

D. Extraction 581

Chapter 581 Spirit

After three minutes of concentration, Vale finally got the result he wanted.

[Energy Source has been discovered. Would you like to start the Extraction?]

'Energy Source? Interesting... It didn't recognize the Formation Circle as an Arcane Art but as a source of energy?' Vale mused as he didn't expect this notification to appear.

Nevertheless, it made a lot of sense since his Divine Extraction Energy was not an Appraisal Tool. It only recognizes 'extractable' targets. From the system's perspective, perhaps this complex Trap Formation was nothing more than a huge gathering of Arcane Energy.

Without any more hesitation, Vale started with his Extraction.

[Extraction Successful. Energy +1120

Fiend Essence +1000

Vampire Essence +1000

Elf Essence +1000]

[Extraction Failed]

[Extraction Failed]

[Extraction Successful. Energy +1200

Fiend Essence +1100

Vampire Essence +1100

Elf Essence +1100]

[Extraction Failed]

"Incredible... Isn't this a bit too much?" Vale muttered as he saw the results of his Extraction. He was getting thousands of them at once!

This was such an incredible experience.

'I guess this Trap Formation had other creatures it could materialize aside from the Blood Specters.'

Vale concluded after seeing some essence of the Vampire and Elf. Perhaps, once they eliminated the Blood Specters, the Trap Formation would summon other creatures like Vampire and Elf to deal with them.

On the other hand, as Vale continued with the Extraction of the Trap Formation, Magnus focused on preparing his Slave Contract Talisman.

"Go on... Waste your energy." He muttered.

He was fully aware of the difficulty of escaping from the Trap Formation. If they couldn't find its weakness or they failed to understand the Formation's rule, it would be impossible to survive in it.

Furthermore, he understood the futility of attempting to overpower the Trap Formation, given the castle's abundance of Energy Cores and Spirit Stones that fueled its potency.

Even if it were him, he would fail to destroy this Formation Art with just brute force.

Any attempt by Vale and his companions to dismantle the Formation or eliminate the Blood Specters would only result in a wasteful expenditure of their energy. It would hasten their demise since the Formation Arts also had another effect, which could stop their Arcane Energy's regeneration.

Crack...

Amidst the preparation of the Slave Contract Talismans, an unforeseen development transpired—the Trap Formation began to dim, accompanied by the emergence of numerous cracks, leaving Magnus bewildered by the unexpected turn of events.

'An invisible spell? What's going on?' Magnus was alarmed as he didn't see where the attack came from.

Perplexed by the unanticipated damage to the Formation, his focus shifted to Vale, who remained at the heart of the Formation.

"It's you!"

Sensing a connection between Vale's actions and the Formation's deterioration, Magnus swiftly directed his Staff toward the young man, invoking a spell in a desperate attempt to thwart his efforts.

Petrification!

This Spell would normally require an incantation, but thanks to his Staff, such action was no longer needed.

Faith, foreseeing the impending threat, swiftly countered Magnus's Spell with defensive magic.

Arcane Force Field!

It was a potent barrier that remained invisible to the naked eye but resonated profoundly within their Phantasm State.

Even Pearl felt impressed by this unusual Spell...

Within moments, a protective dome materialized, enveloping the group.

Boom!

As the Petrification Spell didn't reach its target, it suddenly created an explosive reaction, which reverberated through the air, unsettling even the Blood Specters that were suppressed by Pearl's domain.

"So you're hiding there..."

Seizing the opportune distraction, Pearl directed her Energy Spear towards Magnus!

Whoosh~

The Spear made of her Spiritual Energy rushed through air... However, it encountered an unexpected obstruction!

Boom!

It was impeded by the Trap Formation Art itself!

"What? Isn't that cheating? He can attack us from the outside, but we can't do the same?" Pearl muttered as she realized the other effect of the Formation Art.

This continued several times as Magnus started casting a few more Petrification Spells while Pearl and Faith would defend against it.

'Is he planning to waste our energy through this action?'

"Vale... Are you not finished yet?" Pearl suddenly asked as Magnus persistently launched successive attempts to trap them in petrification.

"I'm almost done... The Formation Art will collapse soon. Please deal with that old Arcanist once it's broken." Vale replied.

"Very well... I'll take care of that old man!" Pearl said as she was already annoyed by the fact that she couldn't kill the Blood Specters. Although she didn't mind holding them in her Spiritual Domain, she

She was itching for a real battle!

In the alchemy laboratory nestled within the labyrinthine corridors of the Magnus' Castle, an atmosphere of mystery and innovation permeated the air.

The room was adorned with an array of shelves, each meticulously laden with glass jars containing a menagerie of preserved specimens—ethereal creatures suspended in amber liquids, arcane botanical specimens, and anatomical curiosities, all bathed in a soft, eerie glow that lent an otherworldly aura to the laboratory.

Within this captivating environment, Lisa and Chad engaged in their alchemical pursuits, immersed in the art of potioncraft and the enigmatic machinations of their experiments.

Well, if they weren't afraid of dying, they wouldn't be this focused on their tasks.

Boom!

The ground suddenly started shaking, and the ceiling started making some noise. They couldn't help but feel worried that the walls would collapse on them.

"Lisa... Is the castle being attacked?" Chad asked as he stopped what he was doing. He was ready to escape from the laboratory.

"It could be... But I think Sir Magnus might be doing an experiment in the third laboratory... You know that he's handing explosive items there." Lisa said with a helpless smile.

She was making a potion using moonflower extract and starlight essence. It's known to enhance perception and mystical energy attunement. It's a delicate process, but the results can be quite extraordinary.

It had a very complicated brewing process, and now that she missed the timing, she had to restart once again.

However, as she was thinking of continuing with her experiment, a beautiful Dark Spirit appeared before them.

The female Dark Spirit had a mesmerizing presence, with flowing ebony hair that seemed to dance around her like wisps of smoke. Her eyes glowed with an otherworldly light, and her elegant, ethereal form exuded an aura of mystery and power.

Lisa's eyes lit up after seeing her...

"Are you Vale's Dark Spirit?!"

Chapter 582 Mirror

Yvaine didn't answer Lisa's question, but her calm demeanor was already an answer for her.

'How did Vale come here faster than the professors or the Faction's Vessels?' Lisa mused as she knew that her guess was most likely correct.

Anyway, she couldn't help but smile as she put down the laboratory tools she was holding.

"What? Vale's Dark Spirit? Then... Is he the one attacking the castle?" Chad said as he couldn't help but feel worried. If Vale was killed, they wouldn't be able to forgive themselves.

"It must be him... Dark Spirit, are you going to take us away with you?" Lisa asked. She wanted to know if the attack was a diversion and if the Dark Spirit was here to take them away.

They didn't want their friend to die fighting against the old monster who claimed to have practiced all Arcane Paths.

If they could lessen his burden, they would do so.

'Even if Vale is a genius Dark Magician, there's no way he can win against that old monster.' Lisa thought as she turned to Chad, who seemed to have something in mind.

"Ahh... That Dark Spirit left." Lisa muttered as the Spirit suddenly disappeared from her Magic Zone.

"She probably returned to inform Vale." Chad commented as he shifted his attention to the mirror beside him.

Soon, he uttered a silent prayer.

"Esteemed ArchFey of the Third Era, the 13th Warden of the Spirit World, the current Spirit of the Pristine Mirror, grant me your audience... In accordance with the vow, a practitioner of the Darkness Path will find the light within the darkness, and it'll outshine even the darkest of shades."

This prayer won't normally work since Chad doesn't possess the Pristine Mirror. He was simply using a normal mirror within the Alchemy Laboratory.

However, they learned in their third-year class that Mennena could still be called as long they sacrifice their blood and an object that has decent value. Well, Cursed Artifacts are preferred, but they could be changed depending on the quality of the item.

After Chad's prayer, he cut his finger with a sterilized knife and dropped a few of them on the mirror.

Then, he threw the knife as well. It was a mid-grade Mortal Rank item and was quite pathetic. However, Chad had another secret.

He now possesses the Ghost King's Body! The blood he just offered and the knife that his blood had stained had become precious at this point!

It didn't take long before a ripple appeared in the mirror, indicating that Menna had created a link on it.

Lisa was previously confused about Chad's ritual, but after confirming that Mennena was the being called, she realized Chad was planning immediately.

Chad immediately spoke as soon as he felt Mennena's presence.

"Mennena! Can you tell us if the Dark Spirit lurking around was connected to Vale?"

Mennena didn't seem to be surprised by the question and answered immediately without showing her appearance in the mirror.

"Vale Chambers? Your previous classmate?" Her voice still sounded ethereal, and Chad couldn't help but gulp.

After a moment of hesitation, he nodded. "Yes..."

"Mhmm... I can't feel his presence. Is he using an anti-detection artifact? Let me use the mirrors around here. I'll search for him real quick, Ghost King Chad..."

"Pfft~"

Lisa failed to stop her chuckle as soon as she heard Mennena's way of addressing Chad.

"Ghost King Chad... I didn't expect that. Should I call you that as well?" Lisa teased.

"Ugh... Don't even think about it. I'm just letting her call me that since I can't do anything about it." Chad replied with a helpless smile.

Soon, Mennena grasped what was going on in the castle.

"I found him. A Spell or Artifact protects him, so you won't sense his presence. However, I saw his face in a broken mirror. That Dark Spirit had also found its way back to him."

"That's great! Is he alone? Are we being saved?" Chad immediately asked. He knew that Mennena wouldn't be able to stay here for long.

"He's with two other mysterious Arcanists. I can't see through them, but I know they're incredibly strong, so I'm sure you'll be able to escape this time... If I'm not mistaken, even 5 Magnus will fail to stop them. Summon me next time with more of your blood..."

As soon as Mennena said this, the power that was lent to her by Chad had reached its limit.

Mennena immediately disappeared, and the mirror returned to normal.

"I knew it... We're saved! Thank you, Mennena!" Chad replied with eagerness as he looked at the excited Lisa.

"This is great! I wonder if Vale was together with the Headmaster or perhaps some members of the Vessels..." Lisa muttered.

The laboratory room's seal was still active, so they still had to wait until Magnus was defeated. At this time, they could only speculate about the identities of the people that was helping Vale.

"I think Mennena would recognize the Headmaster if he was with Vale. Since they're called Mysterious, they are probably from the Order of the Evanescent Vessels or Arcanists directly from the Vermont Clan." Chad replied after some time.

He believed that the Vessels protecting their Academy would be tasked to search for them. However, he also knew that the Vermont Clan behind the Vermont Academy would also make their move to save students like them.

In the meantime, while Lisa and Chad waited to be rescued, Vale had finally completed half of his extraction.

"Now!" Vale shouted the moment he felt the Formation was about to break.

At his signal, Pearl acted without hesitation, hurling an Energy Spear that tore through the Trap Formation.

The Trap Formation had always blocked her attacks, so she had been quite frustrated for a while now.

"Take this!" Pearl exclaimed as she unleashed the powerful energy, her eyes blazing with annoyance.

Boom!

Soon, the Energy Spear hurtled directly toward Magnus, catching him off guard.

The impact sent shockwaves through the place, causing the castle's main hall to tremble and the torches to flicker.

Chapter 583 Ember

"You dare?!" Magnus shouted in fury, caught off guard by the unexpected turn of events.

What infuriated him was the fact that he was slightly injured, something he had never experienced for many years.

He had been confident that his Trap Formation would be sufficient to deal with the three intruders. He had crafted it himself and knew its formidable power. Even if someone could dismantle his Formation Art, it would take several Formation Experts working together, and it would still require several days for them to destroy it.

Nevertheless, Vale and the others ignored him for a moment.

"Pearl and Miss Faith... I'll deal with this old Arcanist. Can you follow my Dark Spirit and save Chad and Lisa? They're in an underground facility..." Vale said, gesturing to Yvaine, who had suddenly appeared behind them.

They didn't even know that Vale already sent his Dark Spirit to look for the captives!

'So they're really here!'

Faith's eyes lit up as soon as she heard this. Those two students were the reason she had come here in the first place.

She immediately agreed, and Pearl hesitated only for a moment before agreeing as well.

"Fine... Make sure to torture that arrogant man..." Pearl said, sensing that Vale had something in mind. She wasn't sure what it was, but it felt as if Vale was truly looking forward to facing Magnus.

Although she also wanted to punch Magnus' face, she felt that Vale would do a better job.

Vale's torture of sucking all the enemy's energy and life was something that was instilled in her mind. She felt that she had no way of topping that terrifying ability.

"Alright... Do you think Lisa and Chad require quick medical assistance? I'll have to summon Healing Spirit if that's the case." Faith asked after she recalled that Chad and Lisa may not be in very good condition.

Summoning a Healing Spirit requires some time, so she was planning to do it ahead of time if it was needed.

"They're fine. But they're confined in a room according to my Dark Spirit..." Vale replied as he signaled Yvaine to lead the two.

Meanwhile, Magnus, who was about to release a Mystic Spell to trap the three once again, noticed the sudden appearance of the Dark Spirit. As he overheard their conversation, he realized that they had already found his two captives.

He didn't have the time to question how the Dark Spirit bypassed his traps and formation arts, so

"All of you will stay here!" he yelled in fury as he cast one of his finest Alchemy Arts.

"Cursed Flame!"

As soon as he triggered this Spell, black fire erupted and surrounded Vale and the others. The darkness of the flame seemed to swallow the very light in the room, casting eerie shadows on the walls and sending ominous tendrils of smoke curling through the air.

The heat it emitted was intense, and the crackling of the flames filled the hall with a menacing sound.

It was such a terrifying sight.

Nevertheless, Vale gazed at the ominous black flame calmly.

He could sense that this Spell had likely reached the Advanced Realm, or perhaps even the Perfect Realm, making it extremely dangerous.

After all, the very fabric of space seemed to contort in response to its lethal power.

'I like this Spell... Cursed Flame? I should target this one.'

Vale smirked as he planned to end this quickly.

He had no intention of prolonging this battle. He was acutely aware that Lisa and Chad's lives could be at stake if he didn't swiftly confront this formidable Arcanist.

They could be used as a hostage or even as a sacrifice if this Magnus decided to be shameless.

With this urgency in mind, he focused on casting one of his Elemental Spells, disregarding any potential surprise from Faith at his ability to do so.

'Well... I don't think she'll be spreading this around, but I'll tell her later.'

"Ember Spirit!" Vale invoked, channeling his force into his Spell Model...

As soon as he did this, the Spell Model dimmed completely.

It means he could no longer cast this Spell until the Model was again filled with energy.

Whom~

Suddenly, a small, ethereal spirit surrounded by dancing flames materialized before him, its fiery aura casting a warm, orange glow in the midst of the darkness.

Pearl and Faith, who were thinking about how to pass through the flames, noticed its appearance and halted for a moment.

They didn't need to ask Vale, as they knew that he was about to do something with the Cursed Flame that was slowly closing on them.

'So Vale has this beautiful Spell... When did he even learn this?' Faith commented in her mind as she felt that Vale was indeed hiding too many things.

At this time, she had already recognized Vale as a Half-Human. She wasn't exactly sure if Vale was Half-Dragon, Half-Elf, or even Half-Evil Creature... After all, there was no way Vale could practice multiple Arcane Arts unless he was half-blood.

As for being a Half-Spirit like her, she highly doubts it since she would immediately notice if he were.

In the meantime, Pearl could only sigh as she realized that Vale still had plenty of Spells in his body.

'Just how many Spells does this guy have? I've already seen him cast more than 12 Spells. Isn't this cheating?' She mused.

Whoosh~

The Ember Spirit that had appeared exuded an otherworldly presence. Its form evokes the mesmerizing dance of flickering flames, with hints of gold and crimson swirling within its core.

Furthermore, it seemed to be delighted as soon as it saw the Cursed Flame that Magnus created.

"Great! Create a path for them. I know you can do it." Vale didn't hesitate as he immediately commanded the Ember Spirit to confront the Cursed Flame and create a path for his companions to escape and rescue Lisa and Chad.

The Ember Spirit doesn't seem to be capable of speech, but it was able to create a sound as it followed Vale's command.

"Gruu~"

Chapter 584 Cursed Flame

Vale didn't bother leveling up the Ember Spirit as he was thinking that he'd just Fuse it to other Spells and waste its mastery.

Even if he had to increase its mastery for its Fusion, he wanted to ensure it wouldn't be too much. After all, not every Spell Fusion was like Moonlight Specter, which requires Advanced Realm Mastery.

Most of them don't even require any level of mastery at all!

Nevertheless, Vale didn't bother to increase the Ember Spirit's level since it only has to deal with Cursed Flame.

Whoosh~

The Ember Spirit observed the Cursed Flame for a fleeting moment before it sprang into action.

With a graceful wave of its hand, it began to dance in mid-air, its movements resembling an intricate ritual. As it swayed and twirled, radiant embers emerged from its form, weaving a mesmerizing pattern that seemed to draw the Cursed Flame into a meticulously crafted path.

Just like Vale's orders, it was trying to create a path!

Each fluid motion of the Ember Spirit brought forth a trail of shimmering embers, which wove and swirled in a hypnotic display. It then started guiding the malevolent black flames to part and create a passage for Pearl and Faith.

'As expected of the embodiment of Fire... Even the Cursed Flame can only obey its command... This is really intriguing.' Faith mused as she shifted her gaze to Vale.

'Even if Vale can practice several Arcane Arts, he still has to complete the Elemental Baptism to record the Elemental Spell Models. When did he have the time to conduct the Baptism?'

Faith couldn't help but wonder as she was also practicing different Arcane Arts.

She knew very well about the challenges of having multiple Spells from different paths since they would have plenty of requirements like the Baptism or the energy conversion to Elemental Energy to use Elemental Spells. After all, Dark Energy could not be used for Elemental Arts.

"Let's go!" Pearl suddenly spoke, interrupting her random thoughts.

"I'm coming!" Faith muttered as she also started moving. To be honest, she was thinking of just using a defensive spell to bypass the Cursed Flame a few moments ago.

However, as she passed through, she realized that the Cursed Flame could potentially heavily injure her if not for the Ember Spirit's assistance.

The black Cursed Flame had actually damaged her clothes and mystical artifacts even without making contact with it!

"An Ember Spirit?!" Magnus was shocked after seeing the small fire spirit that Vale had summoned.

Even if Magnus was extremely talented, as he could practice any Arcane Path, he was unable to complete the Spell Model of the Ember Spirit. It was because he didn't have the elemental affinity he needed to complete it.

'I have to kill it!'

Magnus knew the threat it could pose against his Cursed Flame. He had to kill it while it was still busy trying to control the Cursed Flame.

Magnus opened his Grimoire and was about to summon a creature that could help him fight against the Ember Spirit.

Yet Vale was swift to counter this interference.

Before Magnus could even summon a creature, Vale summoned two Shadow Soldiers from Magnus' own shadow, revealing a surprising mastery over both Elemental and Dark Arts.

"Dual Path Practitioner? You have an interesting ability, young man. So you can use both Elemental Arts and Dark Arts. Then, allow me to experience your Elemental and Dark Arts..." Magnus remarked as he kept his Grimoire and suppressed the Shadow Soldiers with his Dark Arts, the Spectral Hands.

Magnus's competitive spirit surged as he also decided to confront Vale using one of his Dark Spells...

The Spectral Hands then held the Shadow Soldiers tightly, and he looked at Vale with a satisfied smile.

"These Shadow Soldiers are a waste of Spell Light..." Magnus muttered before he triggered his Alchemy Spell.

Cursed Flame!

With a swift and purposeful display of power, he effortlessly destroyed the Shadow Soldiers that Vale had conjured, relying on the might of his Spectral Hands and the engulfing Cursed Flame.

"Those Shadow Soldiers are only a bit resilient... They must be at the Advanced Realm to endure 10 seconds in my flame..." Magnus commented, although he wasn't worried.

He was only a little surprised by their tenacity, having initially anticipated their swift demise within 3 or 4 seconds of exposure to the Cursed Flame.

Nevertheless, he knew that he still had better mastery and a set of Spells.

"You look like you're already celebrating..."

Vale couldn't help but chuckle at Magnus's assessment as he directed the Ember Spirit to take command of the Cursed Flame, enveloping him and redirecting it towards Magnus. With Faith and Pearl already departed, Vale was prepared to unleash his full capabilities.

"Hmph! That's my Alchemy Spell! Do you think you can wield it against me?!" Magnus retorted, summoning another surge of Cursed Flame and absorbing the Flame under the Spirit's control.

Puff~

He had dealt with it quite effortlessly.

However, unbeknownst to Magnus, Vale's keen perception, thanks to his Dragon's True Sight, had already pinpointed the old Arcanist's vulnerabilities.

Vale found three luminous points akin to cores or energy points. They glowed upon Magnus's forehead, chest, and abdomen, revealing potential weaknesses awaiting exploitation.

'The only problem is that he's wearing an armor that's probably a Royal Rank.' Vale mused as he realized what to do.

"Well, since you're adorned with numerous protective items... I have no choice but to make it easy with this Spell."

Shadow Mutilation!

The Spell swiftly homed in on its target—Magnus.

"Mhmm? What have you done? Is this a curse?" Magnus inquired, sensing the impact of the Spell, which managed to bypass his passive defensive artifacts due to its non-threatening nature and unprecedented speed.

He couldn't identify what it was, but it didn't seem to hurt him at all. He also couldn't feel the curse if it was.

Vale, however, had no inclination to provide an explanation to Magnus.

Instead, he summoned additional Shadow Soldiers to divert Magnus's attention as he focused on targeting Magnus's shadow.

With a deft activation of his Meridian Access, he enveloped his form in an encompassing Aura, fortifying his body...

"You haven't learned! These Shadow Soldiers are nothing against my Cursed Flame!" Magnus shouted as he summoned black flames from both of his hands.

Chapter 585 Failures

As the dozen Shadow Soldiers engaged Magnus, Vale seized the opportunity to get closer to the old man's shadow, setting his plan into motion.

"Cursed Flame!" Magnus exclaimed.

He then pressed his hands together, and soon, the black flames coalesced and began swirling, eventually expanding to engulf all of the Shadow Soldiers at once.

Boom!

The sheer force behind the strike shattered the castle's windows, leaving a visible crack on the pillars and walls.

Magnus was going all out!

However, to Magnus's surprise, the Shadow Soldiers endured for more than 10 seconds, demonstrating remarkable resilience.

They seemed protected by an unknown force he couldn't identify.

Nevertheless, it only delayed the inevitable. The Shadow Soldiers perished after some time.

Then, at the same time, Magnus's Cursed Flame Spell duration had also ended, rendering him unable to utilize the Spell for a period of time.

Adapting swiftly, Magnus decided to employ a different Alchemy Art. His strongest Fire-Related Spell was actually the Cursed Flame Spell. Now that he couldn't use it, he had to use another Spell that would work well against Vale.

"Incinerator's Flame!" Magnus muttered as blue flame started accumulating in his right fist.

Although not as potent as the Cursed Flame, this fiery manifestation possessed the unique ability to dispel Dark Arts' hexes, curses, and even necromantic spells.

This should be a good counter against a Dark Practitioner like Vale.

However, as Magnus invoked the Incinerator's Flame, he was suddenly wracked by a sharp pain in his abdomen.

"Ugh..." Magnus grunted as he felt a person close to him.

To his astonishment, Vale was already standing right beside him.

"You!" Magnus exclaimed, perturbed by his failure to detect Vale's presence.

'He's too close to me, but my Magic Zone didn't notice him! What was that Spell?!'

Unaware of what had transpired, Magnus felt his Energy Flow disrupted, causing the premature cessation of the Incinerator's Flame.

Bam!

The Incinerator's Flame was forcefully canceled, so it created a backlash, and his hand was burned. Luckily, he had gloves on his hand, which lessened the injury he sustained.

Then, Magnus swiftly reacted. He distanced himself by leaping back, and as soon as he did this, he checked his abdomen only to find no discernible evidence of a weapon or dagger piercing his armor. His defensive artifacts remained intact and operational.

"How?!" Magnus exclaimed in disbelief, unsure how he got an internal injury when his opponent didn't even pierce through his defenses!

Vale grinned as he observed Magnus's perplexity in the strangeness of his attack.

As expected, the Shadow Mutilation would surprise anyone... This Celestial Art was simply too unusual and could not be defended easily.

'We're just starting.' Vale silently thought. Well, he still felt a bit unhappy even with such a good result.

After all, his intention was to incapacitate Magnus with that precise maneuver, but regrettably, the Shadow Mutilation Spell didn't last as long as he expected.

He had only managed to inflict a single strike upon Magnus's shadow before the Spell abruptly dissipated. Evidently, Magnus's formidable Artifacts significantly shortened the Spell's duration. It seemed that if his mastery of the Shadow Mutilation had been lower, it might not have connected with Magnus at all.

Determined not to allow Magnus the opportunity to recover, Vale pursued him immediately.

'This is an opportunity... I can't waste it.'

The repercussions of Magnus's forceful dispelling of the Incinerator's Flame were likely to linger. Utilizing his Lightspeed Spell and Nature's Guise, Vale swiftly caught up to Magnus once more, evading detection.

The Nature's Guise Spell that he got from the Druids or Artificial Humans was actually incredibly good. This Spell was like an invisibility cloak, but it wouldn't last long if he wasn't close to nature, specifically trees.

Nevertheless, Vale could still use it for five seconds if no trees were around.

As soon as Vale got closer, he immediately reached out his hand and grabbed Magnus' shoulder.

[Living Half-Spirit has been discovered. Would you like to start the extraction?]

'Yes!'

[Extraction Failed.]

[Extraction Failed.]

[Extraction Failed.]

"What?" Vale was shocked at the unexpected result.

He didn't have the time to be surprised by the fact that Magnus was actually a Half-Spirit.

He couldn't help but feel at a loss after seeing three failures consecutively.

This had never happened before. This message would only normally appear if the target had been extracted a lot already. However, that was obviously not the case with Magnus.

"Get off me!"

Magnus shouted as he burst out with a fiery aura...

It appears that his main Arcane Arts was still the Alchemy Art. This would certainly provide a higher control over flames, but in the end, it wasn't as terrifying as Vale thought.

He easily moved away, but he didn't plan to end his assault here.

Vale decided to surprise Magnus!

As he fully activated his Meridian Access, he burst with Aura, exceeding the pressure that Magnus was emitting.

This time, there was no way for Magnus to dismiss the Aura he had felt.

"You're a Combat Arts practitioner... So I didn't make a mistake when I felt it a while ago." Magnus muttered as he pulled out his Grimoire.

It wasn't to summon a familiar to block Vale's incoming fist!

Bam!

The Grimoire and Vale's Gorilla Punch collided and created a small shockwave in the area.

Magnus stepped back a couple of times because of the impact, but it wasn't enough to defeat him.

"Haha! Good punch! However, you still lack experience!" Magnus shouted as his eyes turned red.

He successfully activated a Spell during this time!

Vale didn't seem to notice this as he pounced on Magnus without any care...

"Die!" Magnus shouted, expecting his eyes to release a Deathly Light.

It was one of his strongest Dark Spells, and he felt it would be a good way to end his opponent's life.

However, to his surprise, nothing happened.

Vale continued on his pounce and held him by his throat!

"Uck! H-how?!" Magnus was shocked as he struggled to remove Vale's hand.

'It's Spell Dispersion...' Vale smirked and answered in his mind.

Then, he continued with his Extraction, but this time, he didn't use the Auto Extraction and aimed at Magnus's Spell, the Cursed Flame.

Chapter 586 Marked

[Living Half-Spirit has been discovered. Would you like to start the extraction?]

'Yes!'

[Extraction Successful. Complete Cursed Flame Spell Model

Complete Spell Light +1

Energy +10]

"As expected, I need a concentrated Extraction to make it work. But it's not enough... I need more." Vale muttered as he pulled away to dodge Magnus' attack.

It was Earth Spear that tried piercing him from his feet.

Although he was concentrating on his Extraction, his Dragon's True Sight was still active, and he was able to sense the flowing Arcane Energy throughout the surroundings.

Vale's response to his attack surprised Magnus himself. He looked at Vale with a hint of confusion while bolstering his defense with a couple of Defensive Spells. They were Iron Body Spell and Toxic Fume Spell...

They were a Knight Spell and an Alchemy Spell. This time, Magnus planned to use all the spells he knew to kill Vale.

"Hey, you could've ended my life just now..." Magnus said as he held his throat, which Vale had previously grabbed.

'Did he attack my Spell Lights? He only destroyed my Spell Model... Is he planning to destroy all my Spells?' He mused.

Vale smirked at this and taunted him even more.

"I'm not done with you yet. My friend asked me to torture you, so I won't be ending your life that easily.

"What did you say?!" Magnus roared as he felt insulted by that. Although he knew that he was being taunted, he couldn't help but feel angry since no one had dared to disrespect him like that for a very long time.

"That was your only chance to kill me!" Magnus said as he prepared to cast another spell.

However, the moment he tried to cast his Beast Arts to borrow the power of a Fierce Tiger, he felt his connection to his Spell vanished.

"Anti-Magic?!" Magnus' eyes widened as he finally realized what was going on.

Although it felt different from the Anti-Magic he had seen before, the principle seemed the same: it could destroy the gathered Arcane Energy forming the Spell.

This time, it was Vale who was surprised after seeing how Magnus recognized the Spell so quickly.

"You seemed knowledgeable... Who are you? Why did you capture our friend?" Vale asked as he looked at the old man curiously.

This man was living in a castle far away from the civilization. He seemed to be doing some important research here where he needed Chad and Lisa's help in the Alchemy Laboratory.

Furthermore, this person knew several Arcane Spells, which was still quite impressive even though he was Half-Spirit.

"I don't think I need to explain that to you. You will be dying here alongside your friends!" Magnus said as he pulled out his Grimoire.

In the meantime, Vale decided to check his Attribute Panel... He suddenly had an idea of what to do with this person.

With a sigh, he leveled up his Slave Mark Spell. It was one of the Spells he got from the Vampire in the previous castle he had visited.

It was currently Level 0 since he wasn't planning to use it in the first place. At most, he was thinking of fusing it with other Spells.

However, this stubborn old man was getting on his nerves. He was also quite talented and seemed to know a lot about the Arcane Arts.

[Consume 8 energy points to improve Slave Mark?]

'Yes..'

[Consume 16 energy points to improve Slave Mark?]

[Consume 32 energy points to improve Slave Mark?]

...

[Consume 512 energy points to improve Slave Mark?]

'Yes...'

Vale made a quick upgrade on his Slave Mark Spell and spent a total of 1,016 Energy Points to reach Level 7 or its Advanced Realm.

He felt that he had to do this much if he wanted to control this Half-Spirit. Of course, he still had to weaken the man's mental defense to ensure that his Slave Mark Spell would work seamlessly.

Then, without any more hesitation, he confronted Magnus...

He didn't want to use any Spells that could result in too much destruction since he felt this castle had many secrets.

With this in mind, he found himself in a limited option.

'Let's try it one more time...' Vale thought as he activated three Spells.

Nature's Guise...

It allowed him to become invisible for only 5 seconds since no trees were around. Then he followed up with Lightspeed Spell to boost his speed, and lastly, it was his Fusion Spell, Chain of Souls!

Clank... Clank. Clank...

Several chains suddenly appeared beside the Magnus. It seemed threatening, but it wasn't enough to stop him.

"A Fusion Spell! Not bad!" Magnus remarked as he triggered his Beast Art!

"Blazing Falcon..."

The moment he said this, his whole body started burning and kept the chains at bay! Furthermore, his eyes turned red, and he seemed to see through everything in his surroundings!

"So you're aiming at my back! What a coward!"

This time, he was able to see Vale's movement even though he should still be invisible!

"Not that it matters!" Vale replied as he canceled his Nature's Guise and Chain of Souls...

He didn't suffer any backlash on this move since he already had an Incorruptible Body. His Physique could nullify any weak backlash on his Spell Casting.

As soon as he did this, he cast his Spell Dispersion once again!

"That won't work on me anymore!" Magnus shouted as a potion appeared in his hand.

Crash!

He crashed it in his hand, and a fog appeared around him. It seemed to nullify the effect of his Spell Dispersion!

'So you're relying on that potion...' Vale smirked as he decided to fight in close combat!

Magnus didn't expect this as Vale used his Shadowblade Footwork and aimed at Magnus' abdomen!

Boom!

Vale made sure not to suppress his Half-Celestial Physique and his Power Strands on that punch!

The punch's brute force destroys the Blazing Falcon and Magnus' defensive magic!

Darkness Manipulation!

With this Spell clutching on Magnus, Vale continued his Extraction. This time, he made sure to target Magnus' Energy to weaken him quickly!

[Extraction Successful. Energy +800]

[Extraction Successful. Energy +500]

After this, Vale used the Spell he had just upgraded...

Slave Mark!

Chapter 587 New Magnus

Instead of killing this Half-Spirit, Vale wanted to use his knowledge to help him in his journey. After all, this person might know how to deal with the Time Manipulators or Demonic Saints of the Abyss Realm.

"You!" Magnus' eyes widened as he realized what kind of Spell was being used on him.

He had also learned a few Psychic Arts and could say that this Arcane Art was the most evil among the 12 Arcane Paths.

This was an Arcane Path that flagrantly disregarded moral virtue, capable of subjugating the will of its targets! It exuded an unmistakable malevolence.

Of course, Magnus also had a way to protect his mind on this occasion. However, his opponent seemed to have sucked his energy making him unable to cast the Mind Protection spell that he needed!

He wasn't sure how his opponent did it, but the energy he had from all of the cores was drained in an instant!

'If I know he can drain someone's energy without an Artifact, I can--'

Magnus' ruminations were abruptly cut short as Vale's Slave Mark Spell took hold of his consciousness.

"Is it done?"

As soon as Magnus calmed down and his eyes seemed to turn blank, Vale felt that the Slave Mark Spell had done its job.

However, he also realized that the Slave Mark didn't actually last for long. It could only last a month, even with his Advanced Realm Mastery. He could only learn this after the Spell sent feedback to him through the Spell Model.

'I guess that's already enough...' Vale mused, feeling that 30 days was more than enough to get everything he needed from this person.

The duration didn't seem that bad since, if he needed more Time; he only had to cast this Spell once a month to make up for it.

Furthermore, he could do this repeatedly to up to 30 targets!

In short, he doesn't have to spend 7,168 Energy Points to advance his Slave Mark Spell into the Perfect Realm to make this old Half-Spirit loyal to him Forever.

"Tell me your name... I mean, tell me something about you." Vale said as he faced the old Half-Spirit.

"I've used many names for hundreds of years, Master. I've been using the name Magnus for the past 30 years. You might have noticed already, but I'm a Half-Human and Half-Spirit. I have no recollection of my origin, so I can't tell you how I came here. I can practice all Arcane Arts, but I focus mainly on Alchemy Arts and Beast Arts..."

Magnus answered, which made Vale happy. Magnus' answer was quite informative and made it a lot faster for him since he no longer had to ask continuously.

"Alchemy and Beast Arts, huh... This is getting interesting." Vale muttered as an idea came to his mind.

"Tell me all the Spells you have!"

"Yes, Master. I will start with Dark Arts... I have recorded Spectral Hands, Blind Eye's Curse..."

Magnus continued listing all the Spells he had recorded, and Vale found 8 of them very enticing.

Two of them were Holy Arts Spells. They were Holy Smite and the Sacred Blessing Spells.

These two Spells would perfect his disguise as Clovis if he had decided to do so. It was a pity that Magnus hadn't learned any Healing Spell since the Churches were extremely strict about it, and he couldn't even glance at its Spell Model.

Nevertheless, these two Spells were extremely useful to him.

Then, the other six spells that caught Vale's interest were Alchemy Art's Cursed Flame, Rune Art's Rune Creation, and Protection Rune.

The other three were Mystic Art's Reaper Scythe, and Beast Arts' Feral Fury and Bear's Strength.

The Cursed Flame's power was unquestionable. Magnus was simply too unlucky that he had to face Vale in a battle where he also couldn't use his beloved Beasts outside the castle.

As for the Rune Arts, Vale wanted to learn how to create runes since creating Runic Weapons seemed more reliable than making Talisman.

"This Reaper Scythe is also amazing... Its only downside is that it can't be used unless the target has a very low vitality than the caster." Vale smiled after learning this from Magnus.

After all, if there was one thing he was confident in, it was certainly his attributes that were higher than even the First-Class and Master-Class Arcanists!

As for the reason he was interested in the two Beast Arts, it was obviously because he was planning to fuse them with his Gorilla Punch or other Spells that require some physical prowess.

He believed that these two Spells would bring him a decent Fusion Spell that would showcase his incredibly high Power Strands at the moment.

Soon, Vale took action and Extracted all these spells from Magnus.

Vale also ensured that Magnus still possessed the Spells he needed to work as an Alchemist or a Magic Craftsman.

He made sure not to take too much of his attributes and energy.

After all, he was planning to make this person work for him.

No matter what, Magnus had lived for centuries, and his creations should be incredible.

"Right... Do you know anything about the Time Manipulators and Demonic Saints?" Vale asked while waiting for Pearl and the others.

Since Magnus was no longer controlling the Formation Circles, Vale could now use his Magic Zone to its limit and tell that Lisa and Chad were already being rescued.

"Time Manipulators are from a different realm. However, they have passed down their techniques to Mystic Arts Practitioners who had obtained a certain Arcana's blessing. I'm unaware of which Arcana it is, but I heard that they needed the Divinity of Immortals to use it... Alas, I have never crossed paths with them and have only gleaned these rumors from an entity in another realm..."

Vale's eyes lit up as his words aligned with the information he heard from Constance.

However, the revelation that Mystic Arts Practitioners could potentially transition into Time Manipulators through the influence of a specific Arcana caught him off guard.

Chapter 588 Return or Not

'An Arcana that converts Mystic Arts Practitioners into Time Manipulators through its blessing... That sounds like a powerful Arcana.' Vale mused as he turned his attention back to Magnus, anticipating that there was more to be divulged.

"I'm aware of the existence of Demon Saints from the Abyss Realm... I've never seen them alive, but through my research, I have some grasp of their capabilities." Magnus calmly spoke.

"What do you mean? Were you able to research them? How?" Vale asked in astonishment.

"I have their remains concealed within the castle... The remote location of my castle was chosen purposefully, as I stumbled upon a burial ground housing these entities alongside the bodies of Immortals." Magnus answered, which surprised Vale even more.

To be precise, Vale was not merely surprised; he was exhilarated. The unanticipated revelation that the castle harbored the remains of both Immortals and Demon Saints stirred a profound sense of excitement within him.

"That's amazing... I'll be visiting that burial ground later. I assumed you chose this place because of the creatures you control outside. So it's all because of the corpses." Vale muttered in realization.

Magnus then looked at Vale and gently nodded.

"That's also one of the reasons, Master. The creatures that I'm controlling outside were trained to deal with Demons. Once the Abyss Realm fully opens up, demon creatures will start invading this Realm, and I'm planning to use this castle to avoid their detection..."

"What?"

Vale's eyes widened after hearing this.

It was the same for the others who had just arrived.

"What? The Abyss Realm will invade us?" Chad asked as he approached Vale. He was initially planning to run and hug his friend, but Magnus' words stunned him. He didn't even bother to question why Vale was comfortably chatting with the enemy.

Behind him were Lisa, Pearl, and Faith, who also seemed interested in the topic they were discussing.

Of course, Vale knew that Pearl was also somewhat aware of this matter, but because she had been trapped in the Mystic Soul Tower for a very long time, her information wasn't as informative as Magnus.

"It seems that's the case, Chad. It's great to see you again." Vale said as he also looked at Lisa and gave a gentle nod.

"We were already lucky that we didn't die from that teleportation circle's malfunction. I heard from this Sir that we could've died instead during that time." Chad replied, referring to Magnus' words before.

"Ahem... Can we listen to that matter about the Abyss Realm's invasion, Vale? Right, thank you for coming to rescue us..." Lisa said that she really thought that she'd have to serve Magnus for years before being able to leave this place.

"Of course. I also want to hear more about it." Vale said as he allowed Magnus to discuss what he knew about the incoming invasion.

After almost an hour of discussion, Vale's group realized that they were approaching a bigger war. A war that will involve all nations and not just Arcane Arts Factions.

Apparently, two or three years from now, the Abyss Realm was prophesied to clash with their Human Realm.

This was unavoidable and had been predicted to happen hundreds of years ago already. However, recent divinations by Seers led them to believe that this catastrophe was about to happen in a few years' time.

With this in mind, Magnus decided to build his own fortress to avoid trouble. This may sound cowardly, but even with his strength and knowledge, he had no way of fighting against the Forces of the Abyss. He believed that even if the 12 Factions and all nations would work together, there would still be plenty of casualties.

In the end, he decided not to side with any organizations and kept himself hidden in this place.

Furthermore, he believed that the demons would target crowded areas or places to hunt humans. Living in isolation would guarantee him that he wouldn't be attacked unless they somehow found this hidden place.

"I don't think that it's cowardly... I'd probably do the same if I were you." Vale muttered softly, but everyone heard him.

Of course, they have varying opinions on this matter since Chad had a Bulmung Family waiting for him.

As for Lisa, she somehow wanted to be with the Dark Arts Faction if the invasion happened since she believed that Lesley would be there as well.

As for Faith and Pearl, they don't really have a place to return to, so they can agree to Vale a little.

'If there's really a war... I can probably stay with Vale or return to the safety of my Mystic Soul Tower...' Pearl thought as she imagined what she'd do once the demons started crawling out of the cracks that lead to the Abyss.

After a brief pause, Vale fell silent. Eventually, he composed himself and divulged his next plans to the group.

"Ahem... I hypnotized Magnus, so he's currently following my orders. For now, I'm planning to bolster the defenses of this castle and use it for myself. I'm thinking of using the arrangements that Magnus had prepared for many years." Vale said as he looked at their reaction for a moment.

Then, he continued. "Furthermore, there are plenty of treasures in this place, and I'm planning to use them to my advantage. Magnus is an Alchemist and a Magic Craftsman, so you can look forward to his collection. Chad, Lisa, and Miss Faith, are you planning to return to the Dark Arts Faction?"

Vale asked, stunning the three for a moment. They didn't expect such a question the moment they thought that they were about to return.

Indeed, ever since they arrived here, Chad and Lisa just wanted to return to the Dark Arts Faction. This was what they wanted the whole time during their captivity.

As for Faith, she just wanted to fulfill her mission, and that was to bring the lost students back to the Faction.

After a few moments, Faith looked at Chad and Lisa.

"If you wish to rejoin the Faction and resume your studies or adhere to any other arrangements in that place, I will facilitate your return," she assured them.

Chapter 589 Vent

Chad and Lisa exchanged glances, unable to provide an immediate response. The looming threat of invasion weighed heavily on their minds, causing them to consider a potential return to the Faction in order to bolster their strength.

They were still in their fourth year and had to study a lot before they could become useful in war. They haven't even learned the Spell Fusion or even the Dark Arcane Talisman Crafting.

'Should I just return and hope that I get to continue my studies?' Lisa pondered as she considered her options.

'If Vale had really hypnotized Magnus, then perhaps we can learn from him instead?' Chad mused as he shifted his gaze to Magnus.

In the end, their apprehension stemmed from the ongoing conflict between the Dark Arts Faction and the Allied forces of the Holy Arts Faction, Mystic Arts Faction, Transformation Arts Faction, and others.

They questioned whether a return to the Faction would truly entail a focus on their studies or if they would be conscripted as mere pawns in the war—a concern that plagued their thoughts.

'I don't want to be cannon fodder.'

This was what was in Lisa's and Chad's minds.

Ultimately, the two of them resolved to seek further clarity by posing a series of questions.

"Could you enlighten us on the current state of the war involving our Faction?" inquired Chad.

In response, Faith nodded and provided an update.

"The Holy Arts Faction and its allies have been targeting the smaller bases of the Dark Arts Faction, as well as rogue Dark Mages. Their aim is to showcase the consequences of practicing Dark Arts to the public. However, I anticipate that within the next few months, they will launch a large-scale offensive against the Dark Arts Faction. If my guess is right, their initial target is likely to be the Necromancer Branch, specifically the Undead Tower, given its proximity to the Mystic Arts Faction."

"The Undead Tower? I heard there are three Gold-Rank Necromancers there. The three of them can work together and summon Doom Knights if I'm not mistaken. Are they that confident?" Chad asked as he felt that the Undead Tower was the most protected territory of the Dark Arts Faction.

"They must be confident. After all, they have a decade to prepare." Faith answered.

Upon hearing this, Chad and Lisa were immediately filled with concern, realizing that they were ill-prepared to partake in such a significant conflict.

"Manager Faith, do you believe it would be advisable for us to remain here?" inquired Lisa.

Faith paused for a moment, carefully considering Lisa's inquiry.

Following a brief period of contemplation, she responded. "I will seek the Vice Headmaster's guidance on this matter. Given that Headmaster Jean has passed away... If the Vice Headmaster assures you that your focus will be solely on your studies without involvement in the war, then I can recommend that you continue your education there and deepen your understanding of your chosen path. However, if you are expected to engage in combat, I advise that you remain here if you value your lives. We should receive a response within a day, so the wait won't be lengthy."

Lisa's eyes brightened upon hearing this, but she immediately paused as she processed what Faith just said.

"Headmaster Jean died?!" Lisa and Chad exclaimed in unison.

Vale, on the other hand, remained calm as he already heard this from Faith while they were on the way to this castle.

"Yes... The biggest indication was the fact that your shadow has returned. You must've felt it before." Faith explained.

Chad took a deep breath as he knew what Faith was talking about. A few weeks ago, while he was working in the Alchemy Laboratory on a potion he didn't even know about, he suddenly felt a refreshing sensation like he was finally complete. Furthermore, he started to feel that some of his confidence in the Dark Arts had somehow changed.

He didn't mind it then, as he believed that he had felt different since Magnus captured him.

"So it was like that. May I ask if his body was already cremated?" Chad asked.

Faith shook her head and answered.

"We don't know... The last news I heard was that they were still looking for the Headmaster's body. Well, there's probably no point in searching for him since the Holy Arts Faction probably destroyed his body or, if not, it was already possessed by an Evil Spirit."

"What? Is it possible that Headmaster Jean was still alive and just released the shadow to fake his death?" Lisa asked.

"You're thinking too much, Lisa... In any case, I'm going to send a message to the Vice Headmaster now. Is that alright?"

"Ah! Yes, we'll proceed with that plan!" Lisa and Chad declared in unison.

This time, Vale joined in the conversation.

"Excellent. While you await the response, I intend to explore this castle further, but my stomach is signaling its hunger. Magnus, do we have provisions for a meal here?" Vale inquired.

"Yes... My controlled beasts can always procure fresh meat, vegetables, and fruits from the forest. Some of them are cultivated by my summons, but I still primarily rely on foraging in the forest," Magnus replied.

With the matter settled, the group made their way to the kitchen, where Magnus "volunteered" to prepare a meal for them.

Chad couldn't help but grin from ear to ear during this meal as he was able to order Magnus around. It felt quite refreshing for him and lessened the grudge he was keeping in his heart.

It was the same for Lisa, who repeatedly ordered Magnus to bring her food.

Vale smiled as he observed the situation, recognizing that they were simply venting their frustration. Well, Magnus was already fortunate to only be following their commands.

"Ahh... Vale, you're not going to free him later, right? If you have such plans, can you erase his memories?" Chad suddenly asked as he recalled that most hypnotism doesn't last long.

There are also cases where they could remember what they've done during the hypnotism.

Lisa also ceased giving orders to Magnus, awaiting Vale's response.

"Don't worry... The hypnosis I've employed on him is quite potent," reassured Vale with a smile, putting the two at ease.

Chapter 590 Mausoleum

After their satisfying meal, they unanimously agreed to explore the enigmatic depths of the castle.

Magnus had graciously lifted all the restrictions he had previously made, allowing everyone to roam freely within the confines of the ancient castle.

Pearl, drawn by the allure of knowledge, set her sights on the library. According to Magnus, it houses a wealth of tomes on alchemy and artifact crafting.

Even Faith, captivated by the prospect, expressed her keen interest in delving into the secrets concealed within the pages.

However, in the end, she decided to visit it at a later time.

"I'm curious about the beasts trained to sense and hunt the Demons. I feel compelled to meet them... Can you help me with that, Magnus?" Faith declared, her eyes alight with a hint of expectation.

Needless to say, Magnus could only agree to their request as he commanded his Beasts to treat Faith well.

Meanwhile, Lisa was eager to continue her pursuit of alchemical mastery.

She made her way back to the Alchemy Room.

Although Magnus had been ordering them around and limiting their freedom, it didn't change the fact that they'd learned a lot in the Alchemy Field. Thanks to the hands-on experience he provided, their understanding of alchemy was enriched.

Lisa was particularly intrigued by potions such as Focused Vision, Paralyzing, Arcane Lock, Ironskin, and Nightmare... If possible, she wanted to master these potions up until she could make a Tier 2 or even Tier 3 of them.

"The Arcane Lock potion that blocks the Arcanist's Arcane Energy seemed very malevolent, yet undeniably practical... I want to at least master this potion." Lisa mused, her thoughts drifting to the intricate art of potion-making.

Chad, with a single-minded purpose, ventured to the Training Ground of the castle, where the spiritual energy was said to be conducive to further strengthening his Ghost King Body.

The prospect of honing his abilities within the castle's nurturing aura spurred him forward.

'This castle is leaking some incredible ghostly energy... It's even better than the ones in the Academy. I need to cherish this moment.' Chad mused as he knew that he couldn't waste this opportunity.

He will nurture his Dark Spells here!

Lastly, Vale was led by Magnus to visit the burial grounds of the Demon Saints and Immortals concealed beneath the castle.

As Vale crossed the threshold into the concealed mausoleum, a profound sense of reverence washed over him.

'What's this feeling? Overflowing Divinity and Malevolence? What kind of combination is this?!' Vale thought in a bated breath. He didn't expect to be welcomed by such a profound sensation.

Thud...

As he entered the mausoleum, he also felt the air grow heavy. A hushed stillness enveloped the chamber as if time itself had halted within the confines of the sacred space.

'It looks like Magnus is taking care of this place seriously.' Vale commented in his mind.

The mausoleum stretched out before him, bathed in a soft, ethereal glow that emanated from the ancient stone walls.

The dozen flickering torchlights cast dancing shadows across the chamber and illuminated the intricate carvings adorning the pillars that stood throughout the hall.

The hallowed ground was adorned with rows of imposing tombs.

The stone coffins, weathered by the passage of time, bore cryptic runes and intricate sigils, hinting at the otherworldly power that lay dormant within.

'Twelve opened coffins... Eight unopened... Did Magnus fail to open those eight?' Vale mused as he felt confused as to why Magnus would leave these coffins unopened for so many years.

Anyway, he decided not to ask for now and continued with his investigation.

At this time, his Magic Zone was working to its limits, and his Dragon's True Sight was activated as well.

Step. Step...

Vale's footsteps echoed softly against the cool, polished marble floor as he ventured deeper into the heart of the mausoleum.

As Vale continued his reverent exploration, he felt an overwhelming sense of connection to the Divinity that was leaking throughout the chamber.

He couldn't help but think that if he decided to conduct a summoning ritual for his Grimoire here, he would probably summon an angel with this level of energy!

'Should I try?' Vale mused for a moment, but he immediately shook his head. If he really tried doing that, there might be an imbalance in the energy since the ritual would be taking the surrounding aura.

Nevertheless, the atmosphere stirred within him a profound respect for the Demonic Saints and Immortals.

No matter what, he would benefit from them later on, so he had to take care of the surroundings.

"Magnus, tell me about this place... Tell me what you've done and planned to do with the corpses of these beings." Vale asked as he finished looking around.

Magnus respectfully responded, "Master, I have assumed responsibility for this place to pursue a pursuit that befits any Arcanist of my stature—the pursuit of immortality. The Immortals are impervious to the ravages of time, and the Demon Saints share a similar nature. With their impeccably preserved bodies within this sanctuary, shielded from evil spirits, I am able to conduct unconstrained studies of their essence."

'Immortality?'

Acknowledging Magnus's explanation, Vale prompted further, "Fine... Tell me about your progress."

Perhaps he was still too young, so he hadn't considered aiming for "immortality" yet.

It wasn't in his mind at all. As a matter of fact, just a few months ago, he was simply thinking of his future job as a Dark Arcanist.

Anyway, Magnus didn't hesitate to answer as soon as he was asked.

"Through my research, I have discerned glimpses of the intricate rituals and esoteric arts that sustained their immortal essence..." Magnus then started explaining about the 'essence' that he had discovered.

"In my research, I have delved into the anatomical and metaphysical characteristics of the Immortals and Demon Saints. I have sought to comprehend the intricate mechanisms that sustain their longevity and resilience. Additionally, I have explored the potential utilization of their essence in the pursuit of immortality, examining the interplay between their spiritual energy and physical form."

It was different from Divinity, but it seemed more like the true core that both the Immortals and Demon Saints had.

It was quite an interesting topic, but it was also too complicated for Vale. In the end, he decided to live it at that.

This time, he wanted to know if it was fine to extract them...