

Earths GMagus 231

Chapter 231: Plant Hunting

When the exam started and the apprentices began to scurry around the biomes like lost animals, another person wearing master clothings was seen visiting the top floor. The master was an unusual looking one, a dwarf.

Master Anmir, who was about to relax, swiftly approached the man when he noticed his arrival. Despite their similar clothing, the attitude Master Anmir showed to the other person was strangely respectful.

"Hello, Master Grom. Is there anything I can help you with?"

The dwarf, named Grom, replied with a smile, "Master Anmir, there's no need for you to be like this. I am just checking out on the apprentices who are currently taking the exam. I only hope you didn't make the test too easy for them."

Upon hearing that, Master Anmir flashed a smile, "Of course not, Master Grom. I will never do that. This time, I have increased the passing grade to 90%. I even put a special pill as the fifth item of the exam's assignment."

Raising one of his eyebrows with interest, Master Grom approached the table located in the center of the hall, where dozens of storage rings were seen. He then grabbed one of them and examined its content, or rather, examined the special pill. Looking at the pill in his hand, the dwarf laughed, "I guess you really don't want many to pass the test, don't you?"

Nodding his head, Master Anmir firmly said, "We don't need any more of those second rate apprentices. As long as I am in charge, I will assure you only the best are allowed to be our assistant."

"Very good. Very good." Master Grom answered.

Currently, all 105 participants were concentrating their minds, as they tried to analyze all five items.

When Emery lifted his head and looked at the surroundings, he realized several other apprentices apparently had similar skills like his [Fragmentation]. Most of them looked unassuming, but there were also a few of them that managed to catch Emery's attention because of how eye-catching their spells were.

There was an apprentice who used a water sphere to absorb the plants as a way to analyze them. Emery also saw one apprentice using a beast as his method of analysis. For a brief second, he wanted to ask if that was even allowed.

When Emery glanced at the senior acolytes who watched them, it looked like they weren't concerned about it at all. Probably the end result was what mattered in this exam.

Well, after giving it much thought, Emery realized it might even be a special trait. After all, someone who managed to train a pet to help identify tens of thousands of different ingredients should be quite exceptional.

Emery then casted his gaze away and spotted Sabil, who was analyzing the items. Looking at his demeanor, Emery was sure Sabil had his rank 2 [Analyze] skill along with rank 2 [Universal Flora Knowledge]. Because unlike him, Sabil looked like the studious guy, who reviewed his material over and over to come prepared.

The next person who caught Emery's eyes was the little girl he helped, which surprisingly used the most basic, ancient way of analyzing. The girl lifted the potions and brought them closer to her mouth, before she proceeded to give them a taste.

Each time she tasted the items, a different weird expression would appear on her face. Looking at the girl's conduct, Emery worried about her state after the exam. What if one of the items wasn't supposed to be consumed orally? Or worse, what if it was a poison?

Alas, Emery didn't have the time to worry about the others, as he himself was troubled by the assignment. Moments later, he noticed Sabil and the girl seemed to be done with their analysis and went to the biomes, probably searching for the ingredients.

Shaking his head roughly, Emery swiftly gathered his focus and casted [Fragmentation] on the fifth peculiar item. Several seconds passed as Emery waited for the spell to show its result; in the end, the spell managed to analyze the ingredients of the pill.

Most of them were ingredients from various tier 1 and 2 plants. However, there was still one unknown ingredient detected, which was probably another tier 3 rare ingredient. Combined with the two unknown tier 3 ingredients found among the four lower tier items, there were 3 unknown ingredients out of 20.

As the exam time was limited, Emery decided to search all the other 17 ingredients first before thinking about the other three unknown ingredients he needed. After all, three hours was barely enough time to find 17 ingredients amidst the ocean of flora before him.

As he walked through one of the biomes, Emery parsed the information of each object before him carefully, lest he accidentally walk past the ingredients in question.

Tree, fern, grass, shrub, moss, mushroom, seaweed, water plants, even simple rock; all objects were carefully scanned by Emery in his endeavor of finding ingredients. Luckily, Emery had his [Nature Sense] spell, which unexpectedly helped him a lot finding his targets quickly.

Knowing the location and finding the plants was one thing, but taking the right part of the plant was another different matter. With different characteristics each plant possessed, Emery needed to take an extra careful approach on handling them. For example, there were some plants with twin stems, while others had triple stems. Some of them could be easily destroyed by a slight rough touch, while others had a defensive mechanism which allowed them to fly away when approached.

Fortunately, Emery had some basic skill regarding the matter from his time exploring the Chrutin Forest. Despite that, it still needed him more than 2 hours to finally gather all 17 ingredients from the various plants. After double-checking the 17 ingredients and storing them inside the ring, Emery only had approximately half an hour to find the other three remaining ingredients. And to make matters worse, Emery didn't know how to do exactly that. Heck, he didn't even know the plant's name or appearance.

At the moment, Emery felt extremely stupid for not getting the rank 2 [Analyze] skill and rank 2 [Universal Flora Knowledge]. He really didn't prepare anything for the exam, just jumped into it straight ahead. His actions were exactly like waging a war empty-handed and now he had to pay the consequences of his own foolishness.

True, with the [Fragmentation] spell, Emery was able to separate the essence of the items, letting him receive the exact plants he needed to search for. However, the spell didn't tell Emery where to locate it or even the name of the plant. So Emery really didn't know where to start.

While Emery was in a dilemma, a figure suddenly approached him, "Brother, do you need help?"

Turning his head around, Emery found that the figure was the little girl he helped before. With just one look, the girl was able to recognize all three ingredients Emery was confused about and tell him their information, the approximate location where the plants might be and their complete description.

When the girl finished her explanation, she added, "By the way, brother... I am Karin. I'm sorry, I am in a hurry as well. I hope my information were of help to you."

As he watched the girl walk away, Emery was unsure if he wanted to follow the girl's information. If her information was wrong, Emery would waste his time and lose his chance to succeed in the exam.

Thinking for a while, Emery decided to try to follow the girl's clues, as he didn't have any better option. At least, the situation was better than him just searching in the dark. Moreover, he also had another skill that could be helpful to make sure the information Karin gave to him was not wrong.

When he approached the location described by Karin, Emery immediately used his innate ability [Wild Hunt]. Using the increased sense of smell bestowed by the ability, Emery could match the plants through their smell.

When his enhanced nose led him to the plant, Emery used [Analyze] on it, but he was still unable to receive the information of said plant. But from Karin's description and the smell, Emery believed it was the right one. So, he swiftly departed to search for the other two ingredients.

The process was smooth sailing until Emery found the last ingredient, which got him confused. It was a particular mushroom that had the same exact colour and texture from the essence he got as the result of [Fragmentation]. However, it didn't smell the same.

With only several minutes remaining until the end of the exam, Emery decided to use his [Nature Sense], and focused his sense of smell again. Several seconds later, he noticed an abnormality. His nose found a tingling spell emanated from a particular red-colored plant which appeared to be consuming the mushroom. A parasitic plant.

Emery swiftly dissected the parasite and found the cru

Chapter 232: Result

When Emery returned to the front hall to hand back his ring, he noticed, almost all of the other participants had returned as well. He then took a closer look at each of them and noticed around a dozen had returned with a sullen expression on their faces and slumped shoulders.

Before Emery could wonder what happened to them, they were told to leave the hall in a harsh tone, right after they handed their ring to the examiners.

Despite the calm and eagerness most had displayed before the start of the test, passing through the rank 2 examination was not as easy as they first thought. One of the artisans who collected the rings tried to calm down one of the failed apprentices, who was crying, "You can try again next month."

Even from this distance, Emery could see the despair of the failed exam wiped their previous confident expression clean.

At first, the task indeed sounded easy. At its core, the task was simply to gather herbs required to make certain concoctions. But it seemed the ingredients required to create the potions and the pills were just far too difficult to find for them.

If Emery did not have his [Nature Sense] spell and his physical strength, he would also feel the three hours of allotted time were way too short to search for 20 correct ingredients among thousands of plant varieties. Moreover, they also needed time to analyze the ingredients.

Emery decided to glance at the examiners gathered in the place and saw Master Grom was standing among them. Part of him wondered if Master Grom still remembered him, but Emery thought back to their short encounter last year and decided the old dwarf most likely already forgot about him.

Within minutes, all the apprentices had returned to the hall and Master Amnir stepped forward. His voice echoed around the room, ensuring everyone in the place heard what he had to say.

"Perhaps, some of you think that task was too difficult for an exam advancement to rank 2. However, I can assure you every single skill you need to pass is extremely important for your life as an alchemist. For us, finding the correct ingredients for potions is a very important step and, as an apprentice, your duties will include gathering ingredients for brewing. This means, your master needs to be able to trust you to identify each herb correctly and give him the right items for his recipes. In apothecary, a seemingly simple mistake could ruin the resulting potion at best or endanger your master along with everyone else around you."

Even though the words were not enough to cheer everyone up, most of the apprentices realized the importance of the exam and nodded their heads.

"If your name is called, it means you have misidentified three or more herbs out of the 20 herbs we required you to gather. I suggest you go back to your studies; hopefully you will do better in the next month's exam."

The announcement was done very quickly, within minutes, 40 names were already mentioned and entered the list of the failed apprentices, joining the dozen or so participants, who returned late from the allotted time. The process stripped down half of the participants and when the announcement ended, only 50 people remained in the room.

The moment Master Amnir finished calling the last name, he stopped for a second before saying, "That will be all."

Emery and everyone else who were still staying in the room released the breath they did not realize they were holding.

"Those who remain here, congratulations, you have passed the exam."

Right as Master Anmir gave the announcement, Emery saw the symbol on his palm shine, followed by a notification immediately appearing in his mind.

[Congratulations! You are now a rank 2 apothecary apprentice!]

Master Anmir clapped his hand to catch the attention of every apprentices who were excited due to their successful exam. "Alright, now for the rest of you, only five managed to get all 20 ingredients right. Frankly, I am quite disappointed." Master Anmir said, shaking his head.

"Sabil!"

The first name was called and the boy walked towards the examiner to receive his honor. After receiving the appreciation, Sabil quickly stepped aside and stood in front of the examiners facing the other apprentices. A wide smile could be seen on his face.

The names then continued to be called. Other than Sabil, Karin's name was also being called. The little girl excitedly walked forward and stood beside Sabil. The announcement then continued, as two other people came up and stood next to Sabil.

Just when Emery thought he wasn't going to be called, a loud voice attracted his attention, in a good way.

"Emery!"

Upon hearing his name, Emery looked at the direction of the examiner. He saw a giddy smile gracing Karin's face for his achievement, but in contrast to the girl, Sabil looked utterly dissatisfied.

Honestly, Emery did not really care what that boy thought, he was just happy he had what it took to become a top apprentice in the Apothecary Institute. Even so, Emery did not forget the help given by the little girl.

Emery stood in front, right next to the other four, choosing to stand next to Karin. Afterwards, he whispered to the girl. "Hey, thank you for the help."

"You're welcome, brother." The girl gave a secretive smile. "I am glad to see you made it as well."

Now that they had some time to know each other without the pressure of the exam hanging over their heads, Emery was able to observe the girl. From the things he had observed and her demeanor Emery concluded Karin, the girl with short curly hair and brown skin, was a cheerful person.

On the other hand, Master Anmir was about to close the announcement with his closing speech...

"Every participant in this exam will receive the task to obtain an unique last ingredient. This is a reminder to you, to always be careful when picking your ingredients and do not take the task lightly. As useful as it is, you sometimes cannot depend on the universal flora library data to do the hard work for you. At the end of the day, the responsibility to ensure you obtained the correct item is all on you."

Some of the apprentices were seen nodding their heads, agreeing with Master Anmir's words, "Do you understand the importance of your role now?"

"Yes, Master Anmir." The remaining apprentices answered at the same time, all wearing a serious expression. It was clear the seemingly easy exam was not a mere exam. It was also a lesson and a reminder to always ensure they all gave their utmost in everything, even in a task as simple as collecting ingredients.

"Now, the part all of you are waiting for. I will hand out the promised reward to the eligible apprentices."

The sour mood instantly changed, some were whispering to each other and speculating what the reward would be, while some expressed their disappointment at their own failure. They eyed Emery and the others with various gazes, as every one of them was given a small brown box.

The brown color of the box originated from some kind of wood and the patterns swirling on its surface gave the box an elegant and desirable appearance. Emery swiftly opened the box the moment he received. Inside it, he saw a small pill placed right in the middle of red fabric. Even with a short glance, Emery knew the shiny, glowing white pill was an extremely precious item.

[Spirit Foundation Pill]

From the expressions seen on the apprentices' faces, it looked like no one expected such a valuable reward to be given as the reward for doing well in the test.

Realizing he had received an extremely precious item, Emery decided to quickly close the box and put it inside his storage ring, before looking around to greet Master Grom. However, it appeared the old dwarf had left, while Master Anmir was in the middle of his speech.

Now, Emery was officially a rank 2 apprentice. With this rank, he was able to access more facilities and studies if he so desired. But for now, he still had the third game to worry about. Hence, everything else could wait to be dealt with later. Not wanting to waste the time he could use for training, Emery decided to leave the institute and continue his preparations for the game.

Chapter 233: Spirit Foundation Pill

By the time Emery had returned to Magus Xion's residence, the sun had already set on the western horizon, as the night announced its arrival. Therefore, Emery decided to not waste any more time and immediately dived into his nightly training.

Inside the familiar cubic room, Emery quickly cast his [Shadow Root Binding] spell, as his roots began to pursue the three thundermouses again. Channeling his energy and focusing his mind to controlling the spell, Emery was able to catch the little creatures if he targeted them one by one.

Using the number of roots he could currently control, Emery was able to catch them with ease if he surrounded one of the thundermouses from all directions and continued the process just like that. However, Emery still could not catch them altogether.

The reason Emery went through this training was to let him be able to concentrate multiple spells and control them as swiftly and precisely as possible. Hence, Emery released the captured creatures, as he was still unsatisfied and wanted to try again.

At midnight, Magus Xion visited the cubic room and told Emery to take a short break. While he was saying so, Magus Xion took out a small table, two chairs and a tea set, before proceeding to brew his favorite tea.

As he sipped the warm and fragrant tea before him, Emery told Magus Xion about his success in the exam. At the same time, Emery also spoke out about strategy for the third game.

Emery wanted to discuss other means of fighting besides using his spells. He wanted to know if he had other possible options, in order to increase his chances of winning even more.

"Master, you know I have the strength paste and the acid potion in my repertoire." Emery said, which earned him a nod from the magus. "What do you think about them, master? Will they be useful in the game?"

Magus Xion was silent for a while, before saying with a smile, "Actually, I can't say for sure, Emery. It's really as everything goes: it might or might not be useful. The answer itself depends on your opponent. So, the most important thing is to understand your enemy and yourself, especially the latter."

Upon hearing that, Emery fell into deep thought, contemplating his master's words. After a while, he nodded his head, "I understand, master."

Emery then proceeded with his next question, "Ah, by the way, master. I heard the third game will not be held in the virtual arena. Is that true, master?"

Magus Xion nodded slightly as confirmation, "Yes, but killing is strictly prohibited. If someone is killed, the perpetrator would be heavily punished."

"Wouldn't it still be dangerous though?"

"Yes, of course. But unless you instantly die, the academy has the facilities to bring your body back the way it was. It can even grow separated limbs. Unless..."

"Unless the injury causes you some cultivation trouble. If indeed so, then it will hinder you for the next round. Therefore don't let your guard down even when you are in a winning situation. If you are not careful, you will already lose the next fight before it could even begin. Do you understand?"

"Yes, master."

Upon hearing his master's reminder, Emery recalled that during the second game, when he forced both his bloodline transformation ability and [Immortal Gate] battle technique to their utmost limit. Thanks to that, he was left with a chaotic spirit core after his body couldn't take the burden anymore.

If the same thing happened again, Emery didn't even dare to hope he would get another of those fortunate evolutions in the middle of the battle. Lightning didn't strike twice in the same spot.

Realizing Emery was absent minded, Magus Xion asked his own question, "How was your cultivation training in the origin stone room?"

Waking up from his contemplation, Emery was silent for a moment before releasing a sigh, "It took me three and a half days to achieve a breakthrough in the plant element. And to make matters worse, that is the element I am most confident of, master. So, I'm not sure if I will be able to do the same with my

water and earth elements. They'll probably take much longer to break through. I need much more time, something I don't have at the moment."

"Aah, you are right. That will surely become a problem." Magus Xion said, while refilling his cup. "Your B aptitude really makes things much harder, Emery. Normally, if an acolyte's spirit power has reached their maximum, it will only take them one or two days cultivation inside the origin stone room to achieve a breakthrough."

Gloomy atmosphere enveloped Emery for a brief moment before he took out a brown box from his ring and showed its content to the magus. "Take a look at my reward from passing the exam, master."

When Xion saw the pill laying inside the box, his eyes immediately lit up as a grin formed on his face.

"A Spirit Foundation Pill! Good! Very good!"

"I heard this pill could help in cultivation. Is that right, master?"

"That's right! It will help your cultivation tremendously."

Magus Xion then explained about the advancement in the realm and the function of the pill.

All acolytes below rank 7 increased their cultivation using Spirit serum. The time when the acolytes were still in the Spirit Condensation stage.

After reaching rank 7, the exact moment when the Foundation Core was formed, none of those spirit serums would be helpful anymore. Fortunately, this problem was somewhat resolved by the existence of apothecaries, the invention of pills and potions that could help in cultivation.

When Emery heard that, his eyes were sparkling as he asked, "Master, doesn't that mean this is exactly what I need in my current condition?"

Instead of answering, Magus Xion took out a similar brown box from his storage ring and put it on the table. When it was opened, Emery could see the same pill lay inside it.

"You will actually get yours when you enter the elite class after the Magus Games end. However, I reckon you really need one right now. So, I purchased one for you right away. Who knew you would manage to get one already. It appears the lady luck is smiling at you, Emery."

Magus Xion then explained more about the pill, letting Emery know how precious this pill actually was. The Spirit Foundation Pill was one of the most sought after items in the universe. It was also the reason why Apothecary Institute was one of the three main crafting paths in the universe.

"Emery, the pill is supposed to be used when you have already reached rank 7 and it's a waste to use it now, However, with your current aptitude problem and the fact the game will start in 5 days. I believe you have to use one right away."

Chapter 234: Breakthrough

Emery spent his sixth day within the walls of the Earth Institute's origin stone room, he sat cross-legged on the floor, his eyes closed and his mind focused.

The third and final game would start in four days, within that time, he had to be ready. Right now, his most important task was to reach rank 7, nothing else mattered. In order to increase his rank, Emery needed to increase his understanding of all his elements to the middle stage.

In the next few days, he had to bring up his understanding of Earth and Water elements to the middle stage.

Anyone with common sense would see how hard, or even impossible, Emery's desire to reach rank 7 in his limited time frame actually was. However, Emery kept on focusing. He didn't even have enough time to cultivate, why should he waste it with self-doubt?

Emery channeled his mind and focused at the earth origin stone floating several meters away from him. Moments later, he began to feel the yellow-colored spirit lying dormant within his body starting to stir. The moment Emery tasted the feeling, he took out a familiar brown wooden box and swallowed the pearly white pill lying within.

He felt the pill move deep into the center of his body before dissipating into a vortex of powerful energy. Like water bursting from a dam, the vigorous energy travelled through his entire meridians before flowing into his dark core. His dark core felt like a small water bag placed under a waterfall, far too small to be filled with such massive amounts of energy. The energy would make it explode if not channeled, but even if he did channel it, the accumulation of energy felt way, way too painful. All of a sudden, Emery coughed up a mouthful of blood.

"Do not stop!"

Magus Xion's warning echoed in his thoughts,

"Do not ever consider to stop channeling the energy. This is an extremely dangerous method, but stopping will only endanger your body even more without any reward."

Therefore Emery gritted his teeth. He used all his remaining mental energy to bear the excruciating pain, while concentrating to channel the overflowing energy towards the yellow-colored spirit inside his body.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Emery, two figures had been watching his training process. Magus Darius from the Institute of Earth and Magus Xion from the Institute of Darkness watched from just out of sight, with enough distance for them to oversee Emery's training, yet not too obvious to alert Emery of their presence.

"You really are interested in this kid, aren't you? Isn't he the kid from the regular class who managed to make it into first place?"

Magus Xion did not answer the question, as he only kept on watching Emery.

"Did he really take a Spirit Foundation Pill? He is still rank 6! He's just endangering himself!" Magus Darius said, when he saw Emery swallow the familiar pill. The tone in his voice showed he was truly shocked.

The moment Emery spat out blood to the floor, both of their expressions changed for the worse.

"Hey, Xion! What did you do? Stop this! All this for a game...? Look, I know there are a lot of things worth dying for, but the magus game is not one of them."

In contrast to Magus Darius, Magus Xion seemed calm and kept watching Emery concentrate on his training. Darius was able to notice Xion seemed troubled, but his decision to do nothing made the Earth Institute magus so enraged, to the point he had to leave the room to calm himself down.

One hour passed...

Emery kept on gritting his teeth and bear the pain, even as his knuckles turned white from the tight grip he subjected himself onto. The pain did not subside even one bit.

Two hours passed...

Emery's entire body was soaked wet with his own sweat and his breathing had become ragged. He pushed through the pain and continued on.

Four hours passed...

At the moment, time held no more meaning to Emery. All he could focus on was his drive to keep going, to keep controlling the endless deluge of energy and channel them through his dark core towards the yellow-colored spirit.

After what felt like an eternity, Emery finally managed to break through. The moment he did so, he felt as if he had finally managed to pry a rusted steel door from its hinges.

[Congratulations! You have reached a breakthrough in the earth element!]

[Earth Spirit – Mid-Foundation]

The moment the two notifications appeared, Emery spat out another mouthful of blood that swiftly splattered onto the room's floor. It was clear from his gaze and his slumped posture he was extremely exhausted. Without further due, Magus Xion finally moved and grabbed Emery's falling body before it could hit the ground.

Magus Xion took one look at Emery's body and told him to rest. He would need all the energy he could get if he wanted to advance his understanding of the water element.

The next day came, upon waking up, Emery immediately went to the water origin stone room to start his training. Despite his still aching body, he ignored the pain, as he still had matters unfinished.

Just like yesterday, Emery sat in a lotus position within the range of the water origin stone.

On one hand, while he was glad to be able to reach a breakthrough in such a short period of time, Emery felt he was doing something wrong and his practice method could be improved. However, he remembered how his master, a full-fledged magus, was keeping an eye on him. Therefore, with a newfound sense of confidence, Emery took the second Spirit Foundation Pill.

The familiar deluge of energy came back, all flowing towards his dark core. This time, Emery channeled all the energy towards the blue-colored spirit stirring within his body.

Again, just like yesterday, Emery felt an excruciating pain all over his body. He remembered the result from yesterday and decided to grit his teeth. There was no choice but to endure, endure the pain in order to grasp a chance to obtain a quick and significant result.

Unlike yesterday, this time the process took a significant part of the day.

[Congratulations! You have reached a breakthrough in the water element!]

[Water Spirit – Mid-Foundation]

[Congratulations! You have reached rank 7!]

[Spirit Force increased]

[Battle Power increased]

[Emery Ambrose]

[Battle Power: 45]

[Spirit Force: 155]

[Plant Spirit – Mid-Foundation]

[Water Spirit – Mid-Foundation]

[Earth Spirit – Mid-Foundation]

[Spirit Core of Darkness – Stage 3]

[Fey Bloodline – Rank 3]

[Acolyte Rank: 7]

The moment he saw the notification, he exhaled in relief and felt his eyelids become heavy. Right before he was about to lose his consciousness, Emery saw the familiar face of Magus Xion right in front of him.

"I... I did it, Master...!"

"Great, you did great, Emery."

Finally, with all his energy spent, Emery fainted and dropped to the cold floor with a thud. Just like before, Xion took him. But this time, without Emery knowing, his Master took him to a certain castle, where the head of Darkness Institute resided. Soon, they would come face-to-face with Grand Magus Zenoia.

Chapter 235: Reborn

Inside a luxurious room filled with exquisite decor, three figures could be seen. Two of them seemed to be conversing with each other, while the last one was laying on top of a table, no motions were seen.

At the moment, the stunning pale-skinned Grand Magus Zenoia was staring at the person in front of her, a disciple of her, "Did you do exactly like what I instructed you to do, Xion?" The grand magus said with a sharp glint in her eyes.

Facing his grand master, Magus Xion tried to calm his nervous state and answered, "Yes, master... He actually took two pills instead of one..."

"Two Spirit Foundation pills? And he survive those?" Grand Magus Zenoia asked with disbelief. But as he nodded his head as a sign of confirmation, Magus Xion was sure he could see traces of elation in his mentor's expression.

The gorgeous grand magus turned even more excited the moment she saw the confirmation. While Magus Xion was a little taken back by the reaction of his mentor, he still voiced the thing that he worried the most.

"Master... Is he going to be alright?" Magus Xion asked, pointing his finger at the figure laying on the table.

Grand Magus Zenoia was silent for a moment, "I don't know, Xion. Probably not." The grand magus chuckled, as she heard the words coming out of her own mouth.

Upon hearing the last words spoken out, the expression on Magus Xion changed as he pleaded, "Master, he is a good kid. Can you help him?"

"Of course I can, Xion.. but I can only do half the process. The rest of it will be depending on him. Let's see if this kid has the will to succeed."

After she said that, Grand Magus Zenoia raised her hand. In an instant, Emery's body, who had laid unconscious on the table, started to float into the air.

Several seconds passed, as the grand magus chanted and casted a spell. Immediately after, the shadow beneath grand magus' figure suddenly moved by itself and unexpectedly rose to the air towards the floating Emery.

In the blink of an eye, the shadow went into Emery's body, covering his entire body with a layer of impenetrable darkness.

Due to the spell, Emery was slowly awakened from his unconscious state. Still in half-conscious condition, Emery was startled when he realized he couldn't see anything around him, only pitch black darkness. Thanks to the spell that encompassed his body, Emery could not see past the layer of darkness, but he could still faintly hear sounds outside of it.

While he tried to perk up his ears, catching anything that could help him identify where he was, Emery suddenly felt a strange sensation in his entire being, as if hundreds of small ants were crawling all over his body. The sensation was both painful and soothing at the same time.

"A Dark Core is truly a fascinating matter..." Grand Magus Zenoia mumbled, causing Magus Xion's face to change. "The way the ancients cultivated... Hmm... I wonder if the kid thought of this or if it was because of an accident."

A perturbed expression appeared on Magus Xion's face, as Grand Magus Zenoia worked on Emery's body. Well, his worry was not without reason, as his esteemed master currently didn't look like treating Emery at all. Instead, it looked more like an experiment.

Moments later, the focused Grand Magus finally spoke again, "Yes. As expected... There are bits and pieces of the three different elements stuck inside his dark core, causing it to turn chaotic, as it is unable to filter the energy of the three elements correctly."

Grand Magus Zenoia then flipped her hand and casted another spell. The layer of darkness around Emery's body swiftly waved all around, creating a swirling black vortex.

Inside the vortex, the now fully-awakened Emery felt the spell slowly made his chaotic spirit core relaxed, as it slowly released the tension it held. At the moment, Emery felt as if a tight blockade within him had been destroyed without traces, he could suddenly breathe the air seamlessly.

Still excitingly examining the changes occurring inside Emery's body, the grand magus didn't leave Magus Xion in the dark, as she proceeded to explain her findings, "The pain was coming because he was unable to absorb all those surging energies from the pill."

But then, Grand Magus Zenonia was suddenly startled, as she delved deeper into Emery's dark core. The expression on her face indicated she had found something unexpected. Whatever it was, it must be extraordinary to make even an esteemed grand magus surprised.

Grand Magus Zenoia found a particular dark energy lingering in the depth of Emery's dark core. Curiosity filled her, the grand magus casted another spell, trying to reach deeper. Alas, she was frozen in shock as the mysterious energy bounced her probe back.

On the other hand, Emery could feel something slowly brewing inside him, right in his spirit core. A sphere of energy was growing and then, in an instant, an explosion occurred within his spirit core. Emery felt a rush of spirit energy flowing through his body. His spirit core was once again undergoing the evolution to the next stage.

[Spirit core of Darkness - stage 4]

[Your spirit force had increased tremendously]

[Spirit force 185].

Emery was astounded as he saw the notification that appeared inside his mind. That was an immediate increase of 30 points! He suddenly felt refreshed, as if he was reborn. Emery felt as if his whole body was being lifted up full of energy.

The moment Grand Magus Zenoia retracted her spells, Emery finally realized the situation he was in. He quickly got off the table and knelt in front of the grand magus. "Thank you for your kindness, grand magus." Emery said with a hint of gratitude in his voice.

Emery was silent for a few seconds, waiting for the grand magus' response. Alas, it seemed the grand magus was somehow lost in her thought. Magus Xion, who noticed his master's condition, asked with a worried tone, "Master... Are you alright?"

That was the exact moment the grand magus returned to her senses. And the next thing she did was staring at Emery. A disbelief was seen on her face, before it suddenly turned into laughter.

"kid... you can go now..."

Not only Emery, but even Magus Xion also found the reaction the grand magus showed to be very strange. But the two of them surely didn't have the guts to ask why. Hence, Emery quickly gave another gratitude and excused himself together with Magus Xion.

When the two of them left the room, leaving Grand Magus Zenoia alone in there, the grand magus finally returned to her composed self. She walked towards one of the information cube floating in the room and searched for something in the academy database.

Browsing through the database, Grand Magus Zenoia opened the profile list of the academy's second year acolytes. She then accessed the profile of one of those acolytes, to be more precise, Emery's. As the grand magus read through the file from his recent accomplishment to his first year history, her eyes suddenly glowed the moment they landed on a certain incident that happened in the first year.

Chapter 236: Close Training

As he reached the target he set before he went ahead and dived into his crazy cultivation streak, Emery didn't need to spend any more time in the origin stone room. Hence, he utilized all the remaining days in close training with Magus Xion, polishing his spells and combat strength.

With his increase in rank and spirit force, courtesy to his recent advancement, Emery's capabilities on spell control, casting speed and spell power had increased into another level altogether.

[Shadow Root Binding]

Since his overall improvement on his spells due to the advancement, Emery could summon seven shadow roots at the same time. Each of the tentacle-like darkish roots were slithering at great speed, not only chasing but also forming into an encirclement to the three little thundermouse.

When they noticed the entrapment, the three poor things could only squeak in panic as Emery was able to successfully capture all three thundermouse simultaneously.

Emery released and captured the three continuously until the three little creatures finally lost their arrogant attitude. Emery, of course, stopped tormenting them once he got used to the challenge. In fact, he found himself liking the little creatures now that he understood the meaning of Magus Xion's training with the cute creatures.

On the eighth day, Magus Xion finally added another challenge to Emery's current training regime. The extra challenge was to fight the magus in swordsmanship. But the catch was Emery still had to keep casting his [Shadow Root Binding] spell trying to catch the little things roaming around. Hence, these things surely added several levels of difficulty to the training.

Previously, Emery only needed to stand still and focus his mind on the control of his spell and how to direct it. Now, he had to cast and control the roots, while evading and blocking the magus' relentless sword attacks. Doing one of the tasks, while maintaining his focus was difficult enough, let alone two.

The added challenge made the training an impossible matter for the current Emery. However, that was exactly the purpose of the challenge: to let Emery overcome his limits and improve his strength.

On the ninth day, Magus Xion proceeded to guide Emery to learn a new spell. With Emery having already reached rank 7 acolyte, he was now eligible to learn a tier 4 spell. Unfortunately, with the limited time he currently had, Emery only had enough time to learn one new tier 4 darkness spell, leaving the other three elements for another time.

Emery's left arm grabbed the wrist of his right, as his mind concentrated the energy inside his dark core into his right palm. Gradually, black smokes were materializing and gathering into a tiny glowing light and turned bigger over time.

[Dark Matter - Tier 4 Darkness Spell]

When Emery seemed unable to contain the energy anymore, he immediately threw it flying towards Magus Xion. The magus swiftly used his special [shadow edge] blade technique to counter the incoming spell. When both hit each other, a blast appeared on the location of contact.

Kaboomm!!!

The tier 4 darkness spell was kind of similar to the low tier fire spell, [Fireball]. But, instead of releasing a ball of fire that exploded upon contact, it released a sphere of pure darkness energy that would corrupt matter on impact. This was exactly the spell Emery needed at the moment, a strong offensive spell.

[Dark matter] was the strongest tier 4 darkness offensive spell. However, even though the spell was quite common, mastering the spell was not easy. Moreover, this spell was considered a channelled spell, which meant the stronger the user spirit core, the stronger the strength of the spell became.

"Emery, I honestly have seen many darkness acolytes using this spell, but none of them could beat yours in terms of strength. Even so, the weakness of this spell is the time it needs to gather the power."

"I understand, master. That means I need something I can quickly use to complement this spell's deficiency." Emery replied, he then turned silent for a moment. "I think...? The blade technique you showed earlier will be the best combination for this." Emery said with a grin.

Magus Xion squinted his eyes, as he knew Emery was only saying nice things, so he would teach him the special blade technique.

"Haha... you can't learn my skill in days, Emery. Not a chance. Maybe later, when you reach rank 8 acolyte. Yeah... at that time, you could learn this technique."

Hearing that, Emery was in shock, then in disbelief, "Rank 8? Master! You previously said rank 7! You yourself said you would teach me when I reach rank 7."

"Did I say that? I don't think so..."

"You definitely did, master."

"Ahh!! If only anyone was here and heard what I said, surely my apprentice will not treat me like a common liar."

Emery instantly turned speechless, as he faced against this shameless side of his master. Alas, there was nothing he could do.

Emery could only channel this 'injustice' he experienced through combat. With the new spell and his increased power, the last day became a duel between the two, where Emery used everything in his repertoire to at least try to take down Magus Xion.

The duel-format training main objective was to practice fighting strategies that Emery could implement later in the game, and having an experienced magus as his training partner surely would improve his skill.

In the end, by the closure of the tenth day, Emery was not even able to lay a scratch on the magus. But despite the failure, he still gained a lot of improvement and confidence as he persisted through the training.

Magus Xion decided to mark the end of the training with another hot beverages' moment.

While sipping the tea that was brewed by his master, Emery said, "Master, what do you think about my progress? Do you think I will have my chance against those top acolytes?"

Pouring his own cup with tea, Magus Xion replied, "Honestly, your darkness spirit core is special, Emery. However, you will be fighting against acolytes who are born to be the best. They already have the best training prepared for them since infant."

Emery was just a low noble from the lower world. Therefore, it was normal that the training he received during childhood was incomparable to these elites.

Magus Xion was silent for a moment before continuing, "Being chosen in the privileged class is no longer the matter of hard training and impressive stats, but also unique talents. In the privileged class, they are all acolytes who have talent beyond the 10 elements and the S aptitude. I saw your fight with some of those people. The gravity user, the boy who has purple flame, the crystal-like ice user, those are considered unique talents."

As Emery heard Magus Xion's explanation, his mind recalled the sight of Micah using his almost unbreakable crystal-like ice, Lodos who easily decimated group of acolytes, and impressive firepower Gerri showed; those acolytes didn't even manage to enter the privileged class. The revelation made Emery concerned about what kind of monsters existed and exceeded those people.

"You will see that all of the privileged acolytes have stronger capabilities than the opponents you had faced before. After all, they are considered to be the protected jewel of the academy. So Emery, in the end, remembers to understand your enemy and yourself as that is the secret to win the fight."

Emery was grateful with all the training and guidance by the magus, Reflecting on this again, Emery wondered how Magus Xion, an official magus, had the time to privately and personally guide him.

"Master, please tell me. Why did you help me?"

Upon hearing Emery's question, Magus Xion didn't answer right away. Instead, a few seconds of silence happened between the two of them.

"At first, it was because my grand master. She is everything for me."

Emery remembered the first he had met Magus Xion was because the grandmaster was using the stone room privately and making the magus owe him a favor.

"However, as I get to know more about you, I begin to really like you, Emery. The current condition your world face also reminds me of a mistake that I made. Perhaps by helping you, I get to somehow pay for my mistake"

On the last day, Emery had a deep conversation with Magus Xion. The magus told Emery about a certain mission where he was involved in the death of billions of lower world civilisations. Because of that, he hoped for Emery's world would not face the same fate.

With a serious tone the magus asks "You told me that you wanted to protect the people that are important to you, right?"

Emery nodded his head as he recalled about their last conversation.

"Power, Emery. You will need power to stand tall and hold onto your resolve."

Chapter 237: Cheer

Ten days had finally passed by. Ten days full of relentless training and perseverance. On the eleventh day, Emery made his way towards the Grand Hall with his newfound confidence.

The moment he entered the peripheral area of the hall, Emery saw something much different than the previous two games. The area outside the grand hall had turned into such a chaotic yet festive situation. There were thousands of people gathered outside of the hall trying to get into the arena.

As he walked towards the familiar arena, Emery realized that some of the crowds recognized him, as he heard shouts containing his name or aiming at him.

"That's Emery! The Savage Acolyte!"

"I am rooting for you, kid! Good luck!"

"Aaa.. he's more handsome up close"

"Woof woof! I came to see the wolf transformation!! Don't disappoint me!"

As his eyes scanned the sea of people before him, Emery realized there were more guests from outside the academy, who had come to watch the Magus Games. The reason he thought of that was because there were many people wearing different attires that weren't commonly seen in the academy.

Much to his surprise, the first familiar and friendly face Emery saw was actually Silva. The white-haired girl immediately said something to Emery the moment her eyes landed on him. "Hey Superstar... Don't you think they are really your fans now... you will see that none of them will remember your name next month. No, maybe even less..."

"Hi Silva. Nice to see you too." Emery answered with a grin on his face, decisively ignoring Silva's sour remark.

After a while, Silva decided to put her clenched fist down and sighed. "Aah, whatever! Just focus on the game later, alright?! Don't think about anything else. And also, if you happen to face me. Remember. I don't give any mercy."

"Ah, yes. Thank you for the kind reminder, Silva." Emery said, while holding back his chuckle.

"Huh! Go then, go to your friend over there." Silva said, pointing her finger in a certain direction. "I have something else to do."

"Alright then. Good luck for you too, Silva." Emery said with a smile.

Silva, who was about to walk away, swiftly turned her body around when she heard that, "I don't need your luck. Keep it to yourself you will definitely need it more than me." She then turned around and disappeared among the sea of people.

As soon as Silva's figure was gone, Emery noticed his two friends, Thrax and Chumo, had been waiting for him in the distance. The moment Emery appeared in front of them, Chumo immediately opened his mouth, "You have reached rank 7, didn't you Emery? Congratulations!"

"I still can't believe I used to think you were the weakest among us..." added Thrax.

Chumo approached Emery and patted his shoulder a few times, "I wish you the best my friend. Make us proud!"

Emery was all smiley when he heard the two words spoken out by his friends. But his confidence was instantly gone when Klea approached the trio.

"Emery!!! There you are?!!!"

The exotic beauty jumped towards Emery with a mischievous grin. "You look very different, Emery. Very, very ..." Klea delayed her words, as Emery could see she was staring at him, scanning him from top to bottom, which made Emery a little bit uncomfortable.

Klea approached near and touched Emery's arm "Wow i just realised your arm turned more manly than before.. This muscle...hmm" Klea unconsciously starts to compare it with Thrax arm. "Not much different than yours Thrax.." Klea grin to them both. She then stares toward Chumo which instantly makes him hide behind Emery's back.

Selectively ignoring Klea's usual teasing moment, Thrax continued his words, "Emery, we have not seen each other for 10 days. Hence, I really wish to have a spar with you soon."

Upon hearing that, Emery swiftly shifted his gaze away from Klea to Thrax, "Yes of course, Thrax. We can do a spar after the game."

Thrax smiled when he received Emery's confirmation, clenching his fist and raising it to the air, Thrax said, "I have to warn you, Emery, we will soon catch up to you. In fact, during the last 10 days, this boy here has really impressed Lord Izta with his archery." Thrax said, pointing at Chumo. "As a result, Lord Izta has agreed to impart his archery legacy to Chumo."

"That sounds really impressive, Chumo! Congratulations!" Emery exclaimed, shocked yet happy by the unexpected surprise.

"Damn it! This sucks! Everyone is getting stronger, then I shouldn't lose either!"

Klea let out a small chuckle, as she found Thrax's competitive spirit to be entertaining. After chatting for a while, Emery didn't catch the shadow of his other friend, causing him to wonder what had happened with him. Unable to contain his curiosity anymore, Emery decided to ask, "Where is Julian? Is he not with you guys?"

Upon hearing the question, as if it was a forbidden one, the three except Emery suddenly turned quiet. Seeing the strange reaction from his friends, Emery thought there must be something wrong, "Why did you guys turn quiet? Did something bad happen to Julian?"

The expression on Thrax's face quickly became annoyed, "Yes! Something bad will happen to him!... By me!"

Looking at Thrax's unexpected outburst and the others' reactions, it appeared Emery missed something during his 10 days of training. When Emery was about to ask what happened during the time they separated, a familiar voice was heard from the distance, causing the four teenagers to turn their heads over.

"Hey!! You boys talking about me? Hahaha! You Thracian can't do anything to me even if you wanted to!" Julian said, making his way over to the group.

"Huh, traitor!!" Thrax hissed, as he became a bit emotional, but Chumo quickly held him down.

Seeing Chumo holding Thrax from attacking Julian, Emery became even more confused, "What happened, Julian?"

Instead of answering Emery's question, Julian waved his hand and said, "Don't worry about that Thracian, Emery. I am fine.."

Klea stepped forward and sneered at Julian, something Emery wouldn't expect coming from her, "Last week, this friend of us suddenly walked out of Lord Izta and joined the Harlight Family. Yeah, the one that has a connection with that bastard Roran."

Emery was shocked when he heard that. He swiftly approached Julian and asked, "Is that true?"

Julian quickly grabbed Emery's shoulder and said, "Let's go into the arena. Alright?"

Emery didn't budge, as his eyes indicated he wanted an explanation right now. Seeing that, Julian shook his head and could only say, "I will tell you later. Let's go into the arena first. The time is near."

Julian then swiftly walked towards the arena. Emery realized he could only follow this friend of his, as he waited for the explanation. As the group walked up the stairs, Julian started to explain, "Emery, trust me. I have thought a lot about this matter before deciding to do this. They can give me something that Lord Izta can't. And actually, Lord Izta agreed with my decision."

"Lord Izta did?" Emery asked, which answered with a nod from Julian.

"Of course. Why else do I dare to do this and bring wrath to that great Thracian?!" Julian purposely raised his voice to exclusively annoy Thrax.

Julian glanced at Klea and looked at Emery, "You two should really just focus on the game. If any of you manage to successfully enter the privileged class, then it will be easier for the remaining of us. We will talk more after the game, alright Emery? Klea?"

At the top of the stairs, the group went their separate ways, as only Emery and Klea would be participating in the game. While the two of them walked down the path to the center of the arena, Klea asked, "Are you nervous, Emery?"

Upon hearing that, Emery turned his head to the side and noticed Klea wasn't looking at him, "Surprisingly, I'm not. Not really. Are you?"

"A little bit actually." Klea said, as she stopped her steps and stared at Emery. She closely scrutinized him and smiled.

"What is it?" Emery asked confused, as he didn't know why Klea was smiling looking at him.

Klea chuckled, "Remember the first time I met you? At that time, I already knew you would become a great person."

Emery was startled with Klea's unexpected words. While Emery was in daze, Klea quickly held Emery's hanging arm and jumped in to kiss his cheek.

Emery was obviously startled, he then saw Klea's embarrassed face.

"That...That's for good luck... Thank me later." Klea said, as she ran towards the center of the arena, leaving a speechless Emery behind. Klea moved so fast Emery couldn't see her expression at all.

The final game was about to begin.

Chapter 238: Third Game

The moment the last needle of the clock hit the appointed time, the opening of the third and final game of the Magus Games finally started. Melodious and bright music resounded throughout the arena, followed by a succession of colorful and extravagant fireworks in the air.

It was such a grand opening for welcoming the final game. At the moment, the Magus Games didn't look like an academic event at all. Instead, they looked like an entertainment one.

A fully packed arena with triple layers of sittings arrangements were seen. There were at least a few hundreds of thousands spectators, who had come directly to the arena to see the event that would run for three days with their own eyes. However, the audience didn't stop there, as there were countless others, who also watched the event through various means.

Thanks to the extremely crowded spectators, Magus Serena, who once again was tasked to be the host of the event, had turned even more energetic compared to the previous two games.

"Welcome to the third and final Magus Game!!!" Magus Serena shouted, complemented by her charming act. Due to that, the audience responded with a loud cheer that thundered through the air.

After the cheers receded, Magus Serena proceeded with her next task: explaining the rules, "The rules the participants have to follow in the third game are simple. A duel, which keeps going until the other person gives up or simply can not continue anymore."

"There will be five random matches for each participant. However, participants who have already lost their battles twice have no right to continue and are disqualified. In the end, we will be left with the top 100 acolytes, the best out of this year's ten thousand acolytes."

Noticing the crowd was fired up, Magus Serena swiftly called the stars of today's event, lest the audience's passion burned off, "without further wait, let us call out all the acolytes to the stage!!!"

The moment Emery and all the 550 acolytes made their way to the center of the arena, the cheer let out by the audience increased many times over, as they became even more lively.

Dozens of small translucent cubes were flying around the arena, taking close-up images of the acolytes, which would be projected to the screens located above the arena and also to the audience who watched the event from elsewhere.

Just like the previous two games, the headmaster of the Magus Academy, Altus Drayden, stood up to deliver his opening speech and encouragement for the acolytes that would be participating in the game. The familiar sound of staff stomping the ground reverberated through the arena, causing the attention of the audience and the acolytes alike to be directed at the venerated man.

"Today, we will commemorate the third game to finally see this year's most talented acolytes! Let us all give excellent support to the future generation of mankind!"

This time, the headmaster raised his staff to the air and unexpectedly casted a spell. A dazzling light rapidly flew towards the sky, before it exploded into glittering particles. "Let the game... Begin!!!" A thunderous applause was heard, followed by unending cheers from the audience

At the same time a notification came from the symbol in Emery's hand.

[You are eligible to join the third and final Magus Game]

[Objective - win four out of five fights]

[Special reward - Undefeated]

[You are part of group 7]

[Please process to the allocated corner]

Right after, Emery and all the other participants began to move. All 550 acolytes quickly split up and headed towards the eight corner of the arena, where a large flat platform with see-through roofs could be seen.

The terraces were located right below the audience's seats, which allowed the spectators to better see the participants. From the terraces, all the acolytes would be able to clearly see the fights, which would happen in the center of the arena, by simply looking over or through the screens floating across the platforms.

When Magus Serena saw that most of the acolytes were seated in the terraces, she proceeded to once again explain the rules of the game. At the same time, the arena began to slowly change itself. The arena's floors were split apart and raised until the massive arena transformed into 8 smaller arenas.

When Emery arrived at his corner, Emery recognized a few faces among them, but to his surprise, one particular surprised him: a pink haired girl, Mags.

"Emery!"

"Mags, I didn't realize you managed to join the third game"

"Wow, that's painful to hear Emery, I am not that weak you know... Well I might be scared facing those orcs, but to other acolytes I am still confident"

"Aaa... that's not what I meant..."

"Haha don't worry Emery I am only kidding, I'm honestly not that confident to win even one match."

"No, Mags... I am sure you can do it..."

"You are always nice Emery, I saw your last fight. It was amazing, I will cheer for your success, Emery. Okay, I am not going to bother you anymore, I am sure you need to concentrate on the game... good luck" Mags then immediately sat in one corner of the room meditating.

Moments later, there was a loud ring of bell and the screens scattered across the arena showed 8 pairs of images that appeared at the same time and matched. Those images were the acolytes that would fight in the opening battles of the game. Within the screens, the background and basic information of the participants were shown, allowing the audience to see their basic information and where they came from.

Immediately after, the acolytes, who were quickly matched, made their way to their designated arena, which was shown on the screen. The sixteen of them were waiting for the final bell to ring, announcing the official beginning of the first battle of the day.

The crowd let out thunderous cheers, as the acolytes in eight arenas began fighting against their opponent. The other acolytes also excitedly watched the battle from their terraces. Some of them merely saw the fights, while others used the opportunity to observe their potential opponents.

There would be only two rounds out of the five rounds of battles today. However, seeing the current ongoing battles, all the acolytes couldn't wait for their turn and for the chance to prove their strength.

When the second group of sixteen acolytes was called, Emery realized Silva was one of the 8 matches. So, he decided to pay his utmost attention to her.

As the fights progressed, Emery could see Silva's overall battle prowess, from speed, strength, spell variety and power, were all superior compared to her opponent. Therefore, she was able to win her first fight easily. Looking at that, Emery was obviously happy for her.

Several matches later, Emery finally saw another familiar figure, Roran. At the moment, he was fighting against a Lightning acolyte. Using his sword and shield, Roran was fighting defensively. Emery could clearly see that he was very cautious in his every move.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, he was still able to win the match. It was such a by-the-book battle with no flashy moves. It was dull, but effective."

The third match Emery observed was Klea's. As she walked up to her designated arena, Emery could see she stood there with confidence.

When the bell rang, Klea's opponent attacked her wildly, like raging winds. However, it appeared that Klea's wind spells had improved greatly, as her opponent was unable to touch her at all.

The fight was going on fiercely when Klea's opponent suddenly fell to the floor and didn't move anymore, causing some of the audience to be surprised. Meanwhile, Klea was standing on the arena, giggling.

Apparently, Klea had managed to cast her spell [Enchantment] on her enemy. And evidently, her opponent had a very low mental capability. As a result, Klea was able to put him to sleep in the middle of the arena.

It was decided Klea had made her opponent unable to continue the fight. Thus, she received her first win. An anticlimactic win, but a win nonetheless.

A few matches later, Emery finally saw his image being shown on the screen. Beside his image there was an image of another acolyte with a name below it: Sparse.

Emery walked confidently towards his arena. When he reached the place, he quickly observed his opponent.

Emery's first opponent was a fragile-looking acolyte, his body was so thin the first thought that came to Emery's mind was that the acolyte was malnourished. However, when the bell rang, the acolyte's entire body suddenly grew exponentially. His previously weak-looking limbs quickly grew in size, as the gaunt acolyte turned into a giant, three times the size of a normal adult.

"Fight begins!!"

Chapter 239: First Fight

Emery looked up and down at the 3-meter giant human standing in front of him and wondered. Was this acolyte named Sparse really a bloodline acolyte just like Ivar and Igor, Silva's two teammates? But, he could see no other sign of a beast bloodline from the giant. All Emery could see standing before him was a large man with bulky muscles.

"What are you waiting for, wimp?" The acolyte taunted. "What is it, boy? Did you wet your pants?"

Emery simply laughed inwardly. Anyone with half a functioning brain would know better than getting close to a giant without preparation. He saw through the giant's attempt to make him approach and force a close range battle, where he most likely would have an advantage in strength considering his size. Of course, Emery was above responding to such pathetic attempts to rile him up.

"Nah, thank you, I'm just fine here." Emery replied, before he waved his hand to cast his long-ranged spell. Right now, he needed to assess the situation and a ranged spell would allow him to do so at a safe distance.

[Enfeeble Blade]

Darkness gathered together in the air next to Emery, before materializing into a blade made of coalesced smoke. The blade flew towards the giant at breakneck speed, but the giant simply raised his hand, blocked the spell and crushed the blade with his palm, turning the blade back into smoke and letting it disperse into the air without hurting him.

When the giant blocked his spell, Emery could see ridges and bumps on the giant's skin, similar to when he used the [Stone Skin] spell. Emery realized he was about to face a giant with massive physical

strength along with good defensive skills. The battle would most likely be extremely tricky at best. However, this kind of fighter would usually have a lowered speed due to the weight of their body.

Emery casted two more [Enfeeble Blade], a pair of black blades flew towards the giant. This time, the giant did not make any attempt to block them, but the attack still did not leave any wounds. In fact, it only served to enrage the giant.

The giant touched his storage ring and a pair of massive maces appeared in his hands, before he dashed towards Emery, creating a terrifying sight similar to when a predator has focused on its prey. Emery reacted quickly and decided to cast [Blink] and dodge the attack by disappearing and reappearing around 10 meters away, before casting another [Enfeeble Blade].

The giant stared at the blade, letting it hit his body and turn into smoke, before adding. "Dammit you little coward, do you want to fight or do you want to play hide and seek? Come on, fight me like a man!"

When he heard the cheap attempt at taunting again, Emery frowned and sighed.

"Seriously? Are there actually people who would run towards you after hearing that?"

The giant expression suddenly turned into a laugh hearing emery remark "Haha! Actually more than you could imagine!"

Emery laughed in his mind. Would someone that stupid be able to reach the third game? Apparently, the giant has been winning fights by getting an advantage from taunting. If his enemies took the bait, they would initiate the attack and the leverage he required to win would be in his hand.

The giant reached for his storage ring and took out a new weapon. This weapon was a large metallic chain, adorned with a circular handle on one end and a large heavy ball at the other end. With a simple flick of the giant's hand, the weapon was moving around ready to strike.

Bamm! Bammm!

Emery had to admit the giant's weapon of choice really suited him. The long range provided by the chain would cover his lackluster speed, while the weight of the ball would only serve as means of sending powerful attacks towards the enemy without hindering his movements at all, due to the giant's strength. Even worse, Emery could see the chains were able to cover the entirety of the arena. If he stepped outside the bounds of the arena, he would be disqualified.

But still, his speed allowed him to partially dodge the attacks by blinking and dodging in the middle of the chains. To ensure his victory, he casted another spell [Shadow Mist], causing illusionary images of him to appear all around the arena.

He kept dodging and used [Enfeeble Blade] multiple times, until he could see the protective aura around the giant's body had finally shattered. But, Emery could see right away the fight was far from over. Even without the energy shield surrounding his body, the giant still had his protective skin.

The giant acolyte's attacks were relentless, each strike so strong it was able to shake the arena and destroy most of the floor. One moment, Emery's concentration faltered and the acolyte rushed close and used the mid-range spell [Stone Spikes]. The earth rumbled and long spikes of various sizes jutted

out from the ground, before rushing towards Emery. Unable to dodge in time, Emery quickly casted [Granite Skin] and took the attack.

Upon seeing Emery's spell, the giant fell into deep thought and said. "Wait! Wait!" The sudden shout made Emery stop and hesitate.

"I see your defensive spells are not inferior to my own and this could end up being an extremely long and exhausting battle. So, I have a proposal for you."

"What would that be?" Emery stopped attacking and asked.

"The Idea is simple! We could just each take turns taking hits."

Of course, Emery's first thought was to reject the proposal. But right before he opened his mouth, the acolyte added. "Both of us still have to do another fight today, right? It'd be more beneficial to the both of us, if we could save our stamina, so we can do better in the upcoming battle. What do you think? Brilliant proposal, right?"

Emery hesitated still and frowned. Was it a trap to get him to let down his guard? The giant seems to be good at close-range battles and getting closer would mean his own disadvantage.

Sensing Emery's hesitation, the giant man hurriedly added. "If you're still unsure, I can even let you hit me first! What do you think? Do you accept?"

Now that would be an advantage to the giant. If Emery struck first and the attack did not do any damage to him, he would be in an extremely vulnerable position.

Emery gave it a short thought and decided to say "Yes! Let's do it!"

"Hahaha! I like your confidence! Don't go back on your words!" The giant dropped his weapon, raised his chest, and shouted in such confidence. "What are you waiting for? Come here and give me your best shot!"

Right as Emery was about to prepare his spell, he saw the body of the giant emit a dim yellowish glow before changing. His whole body turned into stone and the rough texture of his skin became more pronounced. Amidst the bumps, Emery was able to see a different colored glow illuminating the stones.

[Greater Stone Skin – Tier 4 Earth Element Spell]

Emery knew not many people were able to learn the next stages of the basic spells and among those people, Sparse seems to be one of them. It was no wonder the giant man was so confident. Not only did he have the unique ability to enlarge his body, he was a master capable of learning the next stage form of a basic spell.

Emery shook his head, realizing how shameless and one-sided the giant's 'deal' was.

Finally, Emery sighed and decided to continue the fight. He raised his hand and concentrated, figuring this time was a time as good as any to attempt using his strongest offensive spell.

Emery held the wrist of his right hand with his left hand before closing his eyes and concentrating on his dark core. He obviously planned to release the strongest tier 4 darkness spell available to him.

[Dark Matter].

His opponent gave him the perfect chance. As they agreed to take turns, this gave him time to charge the spell to its maximum power.

Emery closed his eyes and concentrated. Letting dots of pure darkness appear in the air and gather together into a single ball. Seconds passed and the ball slowly got larger and stronger, fueled by the pure darkness energy poured into it. It was all or nothing, Emery decided to push all his remaining energy into this one single attack that would decide his victory or herald his defeat.

Sparse simply stared at the ball while it got larger and larger. The larger the ball, the more worried his expression looked. He shook his head, deciding it was not time to falter. "No... No... surely no spells can break apart my advanced Greater Stone Skin that easily."

Emery continued pushing darkness energy into the ball and, when he could not hold it anymore, he decided against throwing it. Instead, he dashed forward and pushed the black ball square into the giant acolyte's chest.

A second before the spell detonated, Emery could see an expression of regret on the giant's face.

Kabooooommm!

A large explosion of energy resounded throughout the arena, sending waves strong enough to throw the giant meters outside the bounds of the arena. The giant laid down on the ground, unmoving, a testament to Emery's victory.

"Aaa... Heii... are you ok? It's your turn now.."

[Congratulation you win first match]

Chapter 240: VIP

The audience cheered upon witnessing the explosion. Their cheers only got louder as the dust settled and let them see the giant acolyte lying unconscious on the ground. Flashy offensive spells were really good at riling up the audience and the one Emery just used was no exception.

"Whoa! Are we mistaken, or was that really a tier 4 spell?"

"Yes! It was!"

"That's amazing! How can it break through the Greater Stone Skin spell?"

"More! More! We want more!!"

Acolytes and magus all mingled together among the audience and all of them were capable of estimating Emery's strength from the spell he just used, [Dark Matter]. In addition, such strength from a tier 4 spell was unusual. It was clear, the spell was not only flashy enough to attract the audience's attention, but also capable of piquing their curiosity.

Meanwhile, on top of the usual audiences' area, there was one special place. It was the VIP seating area reserved for the elite members of the Magus Academy. Seated among them were the headmaster Altus

Dreyden, the deputy head Delbrand, the dozens of grand magus of the institutes, the representatives from major families and the members from humanity's governing body.

Emery did not realize the significance of what he did. The area was abuzz with whispers and discussions, each discussing the spell he used.

In contrast to the others, Grand Magus Zenoia watched the arena with rapt attention, eager to know just a little bit more about Emery's progress.

"Zenoia, you recognize that boy in Arena 7? I think he's from the Darkness Institute, right?"

Similar to Zenoia, the magus who asked her was also a grand magus specializing in the darkness element. However, unlike Zenoia, he was the instructor of the Destruction Path branch.

"Vulmar, you do realize there are a lot of people joining the darkness institute every year, right? Expecting me to keep track of hundreds of acolytes is absurd."

"Hah! Zenoia, you really do need to pay more attention to the members of your institute. The power of that kid's Dark Matter spell was off the charts. Knowing more about it should be worth the effort."

"Oh, you think so...? I personally think it's just a standard outcome from a spell that takes such a long time to be cast. It's nothing to write home about."

"Really? So, would you mind if I poach him and teach him the ways of Destruction Institute?"

Zenoia grinned, as if she just heard the most absurd joke and waved her hand. "If that's what you want, I'm not stopping, you, Vulmar." She winked and added in a husky voice. "Do whatever makes you happy."

Being noticed by them would only bring fortune to Emery. Regardless of the outcome of each battle, the Grand Magus watching from the VIP area had the final say of which acolyte would be the real winner of the Magus Games.

Unaware of the discussions going on amidst the audience, Emery basked in his victory, before realizing what he just did. With a worried frown, he ran towards the direction where Sparse fell unconscious. After all, they were no longer in a virtual simulation and his spells could cause real lasting damage here. He didn't have a precise idea on how strong the [Dark Matter] spell he just released was.

He closed the distance between him and Sparse and saw the former giant acolyte was lying down on the bare ground as his skinny self. He seemed to have regained consciousness and was currently being taken care of by other acolytes who specialize in healing. From what little he had seen, the talkative guy turned silent while being treated. It seemed his wound couldn't compare with the humiliation he just received.

When he saw Emery walking closer, he shouted in anger. "You! You still owe me a punch!"

"Sure, sure, we can do a rematch at any time you want. Just tell me."

Emery's reply made Sparse feel even more angry, but he was conflicted between his rage and his embarrassment of losing after acting with such confidence. Unable to come up with a good reply, he decided to stay silent and stew in his grudge.

Emery had confirmed his opponent's injury was not too serious, therefore he decided to return to his corner and wait for his next battle.

The moment he walked into the room, Emery was welcomed with dozens of threatening gaze, all sharply focused on him like a bunch of daggers. His skin prickled slightly, but he was not too afraid.

It was to be expected. After all, at the end of the day they are all his competitors, his victory would mean things getting harder for them.

Emery decided to conserve his energy and ignore them all, before taking a small spot in the corner. He sat cross-legged on the floor and tried to stabilize his darkness core.

When he focused on his core, he could feel the slight aftereffects of using such a powerful spell. But, from what he knew so far, it should be nothing unusual. Though he did pour all his strength to release a powerful [Dark Matter] spell, at the end of the day, he was only using a tier-4 spell. He was quite surprised too, when he witnessed the destruction his spell had brought, including throwing a giant several meters out of the arena.

He took a deep breath, concentrated and decided to cast [Nature's Blessing]. The spell was perfect for the occasion, as it was not only able to heal physical wounds, but also soothe one's spirit energy. He took his time and let his body rest for one hour, allowing the spell to restore his body to his prime.

He stood up, stretched his body and started watching the ongoing fights after his body was fully healed.

When he looked at the arena, he saw Rofos Trigerson, the red-haired muscular young man, who was among the top half-blood fighters participating in this game. Despite being able to, the acolyte with the tiger bloodline did not bother using his transformation powers at all.

Emery could recognize some of the half-blood acolytes scattered around the arena. Among them, his favorites were Zach, the dragon boy, and Vida, the bird girl. None of the opponents who had the misfortune to face them were able to last more than five minutes. But then again, the game had just begun and it was impossible for them to lose this early in the game.

He continued watching the fights and gathered more information from each acolyte battle style, hoping it would become useful later. Time flew, and in two hours, Emery's name was once again called. He took a deep breath, calmed his mind and walked out. Soon, the second match of the game would start.

Emery walked out of the corner reserved for participants and glanced at the large screen to find out who his next opponent would be. To his surprise, he saw a familiar name, the name of the elite acolyte he met in the previous game.

The elite acolyte flew down the sky, letting his flames billow in the wind to keep him afloat. After a while, he landed and waved at Emery with a grin. "Hey, finally we get a proper rematch! Emery the Mad Acolyte, against me, Gerri the Violet Flame!"

Gerri's smile made Emery tremble with excitement. This was the perfect chance to measure his progress in the last 10 days.

Gerri raised both of his arms, took a battle stance with his martial arts technique, the purple flames wreathed both of his hands, sending heat waves everywhere.

"Round two, Emery! Let's fight!"