

H. Academy 461

Chapter 461 104.2 - Everchanging Glyph

After finishing my meal, I made my way to the training room where I had worked with Reina the previous day. The corridors were quieter now, with most trainees immersed in their own schedules. The sense of calm before the storm of rigorous training ahead was almost palpable.

Reaching the third floor, I followed the familiar path to the south wing, where the room awaited. But then, as I reached the door, I could not open it.

The card did not work there.

[Please Enter the Password]

I frowned, glancing around for any clues. The area was quiet and empty, with no one around to ask for help. But then, something caught my eye—a faint glimmer of psions near the doorframe.

'Reina...' I thought, understanding what she wanted me to do.

Standing still, I focused on the line of psions, extending my mana threads towards it. The process required precision and control, much like what I had practiced with her the day before. I carefully wove my mana into the psion line, feeling for any information it might reveal.

The line resisted at first, but I persisted, gradually unraveling its structure. As I delved deeper, I sensed a pattern within the psions—a sequence of energy that seemed to form a code. It was delicate work, requiring intense concentration, but slowly, the pattern began to make sense.

[Not bad]

That was the password?

'Really....' –Click.

The door's lock disengaged, and the screen displayed a message: [Access Granted].

I let out a breath I hadn't realized I was holding. Reina had set this up to test my ability to decipher and manipulate psions, reinforcing the lessons from yesterday.

Pushing the door open, I entered the training room. Reina was there, her expression neutral but her eyes gleaming with approval.

"Impressive," she said. "You deciphered the psions faster than I expected. You're making good progress."

"Thank you, Miss Reina," I replied. "I've been practicing."

"Good," she nodded. "Today, we are not going to change things too much. You are going to train here with your eyes. We will be focusing on filtering and assimilation once again." She said as she gestured for me to follow her.

"How was your first day?" She suddenly asked.

"It was not bad," I replied.

"How was your experience with Dakota, Kennet, and Tianna?" Reina asked, her tone curious as she led me deeper into the training room.

"Each of them is unique in their approach," I began, reflecting on the day's events. "Dakota is intense and straightforward. Her training is demanding, but it's clear and focused. She's very skilled and expects a lot from her students, but she provides clear guidance and support."

Reina nodded, a small smile playing on her lips. "Dakota is one of the best. She doesn't tolerate mediocrity, but her students benefit greatly from her expertise."

"And Kennet?" she prompted.

"Kennet is...different," I said, choosing my words carefully. "He's methodical and precise. His focus on stealth and presence erasure is intense. I realized I had been relying too much on artifacts to

mask my presence. He quickly pointed out my flaws and made it clear that I needed to master the basics."

Reina's eyes gleamed with approval. "Kennet's methods may seem harsh, but they are necessary. Stealth is not just about hiding; it's about blending in and becoming one with the surroundings. He'll push you to reach your full potential."

"And Tianna?" she asked, her tone curious.

"Tianna is very structured. Her acrobatics training is divided into stages, each one building on the previous. She's detailed in her instructions and expects perfection in execution. I can see how her training will improve my agility and precision."

Reina smiled, a rare expression of genuine warmth. "It seems you're adapting well. Each instructor has their own methods and strengths, and you're fortunate to learn from them."

As we reached the center of the room, Reina turned to face me, her expression serious once more. "Just as I had said, today, we'll focus on filtering and assimilation, just as we did yesterday. But this time, I want you to push yourself further. The goal is to achieve a level of integration where the flow of mana becomes second nature."

I nodded, ready to begin. "Understood."

Reina created a new line of psions, which was more complex than before. "Start with filtering," she instructed. "Remember, it's about isolating the thread from the surrounding energy. Find the unique flow and follow it."

I closed my eyes, focusing on my breathing and the sensation of mana around me. The room's ambient energy was familiar, but the new line of psions required careful attention. I extended my mana threads, weaving them into the psion line and filtering out the extraneous noise.

The process was slow and methodical, but gradually, I felt the unique flow of the psions standing out. It was like tuning a radio to a specific frequency, blocking out the static, and honing in on the clear signal.

"Good," Reina's voice was calm and encouraging. "Now, begin the assimilation. Merge your mana with the psion line, becoming part of its flow."

I took a deep breath, allowing the filtered psion line to guide my mana. The integration was delicate, requiring both precision and control. My mana threads wove into the psion line, creating a harmonious connection.

As the process continued, I felt a sense of unity with the psion line, the flow of mana becoming more intuitive. The room around me seemed to fade, and all that mattered was the connection I was forming.

"Excellent," Reina said, her tone approving. "You're making great progress. Continue this process, and with time, it will become second nature."

And just as she said, that was starting to happen. Why?

Yesterday, I had already become proficient at doing this to a certain extent. I had just stopped since my head was hurting from all that constant focus, and I was hungry.

But today, with my mind refreshed, things were starting to become more and more easier.

As I continued to weave my mana into the psion line, the process became increasingly natural. The initial struggle gave way to a smooth, almost effortless flow. Each connection, each thread, felt intuitive and precise. The filtering and assimilation were no longer separate steps but a single, fluid motion.

In no time, I had mastered the technique. It felt as though it had become second nature to me. I opened my eyes to find Reina observing me with a clear smile of approval.

"Impressive," she said, her tone filled with genuine admiration. "You've made remarkable progress. Did you show the same performance as the other instructors?"

I met her gaze. "Did the word not reach your ears already?"

Reina chuckled softly. "It seems you're starting to understand how things work around here. Information flows quickly, especially regarding promising trainees. Your performance has indeed been noted."

I nodded, acknowledging her words. "I've been doing my best. Each instructor has their unique methods and expectations. It's been challenging but rewarding."

"Good," Reina replied, her expression serious once more. "Adaptability and the ability to learn quickly are crucial here. You're demonstrating both, and that will serve you well."

I felt a sense of satisfaction at her praise, knowing that my hard work was paying off. The training here was demanding, but it was also pushing me to new heights.

"Now," Reina continued, "we'll take this a step further. I want you to practice this technique under more complex conditions. The more variables you can handle, the better you'll become."

She created another line of psions, this one interwoven with multiple threads of varying complexity. "Start with filtering, as before. But this time, you'll need to isolate each thread and integrate your mana with them simultaneously."

I took a deep breath, focusing on the new challenge.

"And don't worry. In no time, you are going to understand the reason why we are doing this."

I nodded, not doubting her teaching methods. For me, my eyes were an unknown. Thus, there was absolutely no reason for me to refuse the hand that was trying to guide me.

The additional threads added a layer of complexity, requiring even more precision and control. I extended my mana threads, beginning the process of filtering and assimilation once again.

As I worked, I could feel the subtle differences between each thread. Some were more resistant, requiring a delicate touch, while others flowed more freely. It was a test of my ability to adapt and respond to the unique characteristics of each thread.

Reina watched closely, offering guidance and feedback as needed. "Remember, it's not just about control. It's about harmony. Each thread has its rhythm. Find it and match it with your own."

Her words guided me as I adjusted my approach, seeking the right balance. Slowly but surely, I integrated my mana with the multiple threads, creating a seamless connection.

"Excellent," Reina said, her approval evident. "You're making significant strides. Keep practicing, and soon, this will become second nature to you as well."

"Understood."

Just like that, I practiced until evening.

Dakota made her way to the central command center of the Arcadia Base; her thoughts focused on the conversation she was about to have. The Anchor of the base, known by the nickname "Steelclad," was the one she needed to convince to get permission for the Everchanging Glyph.

She approached the heavy, reinforced doors that led to Steelclad's office. The guards recognized her immediately and allowed her through with a respectful nod. Inside, the room was dimly lit, filled with the soft hum of high-tech equipment and large screens displaying various data feeds.

Steelclad was standing at the central console, his broad frame silhouetted against the glow of the monitors. He was a figure of authority and respect, his presence commanding the room.

"Dakota," Steelclad greeted her without turning around. His deep voice resonated with a calm but undeniable power. "What brings you here at this hour?"

"I need to discuss a matter of great importance regarding one of our trainees," Dakota replied, stepping forward. "It's about Astron Natusalune."

Steelclad turned to face her, his piercing eyes meeting hers. "Astron Natusalune," he repeated thoughtfully. "Reina's recommendation, correct?"

"Yes, that's him," Dakota confirmed. "He's shown remarkable potential, far beyond what I initially expected. I believe he's ready for something more advanced."

Steelclad raised an eyebrow. "More advanced? What do you have in mind?"

"The Everchanging Glyph," Dakota stated, her voice firm. "I believe it's the perfect technique to push him to the next level."

There was a moment of silence as Steelclad considered her words. "The Everchanging Glyph is not something we grant lightly, Dakota. You know that."

"I understand," she said, meeting his gaze steadily. "But Astron has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to learn and adapt. His progress in such a short time is unlike anything I've seen. If anyone is worthy of the Glyph, it's him."

Steelclad studied her for a long moment, weighing her request. "You're confident in his abilities?"

"Absolutely," Dakota replied without hesitation. "He's shown a natural aptitude for integrating mana and physical movements. His combat awareness and adaptability are exceptional. With the Everchanging Glyph, he could become a significant asset to our forces."

Steelclad nodded slowly. "Very well. But you will be responsible for his training and ensuring he doesn't misuse this technique. The Glyph is powerful, but it's also dangerous if not handled correctly."

"I accept full responsibility," Dakota affirmed. "I'll make sure he understands the gravity of what he's learning and guide him through it."

"Then you have my permission," Steelclad said, a hint of a smile tugging at the corner of his lips. "Good luck, Dakota. I trust your judgment."

"Thank you, Steelclad," Dakota said, her relief palpable. She turned to leave, feeling a renewed sense of purpose. With the Everchanging Glyph approved, she was one step closer to unlocking Astron's full potential.

And she could not help but smile.

'I wonder....Is this how the perfect [Weapon Master] will be created.....And how much of a monster we are creating here....' Yet her blood boiled, as she wanted to see what would happen to this monster....

Chapter 462 104.3 - Everchanging Glyph

Dakota quickly made her way to the facilities where the necessary preparations for the Everchanging Glyph could be arranged. The Glyph, a powerful and ancient mark, required a controlled environment and precise conditions to be safely and effectively engraved on Astron's body.

She reached the specialized chamber designed for such procedures, a high-tech room filled with intricate machinery and glowing runes embedded in the walls. The atmosphere hummed with latent energy, ready to be harnessed for the delicate operation ahead.

Dakota approached the head technician, a seasoned mage named Thalia, who was overseeing the preparations. Thalia looked up from her console, her eyes lighting up with recognition.

"Dakota, what brings you here?" Thalia asked, her voice tinged with curiosity.

"We need to prepare the chamber for the Everchanging Glyph," Dakota replied, her tone leaving no room for hesitation. "I have Steelclad's permission to proceed with the engraving for Astron Natusalune."

Thalia's eyebrows shot up in surprise. "The Everchanging Glyph? That's quite a step. Is he ready for it?"

"He's more than ready," Dakota assured her. "His potential is remarkable, and this will help him reach new heights. I'll be personally overseeing his training."

Thalia nodded, her expression becoming serious. "Understood. We'll make sure everything is set up correctly. This process requires precision and caution."

Dakota watched as Thalia and her team moved efficiently, adjusting the runes and calibrating the machinery. The room began to glow with a soft, pulsating light, the energy building up in preparation for the engraving.

Once everything was ready, Dakota contacted Astron through her communication device.

[Disciple, come to this location. I have something for you.] *****

Just as I was deeply focused on my training, an immense headache suddenly struck me down. The pain was sharp and intense, radiating through my skull like a thousand needles. I staggered, barely able to keep my balance, and instinctively reached up to my face. My fingers came away smeared with blood from my nose.

I realized that I had pushed my limits too much. Reina had left me alone some time ago, trusting me to practice and figure things out on my own. Her guidance had been invaluable, but she had also made it clear that self-reliance was crucial.

Wiping the blood from my nose, I took a moment to sit down and breathe, trying to let my mind settle. The headache slowly began to recede, but the experience left me feeling drained and vulnerable. It was a stark reminder of the importance of balancing effort with caution.

Wiping the blood from my nose, I took a moment to sit down and breathe, trying to let my mind settle. The headache slowly began to recede, but the experience left me feeling drained and vulnerable. It was a stark reminder of the importance of balancing effort with caution.

"Overexerting my mind and mana like this could have serious consequences," I muttered to myself. "I need to recognize my limits and avoid pushing past them."

I closed my eyes, focusing on slow, measured breaths. The headache continued to subside, leaving me with a lingering sense of exhaustion. I knew that I had made significant progress today, but it had come at a cost.

The pressure to constantly improve was immense, but I had to remember that pushing too hard could be just as detrimental as not trying hard enough.

"Balance is key," I reminded myself, echoing Reina's earlier words.

After a few more minutes of rest, I stood up slowly, feeling a bit steadier on my feet. I knew I needed to take the rest of the evening to recover and recharge. My training would resume tomorrow, but for now, my priority was to take care of myself.

As the headache subsided to a manageable level, I made my way towards the cafeteria, the familiar hallways quiet in the evening. The routine of training was physically and mentally exhausting, but the structure also provided a sense of stability.

Entering the cafeteria, I found it less crowded than usual. Most trainees were likely still engaged in their own training sessions or taking the time to rest. I approached the serving counter, the same aroma of freshly prepared food wafting through the air.

"One Reddish Hydra Serpent Steak and one Ironhide Boar Roast, please," I said to the attendant.

The attendant nodded, quickly preparing my order. Within minutes, the same two steaming plates were placed before me, the scents mingling with the spices, making the food seem more palatable despite its notorious taste.

I took my tray to an empty table, grateful for the quiet. The cafeteria's hum was soothing, a backdrop that allowed me to reflect on the day's events. Picking up my utensils, I started with the Reddish Hydra Serpent Steak, the flavors rich and slightly spicy, replenishing the energy I had expended.

As I ate, I considered the progress I made today. Despite the overexertion, I had achieved a deeper understanding of my abilities.

—RING!

Just as I was eating more, suddenly, my smartwatch rang.

[Dakota Hellen: Disciple. Come to this location. I have something for you.]

The message was blunt and simple, just like Dakota's style. I shook my head with a sigh, thinking how straightforward she always was. And it reminded me of a certain someone once again. Today, this was the second time this happened.

'Tsk. I am getting soft.' I grumbled inwardly.

I sent a quick reply:

[I'm eating now. Would it be okay if I came 10 minutes later? Or is it urgent?]

Almost immediately, a message came back from Dakota: [It's fine if you're eating. In fact, it would be even better.]

An ominous feeling enveloped me. The fact that Dakota said it would be better if I came after eating meant I would do something that either required more energy or something that needed me to be in top condition. I quickly finished my meal, making sure to eat every last bite to maximize my energy reserves.

Once done, I made my way to the location Dakota had specified. The corridors were quieter now, with most trainees immersed in their evening routines. I couldn't shake the feeling of anticipation mixed with a hint of apprehension.

Reaching the designated room, I took a deep breath and opened the door. Inside, Dakota was waiting, her posture as rigid and commanding as ever.

"Good, you're here," she said, her eyes scanning me critically. "How are you feeling?"

"Better now that I've had something to eat," I replied while seizing the room from top to bottom.

It felt sterile, almost like a place for someone to get surgery. The walls were lined with intricate machinery and glowing runes, and there was an underlying hum of energy that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

Dakota noticed my unease and gave a small, reassuring nod. "This room is designed for precision and control, necessary for what we're about to do."

"What exactly are we about to do?" I asked, my curiosity piqued.

"We're going to engrave the Everchanging Glyph on you," Dakota explained. "It's a powerful and ancient mark that will enhance your abilities and help you reach new heights."

'Everchanging Glyph? What is that?' I thought to myself, and then, as I looked for the information in my head, I was not able to find anything. There was no mention of such a thing in the game. It was evident that this was something that was hard to access.

"What exactly is this Everchanging Glyph?" I asked, curious and with a hint of apprehension in my voice.

Dakota smiled a hint of pride in her eyes. "While I was teaching you, I mentioned the first thing you were lacking: mana control. Do you remember?"

I nodded. "Yes, I remember. Since I had never fought while using mana before."

"Correct," Dakota said, nodding her head. "But aside from that, there was one other thing you were lacking."

I narrowed my eyes, trying to think of what it could be. "What is it?"

I frowned, considering her words. "So the Everchanging Glyph will help with that?"

"Exactly," Dakota confirmed. "The Everchanging Glyph is an ancient and powerful mark that enhances your body and balances your muscles. It adapts and evolves with you, ensuring that your physical condition remains optimal for any weapon you use. Since you're a [Weapon Master], you'll be using many different weapons, each requiring a different set of physical attributes. The Everchanging Glyph constantly overwrites and adjusts your muscles and body structure to suit the weapon you're wielding at the time. This will solve the problem of adapting your body to different weapons."

She gestured to the intricate machinery and glowing runes surrounding us. "This room is designed to ensure that the engraving process is precise and controlled. The Everchanging Glyph is not something to be taken lightly. It requires a delicate and careful approach."

I took a deep breath, steeling myself for what was to come. "I understand."

There was absolutely no reason for me to refuse such an offer, as this was something that had been in my mind for a while as well.

While we were being taught the Federal Swordsmanship in the Academy, I came across this problem as well. The sword did not move the same as the dagger. My body, which was trained with a dagger and bow for a long time, could not easily adapt to the sword.

This solved this problem exactly, with a solution that I could not think of since I did not even know it existed.

At that moment, the woman that Dakota had just talked to came.

"We are ready."

"Okay." Dakota nodded, her expression serious. And then she turned to me and gestured. "Lie down on the table and relax. Thalia and her team will handle the engraving process."

I complied, lying down on the cold metal table in the center of the room. Thalia and her team moved around me, making final adjustments to the machinery. The room's hum intensified, and I could feel the energy converging around me.

"Ready?" Dakota asked, her eyes locked onto mine.

"Ready," I replied, my voice steady.

Thalia began the process, and I felt a sharp pain as the engraving started. It was intense, but I focused on my breathing, trying to remain as still as possible. The pain ebbed and flowed, and I could feel the energy of the glyph merging with my own.

As the procedure continued, I lost track of time. The pain was a constant companion, but so was the sense of power growing within me. The Everchanging Glyph was becoming a part of me, enhancing my abilities and unlocking new potential.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, the process was complete. The machinery powered down, and the glowing runes faded. Thalia and her team stepped back, their expressions a mix of exhaustion and satisfaction.

"It's done," Thalia said, her voice tired but pleased. "Now, please move him towards the bathroom. His body needs nutrients."

"Understood, Miss Thalia." The assistants that were right beside her nodded their heads and then slid me through the place.

WOOSH!

And threw me into the orange-looking water.

Chapter 463 104.4 - Everchanging Glyph

As I was thrown into the orange water, an overwhelming wave of pain coursed through my body. It was as if every fiber of my being was being torn apart and reconstructed at the same time. My bones, muscles, arms, and skeleton – everything felt like it was being broken down and rebuilt anew.

The agony was incomparable to anything I had ever experienced before. It was far worse than the engraving process itself. The searing pain felt as though my body was burning from the inside out, similar to the intense burning sensation I had felt when consuming the essence provided by Senior Maya.

'No. That is even worse than that.'

It was so much that my vision blurred, and I struggled to maintain consciousness. The pain was relentless, refusing to let up even for a moment. It felt like an eternity, and my senses were overwhelmed by the sheer intensity of the transformation.

Just as I thought I couldn't endure it any longer, the pain began to subside, replaced by a strange sense of clarity and strength. I could feel my body adapting, the Everchanging Glyph integrating fully into my being. Every muscle, every bone, every fiber felt different – stronger, more resilient.

After what felt like hours, the orange water lost its glow, and I was left floating there, exhausted but transformed. Slowly, I managed to pull myself out of the water, my body still trembling from the ordeal.

Thalia and her team were there, watching with a mix of concern and curiosity. Dakota stood at the edge of the pool, her expression unreadable.

"How do you feel?" Dakota asked, her voice steady.

I took a moment to gather myself, then replied, "Different. Stronger."

"How about the pain?"

"I am already used to it."

"Good," Dakota replied with a nod, satisfied with my response.

Thalia approached a tablet in her hand. "Let's go over how this glyph works and the direction you'll need to take moving forward."

She tapped the tablet, bringing up a series of charts and metrics. "First, let's look at your body parameters before and after the integration. The Everchanging Glyph is designed to optimize your physical state for any weapon or combat style you use. It will constantly adapt, ensuring that your body is always in the best possible condition."

Thalia showed me a detailed breakdown of my body metrics. The screen displayed various data points: muscle density, bone strength, reflex speed, and other vital statistics. I could see the significant improvements in each category, highlighting the transformation my body had undergone.

"As you can see," Thalia continued, "your muscle density has increased by 25%, your bone strength by 30%, and your reflex speed has improved by 20%. These enhancements will give you a significant advantage in combat."

She paused, looking at me with a serious expression. "However, it's important to note that the glyph is not a replacement for training. It enhances your abilities, but you must continue to train and push your limits to fully utilize its potential."

"Understood," I said, absorbing the information.

Thalia nodded. "Good. Now, let's discuss the direction of your training. The Everchanging Glyph will allow you to adapt quickly to different weapons and combat styles. You'll need to practice with a variety of weapons to ensure your body can adjust seamlessly. This means dedicating time to both familiar and unfamiliar weapons."

Dakota chimed in, "In the future, we'll be incorporating a diverse range of weapons into your training regimen. You'll need to become proficient with each one, understanding how the glyph modifies your body in response to different fighting techniques."

Thalia continued, "Additionally, you'll need to monitor your body's responses closely. The glyph is powerful, but it may require a significant amount of mana to function effectively in some states. Especially if you are not proficient and your body has not recorded the optimal state. In that case, the mana and the time will be used while your body searches it on its own. That is why you must not try a completely new weapon without training with it before. If you are doing so, you must deactivate your glyph. It will backfire otherwise."

"Understood," I repeated, my mind already processing the implications of the training ahead.

"Additionally," Thalia said, "you'll be given a special diet program to ensure your body develops at the optimal rate. The Everchanging Glyph requires a high level of nutrition to support its adaptive capabilities."

She glanced at a screen displaying my past records of eating and noted the combination of meals I had consumed, some of which didn't taste particularly good but were rich in nutrients. She nodded approvingly. "It's good to see you're not a picky eater. This will make following the diet program much easier."

I nodded, understanding the importance of proper nutrition. "I'll follow the diet closely."

"Excellent," Thalia replied. "The program includes a balanced mix of proteins, carbohydrates, and essential vitamins and minerals. You'll be consuming a lot of high-energy foods to support the intense training regimen and the demands of the glyph."

Dakota added, "Your meal plan will be updated regularly based on your progress. The chefs in the cafeteria have been briefed and will prepare your meals according to the plan. Make sure you stick to it."

"Understood," I said, appreciating the thoroughness of their approach. Every aspect of my training and development was meticulously planned and monitored, ensuring I had the best possible chance of success.

Thalia handed me a detailed meal plan outlining the specific foods I needed to consume and their nutritional values. "Keep this with you and follow it closely. If you have any questions or concerns, you can always come to me."

"Thank you," I said, taking the meal plan and glancing over it. The variety of foods was impressive, and while some items were unfamiliar, I was willing to try anything to enhance my abilities.

Dakota gave a final nod. "Rest and recover for now. Tomorrow, we'll start incorporating the new training elements. Be prepared."

As I left the chamber, I felt a weird feeling all across my body, but at the same time, I could not help but feel satisfied.

'After all this time, it seems my luck is finally turning to my side.' Whether or not this was a very good improvement. Something that came out of nowhere without any preparations from my side, yet something that was very welcome.

Returning to my room, I noticed that Kael and Lyra were already asleep. They hadn't sensed my movements, a testament to my improved skills in erasing my presence. I moved silently, careful not to disturb them, and entered my room, shutting the door quietly behind me.

With a sigh of relief, I threw myself onto the bed, feeling the comfortable mattress beneath me. The events of the day played through my mind, the pain of the engraving, and the transformation I had undergone. Exhaustion washed over me, and despite the lingering discomfort, I felt a sense of accomplishment. The Everchanging Glyph was now a part of me, a powerful tool that would help me reach new heights.

As I lay there, I let my thoughts drift, feeling the weight of the day's training and the promise of tomorrow's challenges.

But before that, there was something that I needed to do, something that I needed to check.

'Status.' I thought in my head, and following that, the panel appeared right before my face.

▶ Name: Astron Natusalune

▶ Occupation: Weapon Master (level 3 --> 4)

▶ Talent Limit: 9 ▶ Passives:

Vengeful Bane Bloodline Resonance Psychic Cognizance

▶ Attributes:

Variable Attributes:

Strength: 3.87 --> 4.85

Dexterity: 4.3 --> 5.13

Agility: 4.64 --> 5.20

Constitution: 3.89 --> 4.88

Intuition: 4.70 --> 5.26

Magical Power: 5.01 --> 5.61

Mana Capacity: 4.02 --> 4.88

▶ Traits:

Perceptive Insight (Epic)(Unchanging)

Lunar Enigma (????) (Growth Type) (Stage 1)

Shadowborne (Legendary) (Growth Type)(Stage 2)

▶ Arts:

Lethal Arsenal Ascendancy (????)(%29 --> 35)

▶ Skills:

Eyes of Hourglass

▶ Body Imprints:

Everchanging Glyph

▶ Bonds:

Aurora Raven (Rare)(Growth Type)

Celestialith, The Transcendent Eclipse

Seeing my updated status, I couldn't help but feel a surge of satisfaction. My level had increased, and my attributes had made significant leaps. The Everchanging Glyph was already making a noticeable impact, boosting my physical and magical capabilities. The progress in my arts and the stability of my traits and skills were promising signs of my development.

"Looks like all the hard work is paying off," I muttered to myself.

I began to analyze my parameters in detail. My strength had risen to 4.85, a substantial increase. This, combined with my enhanced dexterity and agility, meant my overall combat efficiency had skyrocketed.

My agility was now at 5.20, making me quicker and more responsive in battle. Dexterity, now at 5.13, would enhance my precision and control, crucial for a Weapon Master.

With the way my stats were right now, I could fight toe-to-toe against the top 200 students at Arcadia Hunter Academy based on parameters alone. I clenched my fists, feeling the newfound strength coursing through my body. Finally, my endurance and strength had closed the gap between them and my other stats. My physical parameters were a lot more stable thanks to the enhancements from the Everchanging Glyph.

My constitution, now at 4.88, meant I could endure more in combat without tiring as quickly. The increase in my intuition to 5.26 would enhance my perception and reaction times, which are critical for anticipating and countering enemy movements. My magical power and mana capacity had also improved significantly, now standing at 5.61 and 4.88, respectively. This would allow me to harness more mana for extended periods, crucial for both offensive and defensive maneuvers.

Feeling a surge of confidence, I flexed my muscles, testing their responsiveness. Every movement felt more precise, every action more controlled.

Curious about the Everchanging Glyph and its full potential, I opened its description on my status panel. Another screen appeared, filled with intricate details about the glyph and its workings.

Everchanging Glyph

Description: The Everchanging Glyph is an ancient and powerful rune that continuously adapts the wielder's body to optimize the use of any weapon. It ensures that muscles, tendons, and bones are always in an ideal state, enhancing strength, dexterity, and agility based on the current weapon and combat style.

This glyph consumes a steady flow of mana to function, with increased consumption during combat or weapon switching. Though it provides significant enhancements, it requires the user to maintain rigorous training and proficiency with various weapons.

Originally crafted by ancient weapon masters to transcend physical limits, the glyph's secrets were lost for centuries before being rediscovered and refined.

Reading the panel, I nodded. This was exactly what I had been informed of. But at the end of the paragraph, one sentence took my attention.

"Originally crafted by ancient weapon masters to transcend physical limits, the glyph's secrets were lost for centuries before being rediscovered and refined."

I read it aloud, the words resonating in my mind. An image flashed before my eyes: a certain blacksmith who had made my weapon—Celestalith.

"Could it be...?" I murmured to myself. The familiarities between the description of the Everchanging Glyph and the unique attributes of Celestalith were uncanny.

I remembered the blacksmith, Vorgvir. He mentioned ancient techniques and forgotten arts when forging Celestalith, but at the time, I hadn't fully grasped the significance.

"Haha.....It is pretty ironic, is it not, old man?" I shook my head as I remembered the face Vorgvir made when I mentioned his vengeance.

"Finding another one of your legacies."

The life was filled with coincidences indeed. Just like that, I closed my eyes and fell asleep.

Chapter 464 104.5 - Everchanging Glyph

"Disciple, come at me." Standing on the mat, Dakota stood face to face with Astron, looking at him.

"We are going to spar?" Astron asked. He had started his training just one day ago, and for a usual procedure, it was not a normal thing for them to just start constantly.

"Yes," Dakota replied, but then she changed her stance. "However, we both are only going to use [Gale Stance]."

"Ah, right." Since Astron had been training only one stance, it would make sense that they would do such a thing. However, the main reason why Dakota wanted to see Astron in a spar was not to see his progress in [Gale Stance] but rather to test his new body after the changes.

'The Everchanging Glyph. I wonder how effective it is,' Dakota thought, her eyes narrowing slightly as she observed him. She was eager to see how the ancient rune had affected Astron's body.

The Everchanging Glyph was not something used lightly. It was designed to adapt the wielder's body to optimize the use of any weapon, ensuring that muscles, tendons, and bones were always in an ideal state. The glyph consumed a steady flow of mana to function, with increased consumption during combat or weapon switching.

Out of many different things that the organization had under its disposal, this rune was one of the most situational ones. Rarely would people have different types of occupations, thus requiring them to have such a chance in their bodies. And even if they did, none of them would need a drastic rune like this. It would mostly be wasted.

That was why she was curious to see its performance as well as to understand what kind of training they would need to undergo from now on.

"Begin," Dakota said, and the air between them seemed to thicken with tension.

Astron moved first, stepping into the [Gale Stance] with a fluidity that surprised even him. His body felt lighter, more balanced. He launched a quick succession of strikes, testing his speed and precision.

This was the first exercise that he was doing after the rune was engraved on him. Since he was forced to rest for the whole night, he was not allowed to wake up early and train on his own.

THUD! THUD! Dakota parried his attacks with ease, her movements smooth and controlled. She noted the increased speed and power behind Astron's strikes. The Everchanging Glyph was already showing its effects, enhancing his dexterity and agility.

'Interesting,' Dakota thought. 'The glyph is adapting his body efficiently. But how well can he maintain this under pressure?'

She decided to increase the intensity, pushing Astron to see how he would handle a more challenging opponent. Her strikes came faster and harder, forcing Astron to react quickly.

Astron felt the glyph working within him, adapting his muscles and enhancing his reflexes. He dodged and countered with surprising accuracy, his body moving in perfect harmony with the flow of mana.

On the other side, the strain of maintaining the glyph's effect was noticeable, but he pushed through it. It was a hard task even for him. While maintaining the mana flow of the [Gale Stance], he also needed to maintain his Glyph's efficiency.

Dakota was impressed by his resilience and adaptability. 'He's already integrating the glyph's benefits into his combat style. But he needs to understand its limits and the cost of maintaining it.'

For the time being, Astron's options in combat styles were just limited to one style. But Dakota knew that if he were to understand how one style worked, he would be able to adapt it to the other styles.

SWOOSH! She launched a particularly fierce combo, testing his endurance. Astron met her attacks with focus, feeling the burn in his muscles but also the thrill of the challenge.

Each strike and counterstrike honed his skills further, the glyph ensuring his body was always in peak condition.

Finally, Dakota stepped back, signaling a pause.

"Not bad," Dakota said, her tone carrying a hint of approval. "The Everchanging Glyph is enhancing your abilities, but remember, it consumes a lot of mana. You need to manage it carefully."

This was her first impression of the glyph. "Or maybe it is related to your mastery. The more you understand the rune, the more likely it is that you are going to consume less mana. I would suggest that when you are free, you should experiment with your body to increase your understanding."

She decided to shift the focus from the rune to his technical abilities. "Now, let's focus on the [Gale Stance] itself. As you know, the [Gale Stance] is designed to maximize speed and fluidity. It has three primary moves, each with a specific purpose."

Dakota began to outline the moves, reminding Astron of their importance. "We have the [High Gale], [Medium Gale], and [Low Gale]. Each one targets different areas and has its unique strategic advantages."

She continued, providing detailed feedback based on their sparring session. "During our spar, I noticed a few things. Your [High Gale] was quick and precise, but your strikes lacked follow-through. You need to commit fully to each strike to maximize its impact."

"For the [Medium Gale]," Dakota went on, "your transitions were smooth, but there was a hesitation in your movements. That hesitation can cost you in a real fight. You need to trust your instincts and the flow of mana within you."

"And finally, the [Low Gale]," Dakota said, her tone becoming serious. "Your low strikes were effective, but your stance was too rigid. Flexibility is key here; you need to stay loose and adaptable to react quickly to your opponent's movements."

"I see," Astron said after looking at his body. He imagined how he was moving in his head, and even though his imagination may not have been inaccurate, in his imagination, he had simulated his flaws.

"Now, take the [Gale Stance], and let's work on those details," Dakota instructed.

Astron assumed the [Gale Stance], his body poised and ready. Dakota moved around him, observing his posture and movements closely. She made small adjustments, correcting his form and ensuring his stance was perfect.

"Your left foot needs to be angled slightly more," she said, nudging his foot into position. "And keep your shoulders relaxed. Tension will slow you down."

As she continued to adjust his stance, Dakota explained, "These mistakes stem from the techniques you learned before as a combatant. For a normal, non-awakened human, those methods make sense. But now, as an awakened, you need to adapt and change."

She stepped back, watching as Astron made the adjustments. "Remember, your body is now enhanced by mana. You need to rely on that, not just your physical strength. Let the mana guide your movements, make them more fluid and powerful."

Astron nodded, focusing on integrating her corrections. He could feel the difference, the increased ease and efficiency in his movements. The Everchanging Glyph's effect on his body made it even more evident.

"Much better," Dakota said with approval. "Keep practicing, and these adjustments will become second nature." She said while slowly turning back. "From now on, you may see a little decrease in your sleep. Are you ready?"

But then she suddenly dropped the bomb.

"What do you mean, Master?" Astron asked, feeling a bit ominous. He was kind of predicting what was about to come.

Dakota turned back to face him, a smirk playing on her lips. "While your body is one of the best to change itself to suit the art you are using, it is not only limited to art but to every situation."

She paused, letting her words sink in. "For instance, extreme conditions."

The moment Astron heard this, he understood what she meant. A long and painful road awaited him, filled with grueling training sessions designed to push his limits and adapt his body to the harshest conditions imaginable.

Dakota's smirk widened as she saw the realization dawn on his face. "The Everchanging Glyph will help you adapt, but it won't make the process any less painful. You need to be prepared to endure and overcome."

Just as she said that there was an ominous glint in her eyes, and Astron knew what it was.

'The same eyes as those....' A memory flashed for a split second, a memory that he had buried underneath for a long time.

"001. Do you know why this number is given to you?" The man's voice was cold and emotionless as he looked down at Astron with eyes that held no empathy, only superiority.

The man continued, his tone icy. "No matter what you do, you are the first in everything, the best. Best at combat, best at thinking, best at analyzing, best at killing. You are the best in everything."

The man's gaze bore into Astron's, unyielding and merciless. "But at the same time, you are also the best at not feeling anything. You are not a human but a number because of that—a tool that can only be used by humans. And I want to see..... I want to see the monster that you are going to become.... That is why we have prepared something for you." For a split second, only a millisecond, his eyes flashed cold. The memory.... It was not something that he wished to remember.

Dakota's eyes contained the same madness that that person had. And his end was not well.

Dakota's voice pulled him back to the present. "You need to be prepared to endure and overcome."

Astron shook off the haunting memory, focusing on the present and the path ahead.

'I don't want it to end the same.' Compared to the past, he was different now. He was changing. He did not want to return to the same person that he was at that time.

"I understand, Master. I'm ready," he said, his voice steady despite the turmoil within. For the time being, he would see how things would go.

'As long as it does not harm my goal, I can endure everything.' The other person could desire whatever they wanted; he would not care. As long as it is within reasonable limits and something that would not hinder his goals or align with them, he would comply.

No matter how painful it was, as he was already accustomed to the pain long ago.

Dakota nodded, her expression firm but approving. "Good. I will be looking forward to it."

Chapter 465 105.1 - What it means to be a Genius

After leaving Astron to train on his own, Dakota made her way to the Anchor's office once again. She needed his approval for the next phase of Astron's training—the use of the Chamber.

The Chamber was a place designed to push Awakened to their absolute limits, a place where the extreme conditions and rigorous simulations tested every aspect of their abilities.

Dakota entered the office, her expression resolute. "Sir Steelclad, I need your permission for Astron to use the Chamber."

The Anchor looked up from his desk, his brows furrowing. "The Chamber? That's not something to be taken lightly, Dakota. You know the risks involved."

"I understand the risks," Dakota replied, her voice steady. "But I believe this will greatly increase his prowess and push him to get better faster. He has the potential, and the Chamber will help him unlock it."

Steelclad studied her for a moment, his eyes thoughtful. After a pause, a smile slowly formed on his lips. "You're really invested in this one, aren't you?"

"He's special," Dakota said simply. "And he needs this opportunity." She said while looking resolute. "Just like me, the organization is the same, is it not? The amount of resources that was given to him is already too much, so I want to make it worth it."

Steelclad nodded, his smile widening. "Very well. You have my consent."

Dakota allowed herself a small smile of relief and gratitude. "Thank you."

As she turned to leave the room, she heard Steelclad's voice behind her, tinged with something. "Dakota. When did you become like this?"

She stopped and turned back to face him, her expression thoughtful. "Like what?"

But as the words left her mouth, she suddenly saw his eyes turn black. Countless different pupils swirled within them, like serpents writhing in a pit.

Dakota felt a wave of intimidation wash over her, a sensation unlike anything she had ever experienced. Her skin burned as if set on fire, and an overwhelming sensation of insects crawling under her flesh made her shiver uncontrollably. Pain surged through her being, sharp and intense as if her very soul was being torn apart.

Steelclad's voice cut through the haze of agony, cold and authoritative. "You think of Astron as a mere tool, a means to fulfill what Elias failed to achieve. Your ambition blinds you, Dakota."

She tried to speak, but the pain was too intense. Every breath felt like a struggle, every moment an eternity of suffering.

"You request something that requires immense willpower," Steelclad continued, his gaze piercing into her soul. "With the amount of training the boy is already undergoing, this could easily backfire. You have no idea the depths of pain he would endure. The pain you're feeling now is but a fraction of what he would face."

Dakota's knees buckled under the weight of his words and the unbearable sensation, but she forced herself to remain standing. The intensity of Steelclad's power was overwhelming, a stark reminder of his true capabilities.

"Do not let your greed blind you," Steelclad scolded. "Everything in this world has a limit. That kid, Astron, is not just a vessel for your ambitions. He is a person with his own strengths and weaknesses."

With a final, searing glance, Steelclad's eyes returned to normal, and the excruciating sensations vanished as quickly as they had come. Dakota gasped for breath, the lingering echoes of pain making her limbs tremble.

Steelclad's voice softened slightly, but his words were no less stern. "Remember that, Dakota. Do not push him beyond his limits, or you will lose him. Train him, guide him, but never forget his humanity."

Dakota nodded, her voice barely a whisper. "Yes, sir. I understand."

She left the office, her mind reeling from the encounter. Steelclad's warning echoed in her thoughts, a stark reminder of the fine line she walked between ambition and responsibility.

On the other hand, after she left, the Steelclad looked thoughtful in his seat. He looked into the small hologram of the young man with purple eyes training.

"Never make him forget his humanity, or else this place will be in ruins."

Remembering "His" words, he could not help but shake his head.

'What is it that even "He" is afraid of? Even making "The One" afraid. Just who are you, young man?'

He could not help but be curious about the whole thing surrounding him, yet he remained seated.

'The time will tell.'

'What was I thinking?'

Dakota thought as she reflected on her past actions and how she had behaved. She realized how immature she was. While she indeed thought that she would need to push his limits to make him stronger, was this the right way?

What had she just said? Was that really a good thing? What if she were to push him from herself? Could she really call herself his master, then?

She knew she needed to tread carefully to balance her drive to push Astron to his full potential with the understanding of his limits.

On the other hand, she couldn't deny the importance of pushing boundaries to achieve greatness. The challenge lay in finding the right balance—ensuring that Astron grew stronger without breaking his spirit.

She needed to be both a guide and a guardian, pushing him to his limits while also protecting him from undue harm.

'He's not Elias,' she reminded herself. 'Astron is his own person, with his own path to walk.'

As she made her way back to the training area, Dakota resolved to change her approach. She would still push Astron but with a greater awareness of his well-being and respect for his individuality. She needed to earn his trust, not just his obedience.

'Let's focus on what we have before our eyes for the time being.'

She was already sure that the analysis team would arrange what was best for him. There was no need for her to forcefully intervene herself. She just needed to do her job as his master. She needed to guide him so that he could become a full-fledged martial artist. That was what she needed to do.

With all those thoughts in her head, she walked forward, thinking about how she needed to just adapt.

The acrobatics training hall buzzed with activity as trainees navigated the intricate parkour setup. The air was filled with the sound of feet hitting mats, the soft thuds of bodies rolling, and the occasional grunt of exertion.

Astron entered the hall, his eyes scanning the obstacles before settling on Instructor Tianna. She stood at the front, her sharp eyes immediately noticing his arrival.

"Astron," Tianna called out, waving him over. "Are you ready for today's session?"

"Yes, Instructor," Astron replied, his voice steady and confident. He felt different today, more attuned to his body's movements, thanks to the Everchanging Glyph.

Tianna nodded, studying him for a moment before speaking. "Today, we'll focus on the second stage of your acrobatics training. The complexity increases, requiring more agility and precision. Let's see how you handle it."

Tianna began her demonstration with a fluid grace that spoke of years of training and practice. "Watch closely," she said, positioning herself at the start of the course. "First, let's tackle the narrow beams."

She balanced effortlessly on the beam, her body perfectly aligned. "Maintain your center of gravity. Your core should be engaged, and your steps should be light but deliberate." Tianna moved forward, her feet gliding over the beam with precision. She turned her head slightly towards Astron. "Never rush. Speed will come with mastery."

Next, she approached the higher walls. "Vaulting over these requires both strength and technique." She placed her hands firmly on the top edge of the wall and swung her legs over in a smooth, controlled motion, landing softly on the other side. "Use your arms to propel yourself and ensure a soft landing by absorbing the impact with your legs."

Tianna then moved to the wider gaps. "Jumping across these requires explosive power." She crouched slightly, gathering energy before leaping forward, her body extended in a perfect arc. She landed in a roll, minimizing the impact. "When you land, roll to distribute the force evenly across your body, protecting your joints and maintaining your momentum."

She led him to the starting point of the second stage, a more challenging setup with narrower beams, higher walls, and wider gaps. "Remember, efficiency and control are key. Each movement must flow seamlessly into the next."

Astron nodded, his mind already visualizing the course. He took a deep breath, feeling the mana coursing through his body, the virtual core aiding in the precise control of his movements. That is right. When he had learned the theory of using the Virtual Core, he decided to integrate it into other things. Normally, splitting his brain and thought process so that he could also control his mana was not something that he found efficient. Thus, he decided to use another perspective.

As Tianna started the timer, he launched himself into the course.

His body moved with a fluidity that was incomparable to yesterday. Each step was light and controlled, his feet barely making a sound as they landed on the narrow beams. He vaulted over walls with ease, his muscles responding perfectly to his commands.

Tianna watched, her eyes widening slightly as she noted the smoothness of his movements. Astron's agility and precision were far beyond what she had expected at this stage, especially after seeing what happened yesterday.

While he may have passed the first stage in one day, it was because he already looked like he had some experience in terms of acrobatics and climbing. But, she did not expect the same performance.

Yet, here he was. He navigated the complex obstacles effortlessly, his body adapting quickly to each new challenge.

Just as Astron cleared the final obstacle with a flawless roll, he stood up, his breathing steady and controlled. Tianna couldn't help but shake her head in amazement. "I see now why you were given such an advanced program," she said, her tone a mixture of admiration and disbelief. "Your natural talent and adaptability are remarkable."

Astron nodded, grateful for the compliment but focused on the task at hand. "Thank you, Instructor."

Tianna smiled, her expression softening slightly. "Very well. I'll leave you to train alone for now. Continue to refine your techniques and push yourself. When you feel ready to be tested on the second stage, come find me."

For the next half-hour, Astron trained relentlessly. He repeated the course multiple times, each run smoother and more precise than the last. He paid close attention to the feedback Tianna had given him, ensuring his body remained relaxed on the beams and that his hand placement during vaults was perfect. With each jump across the wider gaps, he focused on generating enough power without sacrificing control.

And then, just like that, just half an hour later, he came to stand before her.

"Instructor Tianna, I believe I'm ready for the second stage test," Astron said, his voice steady.

'What a monster.....'

Tianna could not help but grimace.

-----A/N-----

Everyone can make mistakes. What is important is to take lessons from them. Hope you liked it. This should be enough for the detailed training arc. From now on, we are going to speed up.

Chapter 466 105.2 - What it means to be a Genius

<Stealth Training hall, 12 P.M>

The training area was silent, the dim lighting casting elongated shadows across the floor. Astron stood at the starting point, feeling the weight of Kennet's gaze on him. Today was the day of the first-stage examination, a test to prove his mastery over the basics of stealth and presence suppression.

"Ready, Astron?" Kennet's voice cut through the silence, calm yet commanding.

Astron nodded, his focus sharpening. This was the culmination of weeks of intense training, and he was determined to succeed. Kennet moved to a control panel, activating the intricate wards and sensors scattered throughout the obstacle course.

"Remember," Kennet said, his eyes fixed on Astron, "this is about more than just physical agility. You must blend with your surroundings, making your presence indistinguishable from the environment. Move slowly and deliberately, maintaining your mana flow in harmony with the ambient energy."

Taking a deep breath, Astron closed his eyes briefly, centering himself. His breathing slowed, his heartbeat steadying.

As the course began, he stepped forward, each movement calculated and precise.

The Exam

The first obstacle was a series of narrow beams, each one lined with delicate sensors. Astron rolled his foot from heel to toe, imagining the floor as water beneath him. His steps were light, silent, and deliberate. The beams didn't shift, and the sensors remained inactive.

Next, he encountered a wall with hidden pressure plates. He visualized his mana as a calm stream, flowing gently through him and blending with the environment. With each breath, he felt the subtle shifts in the ambient mana, adjusting his flow to match. He scaled the wall, careful not to trigger any hidden alarms.

Halfway through the course, Astron faced a field of laser sensors. Their faint hum was almost imperceptible, but with his [Perceptive Insight], he could sense their presence. He minimized his mana output, blending with the surrounding energy, and moved through the lasers with fluid grace.

Finally, he approached the last section—a series of shadowed alcoves and moving platforms. This part required perfect timing and balance. Astron took a deep breath, his focus unwavering. As he navigated the platforms, he felt his presence dissolve into the shadows, becoming one with the environment.

Reaching the end of the course, Astron stepped into the final alcove. The sensors remained inactive, and the wards were undisturbed. He turned to face Kennet, who had been watching closely.

'What is this.....' Kennet could not believe what he was seeing. He had been taking a close look at Astron's prowess for a long time as he got his attention. That was why Kennet was sure that he was not like this yesterday.

'His body.....It has changed.....Just like his mana....' Whatever the reason was, the kid's steps and presence became more silent, and the change was a drastic one.

'With this pace, he can even finish the second stage in just one day.' Kennet's eyes were narrowed, his expression one of intense scrutiny. Slowly, a smile spread across his lips. "Well done, Astron," he said, nodding in approval. "You completed the course without setting off a single alarm. Your control over your presence and mana flow is impressive."

'In any case, it is not my place to inquire about his secrets. Everyone here has one or two at least.'

Kennet walked over, his demeanor shifting to one of a mentor ready to impart further wisdom. "You've mastered the basics, but now we move to the second stage. This will require a deeper understanding of your environment and more advanced techniques."

He paused, his gaze piercing. "First, let's discuss enhancing your sensory awareness. In advanced stealth, it's not enough to blend in; you need to anticipate and adapt to changes in your surroundings. This means extending your perception beyond the immediate area."

Kennet raised his hand, demonstrating with a flow of mana. "You must learn to project a field of awareness around you, sensing disturbances in the ambient energy. This will allow you to react instantly to threats or changes, maintaining your stealth even in dynamic situations."

Astron watched intently as Kennet manipulated the mana, creating a subtle ripple in the air around him. "This is called the [Aura of Silence]. By projecting this field, you can dampen your presence and any sound you make, making you almost undetectable. It requires precise control and a deep connection with the ambient mana."

Kennet's eyes met Astron's, serious and focused. "Practice this technique in the coming days. Focus on expanding your awareness and maintaining the harmony of your mana with the environment. Remember, true stealth is not just about hiding; it's about becoming an invisible part of the world around you."

"I understand. I will do my best."

After finishing his training for stealth techniques and having his meal, Astron made his way to the familiar training room where he would be working with Reina.

As he approached the door, he already knew there would be a new challenge awaiting him. He extended his [Perceptive Insight] and began to decipher the psion line near the doorframe, filtering out the ambient mana and focusing on the unique thread.

'What would the password be this time?' he wondered, predicting Reina's tendencies. 'Considering what kind of passwords she has been using, this time it must be.' He thought as he predicted.

'Took you long enough.'

Sure enough, as he deciphered the psions, the password revealed itself: [Took you long enough].

Even if he could predict the password, he wanted to take up the challenge and make sure he was getting better for every practice.

With a click, the door's lock disengaged, and the screen displayed the familiar message: [Access Granted]. Pushing the door open, Astron stepped inside. Reina was already there, waiting for him with a neutral expression, though her eyes betrayed a hint of anticipation.

"Impressive," she remarked, noting his quick entrance. "You're getting faster at this."

Astron nodded in acknowledgment. "Thank you, Miss Reina."

"Let's begin immediately," she said, gesturing for him to follow her deeper into the room.

They moved to the center, where the intricate runes and glyphs awaited. Without wasting any time, Reina created several complex psion lines, each interwoven with multiple threads of varying resistance and flow.

"Today, we'll continue your practice with filtering and assimilation," she instructed. "Just like yesterday, this time, too, I want you to handle multiple threads simultaneously and adapt to their unique characteristics."

Astron nodded, focusing his mind. As he extended his mana threads to interact with the psion lines, he subtly expanded his mana all across the space, using the ambient mana as a conduit. He felt the energy in the room shift, harmonizing with his own.

Reina's eyes widened slightly as she observed this. She recognized the technique instantly. "Astron, have you learned [Aura of Silence]?" she asked, her voice tinged with curiosity and a hint of disbelief.

Astron nodded, maintaining his focus. "Yes, I learned it today."

Reina shivered slightly at his response. [Aura of Silence] was known to be a complex technique, usually requiring a long time to master. The reason for that was not because the technique was hard but because it would be the first technique that the trainees would be learning in terms of stealth and mana.

That was why she was having a hard time understanding what she was seeing, as supposedly, according to Kennet's observations, this must be his first time mastering it, too.

Yet, Astron had not only learned it in a single day but was also using a slightly altered version in this space. While [Aura of Silence] typically created a field of perception around the user, Astron had taken it a step further, creating a field of impact around him.

The 'impact' was not that strong. At least not enough to affect the physical objects, alter them, or smash them.

But, it was enough to deal with the low mass-energy like the small mana psion particles themselves. And this was what today's training was about.

She watched in awe as Astron's mana threads wove seamlessly into the psion lines, filtering and assimilating multiple threads simultaneously with remarkable precision. The ambient mana in the room seemed to resonate with his energy, creating a harmonious flow that enhanced his ability to decipher the intricate patterns.

"You've taken [Aura of Silence] and adapted it to your unique abilities," Reina observed, her voice filled with admiration. "Creating a field of impact around you... that's impressive."

Astron continued to work, feeling the threads of mana become part of his own flow. "Thank you, Miss Reina. It felt like a natural progression during my training."

'The natural progression during your training....Are you clueless of the feat that you have just achieved, or are you just boasting...I can't tell.'

The fact that this kid's face never even changed slightly was sometimes irritating. Being his teacher of some sorts Reina wanted to see the happiness that her student would display when he had successfully learned something.

But that was not the case.

'Now I can see why Garrett did not like training this kid too much. It feels like talking to a wall. No reaction or anything, just absorbing knowledge and techniques. Almost as if he is not a human.' Reina nodded, somehow feeling pitiful for the kid. After all, how could she not feel pitiful when this kid was ripped apart from the things that he wanted the most? "You're progressing faster than I anticipated. Let's push this further."

But she was not someone who would mix feelings with her work.

For the rest of the session, Reina challenged Astron with increasingly complex psion lines, each requiring a higher level of filtering and assimilation. Astron's expanded field of impact allowed him

to handle the challenges with newfound ease, his [Perceptive Insight] guiding him through the intricate dance of mana.

As the training continued, Astron's understanding and control deepened. He could sense the subtle nuances in the flow of mana, harmonizing with the ambient energy and integrating it seamlessly into his own.

By the end of the session, Reina's expression was one of approval. "Indeed, you have almost mastered everything for deciphering and filtering. This pace is even faster than what I had initially thought. Not bad, young man."

Reina said as she looked into his eyes. "Also, congratulations on your new rune."

"Thank you, Miss Reina."

"No need to thank me, thank Dakota instead. She was the one who pushed hard for you to get that rune."

"Miss Dakota.... I understand I will do that."

"Good. Now, you will most likely receive a new addition to your training; it will be related to your new rune. Hope you will make the most of it."

"I will."

"That is a good attitude."

With that, Astron left the training room.

Chapter 467 105.3 - What it means to be a Genius

'Indeed. It is just as they have said. The techniques of the other disciplines can be interchanged. That is why the Hunters are more versatile. It would not be that hard for them to improve all types of abilities if they learn only one of them.'

I thought while leaving Reina's training room. Right now, by this point, I felt like my mana sensitivity was increasing with each training. It was as if the more I was able to familiarize myself with mana, the better I was getting at sensing everything.

At this point, it was blatantly obvious that the more you rise up in the ranks of strength, the more everything is becoming linked to mana.

It's as if the world is contained solely of mana at that point, and that makes sense. It makes a lot of sense, actually.

Just as I was walking in the hallway, a message from the analysis team rang and caught my attention. Opening it, I read the contents carefully:

[Analysis Team] Subject: New Training Program Inclusion

Astron Natusalune,

Based on recent assessments and the integration of the Everchanging Glyph, a new program has been included in your training schedule. The primary objective of this program is to align your physical conditioning with the optimal state provided by the glyph. This training will focus on ensuring your body adapts seamlessly to various weapon styles and combat techniques.

Updated Training Schedule:

5 A.M.: Four hours of one-on-one training with Warden Dakota as her official disciple.

9 A.M.: Two-hour break.

11 A.M.: One hour of body acrobatics training.

12 P.M.: Two hours working on developing stealth abilities and mastering the art of erasing presence with Instructor Kennet.

2 P.M.: One-hour lunch break.

3 P.M.: Training with Reina

7:30 P.M.: Body training session focusing on Everchanging Glyph optimization

Check out the attachments for more detailed information. Please be prepared for the new addition to your regimen. Ensure adequate rest and nutrition to maximize your performance.

For your nutrition, please check out the attachment for further briefing.

I reviewed the new schedule, noting the addition of the evening body training session. It was clear that the analysis team was determined to ensure my body adapted perfectly to the Everchanging Glyph.

'I wonder what kind of training they would give to me.'

For the time being, in the past three days, I did not feel any type of tiredness or mental fatigue between the classes. Sure, closer to the end of the day, I was feeling a bit tired mentally, but that was because it was my first day dealing with Reina's way of teaching, which required a lot of mental power since it was important to keep the constant focus all the time.

I opened the attachments to see the detailed information about the new training program and diet plan. The training regime was outlined in precise detail and designed to optimize my body's adaptation to the ever-changing glyph.

Body Training Session:

Strength Training with Heavy Ropes: Designed to enhance core strength and endurance, this exercise would involve intense rope workouts to build overall physical resilience.

Weighted Climbing: This exercise would focus on agility and strength, requiring the user to climb various structures while carrying additional weight, simulating real-world scenarios where such skills would be essential.

Compound Exercises: Including squats, deadlifts, and overhead presses, these exercises aimed to improve overall muscular coordination and power.

Gravity Room: Training in an environment with increased gravity to enhance muscle density and overall physical conditioning.

Herbal Baths: Immersing in specially prepared herbal baths to aid in muscle recovery, reduce fatigue, and enhance overall physical conditioning.

The key details will be explained by the Training Room Artificial Intelligence.

Diet Plan:

Some key items on the list included:

Reddish Hydra Serpent Steak: Known for its high protein content and energy-boosting properties.

Ironhide Boar Roast: Rich in essential minerals and nutrients, aiding in muscle recovery and strength building.

Thunder Hawk Eggs: Packed with proteins and healthy fats to support muscle development and cognitive function.

Mighty Bear Liver: Providing essential vitamins and minerals to boost endurance and overall health.

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The list went on just like that, with many different types of meats. But it seems they have also included the meal combination that I had been using.

'They must have gotten curious about what I was doing. After all, for the Analysis Team, checking such a thing must not be that hard.' I thought to myself.

'But still.....Eating six meals per day.....What am I, a pig?'

It would be my first time eating that much in my whole life, but there wasn't anything that could be done. It seems I would be starting from now on.

"Welcome, Trainee Astron Natusalune. Beginning body training session focusing on Everchanging Glyph optimization."

"Ah..... This is the artificial intelligence that the attachment mentioned."

"That is right, Trainee Astron. You can call me Training Assistant. I am an artificial intelligence created for the sake of assisting the trainees here."

"Understand."

"Then, do you wish to commence with the training?"

"I do."

"Commencing with the training."

Astron started his training with the robotic voice of artificial intelligence.

The first exercise was strength training with heavy ropes. The ropes were massive, their weight causing them to slap against the floor with a resounding thud. Astron gripped them tightly and began the routine, his muscles straining with each wave.

The ropes felt like they were alive, resisting his every movement. Sweat poured down his face, and his arms burned with exertion.

"Trainee Astron's body limits are pushed to %70. Increasing the intensity."

The moment the voice of the assistant echoed, suddenly, the ropes changed slightly. The resistance had increased much more. His muscles screamed for him to stop, but Astron did not.

"Trainee Astron's body limits are being pushed to the extreme. You are entering the Extreme State. Your Glyphs are glowing; please push yourself further."

The more he heard the voice of Artificial intelligence, the more he wanted to punch it. At least, it was only for a momentary impulse as he controlled himself.

Then, he pushed through the pain, focusing on the rhythm of his movements and the sound of the ropes hitting the floor.

"Good. Now transition to weighted climbing," Training Assistant instructed.

Astron, with his muscles already screaming in protest, strapped on the weighted vest. The training assistant increased the gravity of the room. Each step felt like moving through molasses. He approached the climbing wall, its surface dotted with various holds and ledges, and began his ascent. His muscles screamed with every movement.

"Maintain your grip strength. Use your legs to support your weight," Training Assistant coached.

The added weight made every pull and push a battle. His breaths came in harsh, ragged gasps. His fingers ached from gripping the holds, and his legs trembled as he fought against the increased gravity. He reached the top, muscles quivering from the exertion, and then descended, ready for the next challenge.

"Trainee Astron's body limits are pushed to 80%. Increasing the intensity."

Astron moved to the squat rack, loading it with heavy weights. He positioned himself beneath the bar, lifting it with a grunt. Each squat was a test of endurance, his legs burning as he lowered and raised the weight.

He transitioned to deadlifts, the strain on his back and legs intense as he lifted the heavy barbell.

Finally, overhead presses, where his shoulders bore the brunt of the weight, pushing his strength to its limits.

"Trainee Astron's body limits are pushed to 85%. You are entering the Extreme State. Your Glyphs are glowing; please push yourself further."

The more he heard the voice of the Training Assistant, the more he wanted to punch it. At least, it was only for a momentary impulse as he controlled himself.

Next was the gravity room. Training Assistant increased the gravitational force even further, making every movement a struggle. Astron felt as though his body was being pulled towards the floor with an invisible force. He moved through a series of exercises, each one more difficult than the last.

"Keep pushing, Trainee Astron. This will enhance your muscle density and overall physical conditioning," Training Assistant encouraged.

His muscles ached, and his lungs burned as he struggled to draw in enough air. Sweat dripped from his body, pooling on the floor beneath him.

"Trainee Astron's body limits are pushed to 90%. Increasing the intensity."

The gravitational force increased again. Every step felt like a monumental task. His muscles screamed for rest, but he pushed on, determined to complete the training.

"Final phase: herbal baths. Proceed," Training Assistant commanded.

Astron dragged himself to the bath area, muscles protesting with every step. He lowered himself into the steaming water, the herbs soothing his aching body. The relief was immediate, and the warm water and herbal mixture worked to ease his pain and fatigue.

"Herbal baths will aid in muscle reconstruction and reduce fatigue. Prepare for the final challenge," the Training Assistant stated.

"Muscle reconstruction?" Astron asked as he felt something ominous once again.

"That is right. Muscle reconstruction."

The moment AI said that Astron's eyes widened.

"Urghk-!"

And immense amounts of mana started being consumed from his reserves. It was as if something was drawing everything and consuming it.

"AAAARGHK!"

It was a scream of pain as his breaths got more and more rough.

"Trainee Astron's body limits are pushed to 113%. The body is entering the "Survival State." Your Glyphs are glowing; please push yourself further."

As Astron writhed in the herbal bath, the Training Assistant constantly scanned his vitals. The water around him began to bubble and change color, various toxins and impurities being expelled from his body. His muscles tensed and relaxed in waves, and his bones seemed to vibrate under the strain.

"Analyzing... significant expulsion of toxins and impurities detected. Bone and muscle density increasing. Mana reserves are critically low," the training assistant reported.

Astron could feel every fiber of his being undergoing a painful transformation. His muscles screamed as they tore and rebuilt themselves, becoming denser and stronger. His bones felt like they were being compressed, making them sturdier with each passing second.

"Mana reserves at 15%. Administering high-rank mana potions."

A mechanical arm extended from the wall, presenting a vial of glowing blue liquid. Astron, barely conscious, reached out with a trembling hand and drank the potion. The effects were immediate. He felt a surge of energy as his mana reserves were replenished, the pain momentarily subsiding.

"Mana reserves at 60%. Continuing muscle reconstruction process," Training Assistant announced.

Astron's body continued to absorb and expel substances from the herbal bath, the water around him now a murky mix of expelled impurities. He could feel the changes more acutely now, his senses sharpening as his body adapted to the Everchanging Glyph's influence.

"Trainee Astron's body limits are pushed to 120%. The body is adapting efficiently. Bone density increased by 4%. Muscle density increased by 4%," the Training Assistant detailed.

The AI's updates became a distant hum in the background as Astron focused on enduring the process. The mana potion's effects were starting to wane, and he felt another wave of exhaustion.

"Administering second high-rank mana potion," Training Assistant said, another vial presented to Astron.

With shaking hands, he drank the second potion, feeling his mana reserves surge once more. The pain, while still intense, was becoming more manageable as his body adjusted.

"Mana reserves stabilized at 70%. Finalizing muscle reconstruction process."

The water began to cool, the intense bubbling slowing as the process neared its completion. Astron's breathing became more regular, his body no longer wracked with spasms of pain.

"Process complete. Trainee Astron, your bone and muscle density have been significantly enhanced. You have successfully adapted to the Everchanging Glyph's initial phase. Recommend rest and further monitoring."

Astron leaned back, his body feeling heavier but stronger. The ordeal had been grueling, but the results were undeniable. He felt a newfound strength coursing through his veins, his body more resilient than ever before.

"Thank you... Training Assistant," he managed to say, his voice hoarse from the exertion.

"You are welcome, Trainee Astron. Rest well and prepare for the next phase of your training," the AI responded. "You are to be subjected to this program for the next two weeks. Estimated overall Muscle Density and Bone Density improvement is %40 after the training ends."

Hearing this, Astron could not help but shake his head as his eyes turned cold.

'Next two weeks....It will be grueling.' But he would endure. Since the rewards.....They were immense.

Chapter 468 105.4 - What it means to be a genius

<Combat Training Area, Fourth Day of Training, 5 A.M>

Astron stood in the training hall, his breathing steady as he completed the final strike of the [Gale Stance].

His body moved with a precision and grace that was supposed to take countless hours to achieve.

Each strike, each movement, flowed seamlessly from his core, enhanced by the controlled flow of mana.

Dakota observed from the sidelines, her keen eyes noting the perfection in each individual movement. She nodded approvingly, recognizing that Astron had mastered the basics. Now, it was time to push him further.

"Astron," Dakota called, stepping forward. "You've mastered each strike of the [Gale Stance] individually. Now, we will focus on transitioning between them flawlessly."

Astron nodded, his expression serious and focused. "I'm ready, Master."

Dakota took her place beside him; her posture relaxed yet exuded an aura of controlled power. "Watch closely," she instructed. "I'll demonstrate a series of sequences. Pay attention to how each strike flows into the next without hesitation."

She began with a simple sequence, moving through the [High Gale], [Medium Gale], and [Low Gale] strikes. Her movements were fluid and precise, each strike seamlessly transitioning into the next. The air around her seemed to hum with the energy of her mana, perfectly controlled and channeled.

"Notice how the energy flows," Dakota said as she finished the sequence. "There is no break, no pause. Each strike is a continuation of the last, maintaining the momentum and power."

Astron watched intently, absorbing every detail. "Understood, Master. I will focus on the flow."

Dakota stepped back, giving him space. "Begin with the first sequence," she instructed. "Start slowly and focus on the transitions. Speed will come with mastery."

Astron took a deep breath, visualizing the sequence in his mind. He began with the [High Gale], feeling the familiar surge of mana as he executed the strike. Without pausing, he transitioned into the [Medium Gale], his movements smooth and controlled. Finally, he flowed into the [Low Gale], maintaining the momentum and energy.

"Good," Dakota observed. "Now, repeat it. Focus on making each transition smoother."

Astron repeated the sequence, each repetition becoming more fluid. He concentrated on the flow of mana, ensuring that it enhanced each movement and transition. The virtual core within him acted as a regulator, helping him control the energy and maintain the rhythm.

As he practiced, Dakota demonstrated more complex sequences, combining different strikes in rapid succession. Astron watched closely, memorizing the patterns and flow.

"Now, try this one," Dakota said, moving through a particularly intricate sequence. Her movements were a blur of speed and precision; each strike was delivered with perfect timing and control.

Astron took a moment to internalize the sequence, then began to replicate it. His movements were deliberate and focused, each strike flowing into the next with increasing fluidity. He could feel the difference, the seamless integration of mana and movement.

"Excellent," Dakota said, nodding in approval. "You're getting it. Keep practicing these sequences. The goal is to make them second nature so you can execute them without conscious thought. That is the best way to understand the [Tempest Fang]."

"You wish to take the exam? Are you sure that you have mastered the [Aura of Silence]?"

Looking at the young man standing before him, Kennet could not believe his ears. What did he just hear?

"That is right. I have mastered it completely."

A trainee mastering [Aura of Silence] in one day. Or not even in one day. In a matter of two hours?

That did not make any sense. Well, it was not like the technique was too hard or anything. It was just the beginner stages of the art itself. There was a lot more to that.

But still, it was still a complex art.

Kennet narrowed his eyes, searching Astron's face for any signs of deception or overconfidence. Yet, the young man's gaze was steady and unwavering, exuding a quiet certainty that gave Kennet pause. There were no traces of arrogance or uncertainty, only a calm assurance.

"Well," Kennet thought, "perhaps he truly has grasped it." The [Aura of Silence] was only the beginning stage of a far more intricate art, but even so, mastering it in such a short time was no small feat. Kennet decided to take Astron's words seriously, though he felt a need to set expectations.

"Very well," Kennet said, his voice taking on a more serious tone. "If you believe you are ready, we will proceed with the exam. But understand this, Astron—if you are overestimating yourself and wasting your time, there will be consequences. I do not take kindly to having my time wasted."

Astron nodded, his expression unchanging. "Understood, Instructor Kennet. I am ready."

Kennet gestured for Astron to follow him. They moved to a different part of the training area, one specially designed for testing advanced stealth techniques. The room was filled with intricate wards and sensors, each more sensitive than the last.

"This exam will test your ability to maintain the [Aura of Silence] while navigating through various obstacles designed to detect the slightest disturbance. Fail to suppress your presence, and you'll trigger the sensors."

Kennet looked Astron in the eye, his expression stern. "Are you sure you're ready for this? If you've misjudged your abilities, you'll find out soon enough."

Astron met his gaze with unwavering resolve. "I'm ready."

"Very well. Begin."

Astron closed his eyes, taking a deep breath as he centered himself. He extended his awareness, feeling the ambient mana in the room.

With practiced ease, he projected his mana, blending it with the surrounding energy. The sensation was seamless, his presence fading into the background.

He moved forward, each step deliberate and controlled. Kennet watched intently, his eyes following Astron's every movement. Being one of the best at stealth, he was someone who could also see and sense the best around the place. For a high-rank hunter like him, seeing such Astron was not a hard thing.

'But, it seems he really mastered it.' The first set of sensors remained inactive, and the wards were undisturbed. Astron's movements were fluid; his mana harmonized perfectly with the environment.

As Astron navigated through the course, Kennet's initial skepticism began to wane. The young man's control was impressive, his presence virtually undetectable. He moved through the obstacles with a grace and precision that spoke of innate talent and meticulous practice.

In the end, Kennet could not help but accept.

'This kid may be a monster.' *****

"Well done, Astron," Kennet said, nodding in approval. "You've demonstrated a remarkable grasp of the [Aura of Silence]. I'm impressed."

Astron allowed himself a small smile, his eyes reflecting a quiet satisfaction.

Kennet's demeanor shifted slightly, becoming more instructive. "Now that you've mastered the basics, we can move on to more advanced techniques. The second stage involves enhancing your sensory awareness and projecting a field of undetectability around you. It's called the [Veil of Shadows]."

He demonstrated his mana, creating a subtle, almost imperceptible ripple in the air around him. "This technique allows you to dampen your presence even further and mask any sounds you make. It requires precise control and a deep connection with the ambient mana."

Kennet's gaze hardened slightly. "But remember, Astron, if you underestimate these advanced techniques, you'll find yourself overwhelmed. Approach them with the same dedication and focus you've shown so far."

"I understand, Instructor Kennet," Astron replied, his determination evident. "I will give it my all."

"Good," Kennet said, nodding. "Begin your practice immediately. You've proven yourself today, but the path ahead is long and demanding. Keep honing your skills, and you'll continue to excel."

But there was something that he did not know.

'Veil of Shadows....The name is really similar to the [Shadow Veil], the first stage of the [Shadowborne].' Astron had something that was very similar to this.

"Instructor Kennet." At that moment, Astron called out to the instructor, who was about to leave.

Kennet turned back, his eyebrows raised in question. "Yes, Astron?"

"Is there a complete manual of these stealth techniques?" Astron asked. "It seems like each stage is linked to something larger."

Kennet paused, a smirk forming on his lips. "There was indeed a manual once."

"Once?" Astron echoed, sensing a deeper story behind Kennet's words.

A slightly pained look crossed Kennet's face. "Yes, once. It is no longer in my hands."

Astron nodded, understanding the underlying sentiment. "Understood. If my question caused any inconvenience, I apologize."

Kennet shook his head, his expression softening. "No need to apologize. Just focus on your training, Astron. That's all that matters."

With that, Kennet turned and walked away, leaving Astron alone in the training area.

Astron stood silently for a moment, reflecting on the conversation. The mention of a lost manual piqued his curiosity.

'The fact that these techniques are linked to Instructor Kennet's past makes it seem he is teaching some sort of family art. Maybe his family was once a part of an organization or something, and it was taken down by a rival. Maybe a betrayal? Countless different possibilities passed through his mind at that very second.

'No matter what it is, it is highly possible that Instructor Kennet is linked to demons.' He stopped as his eyes turned cold for a split second.

'Because whenever he is near, [Vengeful Bane] is always getting triggered.' He did not show any hostility and was trying his best to hold his feelings in since he did not want to cause a scene in the organization, but the fact that Kennet could be linked to demons itself was an important piece.

'Because, if that is the case, they may have been led by the descendants of MistWraith. The Primordial of Shadows.' He thought, remembering the content of the game.

'A certain villain....There was a certain villain with similar powers in the game....What if they were linked? That would explain a lot.'

No matter what or how hard Astron analyzed, he was not able to get more from the situation itself. It required more investigation so that he would get more information to conclude.

But for the time being, he decided to focus on the art. Since, even though he had advanced his trait, Astron had never felt like he was perfectly utilizing the first stage of his [Shadowborne].

'For the time being, it is better for me to focus on my training.' With that thought, he continued.

Chapter 469 105.5 - What it means to be a Genius

What does it mean to blend into the shadows? Or, what is a shadow? These questions have puzzled scientists and alchemists for centuries. The answers they found were enlightening.

When there is no light, there is darkness. Darkness is the complete absence of light, a natural state that exists without illumination. Shadows, on the other hand, are born from the interaction between light and objects, creating a space where light cannot reach.

A shadow is a part of the world where light is obstructed, a transient and ever-changing entity shaped by its surroundings.

I pondered these concepts as I prepared to practice the [Veil of Shadows] while also checking out the [Shadowborne]'s description.

Trait: Shadowborne

Description: The innate trait bestowed by the Mistwraith grants the ability to harness and manipulate shadows with great proficiency. It enhances the user's control over darkness, enabling them to bend and shape shadows to their will.

Stage 1:

Shadow Veil: The user gains the power to blend seamlessly with shadows, becoming nearly invisible in dimly lit environments. This grants them enhanced stealth and the ability to move undetected.

While looking at this one before, I had never thought of it as complicated since the description was completely clear and understandable.

But then I thought of one another thing.

'Bending and shaping shadows to my own will.'

Looking at this one, it was evident that there was a lot more to the Trait than just the stealth itself. I also knew about this as the more one progresses in the [Trait], the more they would develop shadow-related skills.

But, there was one thing that I overlooked after obtaining it from MistWraith. Normally, in the game, the player would get [Shadowborne] after killing the MistWraith as the normal boss of the second-year arc. But, the special properties of the trait would be a lot different.

For instance, while I got the [Shadow Leap] when I advanced to the second stage, the Player would get a different skill in the game. The skill that Ethan would get would be the ability to mend the shadows and enhance the spear by adding magic damage to the weapon. That was what he would get. Normally, that would not be a bad thing as it was an ability that fit Ethan. However, there were many different abilities like this, and even Ethan himself had such skills in his arsenal. That is why many players did not use that ability too much, as while shadows looked cool, they did not provide much for the gameplay.

However, for me, it was different, as I had gotten it once with an easter egg by getting it a lot earlier than how it was supposed to be gotten. Though, I was not able to complete that run and advance the trait.

But still, I understood that something about MistWraith had been altered at that time. If you would get a different and possibly better trait if you had killed the MistWraith earlier than it was supposed to be and would get a better trait, that meant something about the demon would fundamentally change.

'For instance, if the core of the Demon had been stolen and another artificial core had been added.' The MistWraith had already been in a weakened state for a long time, and it would not be that hard to hunt him. I was even able to hunt him down after learning about his weaknesses, though it required some sacrifices. If someone else were to study the demons and ancient ones, they could easily capture it and experiment on it.

'There is a high chance that this is the case.'

For instance, insiders in the academy would be able to make such a thing happen. And maybe that was the reason why MistWraith was attacking the academy.

In the end, one thing was clear.

'There is more to this trait than I initially assumed. I especially understand this right now after practicing the stealth arts for the past four days.'

Shadows are formed in the presence of light. For a shadow to exist, light must be present, and something must block that light. This interplay creates a space where light cannot reach—a shadow, an entity that is transient and ever-changing, shaped by its surroundings.

But shadows can only be seen by eyes. They can't be heard, smelled, or touched. They are purely a visual phenomenon. However, a person blending into the shadows still exists physically—they produce sounds and smells and radiate heat. While they may be unseen, they can still be detected through other senses.

As I pondered this, I realized that blending into the shadows required more than just becoming invisible. It involved eliminating all other traces of my presence. I needed to silence my movements, mask my scent, and control my body temperature. It was about becoming undetectable by any means, not just sight.

What is the meaning of light to the eyes?

Light is the medium through which we perceive the world. It allows us to see shapes, colors, and movements. When light is blocked, it creates shadows, which are visual indicators of something's presence and shape.

Without light, we are blind to our surroundings. So, if shadows are created by blocking light, then blending into the shadows means manipulating that light and its absence.

To truly master the [Veil of Shadows] or [Shadow Veil], I needed to understand the interaction between light and my presence.

I had to manipulate the ambient light, bending it to create an illusion of emptiness where I stood. This went beyond simple stealth; it was about becoming a part of the shadows themselves.

At the same time, I needed to understand what light and shadows are for other senses. For instance, what is the light for ears?

It would be sound waves. The waves that travel through the air alert others to my presence.

And what about the smell? The particles that linger in the air, carrying my scent. And touch? The heat my body radiates is detectable to anyone nearby. All these aspects of my presence needed to be addressed to achieve true invisibility.

As I came to these realizations, it struck me that the [Shadowborne] trait was not only about shadows. It was about 'shadowing oneself from the world.' It was about becoming undetectable in every sense. To master this trait, I needed to become a void, an absence in the perception of others.

"Shadowing Oneself."

It was like an enlightenment, something that I did not think I would be achieving at such a random moment. But there it was.

And then, just to compliment me, I sensed a change in myself. A change in the trait that had been engraved to me.

Your understanding of [Shadowborne] has increased.

A panel appeared right before my eyes. It was rare for the status window to interact with any type of Awakened, but at the same time, things like these tended to still happen sometimes.

Stage 1:

Shadow Veil: The user gains the power to blend seamlessly with shadows, becoming nearly invisible in dimly lit environments. This grants them enhanced stealth and the ability to move undetected.

Additionally, the user can mask their scent and sound and regulate their body temperature to blend with the surroundings, enhancing their overall stealth capabilities.

I could feel the changes within me, a subtle shift in my abilities with shadows. My senses heightened, and I felt more attuned to the ambient darkness around me.

The Shadow Veil technique now included masking my scent and sound and regulating my body temperature, making me even more undetectable.

The status window also included a new note:

You have peeked into the ultimate realm of the trait.

The message was cryptic but clear.

'Peeking the ultimate realm of the trait.' Each trait has an ability once they have reached the end of it. That is something every trait has, but at the same time, rarely can a person achieve such a thing if the said trait is a unique one.

Since [Traits] are enigmas for the Awakened, most of them need to carve their own paths unless they receive these [Traits] from their bloodlines. That is also another reason why the named families are this strong.

They already know the conditions for achieving the higher ranks of the traits that their heirs possess. Therefore, it is a lot easier to nurture them and takes a lot less time and resources. That is the advantage of having a common trait, though it still has its disadvantages, of course.

I thought about what I did to speculate about what the ultimate realm of the [Shadowborne] trait could be. Realizing that shadows are not only about the absence of light but are also a metaphor, I began to understand that they actually symbolize something more profound.

The phrase "Shadowing Oneself" echoed in my mind, and I understood that the ultimate realm of the trait was about this very concept.

'Shadows are the parts of the world that go unseen. They represent the unseen and the unnoticed, the hidden aspects that exist beyond the perception of light. To master shadows is to master the art of being unnoticed in every aspect.'

This realization was profound. The ultimate realm of the [Shadowborne] trait was about complete and utter invisibility, not just to sight but to all senses. It was about becoming a true shadow in every sense of the word—silent, scentless, intangible, and unseen.

I began to think about how this applied to my recent training.

'Every technique I've learned so far has been about reducing my presence in one way or another. From silencing my movements to masking my scent and regulating my body temperature, it's all been about becoming less detectable. If the ultimate realm of [Shadowborne] is about shadowing oneself from the world, then it means achieving a state where I am completely undetectable by any means.'

That meant, upon reaching the ultimate stage, I would become undetectable by no means, regardless of anything.

It seemed I still had a long way to go.

The idea of becoming a true shadow, a ghost in the world, was interesting and daunting at the same time.

But for the time being, rather than setting my expectations high, I need to focus on what was present before me.

'Since I have yet to know the number of stages that I need to advance to reach the ultimate realm, First, I need to reach the next stage, and I still have yet to find any clue about what it is.'

And that was not the case for only [Shadowborne].

[Lunar Enigma] was also the same.

Chapter 470 105.6 - What it means to be a Genius

<Acrobatics Training, 11 A.M, Fourth day of training>

Tianna stood at the edge of the training area, her sharp eyes fixed on Astron as he tackled the third stage of his acrobatics training. The third stage was notably more complex, with a series of high walls, narrow ledges, and wide gaps that demanded precision and explosive power.

Astron moved through the obstacles with a grace that was becoming characteristic of him. His body seemed to flow effortlessly from one movement to the next, his feet landing lightly on narrow beams, his hands gripping and propelling him over high walls, and his jumps covering wide gaps with ease. Tianna couldn't help but marvel at his progress.

'He's advancing so quickly,' she thought, her eyes narrowing as she watched him leap across a particularly wide gap. 'It's almost as if he's been training for this his entire life.'

Astron rolled smoothly upon landing, immediately transitioning into a sprint toward the next obstacle. He vaulted over a high wall, his muscles working in perfect harmony. Tianna noted the precision in his movements and the way he seemed to anticipate each challenge with confidence that belied his relative inexperience.

'This kind of progress is unheard of,' she mused, crossing her arms as she continued to observe. 'He's not just talented; he's driven. There's a purpose behind every movement, a determination that's pushing him beyond the normal limits.'

Astron approached a section of the course that required climbing a series of increasingly narrow ledges. He moved with remarkable agility, his hands and feet finding purchase with ease. Tianna could see the concentration etched on his face, the way his eyes flicked ahead to anticipate the next move.

'He's already mastered the basics of this stage,' she realized, a hint of admiration in her thoughts. 'At this rate, he'll be ready for the test by the end of today's session.'

As the training session progressed, Astron continued to refine his techniques. He repeated each section of the course multiple times, making slight adjustments to his movements until they were flawless. Tianna watched as he incorporated feedback seamlessly, his body adapting quickly to the demands of the course.

Finally, after what seemed like no time at all, Astron completed the third stage with the same composed efficiency he had displayed throughout his training. He stood at the end of the course, his breathing steady and his expression focused.

Tianna knew what was coming next. 'He's going to ask for the test,' she thought, a slight smile playing at the corners of her mouth. 'And he's going to pass it, just like he did the previous stages.'

She walked over to him, her expression neutral, but her eyes filled with approval. "Astron," she called out, catching his attention. "Are you ready to be tested on the third stage?"

Astron nodded, his confidence evident. "Yes, Instructor Tianna. I'm ready."

Tianna could not help but understand what other people were feeling when she did the same.

'They were calling me a genius, but if I am one, then what are we going to call this kid?' *****

<Reina's Room, 3 P.M, Fourth day of training>

'The password...It should be. Did you think I would mock you?'

As he thought, he deciphered the password.

"I will not mock you today."

The answer was a little bit different. 'It was close.' He thought, shaking his head. 'Next time, I will not miss.' With that, he entered the room.

Reina watched as Astron entered the training room, his movements precise and focused. 'He's progressing faster than I anticipated,' she thought, impressed by his dedication. The speed of deciphering passwords was getting shorter and shorter with each try.

"Let's continue where we left off yesterday," Reina said, creating a new set of psion lines with complex threads. "Focus on filtering and assimilation, but this time, I want you to increase your speed without losing precision."

Astron nodded, extending his mana threads and beginning the process. He wove his energy into the psion lines, filtering out unnecessary details and harmonizing with the unique flow of each thread.

As Reina observed him, she couldn't help but feel a sense of awe. 'He's mastering techniques that take others months, even years, to learn. His ability to adapt and integrate his mana is extraordinary.'

Astron's concentration was unwavering. He felt the subtle rhythms of the psion lines, adjusting his mana to match their flow. The room seemed to hum with energy as he worked, the ambient mana resonating with his efforts.

'His potential is limitless,' Reina mused, watching him seamlessly integrate with the complex threads. 'If he continues at this pace, he'll surpass even my expectations.'

By the end of the day, Astron stood before her, his expression determined. "I feel like I'm almost there," he said, his voice steady.

Reina nodded, her eyes filled with approval. "You're just one day away from mastering this."

"I see." Astron raised his head and asked. "Then what is going to be next?"

"Next. You are going to do this for the next level of mana. While you can now understand the mana structure with rank-3 positions, the other stages still remain. We are going to repeat this process until you can reach your limit. With your Magical Power, since it is still in the borders of 5, you are going to train until stage 3."

"After that?"

"After that. You will see why we were doing this."

"I understand."

<Body Training, Fourth Day of Training, 8 P.M>

"Welcome, Trainee Astron Natusalune. Beginning body training session focusing on Everchanging Glyph optimization."

Astron nodded, bracing himself for another grueling session. He started with the heavy ropes, the familiar resistance testing his endurance once again.

"Trainee Astron's body limits are pushed to 75%. Increasing the intensity."

He transitioned to weighted climbing, his muscles screaming in protest but responding with growing strength.

"Grip strength and muscle endurance improved by 5% from the previous session."

Next were the compound exercises. Each squat, deadlift, and overhead press felt slightly more manageable than yesterday.

"Overall muscle coordination and power increased by 3%."

In the gravity room, he pushed through the exercises, his body adapting to the increased gravitational force more efficiently.

"Bone density and muscle resilience increased by 2%. Mana reserves stable."

Finally, he entered the herbal bath, the water bubbling around him as toxins were expelled once more.

"Significant expulsion of impurities detected. Bone and muscle density increasing. Mana reserves at 60%. Administering high-rank mana potion."

Astron drank the potion, feeling the familiar surge of energy. The pain was intense but more bearable than before.

"Muscle reconstruction process ongoing. Body limits pushed to 110%."

As the session neared its end, the Training Assistant's voice reported the progress.

"Process complete. Trainee Astron, muscle and bone density increased by an additional 3%. Adaptation to Everchanging Glyph's influence is progressing as expected. Recommend rest and further monitoring."

<Combat Training Arena, Fifth Day of Training, 5 A.M>

The training hall was quiet, the early morning light filtering through the high windows, casting long shadows across the floor. Dakota and Astron stood in the center, both in their training stances, the air around them humming with focused energy.

"All right, Astron," Dakota said, her voice calm and measured. "We're going to work on the transitions between strikes. The goal is to make each movement fluid and seamless. No hesitation."

Astron nodded, his eyes locked onto hers with determination. "Understood, Master."

"Begin," Dakota commanded.

Astron moved into the [Gale Stance], his body a blur of motion as he executed the first strike, [High Gale]. The blow was swift and precise, aimed at an imaginary opponent's upper body.

Without pausing, he transitioned into [Medium Gale], a powerful horizontal slash designed to break through defenses. The fluidity of his movements was evident, each strike flowing into the next with practiced ease.

Dakota watched closely, her eyes sharp as she monitored his form and the flow of mana. "Good. Now into [Low Gale]."

Astron adjusted his stance, bringing his strike downwards in a rapid arc, targeting the lower body. The transition was smooth, his body moving with the grace and speed of a seasoned fighter.

"Excellent," Dakota said, her tone filled with approval. "Now, combine all three strikes into a continuous sequence."

Astron took a deep breath, centering himself. Then, with a focused burst of energy, he launched into the sequence. [High Gale], [Medium Gale], and [Low Gale] flowed together seamlessly, each strike executed with precision and power.

After seeing him training, she left him to himself and went to do her own thing. Then, as she returned at the end of the lesson, she came to see him in the state that she had expected.

"You've mastered the transitions well, Astron. Your control over the [Gale Stance] is impressive, especially considering the short amount of time. From now on, you will no longer be able to improve yourself by only training with yourself."

Astron nodded, his breathing steadying as he wiped the sweat from his brow. "Thank you, Master."

Dakota's lips curled into a smirk. "From now on, you will no longer be able to improve yourself by only training with yourself." Her eyes gleamed with a fierce intensity. "From now on, we are going to work on the real thing. We are going to start spars."

A fierce aura emanated from her, the air around her crackling with energy. The battle-crazed expression on her face made Astron almost sigh. He knew a certain woman in the main cast who had a similar look when it came to fighting.

'Well, battle-crazed people are all similar.' There was nothing he could do. He had chosen Dakota all well, knowing this kind of thing would happen one way or another.

'And it is not like this is not fun.'

He was also having fun for the first time in a while.

'The feeling of improvement. It is indeed addicting.'

<Acrobatics Training, 11 A.M, Fifth day of training>

Tianna stood at the edge of the training area; her eyes focused intently on Astron as he began the fourth stage of his acrobatics training. This stage was even more complex, with swinging bars, angled walls, and rotating platforms that required impeccable timing and coordination.

Astron launched into the course with a newfound fluidity. His movements were not just precise but almost preternaturally smooth. Each leap, vault, and roll was executed with such grace that it seemed as if his body had become perfectly attuned to the obstacles.

'He's mastering this even faster,' Tianna thought, her eyes widening as she watched him glide over the swinging bars, his grip unerring and his momentum flawless. 'It's like he's integrated every aspect of the training into his very being.'

Astron approached the angled walls, scaling them with a nimbleness that left no room for error. His transitions between obstacles were seamless, each movement flowing naturally into the next. As he reached the rotating platforms, his balance and timing were impeccable, navigating them with an ease that seemed almost effortless.

'His control over his body has improved remarkably,' Tianna mused, her admiration growing with every passing second. 'It's as if he's become one with the course.'

Within minutes, Astron completed the fourth stage, landing softly and standing with his usual composed demeanor. He looked towards Tianna, a confident but humble expression on his face.

'Incredible,' she thought, shaking her head in awe. 'Just from getting a one rune, he changed this much.....Are you telling me to attribute all those things to one Glyph? That would be insulting every other person who trained with this...'

She thought as she grimaced.

And as she saw him approaching her, she mumbled.

"Ah, shit....Here we go again."