

Magic System in a Parallel World

Chapter 241: Day of the Labyrinth Examination

"May I see your Adventurers' ID?" The receptionist asked Leo.

"Sorry, but I no longer have it. Can I receive another one?"

"Can I get your name and date of birth?"

"Leo Magnus. First day of the first month. 2022."

"Oh... You're the one who consumed the..." The receptionist halted his sentence midway.

"Sorry, I have confirmed your identity. We'll issue you a new ID shortly."

Due to Leo's infamy, the receptionist didn't need to further confirm his identity.

"In the meanwhile, can you show me what you wish to sell?"

"Sure."

Leo proceeded to take out 100 A-Grade mana cores and placed them on the desk.

"How much can I get for these?"

"I will need to have these mana cores examined before I can give you a number. Unlike B-Grade and lower mana cores, the mana found in A-Grade and above can vary greatly, and that is what we're really paying for." The receptionist explained.

"How long will it take? I'd like to have the money by today if possible."

"Don't worry, it won't take too long. It will be done in a few minutes. May I take these mana cores to the back for an examination?"

"Of course."

The receptionist proceeded to take the mana cores to the examination room in the back.

A few minutes later, the receptionist returned to the front desk where Leo was waiting.

"Thank you for your patience, we have examined the mana cores, and after counting the amount of mana contained within the cores, we've determined the worth to be 18 million dollars."

"18 million..." Leo swallowed nervously upon hearing this extraordinary figure.

"Are you willing to sell the mana cores to us?" The receptionist asked him for confirmation.

"I am!" He immediately responded.

Even if he could only sell the mana cores for 8 million, he'd sell them all in a heartbeat.

"Thank you for your business! Please give me a few minutes to transfer you the funds."

Sometime later, Leo left the Adventurers' Guild with 18 million dollars in his bank account.

'Hahaha! I'm rich! I'm freaking rich!' Leo laughed inwardly, feeling incredibly blissed.

He went to the Stellar Terminal afterward to resupply his potions and high-quality MREs.

"My god... I thought I had a lot of money, but I forgot how expensive things were in this world. Just resupplying my inventory had cost me half of what I sold my mana cores for..." He sighed out loud.

"You did purchase months of supply in advance, and for more than just one person." Lilith said.

"Just in case." He said.

"Whatever, I can easily earn more money by hunting monsters, anyway."

Lilith smiled, "You're becoming more and more confident. A few months ago, you wouldn't dare to say such things."

"When you're forced to fight and hunt monsters, things are bound to change." Leo shrugged.

Leo returned to the academy shortly after, and he would spend the next two days training with Lia and Helia.

On the day of the Labyrinth Examination, Leo woke up earlier than usual.

During breakfast, Eve said to him, "You'll be entering the Ancient Labyrinth today. Are you excited?"

"Not really," he said in a low voice.

"Why not? I thought you enjoyed hunting monsters."

"Yeah... Since I can acquire their mana cores. However, according to what you told me, the monsters in the Ancient Labyrinth won't drop any mana cores, so you cannot blame me for not feeling any excitement."

"That's not entirely true." Eve said, and she continued, "Only the monsters in the earlier floors won't drop any mana cores because they've been killed too many times. The monsters past 20th floor still drop mana cores."

"Really?! You should've told me earlier! Now I am feeling a little more motivated!"

Sometime later, Eve said, "I will go ahead. See you guys later at the Chapel."

After they finished their breakfast, Leo and Lia also left the building to head to the Chapel, where the students will be gathered.

On their way to the Chapel, Leo noticed many students wearing a different uniform wandering their academy.

Of course, these students also noticed Leo and Lia.

"Hey, look over there! Isn't that Leo Magnus and Lia Scarlet?"

"Look at Lia Scarlet's uniform! The rumors were true! She really transferred to the Four Witches Academy!"

Nearly every student they passed talked about them and their unique relationship.

When they arrived at the Chapel, Leo raised his eyebrows.

"The students gathered here are mostly from our academy. Where are the others?" He wondered out loud.

"This place can only hold so many people at once. Every academy has their own schedule on when their students enter the Ancient Labyrinth." Lia explained to him.

"I see... That makes sense. Let's find Helia and Celeste before they begin the briefing."

They proceeded to walk around.

It didn't take long to find Helia, as her fiery red hair stood out amongst the crowd.

"Have you seen Celeste?" Leo asked Helia.

"No, I haven't."

They continued looking for her.

"I still can't believe that Celeste Light would be joining us. How did you manage to recruit her?" Helia asked.

"I don't know. We just asked her normally, and she accepted it without any trouble."

"Celeste is known for not participating in these kinds of events due to their nature— not that it affects her since she already has offers from the top Guilds." Helia sighed, and she continued, "Honestly, I'm a little envious of her. Despite my grades and background, I still have to work hard to be noticed by the top Guilds. Celeste, on the other hand, is known as the future Saintess. Everyone and their mother will be trying to recruit her regardless of her grades."

Leo looked at her and asked, "Is that why you wanted to join our team? Because you're trying to be recognized?"

She nodded, "Pretty much, and because I know that we're going to be the strongest team this year."

After walking around for a few more minutes, Leo noticed a large gathering of students in the distance, and they all appeared to be surrounding someone.

"Leo. I found her. She's in the center of that group over there." Lilith said to him from the sky.

"I got it."

Chapter 242: Day of the Labyrinth Examination(2)

"Celeste, what is the meaning of this? Why are you here?" A small group of people stood before Celeste while they were surrounded by even more students.

"Naturally, I'm here to participate in the Labyrinth Examination." Celeste responded to this person with a gentle smile on her face.

However, this person frowned and spoke in a dissatisfied tone, "What are you talking about? You would always refuse to join events that involve fighting and monsters! I have invited you to join our team countless times, but you would refuse all of them!"

"There's always a first time for everything. I refuse your offer simply because I am not interested in joining it. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to find my team."

Celeste turned around and proceeded to walk away.

The students surrounding her didn't dare to block her path and opened a way for her.

"P-Please wait! Let's talk—"

"Hey! We've been looking for you!" A new voice suddenly resounded.

"That's..."

The students were dumbfounded when they saw Leo and the two girls accompanying him.

"I-I'm really sorry for making you look for me!" Celeste lowered her head and apologized in a timid manner.

"No worries. We still have some time before the Labyrinth Examination begins, anyway." Leo casually waved his hand.

He glanced at the handsome young man that was still being encircled by students, and this student looked livid, almost as though he'd just been rejected by his crush.

'That's Ken Wagner...' Leo recognized this handsome student.

He was just like John, one of the most popular male students in his old world. But unlike John, who was known for being calm and composed, Ken was known for being hot-headed.

And just like his old world, this Ken appears to be infatuated with Celeste.

"Let's go somewhere more quiet for now." Leo said to Celeste before walking away.

"That was Leo..."

"And he was with Lia Scarlet and Helia Barnett just now..."

"Holy shit... Don't tell me they're going inside the Ancient Labyrinth together... along with Celeste Light!"

"My god, if that's true, what a powerhouse of a team!"

"Leo Magnus, Helia Barnett, Lia Scarlet, and Celeste Light! This is the most powerful team that can exist in this city!"

"It even exceeds my imaginations."

News of Leo's team quickly spread amongst the students, and without doubt, all of them were shocked when they heard it.

"With such a powerful team, they might finally be able to break the record that has been unbeatable for many decades."

"The record set by the Headmistress when she was still a student, right?"

"Yes. If I recall correctly, she'd reached the 37th floor."

"Which is really impressive, considering that 99 percent of students don't get past the 25th floor."

Meanwhile, Leo and his team were chilling underneath the shadow of a tree while they waited for the briefing.

"Umm, since this is the first time the entire team has gathered, why don't we all introduce ourselves? We're going to be spending the next 60 days with each other, after all." Leo suddenly said.

And he continued, "I will start. I'm Leo Magnus. Currently 19 years old. I specialize in fire magic and swordsmanship."

"Helia Barnett. 19 years old. I also specialize in fire magic."

"C-Celeste Light. 18 years old. I specialize in light magic, healing, and I can also buff. Nice to meet all of you."

"Lia Scarlet."

The atmosphere became dead silent after the introduction ended.

"Look at you, Leo. You're surrounded by the top beauties in the academy, and you'll be spending the next two months with them. Imagine the possibilities! How lucky!" Lilith chuckled, breaking the silence.

Leo glanced at her, ignored her words, and asked, "Have you ever entered the Ancient Labyrinth before?"

"Nope. That's too risky even for someone like me."

"Can you elaborate?" Leo raised an eyebrow.

"As I'd mentioned before, just because I am invisible doesn't make me invincible. If the conditions are right, I can be hurt, and the Ancient Labyrinth is a place filled with phenomenons. There's no way I am going to risk my life by going inside... alone."

"Is that so..."

About ten minutes later, Eve showed up to the scene and gathered all of the students there.

"I will now give you all a short brief about the Labyrinth Examination."

"First and foremost, you may challenge the Ancient Labyrinth with at most 4 people in your team. You will have 60 days to go as far as you can. Each of you will be given a watch and a recorder just like the Wilderness Training Course."

"We will send a team into the Ancient Labyrinth every 30 minutes. You may leave the Ancient Labyrinth whenever you wish with the Return Crystal, but keep in mind that once you leave the Ancient Labyrinth, you will not be able to go back inside, and your results will be calculated at that moment."

After a slight pause, Eve continued, "Now onto the rules."

"One, physical conflict between students, no matter which academy they attend, is strictly prohibited. If caught, you will be disqualified from the examination and could even be expelled depending on the severity."

"Two, any sort of disruption, sabotaging, and obstruction towards another team is strictly prohibited while inside the Ancient Labyrinth."

"Three, different teams are not allowed to assist each other, but there is an exception, and that is if the other team's lives are in danger."

"Four..."

After spending many minutes going over the rules, Eve started sending the students into the Chapel, where the entrance to the Ancient Labyrinth existed.

"Remember, do not throw away your life. This examination may be important to you, but it's not more important than your own life. I wish you all the best of luck."

Before sending the students into the Ancient Labyrinth, all of the students were handed three items. A watch that records their cleared floors, a camera to record their experience, and a necklace with a square shaped crystal that could instantly teleport the students out of the Ancient Labyrinth if they were stuck or wished to exit for any reason.

Chapter 243: Entering the Ancient Labyrinth

"So this is the entrance to the Ancient Labyrinth, huh? I could've never imagined there would be a Labyrinth within our academy, nor that the entrance to this Labyrinth is inside the Chapel." Leo mumbled in a dazed voice when he saw the massive entrance to the Labyrinth that was hidden at the end of the building.

And unlike regular Labyrinths, this entrance was veiled in a warm light, giving off an otherworldly aura.

After waiting in line for about two hours, Leo and his team finally reached the front of the line, where they received their three pieces of equipment.

"This watch will tell you which floor you're currently on, and this camera will allow you to record your experience, just like the Wilderness Training Course. As for this necklace, it will teleport you out of the Ancient Labyrinth and back to the chapel in case you become stuck or need to escape. However, be aware that once you exit the Ancient Labyrinth, you won't be able to go back inside." A teacher explained to them as he handed out the equipment.

Leo inspected the necklace with interest.

After another hour of waiting, it was finally Leo's turn to enter the Ancient Labyrinth.

Eve, who was standing by the entrance, said to them, "Good luck, and I hope to see you all again in two months."

She looked at Leo and continued, "Don't die."

"I won't." He smiled.

Leo and his team took their first step towards the Ancient Labyrinth, and the moment they stepped into and through the light, they disappeared from the Chapel and appeared in the middle of a wasteland, one that was similar to the Wilderness.

After being teleported into the Ancient Labyrinth, Leo and his team immediately prepared for combat.

Unlike ordinary Labyrinths, the Ancient Labyrinth operated differently. Instead of wandering around the floor looking for the staircase to the next floor, they must complete specific trials, and the most common trial is fighting monsters.

"So, how does this work?" Leo asked them.

"We have to clear all of the monsters on this floor before we can head to the next one." Helia said.

"The monsters will all be F-Rank, so we don't need to worry about it as long as we stay focused."

Sure enough, monsters started appearing around them a minute later.

Not wanting to waste his arm strength by swinging his sword, Leo decided to use his magic to take care of these monsters.

[Black Flame]

He engulfed the monsters in a sea of black flames, killing most of them within seconds.

Helia and Lia also used Tier 1 magic spells to deal with the monsters.

As for Celeste, she merely stood there and waited for them to finish. Since the monsters were too weak, there was no need for her to buff them.

There were a total of 100 monsters, but it didn't take long for Leo's team to clear them all.

Once all of the monsters were killed, an oval-shaped portal appeared before them.

"This is what's going to take us to the next floor?" Leo asked.

"Yes." Helia nodded.

"The next team will be entering the Labyrinth soon, right? How will that work? What if we decide to stay here until they arrive?"

"Actually, there can be multiple active instances at once. In other words, there can exist more than one 'first floor' at once, and each of these instances can hold a team of their own." Helia explained.

"So there are multiple 'first floors', allowing every team to have their fair chance. But why would they say we can't sabotage each other?"

"Because there are floors where only one instance can exist, meaning we will be able to meet with other students."

"I see. That makes sense."

Leo's team walked through the portal and appeared on the second floor shortly after.

Over the next several minutes, Leo and the others would breeze through the Labyrinth, speeding all the way to the 5th floor.

Upon entering the portal that led them to the 5th floor, Leo found himself standing in a familiar scenery.

"This is... a boss room?"

"There will be a boss room every 5 floors." Helia said.

"Once we clear this floor, the next five floors will have E-Rank monsters."

They entered the boss room a moment later, and Leo killed it after another moment with a simple Void Spear.

Several hours later, they arrived on the 15th floor.

"Should we take a small break before we deal with this boss?" Leo asked them.

"Sure. We've made incredible progress in less than a day. A small break won't matter." Helia agreed.

Thus, they set up their tents in front of the boss room.

Three tents were set up a moment later.

"Then I will see you guys in a few hours." Leo said to them as he entered his tent.

When Helia saw Lia following Leo into his tent, she subconsciously spoke out loud, "W-Wait."

"What is it?"

"You're sharing a tent with Leo...?"

"Yes. Is that a problem?"

"N-No..." Helia quickly entered her own tent.

Celeste watched their conversation in silence before entering her own tent.

Once she was inside her tent, she took out a book and began writing, "After many years of watching him from a distance, I have finally been granted the opportunity to watch him— to stand right beside him— inches away from him. His scent is so much stronger than what I am normally used to, so much so that I cannot even keep a straight mind when I am beside him."

"I will be spending the next two months with him in the Ancient Labyrinth. Will I be able to go through this trial of mine without losing my self restraints?"

She closed her book a few minutes later and stored it inside her spatial ring, feeling quite satisfied.

A few hours later, Leo's team cleaned up their tents before entering the boss room.

After taking a minute to clear the boss room, they proceeded to clear more floors and delve deeper into the Ancient Labyrinth.

Chapter 244: Thousand Miles Bridge

Over the next several days, Leo and his team would descend all the way to the 19th floor. Even though it only took them a couple of hours to reach the 15th floor, each floor after the 15th floor required much longer to clear, mostly because Leo's team decided to take their time, taking a long break after every floor.

By the time they cleared the 19th floor, a week had already passed in the Ancient Labyrinth.

"The 21st floor will be a lot different from what we've experienced thus far." Helia said to Leo after they cleared the 20th floor.

"How different?" He raised an eyebrow.

"Starting from the 21st floor to the 25th floor, it will all be connected, and we will be seeing the other students. I will explain more once we enter the 21st floor since it will make things easier to explain."

"Alright. We'll take a brief break before we enter the 21st floor then."

Several hours later, Leo's team entered the portal to the 21st floor.

Upon exiting the portal, they were greeted by a massive bridge that stretched all the way to the horizon, and the surrounding was filled with mist, making it impossible to see anything that was not the bridge.

The bridge itself was incredibly wide, enough to allow a hundred people to tread while standing side by side and with plenty of room to spare.

"What is this place?" Leo mumbled with a look of awe on his face.

"Thousand Miles Bridge. As the name implies, this bridge is a thousand miles long. The goal is simple. We must reach the other side while defeating monsters that will periodically spawn." Helia explained.

"A thousand miles...? Are you serious?" Leo was baffled.

"I'm afraid so." Helia nodded.

"And since this is the 21st floor, we will also have to deal with B-Rank monsters. This is where most students give up."

"A thousand miles... how long will it take to traverse this bridge?" Leo then asked.

"It really depends. Most people require three to four to reach the end, but with our team, we can probably rush through it within two weeks. What do you want to do?"

Leo pondered for a moment before speaking, "Wait. What if we use our hoverboards? It won't take more than a few days then."

Helia shook her head, "Unfortunately, hoverboards do not work in this place, so we will have to walk the whole way."

"No way..." Leo sighed.

Sometime later, he said, "I think we should rush through it. What do you guys think?"

He looked at the others.

"I will do whatever you decide." Lia calmly said.

"M-Me too..." Celeste nodded in a bashful manner.

"Alright, then it's decided. Let's go."

"Wait." Celeste suddenly stopped them.

"Please allow me to buff you all first."

"Sure." Leo nodded.

Celeste proceeded to take the next several moments to buff the team with enhanced movement speed and improved energy, allowing them to move quicker and consume less stamina.

Once they were fully prepared, they began running on the bridge, speeding through it.

And for the first time since entering the Ancient Labyrinth, Leo encountered other students from the other teams.

However, he would only give them a glance before running past them.

"Huh? Wasn't that Leo Magnus just now?"

"Are you sure? They should be floors ahead of everyone else with their ridiculous team."

"Right? There's no way they'd just enter the 21st floor."

"I know what I saw."

"I didn't see Leo's face, but I saw Lia Scarlet."

"So it really was Leo's team. Why are they so slow?"

"Who knows."

Leo's team would surprise more people as they passed more teams, as his team was in an unexpected position, and it was not a good one, especially considering how stacked his team was.

About ten minutes after Leo's team entered the Thousand Miles Bridge, they were forced to stop for the first time when a group of monsters suddenly spawned before them like ghosts.

However, Leo would react quickly by brandishing the Vampire Vanquisher almost instantly after the monsters spawned, cutting down the monsters before they could even react.

"I wonder how many teams cheat by assisting each other on this bridge." Leo suddenly mumbled out loud.

"Believe it or not, not many people are willing to cheat, even though we control what we want to record and what we ignore." Helia said.

"And this is all because of the Observation Team, 'students' here whose only job is to observe the other students. However, they won't try to stop you and will only report it at the end of the examination, and if you're caught, your results will be nullified."

"So they sent spies to watch over us, huh? Why am I not surprised?" Leo smiled.

"It's more effective than having teachers down here since they're easily recognizable." Helia said.

"Makes sense."

Leo's team would spend the next 24 hours running on the bridge with barely any breaks in between, only stopping to deal with the monsters, use the bathroom, and to reapply the buffs.

"Do you guys want to take a short break?" Leo asked them at the 28th hour mark.

"We'll have to limit our tents to one so we won't block the path for the others." Helia said.

"That's fine. I don't mind sharing a tent." Leo said.

"What about you?" He turned to look at Celeste, who was clearly nervous and hesitant about the idea of sharing a tent.

"I-I don't mind..." She eventually agreed.

"Great. Then let's take a break here."

Leo proceeded to set up his tent on the left side of the bridge like he saw many other teams doing.

He entered the tent with Lia and Helia shortly after.

'I'm going to share a tent with him...!' Celeste took a moment to mentally prepare herself outside before entering the tent.

A moment later, her body shivered uncontrollably when she took her first breath inside the tent.

'Ahhh... His smell here is so strong that I can die here and be at peace...!' She sighed inwardly.

Chapter 245: Thousand Miles Bridge(2)

"I'm going to take a shower. Do any of you have to use the bathroom?" Leo asked the others shortly after they entered the tent.

When the ladies shook their heads, Leo entered the bathroom and began washing away the sweat he'd accumulated.

Leo came out of the shower after spending 10 minutes inside to see the others sitting apart from each other, almost as though they were intentionally avoiding each other, and the atmosphere was quite awkward.

"I'll take a shower now." Helia quickly stood up after seeing Leo come out.

While they waited for Helia to finish, Leo retrieved a high-quality MRE and began eating it.

"Aren't you two going to eat?" Leo asked them when he noticed that they were just sitting there.

"I-I will do so after I clean myself..." Celeste hastily responded.

"Is that so?" Leo didn't bother them any further and focused on his own meal.

Once Helia came out of the bathroom, Celeste went inside next. Meanwhile, Helia started eating her meal.

About an hour later, once everyone cleaned themselves and filled their stomach, Helia spoke while looking at Leo, "What do you think about the Ancient Labyrinth thus far? Are you recalling anything?"

"Huh? Recall what?" Leo looked back with a puzzled look on his face.

"You have amnesia, right? I was wondering if this place is helping you with regaining your memoires."

"R-Right. Unfortunately, I still don't remember anything." He quickly shook his head.

"How do you feel about it? Losing your memories, that is." Helia continued to ask, her face field with curiosity.

"I don't know what to say... But if I have to say something... I feel nothing, I guess?"

"If you ask me, I'd say that losing one's memories is akin to dying. After all, you don't just lose your memory. You also lose your identity, so whoever you were before is now dead. Honestly, I feel a little sad for you."

Leo smiled, "There's no need to pity me. No matter who I was before, I am content with my current situation."

"Is that so?" Helia turned to look at Celeste a moment later.

"What about you? How are you feeling? This is your first time entering the Ancient Labyrinth, right?"

"Yes, this is a first for me." She nodded.

"I was expecting something much worse, and I was expecting to put in more effort. However, what I've experienced up to this point is the complete opposite of my expectations. To be honest, I feel like you'll do fine even if I wasn't here— like I am useless."

Ever since they entered the Ancient Labyrinth, Celeste hasn't used her magic to fight monsters even once. In fact, she used her first magic when they arrived at the 21st floor, and it was a personal request. If she didn't say anything, they would've entered the bridge without any buffs.

"You're thinking too much, and you're definitely not useless." Leo shook his head.

"He's right. Our team is just strong enough to not require a healer... yet. However, once we enter the 26th floor, we will definitely start relying on your light magic more and more, so be prepared for that." Helia said.

"Alright." Celeste nodded.

After resting for a total of 3 hours, Leo's team resumed their journey.

Three days later.

"We just reached our 500th mile. We're halfway there." Leo said as he stared at his watch, which had the function of calculating their distance traveled, which was a special function only available for the 21st floor.

"500 miles... since every 200 miles count as a floor, we're halfway through the 23rd floor."

"Will there be a boss at the end of the bridge?" Leo suddenly asked.

"No, this floor is special. There won't be any boss room. Once we reach the end of the bridge, we can immediately enter the 26th floor."

"Great."

After traveling for 2 days, Leo's team decided to take a long break before they push the final day.

"You guys can go to sleep first. I will be on the lookout." Leo said once they entered the tent.

"Thank you. I have to take a shower first, though." Helia said as she entered the bathroom.

Once they all used the bathroom and ate, everyone but Leo took out their sleeping bag and entered it.

Celeste and Helia laid their sleeping bag on their own corner while Lia placed her sleeping bag right beside Leo.

Helia and Lia quickly fell asleep, but Celeste couldn't sleep for reasons that she would rather not say.

After trying to sleep and failing for an hour, Celeste gave up and sat up on her sleeping back.

Leo noticed her movements and turned to look at her.

"Can't sleep?"

She nodded.

Leo smiled and continued, "I wouldn't be able to sleep either if I were in your shoes. After all, how can I possibly sleep peacefully while knowing that monsters could spawn at any moment? However, you don't need to be worried. I alone am more than enough to deal with the monsters. As long as I am here, I will protect you."

Celeste's body trembled after hearing his last few words.

"..."

After a moment of awkward silence, Celeste spoke in a low voice, "Hey, can I ask you something?"

"Go ahead."

"Do you really not remember me... or are you just pretending?"

Leo raised an eyebrow and asked, "What are you implying? That I am pretending to not know you? Why would I do something like that?"

A disappointed look appeared on Celeste's face, and she sighed, "Please forget what I just said. It was just a misunderstanding on my part."

She proceeded to lie back down in her sleeping bag and went silent.

'Was she acquainted with the old Leo?' Leo wondered inwardly as he continued to watch over them while they slept.

Monsters would spawn every half an hour, and when that happened, Leo would approach them by himself.

After casting several magic spells in quick succession, Leo went back inside the tent and acted as though he didn't just slay over a dozen monsters by himself, silently and patiently waiting for the next wave of monsters to show up.