

D. Extraction 41

Chapter 41 Status

Although he could barely remember this person, his chilling smile was something that had etched in his mind.

After all, this person had taken a small part of his shadow before he was sent to the factory! He could still remember that day.

According to Mr. Heinz, the person's identity is most likely the Vice Headmaster who had visited his laboratory on that same day. Unfortunately, Kyle had forgotten the man's face so he wasn't able to confirm it...

"So you can remember me?" The pale-faced man asked as he didn't deny his identity.

Kyle took a deep breath as he gently nodded to the Vice Headmaster. There's no point panicking. In any case, he knows that he shouldn't be in danger. If this person has bad intentions, he would have died already when he was still on that cart pulled by the Variant.

"Are you here for Master Heinz? He seem to have gone out yesterday after the disturbance in the dockyard. Would you like to wait inside the laboratory?" Kyle asked unhurriedly as he stood on his spot.

The Vice Headmaster, on the other hand, didn't answer and just walked closer to him.

The latter almost flinched at this action but he maintained his position since he was not feeling any animosity from the Vice Headmaster in the first place.

Then, Kyle suddenly heard the familiar cane that ripped his shadow. It had somehow appeared while the man was walking...

'What Dark Spell was that? Illusion? Transformation?' Kyle mused as he can't figure out how did he miss the appearance of the cane.

Only when it struck the floor and made a sound did he notice its presence. It was magical and quite cool, to be honest... If possible, he wanted to learn this spell so he was already thinking of asking the Vice Headmaster about it.

The man then tapped Kyle's shoulders twice before speaking... "You're doing great... You already have two Dark Spells. Make sure not to add more if you want to attend the Academy next year."

Kyle froze as he realized that the Vice Headmaster can really sense his Spell Model... Nevertheless, what was even more shocking was his Incorruptible Body that is undetected by the Vice Headmaster!

He knows for sure that the man had only detected his Spell Dispersion and Ghost Hands...

'So I was right... No wonder the third light wasn't as imposed as the other two. The Incorruptible Body isn't a Dark Spell but is considered as Dark Arts. Only dark spells are detectable from others...' Kyle has finally confirmed his thoughts about his third Dark Arts.

Unlike the Spell Dispersion and Ghost Hand's Spell Model in his body, the Incorruptible Body can't be used actively... It is a passive ability that he gained and it is basically his physique and not some sort of spell that can be used up or needed to be "refilled" with energy.

In short, he really doesn't have to worry about being unable to enroll.

"Y-yes, Vice Headmaster. Master Heinz already reminded me."

"Mhmm... I see. You can now call me Headmaster Jean starting today." The man replied with an incredible sense of joy.

Kyle was speechless for a moment. He knows from the book he read that the Headmaster did not change ever since the Academy was built!

It was quite surprising that the Headmaster would just suddenly change!

'Is it related to what happened yesterday? Is that the reason why Mr. Heinz can't return yet? Urgh... I'm thinking too much... I must congratulate him first.' Kyle thought as he immediately changed his mood.

"Congratulations, Headmaster Jean." He calmly spoke.

'Lesley's uncle is now the headmaster... How lucky...' Kyle added in his mind.

The evil woman truly had a solid background! No wonder she was able to spend a lot of money to buy Mr. Heinz's potions...

'Ahh... If I'm not mistaken, Headmaster Jean shouldn't know about Mr. Heinz and Lesley's transaction at that time. Tsk...'

Although Kyle wanted Lesley to be reprimanded because of this, Mr. Heinz might be affected as well so he decided not to bring up this matter.

"I'll be waiting for your master in his laboratory... You can go ahead."

"Yes, Headmaster Jean..." Kyle replied as he heaved a sigh of relief. He can finally leave the corridor.

After a few hours, Mr. Heinz finally arrived while leading a total of five carts pulled by the Variants. Needless to say, the carts were filled with corpses!

Furthermore, they are dressed as corpses! They weren't just extractable, they are also lootable corpses!

Of course, Kyle didn't follow his master since he knows that the Headmaster is still waiting in the laboratory.

He would be scolded if he interrupted the discussion of the 'adults' so he has to wait until Headmaster Jean was out.

It was only in the late afternoon did the Headmaster leave and this time, Kyle can finally recall half of his face!

Before, he can only vaguely recall the man's smile showing his white teeth... However, he can now recall the lower half of his face which seems to be an improvement...

As he was about to enter the workshop, he suddenly saw Denise so he quickly called her.

"Denise! Hold this..." Kyle said as he handed the Spirit Converging Crystal to the girl.

"Ahh?" Denise was a bit surprised by his sudden approach but she still held the crystal.

Seeing the blue crystal in her hands, she immediately realized what Kyle wanted to happen.

She didn't refuse as she also waited for the crystal to produce results.

"I'm also quite curious how many strands I'll make... It has been a while since I got tested... Right, how many strands did you make? Are there any changes?" Denise asked with a teasing smile. She knows that it's not easy to increase someone's Spirit so she believes that Kyle still has the same result. Three white strands.

However, his answer exceeded her expectations.

"I only made five..." Kyle answered.

In his mind, the corpses that were delivered a while ago will allow him to increase his stats once more so he didn't mind revealing his current Spirit.

Chapter 42 Answer

"Did you really make 5 strands? That was impressive. Are you sure you're not from a family of Spellcasters?" Denise said in surprise. She can still recall how Kyle mentioned that he had only made three strands a month ago.

Anyway, since Denise's older sister had attended the Academy for a while, she learned quite a few things from her... She also learned why her sister, Cressida, had become a target of envy from the sons and daughters of the so-called noble families.

She remembered how Cressida mentioned that one of the first activities in the academy was to determine the Spiritual Force of the students.

At that time, Cressida had produced a total of 15 white strands while her classmates that are supposedly nobles and such had only produced 3 to 8 strands!

The difference is so huge that it was no wonder she failed to befriend anyone and has even become a target for the nobles. Furthermore, Cressida was only starting in her Arcane Path so she had a lot of potential to grow.

This resulted in numerous threats to her life until she disappeared.

'Well, I'll warn him of the dangers if it reaches eight...' Denise thought as she looked at Kyle's face.

Then, she realized that Kyle wasn't focusing on her question and was instead looking at the crystal in her hands. At this time, the Spirit Converging Crystal in her hands had already shown results...

There were a total of 17 strands in it!

"W-what... 17 strands and your magic zone is small? Did you not mention to me that you can only cover 18 meters at that time? Are you neglecting your training? I can't believe your magic zone is that small considering your massive Spiritual Force..." Kyle said in surprise.

The difference in their strands is indeed huge.

He only has 5 strands but he can already cover twenty-five meters! Although what was needed to increase the magic zone is the physique's adaptiveness to the mystical state, it doesn't mean that the Spiritual Force wasn't part of it.

Denise didn't seem surprised at his reaction and she looked at him with a complicated gaze.

"Heh... I can only train normally. I'm not like you that can drink those potions that were worth 10,000 zen each."

"R-right..." Kyle nodded as he felt really thankful for the resources that his master gave him.

"You've had Spirit Enhancement Potion including that Idle Mind Potion. If I managed to drink those potions as well, it might get a lot easier to expand my Magic Zone."

"Well, I might learn how to make these potions someday. In the future, as long as you have the ingredients, I won't charge you a labor fee and I'll make them for you." Kyle can only give her an empty promise after seeing her feeling down.

"Hurry and get in... If you're late, Sir Heinz might put send those corpses to the furnace already."

With this reminder, Kyle hurriedly went to the laboratory. He realized that the carts where the corpses are piled up are still in the corridor outside the laboratory.

'Right... I didn't see the Variants go out just now.' Kyle mused as he ignored the corpses for now to check the laboratory.

There, he saw Mr. Heinz seemingly busy. There are items on his workbench and he seemed quite nervous handling them.

'No wonder the Variants can't complete their delivery.'

Realizing that it was not appropriate to enter, he decided to complete his extraction in the corridor.

Kyle cautiously glanced at the Variants... They still looked quite scary with patches all over their bodies but he was no longer scared of them.

"You can leave the corpses here. I will be carrying them inside once Mr. Heinz finished his job." Kyle decided to speak to them since he knows that Variants have brains and can understand instructions.

They may not be capable of communicating with their stitched mouths, but they can still understand what he was saying.

"..."

The Variants didn't reply so he continued.

"I will be staying here to guard the corpses. They're not going anywhere. I'm sure you have other tasks so you can just leave them here. Take the carts later tonight or tomorrow when it's convenient." Kyle said as he tried to appear reliable in front of the Variants.

"..."

Finally, after more than a minute of staring contest with the Variants, Kyle saw them lowering the handle of the carts before stepping out.

Soon, the five Variants left the carts to Kyle without any words...

"Phew..."

Kyle heaved a sigh of relief as he started working. He finally had the time to observe the corpses and realized that the first two carts have corpses that are wearing normal working clothes. If he would make a guess, they're probably some of the workers in the dockyard that had perished after the attack happened.

"Are they going to be incinerated as well? Aren't they normal people? They didn't drink the Darkness Possession so they shouldn't become a vessel for evil spirits and become evil creatures after death..."

Kyle muttered in confusion as he recalled the reason why they are being incinerated in the first place.

In any case, he didn't think too much of it as he started his extraction.

[Human corpse has been discovered. Would you like to extract it?]

"Yes."

[Extraction successful. Energy +2 Vitality +0.01]

"..."

Kyle had to pause for a moment after seeing the result.

This is the first time he had extracted a Vitality Attribute! It was quite unbelievable and also a pleasant surprise to him.

"So it's ordinary humans... I can only extract vitality points from those unrelated to Mysticism or Arcane Path..."

Kyle finally had an answer to this mystery as he continued his extraction with mixed feelings.

[Extraction successful. Energy +2 Vitality +0.01]

[Extraction successful. Energy +2 Vitality +0.01]

...

[Extraction successful. Energy +2 Vitality +0.01]

Chapter 43 Improvement

A total of 18 bodies were extracted from the two carts filled with ordinary people.

His Vitality has now turned into 1.03 points finally exceeding a whole number!

Then, with the addition of 36 energy points from the eighteen corpses, his Available Energy is now 69 points.

The bodies of normal humans can only provide 2 points of energy each which seems to be the limit for their kind.

Then, Kyle continued extracting the third, fourth, and fifth carts and all of them were Spellcasters like him.

Surprisingly, his extractions this time weren't mostly intelligence, it was mostly strength this time...

[Extraction successful. Energy +8 Strength +0.20]

[Extraction successful. Energy +8 Strength +0.20]

[Extraction successful. Energy +8 Agility +0.21]

[Extraction successful. Energy +8 Intelligence +0.22]

[Extraction successful. Energy +8 Strength +0.20]

[Extraction successful. Energy +8 Strength +0.20]

"Hmm... Now that I look at it, these people are all quite pale..." Kyle muttered after observing the bodies for a while.

Of course, the paleness he was talking about wasn't similar to the paleness brought by being frozen or losing blood...

Most of the people in the town and the students in the academy were slightly tanned compared to these bodies. It's probably because of the region they were in so he could easily tell the difference.

Furthermore, he can see their faces clearly since their death didn't involve physical weapons. It appears that most of them died through Dark Spells...

'Are these people actually from the south? They're from that airship brought by the Untainted Sentinels? However, they seem too weak... They've only provided a small number of attributes. There's no way they would think of attacking this place with such a weak lineup, right?' Kyle surmised as he believes that it was too ambitious to send these levels of attackers to one of the strongholds of the Dark Arts Faction.

Anyway, he didn't look into it too much as he decided to check whether they still have belongings in their pockets.

Unfortunately, aside from their clothes, all of them had their items taken away already. Not even a single coin was left.

"That's enough..." Kyle muttered as he decided to check his attributes this time.

[Name: Kyle Marshall]

[Attributes: Strength 6.78, Agility 5.47, Intelligence 11.82, Vitality 1.03]

[Dark Arts: Spell Dispersion Lv2, Ghost Hand Lv5, Incorruptible Body Lv4]

[Available Energy: 261]

Kyle couldn't help but smile after seeing his progress.

He felt fortunate to be able to stay here in the workshop for several more months. Once he entered the academy, it would be a lot more difficult to extract corpses and his progress would certainly halt.

Unless he learned how to increase his attribute on his own without the help of his system, it would be difficult for him to raise his attributes.

After a couple of hours, Heinz had finished his job and instructed him to undress and line up the corpses. It didn't take him that long thanks to his improved strength. He can now easily carry the bodies instead of just dragging them on the floor.

After a while, Kyle finally had the time to ask Heinz and satisfy his curiosity.

"Master Heinz, may I know why ordinary people are going to be incinerated here as well? If I'm not mistaken, most of the bodies being sent here were at least related to mysticism. But there were quite a lot of them who didn't seem to have any relations to the Arcane Path..."

"Oh? So you're sensitive to this as expected... Were you able to tell it through their physique or their blood? How did you differentiate them?" Heinz just answered with a question but Kyle was quite helpless about this. He can only answer his Master for now.

"It might be related to my physique... After touching them, I can somehow tell a slight difference between those who had started their Arcane Path and not."

Heinz nodded at this answer and he didn't find it weird.

"Your physique is much better than I expected. This is a good thing... In any case, the Quince Furnace that we have here is special... Any corpses will be helpful to us in making potions or even forging special steel. However, I can't just hog all the corpses being sent to the Academy since the other departments have used them as well."

"R-right... So even ordinary humans can be used in the furnace... You mentioned before the Necromancy Department uses corpses for their experiments, are there any other departments aside from that?"

"Of course. There's even a department that would purposely bury some corpses and wait for them to be possessed by evil spirits and turn into evil creatures."

"Ahhh? Isn't that dangerous? What department was that?"

"Corruption... Essential Corruption Department."

Kyle paused for a moment as he looked at Heinz's face to make sure that he wasn't joking...

'Essential Corruption? When did corruption become essential?' Kyle could only nod and not comment on it. In any case, he would learn about this once he started his study.

The two then chatted for a while as Kyle mentioned his meeting with the previous Vice Headmaster. As expected, the recent attack seems to be related to the changes inside the Academy.

Heinz didn't delve too deeply into this but it's already enough for Kyle to know that Headmaster Jean is the absolute ruler of this land.

It's better not to get on his bad side.

After a couple of weeks, Kyle finally had the time to return to 4 Silver Street to take his pocket watch. It was long overdue but since he already made a downpayment, Sir Gerard was able to wait for him.

Mr. Heinz had given him plenty of tasks to get used to his Incorruptible Body so he barely has time to rest.

Now that he obtained it, Kyle couldn't wait to inspect it. After all, this pocketwatch seems to be related to his transmigration!

Chapter 44 Seal

Click!

Kyle pressed the top of the pocketwatch to flip open the cover. There, he saw the well-made timepiece with a simple gold pattern. It looks the same according to Kyle's previous memories...

'Everything seems to be normal...' Kyle thought as he checked the time.

However, he didn't stop inspecting since according to the books he read, there are many mystical items in this world but almost all of them are dormant.

They needed to fulfill certain requirements in order to awaken them. Furthermore, there are mystical items that are truly evil so he has to be careful in case he got affected by them.

Kyle took a deep breath before entering his Phantasm State.

"Enter..."

The moment he said this, his vision immediately focused on the pocketwatch...

"It's really mystical..." Kyle mused after noticing a tiny black flame inside the pocketwatch... According to that book, the black flame represents the mystical properties of the item.

However, it was quite small than what he was expecting. The size wasn't even half of his fingernail. Furthermore, as Kyle placed it down on the desk, the tiny flame disappeared from his vision. It means that the item can only be activated while being held or it has certain properties that would make it unnoticeable unless it was held.

Kyle then picked it up again to continue his inspection.

Even if it has mystical prowess, it seems to be quite useless... According to the books he read, this tiny flame can probably attract weak ghosts or minor bad luck to the wearer.

Of course, he wasn't sure about its specific effects yet so he can only make a guess. Anyway, it should be in a very negligible state so as long as he doesn't deliberately trigger the black flame, there shouldn't be a problem.

Once he learned more about mystical items, that the time he will try to experiment with them.

'However... This also means that it's not a dormant item...' Kyle mused as he decided to learn the sealing method he found in one of the books in the small library.

This is to ensure his safety and those in his surroundings.

This sealing method isn't a secret method and it can be learned in the first three years inside the academy so it wasn't surprising that Mr. Heinz has a book for it.

With this in mind, Kyle began his study... He decided not to bother his master to seal it for him since he believes that there is no immediate danger from it.

Two months had quickly passed and during this time, he tried sealing the pocketwatch only to fail all the time.

Today, the 14th of August, year 893, would be his 4th attempt to seal the pocketwatch.

He has been using the Animus Haven Hall to complete the sealing process since the location meets one of the conditions in making the ritual.

It is a place that is filled with the essence of Darkness. Well, he wasn't sure what the essence of Darkness was, but Mr. Heinz mentioned that this hall has plenty of it so he decided to just use the place with his permission.

Currently, Kyle is wearing his white shirt and light brown trousers while on his barefoot. He's crouching on the ground as he ensures the condition of his magic circle.

"I hope everything goes well this time..." Kyle muttered with a sigh while holding a bottle filled with liquid mercury.

The magic circle he made is very small compared to the one on the floor of the hall. Furthermore, this isn't an engraved magic circle but one that is made with silver powder.

The circle has the pattern of an eight-angled star with two overlapping circles inside and a crescent moon shape at the center.

Beside this crescent moon is his golden pocketwatch.

Just with all of this, he can already start his sealing process. He simply has to call the 'Eternal Darkness' to seal it for him... However, the problem with this is the fact that he has barely started his Arcane Path so according to Mr. Heinz, his connection with the Darkness isn't that deep yet.

This is probably the reason for his failure during his first attempt. The second attempt was to request the sealing process to be done by the 'Eternal Darkness' Hallowed Spirit. It seems to be part of the Eternal Darkness that is tasked with this kind of request.

It was successful but the sealing was too weak!

It only lasted for five days and it was broken immediately. At this point, Kyle had no choice but to ask Mr. Heinz for his guidance. In exchange, he would have to practice his Spell Dispersion with him for 6 hours every day in two sessions. It was hell for Kyle since dispersing this expert's attack would be deadly for him if he failed even once.

In any case, the third attempt was to make some changes to the magic circle. It had failed as well but it was a mistake on his part during his prayer.

He simply can't restart the ritual since he has to purchase the silver powder every time he failed and procuring them isn't easy.

Today's fourth attempt is similar to the third attempt, he will add the liquid mercury so the Hallowed Spirit can channel stronger power to seal the pocketwatch...

'I can do this...'

Kyle took a deep breath as he started the ritual.

He poured the liquid mercury into the outer circle of the silver powder.

Then, without wasting any of his time, he started his prayer.

"Hallowed Spirit, the ruler below the Eternal Darkness, hear my voice in my time of need.

Lead me so I can bring darkness into my encumbrance...

I request this of you with true devotion... Empower me with your glorious soul.

Seal this Mystical Item with your unlighted flame..."

After finishing his prayer, he entered his Phantasm State and felt the power of the Darkness.

Soon, the silver and the mercury "melted" together and disappeared leaving a burn mark on the floor. At this time, Kyle saw the tiny flame of the pocketwatch and became still like it was frozen...

"Success..." Kyle muttered as he heaved a sigh of relief.

Then, he heard another voice behind him.

"Congratulations..."

It was Mr. Heinz who has been watching him from the darkness all this time.

Chapter 45 New Identity

Kyle was startled after hearing this but as soon as he recognized the owner of the voice he couldn't help but look behind him with a helpless look on his face.

"Master Heinz, please don't scare me like that. I didn't even hear you enter from the door. Is there a secret passage here? Or did you use some sort of teleportation technique?"

"Hah... Teleportation? I didn't think I would hear that again. There was no way I can use something like that." Heinz said as he walked closer.

"So that ability really exists... That's good to know." Kyle muttered thoughtfully.

"Just how many bottles of silver powder did you use this time? It's not cheap, you know?"

"Ahem... I just want to make sure that this pocketwatch won't cause trouble."

"Mhmm... Can I inspect it?" Heinz asked.

"Of course. If possible, can Master also check how long will this seal last?"

Heinz agreed before Kyle handed the pocketwatch...

Although Kyle asked for his master's opinion about the sealing ritual, he didn't mention anything about the pocketwatch at all. This is also the first time that Heinz saw him perform the sealing ritual.

"Mhmm? Isn't the energy contained too low? There's no need to seal this item at all. The Level 2 Sealing Ritual you performed is enough to seal this for about 10 years or even more. Ahh, you're just practicing, right?" Heinz asked after realizing the negligible mystical properties of the pocketwatch.

Normally, this kind of low-grade mystical item wouldn't need ritual sealing at all. Suppressing it with one's power would be enough to ensure that it won't act up.

"Y-yes, Master Heinz... It's a practice. I'm already training my Spells and Phantasm State. I've also finished reading all the books on the shelves... So doing what I've learned would be very helpful for my growth."

"Very well. It's indeed good to experience certain rituals... Just make sure you do it here to be safe."

"I understand, Master Heinz... Can you also tell what kind of effect this tiny black flame does if remains unsealed?"

At this question, Mr. Heinz closed his eyes as he tried recalling the specifics of this mystical property.

"Mhmm... Since it's a black flame with no other properties around it, it has something to do with death. However, since it's incredibly tiny, at most, it can probably attract bad luck once every other month if you're wearing it all day."

"Once every other month... I guess it's not a big deal but it's better to seal it as well."

Heinz nodded and added. "You can also suppress it with your energy... Anyway, if you deliberately trigger it, you can probably use it as a catalyst to bring illness to your target. Well, you'll learn it in the academy. It should be a class called Rudimentary Usage of Mystical Artifacts. You should pass that subject. It's important."

"Yes, Master Heinz!"

After confirming that Kyle's ritual wouldn't cause trouble, Heinz finally left leaving him to continue with his practice.

Click...

Kyle checked the pocket watch once more as he looked at the unmoving flame inside by entering his Phantasm State.

'I think it had gotten bigger... But the difference is too little... I can't confirm yet.' Kyle shook his head as he decided to check it once more after a few months.

Checking it every day would make it more difficult for him to see the minuscule changes.

With this in mind, Kyle just continued practicing his spells since there are no other things to do anymore. There is no corpse delivery and there are no more books to read.

Of course, he would also re-read a few advanced books from time to time. Even though he doesn't understand most of them, committing them to his memory might be useful once he started his Arcane Studies.

Time passed quickly and in a blink of an eye, the enrollment for the freshmen of Year 894 had just ended.

Last year's classes started on May 8 of Year 893 while this year, the classes would start on Monday, the 7th of May.

Kyle still has less than 5 days to wait and currently, he's in town buying new clothes and other things he might need inside the academy.

During this time, Kyle has already completed the special training arranged by Mr. Heinz. Unfortunately, he doesn't have anyone to compare with so he was still unsure how he differs from the nobles or those people who grew up from a family with mysticism background.

"Vale!"

As Kyle was waiting for his turn in the tailor shop, he heard someone calling for Vale outside the shop. He ignored this as he continued reading the fashion magazine in his hands.

"Vale..."

Again, he heard the name being called by a familiar woman's voice... However, this time, she was already closer to him.

Finally, he recalled something as he immediately look up and answered. "Yes?"

There, he saw Denise looking at him with a smile. She then pursed her lips as she whispered to him.

"You have to get used to your new name... Hurry up, Sir Heinz is waiting." Denise said as she turned around and left.

Kyle could only sigh as he advised the tailor that he'll be out for a while.

'I already expected to have a new identity but I really can't get used to this name...'

Apparently, he had three choices for a new name that Heinz had prepared for him.

They were Eustace, Clovis, and Vale. All of them were related to Heinz and had a noble background. Even the Headmaster has already agreed to this...

Eustace is an orphan adopted by Whithope Family. It is a family working for Heinz. He is supposedly 14 years old this year but was killed by one of Heinz's experiments. No one knows him aside from the Patriarch of the Whithope and Heinz himself.

Clovis Becker, on the other hand, was Heinz's nephew. He also suffered the same fate as Eustace.

Lastly, was Vale Chambers.

According to Heinz, Vale was vulgar and petulant, but very capable. This is to be expected from somebody with a gruesome past.

He was born and grew up in a fairly rich family in a developing port, he lived in peace until he was about 8 years old, but at that point, life took a turn for the worst.

He lost his family to a food shortage and was caught up with the wrong people. Heinz found him when he was 11 years old in the streets and was finally adopted by the Chambers Family through his recommendation. Unfortunately, he was only able to survive until two years ago...

What Kyle liked about Vale's identity is the benefits he'll get from being part of the Chambers Family.

Chapter 46 Last Warning

Heinz was waiting inside a normal bookstore in the town. The place looks abandoned right now but the store also sells popular novels so every time there is a new release of books from popular authors, the store can very busy at times.

At the moment, Heinz had closed the store to meet Kyle here. As for Denise, she would have to return to the workshop since it was time to clean the laboratory, or so he thought.

Cling... Cling...

The bells chimed as the door opened. Kyle entered the store and found Heinz on the counter reading a novel.

The Vanity of Turald...

According to his memories, Turald is a fictional vampire character and is quite popular among young adults. Even Denise had read a couple of volumes about this vampire. He didn't expect that even Heinz would be interested in this.

This is quite unexpected for Kyle.

Thump.

The book closed as Heinz noticed that Kyle has arrived.

"It's good to read a few novels or just those popular ones from time to time. You can use it to make friends inside the academy."

"Yes, Master Heinz. I'll keep it in mind."

Heinz looked at Kyle for a while before shaking his head.

"Sometimes, I'm wondering whether you're really 14 years old. Even if the training and potions I gave you helped in increasing your spirit, they won't make you mature so easily. Although you seem clumsy and incapable at the beginning, you grew so quickly and had gotten used to the world of mysticism so easily..." Heinz paused for a moment before he continued.

"I also noticed that you befriended those workers who are probably 20 years older than you. You're quite unusual... In any case, all the workers in the workshop except Denise would be sent away to ensure that no one knows you here, Vale Chambers."

"Y-you're not going to kill them, are you?" Kyle blurted as he felt something off.

"Heh... I'm not as cruel as you think... Although I can experience bouts of madness because of the Dark Spells I've learned, I'm not that evil to kill those who had worked for me for a long time."

Kyle heaved a sigh of relief after hearing this.

Then, Kyle heard footsteps coming from the inner room of the store.

With a creaking noise, the door behind the counter opened, and a blonde noble lady came into sight.

Her overcoat is unbuttoned revealing the rather simple dress worn underneath. The smooth, corset-like tied fabric of her dress covers her stomach where the continuous flow is broken up by a light leather belt worn low around her waist... It was a beautiful sight...

Kyle had just seen this outfit in one of the fashion magazines in the tailor shop a while ago.

'It looks more impressive in person.' Kyle commented in his mind as he shifted his gaze from the gorgeous lady to Heinz.

"This is Baroness Florence Chambers... You already heard about her but I still need you to meet each other."

"I understand, Master Heinz..." Kyle answered with a gentle nod.

He then recalled all the information about her.

'She's the only member of the Chambers Family excluding me... She owns a manor in the countryside. She didn't re-marry after her husband died. Vale Chambers, her adopted son, died early after a certain experiment failed. Florence, Vale's mother, is also about to die due to a certain disease that Master Heinz didn't mention... However, she doesn't look unhealthy at all.'

Anyway, once Florence dies in another year or two, Kyle would be inheriting her title once he had become an adult.

At first, Kyle thought that it would be bothersome to take over such responsibility but in the end, he chose this identity since Eustace and Clovis' identities were either too troublesome or too poor.

Of course, it is only one of the reasons why he chose the Chambers Family.

"Are you curious why she's about to die although she looks so healthy?" Heinz asked as if he could read his thoughts.

Kyle nodded as he was indeed curious.

"It's because she can't adapt the Incorruptible Body..."

"Ahh... She also consumed that Anti-Corruption Force Potion?" Kyle asked in surprise.

This time, it was Florence who answered.

"Yes... The Malefic Branch is something that our Master wanted to achieve... The Whitope Family, the Becker Family, the Chambers Family, and Master's Blackcolt Family worked together to create this Branch. I really thought that we would fail in the end... Your existence is the proof that we've succeeded... It's a pity that almost all the pioneer researchers have already died... It was only Sir Heinz who was left."

'Malefic Branch... It sounds suitable for Dark Arts' branch...' Kyle commented in his mind as he looked at his Master.

"Yes... However, it isn't over yet... The Malefic Branch isn't just about Spell Dispersion and Incorruptible Body... Kyle—No, Vale Chambers... There are a few things left that I need to study but my days are also numbered. I probably have three more years. During this time, I will try to explore this path but I can't guarantee anything... It will be all up to you so you have to study well... Don't get captured by Lesley."

"W-what?" Kyle wasn't expecting that his Master would suddenly announce such a thing. He thought that he only needed to inherit the new branch of Dark Arts. As for Lesley's matters, he had long noted it in his mind.

Before he could ask even further, Heinz continued.

"I will leave today with Florence since I can't continue my research in the workshop anymore. Denise will come with me as well. I decided to nurture her from now on."

"..."

Kyle felt that things are happening too quickly...

Then, Florence walked closer and handed over a necklace to Kyle.

"This is the proof of your identity as the only son of the Chambers Family. Keep it well."

Seeing this, Heinz reminded Kyle one last time.

"If you ever had to go outside the academy, be careful of the Holy Arts Factions... They are cruel and many of them are true believers of the devils."

These last words had certainly confused Kyle even more but the two already left using the backdoor.

Chapter 47 Unplanned

Kyle was stumped by the sudden disappearance of the two people... They didn't even wait for him to ask questions.

"Why are you in a hurry?!"

Even though they have long planned this, Kyle was at least expecting some celebration since he was already about to enter the Academy.

Furthermore, he wasn't just a simple student who has been recruited from one of the recruitment sites.

He is the inheritor of the Malefic Arts or the new branch of the Dark Arts that the four families had built over the past few decades.

Kyle could only sigh as he looked at the necklace given to him by Madam Florence. He wasn't sure if he will ever meet her again so it was quite a pity that he couldn't even ask some questions regarding his new identity or the things he has to look out for.

As he inspected the necklace in his hands, he realized that even though it was a thin silver chain necklace that shouldn't be that expensive, it has an exquisite gemstone as its pendant.

"Hmmm?"

Kyle may not be a jeweler in his current life or his previous life, but he knows that this red gem is most likely a garnet. If it has a deeper color, he might think of it as a ruby... In any case, what attracted his attention was the tiny obsidian sword inside the garnet stone!

'So this is an artificial gemstone?' Kyle mused as he wondered how the sword got stuck inside. In any case, he entered his Phantasm State.

As soon as he did this, his vision swiftly shifted to the necklace in his hands. As expected, the necklace has signs of being a mystical item.

There is a pale glimmer of blue light surrounding the whole necklace in his hands. The glimmer is even stronger as it gets to the pendant.

Unlike his unlucky pocketwatch which shows a tiny black flame, this necklace's blue light or glimmer means something good.

According to the books he read, this is the simplest mystical item out there that provides enhanced durability.

It is specifically called Spirit Protection. It is something that can be learned by those with a background in Arcane Studies even before going to the Academy.

People would normally use this method to ensure that their precious items wouldn't be damaged, get rust, or even get dirty while being stored.

The most it could do is protect the item itself so Kyle has nothing to worry about wearing this necklace all the time.

After wearing it around his neck, Kyle looked at the book that Heinz was previously reading... He noticed just now that when he activated his Phantasm State, the book with the title, The Vanity of Turald, was also showing signs of being a mystical item.

"Ahhh? Did he really just leave it here?" Kyle muttered in surprise. As soon as he opened the book, he found out that the content was different from the cover! This is definitely a book of mysticism!

The paper book cover was removable so Kyle gently took it off as he read the true title of the book.

The Forbidden Practice of the Unlighted...

'This doesn't sound like a legal book...' Kyle paused for a moment as he flipped the book open once more...

After a few minutes, Kyle took a deep breath as he couldn't help but reprimand Master Heinz in his mind... After all, what if he didn't use his Phantasm State? What if he didn't notice the mystical properties of this book? Wouldn't it be dangerous to let it stay here?

Wouldn't it be a waste if he didn't get to learn this?

Kyle had mixed feelings about this sudden discovery. He immediately, returned the paper cover of the book to disguise it as the romance book of the vampire.

After that, he looked at the table once more using his Phantasm State to ensure that he didn't miss anything... Then, he returned to the tailor shop as he needed some set of new clothes from the academy.

Although he will receive three sets of his uniform as part of the tuition fee, he also needed some casual clothes.

He also needs to have a set of shoes so he can't return to the workshop yet.

After two hours in the town, Kyle returned to the workshop only to be greeted by the new manager who had replaced Mr. Heinz. She seemed to be a strict middle-aged woman with slanted brows and oval-shaped reading glass resting on her nose.

She introduced herself as Madam Celia and she was already informed about Vale's early arrival in the academy's territory. She doesn't know him as Kyle and only knows that he will be staying in the workshop for the remaining days until the opening of the Academy.

After greeting her, Kyle continued to the corridor leading to the closed laboratory and to his room...

'Should I also tell Mr. Gerard about the change in my name?' Kyle mused as he entered his room. After pondering for a while, he decided to just casually inform him about this.

"I'll just tell him it's my real name and Kyle was an alias when I was still working part-time in the workshop... I can just blame it as a noble thing..."

In any case, it's not like he had done a crime and that the police are chasing after him.

It was only to ensure that Lesley would forget about his existence and avoid confusing the records since there should be a dead Kyle Marshall already.

On the next day, Kyle was surprised that there is another delivery of corpses! Madam Celia can also handle them but she decided to inform Vale about it since she was also notified that this young man has been helping Mr. Heinz with the Quince Furnace...

Kyle didn't expect this as he thought that all the deliveries from the recruitment sites were completed two days ago.

"W-wait... This is not from the recruitment sites!"

Chapter 48 Shadow's Fault

The delivery that was made by the Variants today was different from the one two days ago. These bodies are all adults!

Just by seeing this, he can already tell that these people did not die from trying their luck in surviving the Darkness Possession. It must be something else!

Kyle then walked closer to a couple of carts in the corridor sent by the Variants.

After further inspection, the bodies have injuries again on their foreheads like they were shot by a bullet or stabbed by a sharp object.

"This injury again? Madam Celia, do you know what's the cause of their deaths?" Kyle asked. His Master didn't bother answering his question so he decided to try his luck with the new manager.

"Mhmm? Didn't they die after being shot in their heads?" Celia asked in return as she glanced at him slightly confused.

Kyle wryly smiled as he shook his head.

"It's quite weird that there are no signs of blood. There is no penetration of the bullet on the other side. It even feels like they have a hallowed skull."

Kyle feels like a huge syringe was used to stab their skull and extracted their brain matter. That's right, this is what he was thinking all this while when he investigated the first corpse. He just didn't want to admit it since it was too weird...

However, over the past few months when his knowledge about the world of mysticism deepens, he learned that these things weren't that impossible to happen.

"Well, they might be those unregistered practitioners... You know that those in the ninth year and tenth year students will help hunt those who are practicing mysticism without a license, right?"

"Aahh... It was actually their task. I didn't know. I only know that there were people assigned to hunt those who are practicing any of the Arcane Arts without permission."

"Indeed... They were only helping the officials for some time for the experience. I'm thinking that this is the result of their job or something. Even if it's their vacation, they would normally continue their hunting job if they encountered one..."

Kyle nodded after hearing this explanation. Of course, this still doesn't explain how they died.

Seeing that "Vale" was looking serious, Celia added.

"Well... It's not important, is it? As long as they don't turn into evil creatures... That should be enough. In any case, they're doing that to lessen the number of evil creatures roaming around... So don't think too much of it."

She also noticed the abnormalities of their deaths but she knows not to dwell on this for her own good.

"You're right... I will help arrange them since I have nothing else to do."

"Thank you... This is also my first time sending corpses to the Quince Furnace so I'd really want your help this time---Ahhh, you're undressing them?" Celia asked in surprise after seeing what Kyle was doing.

"Yes... Sir Heinz said that their clothes and other belongings would be sent to normal furnaces while the bodies would be sent to the Quince Furnace. Did he say something different?"

"Well, he didn't mention it specifically so I thought that everything goes in there..." Celia replied as she continued watching Kyle.

The young man was quick on this task so Celia can tell that he's been doing this for quite a while now.

'Won't it be difficult for me once he left? Should I also get an apprentice or assistant?' Celia mused as she decided to help.

However, instead of doing it manually similar to what Kyle does, she decided to use her Ghost Hands.

Kyle didn't miss this as he entered his Phantasm State as soon as one of the bodies started getting naked.

Soon, he realized that Celia also has two Ghost Hands that were smaller than his Ghost Hands... Furthermore, the Ghost Hands even seem like they are female hands...

It feels like Kyle's Ghost Hands were from a 9 ft tall giant while Celia's Ghost Hands were from a young female in her teens... It looks quite delicate but at the very least, her hands look more solid than the illusory hands that Kyle summoned.

"Ahem... This is the first time I've seen that version of Ghost Hand..." Kyle couldn't help but comment after seeing it.

Celia didn't seem surprised at this reaction as she replied with a smile. "Don't worry, you'll be able to change your Ghost Hands if you reached the Advanced Realm. Well, that will probably happen in your 7th or 8th year if you learned it now."

"Eight years? I'll probably be bored and learn a different skill instead." Kyle commented. Of course, he can simply increase the realm with enough energy points. There is no need to wait or practice it for such a long time.

"Well, that's for average students... In any case, I'm sure you won't be bored once you entered the Academy."

"Did you also graduate from the Academy, Madam Celia?" Kyle asked while continuing his task. Then, he suddenly recalled that the Academy was only built 11 years ago.

Lesley's batch might even be the first graduates!

Celia just laughed it off and replied.

"I did not... However, I had a niece and nephews study there so I know you won't be bored."

"Really?" Kyle was doubtful. Ten years of study was too long. Anyway, he indeed doesn't feel anything wrong about it... As a matter of fact, he weirdly feels excited to go and study.

"Well, it might be something to do with the tradition."

"Tradition?" Kyle repeated.

"Yes... The Academy's Vice Headmasters might take a part of your shadow... It's not bad for you, it will only compel you to stay and study in the Academy and not betray the Dark Arts Faction. Ahhh—I probably shouldn't have said that..."

As soon as Kyle heard this, he immediately felt everything making sense. No wonder he didn't have the urge to leave after arriving here! Even after learning the benefits of his Extraction System, he didn't have the guts to leave this place and go to various large cities to extract corpses!

It was all that damn extracted shadow's fault!

Chapter 49 The Nobles

'So it was like that... No wonder Sir Heinz isn't worried that I'll just suddenly flee or disappear after they've left. That missing shadow is unconsciously forcing me to attend the academy and be part of the Dark Arts Faction... That was genius...' Kyle couldn't help but be impressed at the method that the Dark Arts Factions used to retain all their members.

Of course, he still felt that it was too much since he was still quite young and should've been properly informed about it.

Celia seem to have read Kyle's mind as she immediately added.

"Don't think too much of it... However, if you're really bothered by it, you have to remember that some other factions does it worst. The Holy Arts Faction would force their graduates to work for their faction for the rest of their lives... The Alchemy Arts Faction, on the other hand, would have a 10 to 20 percent cut on their sales once they've become licensed Alchemists..."

"W-what? Isn't that a bit too much? If that's true, then the Dark Arts Faction's compelling to study and being loyal to the Faction isn't a big deal at all."

"Yes... Of course, these are only the things I know on the surface. There might be special exceptions similar to our faction."

Kyle's eyes lit up after hearing this.

"There's an exception? Can I take back my shadow someday?"

Celia only gave a gentle smile and didn't voice her answer... Nevertheless, it was enough for Kyle to know the answer.

'I guess she's not allowed to speak... but that's fine...'

"Thank you, Madam Celia... Since I'm about to attend the Academy, do you have any advice for me?" Kyle asked. He felt that he had gotten closer to the manager so he was comfortable asking for any advice.

Celia didn't expect that sudden question so she pondered for a moment.

"Mhmm... Advice? Well, I think you just need to choose the most suitable branch of Dark Arts for you... Choosing a branch that you will be specializing in will happen in your fourth year. That's a very important decision... The Academy may give you suggestions at the end of your third year but it would ultimately be your decision... The Academy won't stop you from your choice."

"There's no option to change my branch?" Kyle asked.

"There is... However, you will be repeating your fourth year. Each year is important so I would like you to avoid that if possible." Celia reminded.

The two continued chatting while they finish their task. Kyle also extracted all 18 bodies which had given another boost to his attributes. Furthermore, the lowest attribute point he got was 0.30... Although there is no vitality increase, it was still a decent improvement for him.

Kyle then looked around the laboratory and confirmed that most of the items and ingredients on the shelves has already been collected by Mr. Heinz.

The place no longer looks like a laboratory and soon, it will simply turn into an office by Manager Celia.

The day before the opening ceremony of the Academy, Kyle can already enter the academy to occupy his dormitory room.

Nevertheless, for the next two days, Kyle still has nothing to do so he would either visits the abandoned part of town and wait for ghosts or would spend his time in the town to avoid the noise coming from the workshop.

Although he has already gotten used to the place, he would still feel better without the banging noise of steel.

"Clear the way! Clear the way!"

Suddenly, he heard the sound of hooves from galloping horses as a lavishly designed carriage was hurrying to the Academy.

The coachman driving the carriage was continuously shouting at the pedestrian along the way...

"A noble? I wonder which family is this from..."

"Heh... Can't you see that insignia they're blatantly waving around? That's Featherstar Family..."

"Ahh? One of the founding members of the Dark Arts Faction?"

"I wonder why they're still sending a member of their family to Vermont Academy? I'm sure they have better Dark Arts teachers in their county..."

Kyle looked at the carriage as the crowd started gossiping about the Featherstar Family... Unlike these gossipers, he knows better why the nobles are sending their children to this Academy instead of sending them to normal schools or even universities.

"It was the Moontomb Family the other day... Now it was the Featherstar Family..." Kyle wryly smiled as he felt that this year's freshmen students would be filled with geniuses from various families that had brought and started the Darkness Arcane Path.

As he was about to buy a skewer being sold on the streets, a loud explosion suddenly occurred. The ground trembled as the people cried in shock.

Boom! Boom!

Two more explosions occurred causing a huge panic...

"T-the carriage of the Featherstar Family was attacked!"

Luckily, it was attacked a couple of blocks away from him so he wasn't too affected.

Nevertheless, the sudden attack on the noble family is definitely a piece of bad news.

As expected, after a few moments, the sound of battle immediately erupted...

Without any hesitation, Kyle started running away... Although he wanted to handle the corpses, he wasn't brave enough to do it while there is still a danger lurking around.

Instead, he went to a nearby Tea Parlour. The second floor of the building will allow him to see what was going on while staying in a safe spot...

Kyle greeted the waitress with a smile as he went to his seat and opened the window... He would always come here so the workers already know his tea.

The customers had also heard of the problem a couple of blocks away but they weren't too worried. After a few questions to the waitress and the security personnel, everyone started calming down.

In the meantime, Kyle was observing the situation from afar and realized that the carriage of the Featherstar Family seem to be baiting the enemies from the start!

After the carriage started burning from the series of explosions, a few masked individuals started getting closer to either confirm the kill or take something inside...

However, several black-robed people started surrounding them!

Without any doubt, these people are members of the Evanescent Vessels!

Chapter 50 Vermont Academy

"Interesting..."

The sudden appearance of the members of the Evanescent Vessels astounded Kyle. However, after a moment of thought, he felt that this is also understandable since these noble families can't bring their private guards inside the Academy.

In exchange for this, the Academy Officials would guarantee the safety of the students as long as they are within the territory of Vermont Academy.

Aside from the Academy's Credence and Ethics Committee which is composed of highly qualified students. There is also the Academy's Supernatural Security Force that protects everyone inside the Academy walls. Kyle wasn't exactly sure about this Security Force but he knows that they weren't people to mess with.

Anyway, when it comes to external affairs, the Academy had partnered with the Order of the Evanescent Vessels to protect them which should be the most reliable force out there.

Well, Kyle previously learned how great this organization was... According to Mr. Heinz, there are only three organizations among the 12 Factions that could equal the Evanescent Vessels.

It was the Untainted Sentinels of the Holy Arts Faction, the Lore Hunters of the Elemental Arts Faction, and the Illustrious Liquidators of the Mystic Arts Faction...

If the masked figures weren't from those three factions, their only option is to run once the Vessels have appeared.

Whom~

Suddenly, he felt waves of energy and it seems quite familiar to him...

'Field Distortion? A weaker one? I guess this is not a big deal...' Kyle muttered as he realized that the previous area of the incident become "normal" in his eyes or everyone's eyes...

After 3 minutes or so, before his tea has even arrived, he realized that the battle was already over. He may not have seen the battle because the place seems to have been distorted but he knows that numerous dark spells were used just now... He can tell this much because the restless energy surrounding the street had started calming down.

'I wonder how long this distortion was... I want to see the result...' Kyle mused as he looked at the pedestrians who seem to disregard the "normal scene" on the road where the carriage exploded.

Well, the distortion that he mentioned was the method of isolation that the Vessel did just now. That's right, the Vessels isolated the battlefield from ordinary people using distortion or perhaps through the illusion that they've made. This level of distortion is enough to stop ordinary people from entering the perimeter and make them think that everything is normal.

Kyle had previously seen them use a similar technique but instead of this low-level field distortion, what he saw that time was a huge shadow dome. It was when the Untainted Sentinels attacked the dockyard a year ago.

However, since the enemies today are quite weak, the Vessels didn't use that high-level distortion and instead, use this "illusion"...

It can be easily broken by experts but it's certainly enough to fool ordinary citizens... including him if he wasn't aware of this isolation method.

"Here's your tea, Sir."

The kind waitress served his tea and Kyle gently nodded to thank her. As Kyle returned his gaze to the window, he confirmed that the distortion was gone... What was left was the broken fancy carriage on the streets.

The horses had even conveniently vanished!

There are already a few police officers handling the scene and Kyle could no longer see any members of the Vessels or the masked robbers.

"Eh?"

Suddenly, Kyle noticed that a young girl hurriedly approached the broken carriage. This young girl wearing a graceful blue dress and feathered hat, or perhaps a fascinator hat, appears quite delicate as she ordered the police to take something out of the carriage.

It appears that she had forgotten her luggage inside so she had to return and take it.

Although Kyle was in a distance, he can guess that this girl is the one who was ambushed just now.

Of course, he only felt a little interested since she might be his classmate later on. In addition, he wanted to remember her face. He wanted to ensure not to get entangled with her since she looks like she will bring a lot of trouble to those people surrounding her.

She hasn't even entered the academy and she already caused one!

As the girl left the scene, Kyle also finished his tea and paid for it before leaving.

'Well, I'm not hoping that corpses are to be sent to the workshop. Ahem... I just want to help Manager Celia since she wasn't used to the job yet.' Kyle reasoned in his mind as he hurriedly returned to the workshop.

However, there are no corpses that were delivered yet. It might be delayed or it was sent to other facilities instead.

It was quite unfortunate but he didn't think too much of it. In any case, he already possesses a decent amount of points in each of his attributes.

Days passed quickly and it is now Sunday, the 6th of May. Tomorrow would be the entrance ceremony so Kyle can now enter the Vermont Academy. He may have been able to enter at an earlier date but he decided not to because he wanted to help Manager Celia with any corpse delivery.

He looked at his room in his workshop one last time.

Well, he wouldn't miss this room, a room without any windows. So he carried his luggage and locked the room quickly.

Click...

He then returned the keys to the laboratory. He looked for the Manager but she hasn't arrived yet since it was still quite early.

Before leaving the workshop, Kyle looked at himself in the mirror that was in the hallway.

Thanks to all the nutritious meals served in the workshop, he grew up quite well for a 14-year-old like him... He looked at his short black hair, his black eyes filled with vigor, the new vest on top of his shirt, and his gray overcoat before he nodded in satisfaction.

He couldn't comment much on his face but he can say that his appearance is more pleasing to the eye than his appearance in his previous life.

Soon, he arrived in front of the Academy and realized that many students at his age were arriving as well. He had even seen a few unfamiliar airships waiting for their turn to land at the dockyard.

Kyle looked ahead and waited for his turn to be checked by the guards. There were more than twenty people in the queue when he arrived but it shouldn't take long before his turn.

After all, they only needed to briefly show their proof of acceptance.

When it was his turn, he realized that more than 30 people is already lining up... It seems that it is a busy weekend for the Academy.

Without waiting for the guard to speak, Kyle showed an emblem he was keeping in his coat's inner pocket.

He only needed to show the emblem that was given to him by Mr. Heinz some time ago and he can already enter.

"Oh..." The guard looked at the brass emblem engraved with the insignia of the Vermont Academy before shifting his gaze to Kyle to have a good look on his face.

To Kyle's surprise, even the few students behind him had also reacted as soon as he had shown the emblem.