

## Earths GMagus 151

### Chapter 151: Control

Emery woke up in a room reminiscent of his own. However, the larger space, the different color of the wall and the view of the mountain range with countless waterfalls by the window wasn't in sight, ensuring he hadn't opened his eyes in his room.

Sitting up, the last thing he remembered was the feeling of an invisible hand dragging him in the air as well as a thousand needles prickling his insides. The face of a beautiful woman, paler than white with blood-red bountiful lips came into his mind, her name was Grand Magus Zenoia. She did something that caused a feeling of pain and pleasure, but, after that, only nothingness.

Then, the thought of the Magus Games entered his mind. Not knowing how much time had passed since he had been unconscious, he finally got out of bed and of the room.

Emery found himself coming out of a house. A green yard with three more houses sitting in the corners. The middle of the courtyard had a patio, there a person was sitting cross-legged on the floor.

The whole area was lighted by a sunset-stained glow, but Emery didn't have to squint hard to see who was sitting.

He walked up to him and gave a bow. Magus Xion looked at Emery and said, "Welcome to my humble domain."

"Greetings, Magus Xion, it seems I have troubled you," said Emery.

Magus Xion shook his head. "Don't worry Emery, it's not a big deal. How are you doing? Do you feel any headache or any pain at all?"

Curious as to why the magus would say that, Emery decided to examine himself. He exerted the internal energy circulating in his spirit core. He let it flow through every part of his body, but he couldn't feel any discomfort. Instead, he actually felt that his body was in optimal condition, better than what he had previously been.

Wanting to know more about himself, Emery checked his status through the symbol on his and found out the following:

[Emery Ambrose]

[Battle Power: 30]

[Spirit force: 110]

The sudden increase of the spirit force caught his eyes. That was quite a big leap, wasn't it, he thought. But then his focus was being diverted again. He got it back on track regarding the Magus Games and asked, "Magus Xion, how long have I been out?"

"Don't worry. It's no more than three hours," replied the magus.

Emery let out a sigh of relief. He couldn't imagine what would have happened if he had passed out for a day or two and disappointed his friends by not being able to participate in the games.

Now that he was more relaxed, Emery wanted to know more. He asked, "So, Magus Xion, can you tell me what has happened and why I am here?"

Still sitting, Magus Xion said, "Actually Emery, my master, the Grand Magus, showed great interest in you. Hence, she asked me to guide you in your cultivation until the games start. I am willing to abide by that, but what about you? Are you willing to accept my guidance?"

Emery immediately got on one knee in respect, saying in the most polite voice he could muster, "It would be my honor to be taught by you, Magus Xion."

The magus gave a satisfied nod and got up. "My master thinks I will be the best guide for you at the moment. She has told me how to make the best of your condition, and in exchange for this, she asked that you will show her something entertaining during the games."

Finally a sentence that rhymed well in his ear. A way to solve his problem and help to succeed at the game. How fortunate indeed.

"Okay Emery, you don't have much time left so we will start right away," said Magus Xion, walking already.

"Yes, Magus Xion," said Emery getting up to his feet and catching up to the magus.

The magus took Emery to one corner of the courtyard, next to a house field, where there were a lot of long wild grass sprouting in every direction.

"As you know already, my specialty is in infusion spells," said Magus Xion with his back turned against Emery.

He turned around and then threw Emery the same tier two sword he has used in today's practice. After that, the magus spawned another wooden puppet from his storage ring and said, "Try using the infusion spell again."

Emery called on his spirit core and executed the spell until a dark light covered the whole surface of the sword. He stared at it and somehow felt the [Darkness Infusion] was much different from earlier. Once he received the go signal from Magus Xion, Emery gripped the sword and put all his weight behind it, striking the stationary wooden puppet. To his surprise, the blade slashed a third of the wooden puppet. It couldn't compare against the inch deep cut from earlier.

"... I..." Emery was at a loss for words. What he could confirm to himself was that the obstacle he had been encountering seemed to have been open and his spirit energy was much more powerful. All he could think of doing was bowing to the magus, expressing his gratitude.

Magus Xion waved his hand. "Don't thank me, Emery. That's my master's work not mine. She opened the clogged flow of energy within your spirit core that had been created because of you having too many elements inside your body."

Clogged flow? Was that the thing connected to his dark spirit core that looked like a bridge? Emery was curious about that, but after clearing his thoughts, he asked the more pressing matter. "Does this mean I am fixed now?"

"Not so fast, Emery. Why don't you try using your water spell again. The first one you showed me before," said Magus Xion.

Emery complied. He raised his hand, focused on the water element spirit and then cast [Steam Lance], the spear-like water, thrust into the wooden puppet. The water splashed upon hitting the puppet, but after seeing it clearing out, it had only created a dent mark like before. When Emery had cast the spell, he noticed that the flow of energy, in comparison to using the darkness element infusion spell, didn't have the same power. Frowning, he asked, "What is going on Magus Xion, what does it mean?"

Magus Xion had his hand on his chin. He seemed to be thinking for a moment before saying, "It's quite simple actually. Your spirit core of darkness has made you able to cultivate faster, but when you cast a spell, as you may have noticed, they go through your dark spirit core, which in turns rejects the other spirit and affects your spell, making it much weaker than normal. In other words, except for your darkness element based spells, the spells based from the other elements you have will be much weaker."

Emery's frown deepened hearing such news. It sounded again like he didn't have a choice other than to accept what fate had given him. Not willing to give up though, he said, "Is there anything I can do to resolve this?"

"Yes, there is. But first I need you to practice something else," said Magus Xion, walking toward the long grass. He pulled one stem and cast [Darkness Infusion], making the stalk of grass shone with blackish light. The long grass then became as straight as a sword, no longer having the limp state it had. "This is what you'll be practicing for now. I need you to keep a steady flow of [Darkness Infusion] into the grass for an hour."

Emery received another stalk of the long grass, thinking this practice was going to be pretty easy. Focusing his thoughts and casting the spell, he found out that he couldn't even send the energy of the infusion spell into the grass. It startled Emery for a moment, it made him think why could he do it with a sword but not with this grass. Trying once more, he still couldn't do it. But Emery welcomed the challenge.

After the third unsuccessful attempt, he thought fourth time's the charm. He tried again and sent his dark energy to the stalk of long grass, finally achieving what Magus Xion had asked him to do. The grass glowed with great darkness and became as straight and as sharp as a sword. He was about to show it to the magus when suddenly the grass wiggled and blew up into thousand pieces.

Emery became confused but fortunately, Magus Xion explained. "This is a good practice to learn how to control the flow of your spirit. This is a crucial first step for you in mastering your elements. Transferring too little of your spirit, you won't be able to give it energy, but giving too much, the grass won't be able to contain the energy."

Emery nodded. The practice had just started, but the sky had already fallen. So, Emery decided to practice doing this all night until he fully mastered it.

## **Chapter 152: Master**

The spells Emery had learned had taken from a couple of minutes to two hours at most. At first, Emery believed he had fully mastered [Darkness Infusion], however, according to Magus Xion, learning how to

cast a spell was different from mastering the flow of spirit energy. This was what Emery was trying to learn by repeatedly casting the infusion spell into the long blade of grass.

Normally, when an inexperienced acolyte casts a spell, they either put all they can or only a fraction of their spirit energy into the spell. This resulted in a highly inefficient method. The reason why the grass was shattering or not lighting up at all with the darkness element was due to the unstable flow of energy.

The stars were the only company for Emery throughout the whole evening. Looking beneath him it was as if a massacre of innocent plants had happened, countless pieces of shattered grass laying around. He had stopped counting his attempts after the first 15. Slowly but surely, he was able to extend the stable flow of spirit by a second more each time. By the time the horizon no longer had any traces of the sun's existence, the long blade of grass he was holding was true and straight with the dark aura. He was finally able to keep the flow from his spirit core stabilized for more than an hour.

The moment he relaxed, the erect elongated blade grew limp, while Emery pulled away his flowing spirit energy. He let out a sigh of satisfaction as he sat down, he comprehended what he had learned during the whole night. In his meditation, a strong beat erupted from the inside of his spirit core.

[Spirit Core of Darkness has reached stage 2]

Opening his eyes, he didn't notice that dawn had already broken behind him, as he could still feel the upheaval beating of his spirit core. Emery stood and took out his tier two sword, after giving it a few swings, he cast the [Darkness Infusion] spell. At first, the dark-flame like aura covered the whole body of the sword, until he focused and controlled the output of his spirit force to what he thought was correct for the tier two sword. The dark light seemed to disappear, almost not visible to the eyes, but when Emery sliced the wind, he could tell the strength of his slash had improved by at least twice.

He was busy giving a few swings with the sword, when the wind behind his back suddenly blew in his direction, lifting his sword, the metal sparked as he parried an incoming attack from an unknown assailant.

Clank!

Then it was revealed to him the unknown attacker was Magus Xion. He was about to say something when the magus laughed and said, "Not bad! Not bad! Good sword defense posture and the flow of spirit power in your sword is above all the other second year acolytes in the Darkness Institute."

While still pushing swords toward each other, Emery returned the smile and said, "Thank you, master."

"No, no, you're still not good enough to call me master," replied the magus with a cheeky grin before quickly adding "If you can defend against my advance for three minutes, maybe I'll consider it."

Without further notice, Magus Xion lowered his hand, a black smoke came out hindering Emery's vision. Emery raised his sword and jumped back, preparing to defend determined to do his best, as if this was a real battle, to not disappoint the magus.

The light from the sky, however, didn't give him much vision, so Emery used the [Nature Sense] spell. The spell allowed him to detect movement even without personal visibility. So the moment he cast it, Emery could 'see' and 'feel' the magus through the grass he was connected to.

Then, the grass on his right was stomped hard, Emery side-stepped, blocking Magus Xion's attack. Sparks flew inside the black smoke as the magus once again disappeared into the darkness.

Magus Xion's voice rang out from every direction, "Very good! I will start using my spells now. Don't worry these are all lower tier spells, nothing fancy".

[Shadow Steps]

Emery connected himself with the plants around him again. He noticed the steps of Magus Xion had become erratic. It felt as if the magus was at multiple places at the same time, Emery was jumping based on how hard the grasses were being stomped on. Knowing he wouldn't be able to win this spar with him being conservative, Emery screamed and tapped into his bloodline.

[Fey form stage one activated]

In his fey form, Emery's movement became as erratic and fast as Magus Xion's. And with his innate skill called [Wild Hunt], which also increased his senses, he could finally distinguish which of the steps the magus was doing were fake.

A voice echoed in the black smoke saying, "Are you ready now, Emery?"

Emery didn't answer, his ears twitched and it looked like Magus Xion had become a bit more serious, for he couldn't distinguish the steps on his left and right moving closer to him! When it felt extremely close, only then he realized the footsteps on the left were real ones.

He raised his sword once more and managed to parry the magus' sword a couple of inches away from his throat: the first attack was parried. However, the magus didn't stop as he stooped low and delivered a wide swing from below. Emery reacted in the last second, doing a jump and rolling on the ground after.

His heart was beating fast for he knew his opponent had just dashed behind him only a few steps away. Suddenly, he racked his brain to come up with a way to dodge. Then, he suddenly felt his body being sucked into himself. An image of stars and odd symmetrical shapes appeared in front of him and before he knew it, he had appeared in a different place a few meters, outside the dark smoke.

It occurred to him a second later that he had just used the [Blink] spell he had received from Killgragah. Even though it didn't seem to be on purpose, Emery was very surprised he was finally able to do it. The black smoke finally dissipated and Emery saw Magus Xion was as shocked as him, if not more.

The magus then sheathed his sword and made it disappear into his ring. Shaking his head, he said, "You really are full of surprises, Emery, aren't you? Was that it the [blink] spell that you just used?"

Emery nodded, "Yes, magus."

"That's a pretty rare darkness spell, and it's also not easy to master from what I've heard. You see, the darkness element spells are normally based on shadows. Within the darkness element, there are categories, shadow and space are two of them. The [Blink] is an advanced spell categorized within space magic of the darkness element. I'm very impressed at how fortunate you are. If only..." the magus then changed his mind from speaking.

Emery noticed then and frowned. He asked, "What is it, Magus Xion? Please tell me."

The magus appeared hesitant. "It's about your spirit core of darkness. It's no easy matter, Emery. Again, I'm not the person who can tell you more about it, that's all I can say at the moment."

Emery could tell that the magus was not telling him the full story. But since Emery didn't want to force him and his immediate concerns were somewhat resolved, Emery let it go and changed the subject, "By the way, can I call you master now? I did manage to spar for more than three minutes."

Magus Xion laughed while looking at Emery's cheeky smile. "Haha, I like you Emery, so I'll allow you to call me master. As for being my actual disciple, I honestly want to grant you that, however, that's a complicated matter. Still, if you make a good impression at the Magus Games, it is possible that someone else may take you under their wings. You may even get a grand magus as your master".

"I understand, master" Emery said with an emphasis on the word 'master'. Both of them smiled for a moment.

Deep down, Emery felt there were more things he had yet to uncover within the Magus Academy. There were more mysteries to be found, he had just scratched the surface. But from what he had understood, they all seem to lead to the Magus Games.

While he was busy thinking, Magus Xion said, "Actually your training hasn't yet been finished, Emery. Now that you have mastered the infusion spell and balancing the output of your spirit energy. It's time for you to learn the way to cultivate your spirit core, courtesy of my master, Grand Magus Zenoia."

### **Chapter 153: The Right Balance**

As the birds of this world traveled the sky singing their songs, two men, one in his teens and one in his twenties, were sitting under a gazebo situated in the middle of a courtyard with four houses at the corners.

Magus Xion was guiding the youth named Emery, who had his eyes closed, concentrating as best as he could, not minding the sweat dripping down his face.

The magus was teaching Emery how to cultivate the Spirit Core of Darkness, as well as how he should cast his spells from now on according to what Grand Magus Zenoia had said.

Of course, the first step had already been done. That was learning to control the flow of energy through mastering the infusion spell. Now that Emery had the foundation for it, he was ready for the second step, although Emery was a bit worried about what Magus Xion was about to teach him with his unique circumstances.

Magus Xion seemed to have noticed this and said, "I need you to understand that my master is one of the greatest magus of the darkness element. I know her way tends to be unorthodox... Actually unorthodox is still an euphemism, so keep in mind that this is very risky. Do you understand?"

Emery listened intently and made sure to understand and remember every word Magus Xion was telling him. This, after all, was about his spirit core, which was the source of his abilities in being able to do spells. Hence, he wouldn't dare take these warnings lightly. Based on what he was hearing more and more about his normal spirit core transformation into a spirit core of darkness, it really sounded that he had been taught the wrong way to cultivate. However, Killgragah was the one who taught him this. The thought of the black dragon fooling him still plagued his mind.

"Master, I have one question," Emery said to Magus Xion, sitting on the opposite side of him. "Is it possible for my spirit core to return to what it was before then?"

The magus shook his head with reluctance and answered, "No, Emery. With the way it has been tampered, it is impossible."

"I see," answered Emery. "I guess I have no other choice than to follow Grand Magus Zenoia's teaching. Please, master, I would like to give it a try."

Magus Xion sighed and continued, "I hope you'll be successful, Emery."

The magus then began explaining to Emery how he should cultivate. The unique way to cultivate the spirit core of darkness actually sounded simple. Currently, within his body Emery had three different elemental affinity that were attached to his spirit core of darkness core via a bridge. This happened due to his cultivation method. So, in contrast to the normal way of cultivating, Emery's current method made him able to cultivate faster than having four elements separated from each other. However, this was where the problem also started, in particular when he was channeling his spirit energy into a spell.

For example, if he wanted to cast a plant element spell, he needed to access his green plant spirit and send it to his core. The normal human spirit core would be natural and colorless, like the one that he had before. When the spirit core received the green element, the plant element spell could be successfully cast.

But now, his core had become a spirit core of darkness. The green energy would have to pass through his dark core and the core would then activate the spells. Due to having two elements, or rather the darkness spirit core intermingling with the green energy, the plant element would contradict with the core and only part of its energy would be casted. Therefore, it resulted with the weakening of the spell.

When Grand Magus Zenoia had 'assisted' him earlier, what she did was actually cleanse the residual energies from the other elements that were in his spirit core, after he had a breakthrough to the foundation level. With the cleansed dark core, Emery was able to perform darkness spells to the best of his spirit force.

But of course this was only a stop gap, a temporary solution for his spells, since the other elements were weakened. So, Grand Magus Zenoia, tasked Magus Xion to teach Emery a unique way of cultivating as well as casting spells in regards to his other elements.

Since he had mastered the concept of the infusion spell, Magus Xion then asked Emery to change the way he casted spells. Rather than sending the element's energy to the core to then cast a spell, Emery would start the other way around, the darkness core would infuse the spirit element he was planning to cast with the darkness spirit first before sending it back to the spirit core.

This sounded simple in theory, but it would be way harder if Emery didn't learn how to properly send his spirit energy. So, the good control he learned from earlier was a necessity for this.

"With your current condition, to be safe just use a simple tier 1 spell that you're most proficient with," advised Magus Xion.

Emery didn't have to think long and hard before he immediately thought of the earth spell [Stone Skin]. Emery felt the element he was most proficient with was his plant element, but he just learned the

[entangled] spell yesterday, and between the water element [whip splash] or the earth element [stone skin]. He was much more familiar with the latter. And as for the other tier one spells: [water breathing], [softened earth] and [fragmentation], they were not suitable for the thing he was planning to do.

After remembering how normally he channeled the earth spell, Emery took a deep breath and as he sat in concentration. He then started channeling his darkness energy to infuse the yellow earth element spirit through the interconnected glowing bridge.

However, the process wasn't easy. It was in fact harder than infusing the long blade of grass with [Darkness Infusion]. When he first sent his darkness spirit energy, the bridge allowed him to do it, but when it arrived on the yellow light, both elements seemed to want to take the lead over each other. The moment he sent too much, Emery coughed blood, and for some reason he felt like his elements were back to square one, just like when he had first seen them.

Wiping off the blood dripping from his mouth, Emery relaxed himself and came to the conclusion that he needed to find the right balance, not too strong and not too weak. It was like sending a delegation of cooperation from one king to another king. If the delegation came with too much power, the king on the other side felt threatened and was like he was willing to fight. If he sent too little of his darkness spirit energy though, the king on the other would just dismiss the proposal.

Emery knew he couldn't give up, he continued and started the whole process again and again. It took half a day for him to find the right balance of power. The yellow spirit didn't resist and the darkness element finally managed to cover the yellow earth spirit completely, Emery then channeled the yellow-dark-infused energy back to his spirit core and cast the spell.

A burst of pain and power was brought forth from Emery's core, he could feel his skin tingling with a rocky feeling. Opening his eyes, he smiled for he had successfully casted the spell. He felt like his skin was slowly turning and growing more powerful than before.

Examining his skin, he saw that it had become hard as usual, but, then, he was startled to see his stone not yet stop changing. The stone turned darkish and the pattern turned more grainy, blurry and definitely much harder. Once his whole body had been covered, he looked like a walking piece of dark stone. And instead of feeling just one energy, which had been his experience all this time, there were two elements flowing through his skin this time. They were both the dark element and earth element.

Then, an information came to his head from the symbol on his hand.

[You have learned new spell]

[Granite Skin]

[Spell categorized - Tier 3]

Emery was startled in surprise seeing the new spell he just learned.

#### **Chapter 154: Granite Skin**

Emery stood still in disbelief as he read the information that appeared in front of him. [Stone Skin] was a tier one spell. But after infusing it with his darkness energy, the spell that came out was a tier three spell



called [Granite Skin]! If that was the case, then would all his tier one spell become tier three after infusion? Then what about his tier two and three spells? Would they reach even higher heights?

Getting excited about the prospects of his spells, he shelved these thoughts for the moment and went ahead to check both his hands and feet to see the spell's result. He even lifted his uniform to check if his whole body had been covered with granite.

"Congratulations, Emery. That is one of the rare spells that can only be cast by the people who have multiple affinities, which in this case, earth and darkness," said Magus Xion when he saw that Emery's body was covered with granite.

"Usually, this spell can only be learned by higher ranking acolytes, but in your case, sure it's special and interesting. Moreover, the fact that you won't find this spell in the shop easily and it requires certain conditions to master makes your case even more extraordinary," said Magus Xion, while nodding in approval of Emery's newly learnt spell.

True enough, Emery could tell that his single element [Stone Skin] couldn't hold a candle against this [Granite Skin], not even close. Not just because it was categorized as a tier three spell, but also because the difference in toughness between the two spells was really big.

He then tried to cut himself with his sword, if before he would've felt it hurt, this time, it felt more like a prickle on his skin instead.

Emery got on one knee, giving his gratitude again to the magus in front of him. "Thank you very much, Master."

Magus Xion waved his hand dismissively and said, "Honestly, I wish I could take the credit for it. But this is all due to my master's idea, the grand magus, as well as yours. Don't discredit yourself, since this whole matter wouldn't be possible without your efforts."

Emery, however, didn't really believe the magus's words and thought his master was trying to be humble, which made him admire the man even more. He believed wholeheartedly, if it weren't for this person bringing him to the grand magus on his own accord, Emery wouldn't even dare to think any of this would be possible in his dreams.

Aside from that, Magus Xion also patiently guided him for the last 24 hours, giving him his utmost care and attention. So, in Emery's heart whoever would be his next master, even if they were a magus or a grand magus, Magus Xion would always be his first master.

Keeping up the spell, Emery tried to test it out further by punching a nearby rock, but as he walked towards it, he could tell that the spirit energy flowing in his [Granite Skin] had become unstable and, not long after, the spell broke and his body returned to being normal.

Feeling that the spell was broken, Emery turned his head toward his master while scratching his head and smiling awkwardly.

"You still need more practice to get used to it, Emery. Be patient," said Magus Xion.

"Yes, Master. I will always keep your words in my mind," said Emery as he sat back inside the gazebo.

Once Emery had taken his seat, Magus Xion, who was staring at the sky, called for Emery's attention. Emery followed Magus Xion's gaze into the sky as a green bird, slightly translucent, swooped down, stopping just before them or more precisely Emery.

It flapped its wings just in front of Emery and suddenly, the bird dispersed into shimmering green particles. At the same time, the symbol on Emery's left palm shone brightly and gave him a notification.

[You have just received a message!]

[Emery! What do you think about my new spell? Do you like it? It's a wind-based summon spell! I'm great, aren't I? Anyway, we have been looking for you since yesterday. The Magus Games starts tomorrow and we need you to hurry up and come back, so we can discuss and prepare for the event. The meeting place of course will be at my residence, tonight. PS: You can come earlier again if you like. So we can finish our... discussion - Klea]

Emery couldn't help but smile when he saw the message from Klea. As a result, Magus Xion, who was still sitting beside him, could also see the blossoming smile on Emery's face.

"From your smiling face, it looks like you've received a message from a girl, haven't you?" said Magus Xion, smirking.

Emery gave his master's attempt to tease him a slight chuckle and said, "No, master. It's from a friend."

"If you say so," said Magus Xion, his smirk getting wider. He then quickly schooled his expression back to normal. "Anyway, I knew that tomorrow is the start of the Magus Games. Hence, I'll guess that you'll have to go and prepare yourself now."

Emery who heard this nodded his head and couldn't help but feel a little down at the thought of leaving his master. Magus Xion clearly saw the expression on Emery's face and patted the young man's shoulder.

"I have already taught you what you needed to know as per my master. You should be able to continue on your own now. I wish for your success tomorrow, Emery," said Magus Xion with a small smile.

Looking at the man who had guided him, Emery nodded and gave the magus his gratitude again. "Yeah... Thank you for everything you've done for me, Master," said Emery as he stood and got ready to leave the gazebo.

Just before he left the place, Magus Xion said, "Wait. I want you to have this. Just think of it as your actual reward for your successful effort of managing to last for more than three minutes."

The magus handed Emery a single-edged sword made out of a dark metal. Emery received it and checked the stats.

[Long sword - Reunite - Tier 3]

[Length 1.2 meter, 3 kilogram]

"Emery, this is what we call a high grade normal weapon. It's not enchanted like the other tier 3 weapons, but it gets its tier three grade from the quality of its material. It's a perfect weapon for a magus who specializes in infusion spells."

Emery held and swung the sword with his hand, trying to feel its balance and weight. It really was the finest sword he had ever seen and wielded. There was a strength within this worn out looking sword. As he was inspecting the sword, Emery then noticed a marking on its handle. XU.

"Master, what is this XU engraved on the handle?"

"Oh, that? That is my initials."

Hearing that, Emery was shocked and blurted out words stuttering. "Y-Your initials?"

"Yeah, it's my initials," said the magus with a faint smile. "That is my old sword, the one I used when I was an acolyte just like you. That's the initials of my name, Xion Uluric," said Magus Xion.

Hearing the magus's explanation, Emery was truly shocked and could only stand there, mouth agape with incredulity. This time, Emery knelt in front of the magus, sword in front, "Truly my deepest gratitude, Master Xion."

Before leaving, Emery suddenly realized that he hadn't yet joined the darkness institute. The magus gave a look of disbelief with half a smile since Emery had been able to get guidance from a magus and even a grand magus, while not being part of the institute. Emery wasn't even supposed to be able to join his darkness class, much less his personal training if that was the case, but one way or another, fate had pulled its strings for him. Thinking about this, Emery could only laugh awkwardly and quickly accept the invitation.

[You are now member of the darkness institute]

Emery then received his three free spells. He decided to choose [Curse - tier 1 - Darkness Element] a spell that weakened his opponent, [Hide in Shadow - tier 2 - Darkness Element], a spell that he had seen the effectiveness personally, which would be also very useful once he returned to his world and [Enfeeble Blade - tier 3], the same offensive spell used by Granny.

Knowing that he would struggle to cast his water offensive spells, it would probably be best for him to have some offensive spells from the darkness element he could rely on.

Emery then returns to the residence to meet the other and to make the final preparations for the Magus Games. Finally the next day the notification came

[One hour till the games start, all participants are invited to gather in the great assembly]

## **Chapter 155: The Day**

Day 10

[One hour till the games start, all participants are invited to gather in the Great Assembly Hall]

Emery and his four friends decided to meet up when they saw the notifications. Emery met with all the boys, when Klea, the only one who hadn't arrived yet, jumped out of nowhere, which resulted in her stumbling and almost falling to the ground. However, she quickly stabilized herself and looked at the four boys in front of her with an excited expression, even more than usual.

"The game will begin soon! I'm so excited for this," said Klea as the expression on her face clearly showed her excitement. She then observed the four boys in front of her or more precisely, the outfit they currently wore.

"The four of you looked so cute and handsome now, especially with our matching uniforms," said Klea with a smile.

At the moment, Klea was admiring their group outfits for the impending Magus Games. The five of them were wearing an obsidian-black shirt and pants as their uniforms, coupled with a grey-colored leather vest with streaks of white.

Although this vest could look dull when combined with the color of their uniform, Emery and the rest were truly happy with these tier two protective vests. Unexpectedly, all of these outfits were provided by Klea and were given to them to be worn today.

[Protective Vest - Tier 2]

[Light Armor]

[Weight : 3 kilogram]

[Protective Energy 100/100]

Each of these Armors cost at least 5000 spirit stones, Julian was shocked and couldn't help but say. "Klea... Did you spend all of your stones on these outfits? I really appreciate the effort, Klea, but... you shouldn't have done-"

Before Julian could finish his words, Klea quickly waved her hand expressing her disagreement. 'Ai... It's just a small amount of stones. It's no biggie at all." said Klea. She then looked at the others, whose expressions were more or less the same as Julian, and her expression turned soft.

"I knew that all of you spent your stones on the spirit serums and weapons that you needed. That's why I did that."

The four boys were about to be touched by her words, when suddenly they heard her muttering "Heh, men always weapons first."

Klea realized she was speaking her thoughts out loud again. She then hurriedly waved her hands and said, "Anyway, you guys don't have to worry about that at all. I've used my entire charm to get the best discount for these outfits. Therefore, it was not that expensive."

"And also, after seeing you guys looking so handsome and dashing on those outfits... I felt that every stone I spent was completely worth it." said Klea.

Emery could see that Chumo seemed to have many words he wanted to say to her. He could even swear that he saw Chumo's eyes were all teary. It seemed what Klea did really moved his feelings.

Taking another look at the gift prepared by Klea they currently wore, all the boys were truly touched by her heartfelt gestures; including Emery himself. He had been too excited and busy with his new skills.

He spent too much time on his practice and didn't get the chance to shop around yesterday. Fortunately for him, thanks to Klea, he was now fully prepared.

Emery stood up and smiled at Klea, "Thank you so much for your gifts, Klea." He then turned around and faced the others, "To not let Klea's gifts go to waste, we need to make sure that we do our best during the Games. Do you guys agree?"

"Yeah!" shouted everyone loudly, startling the wildlives around them.

The three of them who were still seated quickly stood up as this group of five people went to the place, where their class gathered. Not long after their arrival, Magus Minerva came before them, "I truly hope that all of you can succeed in the Games, but I would already be happy if just half of you managed to finish the first stage. Nevertheless, do your best, I wish you all the success."

They then went to the location where the portal was. When they walked along the path towards the portal, they could see dozens of other acolytes who also joined the Games walk alongside them. They then quickly entered the portal and went into the Great Assembly Hall.

As they reached the Great Assembly Hall, they could see hundreds of second year acolytes from a hundred classes had gathered and lined up inside the hall. Just like before, one could see several magus standing in front of the huge stairs. However, the headmaster has nowhere to be seen.

Emery could see that most of the hundreds of acolytes here had worn their fighting gears. The ones who didn't most likely had theirs kept inside their storage ring and would only take them out when needed. All the acolytes were visibly excited as they waited for the game to begin.

Using this opportunity where every second year acolytes were gathered, Emery once again tried to find Silva among the sea of people. Unfortunately, he still didn't manage to find her. To his surprise, Emery saw another girl he didn't expect to find. The skinny pink haired girl also noticed Emery and quickly approached him.

"Emery! I'm glad to see you here."

This skinny pink haired girl was the only other person, beside Silva, who survived from the incident near Elder Respite last time. Emery saw that Mags seemed hesitant to speak.

"What is it, Mags? You can say it to me," asked Emery with a smile.

"I-I have been wanting to find you to give you my gratitude and apology for the incident last time. After I left you behind and managed to escape alive, the guilt always gnawed at me ever since I realized I cowardly left you to die." said Mags with tears in her eyes, "A-After I heard that you and the other girl defeated the monstrous orc, I had tried to find and meet you, but I wasn't able to do so."

"I-I'm truly sorry."

Silent for a while, Emery then opened his mouth, "Don't worry about it, Mags, we were all just trying to survive that night."

"Thank you, Emery. I owe you my life. Therefore, if you ever need anything you can come and find me." said Mags while patting her chest, "By the way, I'm from Class 36."

Just before Mags walked away, Emery suddenly said something, "Actually..."

Mags who already turned her body quickly turned back towards Emery. She then saw Emery take out a bag from inside his storage ring and shoved it to the girl's hands. When she opened the bag, Mags could see six green-colored potions. Raising her head, she looked at Emery in confusion.

Seeing her confusion, Emery calmly said, "This was the reward that we got from the clover mission. We received nine of them and I already took my share. Those were yours and Cole's share."

Mags was startled when she heard Emery's words, "Yo-You are weird, Emery. I don't deserve any of these after I left you behind like that and that included Cole. The guy most likely died already so you can keep them all." said Mags as she returned the bag to Emery.

Receiving the bag, Emery said, "I see... I'll keep them then"

The pink haired girl then braved herself to stare Emery's eyes directly, "Emery, you truly are a good person," said Mags to Emery, before she suddenly jumped and hugged him.

While being hugged by Mags, Emery could hear a soft whisper in his ear, "Thank you, Emery."

The girl then released her hug and quickly left, soon her figure disappeared among the crowd. Emery was still shocked by Mags' abrupt action, when he heard a cough coming from his back.

"Ahem! I see that you are much more popular than I thought... Am I right, Emery?"

Turning his head, Emery saw Klea stared at him with an emotionless face, "How did you charm all those girls, E-M-E-R-Y?"

"C-C-Charm?" stunned by the sudden accusation, Emery stuttered. "No, no, no. She's only a friend."

"Oh? A friend, you say?" asked Klea, still maintaining that emotionless face. "It seems that you are getting too many of these so-called friends. I guess you need to be leashed."

Hearing Klea's words, Emery's mind suddenly filled with disturbing imaginations, followed by unspeakable cold sweats running down his back.

At the same time as Klea finished her words, the crowds suddenly turned rowdy, attracting Emery and the others' attention. Emery could see that the headmaster had already arrived on top of the stairs.

"Huh! Once again, our discussion was disturbed," said Klea. She then walked closer to Emery and grabbed his arm with her both hands, "It has started"

## **Chapter 156: The Magus Game**

On the top of the large stairs, dozens of men and women wearing robes of different colors could be seen standing in front of a huge purple tower. In the center of this crowd of people, an old man with a long white beard was standing firmly. Not a single person on the ground could deny the charisma emanated from this man, Altus Drayden, the headmaster of the Magus Academy, as he simply stared at them with his profound gaze.

Dozens of tiny transparent blue cubes flew around the sea of acolytes, before they flew further above the grand assembly and projected a large screen. It was the same that had been used to display the list of names last year, this time though, it displayed a close-up image of the headmaster's face.

Almost everyone inside the hall was amazed when they saw the distinguished man up close through the screen. Many of them were looking around the cubes, as well as the screen, trying to figure out how they worked.

They then noticed the screen also showed the faces of the magus beside the headmaster. When they looked up, they saw the tiny cubes were in front of the person on the screen. It turned out that the screen was able to project whatever those tiny cubes saw.

Hearing the loud chattering among the acolytes, the headmaster immediately stomped his staff. A deafening sound quickly echoed through the hall, stopping all the chattering of the hundred acolytes, causing them all to look at the old man with a long white beard. These acolytes stared at him intently and opened their ears to listen. Unfazed by thousands of pairs of eyes staring right at him, Altus Drayden calmly opened his mouth as his voice began to spread throughout the whole hall.

"The Magus Games are a yearly event to celebrate progress and acknowledge those who have talent. In the next 20 days, for the second year, this will be your trial, so we can find out who deserves to be given the best the academy can offer" said the headmaster. He then looked at the sea of acolytes beneath him and added. "May the best acolyte win!"

Hearing the headmaster's encouragement, all of them showed their enthusiasm for the event. They wanted to do their best.

After the headmaster said his words, a beautiful magus stepped forward in high spirit. "Dear acolytes, I'm Serena and I will be the host of today's game. The game itself will be observed by the institution and our guests coming from outside."

When the acolytes heard the game was not only observed by the institution's magus, but also by others outside of it, their already high enthusiasm shot even higher.

"This will be our biggest and most anticipated event so far. That's why I suggest you all give your best in competing and don't ever give up!" Magus Selena said.

"Always try to look your best, especially when you are being approached by this tiny cube... do you understand?" continued the beautiful magus with a cheeky smile.

Most acolytes had already read all the information they could put their hands on about the Magus Games. They had gathered as much information as possible to better prepare themselves, with some of them even having detailed information. Emery and the others did the same, because no one wanted to lose in this game and they had decided to get ready ahead of time.

The Magus Games themselves were separated into three rounds. The first one will be held today, the acolyte could join the next round, that would be held in the next ten days, if they passed the first round, simple as that.

The rule would be the same until its last round. In the end, a bunch of groups that could make it to the last round would be considered the most talented ones. Even though the rule was simple and looked easy, the challenge might not be as easy as they thought.

The beautiful blond magus continued her speech, "The classes will be divided into groups, 10 classes per group. If you are from class 45. You will be in group 4 and so on. Now, it's time for you to team up! Hope you have wisely chosen your partners, as finding good teammates itself is part of being one the best magus."

An information suddenly came from the symbol on Emery's palm.

[Will you be participating in the Magus Game?]

[Yes]

[Choose your team]

When Emery was trying to make sense of the words he just received, another information suddenly popped up inside his head.

[Julian Kaesar from Class 77 would like to invite you into the team. Will you accept?]

[Yes]

After Emery accepted the invitation, he could see that Julian had added all their names and they were now a team.

Clapping his hand in excitement, Julian couldn't hold his enthusiasm anymore and said, "Alright, guys. The five of us are already in one team. We are Team 99 of group 7. I'm sure that if all of us can cooperate well this round, we can win this game!"

Klea, who heard Julian's words, rolled her eyes and sighed before saying, "Ai... Can't we just make our own team name? This one screams 'silly' to me."

Thinking for a moment about the rules of the game, Julian opened his mouth, "Uhm... I'm sure there is no rule that holds us back from naming our own group." Turning his head to Klea, he said, "We can pick our own name if we want to. What do you have in mind, Klea?"

Klea fell silent thinking about the possible names, while others kept their mouth shut. Seeing the situation, Julian said, "What about you others? Does anyone have another idea about the group name? Emery? Chumo?"

"Wait. Why come you didn't say my name?" asked Thrax, annoyed.

"Because... your brain full of muscle?" replied Julian.

Just before another fight broke out between the two boys, Klea finally woke up from her deep thought, "How about '5 Jewels'?"

"5 Jewels?" asked Emery in curiosity.



Klea looked at Emery and said, "Yeah! I like the sound of it and it also represents our team's personality better." Turning her gaze towards others, she asked, "What do you think, guys? It sounds great, right?"

Seeing the three boys' silence, Klea crossed her arms and said, "Ok what about.. 'The Queen's Warriors'? I'm fine with either of them."

Looking at the expression plastered on the boys' faces, Emery could sense that all of them dislike the name Klea just suggested. But he knew all too well that none of them would dare to say no to Klea. They would rather agree to anything she said rather than facing the 'consequences'.

"How about 'The Eagle'?" blurted out Julian after the momentary silence. Thrax replied, "Is this about the Roman and their eagle?"

"It's a symbol meant to inspire others," said Julian calmly.

Thrax scoffed at Julian's words, "Huh?! You should choose lion or bear if you want to inspire..." said Thrax, "Eagle.. Heh, what a joke."

Feeling the familiar tense atmosphere, Klea said, "Okay, stop it you two," she then turned her head towards Emery, "Emery, what do you think?"

Rubbing his chin while contemplating, Emery then said, "I think we should just keep it simple and use our home as the group name."

"The name of our planet? So... Earth Magus?" asked Klea.

"It's so plain..." commented Thrax, "But, I guess it sounds fine."

Hearing the agreement from the loud bull, Julian then quickly adds, "Alright then, Earth Magus it is." Turning his head towards Chumo, Emery saw him nodding his head in agreement.

The beautiful blonde magus once again speaking, "Now, I will announce this year's first stage theme." The chatter immediately quietened down when the acolytes heard that. Magus Serena flashed a smile before saying, "This year's first stage theme is... Defend the Bridge!"

The crowd of hundreds of acolytes started to turn wild, when they heard this year's theme.

'It's a fairly easy game to understand. Just stand on the bridge and don't fail on defending it!' said Serena, looking very excited as if she was the one who would participate in the game.

"Defend the bridge?" muttered Emery in confusion. In all honesty, he never really knew all the different themes that could occur in the game's stages. Julian, on the other hand, looked very worried.

Noticing the expression on his face, Emery asked, "What's wrong, Julian?"

"This is bad, guys. This is the worst possible theme for teams such as us."

Confused, Emery asked again, "What do you mean?"

"Don't you get it, Emery? It will be much harder to defend the bridge with only five people. In this theme, the number of the team members really affects the outcome" explained Julian.

While Emery was still thinking about the matter, Magus Serena gave the last announcement regarding the first stage.

"The objective on this stage is simple. Just like the previous first stage games, this will be an elimination game, only 50 teams from each group are allowed to move to the next round. This means the game will not stop until leaving only the top 50. Easy, right? Aren't you all excited?"

[Total team of group 7 :121 team]

50 teams out of 121. Being able to pass this stage meant that they would be in the top 40% of the acolytes. Realizing that, Emery was determined to pass this stage no matter what he had to do later.

Seeing the enthusiastic acolytes, Magus Serena said, "Without further due, you may all step into the portal. The game will start shortly."

"Good luck!"

### **Chapter 157: Defend the Bridge**

[Welcome to Magus Games! You will be now sent to a virtual arena, the pain will be real, death, however, won't.]

[Body and personal items have been scanned. All items above tier 3 are prohibited]

[You are part of Team 99]

[Your point : 0]

[Team point : 0]

[Objective - Defend the Orb at the Bridge]

[The Magus Games will start in 5 minutes]

Emery and the rest of the acolytes filed toward a portal. After they had entered it, Emery and his friends appeared inside a small square room. Their surroundings groaned, as the floor they were standing on shook, they felt themselves being lifted up. Then the ceiling hissed open; when the ground stopped moving, they looked around to see what their battlefield would be.

They found themselves standing on a large stone bridge that stretched up to an endless nothingness on both ends. They then saw a large shining bluish orb floating not far from them. Moving to the edge of the bridge, which seemed to be around 8-meters wide, all they could see was pitch black darkness. However, a distance from them, there were other bridges with people standing on, as well as the same orb. Those were most likely the other acolytes from other teams.

Once Emery and his friends had somewhat familiarized themselves with the area, they moved toward the bluish orb. Julian was already there and seemed to be pondering on something. With his arms crossed, he muttered, "Virtual Arena? What does it mean?"

"I think it means our real body is not actually here," said Klea calmly, receiving a confused gaze from Julian. Shaking her head, she continued, "What's important is that we won't die because of this game."

But remember, the pain will be still very much real." Turning her head towards the other boys, particularly the bull-headed boy Thrax, she added, "So don't go around and start doing reckless things."

As if her words fell on deaf ears, Thrax grinned and summoned his brand new tier three spear and tier two shield. The spear had a bronze body as well as a vanguard, however, since they were on a different world, they just had the color bronze. Its full length was taller than Thrax and when he stomped the ground with its end, small pieces of rock shook, indicating how heavy it was.

Nevertheless, Thrax swung it around effortlessly, as if it had the weight of a feather, hyping himself up. As for the shield, it too was bronze colored. It covered almost half of his body and its base appeared to be very crude and rough. Still, like his bronze spear, one shouldn't underestimate it by looking at its appearance.

"We won't die?" said Thrax with a scorn. "I had expected something more from the academy... How can a safe battle be compared or even become a real challenge?"

"Aren't you too confident, barbarian?! Let's see if you can back up your words later," sneered Julian when he heard Thrax's somewhat provocative words. Julian then proceeded to take out a short sword and shield from his storage ring, both of them gleaming a crystalline silver.

Shaking his head as he watched those two quarrel, Emery turned his attention back at the end of the bridge. When they only had one minute left, Emery noticed a light peeking through. Squinting his eyes, he finally saw that there was a huge 5-meter-tall stone black gate that was slowly opening its doors.

Seeing the stone doors were opening, Emery gestured to his teammates and pointed his finger at the doors, prompting the others to also notice what was happening, "So, I guess we are going to fight whatever comes out from that stone door." Turning around, he continued, "Any idea, guys?"

Holding his chin and thinking for a while, Julian then said, "We don't know yet what will be our enemy and also the bridge is quite wide... I guess we should just create a line formation, where the four of us will stand at the front while Klea will be at the back protecting the orb. What do you guys think?"

Chumo, who was always silent, made a hand signal and took out a bow from his storage and then put it on his back. He then silently walked over to Klea's side. Julian, who saw that, nodded and said, "Alright then, you will be at the back with Klea, Chumo. In fact, I feel much better knowing that both of you will be the one protecting the orb."

Julian then turned toward Emery and said, "What do you think, Emery? We all will have a wider area to defend. Can you do it?"

Emery nodded with a smile and took out his recently acquired equipment. The black sword received gazes of interest from his friends. He had been itching to try out his new sword skills ever since he learned them and now, the time had finally come. Staring at Thrax, Julian asked with a reluctant face, "Okay. Anything you want to add?"

"Nah. Just make sure you can keep up with me, roman," said Thrax. He then shouted in excitement, "Bring it on! Ahoooo! Ahooo!"

Right after the shout ended, Emery saw little dark dots appear from the light peeking out of the stone gate. Thudding of footsteps resounded until they could vaguely see several figures running towards

them. The virtual arena didn't have a light source, but every one of them could clearly see the nearing green skinned creatures, about half the size of a human, heading towards their direction. These creatures had bulging maddened eyes, little to no clothes and sharp elongated ears and noses. Each one of them was holding a different type of weapon, ranging from swords, sabers, knives, bows, clubs and so on. An information appeared in their mind as they looked at these creatures.

[Level One - Goblins]

[Battle power : 15]

[These are the lowest failed creations of the elves, but their sheer number, combined with their madness when attacking, made so these creatures should not be underestimated]

Dozens of these creatures were flowing out from the stone gate and began to run at them while screaming in shrieking noises. Klea, who was currently at the back, couldn't help herself but shout, when she saw those creatures approaching them, "Aiii! I'm sure those are the ugliest creatures I've ever seen." She then took out a staff with a purplish crystal on top of it, which shortly exuded a purplish bright light as she chanted a spell.

[Wind Sphere]

When the spell chant finished, a rotating ball of wind streamed rapidly on top of her staff and shot toward the group of goblins. The ball of wind crashed into the middle of the rushing goblins, throwing a dozen of them out of the bridge into the pitch black darkness on the edges of the bridge. If these creatures were normal living beings, they would have probably been struck with fear. However, they didn't seem to be affected in the least, as they continued to run with even greater madness in their eyes towards the group of humans. The spell attack was followed by a black arrow that could be seen travelling through the air and hitting one of the shouting goblins at the front, effectively killing it.

Headshot!

The black arrow was released by Chumo using his tier three unique bow, Black Longbow. The arrow seemed to be made from spirit energy as it immediately disintegrated after piercing through the goblin's head. Chumo then just constantly aimed his bow, continuing to release spirit arrows over and over, killing the goblins one by one, which also disappeared after a few seconds.

With the battle power stats that were shown, the group could tell that these creatures named goblin were nothing to worry about. This matter was also proved and supported by the fact of how easy those creatures were destroyed by Klea's spells and Chumo's arrows. They had, after all, fought with hundreds of level 3 beasts called Skyglazers, whose battle power was twice of these level 1 creatures.

These ugly creatures were still a good distance away when Emery stopped Klea, who was about to release another spell at the horde of goblins. Klea returned a puzzled gaze at him, however, Emery calmly said, "It's very likely this stage will be a long prolonged battle. It's better if we save and conserve our spirit energy as best as we can."

Klea and Chumo seemed to have understood his intent as they nodded and lowered their weapons after hearing Emery's reasoning. Emery smiled and was about to continue talking when suddenly Julian shouted and grabbed his arm.

"Come, Emery. The goblins are coming and we need you at the front to hold the line."

Smiling helplessly, Emery immediately turned around and walked with Julian but before he did that, Emery said something to Klea and Chumo while smiling faintly.

"Just watch."

### **Chapter 158: Green Creatures**

Emery, Thrax, and Julian stepped forward and took their fighting stance, while the dozens of green creatures continued their advance.

Julian raised his crystalline silver sword and positioned his shield in front of his chest, eyeing the approaching creatures, his demeanor portrayed that of an emperor ready to annihilate his enemy.

Thrax placed his shield in front of him, positioning his tier three bronze spear horizontally, as he prepared to charge forward and thrust his spear. Julian raised his eyebrows at the defensive yet offensive stance Thrax chose.

Emery didn't wanna lose to his two friends, he immediately brandished his sword, placed his left leg in front and lowered his center of gravity, giving him the option to dash forward or slash using the power of his entire body.

Screech! Screech!

Thunderous shrieks echoed in the air, as the horde of goblins quickly approached the location where Emery and the rest took guard. Seeing the green creatures up close with their maddened expressions and their red bulging eyes, any normal person would receive a great shock to their spines, not for Emery and his two friends, however.

The moment the distance between them closed to about 3 meters, Emery pushed his foot forward and shot toward the goblin swinging his sword downwards!

Splat! \*Thud\* \*Thud\*

The little humanoid creature was instantly cut into two parts from its neck to waist when Emery's slash hit its body, followed by sounds of its two bisected parts falling to the ground. Seeing the goblin's cleaved body and how easy the blade sliced through it, Emery couldn't help himself but think about how the tier three Reunite Sword was way sharper than he had estimated. He never thought it would manage to cut the goblins so effortlessly. The black sword itself was more than enough to fight these monsters. Moreover, he didn't even use his [Dark Infusion] spell yet!

Nodding his head in satisfaction, once again thanking Magus Xion in his mind, Emery turned his attention back to the goblins and began the slaughter of his life. Dashing toward the horde of goblins, Emery proceeded to slash and kill the goblins efficiently as he moved his body left and right like an elusive ghost. At the same time he also dodged every strike the goblins threw at him. He continued to shift his position while his body ducked, hopped, tilted and spun as he faced the goblins' relentless attacks.

There were also moments where Emery couldn't change his position anymore due to the overwhelming number of goblins, but he kept his calm and smoothly parried the attacks he couldn't dodge.

The goblin, who got its attack parried by Emery, was pushed back and, before it managed to stabilize itself, a sight of a sword descending towards it was the last thing it saw before everything turned to darkness.

As more and more goblins approached and attacked them, Emery continued to utilize his sword skills as best as he could, while holding the line and preventing the goblins from bypassing him. Seeing the dozens of green creatures around him, he thanked his master's teachings about sword fighting as the only reason he still hadn't received any injury yet.

Flashing a faint smile on his face, Emery maintained his offensive and swung his sword over and over as the goblins began to fall to the ground, dead.

When another goblin died and fell to the ground, Emery finally noticed the goblin bodies he previously killed were nowhere to be found except the one he recently killed. Seeing the strange sight, Emery then decided to observe the goblin he had just killed. As he observed the goblin while still moving and swinging his sword, Emery noticed that its body gradually turned into particles of light and dispersed into the air, leaving only nothingness behind.

Looking at the strange yet fascinating sight, Emery couldn't help but think, "Well... that's sure is a one-of-the-kind experience." Smiling inwardly, he continued the massacre.

Every now and then, Emery would take a peek at the two teammates who were also fighting beside him to see how well they were doing. The two of them arguably had similar weapon skills to him, however, judging from the actions and decisions they made, Emery could tell that they both had much more battle experience than him.

For example, Julian didn't just use his shield to block the goblins' attack. Perhaps because of his Roman heritage, which allowed him to learn and adopt the Roman legionnaires' fighting style, Julian would also use his shield offensively, using it to bash the goblin ahead within reach. The powerful impact from the bash instantly threw the goblins back, as they crashed into the groups of goblins running behind, creating an opening that gave Julian an opportunity to kill the downed group.

Thrax, on the other hand, had a very different fighting style from Julian. Julian's Roman legionnaires style focused on a conservative approach, where he blocked and then countered every attack coming at him, while occasionally striking when there was an opening. Thrax fought as if he was an immovable mountain, his fighting style was focusing on an aggressive approach, where he charged ahead and fiercely stabbed every goblin in front of him, while occasionally using his big shield to obstruct the goblins' attacks and movement. As Emery watched, Thrax stabbed and swiped his spear at the goblins, he noticed Thrax's spear skill seemed to have advanced to another level.

Julian, who saw Emery's battle, was amazed by his performance and couldn't help but say, "Emery, you fight much better than I thought!" He then added his words while laughing, "But you really should have brought a shield to this kind of fight!"

Unfortunately Emery didn't have a shield on him, so he took out a tier two sword and started to do a dual wielding swordplay. The already wrecked horde of goblins were getting even more destroyed, when Emery began his dual wielding. He started attacking with the tier three sword and defending with the other one, tremendously increasing his destructiveness and efficiency. Even though Emery didn't

know much about dual sword technique, it seemed the fact he had once lost one of his arms allowed him to use both hands equally well.

So many goblins attacked them and coupled with Thrax advancing and leaving the line, several goblins managed to break through the line and stormed to the back. Luckily, Chumo was ready to welcome them. He took out a knife and used his [Shadow Steps] skill. As Chumo dashed forward towards the goblins, he left faint shadow trails on the ground, while the goblins fell dead to the ground one by one with their throat cut open. Thanks to Chumo's attack, not a single goblin managed to approach Klea.

"Thank you, Love.." said Klea as she winked at Chumo, making him miss a step and trip his leg.

Julian could only shake his head when he saw the situation, unsure of how to deal with that barbarian who charged to the front alone. Sighing his head, he decided to shout, which prompted others to look at him, "Guys, move back!" As soon as the others saw him, a yellow colored light immediately appeared below him as he chanted.

[Mud Wall - Tier 2 Earth Spell]

He slapped the ground and it violently shook! They could see two walls 2-meter-high rapidly rising on each side of the bridge, which then gradually merged at the top into some sort of funnel. This funnel created a much smaller opening, which further restricted the mobility of the goblins, rendering them unable to take advantage of their large numbers to attack. Making it easier for them to fight the incoming goblins.

Seeing the funnel, Klea shouted from the back, "That's smart, Julian!"

In the front within the funnel, it appeared that Thrax didn't even care about the creation of the funnel as he continued stabbing his spear towards the goblins. "Is that all you got, you monster?! It's not enough! Come! All of you!" screamed Thrax in excitement while laughing loudly.

The fight then kept going with Emery, Julian, and Thrax maintaining the line, while Klea and Chumo only occasionally attacked those who managed to bypass the trio.

Finally, after two hours of fighting, Emery could see that the waves of goblins coming out of the stone gate were slowly thinning. A few minutes later, the stone gate closed and a notification simultaneously appeared on their mind.

[Level 2 will shortly start in 5 minutes]

Seeing the notification, Thrax grew even more excited as he advanced alone leaving the line and ferociously killing the remaining goblins. "Come here, you little creatures! Bring everything you have to me!"

Seeing the reckless bull charging ahead, Julian instantly shouted with the loudest voice his throat could muster, "You're too far away, barbarian! Return to your position now!"

Julian's shout fell into deaf ears as Thrax continued his charge and killed all the remaining goblins in the distance. Watching the spectacle, Emery could only shake his head and smile wryly as he slashed the goblins nearby.

When the rest of the goblins had been killed, a bluish light suddenly shone upon Emery and the boys' bodies. The light made them comfortable as Emery could feel all his fatigue and exhaustion being swept away by it.

[Soothing Mist - Tier 2 Water Spell]

Turning his head towards Klea, who was holding her staff that was exuding a purplish glow, Emery said while smiling, "Thank you, Klea." He then turned his attention back to the stone gate that was slowly opening its doors again.

"Get ready, guys. The next wave is coming."

### **Chapter 159: Next Level**

The stone door creaked open once more and, this time, the silhouette covering the light was much larger.

Information regarding their upcoming enemies appeared in Emery and his friends' vision.

[Level Two - Hobgoblin]

[Battle power : 30]

[A bigger and thicker skinned goblin, three times the size and two times stronger than an ordinary one. The improved version of a failed creation.]

Even from a distance, everyone could see the next creature they were about to face was reminiscent of the goblin. Only this time, the hobgoblins were much larger: about three times the size of the small goblins they had fought against in the first round.

As the hobgoblins neared, the trembling of the stone bridge underneath Emery and his friends' feet grew more evident. The moment the hobgoblins were within striking distance, Klea once again preemptively struck and cast her [Wind Sphere], causing about two hobgoblins to fall to their deaths in the seemingly endless pit of darkness on which the foundation bridge took root from.

This caused a reaction in the hobgoblins, as those in the front hurried their steps. Once they were in front of the mudwalls Julian had summoned, the first hobgoblin raised its huge club and bashed it into thousands of pieces!

Julian cast his spell [Mudwall] only for it to be broken on the second time. This told them their tactic of funneling these hobgoblins into a more manageable wave would not work.

Fortunately, the ugly creatures were still a good 200-meters away from the orb. Their numbers were lesser than the goblins of the first round. Moreover, the 8-meter wide stone bridge only allowed half a dozen hobgoblins to attack in a row.

As the hobgoblins reached the 150-meter mark, a dark arrow whistled through the air and pierced through one of the eye sockets of the most forward hobgoblin, felling it dead before vanishing into particles of light. A second cut past overhead Emery and hit another hobgoblin!

[Harrowing Longbow - Tier 3]



[Length 1.3 meter, weight 4.2 kilogram]

[Special skill - Dark missile]

Chumo's long range tier three bow was really great. Not only because it was powerful, but because Chumo didn't have to stock arrows for it to be fired, which meant, as long as Chumo had enough spirit energy, it would never run out. This was, however, its drawback too: if the user didn't manage the consumption of his spirit energy well, it would spell trouble for them.

"Don't worry they are not that difficult!" shouted Julian, who had ran and attacked the hobgoblin behind the second one Chumo had eliminated, while removing his crystalline silver sword from the heart of a hobgoblin. "Save your energy, Chumo, Klea."

Emery had also rushed forward alongside Thrax and Julian, facing the fourth hobgoblin, he raised his tier two sword, managing to block the creature's strike with his sword in an x-guard. True to hobgoblins' being thrice the overall strength of goblins, the hobgoblins' large maces threw him back a couple of steps. This time, he could feel their swings did have some weight in them.

After experiencing his first stagger against these creatures, Emery knew he couldn't keep blocking them. Parrying was an option, however, it wouldn't be sufficient against a larger creature that was at least three heads taller than him.

Emery then noticed that although these hobgoblins had twice the battle power of that of a goblin, its physical prowess was at least three times of it while its speed was lesser. He figured that the increase in battle power didn't necessarily reflect these creatures having an overall increase on all aspects of their fighting capability, so he decided to use his speed to fight these monsters instead.

And like what he had expected, its agility was lacking compared to him and his friends. Emery easily dodged a hobgoblin's large mace and managed to finally score a kill by piercing its chest with his black sword.

This path of attacking and dodging was also being used by Julian. Thrax, instead, seemed to welcome the blows through his bronze shield.

Therefore, as long as they managed to continually get out of harm's way, these hobgoblins were lesser of a threat than the goblins earlier.

As more time passed, countless hobgoblins fell to the swords of Emery, Julian and Thrax. This second level couldn't be said to be harder than the first one. On the first round, what had given trouble were the sheer number of the goblins flooding out of the stone gate into the funnel. Although the goblins were weaker, having to face multiple enemies, about five at a time, had been a challenge for the three youths on the front line, it was way more taxing than facing two hobgoblins at a time. Even if these hobgoblins were three times stronger than the goblins.

"Hahaha! This is even easier than the first level!" roared Thrax skewering two hobgoblins, deeply immense with his own fight.

Another hour had passed and they were getting a bit tired, nevertheless, the three youths, along with the occasional support from Klea and Chumo, dominated the battle.

In one of Emery's encounters, he had tried using his tier two sword as his main weapon since he had decided on dodging instead of parrying and blocking. That hadn't been a good idea though since his tier two sword had barely cut the hobgoblin's thicker skin.

He realized that, if they had fought in the Magus Games using tier one or two weapons, surely they would have had a really hard time fighting this second level. He wondered what would be of them on the third level? Luckily, due to a stroke of luck with that girl's master, they had managed to get sufficient spirit stones and upgrade their weapon, else this battle would not have been so easy.

After the last of the hobgoblins fell from Thrax's spear. Thrax let out a battle cry, while lifting his spear and shield high in the air. A second later, new information entered their sight.

[Level 3 will start in 5 minutes]

Emery and his friends took out some drinks to refresh themselves. They all gave each other a satisfactory smile for they were able to finish the hundred hobgoblins five minutes earlier than the announcement of the third level.

"Look, I can tell we will win this game," said Thrax after pouring water all over him. He raised his weapon and shield getting ready to fight.

The five minute had elapsed and the stone gate threw itself open once more. This time, from the shadow of the gate, a rhythmic drumming resounded, which reverberated into their bones.

Information about the level three enemies filled their sights.

[Level Three - Orcs]

[Battle power : 50]

[These creatures make up the bulk of the elves' armies. After the failed creations of goblins and hobgoblin, the elves managed to create this third tier of creatures: Orcs. They are grunts raised to become the tools of war. The ultimate race, bloodlust for battle.]

The figure of creatures with beefy arms, torsos, thighs and large yellowish teeth exited the stone gate. Its height was about the same as the hobgoblins, however, their crimson-red eyes radiated an immense thirst for battle as they orcs walked in sync with each other in a simple row.

At that moment, a distant memory resurfaced in Emery's mind. He had fought with these orcs before in Elder's Respite, so he knew what capabilities these orcs had. Of course, he had become much stronger from that time. But a sense of caution still filled him up.

"This doesn't look good," said Julian with a frown on his face. "Barbarian! Get back here now."

"Bah, you're such a worrywart, roman. I'm sure it won't be that much different. Watch as I impale these orcs to the ground." Immediately after the last words exited Thrax's mouth, he dashed and used the momentum of his charge to deliver a deadly thrust into the orc's chest!

Blood splashed across Thrax's face, making the orc roar! However, these were orcs, not goblins or hobgoblins. In Thrax's earlier exploits, this would have been the moment where the enemy would dissipate into fluffs of lights, however, that didn't happen this time. Instead, the orc let out another

maddened roar as it grabbed the body of the spear whilst a nearby orc jumped at Thrax swinging its huge cleaver sideways!

Thrax tried to pull out the spear but it wouldn't budge. And in that split second, Thrax failed to lift his shield as his body received the full force of the second orc's cleaver! He got thrown back to where Emery and Julian were standing. Emery felt the need to buy some time so immediately cast [Mudwall] just to hold the orc until Thrax could get back his bearings.

"Excellent choice of spell, Emery," said Julian. He then shook his head at the Thrax who had a reddened face. "Did you enjoy playing with your new toy, barbarian?" Julian mocked.

"Dammit! W-what are they!" bellowed Thrax while using his spear, which had been pulled out due to the force of the orc's swing. His uniform now had a rip on it. Underneath it was a dark, metallic clothing which seemed to have glowed for a moment. He then checked the status of his tier two protective armor .

[Protective Vest - Tier 2]

[Light Armor]

[Weight : 3 kilograms]

[Protective Energy 69/100]

With just one swing from the creature called orc, Thrax had lost a third of its protective energy.

"Huh! Damn green creature!" retorted Thrax.

Just as expected with only one hit, the mudwall created was easily destroyed. When the orc finally was only a few steps away from the front line, Thrax screamed and his body glowed with an aura.

"[Battle Art Skill!]"

### **Chapter 160: Battle Up**

A faint aura emitted from Thrax's body as he let out his rage, activating his battle arts. Thrax shouted, "[Battle Art Ability - Strength Up] [Battle Art Ability - Speed Up]!"

As soon as the aura diminished, Thrax's battle power increased to 40! Once the orc that had cleaved at him was about to swing down its cleaver for the second time, Thrax performed another battle art. "[Vicious Barrage]!"

He thrust his tier three bronze spear and multiple after images appeared on top of each thrust! The first row of orcs stopped in their tracks and at the moment Thrax pulled his spear back, the orcs' bodies spurted blood as well as numerous holes!

Battle Arts Abilities were skills taught from the Combat Institute. Unlike spells, these skills didn't require the understanding of elements, but, nevertheless, they still required a lot of practice, talent in physical combat fighting as well as spirit energy consumption.

To perform a battle art ability, the user would also have to channel some of their spiritual energy from their core into the parts of their body, where they wanted it to manifest.

To use the [Vicious Barrage] skill, for example, Thrax had to channel the energy, including the knowledge of the technique, to his spear arm exclusively.

As for the other battle art skills Thrax used, they were harder to control and master since he would have to channel them into every fiber of his being to improve his overall fighting capability. And adding to the fact that he had activated three battle art skills in quick succession, it showed his great talent into becoming a combat magus.

After the first six orcs fell, Thrax raised his arms and shouted, "Did you see that!"

With just one move, Thrax had defeated the first row of the orcs. The second row wasn't far away and before Thrax was able to do anything, Julian ran and said, "Hmpf, show off. Now's my turn!"

Julian got on one knee and touched the stone bridge. A yellowish glow emitted from the ground beneath him and crept its way underneath the second row of orcs, extending even further. Julian cast his new tier three earth spell. "[Stone spikes]!"

Yellow circles appeared below the orcs, as the line of light became asunder with waves of small spikes, until it sprang out the larger spikes piercing a dozen orcs and throwing the others from the edge of the bridge into the abyss!

The spell Julian had used managed to eliminate three times the number Thrax had managed with his vicious barrage skill. And, since the stone spikes were categorized as a tier three spell, its durability was above the mudwall spell Julian and Emery had cast, giving them a little break, while the fourth row of orcs attempted to break the spikes with their weapons.

"Aaargh, fine! I applaud you, roman!" said Thrax.

"Thank you. That took a lot of my energy though. I won't be able to cast it again for quite some time," replied Julian, trying to get back his breathing into an even pace.

Amazed by what his two friends had achieved so far, Emery knew he needed to start pulling his weight and contribute more. He had been saving his items, as well as spirit energy, because he knew this "Defend the orb" game would be a battle of attrition. But since his other two front line friends were starting to have a hard time with these orcs, it would be terrible if one of them fell or became injured to the point of no longer being able to continue the battle. So, Emery took out several containers of a bluish paste and passed them to his friends.

[Strength Paste - Tier 2]

"Paste these to your arms and legs quickly!" said Emery as the orcs managed to break the second row of the tier three stone spikes.

Not questioning Emery, Julian, Thrax and Chumo did as Emery asked and spread it to their four limbs. Klea, however, was a bit hesitant, but since Emery had an air of seriousness this time, she complied.

The final row of stone spikes crumbled, but, fortunately, the effect of the new strength paste Emery had concocted took effect immediately. His four friends had looks of awe as they read through the notification which popped in front of them.

[Battle power has increased by four!]

[Thrax: 40 - 44]

[Julian: 28 - 32]

[Chumo: 26 - 30]

[Klea: 20 - 24]

[Emery: 30 - 34]

This strength paste was an improved version of his first one. Due to his [Fragmentation] spell, he had the ability to grab the essences of his old tier one strength paste and, during his time on experimenting back in his residence, he had improved it into a tier two product. The result of his hard work was doubling the value of the strength increase it provided, as well as increase the duration.

As expected, Thrax still had the highest battle power amongst the five of them. He also had the closest strength against the orcs. Since this was the case, they would have to compensate for the difference in battle power by using more spells, artifacts and their guile to defeat these creatures.

Thrax, as always with his bull-headedness, charged head-on against the closest raging orc with Emery and Julian following close behind. The three youths faced the line of orcs, which were four to five per row. Since Klea and Chumo had noticed that Emery, Thrax and Julian were a bit struggling, they decided to help by using a continuous barrage of [Wind Sphere] and [Dark Missile], trying to clear the rows of orcs as fast as possible.

Due to this, the three frontliners were able to fight with the orcs in a one on one battle. While fighting with the orcs, Emery became increasingly amazed, not at his friends, rather at the tier three sword named Reunite Sword he had received from Magus Xion. As it turned out, even though it didn't have any magical properties or enchantment like Klea's staff or Chumo's bow, it seemed to still be able to cut better than the normal tier three weapons. Even without his [Dark Infusion], Emery was able to cut through the orcs' skin. So, he didn't feel the need yet to use it, since he could match these orcs with his current fighting capability and technique.

He then remembered the night at Elder's Respite, when he had first encountered these orcs. For some reason, it felt like these orcs in the virtual arena were weaker than the orcs of that night. Whether it was due to him becoming much stronger than before or something else, he wasn't sure.

After a couple of waves they finally started fighting with an opponent that had a similar strength to them. The three frontliners were starting to receive blows from the orcs. The energy stored in their tier two protective artifacts was dwindling, especially Thrax who kept fighting like a madman.

However, after another good blow from one of the orcs, Thrax finally became a bit cool-headed and he no longer fought on his own. It looked like the bullhead had learnt his lesson at last. Or maybe he just didn't wish to be shamed anymore by getting thrown back, especially with Julian who immediately followed up with mocking sentences.

About only ten minutes since the third level started and Emery noticed there were new information showing from the symbol in his hand.

[105 teams remaining]

[104 teams remaining]

As the number of teams went lower than 100, from the corner of Emery's eye, he noticed the other stone bridge, where another team of acolytes was fighting off the wave of orcs, was starting to get overrun. Not long after that realization, the glowing orb in the middle of that bridge became brighter, its light reached Emery and his friends' bridge. An explosion immediately followed, the stone bridge crumbled from the middle up to the stone gates, implying their defeat.

Emery quickly looked back at the information through the symbol on his hand, it now showed 98 teams remaining.

Placing his attention back to the next wave of orc nearing them, only now Emery was really starting to understand why Cedric had told him the Magus Games were rigged. If they hadn't received outside support, enabling them to get tier three weaponry and tier two defensive equipment, or if they hadn't reached rank 6 acolyte before the games had started, Emery was sure his team's fate would surely be like those who had already failed. They would have probably failed in the second round, he figured.

Just when Emery and his friends' teamwork was starting to get better, they were managing the waves of orcs a bit faster than before, giving them a bit more room to take a quick breather.

While their focus was fully placed against the orcs in front, a loud sound from their backs suddenly heightened the tension of the five youths defending the orb in the middle.