

# Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 391 391: Kaecilius Still Walks the Same Path[ 982 words ]

"Mm, I see him. What's the rush? Did something happen?"

Wanda asked, puzzled.

"Let's go take a look."

Carl grabbed Wanda's hand, and the two immediately chased after Kaecilius.

Just as they turned the corner, a пространственное distortion—like shattering glass—suddenly appeared in front of Kaecilius. He stopped in his tracks. The sight was all too familiar—it was the Mirror Dimension.

Behind him, a figure in a bright yellow robe stepped out. With a simple motion of his hand, the surrounding space folded in on itself. Buildings and even the ground began to rotate layer by layer like interlocking blocks.

Suddenly, with both hands drawing inward and twisting, the entire space rotated ninety degrees. Those caught off guard—the red-robed followers—lost their footing and tumbled sideways, while only Kaecilius managed to remain standing, now planted firmly against a vertical wall.

"Attack!"

Kaecilius shouted. The red-robed followers charged, conjuring magical whips that instantly wrapped around the yellow-robed figure's ankles.

But with just a simple step backward, the attackers lost their balance and fell. The yellow-robed figure kicked them aside effortlessly, and as space folded again, the two were swallowed whole.

Outside, Carl and Wanda had reached the alley entrance. If not for the fluctuations of magic, Carl wouldn't have noticed the existence of the Mirror Dimension at all.

"Looks like Kaecilius has still gone down the same path~~"

Carl sighed. He considered Kaecilius a friend and had hoped he'd let go of his obsessions. Yet in the end, he still chose darkness.

"This is the Mirror Dimension. Something must've happened inside—I need to check."

Chaos energy swirled between Wanda's fingers as she easily made contact with the dimension.

She glanced back at Carl, as if seeking his approval. Since Wanda had already decided, Carl naturally supported her. There wasn't much danger anyway—aside from the Ancient One, no one in Kamar-Taj could match Wanda now.

Carl shrugged. Wanda lightly traced her finger forward, and the Chaos energy instantly tore open the Mirror Dimension, creating a human-sized rift. The two stepped inside, and the 裂缝 slowly sealed behind them.

Within the Mirror Dimension, the yellow-robed figure wielded glowing magical sigils in both hands—circular like discs, yet capable of folding into fan-like shapes. Simple spells, yet seemingly limitless in power.

He kicked Kaecilius away, but suddenly sensed someone entering the dimension. Turning around, he paused slightly upon seeing Carl and Wanda.

"Watch out!"

Wanda suddenly shouted. Scarlet Chaos energy surged outward, forming a crimson barrier midair behind the yellow-robed figure.

Boom!

Kaecilius's invisible blade struck the barrier, only to be repelled by the reactive force of the Chaos energy.

The yellow-robed figure turned, his sigils folding into fan shapes. With a sweep of his hands, the Mirror Dimension rotated once more, sending Kaecilius's followers tumbling from the buildings into open air.

Kaecilius quickly drew a circle with one hand, opening a portal to catch his falling subordinates. Then he leapt toward it himself.

Carl watched him, his expression unreadable, as if unsurprised by his actions. Just before entering the portal, Kaecilius glanced back at Carl—his eyes filled with shock... and a trace of apology.

Seeing him escape, Wanda immediately lashed out with Chaos energy, forming a whip midair. But she was a step too late—the portal vanished just as the whip reached it.

The yellow-robed figure glanced at where the portal had been, then dispelled the rotation of the Mirror Dimension. Everything slowly returned to the normal appearance of the city.

"Master Ancient One, care to explain what's going on?"

Carl looked at the yellow-robed figure. Having seen the films in his previous life, he already knew who it was.

Sure enough, the Ancient One removed the large hood, revealing a gleaming bald head.

"Kaecilius has been seduced by the Dark Dimension. He stole several pages from the Darkhold."

Her tone and expression remained calm, unshaken even in the face of chaos.

"The Darkhold? The one I studied?"

Wanda asked. During the later stages of her training in Kamar-Taj, the Ancient One had allowed her to read part of it.

The Darkhold was divided into two volumes. The upper volume contained dark magic, while the lower recorded beings of the Dark Dimension—their legends and summoning rituals. The pages Kaecilius stole happened to contain the ritual for summoning Dormammu.

"That's right. You read the upper volume. The lower contains summoning rituals for dimensional entities. The pages Kaecilius took concern Dormammu."

The Ancient One nodded, withholding nothing.

Carl, however, looked at her meaningfully. He knew she had likely already begun searching for a successor.

"Master Ancient One... have you really made your decision?"

She understood his meaning. A trace of melancholy flickered in her eyes, gone in an instant.

"Would you like to try?"

She smiled at Carl. It sounded like a joke, but both of them knew—if he agreed, the title of Sorcerer Supreme would be his.

Carl immediately shook his head. No chance—he was perfectly content being laid-back. Why take on a thankless burden like that?

"I'll pass. My personality isn't suited for being the Sorcerer Supreme. Better leave it to someone else~~"

The Ancient One chuckled softly. In her mind, Carl was indeed the most qualified candidate—but she could tell he wasn't joking.

In that case, she would have to move forward with her other choice—someone she had been observing for quite some time.

"Since you won't take it, you'll have to look after the person I choose."

"Sure. I'll keep an eye on him. But... is this really necessary?"

Carl looked at her. He knew she had already accepted her fate, but he still couldn't bear to see it happen.

She shook her head, her voice as calm as ever.

"Everything is predetermined within the river of time. Reckless changes would disrupt the timeline. And I must do this—only then can he take up the mantle without altering the future."

She stepped forward and placed a hand on Carl's shoulder.

"What comes next will depend on you. You are the greatest variable across all timelines. I hope that variable leads to a better outcome—you have the power to save everyone."

Her words were vague, but Carl understood them perfectly—and the meaning behind them.

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## **Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 392 392: Doctor Strange [ 779 words ]**

"I can only say I'll do my best."

Carl nodded. This aligned perfectly with his own intentions—having crossed into this world, if he didn't change anything, then what would have been the point?

"I believe you can do it~~"

The Ancient One had seen the timeline. Though the future was blurred, she knew one thing clearly—it had already changed. And the cause of that change was Carl's existence. That was why she had always kept an eye on him.

With a wave of her hand, she opened a portal and calmly stepped back into Kamar-Taj.

Meanwhile, Carl and Wanda strolled leisurely through the streets, heading back toward their office.

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At the same time, in a hospital, a flamboyant man was putting on his surgical gown while tapping to a rhythm. His schedule was packed today. This particular operation required a craniotomy to treat a neurological condition—extremely difficult, but to him, it was nothing more than routine.

Doctors from all over the hospital had gathered outside the operating room, eager to observe.

Standing at the operating table, the man handled instruments with practiced ease. Beside him, the anesthesiologist casually pulled out a phone and started playing music.

Moving in sync with the beat, the man performed the surgery with calm precision. Outside, the observing doctors scribbled notes nonstop.

Everything was proceeding smoothly—only the final step of closing the skull remained—when suddenly, a figure appeared at the door, looking extremely anxious.

Everyone in the operating room noticed.

"I'll take over from here. You go—we'll handle the rest."

The assistant spoke up, knowing that someone coming in this urgently must mean something critical had happened.

"Alright, I'll leave it to you."

The man nodded and stepped out, removing his surgical gown before heading over.

"What's going on?"

"Gunshot wound."

The female doctor handed him the medical report.

"The fact that he's still alive is a miracle."

He remarked lightly, then began reviewing the case.

"Respiratory arrest, shock, cerebral hypoxia, weak respiratory response... Ah, here it is!"

Flipping through the data on his tablet, he zoomed in on a brain scan. Sure enough, a bullet was lodged near the brainstem—dangerously close to vital nerves.

"This may have already affected the brainstem. Nick has declared him brain-dead, but something feels off."

The female doctor frowned.

"We need to move fast, Palmer."

Grabbing her, the man rushed toward the emergency ward.

This flashy, somewhat arrogant doctor was none other than Stephen Strange—the future Sorcerer Supreme. For now, he was simply one of the world's top neurosurgeons.

"Nick! What are you doing?!"

At the ICU entrance, Dr. Nick was directing staff to wheel the patient away.

"He signed an organ donation form. I'm taking him for harvesting."

Nick replied calmly.

"But I don't agree with this!"

Palmer blocked his path.

"You don't need to. He's been declared brain-dead."

Nick remained unmoved.

"You're jumping to conclusions, Nick. I've reviewed the case—this man can still be saved. He needs a suboccipital craniotomy immediately."

Strange stepped in, handing over the tablet.

Nick didn't even glance at it. "I'm not letting you operate on a corpse."

Strange raised the tablet right in front of him.

"Take a look."

Nick skimmed it—and froze.

"A bullet?"

"Exactly. And not an ordinary one. His bloodwork shows high levels of lead and antimony. The alloy is toxic—once it enters the cerebrospinal fluid..."

"—it triggers acute symptoms, shutting down brainstem and central nervous system reflexes, causing pseudo brain death."

Nick finished the sentence, realization dawning.

"We don't have time to waste."

"Let's go. I've already reserved an operating room."

Palmer didn't hesitate, pushing the patient at full speed toward surgery, with Strange right behind.

"Need help?"

Nick asked.

"No. Dr. Palmer will assist."

Strange shot back bluntly. That was his personality—arrogant, but undeniably skilled.

Despite that, Nick followed them into the operating room, ready to step in if needed.

Palmer technically wasn't qualified to assist in such a high-level procedure, but since Strange personally requested her, she was allowed in.

Soon, the craniotomy was complete. Strange put on his specialized glasses, and Palmer quickly positioned the camera.

"Neural structures are intact. Beginning bullet extraction."

"I need constant updates on heart rate and blood pressure."

"Understood."

With extreme precision, Strange began the extraction. His movements were painstakingly slow—mere millimeters per minute—until he finally reached the bullet lodged in the brainstem.

Now came the hardest part: removing it without causing damage.

Time seemed to stretch endlessly as everyone held their breath.

At last, the bullet was carefully removed.

"Vitals stable—heart rate and blood pressure normal!"

A wave of relief swept through the room. The operation was a success.

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Outside the operating room, Strange stood beside Palmer.

"There's a neuroscience gala tonight. Want to come with me?"

They were clearly familiar with each other.

Palmer declined.

Strange didn't mind, continuing to chat with her casually.

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That evening, dressed in a tailored suit, wearing an expensive watch, and driving a flashy Lamborghini, Stephen Strange sped toward the gala.

He kept accelerating the entire way, overtaking every car in sight—clearly enjoying the thrill.

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## **Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 393 393: The Car Accident[ 985 words ]**

On a mountain road, Strange's assistant Billy called. The two were discussing the next day's surgery. It couldn't be helped—Strange had far too many patients, all drawn by his reputation and skill. And he himself was extremely selective; if a case lacked difficulty, he wouldn't even bother looking at it.

"You'll definitely like this case. A 22-year-old female with a chip implanted in her brain to control her condition—unfortunately, she was struck by lightning."

"That does sound interesting. A bit challenging."

Strange replied while overtaking another car, glancing down at the brain scan Billy had sent him.

Suddenly, his car rolled over a loose stone. The vehicle jolted violently, then slammed into a car beside it. As he was accelerating, the car instantly lost traction, skidding out of control and hurtling off the cliff.

During the fall, the car flipped countless times, rolling from halfway up the mountain all the way to the bottom, even crashing through a wire fence at the base.

In a daze, Strange felt himself lying on a bed being rushed along by a group of people. He saw his hands wrapped in layer upon layer of bandages, soaked with blood.

When he woke again, the first person he saw was Palmer, who had been by his side the entire time.

Her eyes were red—she had clearly been crying.

"Everything will be alright."

Palmer gently stroked his forehead, though her tear-filled eyes betrayed her words.

Strange turned his head—and saw the most horrifying sight of his life.

His hands were fixed onto supports. Each finger was pinned with metal rods, and because they couldn't move, his hands were stretched out and suspended.

He tried to move them—but his fingers wouldn't respond. He couldn't even twitch them.

"I... they... what... what did they do..."

His voice came out in fragments. He couldn't accept what had been done to his hands.

"They searched for you with helicopters for a long time before they found you. But... you missed the golden window for nerve repair."

Palmer wiped her tears. She couldn't accept this either—especially not this version of Strange. For a surgeon, hands were everything. A surgeon without dexterity was essentially finished—let alone someone with injuries this severe.

"What... did they... do to me..."

Tears streamed down Strange's face, his voice trembling and choked.

Palmer fell silent. She didn't want to tell him—but she knew she couldn't hide it.

"Eleven steel pins were inserted into your hand bones. Multiple ligaments were torn. Severe nerve damage... The surgery lasted ten hours..."

Her voice broke before she could finish.

"Look at these fixators... look at them..."

Strange kept repeating the same words, over and over. His entire body trembled; each syllable sounded as though blades were scraping against him.

"No one could have done better..."

Palmer wept quietly, trying to sound strong.

Strange struggled to turn his head toward her. The one eye he could open was filled with tears, yet his gaze was hollow.

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Strange was eventually discharged, though his hands were still tightly wrapped in bandages. His fingers could now move slightly, and he spent all day studying his own condition—medical reports and scans never leaving his side.

The results were clear: nearly every finger had been fixed with metal pins. Regaining his former dexterity was impossible. At best, he could manage daily life—but returning to surgery was nothing more than a fantasy.

Unable to use his hands, Palmer took care of his daily needs until the bandages could finally be removed.

But when Strange saw the clearly visible surgical scars on his hands, he wasn't mentally prepared at all. He tried to clench his fists, but his hands trembled uncontrollably.

Suddenly, he let out a laugh. When grief becomes overwhelming, facial muscles can lose control—producing a smile. That was exactly what was happening to him.

"No... no... these aren't my hands..."

He kept repeating it.

"What you need now is patience. Your hands will recover."

Doctor Nic said at that moment—the surgeon who had operated on him.

"No... they won't. You've completely ruined me..."

Strange shook his head. In just a few days, streaks of white had appeared at his temples.

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After leaving the hospital, Strange didn't sit idle. He gathered the best doctors across the United States for a consultation—all for the sake of his hands. But the results were far from ideal.

"Dr. Strange, your soft tissues are still healing. Operating now would not be a good idea."

One of the doctors—also a renowned surgeon—spoke after reviewing the scans.

"The recovery is too slow. I need to speed it up."

Strange looked at him firmly.

"Insert a stent from the brachial artery into the radial artery."

The doctor froze for a moment—this method might actually work.

And so, Strange was pushed into the operating room once again.

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That night, Carl sat on the sofa watching the news. The report showed footage from Strange's accident scene.

"Looks like he's not far from heading to Kamar-Taj. I should go watch the show when that happens."

Carl grinned mischievously, clearly intending to witness Doctor Strange's upcoming "training hardships."

In truth, Strange's hands could be healed easily—Carl or Tony could just take him to Wakanda and fix everything. But Carl had no intention of doing that. The injury was something Strange had to go through—it was the catalyst for him becoming the Sorcerer Supreme. If his hands were healed now, he'd never go to Kamar-Taj. After all, in his previous life—just like in the movies—Strange had been extremely resistant to the idea of magic at first.

"The one in the news—is he the future Sorcerer Supreme's successor?"

Wanda sat beside Carl with a plate of fruit. Just as Carl reached out, Wanda deliberately handed the plate to Skye on the other side instead.

"So that's him~~ I've heard of him. Highly skilled—but extremely arrogant."

Skye took a bite of a pear-like fruit. Just as Carl's hand reached again, she passed the plate to Gwen.

"I heard his injuries are severe—he won't be able to be a surgeon anymore. That's rough~~"

Gwen picked a piece of fruit, then finally handed the plate to Carl.

Carl took it—only to find a single bunch of grapes left.

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## Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 394 394: On the Brink of Collapse[ 985 words ]

"This guy was personally chosen by the Ancient One. His talent in the mystic arts isn't much worse than Wanda's."

As he spoke, Carl glanced at the cloak lazily propped up on the bar like it was a person. The cloak now belonged to him—he wondered what Strange would wear when the time came.

"Tch~~ Him? Compare to Wanda? Wanda could let him use both hands and feet, and just one look from her would turn him into dust."

Skye didn't believe it at all. She had heard Wanda admit many times that she wasn't a match for the Ancient One, but Skye had never actually seen the Ancient One in action. What she had seen was Wanda's power—and that was far beyond what any third-rate sorcerer could hope to achieve.

"Well... he probably can't beat Wanda, but if Wanda hadn't learned the magic from the Darkhold, then the outcome would be hard to say..."

Carl thought of Wanda's descent into darkness in his previous life. Honestly, if she hadn't mastered dark magic, she might not have been Strange's match. But now? Wanda would never fall like that again. Vision had already been personally "dealt with" by Carl, and the Mind Stone was sitting safely in his spatial inventory. For Wanda to lose control now, Carl himself would have to die—and that simply wasn't going to happen.

"You really think that highly of him?"

Gwen looked at Carl, chewing on fruit as she spoke, her words slightly muffled.

"It's not about me thinking highly of him. He is a genius when it comes to magic. Maybe he's just naturally attuned to it—even forbidden spells, he can pick them up instantly."

Carl recalled how Strange had used the Time Stone for the first time and instinctively learned to manipulate time. Just thinking about it was terrifying.

"Wanda, when he heads to Kamar-Taj, let's go take a look."

Wanda nodded. She was also curious about this man whom both Carl and the Ancient One regarded so highly.

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Meanwhile, Strange was still undergoing rehabilitation.

Although the second surgery had been quite successful, his hands continued to tremble uncontrollably, and their dexterity was greatly reduced. Returning to surgery was out of the question.

"Useless... this rehab is completely useless!"

Strange tore off the rehabilitation gloves. His hands still couldn't exert proper strength—even something as simple as the gloves was beyond him.

"Don't get discouraged, man. This stuff really helps—it'll speed up the recovery of your muscles and ligaments. It's just that your injuries are still fresh. Rehab takes time."

The orderly guiding Strange through therapy spoke calmly. He had seen countless patients like this—people who gave up on themselves. Strange wasn't even the hardest to deal with.

Strange shot him a disdainful look. He knew that even the orderlies here were graduates of prestigious universities—working this job was part of their internship. Every intern had to start as an orderly.

"Tell me, genius—answer me honestly. Have you ever seen someone with nerve and ligament damage this severe recover using this bullshit therapy?"

Strange sneered. Easy for him to talk—it wasn't his hands that were destroyed.

But the orderly's next words stunned him.

"I actually have. Last year. Workplace accident. Spinal injury."

The words hit Strange like a hammer, but the orderly continued.

"One of his legs was completely paralyzed due to nerve damage in the spine. He had to use a wheelchair. The nerve damage even affected his shoulder—he'd get sudden bursts of pain."

Strange listened intently. He wasn't about to miss even the slightest chance of recovery—yet this intern was oddly taking his time.

"He came here three times a week for rehab. Then one day, he just stopped showing up. I even thought he'd died. But then one day, I saw him on the street. Want to guess what happened?"

"What happened?"

Strange asked immediately.

"He walked right past me—just like a normal person."

"Walked past you?"

Strange stared at him in disbelief.

"That's impossible. Complete nonsense. Unless you show me his medical records!"

He refused to believe it. Spinal damage affecting a leg and shoulder—leading to paralysis? Even if cured, there was no way someone like that could walk normally. Not needing a wheelchair would already be a miracle.

"Come on, you're a doctor—you know how hard it is to access medical records."

The orderly shot him down bluntly.

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After finishing rehab and returning home, Strange took out a notebook, intending to write down every treatment method he knew and send them to renowned doctors around the world.

But his hands wouldn't stop shaking.

His writing was crooked and distorted—he couldn't even form a complete sentence.

Finally, frustration overwhelmed him.

He snapped.

Strange began smashing everything in sight. Furniture, decorations—anything within reach was destroyed.

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That night, curled up in a corner, Strange looked like a homeless man.

His luxurious apartment was now a complete mess. Broken fragments littered the floor. Even the refrigerator had been knocked over, its contents scattered everywhere.

At that moment, the door opened.

Palmer walked in.

Seeing the devastation—and Strange huddled in the corner—she understood. The once-invincible man had finally been crushed by reality.

She set down the food she brought along with a document folder, then walked toward him.

"Stop. Leave. Right now."

Strange suddenly looked up. His eyes were bloodshot, veins visible—he looked almost insane.

"Stephen, you need to accept reality. Seeing you like this breaks my heart. We've done everything we could. Some things are just beyond our control. This isn't the end of the world—you'll find something else to give your life meaning again. Look at yourself—you're no different from the homeless outside. Please... stop torturing yourself."

Palmer knelt down and embraced him.

But Strange shoved her away.

"No... I won't accept it... Without surgery, my life has no meaning. I'm a doctor, Palmer. The best neurosurgeon in New York—no, in all of America! I can't lose my hands. I can't!!"

He roared in despair.

"Get out! Leave right now!!"

Strange screamed at her, as if trying to vent every ounce of pain and frustration inside him.

Palmer didn't get angry.

She knew he needed to release it—if he kept it bottled up, he would eventually break completely.

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## **Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 395 395: A Flicker of Hope Rekindled[ 893 words ]**

Palmer didn't say anything more. At this point, words were useless—Strange had to find his own way out. All she could do was stay by his side in silence.

"I brought the medical records for that patient you mentioned. They're on the table. I'll get going."

With that, Palmer left.

The moment Strange heard this, it was like grabbing onto a lifeline. He hurried over, picked up the file, and flipped it open.

Just as the intern had said—the patient had suffered spinal injuries that paralyzed one leg, and nerve damage that also caused neuropathic pain in one arm.

Strange picked up the scan images and examined them closely. The man's spine, much like his own hands, was riddled with metal pins.

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The next day, Strange rushed without delay to a basketball court.

He had learned that this once-paralyzed patient often came here to play basketball. A paralyzed man playing basketball? Strange couldn't even imagine it.

When he arrived, the man was indeed playing. His movements were light and agile—running and jumping with ease. There was no trace of someone who had once been paralyzed.

Standing on the other side of the fence, Strange called out:

"Jonathan Pangborn?!"

His voice caught Jonathan's attention. Seeing a disheveled stranger, Jonathan approached cautiously, the two separated by the fence.

"Complete damage to C7 and C8. Injury to L3 and L4."

Strange had memorized the man's condition after studying his records all night.

"Who are you? I don't think we've met."

Jonathan eyed him suspiciously.

"Stephen Strange. I used to be a neurosurgeon."

Recognition dawned on Jonathan's face.

"I remember you. I came to your office once—you didn't even see me. Your assistant stopped me at the door."

There was a hint of amusement in his expression. Seeing someone who once stood so high now reduced to this state—it was... interesting.

"I couldn't have saved you back then."

Strange replied.

"I know. You call that 'knowing your limits,' right? Didn't want to risk your reputation, so you didn't even take a look."

Jonathan didn't care about Strange's status. However arrogant Strange had been back then, he was just as pitiful now.

"Jonathan... you found hope in despair. You created a miracle. I... I need a miracle now..."

As he spoke, Strange raised his hands. They trembled uncontrollably, covered in surgical scars that looked horrifying.

Jonathan, who had been about to leave, turned back and examined Strange's hands more closely. He understood—hands were everything to a doctor.

"...Alright."

Jonathan finally spoke.

"I had basically given up back then. It felt like everything below my brain had disappeared. Then I met a group of people who called themselves sorcerers. They took me up a mountain to meet a 'holy one.'"

He pointed to his chest.

"I met my master... and entered an entirely new realm. And then... without even realizing it, my body healed. Completely. No aftereffects. That place holds many mysteries. But I didn't stay to learn—I just wanted my body back. So once I recovered, I went home."

To Strange, it sounded like pure fantasy—a bedtime story with no basis in reality. Injuries that severe just... healed on their own? It was unheard of.

But Strange was desperate. Whether the story was true or not didn't matter—he just needed to know where this place was.

Jonathan saw the urgency in his eyes. Though reluctant, he decided to tell him. After all, this was saving a life.

"The place you're looking for is called Kamar-Taj. It's in Nepal. But getting there... isn't cheap."

"How much?"

Strange lived in luxury—money wasn't an issue.

"It's not about money. You'll have to rely on luck. Good luck."

With that, Jonathan turned and rejoined the game, no longer paying Strange any attention.

Strange stood there for a long time, watching Jonathan's agile figure.

In the end, he made his decision.

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Kathmandu—the capital of Nepal, its largest city, the birthplace of Buddhism, and a sacred place for its followers.

Strange wandered its streets, travel-worn and exhausted.

He had been here for three months, searching for Kamar-Taj. Yet no one seemed to know of such a place.

Now, his face was covered in a beard, his temples streaked with gray. He had visited every holy site in the city—but none were what he sought.

He walked and asked, over and over—but the answers were always the same: Don't know. Never heard of it.

So he kept moving, murmuring the name "Kamar-Taj" under his breath.

As he passed through a street, a man in a black robe brushed past him. The man wore a hood that concealed his face.

If Carl were here, he would recognize him instantly—one of Kamar-Taj's sorcerers, and one of his drinking buddies: Mordo.

Mordo followed at a distance, having observed Strange for quite some time. He hadn't revealed himself yet—he was testing Strange's patience.

Now, the time was almost right.

Strange, unaware, continued wandering through streets and temples, chasing that last sliver of hope.

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As he entered a narrow alley, four men blocked his path.

It was obvious what they wanted.

"Sorry... I don't have any money. Just look at me."

Strange raised his hands, trying to appear non-threatening.

One of the men noticed the watch on his wrist and jerked his chin toward it.

"Hand over the watch."

They closed in on him. His clothes might be tattered—but that watch was clearly valuable.

"Please... not this. You can't take it. It's the only thing keeping me going."

Strange clutched his wrist tightly. The watch meant everything to him—it was a gift from Palmer. He wouldn't give it up.

"I said—give me the watch."

The man repeated, as the four of them fully surrounded him

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## **Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 396 396: Arrival at Kamar-Taj[ 865 words ]**

Facing the four robbers, Strange had no choice. He suddenly threw a punch, landing it squarely on the face of the man who had been speaking.

"Ah—!"

The man barely reacted, but Strange cried out in pain instead. His hands hadn't healed yet—this punch only made the pain surge through them.

The man who was hit immediately retaliated with a heavy punch to Strange's face. Losing his balance, Strange fell to the ground. The four men then surrounded him and began kicking and beating him mercilessly.

Suddenly, the surrounding air temperature plummeted.

Strange curled up, covering his head, eyes tightly shut—but the blows stopped. Slowly, he opened his eyes.

Before him stood four ice sculptures.

They were frozen mid-motion—some with fists raised, others mid-kick. These were the very same four men who had been beating him just moments ago.

Strange hurriedly got to his feet, staring at the frozen figures in disbelief. He could clearly recognize them—but he couldn't understand how they had turned into ice in the blink of an eye.

At the alley entrance, hidden from sight, Mordo looked up at the sky. His gaze landed on a young man high above, draped in a red cloak.

It was Carl.

After learning that Strange was searching everywhere for Kamar-Taj, Carl had rushed over from New York. Not knowing exactly when Strange would arrive, he simply came every day. Today, upon hearing that Mordo would guide Strange here, Carl shamelessly tagged along.

Those four ice sculptures? His handiwork.

Mordo shook his head helplessly, then stepped out from the shadows and approached Strange.

Removing his hood, he asked, "Are you looking for Kamar-Taj?"

Strange's eyes lit up instantly. Finally—after all this time—someone who knew of Kamar-Taj.

He nodded vigorously, hope rekindled.

Mordo sized him up but said nothing. Instead, he turned and walked out of the alley.

Confused but unwilling to lose this chance, Strange hurried after him.

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They walked through crowded streets in silence—Mordo leading, Strange following closely behind.

Eventually, Mordo stopped in front of a narrow door, barely wide enough for one person.

Strange looked at it skeptically.

"This is it? Are you sure? That place over there looks more like it."

He tilted his head toward a temple across the street, which indeed looked far more fitting than this inconspicuous doorway.

Mordo smiled faintly.

"I once asked the same question. Though I wasn't quite as self-important as you."

He clearly didn't like Strange's attitude—there was always that air of superiority about him.

Mordo opened the door and gestured for Strange to enter. Before following, he glanced around briefly—wondering if Carl was lurking nearby.

---

Mordo led Strange into a quiet study hall where sorcerers usually read and trained.

Inside, a man sat calmly, reading—a figure who looked profound and unfathomable.

Meanwhile, the real Ancient One stood off to the side, observing Strange. Beside her were Carl and Wanda.

"This is the one you chose, Ancient One? He doesn't look very reliable~~"

Wanda examined Strange carefully. With his beard and ragged appearance, he looked more like a vagrant than anything else.

At that moment, Strange noticed the man reading—and just as their eyes met, the man stood and left.

The Ancient One stepped out from the shadows, holding a teapot, and poured tea for Strange. Carl and Wanda remained hidden in the shadows.

Instinctively, Strange tried to follow the departing man, but the act of pouring tea caught his attention.

"This is the Ancient One~~"

Mordo said with a mischievous grin, exchanging knowing looks with Carl. They both knew Strange had mistaken the wrong person—the true master stood right before him, yet he chased a decoy.

"Mordo, Hamir—you may leave."

The Ancient One's voice was calm.

Mordo and the man who had been reading immediately exited, leaving Strange alone with her. Carl and Wanda, however, stayed hidden.

Strange stared at her in shock. It was hard for him to believe that this bald woman was the leader of Kamar-Taj.

"Mr. Strange—"

"Doctor. Doctor Strange."

He interrupted rudely.

The Ancient One remained unbothered.

"You're no longer a doctor. That's why you've come here. How many surgeries have your hands undergone? Seven?"

Strange's eyes widened in shock as she set down the teapot.

He quickly composed himself and got to the point.

"You once treated a man named Pangborn. He was paralyzed."

The Ancient One didn't deny it. She calmly poured three cups of tea.

Strange frowned. There were only two of them—why three cups?

Before he could dwell on it, she spoke:

"In a manner of speaking. Is he well? It's been some time since I last saw him."

Without looking up, she placed the extra two cups on the opposite side of the table.

"How did you heal someone whose spine was broken in four places?"

Strange still hadn't touched his tea. He had no time for that—this was what mattered.

"I didn't heal him. He couldn't walk—I simply showed him how to stand again."

She took a sip of tea.

"You mean psychological treatment? That's impossible. His condition wasn't psychological."

Strange immediately rejected the idea. He had seen the records—it was real spinal damage.

"The body is capable of reconnecting what has been broken. When those damaged pathways are restored, it is not I who heals—it is you, healing yourself."

Her words caught Strange off guard.

"You mean cellular regeneration? You can do that?"

He was stunned. Even as a world-renowned doctor, this sounded like something out of science fiction.

The Ancient One shook her head.

"Cells only regenerate under specific—rare—conditions."

~~~~~

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## Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 397: Astral Projection[ 1,065 words ]

"Exactly."

Strange agreed with the Ancient One. It seemed the bald woman before him wasn't some quack after all. But what she said next completely overturned his impression of her.

"What if I told you your body can restore itself in all kinds of ways—would you believe me?"

"You've developed cellular regeneration?!"

Strange was stunned. This was a medical breakthrough that the world hadn't even managed to theorize yet—someone had actually succeeded in researching it?!

His attention remained fixed on the Ancient One, completely unaware that not far from him stood a young man and woman, each holding a teacup and quietly sipping—it was the very tea from the table.

"That would be an incredibly advanced project. So you're researching here because there's no oversight from any medical association? You can experiment however you like?"

Strange grew excited. Cellular regeneration could treat the vast majority of human illnesses—his hands would be nothing in comparison.

"May I ask how far this treatment has progressed?"

He looked at the Ancient One with eager anticipation, like a child who had just heard there might be candy, his eyes shining.

"It's... alright, I suppose~~~ But it's not any kind of cellular regeneration. The method I know involves using your soul to heal your body."

The Ancient One spoke in a rather mystical tone. In Western countries, the soul was often regarded as a form of energy—since it was energy, it could theoretically grant the body extraordinary abilities.

After hearing this, Strange froze as if his mind had crashed. He couldn't find the words to respond. He was a doctor, a staunch materialist. He had never believed in the existence of a soul. If souls were real, he should have seen them easily in operating rooms—or even in the morgue. But he had never seen a single one.

"The soul... healing the body?"

Strange's eyes widened. The person before him now seemed more and more like a fraud. He wanted to turn and leave, but his body wouldn't move—the living example of that man with a spine broken into four sections kept flashing through his mind.

"F-fine... Where do we start?"

Strange forced himself to stay. To heal himself, he was willing to try anything. All he wanted was to fix his hands and stand at the operating table again.

At that moment, Wanda waved her hand, and a book instantly appeared in her grasp. She flipped it open and walked toward Strange.

The sudden appearance of another person startled him so badly he nearly jumped. He was certain no one had been standing there just moments ago—yet now there were two!

His gaze fell on the open page in Wanda's hands. It was a diagram—a chart of human acupuncture points. He was familiar with it. Though trained in Western medicine, he still had some understanding of meridians and acupoints.

"Your method is acupuncture? Sorry, I've already tried that. It can relieve symptoms, but it can't cure anything."

Strange had already exhausted acupuncture as a treatment. He had spent his entire fortune traveling the world, trying every possible method, all to no avail.

Wanda and the Ancient One said nothing, simply continuing to flip through the pages.

"Fine~~ I spent everything I had on a plane ticket to come here for treatment, and now you're telling me it depends on some vague belief system? Are you kidding me?!"

As he spoke, Strange reached out to snatch the book from Wanda's hands—but before his fingers could touch it, a surge of scarlet energy blasted him backward.

"Do you see now? All this time, you've been like someone peering at a leopard through a tube. The only difference is that your tube is slightly larger than others'. But now, your tube has been torn open. Your field of vision has expanded beyond imagination—and yet you choose not to see."

The Ancient One didn't react to Strange's rudeness. She knew he couldn't accept this yet. In time, he would understand.

"I choose not to see because I don't believe in souls or faith! None of that exists in this world!"

Strange lashed out angrily, venting everything he had bottled up. He had wandered Kathmandu for months, only to end up with bedtime stories about belief and souls.

Suddenly, the Ancient One grabbed him and struck his chest with her palm.

Strange fell backward. Time seemed to freeze. In front of him, he saw... himself, still leaning backward. If that was him, then who was he?

Looking down, he saw that his body had become semi-transparent, faintly glowing. He could clearly see everything about himself.

It was as if a door to a new world had opened. Before he could even react, he saw the young man step forward and catch his falling body. The moment his body was steadied—

Strange snapped back into it.

"What did you just do to me?!"

he demanded.

"I merely pushed your soul out of your body."

The Ancient One withdrew her hand and spoke calmly.

"What did you put in the tea? Did you drug me?"

Strange immediately assumed the tea had been tampered with. Tricks like this were cheap—common methods used by cults for brainwashing.

Karl rolled his eyes. He couldn't understand Strange's way of thinking. Even someone as materialistic as Tony had accepted magic after witnessing it—but Strange was as stubborn as a rock.

"You just entered a soul state. Everything you saw was real."

the Ancient One explained. But Strange still refused to believe it, forcing her to continue:

"When the soul leaves the body, everything around you feels slow... almost frozen. I believe you just experienced that."

Strange remained unconvinced, still fixated on the idea that he had been drugged.

Seeing this, Wanda lost her patience. The Chaos Magic within her surged outward. In the blink of an eye, she blasted Strange's soul out of his body once more, and a thread of scarlet energy immediately entered his astral form.

Strange felt like he was on a roller coaster. The scenery before his eyes shifted rapidly—one moment he was flying out of Earth, the next he was dragged into a fantastical realm. He even found himself in a microscopic world... and then in the Quantum Realm.

Just as he was about to black out from the overwhelming experience, his soul was suddenly yanked back into his body.

Wanda showed no gentleness like she had with Karl. Once she sensed his soul reaching its limit, she grabbed it and shoved it back in without hesitation.

Strange looked around frantically like a madman. His face was filled with terror, his pupils dilated—he had been thoroughly shaken.

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# Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 398: Please Teach Me~![ 1,084 words ]

"How does it feel?"

The Ancient One pushed a chair forward, and Strange instinctively sat down.

Then, with another wave of Wanda's hand, Strange's soul was once again blasted out of his body, returning to that fantastical realm. This time, however, he could hear the Ancient One's voice.

"As a doctor, a man of high society, you believe you understand how this world works. You think matter is all there is to the universe. But behind it all lies another, unknown domain."

Guided by her voice, Strange passed through one wondrous and surreal world after another. The scenes before his eyes shifted constantly—many changing before he could even fully process what he was seeing.

With a thud, Strange fell off the chair and collapsed awkwardly at the Ancient One's feet. Wanda quickly stepped back, returning to Karl's side.

"Mr. Strange, do you still insist on your previous beliefs?"

The Ancient One looked down at him as he lay trembling on the ground.

At this point, Strange looked completely unhinged—messy hair, disheveled beard—the full appearance of a madman.

His hands trembled as he raised them. The surgical scars were still clearly visible.

"Please... teach me~!!"

His eyes gleamed with intensity. He had accepted what he had seen—but only passively. Deep down, all he wanted was to heal his hands. He wasn't yet ready to accept the responsibility that would come after.

The Ancient One saw right through him.

"No~~"

She shook her head and refused. He wasn't ready. Not yet.

Strange froze in confusion. The world around him suddenly shifted—and the next moment, he was thrown out the door, collapsing helplessly onto the ground.

He scrambled to his feet. Seeing the door still open, he rushed forward—but it slammed shut with a bang. No matter how much he shouted or pounded on it, it wouldn't budge.

—

Inside Kamar-Taj, Wanda wandered around with Karl. There were no so-called restricted areas here—even the chamber housing the Eye of Agamotto was freely accessible. At this moment, the two of them stood right before it.

"Can you control this thing?"

Karl curiously examined the Time Stone embedded within the eye-shaped casing as he asked Wanda.

"I don't know."

Wanda shook her head. She had never used the Eye of Agamotto—she had never even seen the Ancient One use it.

"I don't know how it works."

She reached out and tapped the artifact resting on its stand. It didn't react at all.

Karl, on the other hand, wasn't nearly as cautious. He simply picked it up and examined it in his hands. He vaguely remembered that activating the Eye required specific hand gestures—but in his previous life, he had never paid close attention. If he had known, he would've studied it more carefully.

After playing with it for a while, he lost interest. He already had the Mind Stone—he didn't really need the Time Stone. The Mind Stone's energy would be enough for the system to absorb later.

Karl had no interest in the six Infinity Stones. From watching Loki, he knew these things were basically like glass marbles tossed in a drawer—barely worth a glance. And he certainly had no desire to wipe out half the universe like that purple madman. That would just be absurd.

—

Inside a meditation chamber, the Ancient One sat in meditation. Mordo knocked lightly on the door.

"That's you, Mordo. Come in."

The Ancient One opened her eyes.

"You think I shouldn't have sent him away?"

Mordo stepped inside. The Ancient One looked at him as she spoke.

Instead of answering directly, Mordo said, "He's been waiting outside for hours. I can tell—there's a determination in him. It feels... familiar."

"He reminds you of Kaecilius?"

The Ancient One remained seated cross-legged and closed her eyes again.

"I don't want another exceptionally talented student to be consumed by darkness after learning magic."

Mordo fell silent. After all, Kaecilius was a painful lesson.

"Inner demons cannot be destroyed, Mordo. Everyone has them. They are one of the conditions for falling into darkness. What we must do is learn to coexist with them—use our will to restrain and seal them. The moment that seal loosens, even slightly, is the beginning of embracing darkness."

Her tone was calm, as if she were speaking both to Mordo and to herself.

After a moment of thought, Mordo finally said, "The stolen pages of the Darkhold are still in Kaecilius's hands. If he manages to decipher them, it will bring disaster upon us. Perhaps this Strange could help Kamar-Taj deal with him."

What Mordo didn't know was that Strange had already been chosen by the Ancient One as her successor. She would never truly reject him.

The Ancient One opened her eyes, glanced at Mordo, but said nothing more.

Mordo bowed slightly and left the chamber. He had done all he could—this was as far as he could help Strange.

—

Night fell.

Strange was still outside, weakly pounding on the wooden door. Behind it lay his only hope—his entire future. There was no way he would give up.

"Don't lock me out~~"

He slumped against the door, pressing his back firmly against it, using the last of his strength in a futile attempt to push it open. He no longer had the energy to keep knocking.

Suddenly, the door swung open. Due to inertia, Strange rolled inside like a curled-up ball.

"Hey—how long are you planning to lie there? Dinner's about to start~"

Strange opened his eyes. The speaker was the young man he had seen earlier—the one with the girl. He was looking down at him while casually munching on a piece of chocolate.

When Karl brought Strange into the dining hall, the once lively room fell silent. All eyes turned toward Strange.

Karl ignored the attention and walked straight to sit beside Wanda and Wong. Wanda had already prepared his portion.

Mordo gestured for Strange to sit with them. Strange devoured the food voraciously—he hadn't had a proper meal in days. He had long run out of money and had been surviving on free food from temples—just enough to keep from starving, never enough to be full.

—

After dinner, Mordo led Strange to his new quarters.

It was a small private room. Not large—just a bathroom with a shower, a desk, and a bed. Simple and plain.

Mordo then handed him a small slip of paper—with the Wi-Fi password written on it.

Strange lay back on the bed and let out a long breath.

Finally... he had made it inside the place that could heal him. Hope had returned.

He took out the watch Palmer had given him. It was now the only valuable thing he still possessed. No matter how destitute he became, he had never once considered selling it.

Because to him, it meant far more than money.

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## **Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 399 399: Tempering the Mind[ 1,107 words ]**

Early the next morning, Strange began his life as a mage, diving into obscure and difficult magical studies.

Starting from the construction of magical runes all the way to the execution of complete spells, Strange felt as though he had opened the door to an entirely new world. It was a novel experience unlike anything he had ever encountered before—completely at odds with everything he had previously learned, overturning his understanding of how things worked.

The mornings were spent studying rune structures and the theoretical foundations of basic magic, while the afternoons were reserved for putting that knowledge into practice.

Standing in the courtyard, surrounded by fellow apprentices, Strange watched as each of them practiced with confidence. He lowered his gaze to his own trembling

hands, utterly lacking confidence in the afternoon session—for one reason alone: his hands.

Just as he stood there staring blankly, Karl quietly walked up beside him.

"What are you hesitating about?"

Hearing Karl's question, Strange looked up. His expression—and even his eyes—were filled with self-doubt.

Karl had been bored, so the Ancient One had sent him to the courtyard to supervise the apprentices' training. Although his magic differed greatly from that of Kamar-Taj, the end result was the same. Teaching was out of the question, but acting as a supervisor was well within his abilities.

The moment Karl arrived, he spotted Strange immediately. There was no helping it—he stood out the most in the crowd. His hands trembled constantly as he tried to construct a magic circle before him. But his mind was restless, cluttered with distractions, making it impossible to form a stable spell. No matter how hard he tried, all he produced were a few scattered sparks—like a lighter that just wouldn't ignite.

Karl watched him with a hint of amusement. It reminded him of the Strange from his previous life's movie—desperate to master magic quickly so he could return to the operating table. But whether in fiction or reality, that was no longer possible.

"Your mind isn't calm~~"

Karl strolled over and stopped in front of him, watching his strained attempts.

Strange halted and looked at him.

"I need to heal my hands as soon as possible. I don't have that much time."

He spoke as if it were only natural—but the more urgent something was, the harder it became to achieve.

"Go read. You won't be practicing magic this month."

Karl made the decision on the spot. Without waiting for Strange's response, he waved his hand. A gust of wind formed instantly, lifting Strange and tossing him right out of the courtyard.

He had promised the Ancient One he would help Strange. But in his current state, Strange simply wasn't capable of learning magic. His mind was still bound by his old ways of understanding the world—frameworks that were fundamentally incompatible with magic.

In Karl's view, Strange needed to completely discard his current mindset and fully accept the existence of magic. So his solution was simple: read. Learn the philosophy of Kamar-Taj through books.

The magic of Kamar-Taj was fundamentally different from Karl's.

Karl could generate his own magical source within his body and store magical energy naturally. But Kamar-Taj's mages were different—they couldn't produce their own magical source. Instead, they had to draw power from the Vishanti, borrowing magic and storing it within themselves.

In that sense, it was less "magic" and more akin to gaining power through faith. Even the Ancient One was no exception. Aside from borrowing power from the Vishanti, she also drew strength from Dormammu—the Dark Dimension. In essence, it was all borrowed; none of it was self-generated.

That was why Karl, whose body itself was a self-sustaining magical source, couldn't learn Kamar-Taj's system. Their foundational logic was entirely different.

Wanda, however, was different.

She possessed both a self-generating magical source and the ability to draw external power like the mages of Kamar-Taj. This was all thanks to Chthon's blessing. By granting her his power, Chthon allowed Wanda to access Chaos Magic at will, while also forming a Chaos Magic source within her body.

Because of this, Wanda could learn part of Kamar-Taj's magic. But most of her abilities came from studying the Darkhold—the grimoire originally compiled by Chthon's earliest followers, making it perfectly suited for someone wielding Chaos Magic like her.

Thus, the fundamental logic of magic differed, and so did the mindset required to wield it.

What Strange lacked wasn't control—but a transformation in thinking.

Ignoring Strange's struggles entirely, Karl waved his hand again, binding him with wind and sending him straight toward the library.

"Come back to magic when your mind is calm."

Karl's words carried the same authority as the Ancient One's. This had been her instruction. She knew her time was limited, and Strange had yet to fully grow into his role. For now, she needed Karl to guide him—and Karl had readily agreed.

After all, Kamar-Taj's duty of defending Earth against the Dark Dimension was far more important than anything the Avengers or S.H.I.E.L.D. dealt with.

—

With no other choice, Strange spent his days holed up in meditation rooms or his quarters, reading constantly. Occasionally, he would go to the courtyard to watch the apprentices practice—but for the most part, he simply observed.

One day, Strange approached Wong with a stack of books in his arms.

It was worth noting that after the previous librarian had been turned into "Louis XVI" by Kaecilius, Wong had taken over the position. As one of Kamar-Taj's top fighters, he had been appointed by the Ancient One to guard the Darkhold and prevent further theft.

"Mr. Strange, are you settling in well at Kamar-Taj?"

Seated at a long table in the library, Wong was reviewing borrowing records. Anyone could freely read the books here, but they had to register them—except for a few that were bound with magical chains.

"Uh... and you are?"

Strange had seen Wong before, of course—but he had never asked his name. Previously, he had been too impatient to heal his hands to bother with socializing. But recently, he had begun to calm down and get to know people.

"Wong."

Simple and direct.

"Oh—Wong? Just Wong? That reminds me of Beyoncé... or Aristotle. They only have one name too."

Wong ignored Strange's rambling and took the books from him, flipping through them.

The Book of Cagliostro, A New Compendium of the Cosmos, The Key of Solomon...

"...The Codex Supreme?"

He picked up the last book. The Codex Supreme recorded the legends of past Sorcerer Supremes, including even the Vishanti—the primordial trinity at the beginning of the universe.

"You've... finished all of these?"

Wong looked up at Strange in surprise. He had assumed Strange was here to borrow books—but judging by the records, he had come to return them.

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## **Marvel Manifestor - Chapter 400 400: Days of Study[ 1,010 words ]**

Wong pursed his lips and thought for a moment. "Come with me."

Without waiting for a response, he turned and walked off. Strange hurried after him.

After turning a corner, they entered another section. Shelves lined the area, filled with neatly arranged books—all of them bound together by magical chains.

"This area is normally only accessible after officially becoming a mage. But with my approval, apprentices can read these as well."

As he spoke, Wong approached a shelf and waved his hand. The magical chains loosened automatically. He selected a few books and then moved on to another shelf.

"You can start with the foundational compendiums. How's your Sanskrit?"

Wong asked while picking out books suitable for Strange.

"Not bad. I've got online translation anyway~~~"

Strange replied with a cheeky grin. In truth, he barely knew any Sanskrit at all—he relied entirely on translation tools. Though after days of study, he had begun to recognize a few basic terms, if only because he had to type them in manually.

The books in Kamar-Taj were peculiar—no technological device could record their contents. Whether photos or videos, the moment a device was aimed at them, the text on the pages would vanish.

"Good. Vedic Sanskrit—the oldest form. I imagine your translator will be of some help."

Wong placed two books into Strange's arms before heading to another shelf.

Meanwhile, Strange wandered idly through the room, his gaze quickly landing on a few black-covered books bound in dark magical chains.

"What are those?"

he asked curiously. Those volumes stood out the most—every other book was bound with bronze-colored chains, but these were wrapped in black chains and sealed with additional magic.

"Oh, those are Master Ancient One's private collection."

Without even looking up, Wong already knew what Strange was referring to. Among all the books in the library, those ancient volumes were the most distinctive.

"So they can't be borrowed?"

Strange's eyes swept across the covers. Their materials and patterns differed from everything else in the library.

"In Kamar-Taj, all knowledge is shared—but not all knowledge is suitable for everyone."

Wong walked over and handed Strange another book.

"Among these, aside from the Sorcerer Supreme, only Wanda can understand them—and even she can only read two."

He pointed to the top shelf, where two black leather-bound books rested—the two volumes of the Darkhold.

The script used in the Darkhold was one of the oldest languages to ever appear on this planet. Aside from the Ancient One, no one could read it—except Wanda. To her, the meaning of the text came naturally, as if she had been born knowing it. She didn't need to study it at all.

But that only applied to the Darkhold. The other books were completely incomprehensible to her.

Strange reached out and touched one of the books. The magical chain suddenly loosened, allowing him to take it down.

Opening it, he found that the text wasn't any known language of the modern world.

"What is this book about?"

Though he couldn't understand the writing, he felt as if he should—as though it was somehow familiar.

Wong glanced up—and froze for a moment. He hadn't expected Strange to be able to undo the magical chain. After all, Strange shouldn't even know magic yet.

Looking at the cover, Wong said, "That's the Book of Cagliostro. It deals with time."

After placing the last book into Strange's arms, Wong took the Book of Cagliostro back from him.

"I'm the librarian now. If even a single page is missing or damaged from any of the books I've given you, I'll know."

His expression turned serious.

"And you'll become the next Louis XVI."

Given what Kaecilius had done before, Wong now managed the library with extreme strictness. Some of these books contained dangerous or dark magic—if mishandled, they could cause serious consequences. The Darkhold was still missing three pages because of Kaecilius.

"What if I return them late? Will I lose an arm or a leg?"

Strange joked lightly.

"I'll make you the next King of France."

Wong remained completely straight-faced.

Strange sighed. "My colleagues used to think I was pretty funny."

"That's because you paid them."

Wong stabbed him with a perfectly timed remark.

"...Right. Well, it's been a pleasure talking to you, Wong. Truly enjoyable conversation."

Carrying his books, Strange turned to leave, still talking as he went.

"Thanks for the recommendations—and the threats. I think we're friends now."

After he left, a faint smile finally appeared on Wong's face.

"You scared him a bit just now, Old Wong."

Karl and Wanda stepped out from the corner, Karl laughing.

Wong grinned as well. "It's part of an apprentice's training. Only then will they learn to cherish these books. These are all irreplaceable copies—if they're damaged, it's a serious problem."

Karl casually sat down in a chair. A pile of books lay on the table before him. He picked one up and flipped it open.

The script was ancient—but surprisingly, it was written in Small Seal Script, an old form of Chinese writing. Though Karl couldn't read all of it, he understood most of it instinctively.

As he skimmed through it, he realized it was about cultivation—detailing various realms of cultivation and myths about immortals. He hadn't expected Kamar-Taj to even have texts on Chinese cultivation systems.

Soon, Karl was completely absorbed. Wong called out to him a few times, but he didn't respond, so Wong simply stopped bothering.

"Sorcerer Wong, the Ancient One has permitted me to read the second volume of the Darkhold."

Wanda stepped up to the shelf. The moment her hand touched the book, a surge of scarlet energy burst forth, instantly breaking the black magical chains. The Darkhold fell directly into her hands.

This was the natural affinity between the Darkhold and Wanda's Chaos Magic. She could even summon it at will—just like Thor calling Mjolnir.

"Oh, if the Ancient One has approved, then go ahead. Same rule as always—the Darkhold stays here. No borrowing."

Wong casually picked up a book of his own and sat across from Karl.

Wanda, holding the second volume of the Darkhold, sat beside Karl and began reading.

Now, she had gained solid control over her Chaos Magic. It no longer ran wild like it used to.

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