

D. Extraction 71

Chapter 71 Music

"Hmm... Does any of you know why we have this class?" Professor Axel Seddon asked as he placed his cane to the side and leaned on the pulpit stand.

A few students raised their hands so he just randomly pointed to one and gestured for him to answer. It seems that he has no idea about their names but it's quite normal since it's only their first day.

"I think it's because we also need to prepare ourselves when we're out in society. We're no longer at war so we need time to socialize and maintain this peace. Learning Music and Arts might be helpful in doing so." Neil answered.

"Thank you... Are there any other answers?" The professor asked.

At this point, many of them started raising their hands so Professor Seddon pointed at a few people and allowed them to answer.

"I believe that this subject will also allow us to discover our talents in this field."

"Learning Music and Arts will teach us to understand the world around us so I think it's necessary to learn this subject even if we're studying the Dark Arts."

"It's good for recreational activities since it might give us peace of mind. I heard from my father that learning Dark Spells and some serious rituals had adverse effects. Perhaps, by using this entertainment, we'll be able to remain in control of our emotions."

Felicia, Reid, and Alvin answered.

"Good answers..."

The professor nodded in acknowledgment. However, he was still unsatisfied.

Then, Professor Seddon looked at Vale as he prompted him to answer.

Vale was already thinking of his answer even before he was called so he wasn't too nervous when he was randomly called.

"I think that the 'Music and Arts' subject that we will learn is also part of the Dark Arts so it's normal to learn them."

At this answer, Axel showed a smile and made a follow-up question. "Why do you think so?"

"I've read a few books. One of them is Cabbalistic Philosophy and Radical Omens. This book mentioned how old rituals use dances, music, stone engravings, and other forms of art in order to communicate with mysterious existences. Since we're in the Academy of Dark Arts, I just assumed that the Music or any Arts that we will learn is quite different from the ones we will learn outside the Academy."

Vale answered as his classmates were stunned for a moment.

"Cabbalistic Philosophy and Radical Omens? I also have that book but most of it was written in Oardic... Are you already fluent in Oardic?" Chad Bulmung asked in surprise.

"Eh? The ones I read were written in Soineti." Vale answered as he recalls the first book he picked up on the shelf of the laboratory before.

Although he already started learning Oardic over the past year, he wasn't fluent yet.

"Your family is better than I expected."

"Indeed..."

Chad and Aubrey muttered as they seem to have no access to the Soineti version of that book.

"Good... All of your answers are correct. This subject is indeed something that will help you all merge into society quite easily. The most important thing is that you'll also gain knowledge about various rituals that require Music and Arts." Professor Axel Seddon said as many of his students felt a bit surprised.

Most of them hadn't connected Music and Arts to the rituals made in the Darkness Arcane Path. They didn't think too much of it before aside from being a form of entertainment.

Some of them even started considering the Music Club as their option when joining a student club.

"Professor, I've never heard of a ritual related to Dark Arts that requires dancing... I've also never heard of anyone using it. Is this unpopular because it's inconvenient and not too useful compared to normal Dark Spells?" Dalton asked curiously. Although he has a toothache, he couldn't help but ignore it to satisfy his curiosity.

He seems to be hinting that he's uninterested in it unless it will be very useful in combat.

Professor Seddon didn't answer immediately and looked at his students.

"Are you all thinking about this?" He asked with a faint smile on his face.

"No, Professor. Although I haven't seen anyone use music or other forms of art to complete a Dark ritual, I've seen various churches use music, dances, and paintings to worship their gods. Now that I think about it, their actions may not be really useless. Perhaps it truly has an effect on the gods they're worshipping."

This time, it was Chad Bulmung who answered as he somehow connected this to the church. The other students also started thinking about it and they couldn't help but nod in agreement.

"Indeed... The churches have these rituals. However, I have never connected them as a form of arcane ritual. I thought it was only a form of tradition." Blair added as his family is actually connected to one of the churches.

Professor Axel Seddon was satisfied with their words as they are showing interest in this subject.

"The churches predominantly use musical rituals to connect to their gods aside from their normal prayers. We will go deeper into this topic later on so I can only say that the spirits connected to another realm like music..." He said mysteriously astounding everyone in the room.

"Ah? Is that real?"

"Spirit that is connected to another realm?"

"I've never heard of this before. This idea sounds great!"

"This isn't simply an idea. It's the truth..."

"This is why we're studying here in the first place. We don't know much about the world of mysticism."

"I wonder if that realm is the Deity's Realm? It sounds cool."

"Is it different from the Spirit World where Mennena originated?"

Various comments were heard as they discovered another new word today.

Vale felt really satisfied that he was able to attend the academy. After all, he believes that he'll learn a bunch of things here that he can never touch upon in normal society.

The class ended after Professor Seddon informed them what to expect in his subject for the whole academic year.

This made everyone excited and also nervous at the same time since this subject is actually more dangerous than any other in their current classes!

Chapter 72 Popularity

"Vale, I think that this subject will be more dangerous than Professor Harrison's class..." Chad commented as Professor Seddon left the classroom.

It's already 10 in the morning and they have 30 minutes break before the two hours class will start. Most of them are already preparing to go out of the classroom.

"I think so too... Based on his words, any mistake in music, dance, or any arts might attract a different existence. We have to pay attention especially if we're contacting a strange existence." Vale commented.

"Well, just make sure not to call for one if you're unsure. In any case, there should be plenty of alternatives that we aren't aware of as of yet." Aubrey commented.

"Let's go to the cafeteria... We only have 30 minutes break." Lisa said as she noticed that most of their classmates have already left. Although she's also quite interested in the topic, she was unable to follow them.

Everyone agree and the group of friends then went to the cafeteria at her suggestion.

The food is free unless they want to get the special meal and drinks that the Academy has prepared. The tray of food they got contained fried fish, an egg, a biscuit, and a large cup of tea.

Furthermore, Vale also noticed that there is a post about the scheduled food for later.

It was written that dinner would be fried fillets of sole, green peas, and grapes. Nevertheless, what caught his interest is that they can have tea time around three in the afternoon. The cafeteria will serve a cup of tea, a slice of an apple, and a pudding.

'I wonder how the academy is earning money.' Vale mused.

After all, the academy's tuition is only a one-time payment of a thousand zen. There was no way that this academy can continue to run if they have no other sources of income.

'Ahh... There's also a factory outside run by the Academy... I guess that's another source of income.' Vale thought as he ate his meal together with his group.

As he thought they would have a pleasant or uninterrupted meal, the students from other classes had also arrived.

It seems that their break time only has about 10 minutes of difference. Then, Vale's group including the others in Class 2 heard something interesting from the other first-year students.

"Can you see him? I heard he doesn't look impressive."

"Well, he's probably not handsome but with his Spirit Strand, I think even Maya would take an interest in him."

"Ugh... I just can't accept it. How could someone exceed the Spirit Strand of the Featherstar and Moontomb at the same age?"

"Sshh... He might be hearing you."

The students of Class 2 who were eating leisurely and chatting about their last subject looked at the students who had just arrived.

Most of them are in Class 1...

Since there are four cafeterias in the whole academy, some students may not come to this area so it was quite normal.

As for the other students in different Academic Years, they seem to have different break times so the place isn't crowded yet.

"I think we should go... I'm planning to return to our classroom now. I've finished eating anyway." Vale said as he felt that something might happen if he stays there.

It's not like he's afraid of something but he just felt uncomfortable if he was treated like an animal in a zoo.

Chad and the others agreed as they promptly finished eating their meals and stood up.

However, at this moment, another group of people arrived. It was Maya's group together with other students who seemed older than her.

Then, after looking at the emblem of their coat, they realized that three of them are third-year students! As expected of the beautiful student representative, she even found escorts from higher years.

At this point, there is also another group of students who had approached Neil's group. These students were from Class 3 and they seem to be friends with Neil.

"My friend, Neil... I heard that your class has someone who was better and stronger than Maya, is that true?" The young man asked. Although he probably doesn't have the intention to put Vale into

trouble, his choice of words immediately attracted everyone's attention including Maya and her escorts.

Neil was stunned for a moment as he felt that there was something wrong. However, he noticed that Maya was there and Vale was also not too far from him.

After some hesitations, he decided to answer while raising his voice a little bit.

"Ahem... Is that how the rumors were said? It wasn't like that at all. He simply has a higher Spirit Strand than Maya according to our Professor. It's not a big deal, right? After all, everyone has a different starting point. I'm sure that Maya will surpass him someday."

Neil calmly spoke as he wanted to please Maya by saying these words.

However, it actually backfired as he felt Maya's stinging gaze. It seems that she didn't like how he tried to comfort her.

"Cough... Cough... Let's not talk about that. Have you decided what Club you'll be joining?" Neil changed the topic immediately but his friends didn't take the hint and continued asking.

"Where's this guy? Is he the one beside you?... No? Did he not leave your classroom?"

"Just tell us his name then..."

They asked incessantly so Neil had no choice but to point at Vale's group.

Of course, Maya and her escorts noticed his action as they locked their eyes on Vale.

Their only choice was either him or Chad Bulmung but since Chad doesn't appear impressive, they immediately concluded that it was Vale who has already stood up and was about to leave.

Then, the others also noticed how Maya was looking at Vale so everyone in the cafeteria immediately recognized him.

"Is he the one with 25 Spirit Strands?"

"It seems so."

"Maya only has 18 Spirit Strands while this unknown guy has 7 more... I wonder which family is he from?"

They were all curious about Vale's identity so it wasn't that surprising...

Then, to everyone's surprise, Maya started walking in Vale's direction! It seems that she was about to confront him!

Chapter 73 Fox

Vale felt really uncomfortable as everyone was looking at him.

Luckily, his friends noticed this and they all decided to surround him as they headed toward the exit...

"Wait!"

At this point, Maya already called out so there was no way for them to ignore her or they would be seen as arrogant students.

Vale sighed inwardly as he looked at the approaching students.

"Is there anything we can help you with?" Aubrey asked as she stood in between the two. If Maya wanted to scold Vale for being better than her, Aubrey has many comebacks in her head to humiliate her.

Luckily, Maya didn't seem to be as arrogant as she thought. She seems calm like when they met her at the Assembly Hall.

"I was simply curious about your friend. He managed to get 25 Spirit Strands at the age of 14. Not even the elites of our family were capable of doing that." Maya said without any hint of sarcasm in her voice. She seem genuinely interested so Aubrey's excitement died down.

"Mhmm..." She observed Maya for a moment before glancing back at Vale who had a helpless smile on his face.

Vale nodded at Aubrey and replied to Maya...

"I was just lucky... Twenty-five Spirit Strands might even be my limit already so don't expect too much. In any case, we should hurry and return to our class." Vale said as they don't have a long break.

Before Maya can reply, he continued. "You should also use this time to have a break. It's nice meeting you, Student Representative Maya."

He then gestured that he was about to leave but it wouldn't be easy.

"Hey... Maya hasn't finished talking yet!" The third-year student behind Maya suddenly spoke as he felt that Vale was being disrespectful.

The other one also felt the same and added.

"It's impolite to leave just like that... I think you should attend etiquette lessons first. I can give you a recommendation."

The other students silently chuckled after hearing this but they were still continuing with what they were doing. Although they were listening, they didn't want to make it too obvious.

Aubrey wanted to defend Vale at this point but Maya glared at the two seniors before apologizing to Vale.

"It's not my intention to hold you here. I apologize for taking your time. Let's meet again some other time."

With that said Maya left the cafeteria as if she had forgotten to have a meal. The two third-year students didn't expect this development since they thought that Maya wanted to cause trouble to this student in Class 2.

They were even prepared to make it difficult for him to join any Student Club. Unfortunately, Maya's action discouraged them from going too far.

Without any other choice, they immediately followed Maya out of the Cafeteria.

'It's really hard to recruit this girl to our Club...' One of them thought as he looked at Maya's back.

In the meantime, Vale frowned at Maya's subtle action just now.

'She used a Dark Spell so openly? Is it not prohibited to use it here?' Vale thought as he still felt the remnant of Dark Energy that she subtly used a few moments ago.

Apparently, Maya tried inspecting his body just now! Although she failed in the end thanks to his Spell Dispersion, it was still a reckless move!

Luckily, as soon as he felt intimidated by the pressuring gaze of the third-year students just now, he immediately activated his Phantasm State to protect himself.

'Why did she do that?' Vale sighed inwardly as he wasn't sure how to expose Maya for doing that. In the first place, he can't prove that she tried inspecting his body with a particular spell.

It seems that he has to follow Lisa's advice to read the Academy Rules first.

'I'll check it later after class...' Vale thought as he left the cafeteria with his friends.

Back in the classroom, most of their classmates haven't returned yet since they still have 10 minutes or so...

They simply decided to chat about Maya's appearance a while ago to pass the time.

"I thought that she was really mad just now... I guess it was her first time knowing someone better than her." Lisa commented as she recall how Maya was looking at Vale intently.

"I think she has been eyeing you since we met her yesterday at the Assembly Hall..." Chad added.

"Ahhh, she was already into him since yesterday? How come I didn't know of that?" Aubrey asked in surprise. She looked at Vale with knitted brows.

"Chad was exaggerating. She only glanced at me for a brief moment when we were looking for a student club. He's thinking too much." Vale replied as he recalled yesterday's incident.

Click...

The door in the classroom opened as Neil's group finally returned.

Vale's group just ignored him as they decided to continue chatting. However, Neil suddenly approached them so they all glanced at him with questioning looks on their faces.

"Vale, I apologize for pointing you out a while ago. My friends keep asking me so I can't keep your identity a secret. In any case, they'll know of you sooner or later." Neil said with a very unusual gentle tone in his voice.

Vale looked at him in shock as he never expected Neil to even bother apologizing. He didn't really mind his actions since he was already expecting this to happen.

"I understand... Just don't exaggerate my achievement so I won't get caught into trouble by our seniors." Vale replied.

Although Neil's apology seems very forced as he was still trying to reason out, Vale couldn't be bothered about it and just accepted his apology.

"Hmph... He probably realized that you will be classmates for a long time so it should be better for him to side with you, Vale." Aubrey added in a whisper as Neil left for his seat.

Vale only smiled as he no longer bothered to discuss this matter.

After a while, all his classmates have returned and their subject where they'll learn more about the Darkness Arcane Path finally started.

Chapter 74 Darkness Path

Among all the subjects in the first year, this is probably the subject where he can learn about the spell that Maya used to try and inspect his body.

He was suspecting that Maya decided to immediately leave after he canceled her secretive inspection spell with Spell Dispersion. If possible, Vale wanted to know how to find traces of this spell so he can call her out the next time she tried using the same move.

"I'm Lucius Angelart and I'll be your Professor in this subject for this year."

Lucius, a middle-aged man with strange black eyes without pupils and short silky black hair appeared in front of them. He didn't seem to have used the door and they only felt his presence the moment he spoke...

Many of the students were surprised by his presence as they were jolted awake by his deep voice.

"Angelart? The Angelart Family? One of the Founding Members of this Arcane Path?"

"Incredible... I thought they were only teaching the higher years."

"But how did he enter without our notice?"

"A Dark Spell, perhaps?"

The professor didn't mind as he heard his students gasp and whisper. In any case, he was keeping an eye on one of his students.

"There's only one person who managed to see my entry. It's certainly better than Class 3 and 4 who had all missed my presence." Lucius said as everyone was prompted to look at Vale.

'Hmm?'

It was as if they have rehearsed this action so Lucius was amused by their reaction.

Nevertheless, they weren't wrong... The young man they were staring at was indeed the only one who noticed his presence.

It appears that in just two days, everyone has already acknowledged this person as the most impressive among them.

Lucius couldn't help but show a faint smile after realizing this.

"What's your name, young man?" Lucius asked with interest.

"It is Vale Chambers, Professor." Vale replied with a gentle nod.

"Chambers? Are you related to Baronnes Florence Chambers?" He asked immediately after recognizing the name.

Vale was stunned for a moment as he thought that no one knows about the Chambers Family that was in the far countryside. The Chambers Family didn't produce any outstanding people and has only been able to connect to the Dark Arts Faction because they were assisted by the Blackcolt Family or the perpetrator of the Malefic Branch of the Dark Arts.

In short, they shouldn't be popular.

"Yes... She's my mother." Vale can only answer.

'She's supposed to be my adoptive mother based on the records.' Vale added in his mind. He decided not to explain too much about his identity as it would ensure that he wouldn't make mistakes.

"I understand now... Florence has a great talent and you seem to have inherited her genes." Lucius nodded after confirming his suspicion. He seems to have known his 'mother' which is quite nerve-wracking for Vale.

"Very well, our first class would be an informal one. We'll simply do an activity today."

Everyone nodded in understanding as it appears that all the professors have the same thought about the first day of their class, it was to let their students gain interest in the subject they were teaching.

It is well accepted by everyone since the first impression lasts as they say.

Seeing everyone's excited eyes, Professor Lucius Angelart continued.

"I would like to ask if there's anyone here who knows what would happen if any of the practitioners of the Arcane Arts died. You can tell me whatever you know, it doesn't have to be a complete detail."

Someone suddenly raised their hand after hearing this.

"Alright, introduce yourself before telling us your answer..." Lucius said as he pointed at one student.

Surprisingly, it wasn't Neil who had raised their hands.

It was Chad Bulmung instead.

"I'm Chad from Bulmung Family. Professor Angelart, I heard that—"

"Call me Professor Lucius instead. There are three Professors with the Angelart surname here." Lucius interrupted.

"I understand, Professor Lucius. Ahem... I heard that once a practitioner of any of the 12 Arcane Paths died, they have to be quickly frozen, cremated, or sealed depending on the condition. In most cases, they have to be cremated instead since freezing or sealing costs quite a fortune in the long run." Chad answered.

"That's correct. Do you have anything to add?" Professor Lucius asked as he pointed at Jody.

"Yes. I'm Jody Lumbarde. I only want to add that if the corpse didn't receive those treatments within a day, there is a high chance that it'll be possessed by an evil spirit."

The other students nodded at this except for Lisa who was still clueless about this matter.

She looked at everyone in shock similar to how Vale reacted when he first learned of this. She had seen many people being cremated back in the city instead of normal burials. She thought that they were only thinking of saving up space since a jar of ashes is easier to store than a coffin.

However, now that she thinks about it, perhaps, those people are rogue practitioners and have to be cremated.

"That's true... However, I must correct you on one thing..." Professor Lucius said as he noticed that everyone seem to be satisfied with Jody's answer.

"There's more to it?" Jody asked in surprise. She felt that there was no way she would miss such information. After all, her parents should've informed her a long time ago if there is more about it.

"Yes... You mentioned that it will be evil spirits who would be possessing the dead bodies. However, I must clarify that any wandering spirit can possess them and turn them into a creature you don't want to encounter. However, since the chances are small, many people had forgotten about it."

"Ahh? Any spirit? Even those that are harmless?"

"Why are their chances of appearing low? I've only heard about the Evil Creatures, after all."

Felicia and Alvin asked curiously.

"The answer is simple, most of these harmless Spirits would be too late. The Evil Spirit would notice these corpses a lot quicker... Furthermore, even if they successfully transformed the corpses into 'evil' creatures, they would normally target animals, or just prank some people... In any case, our activity for today is related to that... We will meet a human corpse that was possessed by a weak and harmless spirit..."

Chapter 75 Cage

"Is that true?" Blair's eyes lit up in excitement. As someone who had a deep interest in the Variants, his fascination with various forms of living beings surpassed anyone in this classroom.

He had only heard about these Evil Creatures and had never met one before. He didn't expect that not even a week had passed in the academy and he would encounter them already.

Needless to say, it's difficult to meet Evil Creatures since corpses are immediately handled by the morgues or various institutions working for the Factions to cremate them quickly.

However, as expected of the Dark Arts Academy, they have actually decided to disrespect a corpse and allowed it to be possessed and become a slave or perhaps a pet of some sort.

"That's right... We will be meeting a docile one so you need not worry. Are you all ready? We will be leaving this classroom since I can't bring the creature here." Professor Lucius asked.

At this point, one of them raised his hands.

"Professor Lucius, do we have something to note if we saw the creature?" Vale asked curiously. His knowledge about the evil creature came from the books and most of them don't have anything good to say about these creatures.

Although he mentioned not to worry, they should at least know the do's or don'ts in this matter.

Professor Lucius nodded as he looked at everyone in the class.

"If you're seeing an Evil Creature that is possessed by a strong Evil Spirit, you have to run for your life since your pathetic spell models will be useless against them. Currently, all of your Spells might be useful for parlor tricks but not for real creatures of the Arcane Path." Professor Lucius reminded them ruthlessly.

Although he wasn't sure what Spells they have stored in the spell lights, they must be in the elementary realm and would only be useful against ordinary humans.

"Just try not to make fun of it so it won't look at you menacingly... You might dream of it every single night and cause you a nightmare. That's not good." He added.

The other students felt a bit offended since they were all proud of their skills. To be honest, they have been waiting to show off their Spell Models all this time but they didn't have any chance.

Nevertheless, no one complained as none of them would dare to say that they have a spell capable of defeating an Evil Creature. None of them have ever tried fighting an Evil Creature after all.

It would be a very embarrassing moment if they tried and were defeated instead.

"We understand, Professor."

"We're ready! Please, lead us the way."

Neil already stood up in excitement. He wanted to see this creature as quickly as possible.

"Very well. Follow me." Professor Lucius said as he lead the class to a huge and cold hall. It was located at the underground facility of the right wing building of the Academy.

Serenity Hall.

This is the name of the place according to the huge words written on the steel gate.

Everyone was silently following the Professor as they were led to a corridor made of white marble. Soon, they entered a huge circular room where a human-size birdcage can be seen at its center.

The place was lit up by bulb-like devices similar to the ones Vale found in his room.

Anyway, the place is too huge for a single human-sized birdcage so it was quite suspicious. Vale believed that the Serenity Hall has another purpose other than storing a single 'docile' evil creature.

The huge white room doesn't have any other doors or exits aside from the ones they used. Everyone would have to pass through the white corridor if one wanted to enter or leave this place. There were also no windows around so Vale felt like this is a highly sophisticated prison.

"We're here..." Professor Lucius said.

"Ahh? Where is it, professor? The cage is empty." Neil asked.

The others nodded as they can't see the creature that Professor Lucius told them... Is he playing a prank on them? Some of them thought as they looked at their professor.

At this point, Professor Lucius didn't seem surprised as he continued.

"I can remove the seal to let you see it with your naked eyes but you can also use your Phantasm State to see it... Is there anyone here who hasn't learned how it's done?" He asked.

Everyone glanced at Lisa since she was the only one without any mysticism background here.

Lisa shyly raised her hands.

Professor Lucius nodded and said. "It's fine... You're here to study how it is done after all. For now, I'll allow everyone to have three minutes to view the creature with your Phantasm State... After that, I'll remove the seal around the cage so that not only can you see it, but you'll also feel its presence or aura."

Without waiting for any more words from the professor, they immediately entered their Phantasm State to view the evil creature...

"Aahhh..." Felicia gasps in shock after seeing the creature. It was similar for the others as they weren't expecting a hideous appearance so suddenly appear inside the cage!

"I-it's a demon!" Neil shouted as he stepped back in shock.

"Is that really a docile evil creature?"

"I can't even think how that being was supposed to be a human corpse before."

"Professor, why are we not killing it? Is that thing useful?"

The others asked curiously as they made sure to step back... From their perspective, the steel bars that are keeping the creature are a bit too thin...

Since the creature is a bit large with a muscular build, it appears as if it could easily bend the bars open so it could free itself.

Of course, they know that the cage wasn't simple since according to the Professor, it has a seal that even hides the creature from the naked eye.

But even if that was the case, many of them were still a bit afraid of getting near!

Chapter 76 Exit

Professor Lucius smiled after seeing their reaction. The creature inside the cage does have a terrible appearance but it wasn't the worst thing he had ever seen.

It brings him joy seeing them terrified... He even wanted to remove the cage to tease them and see them piss their pants.

Nevertheless, he controlled his urge to tease them as he took a deep breath.

He didn't answer their questions and asked his students instead.

"How do you think we're keeping it alive?"

No one expected such a question. Most of them are in a daze looking at the creature so they didn't have the time to think of a good answer.

After a while, someone spoke with a curious tone.

"Is it being fed by normal food? If not, perhaps some sort of spiritual food..." Neil said. He actually thought that this creature doesn't need food and only requires some sort of mystical energy. However, from their Professor's question, he seems to be hinting at something else.

Professor Lucius then looked at the others who were still staring at the creature in their Phantasm State.

"I think that it needs to drink some blood like the vampires in the novels..." Felicia commented.

"That's a good one... However, I think it requires living beings as their food. After all, the body they were controlling was previously dead. It probably needs life or maybe soul in order to continue functioning." This time, it was Jody who had answered.

Professor Lucius still didn't answer... He didn't say whether it was right or wrong and was quite annoying for Vale.

'He was acting so mysterious like Master Heinz... I don't like it.' Vale commented in his mind as he saw Heinz's behavior in Professor Lucius' actions.

"Professor... It's already three minutes. I think Lisa wanted to see the creature as well." Chad suddenly reminded me as Lisa glared at him.

She doesn't want it at all! However, the Professor already acted as he waved his hands to remove the seal.

It was as if he cast a spell on it.

'No... He didn't cast a dark spell... He pressed something on the cage using his Dark Energy to remove the seal.' Vale mused as he noticed the Professor's subtle action.

His action seems that he cast a spell just now but he simply used a lump of energy to press or activate something on the cage.

If he wasn't mistaken, he should've targeted the Magic Circle that was carved on each bar of the cage.

This was quite interesting to Vale since he was still learning how to do this seemingly easy action.

At this point, everyone was in for another surprise as the seal that was suppressing the creature was removed.

It means that the creature's aura was finally released! Everyone shivered at the sudden cold and menacing aura wrapping around their bodies.

Lisa was also shocked as she saw the two paralyzing eyes staring at her with a disturbing obsession. She also swears that she saw a flame from its broad mouth with great intensity.

Smoldering and smoking skin adorns its muscular head, which itself is cracked all over. There's also a plume of shadow that escapes the creature's angular nostrils set within a compact nose.

It was no wonder her classmates were terrified after seeing this creature! Lisa finally understood what they were feeling just now!

Its blubbery body disgusts her already so the moment it looked at her, she couldn't help but step away to escape its line of sight. She hid behind Vale as she felt uncomfortable.

Perhaps, it is only lacking some bony wings and this creature would appear close to the demons that he had seen in some paintings in the churches.

"It's horrifying..." Lisa commented as she sucked in a cold breath.

Vale nodded in agreement.

Lisa then looked at the others and they all have the same reaction since they were also wrapped by that menacing aura coming from the creature.

"Indeed... It also eats humans in order to stay alive..." Professor Lucius said.

"W-what?! Humans? Living humans?" Emily asked in concern.

"No..." The professor answered.

"So... The academy is feeding it with corpses then?"

"Isn't that a bit too much?"

The professor expected this reaction so he explained. "That's right... It only needs one human corpse a month... Just in the kingdom, hundreds of people are dying every day. You don't have to worry about lacking enough food."

'That's not what I'm concerned with...' Lisa thought as she also can't accept that human corpses are going to be defiled by this creature.

Although they were already dead, she believes that they shouldn't be treated like that. It's probably the influence of the church in her life so she couldn't help but frown at this practice.

"Professor, does it need a normal human corpse or those practitioners of the Arcane Path?" Vale asked this time.

"Anything will do. However, if it's a practitioner, then there is a higher chance that it doesn't have to be fed for a few more months."

"I see... Then, will it still eat even if we give them more corpses than needed?" Blair asked as he looked at the creature.

"Yes... It will eat human corpses whether it already had its fill or not." The professor continued to answer.

"Since it eats corpses, then it should also be capable of killing humans and eating them. Then, why was this creature considered a docile one or different from the other evil creatures?"

Lucius nodded as this was the question he was waiting for.

"It is docile because it can communicate with us. On the outside, we call all of them evil creatures since they were all possessing dead bodies and can be harmful to society... However, these docile ones who were capable of communicating are what we call Messengers. Of course, they all must be eliminated. We are only keeping this one alive for various reasons like showing it to young ones like you and not being clueless about the outside world."

Before the students further ask, Lucius immediately cut them off and changed the topic.

"You will know someday why they are called messengers. I will not discuss it now... Instead, we will have an activity of testing your might against this creature. I need ten volunteers who will try to fight against this creature."

At these sudden words, everyone froze and their eyes immediately looked toward the exit!

Chapter 77 Strategy

Even Vale was not thinking of fighting against this creature. It is too risky since he barely knows anything about it!

He wasn't sure whether the Spell Dispersion even works on this thing! What if it doesn't use a spell? He would only have to rely on his Ghost Hands.

Although he's confident in this spell, he wouldn't dare say that it's enough to deal with this two-meter-tall creature.

Seeing that no one wanted to volunteer, Professor Lucius didn't display a disappointed look. He understands how they feel so he swiftly added a benefit for them.

"Very well, I will reward you with 1 Contribution Point if you managed to defeat the creature. If you showed excellent performance, I will give an additional point. You may not be able to benefit from the Contribution Points system right now but you'll thank me for it in the next few years when you needed them."

Although many of them know that the contribution point is important, only a handful of them knows its real value thanks to the seniors they know who had studied in the academy.

After some hesitations, Leonore asked. "Professor, what are the odds that we will be killed by that creature?"

"Good question. With me around, there's zero percent chance you'll get killed, only some slight injuries I guess. However, it is probably a 90% chance that you'll die if I'm not here."

Hiss...

'We only have a 10% chance of survival without the Professor?'

The students weren't happy with this percentage at all. Although they won't die with the Professor's presence, they would get injured!

It is only the start of the academic year and no one wanted to be injured at this stage. Some of them were thinking that this professor will only bail them out if they were already injured and were about to die.

That wouldn't be easy...

For 13 or 14 years old like them, they have only studied in their homes and seen live combat from a distance... So almost all of them have zero combat experience.

Nevertheless, the contribution point was very important for them... Leonore, Dalton, Neil, and the others know this very well.

Seeing their hesitation, Professor Lucius tried convincing them once more.

"We have the best infirmary right now... Doctor Gray is currently staying here and is one of the best doctors of the Dark Arts Faction. Even if you get injured, you will be fine with his help. You don't even have to worry about being absent from tomorrow's class... Besides, this creature has been staying here for a couple of years now... It hasn't been fed properly as well so it's incredibly weak. Are you really afraid?"

Many of them started hesitating as they seriously considered the benefits of this...

In the end, four people decided to raise their hands as they volunteer themselves. They stepped forward and grouped together near the professor.

It was Leonore, Neil, Aubrey, and surprisingly, Emily Gagnet! She only had 5 Spirit Strands so it means that she was only able to learn the lowest kind of Dark Spell... Many of them started questioning her decision inwardly...

Nevertheless, none of them spoke about it.

"Professor, what if we killed it? Are we going to be responsible?" Chad suddenly asked as if he was worried that they'll have to pay the academy for the "damage of property".

"Hmm? If you kill it? Then, I'll give you more contribution points." Professor Lucius said with a smile.

"Haha! Very well... Let me in!"

At this point, Vale took a deep breath and decided to join the fun as well. He raised his hands and stepped forward to join the others.

The others also thought of participating especially after they saw Vale join the fun.

In a few moments, the ten students that will challenge the creature were formed.

They were Leonore, Neil, Aubrey, Emily, Chad, Vale, Warren, Blair, and two of Neil's lackeys, Roswell and Larry.

It was quite surprising for them that Dalton Stranway wasn't participating with his 16 Spirit Strands. However, they recalled how he has a toothache according to Mennena so they just thought that he was still uncomfortable with the pain.

As the group was already formed, Professor Lucius no longer wasted time as he instructed the students.

"Very well, all the other students who weren't participating should move back. After I release the other seal on the cage, there will be a Magic Circle that will show up on the floor. It covers 18 meters in radius and will also be the arena for your other classmates so don't enter it or you'll be targeted by the creature as well."

"Wait, Professor! Can you give us at least five minutes to form a battle plan?" Leonore suddenly interrupted as she knows nothing about the abilities of her classmate.

Although Vale may have a decent Spirit Strand, she doesn't think that the Chambers Family has a high-tier Dark Spell.

She wanted everyone to at least inform her about their Spell Models or what they can do so she could strategize for the team.

"I guess that's fair enough... I will give you ten minutes." Professor Lucius said after realizing that they still have plenty of time.

His class has two hours to burn so he didn't mind ten minutes of prep for them.

Leonore heaved a sigh of relief as she faced her classmates.

"We need to understand each other so we can form a strategy. You all should know that Spells have four categories..."

Vale nodded at this as he also learned this while he was still in the laboratory of his master.

"Yes, they were an offense, defense, support, and a special type which can be a combination of any of those three..." Chad added obviously aware of this 'basic' knowledge.

Leonore nodded in acknowledgment as she spoke. "Then, I'll go first. My first spell model is Flesh Bane and the second one is a support-type Curse Spell. It allows me to amplify the pain felt by my target... It works well with my Flesh Bane."

She didn't inform them of the name of this Curse Spell but it was fine. After all, it's enough to know its ability. Nevertheless, this can also mean that the Curse Spell may not be as simple as amplifying pain.

Chapter 78 Ghost Hands

Flesh Bane was something that Vale had also considered before. This is indeed a good offensive Dark Spell so it guarantees that they have enough power against the creature.

"As expected from the Roland Family... I bet that Curse Spell isn't as simple as you said... Heh heh... I'm next. My first Spell Model is Dusk Imprisonment and the other is Darkness Coil." Neil said with a hint of pride.

Vale wasn't sure but it seems that the Darkness Coil is quite a rare one or a high-tier Dark Spell.

He wasn't sure if he had read about it since there are just too many spells but only a handful of them can be learned.

"You have good control-type support spells... Next," Leonore said as she looked at the others.

"I have Severe Ailment Spell and Ghost Hand..." Warren said. He actually has quite a simple set of spells which was quite unexpected. Nevertheless, Warren might really just be lucky to be able to eat the Pride Pomegranate. Without that lucky encounter, perhaps, he'll just be an average first-year student with these spells.

"My first spell model is called Dire Chains and the other is Spirit Hand." Aubrey Hall said with a hint of pride.

"Spirit Hand? That's not inferior to Spectral Hands, right?" Chad couldn't help but comment. He recalled how Wilfred Moontomb has Spectral Hands and passed the requirement to be a member of the Rankers Club. If Aubrey actually tried to fight for a position, she might also be recruited with this set of spells.

Aubrey smiled after hearing this.

"If it's in the Advanced Realm, it won't lose against the Spectral Hands. However, if both spells are in the Elementary Realm, the Spectral Hands would still win.

The others also revealed their spells and most of them have common Dark Spells. They were either Ghost Hand, Dusk Imprisonment, Dark Mist, Nightmare, or Ghastly Ailment which only requires 2 Spirit Strands in order to build their Spell Model.

Finally, it was Vale's turn. "I have Ghost Hands and another defensive Dark Spell that protects me from other spells."

"Oh? Is it similar to my Dark Mist? Or another version of it I'm unaware of?" Chad asked after hearing his words.

Vale smiled and replied with a nod. "Something like that."

At this time, Leonore already formulated a plan.

"Very well, we don't have many offensive spells. It's normal since we only have a set of beginner dark spells. Anyway, I want Aubrey's Dire Chains to be fully utilized. Those with Ghost hands must use them immediately and hold back the creature... The Dire Chains will give my Flesh Bane a boost in penetration ability so it must cover the creature before I use my Flesh Bane."

"Good plan..." Blair commented. He has Ghost Hands so approves of this plan. Other than holding down their target, the ghost hand isn't really useful. It's not meant for combat in the first place. Luckily, there were many of them with similar abilities so if they worked together, their Ghost Hands should do just fine.

"Neil, I want your Darkness Coil if the Dire Chains failed to hold out. Warren, instead of focusing on Ghost Hand, I'll need your Severe Ailment to disrupt the creature's natural healing capability... My Flesh Bane will be more effective with his compromised health." Leonore explained as she showed her knowledge of various Dark Spells.

Vale then waited for her specific instruction but she seemed to have ignored her. Anyway, she noticed that he was looking at her so she thought for a moment...

"Uhhh... I'm sure that your Ghost Hands are better than the others, I will trust you that you'll be able to hold the creature steady... There will be six or seven of you that will work together, anyway."

Leonore said. She wasn't really thinking much of Vale's Ghost Hands. After all, everyone here should have Elementary Realm Dark Spells. It means that Vale's Ghost Hands shouldn't be different from others. At most, he probably has a longer duration of Ghost Hands than the others considering his high Spirit Strand.

As for Vale's defensive ability, it may not be useful if the Creature will attack with brute force instead of a spell. In short, she believes that everything relies on her Flesh Bane.

"Time's up... Are you ready?" Professor Lucius said even though not even ten minutes had passed.

Leonore noticed this but she didn't complain and answered. "We're ready, Professor!"

"Good!"

Professor Lucius then allowed them to get into position as he confirmed that the other students had also backed away.

Then, without any more hesitations, he lifted the last seal that was on the cage...

"Good luck, show everything you've got..." The professor said as he glanced at the ten brave students.

As soon as the seal was removed, the creature inside felt it and swiftly dashed towards the exit!

However, that is where the professor was standing!

It ignored the ten students within the magic circle that has appeared and wanted to escape!

"I will let you escape if you win against these ten students..." Professor Lucius said calmly as his hands remained crossed behind his back.

"Liar!" The Creature spoke with a voice that seems to have come from the abyss. It was eerie and intimidating...

The students inside the circle were even affected by an invisible pressure that made their control of their dark spells slower.

There was one exception on them but he didn't interrupt the conversation between the Professor and the Creature.

"You're a liar! I won against the other students and you didn't let me leave!" The creature added.

It seems that it wasn't the first time that the Professor tricked this creature.

"I'm telling the truth. You just need to win a total of 100 times. I think you've already won a dozen times... or maybe more than that, you just have to continue winning." Professor Lucius said like a professional scammer.

The creature wanted to say more but at this time, Vale and the other finally made their moves...

A total of six small Ghost Hands and three large Ghost Hands appeared heading straight to the Creature's limbs!

"Someone has an Advanced Realm Ghost Hands!"

Felicia, who was only watching the show, immediately recognized the three terrifying Ghost Hands that Vale had summoned!

Chapter 79 Battle

There were five realms of spells. The weakest was the elementary realm followed by the intermediate realm and the advanced realm. These three realms are the ones considered "achievable" while the last two are called the expert realm and perfect realm which is simply a legend for almost all of the Arcane Paths.

The expert realm had only been seen once in the past three hundred years while the perfect realm is simply something that they've seen on the records.

Needless to say, Vale's advanced realm Ghost Hands should be something that not even the graduates of the Academy would achieve!

There may be people who were capable of doing that but they would certainly not focus their time on this support-type Dark Spell! They would rather have intermediate realm Tier 2 Dark Spell than advanced realm Tier 1 Dark Spell.

"This... Is the Headmaster aware of this?" Professor Lucius was also stunned after seeing the three Ghost Hands summoned by Vale. If he wasn't mistaken, these hands can still increase their size if Vale has enough Spiritual Force...

This was simply inconceivable. He had never seen a 13 or 14-year-old practitioner capable of promoting their Dark Spells to the Advanced Realm!

Did he start learning his Dark Spell as soon as he came out of his mother's womb?

As Lucius and the other students were shocked by the Ghost Hands, the Creature also felt some danger coming from it.

Nevertheless, Ghost Hands is still one of the most common Dark Spells out there... It only needs a few moments in order to escape from its grasp. Even if it seems stronger, it shouldn't be capable of harming his tough skin. What it was worried about was the few Dark Spells that would land on him the moment he gets entangled by the Ghost Hands.

Bam!

Several Ghost Hands landed on the creature's body. However, except for Vale's Ghost Hands, all the others have dissipated like a mist.

The three Ghost Hands with seemingly wrinkled skin grabbed the arms and neck of the creature!

"Now!" Vale shouted as he wasn't sure whether his Ghost Hands can last for long. This is his first encounter with this creature after all.

Luckily, Leonore and the others were attentively watching the situation so as soon as they saw the large Ghost Hands grabbing that creature who had approached the professor, they immediately release their Dark Spells.

Black chains started wrapping over the body of the creature as Aubrey's Dire Chains were activated.

Clank... Clank... Clank...

The chains were being broken apart by the struggling creature but they would immediately repair themselves as Aubrey continued to supply her Dark Spell with her energy.

Even with the Ghost Hands suppressing its position, it could still squirm about and casually destroy the chains!

Then, Leonore's Flesh Bane finally arrived...

"Aaaahhhh!"

The Creature cried in pain as the Magic Circle on the ground started getting stronger. It was as if the Seal was trying to suppress the Creature's burst of power!

A part of the Creature's chest started rotting as the Dire Chains moved like snakes until it covers even its mouth...

"We're doing it! Hurry up! Release all the curse spells. Bombard it with whatever you can throw!" Leonore said in excitement as she that the Creature can feel pain.

To be honest, she was afraid that this creature doesn't feel pain since it had basically occupied a human corpse. It shouldn't have any pain receptors anymore.

However, it seems that the creature had reconstructed a new body out of the human corpse making it completely different from what it was before.

The Ghost Hands that were dissipated a while suddenly started forming once more... Unfortunately, most of them were incapable of doing a dual-casting... It means that they can't use both Spell Models at the same time.

The only exception was Leonore, Vale, Aubrey, and Warren...

Leonore was able to use her second spell that could amplify the pain felt by her target. Aubrey had also used her Spirit Hand after her Dire Chains became stable.

The Spirit Hands appear like it was from a female hand and look more illusory. It was completely unlike Vale's Ghost Hands... The ones Vale had summoned looked more like a floating hand of death than a ghost.

This Spirit Hand rushed toward the Creature's eyes in an attempt to blind it while being held by Vale's monstrous Ghost Hands.

In the meantime, Warren used his Severe Ailment Spell to weaken the creature's resistance against the Flesh Bane and Dire Chains...

"Incredible! They're winning?"

"Can they actually kill the Evil Creature..."

"Perhaps it was already too weak. Ugh, I should've joined them."

"Indeed... That one contribution point would've been a great reward."

"What a pity..."

Everything was going well for the next 30 seconds or so as the Creature remained in place with the cooperation of the ten students. It was continuously getting injured and its situation is getting worse.

The Flesh Bane Dark Spell continued spreading throughout its body and it might kill the creature in a few more minutes!

The watching students were getting excited by the fact that their classmates can suppress the terrifying creature. Some of them regretted their inaction... They could've been the ones earning that contribution point!

However, as they were planning to applaud their classmates, something unexpected happened!

The creature that was suppressed by Vale's Ghost Hands started getting large all of a sudden... The Ghost Hands can no longer suppress the Creature as it had to release its hands and tried pressing on it instead.

Furthermore, those with pathetic Dark Spells had already fully consumed their energy and had to wait for a while before they can cast them again.

'This...' Vale frowned at the sudden change of the creature's physique.

'It's already injured and weakened but it can still win against my Ghost Hands. How can we even win against this? Is it really impossible from the start?' Vale sighed as he saw the creature become 2 times bigger.

He then noticed Leonore looking at him from the side.

"Vale, my Flesh Bane has all been used up. Luckily, the Flesh Bane's effect wouldn't be treated by this creature anytime soon. We still have a chance..." Leonore said as she also looked at the others.

She wanted to instruct them on what to do but they already spoke before she could even ask.

"Leonore... We can't use any of our spells anymore."

"We've lost. Let's just surrender."

Chapter 80 Against The Evil Creature

"Let's give up for now... I'm sure that Professor only wanted us to experience how strong this creature was." Neil said as he agreed with his two friends.

The fluctuation of energy coming from the Creature reminds him of his family's Guard Captain. It is a figure that could not be defeated in his eyes.

There was no way the three novices like them can win against it!

The Creature in front of them may even be stronger than the Guard Captain that he knows so they have to retreat before it's too late.

However, Leonore shook her head.

There was no way she would accept that.

Even if they don't kill the creature, they have to suppress it for at least a minute so she can argue to the professor that they have technically defeated the Evil Creature.

"Vale... What about you?" Leonore asked as she can't be bothered convincing the other students.

"Let's give it a try..." Vale said as he noticed Chad, Leonore, Aubrey, and Warren nod in agreement.

"Great!" Leonore was glad since Vale's Ghost Hands would be crucial in the plan that she made in her mind.

"My Ghost Hands can still last for quite some time. Let's try one more time." Vale added. He already checked his Spell Light and confirmed that it is still completely black.

It means that it is still filled with energy and that there is nothing to worry about.

As for the duration of his Phantasm State, it's not something he has to worry about at all!

Leonore smiled as she gave another series of commands.

"Chad, use your Dark Mist... Cover the Creature's body... It hasn't finished its transformation but once it's done, we'll be in trouble. We need to weaken its senses."

"Alright..." Chad said as he immediately used the Dark Mist.

The Creature is still squirming about as its muscles keep expanding and retracting to form a much more horrible appearance.

Nevertheless, what Chad was worrying about was the fact that the Curses they'd cast on the creature were starting to dissipate at a faster rate!

The rotten flesh caused by the Flesh Bane had also started separating from the Creature's body as it formed a new flesh to cover its chest.

The Creature wasn't just transforming, it is reforming its body and removing its curses in the process!

Furthermore, it had waited on them until they exhausted their energy!

"Don't falter... Vale's Ghost Hands is in the Advance Realm... Even if it can't kill the creature, it can suppress it for quite some time. Aubrey will use her Dire Chains once more... Neil, stop acting like a loser and used your Darkness Coil!"

"Ugh... Fine!" Neil decided to follow these people for now but he already started stepping back as he would certainly escape out of the Magic Circle if they were in danger.

The Darkness Coil was another version of Dire Chains but instead of focusing on the suppression effect, it is used to capture targets. Furthermore, it is very effective if used against other practitioners who weren't practicing the Dark Arts.

Under Leonore's command, everyone was able to collect themselves...

"Graaahhhh!"

The Creature finally completed its transformation. It had become taller and its arms had become bulkier. Its huge palms can even cover their entire head!

It suddenly pounced towards them targeting Vale who was controlling the three Ghost Hands that were still grabbing on its body...

The Dark Mist was useless!

The others who didn't want to participate anymore had no choice but to work together. If Vale was defeated, they would be next!

Several Ghost Hands were summoned once more but it was even more useless now. The creature just waved its hands and the Ghost Hands were instantly destroyed except for the ones that Vale summoned.

They were still clinging to its body no matter what the creature does.

Boom! Boom!

The Evil Creature slammed his hands on the ground creating a huge shockwave as soon as it had gotten near them... Most of them were out of balance as their spells got canceled.

"We're doomed..." Neil said as he already saw his fate. His Darkness Coil was ineffective...

The difference in their strength was just too much!

The Creature's next action was brutal... It started punching the students and those who weren't able to dodge in time were sent flying to the other side of the Magic Circle.

"Ack!"

"I give---"

"Save me."

Bam!

With another wave of its hands, finally, Leonore was hit... However, instead of being thrown away out of the magic circle like everyone else, something unexpected happened.

Leonore's necklace suddenly glowed brightly. A blue light blocked the Creature's hands and Leonore was unscathed while the Creature was in pain!

"Graaah!"

Its right arm seemed to have been struck by lightning!

Vale realized that Leonore has this Mystical Item as her life-saving treasure so she wasn't afraid to fight at all.

He glanced at the others while in his Phantasm State and confirmed that some of them has Mystical Items on their bodies. He doesn't even have one!

As the Creature realized that Leonore was hard to kill, it shifted on Vale instead...

This time, Vale no longer hesitated as he utilized the Ghost Hands not to press down on the creature but to attack!

The large Ghost Hands suddenly turned illusory and smaller as they swiftly attacked the creature's demonic eyes. It only happened in a split second.

Psshhh---

To Vale's surprise, the attack was so successful and blinded the creature in instant!

"You dare?!" The Evil Creature's deep and demonic voice resounded throughout the whole room as Vale took its vision.

Vale felt a chill on his body as he realized that the creature has now placed its full attention on him.

Whoosh~

In an instant, the creature appeared behind Vale like a real ghost... Vale didn't have the time to recall his Ghost Hands!

Aubrey, Warren, and the others tried attacking the creature with their spells but it was simply impossible to injure the creature with their current set of Spells.

In the end, seeing that Vale was about to get smashed, Warren gritted his teeth as he tore what seems like a talisman as soon as the creature was about to land its attack.

Then, the Creature seemed to have been smashed by a huge and invisible fist as it crashed toward its cage.

Boom!

The attack was so strong but none of them celebrated. They can still feel the fluctuation of energy coming from the Creature...