

Earths GMagus 181

Chapter 181: Drained

After joining the Institute of Bloodline, in the afternoon Emery went over to the Institute of Darkness. Emery hoped he could meet his mentor, Magus Xion, for some guidance. Unfortunately, Emery had to return empty handed, as the magus was currently not available at the institute.

This time Emery knew the magus was not in a class or at his residence. Therefore, Magus Xion must have gone somewhere. Seeing the person he had come for was not there, Emery thought about returning to Lord Izta's palace to practice his sword and battle art training. However, he immediately changed his mind, when he saw the place where the origin stone room was.

Emery Enter the Institute of Darkness' origin stone room, and took the half day access

[500 contribution point used]

This was actually Emery's first time entering and seeing the darkness stone of origin. He was very excited by the thought of directly seeing the darkness stone. Emery then quickly made his way inside the room and like usual, the closer he was to the stone the heavier his steps.

Emery walked until he found the place he felt comfortable at. Surprisingly, he can walk much closer to the darkness stone compared to the other institutes' stone of origin. Looking at the stone in the distance, Emery estimated he was currently about 80 meters away from the stone, while normally he stayed in the 100 meters radius.

Nodding his head in satisfaction, Emery swiftly sat down and closed his eyes, as he began to enter a meditative state. A sentence, or rather a thought slowly appeared in his mind.

[Darkness the home of void, within emptiness you will find yourself]

Upon hearing that, Emery who was already in a meditative state quickly fell into a trance-like state, where everything and anything was nothing. He was drawn into an illusion, where he was just a tiny speck inside an endless dark space. All his senses were gone, as a feeling of weakness, loneliness and powerlessness crept into his very being and began eroding it.

Darkness was the absence of light. Whenever light arrived, darkness would be driven away.

The feeling Emery was currently experiencing was disturbing... and uncomfortable. In the endless space where there shouldn't be anything, Emery found a mist, a black-colored mist. But before he could reach out to it, he was awoken.

[Time is up]

[Spirit force increased by one]

On the outside, it might be just one point increase of his spirit force. However, Emery found out he had a new understanding of the element of darkness, a knowledge that couldn't be measured by any number.

Feeling it was worth every point he spent, Emery decided he would go to the darkness origin stone room every day and after the meditation session, he would then go to Lord Izta's palace and do a few training courses during the night. Emery thought this would be the best option to rapidly increase his strength within his remaining time.

Solidifying his schedule, Emery immediately went into Lord Izta's palace to... sleep.

After all, it was already midnight and Emery wanted to make sure he would be able to carry out his plan without any flaw. Therefore, he walk as fast as he could towards his quarters and immediately dropped dead into his bed.

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The next morning, after he woke up, Emery swiftly did the 'business' he had to do and darted towards the Institute of Darkness, again. Entering the origin stone room, Emery returned to his previous position and started meditating.

Second day.

[Spirit force increased by one]

...

Third day.

[Spirit force increased by one]

Even though it only gave him one spirit force a day, Emery still came back to the origin stone room over and over. With each day passed, Emery felt his understanding of the darkness element deepen and became more profound.

There were indeed moments where Emery thought of going to the other institutes to spend some time in their origin stone rooms. But after thinking deeply, Emery thought it was not worth it with the limited time he had. With that Emery thought it would be more beneficial to master one element first.

Emery hoped that, with the increase of his understanding towards the darkness element, all his darkness spells as well as the combination spells [Granite skin] and [Dark root binding] would become much stronger than before. This is the right way he thought.

This was the way Emery spent his remaining days before the second stage of the Magus Games began. Cultivating his element during the day, trying to reach a deeper understanding and sparring against the wooden puppets during the night, polishing his combat ability and battle art skills.

At dawn of the fourth day, Emery laid on the ground, extremely drained, as he had finally managed to defeat the level 6 combat puppet, which granted him a 3 battle power increase and another battle art skill. Despite his eagerness to choose a new skill, Emery just couldn't get up.

After several minutes of continuous struggle, Emery gave up and lay there on the ground resting his exhausted body. Half an hour later, Emery finally felt his body slightly recovered. Slowly getting up, Emery received his reward.

[Congratulation for defeating level 6 wooden puppet]

[Receive 3 battle power]

[You are rewarded with one battle art skill]

This time, Emery chose the dagger skill, [Hidden Blade]. Therefore he now had two battle arts for two different situations. A direct attack and an indirect one.

Seeing the morning sun rising in the sky, instead of continuing his rest, Emery immediately went to the darkness origin stone room again. Meditating there for half a day, Emery once again received another one spirit point. Stepping out of the room, Emery checked his status.

[Emery Ambrose]

[Battle power 37]

[Spirit force 126]

These past few days, Emery had been practicing really hard doing everything he could, with very limited rest time. However, he couldn't help but be concerned, he felt he was definitely still lacking for the next game. Remembering there were only 3 days left before the game started, Emery shook his head and sighed deeply.

It was unfortunate that until this day Magus Xion still hadn't returned to the institute. Emery then left the Institute of Darkness with a heavy heart. He returned to Lord Izta's palace and when he was about to practice again, he found out that Julian had been looking for him.

"Emery! There you are!" Julian exclaimed, when he finally saw his best friend.

"What's up, What's with the rush?" Emery asked, as he saw Julian dashing toward him at full speed, as if afraid he would disappear.

"You can't blame me, Emery. After all, these few days you have rarely been seen in the palace." Julian said. "By the way, there is a gathering tonight and we are invited!"

"Gathering? What kind of gathering?" Emery asked, puzzled.

"I heard they are inviting all acolytes of group 7 for some kind of strategy briefing." Julian replied, while scratching his head. "I'm also not sure actually"

"They? Who are they?"

"The other top group 7 acolytes like us, I guess."

"Like us?" Emery asked again, truly confused. Emery didn't think his team was that special.

"Emery! We were in the top 10 in the first stage. Of course we are part of the top teams of group 7." Julian answered with confidence. "So... what do you think? I couldn't find Thrax and Chumo, but I did find Klea. She said that she will be there."

It appeared the last four days, everyone was so drowned with their own training it made them no longer know what the others were doing. Thinking for a while, Emery nodded his head. "Alright. I think it's a good idea to know more about the game. Let's go."

The two of them then left the palace and went into the big residence located at the peak of the mountain. This whole mountain was the location of group 7, which consisted of class 71 to class 80. This location would be the most distinct place for them to do a massive gathering.

When Emery and Julian arrived near the residence, they were taken back for a moment because there were way more people than they thought. Looking around the groups of people. Emery estimated there were at least a hundred acolytes gathered here. Therefore, out of all the top 50 in the group 7, almost one third of them came to this gathering.

When Emery and Julian were seen in the distance, Anas, the acolyte from the Kaleos world shouted. The shout was loud enough it caught the attention of everyone present.

"Here we have the best group that managed to kill the ogre!"

All eyes immediately turned towards Emery and Julian, watching the two of them approach the residence.

Chapter 182: Join Us

Seeing Emery and Julian approaching the residence, Anas' expression couldn't help but turn ugly. He then deliberately 'announced' the arrival of the two of them loudly, so as to catch the attention of everyone here.

"The two of them have graced us with their presence!"

Glancing towards the source of the voice, Emery spotted Anas, the Kaleos acolytes and his groups. Emery also noticed there was one of the acolytes from Zaieuo, who he was familiar with among them, Zana. The man nodded towards Emery and Julian as a greeting.

Emery and Julian calmly walked to the front of the crowd of dozens of people, unbothered with the various gazes they received. Judging from the way Anas smiled at them, which was an annoying one, it seemed he had just spoken unkind things about the two of them.

"Pardon us for the late. So, what did we miss?" Julian asked with a smile.

Glancing at Julian, Anas replied, "Nothing much. We are here just wondering where our miracle team was. And here you are!" Throwing his gaze away, he added in a mockery tone, "Commoner turned into a champion. Heh, how miraculous is that?"

Emery and Julian decided to be the civilized one and ignored the blabbering. After all, no one wanted to keep trash, right? But to their surprise, a man suddenly defended them.

A man with brown hair and average build snarled at Anas. "Can you just quit, Anas? Stop with all the provocation and mockery, we are here for serious matters."

Apart from being surprised by the unexpected help, Emery was interested in this man. What was interesting for Emery was not the content of the man's words, that exactly he had in his heart, but how the prideful Anas fell silent and did not retort the man.

Turning his gaze to the surroundings, Emery also noticed everyone's attention seemed to gather at this man. The words spoken by the man seemed to have a substantial weight within all the hundred acolytes gathered here.

Observing the man closely, Emery couldn't notice anything extraordinary about him. He had an average build and brown hair, he was the epitome of ordinariness. Therefore, Emery was truly curious and wondered who this man was.

After staring at Anas for a while, the man walked over to Emery and Julian, and then introduced himself.

"Hello, I am Roran from class 72. Thank you for joining this gathering. Your support will help us all." the man said with a friendly smile.

Upon hearing that, Emery finally remembered about the gathering. He was still puzzled about the purpose of this meeting. Thus, Emery asked the man about it.

"Let us wait for the others. Just wait a bit more." Roran answered. He then left the two of them and greeted those who were coming.

Emery nodded his head and noticed there were several more people arriving. Emery was quite sure all those who were in the top 50 were invited to the gathering, but who would have known these many were interested to attend.

Not long after, Emery spotted Klea arriving at the residence. She glanced left to right trying to find her friends, only to be greeted by the sight of acolytes from the 10 classes of group 7. Seeing her flustered look, Emery immediately waved his hand at her. Klea noticed the wave and immediately approached Emery.

"Emery! There you are." She then leaned closer to Emery and whispered. " I must say, this is quite a gathering."

Emery hummed in agreement. And then, Roran came again and graciously welcomed Klea.

Seeing the man walking away, Klea nudged Emery and said. "That guy Roran is quite charming, isn't he? Well, still not as charming as you obviously."

Emery could only smile wryly when he heard the tease. He then heard someone saying that Roran came from a very famous family, and not just any important faction, but also being related to one of the ministers and to members of the human council. Thus, the reason why many of the acolytes respected him. Emery kept this information in mind and continued to seek information.

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A while later, nearly 150 people had gathered and it looked like Roran was about to get started. Walking to the stone podium, Roran then tapped his glass to attract everyone's attention.

"First of all, let me thank all of you for coming. My name is Roran, some of you might have heard of my Harlight family." He then proceeded to show the symbol on his shoulder. "That's right, my family is one of the most influential families in the academy. Because of that, I decided to share all detailed information regarding the next game."

"Our group, all 320 acolytes from the top 50 teams of group 7, will be placed together with 50 elite acolytes in an area covering 20 kilometers. The objective of the game will be to get the most points and then, the top 50 individuals will be chosen to participate in the next stage."

Most acolytes already knew about this information. However, the next words Roran said made them rowdy.

"Now, I will share how the points will be given. I'm sure that not all of you know this."

He then proceeded to scribble the information on the large stone wall before them.

[Points for regular class acolytes]

[Kill of a regular acolyte: 1000 points]

[Kill of an elite acolyte: 5000 points]

[Points for elite class acolytes]

[Kill of a regular acolyte: 2000 points]

[Kill of an elite acolyte: 0 points]

[Extra point for the last 50 survivors]

[Each acolyte receive 10.000 points]

Turning around, Roran continued his words. "Now all of you can see here. We get rewarded with more points for killing the elite class acolytes.

Seeing the information, Emery, as well as all the acolytes present immediately analyzed and estimated the situation that would occur in the game.

Noticing everyone was busy with their own thoughts, Roran spoke again. "You should already know about the rule which prohibits equipment. Actually, the rule itself is not completely true. There will be one spot in the game area called 'the center', where there will be a limited number of equipment that are free to take."

One acolyte from the crowd said, "I'm sure that will be the place where the elite acolytes will go. That place will definitely become the killing zone."

Glancing at the acolytes, Roran replied, "That's right. But the weapons themselves outweigh the risk, and eventually, the center will become the last location to decide the top 50."

"There is one more fact you should all know and this is the crucial point that would benefit us all. At the end of the game, the top 50 highest points dead or alive during the game will be chosen to the next stage, but if out of those top 50, more points are from us the regular class then we will be announced as

the winner of the game. The regular class defeated the elite class. And the best of it all is that the whole 320 regular acolytes will receive a bonus reward as the winning class."

Everyone was surprised by the extra reward, "Is that information accurate?" Being asked this question, Roran stared towards Anas, the Kalios acolytes. "You can ask the Kalios. I am sure with your connection, you know about this rule as well."

Everyone's gaze immediately turned towards where Roran's gaze was. Anas, the target of everyone, currently didn't look enthusiastic, but he nodded to confirm the fact nonetheless. Anas then walked forward and said "It is indeed true. However, for your information, the last time a regular Class ever won the game against the Elite Class was 10 years ago."

The revelation startled quite a few people. This showed that the difference between the two classes was massive, despite the sheer advantage of numbers.

Roran then stepped off the podium and walked towards the group from his class, class 72.

"This time all 38 of us have decided to work together to win this game and the more of us work together the better chance for us to get the bonus reward and better, make history".

It turned out that not only this guy named Roran had an impressive background, he even had the support of all top acolytes of class 72. Again, Emery also heard other acolytes talk about how class 72 managed to get the most members to reach the top 50, compared to the other classes and how Roran and his 3 teams managed to beat the ogre, the last boss of Magus Game's first stage.

Upon hearing that, Emery believed this was the reason why Roran was so confident to win the second stage game.

Sweeping his eyes across everyone, Roran opened his mouth again. "Now, we invite you all to join our cause. Will you join us?"

Chapter 183: Persuasion

Boisterous chatter immediately ensued when everyone heard Roran's invitation. The man evidently had the charisma of a leader. His eloquent speech abilities and proven fighting skills, combined with his influential family background and support, made many acolytes admire him.

Clap! Clap! Clap!

Loud claps suddenly resounded in the air, followed by a figure stepping forward until he reached a few steps away from Roran. The sudden clap startled everyone, as they realized it was Anas the Kaleos acolyte, who clapped with a smile on his face.

"That was a very nice speech, Roran. But let me tell you, your idea is not realistic." Anas uttered.

Upon hearing that, Roran immediately turned his body towards Anas, as he stared at him.

"Not realistic? Care to explain to me about it?"

Receiving the man's gaze calmly, because he knew he was right, Anas answered, "There are 320 of us competing. Even if we somehow miraculously managed to defeat all the elite acolytes by working together, how will we decide who will be the top 50 among us?"

The words spoken by Anas represented the thoughts of most of those present in this place. Before Roran could answer him, he continued his words, "Roran, even though we both know those elites will be quite a challenge to defeat, the fact still remains that there are only 50 of them."

Stepping forward until he arrived in front of Roran, Anas said, "I myself have 3 teams ready to work together. However, we will not join you. as I don't want to share my hunts." He then turned around and looked at the other acolytes. "You all should do the same too."

After saying that, Anas and the whole Kaleos acolytes immediately left the place. Together with them there were the Zaiueo acolytes. The group walked past Emery

The three Zaiueo acolytes stopped in front of Emery and said, "Don't mind them guys, once you know them they are actually quite okay," Zuna said, followed by Zaku and Zidi with different phrases, like usual.

"I really doubt that," Julian argued.

Meanwhile, the other acolytes caused another commotion due to Anas' speech.

Seeing the unfavorable situation, Roran quickly stepped on the podium and tried to convince the acolytes again.

"Everyone, listen to me! This is exactly the reason why the Regular Class haven't won a single time in the last 10 years! If we can focus on our opponent first and not kill each other, more of us can go to the next stage!"

Unfortunately, despite Roran's best effort to convince them, more and more acolytes started to leave the place, uninterested with Roran's plan. At first, they were hesitant about the offer, but thanks to Anas's words, the acolytes' opinion was now divided.

All the acolytes here were the best among the regular classes. Therefore, they obviously had their own considerations and after thinking for a moment, they realized, in the end, everyone here was competing for the top 50 position. Those who left were the one who preferred to fight with their own team or by themselves, while the one who stayed wished to join or strike another kind of agreement.

Roran continued to do his best to convince those who were still uncertain when he noticed Emery and his two other friends, who were chatting with each other. Eyes sparkling, he immediately approached them again.

"So, what do you think? I heard about how you all manage to defeat the ogre with only five people. That's very impressive! With your group joining my team, I am sure our chance to win will be much higher." Roran vigorously said.

Before Emery and the others could reply, the man continued his words, "Let me introduce you to someone." He then turned around and beckoned someone in the distance to come.

In the distance, Emery could see a group of dark-skinned female acolytes approaching them. Emery also noticed the white-colored tattoos on their bodies, which fascinated him. Meanwhile, Roran pointed his finger at the young woman who led the group.

"This is Okoye, she and her team are from Akamba planet. Their group is one of those who defeated the ogre too" an all females group, and from the fierceness in their eyes, emery can tell all are skilled fighters, probably all of them are combat magus.

All 8 females cross their arms in their chest as a way to salute, Emery and his friend awkwardly follow the same way.

Roran then continued, "Okoye and her team have decided to join the group. With her team, your team and three of my teams, it means half of the top 10 teams in group 7 will be fighting together at the same side. What do you think?"

At glance, the idea seemed attractive for Emery. However, the fact he had been betrayed so many times in his life made him hesitant, he didn't want to make a rushed not decision. Moreover, this matter would affect his and his friends' future. Therefore, Emery kept silent and just gave a look to Julian and Klea. Roran noticed Emery's gaze and followed his gaze.

"I will follow whatever my friends decide," Klea replied with a smile, when she received Roran's expectant gaze.

On the other hand, although Julian looked quite excited, he tried to calm himself and proceeded to look at Emery. "I think this might be the best option for us," Julian said, as if asking for Emery's approval.

Roran noticed Julian's gestures towards Emery and finally realized who he needed to convince. It was quite surprising for him that the normal looking boy in front of him was the one who held the decision.

Emery felt Roran's gaze towards him.

"You are.. Your name is Emery right?"

Emery quiet surprised Roran knew him.

"You are actually quite the celebrity among us. The only B aptitude acolyte, one among 10.000 but manage to reach to the top 10. People say it must be because of your great teammate, but now i see the information is incorrect."

"No. your information is right, it really was because of my teammate" Emery calmly replied

"Talented and humble, I like you Emery, I am sure we can work really well together. so what do you say?"

The guy in front of him really seems to be sincere but Emery already made his decision.

"Unfortunately, there are still two of our members who are not here. We are interested in your invitation, but we cannot give you an answer right now." Emery calmly said.

Realizing Emery's words could mean a subtle rejection, Roran tried to convince Emery again.

"Of course you can decide what is best for your team, but I really hope you can join us. The elite acolytes we will be facing aren't to be trifled with. With the resources they give to the elites, many of them have reached rank 7. Because of this treatment, every year the percentage of regular acolytes, who manage to get inside the top 50 is only around ten percent! That means on average only 5 fortunate acolytes made it into the top 50."

Hearing this, Emery could safely assume all the elite ranks were given enough spirit serum to boost their spirit force to 150. But probably they weren't all talented enough to achieve breakthrough to rank 7. But then again, only the gods knows what other resources they received.

The news gave Emery another weight of pressure. He needed a lot of effort to only improve his spirit force by a miniscule amount. The same thing was also true for Julian and Klea. This emphasized the blatant unfairness of the academy.

Seeing Emery and the others' expression, Roran said, "It's not fair, I know. It's one More reason for us to win and get into the top. Only then we will be seen worthy to receive the same benefits. It all depends on the next magus game. So, Emery's stake is really high and I am sorry to say this, but acolytes from the lower realms like you will not make it without help. So, please contemplate this decision carefully. If you all decided to join, come to see us before the game. We always welcome talented individuals like you."

Roran and his companions then approached the other acolytes, leaving the trio lost in their thoughts. As there was no way for Emery to decide this matter without asking Thrax and Chumo's opinions, they decided to leave the meeting area. As they left, Emery saw more and more acolytes joining Roran's group.

The decision to join Roran's team would have to wait. Whatever the decision his group would take, a fact still stood: Emery needed to get stronger to win the game. Much more stronger.

Chapter 184: New Meaning

Recalling last night's gathering and the events that had ensued, Emery felt restless about his lack of strength. After thinking about the matter for a while, he still couldn't find a solution, so he took a quick nap.

There were three more days remaining until the second game began. Gathering his thoughts, Emery quickly left his room and headed towards the training grounds, as planned. There, he immediately went to the wooden puppets and swiftly began the training of the day.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

Sounds of metal clashing metal resounded through the place, as Emery was fighting the level 7 puppet. It has only been a little while, since he had started fighting this puppet, and Emery wasn't able to defeat it yet. Every slash from the sword and dagger in Emery's hands sent sweat to the floor.

Emery tried and gave his best to beat the level 7 puppet, as his thoughts were concentrated on the preparation for the second game.

URGH!

A loud sound was heard, as Emery's stomach was hit by the blunt side of the sword used by the puppet. Emery fell to the ground, holding his stomach.

[You failed to defeat the level 7 wooden puppet]

Lying on the floor of the training ground, even though sweats covered his entire body and Emery still felt pain on his stomach, he felt some kind of joy sprouting in his heart.

If the reason Emery had previously trained so hard, like a crazy person, was to get stronger in his endeavor of taking revenge, this time, he felt a different kind of feeling. Of course, he still wished to get stronger to defeat his opponent, it was just his motivation had changed along the way.

It was indeed true the marauders were no longer his match, the current Emery could easily annihilate them in the blink of an eye. However, there were still others like granny and the Knights of the Divine Order he needed to face when he returned.

However this time, after winning the first stage of the game and learning about the objective of the second stage, Emery knew the reason he was excited was, not only because of the massive rewards. It was becoming increasingly clear to him that he really wanted to best these acolytes.

This morning, Emery realized he had found a new meaning in his life, besides his desire of vengeance. It was his competitive passion to grow stronger.

Emery quickly rose up from the ground, determined to face the puppet until he managed to defeat it. Alas, before he could do that, Emery was startled by a notification that suddenly appeared on his palm.

[You have received a new message!]

[Emery. It's me, Magus Xion. I have just returned from a mission, when I heard you were looking for me. Is it about the second game? If so, come and find me. I also have something for you.]

"Finally!" Emery exclaimed loudly when he saw the message. He then quickly took a shower and wore a new uniform, before he rushed to the Institute of Darkness.

On his way, Emery realized the symbol could also be used for sending messages to others. That could be very useful in so many situations, but still, it must have been a very complex magic spell to learn. Therefore, instead of that, Emery reminded himself to find a spell that would help him send a message to others, just like the one Klea had. That would really come in handy

Not long after, Emery arrived at the Institute of Darkness. He swiftly went to Magus Xion's residence. When he reached the residence, Emery spotted Magus Xion practicing his swordplay in the courtyard.

Magus Xion, who noticed Emery entering the courtyard, beckoned him to come over.

"Come, Emery. Draw your sword and join me in the practice. Let me see if you have made any improvement, or you have been lazing around when I was not here."

Emery, being a teenager, would surely love to show off his progress during his training at Lord Izta's palace. Emery quickly took out the sword the magus had given to him and began to cast the [Dark Infusion] spell. Darkish substance materialized and enveloped the sword as Emery started fighting against the magus.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

"I see that your sword skills have improved, Emery. As well as your physique. Not bad..." Magus Xion said, while still swinging his sword.

Receiving the magus's sword, Emery smiled and replied, "I want to show you something new, Master."

After saying that, Emery swiftly focused his attention to his spirit core. If one could look through Emery's body, they would notice the spirit core inside him churned and channeled vigorous spirit energy to several pulse points.

BOOM!

[Immortal Gate - stage 2]

[Battle power increased by 4]

A blast of wind suddenly emerged from Emery, startling and pushing Magus Xion a step back. This time, thanks to the battle art technique, Emery's battle power significantly increased, breaking through the 40 mark.

[Battle power 41]

Stabilizing his body, the sudden burst of power was enough to surprise Magus Xion. Taking advantage of the situation, Emery immediately zoomed towards the magus and used [Heroic Slash]. The sword in Emery's hand glowed briefly, before Emery swung it downwards, creating a crescent-shaped slash that ferociously flew towards the magus.

Receiving Emery's attack head on, Magus Xion felt the attack this time was stronger than before. It was made apparent by the step backs the magus took. But of course, it still couldn't break the magus' defense yet.

When Emery saw that his [Heroic Slash] could only push Magus Xion a few steps away, he immediately pursued the magus and launched a flurry of attacks. Thanks to the enhancement brought by the battle art technique, Emery managed to give Magus Xion a few problems.

After some time passed sparring, the magus suddenly stopped for a moment. Emery, who already swung his sword was startled by the sudden stop, he then swiftly somersaulted in the air to alter the sword's trajectory.

Landing on the grass, Emery asked, "What's wrong, master?"

Flashing a smile at this disciple of his, Magus Xion replied, "Emery, watch this."

The magus held his sword in both hands and raised it high in the air. The black layer from the [Dark Infusion] spell, that previously enveloped the sword, now swiftly engulfed his entire body.

The instant Magus Xion's body was completely shrouded by it, Emery immediately felt a change of pressure in the air. The sudden shift stifled him, as he looked at Magus Xion closely. The magus then swiftly did a heavy downwards slash toward his side.

A pitch black energy slash appeared and cut straight to the distance, leaving a deep mark on the ground up to a hundred meters away. The slash was so extraordinary it left Emery completely dumbfounded.

After the magus showed the skill, Magus Xion turned towards Emery. "This is my own self-created skill, a sword battle art that imbues the attack with darkness magic, [Shadow Edge]. You are calling me your master, but I never actually taught you any skill. Do you want to learn this?" Magus Xion asked with a smile.

Emery immediately nodded quickly with pitiful eyes.

"Hahaha! Of course you want it. Unfortunately, with your current power, you cannot learn this. Not yet" Magus Xion replied, while laughing. "But, we can maybe try it when you reach rank 7 or 8 acolyte."

"You shouldn't have shown it to me then." Emery said, his expression sullen.

Seeing his disciple's expression, Magus Xion laughed even more loud, "Hahaha! Let's talk inside." Magus Xion said, while walking towards the house. He then suddenly turned around and asked, "Do you have tea in your world?"

"Tea?" Emery asked, confused.

Waving his hand, Magus Xion said, "Just come in. Let's talk about your preparation for the second game."

Emery nodded and followed the magus. The two of them then sat in the living room. Magus Xion immediately brought a set of instruments and began to brew green leaves. After a while, Magus Xion gave Emery a cup filled with the brewed water.

Looking at the cup with interest, he seemed to have read about this in some book at the palace library, but never knew what it was like. Emery drank the tea and felt a refreshing sensation coursing through his body. He then shifted his gaze toward the green leaves placed in the jar.

[Analyze]

[Camellia Leaf - Tier 1]

[A leaf collected from a plant found mostly in tropical environment]

List of benefits of the plant came out thanks to his [Universal Flora Knowledge]. Skimming through the list, Emery found the plant was quite useful, but it was not strong enough to create any strong potions. He then returned his attention to the room and enjoyed this moment of drinking tea in serenity.

Moments later, Magus Xion suddenly asked him a question, breaking the calm. "Who taught you that battle art technique, Emery?"

Emery thought of the answer for a second. Initially, Lord Izta was being so secretive about them, judging from the way he invited Emery and the others to his palace. The whole attitude showed as if Lord Izta didn't want to let someone know about their connection.

However, it shouldn't be a problem now that Lord Izta had let them use his place freely, as if it was their own. Despite that, Emery still hesitated if he should or should not tell Magus Xion about this.

Moments later, Emery made his decision and told Magus Xion the truth. After all, the man itself was his master and could be trusted.

"The one who taught me is one of the Combat Institute's combat magus champions, Lord Izta."

"Ahh?! That Mad Man?!!" Magus Xion exclaimed. "Emery, you are very fortunate. Magus Izta is a renowned fighter in the academy. Well, if only he didn't have his weird imaginary friend. Anyway, it's quite surprising to know about this. Lord Izta has never really shown any interest in any acolyte before, let alone personally."

"Actually... It wasn't only me, master. My friends, who are from my same world, are also under his tutelage." Emery replied, while scratching his head.

After saying that, Emery noticed Magus Xion's expression had slightly change.

"What is it, master? Anything wrong?"

Chapter 185: Emery's Answer

Emery noticed the expression plastered on Magus Xion's face and could not help but be worried. Magus Xion was silent, thinking about what to say, after a while, he looked at Emery and said, "Emery, tell me. Why do you want to win the game?"

Emery was stunned when he heard the unexpected question. However, before he could even say a word, the magus spoke again, "I'm sorry. That's a stupid question. Let me rephrase it."

"Why do you want to be a magus?"

This time, the question asked by Magus Xion, combined with the magus's previous expression, made Emery worried. He truly wondered the reason Magus Xion suddenly became so serious after learning about the five of them under the teaching of Lord Izta.

When Emery was still puzzled by the magus's behavior, Magus Xion spoke once again, "I'm sure Magus Izta has something planned for you and your friends. And I believe it's not my place to talk about it. However, your answer to my question will help me to decide on how to help you. Therefore, think carefully and find the real answer in your heart before you say anything."

Realizing how serious Magus Xion currently was, Emery tried his best to answer, so as to not let the magus down. He then quickly fell into deep thought, 'Why did I want to be a magus?'

Coincidentally, he just thought about the matter this morning. Emery realized the new passion to compete and become the best was much more important for him than revenge. However, when Emery thought he already knew the answer and was about to say it out loud, he suddenly stopped.

Something in his heart stopped him from saying it. 'Become the best? That was not it...'

Emery then closed his eyes and dived into his consciousness, as he tried to find what was the most important thing in his heart. He didn't know why and how, but he knew that would be his answer.

As he dived in his consciousness, Emery remembered one of the most important memories of his life.

The happiest moment in his life was when he fought and won the first game with his friends, when they supported each other and strived for success. The moment where the five of them discovered they managed to do it and celebrated together, with smiles and laughter.

Emery then tried to imagine how it would have been if he did win the game, but by himself. He was sure the feeling he had felt would have been much different compared to when he won with his friends.

Then it hit him, it wasn't about winning he enjoyed the most. It was the feeling of working and helping each other, shoulder to shoulder, in the face of challenges. That was the greatest feeling he ever experienced so far.

Emery went on to think about what worried him the most, the things that could make him lose his sleep. And surprisingly, it wasn't about not finding the real killer of his father, nor losing the Magus Games miserably. It was actually the face of a certain someone. Morgana.

Emery didn't have much relation with the poor girl. However, ever since he saw her being caught right in front of his eyes, Emery couldn't stop feeling worried about her predicament.

Emery took another sip of the warm tea, exhaled a huge sigh, but his eyes were determined. He had found his answer.

Staring straight at Magus Xion's eyes, Emery said, "I want to become magus so I can protect those who I care about."

The answer gave Magus Xion a huge smile. He then took a sip of the tea and said, "Then, Magus Izta wasn't wrong about helping you all. Or at least he was not wrong in helping you."

Magus Xion took out a pouch from his storage ring and gave it to Emery. He received the pouch and felt it quite heavy, Emery directed his questioning gaze at Magus Xion, asking what this was.

Magus Xion just smiled and gestured to Emery to take a look. When Emery opened the pouch, his eyes were met with bright yellow glowing stones. A large amount of yellow spirit stone. The sight of so many spirit stones shocked Emery he nearly dropped the pouch.

"Master, w-what... what is this for?" Emery asked, stuttering.

"That's 100,000 spirit stones for you, Emery. That's a lot of stones for an acolyte, so keep it safe."

"No. I mean... Why? I'm confused as to why you are giving me this amount of spirit stones."

"It's for you, Emery. You will need it for the next game."

Emery was stunned and took another look at those spirit stones. Indeed, with this amount Emery could definitely break through the maximum limit of 150 spirit force, effortlessly solving his problem of inadequate spirit force. However, he had his own principle.

"No, Master. I can't accept these stones. This is not right!"

Upon hearing that, Magus Xion laughed. "Hahaha... don't worry, Emery. In fact, I earned this much from betting that you would be able pass the first game, Therefore, don't hesitate."

Emery was smart enough and could guess what was going on. "But, master! This is the result of your bet. I don't mind if you give a me portion, but I can't accept it if you give me this much" Emery replied, while shoving the pouch towards Magus Xion

"That's exactly what I was planning to do. That's the reason I summoned you here. But after hearing Lord Izta's matter and your genuine answer, I changed my mind." Magus Xion said, as he pushed the pouch back at Emery.

"And also, I'm already satisfied with seeing the angry face of that stupid magus Urix when he lost."

"..." Emery wasn't sure how to respond to that. "Master, I-"

"In fact, Emery..." Magus Xion interrupted Emery's sentence, while taking out another pouch, "Here's another 100,000."

"... What?! Master, NO!" Emery was getting more and more confused about the magus's actions.

"This is the amount I was willing to lose to that stupid magus, Emery. Which means this is how much I put my bet on you." Magus Xion said with a smile.

"This is too much, master. I really can't..."

"Naturally, it's not just for you, but also for your friends." Magus Xion interrupted him again, surprising Emery. "What's with your expression? How can you win the next game without their help?"

Magus Xion then added, "Of course, how much you want to share with them is up to you, though."

Emery was speechless at the magus' words. He stood up and walked next to the magus, and then knelt down. "Master, my friends and I are grateful for your generosity!"

Magus Xion immediately pulled Emery to his feet and said, "Just don't disappoint me, Emery. Don't fail. Make it to the elite class or don't come back here."

Emery once again gave his respect and said "Thank you for believing in me master. I will definitely not let you down!"

"I know you won't." Magus Xion replied with a big smile, "Now, you should go before I regret giving those stones to you."

Emery smiled a little when he heard that. He then walked out the house with a step that felt much heavier than before. One more reason for Emery to succeed in the next game.

Chapter 186: Advancement

The tenth day.

Time passed quickly as Emery spent all his time and energy doing his best to increase his strength. Even when there was only one day left before the second game began, he still spent the last day training inside the origin stone room at the Darkness Institute.

After receiving the abundance of spirit stones from Magus Xion three days ago, Emery thought on how he should have divided the spirit stones. It really wasn't hard for him to decide and divide them equally between himself and his four friends.

His four friends were all astonished and puzzled by the spirit stones he gave them, thus they asked him about it. Emery then proceeded to explain the source of the spirit stones to his friends, lest they refused to accept it. He told them the spirit stones were given to him by Magus Xion as a gift and the magus told him to share these with his friends.

Everyone, including Chumo was surprised by Magus Xion's generosity. Even though Julian was questioning Magus Xion's intention and looked like he didn't want to receive his share, with Chumo backing Emery's words as well as Klea and Thrax's easygoing attitude, Julian relented to them and accepted the spirit stones too.

After dividing the spirit stones among his friends, Emery and the others immediately returned to their practice and spent the next three days doing their own personal training. Emery immediately used up his new riches, 40.000 spirit stones, to buy the spirit serums.

According to his estimation, 40 serums should have been enough for Emery to push his spirit force to the maximum limit of rank 6 acolyte which was 150 spirit force. However, to his surprise, after Emery reached the 135 spirit force mark, the amount of spirit serum needed increased again. If he previously needed 2 spirit serums to only increase 1 spirit force, now he needed 3 spirit serums for the same result.

[Spirit force 142]

Emery couldn't help but sigh, when he saw his spirit force didn't reach the 150 mark as planned. Shaking his head, he decided to go do his training routine.

...

In the next two days, Emery returned his concentration to his training and spent his time meditating in the darkness origin stone room. During his time there, Emery received an increase in his spirit force again.

[Spirit force 144]

Hence, today was the last day before the game began. Despite that, Emery continued to diligently cultivate his dark element, as he still tried to deepen his understanding of it. Emery had spent a lot of his contribution points to access this room in the last 7 days and he didn't feel bitter about it. Instead, Emery felt he was on the verge of a breakthrough.

At the moment, Emery was seen inside the familiar dark room meditating with his eyes closed. Just like before, Emery was once again sucked into an illusion, where he stood inside an endless expanse of darkness and emptiness. As he wandered around the expanse, Emery found the familiar dark mist and went for it. In the blink of an eye, his entire body swiftly being engulfed by the dark thick mist.

With every second of time that passed inside the mist, Emery's spirit began to turn erratic and chaotic. Emery had been trying to resist it ever since the second day he trained inside the room and planned to do the same this time. However, for days now, he felt the mist had slowly started to embrace him and he was close to finally manage to subdue it.

Emery could feel something brewing inside him, right in his spirit core. Then, in an instant, an explosion occurred within his spirit core, as Emery felt a rush of spirit energy flowing through his body. His spirit core was undergoing the evolution to the next stage.

[Spirit core of Darkness - stage 2]

[Your spirit force has increased tremendously]

Emery perceived his spirit core of darkness undergoing a massive evolution, increasing its size up to two times. A spirit weave of darkness solidified in his main core in the center.

[You have reached the limit of the realm spirit force limit]

[Battle power increased by 1 point]

[Emery Ambrose]

[Battle power 38]

[Spirit force 150]

[Plant Spirit - early foundation]

[Water Spirit - early foundation]

[Earth Spirit - early foundation]

[Spirit Core of Darkness - stage 2]

[Fey Bloodline - stage 2]

[Acolyte Rank 6]

This was the first time Emery achieved a breakthrough in his spirit core of darkness. Therefore, he didn't really know and understand what it meant. But, there was one thing he truly understood, which was the fact he currently felt amazing.

He felt so much more powerful than before, as if nothing could block him anymore. Unfortunately, he was still unable to reach rank 7 acolyte despite his breakthrough.

At the moment, his understanding towards his other 3 elements were still at the early foundation level, which was quite awful to see. Emery couldn't help but sigh when he saw his three elements. If he truly wanted to increase his understanding towards them, Emery would need to spend a lot of time and so many contribution points, something he didn't have time for and couldn't afford, right now.

However, despite his disheartening situation, Emery felt the breakthrough in his spirit core of darkness was already an achievement for him, a truly meaningful one. Clearing his head of useless thoughts, Emery decided to stop his self-pitying and make the best of what he had right now for the game later.

Understanding there was not much he could achieve in this room at this point, Emery immediately got up and left the room, even though he still had plenty of time left. As he was about to walk out of the room, Emery noticed Chumo, who also had been spending his time in this room for the last few days, seemed to have just made a breakthrough too.

Emery saw Chuo was getting up, so he approached him.

"Congratulations on your advancement, Chumo. Did you reach rank 7?" Emery asked with a smile.

Chumo nodded his head and spoke, "Yes, Emery. All thanks to the spirit stones you gave me."

Hearing his confirmation, Emery couldn't help but smile wryly. Unlike him, not only did Chumo have an A aptitude, he also only had only one element, which allowed him to focus his attention. Meanwhile, Emery had a pitiful B grade aptitude and 4 elements he needed to take care of.

As if his sufferings were not enough, Emery discovered Chumo was able to increase his spirit force from 105 to 150 by only consuming 40 spirit serums, the same amount of him. The unfairness of the situation made Emery could not hold himself from cursing the fate.

Hearing this information confirmed Emery's guess that the problem was either his spirit aptitude or his body talent. He knew his aptitude was bad, but Emery couldn't help but feel bitter thinking his body talent was also inferior, when compared to the other acolytes.

However, despite the bitterness he felt, Emery was truly happy for Chumo, when he saw him manage to reach the rank 7. Emery also wondered if the others also made it.

With Chumo's new title of rank 7 acolyte, he was eligible to train the rank 4 spells. Therefore, Chumo decided to spend more time at the institute to learn them.

"See you later tonight, then." Emery said, while patting Chumo's shoulder. Chumo nodded his head and left the room.

Emery watched the back of his friend and decided to go back to Lord Izta's place. As he walked, Emery thought of ways to train and familiarize himself with his newfound power. After all, there was not much time left for him. When he reached the palace, Emery immediately went to the training ground and began practicing his spells until the rest of the day ended.

While the sun set on the horizon welcoming the arrival of the night, Emery's friends began to come to the training ground one by one. As he looked at them, Emery could tell from their aura all of them had improved tremendously. Unsurprisingly, out of the five of them, Klea also had made it to the rank 7 like Chumo.

Despite having only one less element than him, Klea still managed to cultivate all three to the mid foundation stage requirement and swiftly achieved the breakthrough. The matter of Klea reaching rank 7 was an even more extraordinary achievement compared to Chumo.

"An S grade aptitude genius is indeed different." Emery said with a wry smile.

Emery just hoped not all those elite acolytes were as talented as Klea. If they were, Emery didn't know what would happen later.

They spent two hours sparring between each other, before they all left together to go to a certain gathering.

Chapter 187: Contract

That night, Emery and his friends decided to go to the seventh mountain summit, where Roran and the other acolytes had gathered.

Upon seeing them, the brown-haired acolyte greeted their group with excitement.

"I'm glad you could make it. Have you guys decided to join?"

Julian said. "Yes, but we'd like to know more about your plan first."

Roran shook his head and answered. "Yeah, right, we can't do that, we need you to join before we can tell you more about the plan. After all, don't forget we all are competing for the same thing."

"Smart." Klea quipped.

"What do you say, guys?" Roran insisted.

Emery decided to speak and change the topic. "I'm sorry, but this is the decision me and my friends have agreed to. We really don't wish to break our word later on. Let's do it this way, tell us roughly the kind of plan you have in store, or we can each stick to our own plans"

Roran thought about it for a second, before answering. "Alright, fine. As you are part of the top ten group, I will make an exception for you all. Come with me."

In this group, there are almost one hundred acolytes. All of them have agreed to work together, except for Emery's team.

The meeting began. In front of all the gathered acolytes, Roran showed a map detailing the potential layout of the battlefield they will be fighting in. They decided on a simple tactic to gather in the center of the battlefield and maintain a defensive position.

"In total, 92 of us will be working together. Basically, we have about a quarter of the total participants on our side. I'm pretty sure we can achieve decent results with this strategy." Roran said.

"As for who will decide the top 50 participants among us. If after we defeated everyone else there are still more than 50 of us, we can have a fair and square battle, since we would be the only ones left in the arena. There you go, we have a simple, but effective plan."

Upon hearing the plan, an acolyte named Dopa decided to speak up. "Roran, how can you be so sure of that? What guarantees we won't kill each other before facing the elites?"

Dopa was an acolyte from Class 75. He became a part of the group alongside the other members from his team. He had quite a few acolytes backing him up in the group.

Roran has anticipated the question and answered.

"That's a good question. Don't worry, I've thought long and hard about this, and I have prepared a solution. Here it is."

Roran used his ring and took out an old-looking black scroll from his inventory. Upon seeing the scroll, a few acolytes seem startled.

"For you who have no idea, this is called a [Soul Contract]. Basically, this scroll is used to create an unbreakable contract between us all. With this, we won't have to worry about any traitors putting our plan in jeopardy."

Emery and his friends had no idea what the scroll was, however, a lot of acolytes in there knew the purpose of the scroll. From the other acolytes' whispers and murmurs, Emery was able to glean the scroll was something often used among magus to create an agreement.

"Then, what will happen if we break the contract written there?"

"As far as I know, if you break it, the contract will affect your soul. Your spirit cultivation may be damaged, hindering your progress as a magus at the very least. In worst cases, the punishment for breaking the contract is death."

"Wait, isn't the [Soul Contract] an insanely expensive item?" An acolyte interjected.

"Not really, at least, not for Roran's family, the Hartlights." Another acolyte answered.

Roran took out a pen and started writing on the black parchment. Afterwards, he stopped writing and showed the contents of the contract to everyone standing there.

[Soul Contract – No member of the team shall harm each other until one hour before the game ends]

"Would this be enough of a guarantee for our cooperation?"

A few acolytes walked closer to confirm the contract was to their satisfaction. After they finished reading the contract, they bit their fingers and drew symbols on the parchment with their blood.

Julian looked at the acolytes before staring at his friends and asking. "So, what do you guys think? I do think it looks safe enough, at least."

No one in the group, even Emery, could think of any good reason to reject the offer. In the end, everyone agreed to join Roran's group.

Emery stepped forward, bit his finger, and drew a symbol on the black leather parchment. Right as he finished drawing the symbol, the mark on his hand flashed and sent bits of information into his mind.

[This is a soul contract]

[Read the agreement carefully, as breaking the contract will lead to disastrous consequences.]

[Do you want to accept the contract?]

"Yes."

Emery signed the contract, and felt a shift in his heart, as if something had changed. Emery realized the unique leather scroll did affect something inside of him. The contract had been sealed.

After all 92 acolytes created their symbols on the contract, Roran took the scroll and announced.

"We have a huge group. If we want everything to proceed smoothly, we will need a leader chosen from one of us."

It was not difficult to conclude everyone would choose Roran as the leader. After becoming the leader, Dopa suggested the group to have a vice-leader or a co-leader just in case anything would happen to Roran. After some discussion, everyone agreed to choose a leader from those who became part of the top ten.

There were five teams, who were part of the top ten. Three out of those five belonged to acolytes from Roran's class. Roran had two very capable leaders, who lead the other two teams, Lymord, a young man with a scar on his right eye, and a curly red-haired girl named Mallara. Emery could tell both of them were rank 7 acolytes. But as a show of goodwill, Roran decided he would offer the position to those outside his class.

Okoye the acolyte from Akamba planet was the obvious main choice. However, she chose to not accept the offer. Hence, the offer fell on Emery's Team.

"Does anyone from your group want to try their hand as a leader?" Roran asked.

Unfortunately, Emery realized he had very little battle experience. He felt he would not be able to lead the team to its fullest potential. Meanwhile, Julian raised his hand, as he felt he was up to the task. He had some experience as a centurion within a fully trained Roman army, along with dozens of battles he had participated in.

"Yes, I will do it." Julian said.

Not many people were excited about having someone from a lower realm to be a co leader, but then all agreed to give face to Roran. With the decision taken, their preparation was now complete. The next day, the second phase of the game would begin.

"I wish you all good luck."

Chapter 188: The Second Game

Day 20

[The game will start in one hour. All participants are invited to gather in the Great Assembly Hall]

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, the second game of this competition will begin soon. Emery and his friends decided to prepare in advance.

This time, they did not go outside the hall like before. They climbed the stairs together and arrived in the arena.

Upon entering the arena, all acolytes stared in awe when they saw the empty chairs of the first trial, utterly bursting with people this time. At the very least, there were ten-thousands or more people crammed together in the arena chairs.

Emery could feel the difference in treatment. It was clear something about the second game attracts far more audiences than the first one.

However, the same improvement could not be said for the acolytes remaining in the arena. Even a casual glance was enough for anyone to tell that there were less than a third of the acolytes, who

participated in the first game. Every single acolyte here was the best representative, who came within the top 100 people being ranked.

Amidst the thin group of acolytes, Emery found a group who wore a slightly different uniform. Their uniforms were mostly black with a white stripe in the middle. The stripe was a mark reserved only for the acolytes of the elite class.

Soon, there would be bloodbath, and they would be pitted against each other. However, no one dared to start any problem on an important occasion such as this.

Emery took a deep breath and slowly exhaled, trying to calm his beating heart. All he could feel was the excitement to start.

"Are you nervous, Emery? Klea asked.

"Maybe just a little, don't worry too much about it."

"Really? Well, it's normal to be worried."

Emery knew his heart was beating a mile each second right now, but he was not worried since he had done his very best to prepare. His fast heartbeat was not due to fear, but to anticipation. Emery couldn't wait to show off his skills.

Before the game began, the headmaster Altus Drayden gave a speech once again.

"Acolytes, welcome to the second game. This game will be the real trial to determine your future in the magus academy. May victory go to the most talented acolytes!"

The short yet booming speech, boosted by magic, ignited the energy of the almost four thousand acolytes standing in the arena. The announcement was accompanied by shouts of happiness from everyone.

A magus with blonde hair, Magus Serena, entered and went up the stage.

"Welcome acolytes and all our guests, who are watching today's game... I will be your host today too! Cheer up, for the magus game you are so eager to witness will soon begin!"

Magus Serena explained the rules of the game. Unsurprisingly, the rules were the same Roran explained to them. It seemed having a powerful friend or ally to back you up would be a massive advantage.

After explaining, Magus Serena showed the ten different areas that would serve as the battlefield for ten groups of acolytes.

Deep caverns, towering mountains, snowy fields, deep marsh, a dry desert, a forest, beaches and even a volcano, ruins, and lastly a flat open area. All those areas would serve as the battlefield.

Places such as the snowy fields, the volcano, and the desert were the three most unpopular places each year.

Without further ado, the raffle began.

"Today, the lucky group, who will battle in the volcano pit is... Group five! Give an applause to our lucky group!" Serena said in excitement, in stark contrast to the clear disappointment of virtually everyone of class 51 to 60.

Areas such as the forests or hills were always better for everyone. Meanwhile, areas such as the volcano pit only benefited the acolytes with fire affinity, while spelling disaster for the acolytes with other affinities.

"Group 2, today is your lucky day. You got the open field!"

Actually, that was an exaggeration and a mockery. The open field was the least favorite place for every acolyte, as it was nothing but an empty box-shaped arena, it usually resulted in a massacre.

"Group 7, you have obtained... The forest! What a lucky group!"

Every single member of Group 7 exhaled in relief. The forest was an area every single acolyte saw as advantageous, especially Emery.

After announcing the areas all the groups will battle in, Magus Serena announced the lucky acolytes' place with the elite acolytes. The D Group from the elite acolytes class would meet with Group 7 in their chosen area.

Emery himself didn't really know much about the elite acolytes. So, he chose not to comment on the group assigned to them. Meanwhile, Julian wanted to see Roran again in order to get as much intel as possible regarding the D-Group and the chosen area where they would battle. It seemed he truly took his role as the co-leader seriously.

"Roman, I will go with you." Thrax said.

"Alright, that is fine with me. Bringing a muscled guy would help make me look good in front of the other acolytes, haha!"

Before they both went and started their own things, Emery reminded the group about the plan they needed to stick to and everyone nodded in agreement. The five decided to do a fist bump together to lift their spirits and hope for the best.

While Emery and the others were waiting for the last announcements by Magus Serena, someone shouted his name from afar.

He looked at the source of the voice, and was surprised to see Silva running towards him. Considering her gaze and expression, it seemed something very important just happened.

"What is it, Silva? What happened?" Emery asked in concern.

Chapter 189: Who is she?

Among the sea of acolytes, Emery noticed a figure frantically running towards him. Narrowing his eyes, Emery realized the figure was Silva.

"Emery!" Silva exclaimed, as she narrowly stopped in front of Emery. She was gasping for air due to how fast she had run.

"Woah! Calm down, Silva! What happened?" Emery exclaimed, as Silva almost crashed onto him.

"E-Emery!" Silva said, panting. "We don't have much time. Listen! I'm in the group D. Hence, my group will be your opponent."

Before Emery could process her words, Silva immediately continued, "In my group, there is one person you must avoid at all costs. His name is Lodos, he is the strongest in the group. But the thing that makes him the worst is because he is a maniac. You hear me?... Therefore, once the game begins, you better come and find me right away! That way, you will be much safer."

Emery was startled by the words Silva spoke. He was just standing there, processing the information Silva had shared with him. Because of this, Silva thought that Emery wasn't listening to what she said.

"Hey! Emery! Are you deaf?! What don't you respond to my words? This is a serious matter. It's very important for you to succeed in this game." Silva said with such an urgency, one would think the world was coming to an end in the next second.

Withdrawing from his thoughts, Emery calmly replied, "Yes, I know, Silva. Don't worry, I have things already prepared."

Stunned by the unexpected answer, Silva asked, "Things? What things? What do you mean?"

"You see, me and my friends have decided to join this small alliance..." Emery proceeded to briefly tell Silva about his agreement with Roran's group, so that Silva was careful about it. Emery then continued by showing his hand to her.

"If you find someone with a mark on their wrist like this, it means they are part of the alliance." Emery said, as he pointed his finger at his wrist where Silva could see a black mark etched there. The mark was the proof of the alliance.

"We even did a Soul Contract to act as a guarantee and make sure the alliance stayed cohesive. So, be careful." Emery added with a shrug.

Silva fell silent when she heard Emery's explanation. He thought she was thinking about it, however, to his surprise, instead of being grateful for the information he shared, Silva suddenly became angry.

"You helpless moron!!!" Silva shouted so loudly the acolytes around them turned their heads towards the two of them.

"Those people can't be trusted! And what's with that Soul Contract? That's very dangerous!"

Startled by Silva's sudden outburst, Emery quickly raised his hand. "Woah! Silva, calm down!" Emery said, while he apologized to the other acolytes around them.

"I'm serious, you moron! You won't stand a chance in the game with those guys. You should join me, I have two very strong elite half-bloods that will be helping me. You will definitely like them." Silva rapidly said. "Again, join my team. Don't trust those human purists!" Silva emphasized her offer again.

Klea and Chumo, who were still nearby, heard the shout and approached the two of them. The two of them could clearly hear it when Silva said 'human purists'.

"Who are you saying cannot be trusted?" Klea asked with a glint in her eyes, as she stepped closer to Emery.

Silva flinched for a second and then decided to ignore Klea. Maintaining her gaze to Emery, she asked, "So, what do you say, Emery? Will you join me?"

"I'm truly sorry, Silva. I've made a promise with my friends. However, I hope we all can work together. That would be great." Emery said with a smile.

Upon hearing that, Silva became annoyed again. "Emery, I will say it one more time. If you want to succeed, you better stay with me, your own kind."

When he wanted to open his mouth, Emery suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder. Klea unexpectedly cut in and said with a small smile, "I'm sorry. But I think we are Emery's kind. After all, we are pretty much family here."

Silva looked even more upset and annoyed when Klea broke into the conversation, "Who is this girl, Emery?"

"Ah... Her? She is.."

"I am his lover." Klea blurted out.

"..."

"..."

!!!

Not only Emery, Silva and Chumo were also shocked to hear that.

"Wait! Well, that's not-" Emery frantically tried to think of a way to clarify this increasingly awkward atmosphere. Unfortunately for him, Klea cut him off before he could do so.

"What do you mean by no? We did kiss and sleep together.. Didn't we?" Klea said, staring at Emery.

"...Aaa..." Emery lost his words and could only sigh deeply.

Silva looked even more annoyed and said, "Huh! Do what you want, Emery. I don't care anymore!"

She then turned around and walked away. After only a few steps, Silva suddenly stopped and walked back towards Emery. The next thing she did truly made Emery speechless. The white-haired girl grabbed Emery's arm before proceeding to bite it really hard.

"Argh! That's hurt." Emery said, while tapping Silva's head.

Seconds later, Silva released her bite and left with an annoyed huff. Emery couldn't help but release another deep sigh, as he watched Silva's figure disappear into the crowd.

Turning his head to the side, Emery was stunned to see Klea staring at him with an expression no less annoyed than Silva.

"What is that about, Emery? Hmm..." Klea asked. "Seriously... Why every time we have an assembly you always approach a girl? Huh! I don't want to be your lover anymore!"

As soon as she finished saying that, Klea walked away, leaving Chumo who was still in a state of shock. However, much to Emery's exasperation, Chumo slowly raised his thumb up while a big smile gradually surfaced on his face.

Emery couldn't help but want to smack Chumo right there, right now. Sadly for Emery, before he could wipe the smile off Chumo's face, a notification came out from the symbol on his hand.

[Will you participate in the second game of the Magus Games?]

"Yes, yes, yes." Emery hurriedly said, as he truly wanted to get out of this situation, fast.

[Total number of Group 7's normal acolytes : 320 acolytes]

[Total number of Group 7's elite acolytes : 50 acolytes]

After making sure each acolyte knew the results of their group's draw, Magus Serena closed the assembly by saying, "Remember! The top 50 acolytes with the highest points will not only be the winners of the game and have the right to advance to the next round, they will also be entitled to be part of the newest Elite Class of academy. Therefore, do your best and get in the top 50!"

Boisterous applause resounded through the arena as soon as magus Serena finished her speech. All acolytes proceeded to walk directly into the portal according to their respective draws.

As the figures of the acolytes faded into the portal, Magus Serena's voice could be heard one last time.

"Good luck everyone!"

Chapter 190: Second Game Start

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

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

[Objective - Get the most points]

[Stay alive for bonus points]

[Participants:320/50]

[Your point : 0]

[The Magus Games will start in five minutes]

Upon entering the portal, Emery felt his body froze. Even if he wanted to, he could not move any of his limbs. In the darkness, a bright light suddenly appeared from nowhere, and before Emery was able to process what happened, his ears were greeted by the sound of rustling leaves and his skin was brushed by a refreshing breeze. When he opened his eyes, Emery saw that he was standing amidst lush trees, right in the middle of a dense forest.

Right now, Emery was still being prevented from moving. In the corner of his eyes, Emery noticed the countdown timer was currently at one minute, and it kept going down.

Not wanting to waste the time he had, Emery looked around as much as he could, trying to learn more about the place he was in. The land he stood on had a distinct brown-red color, and short blades of grass grew amidst rocks with a similar shade of red. The trees growing around him were at least as tall as five times his height, with bark as big as two adults hugging each other.

[10... 9... 8...]

[The second Magus Game has started. Good luck!]

In accordance with the plan, Emery immediately used [Nature Sense – Tier 2 Plant Magic], and proceeded to use [Hide in Shadow] before climbing the highest tree he could find around him.

The tips earlier had stated that the most dangerous part of the second game was not knowing the layout of the land they spawn in. The virtual nature of the game ensured each participant would arrive in random different locations, and each location carried distinct advantages and disadvantages from each other.

In other words, to secure victory, one had to prioritize acquiring information upon the start of the game.

With the information he was given before the game, Emery was able to accomplish the first step without a hitch. In this second game, acolytes with multiple elemental affinities had a clear advantage compared to others, therefore Emery only had to be careful and plan each move he would make later.

Within moments, Emery finally arrived at the top of the tree. Thanks to [Nature Sense] and the height of the tree, he was not only able to gather information of the place, but also of how many people were nearby.

[Nature Sense] allowed him to perceive the movement when someone stepped or walked near branches or when their feet brushed even one blade of grass. From the information he received, Emery was able to conclude that there were at least three other people around him. He glanced to the direction of the nearest sign and spotted an acolyte climbing a tree. It appeared that the acolyte was using a similar strategy as him.

From the looks of it, the acolyte seemed to be from the same Lucky Class as him, but Emery was not able to recognize the acolyte. In addition, the acolyte seemed to possess similar skills as Emery, seen from the acolyte's gestures who looked in the direction of the other two people.

Luckily, Emery had used [Hide in Shadow] beforehand otherwise his location would be found. Thanks to the skill, Emery was able to spot the acolyte but not the other way around.

As his battle power and spirit force increased, the sensitivity of all five of his senses was also increased. Thanks to that, Emery was able to see the wrist of that acolyte. Seeing the absence of the mark, Emery knew the acolyte was not part of his team.

The thought to attack the acolytes crossed Emery's mind. With the element of surprise on his side, it was easy for him to take out that acolyte and obtain some quick points. However, after thinking about it

for a second Emery decided to play it safe. He would only attack when he knew for sure that the act would not jeopardize him. In addition, he had another reason to wait on the tree.

Few minutes later, his second reason for waiting and not attacking was fluttering close. A green bird with a slightly translucent body came closer to his palm right near the symbol, and the symbol glowed, sending a message straight into his mind.

[You have received a new message!]

[Emery, I am currently waiting around 100 meters north of the hill across the running river. I hope you are not too far. As the plan says, I will be waiting here for an hour. If you can't be here by then, we will go and meet at the planned location. PS: If you are with that white-haired girlfriend of yours, don't bother coming.]

"..." the last part of the message somehow made his previous anxiousness when entering this battle arena immediately disappear.

Emery tried to learn more about the geographical layout of the place around him and the direction the green bird flew from. He mentally compared what he currently saw with the forest arena map Roran showed the group during the gathering last night..

The area had a radius of around 20 kilometers, and the center position where they could obtain weapons was right in the middle of the circle. Emery tried to get a clearer look of his surroundings again and saw that even though it was quite far, he could see part of a construct that looked like a pyramid several kilometers away from him.

From the information he had collected, Emery was able to calculate his current location. Therefore it was now the time to make a plan. It seemed that he was currently too far from Klea, and the center of the arena was located between the places they spawned. Hence, Emery decided to head to the center as planned.

Emery had obtained information regarding his location and his target location. Now, he just needs to find the best path to reach that location.

Emery used his [Nature Sense] spell again and found out the acolytes near him were gone, presumably to check a different location. Seeing the chance to move undetected, he quickly climbed down the tree and swiftly dashed away, using the shadows of the trees as his cover. Whenever he sensed the presence of other acolytes, he would choose to stay away and take a different path.

After a few minutes of running, he can sense the closer he gets to the center, the more his [nature sense] spells find the movement of other acolytes. To his surprise, while running, Emery heard loud sounds of what appears to be a huge fight nearby. Curiosity slowly filled him until finally, he decided to take a quick look.

He approached the source of the sounds carefully. He walked in between the trees to ensure that he would not be seen by them. After reaching the place, Emery slowly peeked his head from behind the tree used as his cover. From his hiding place, he was able to see eight figures fighting in the middle of a grass field.

From how the fight looked, it was a six-on-two fight or more precisely two Elite Class acolytes versus six Lucky Class acolytes. How did Emery know that? Their attire gave their identity away.

Seeing the people who were fighting, Emery decided to stay and observe the fight. After all, getting more information on the capabilities of an elite acolyte might help him later.

Looking at the acolytes more clearly, Emery finds that two of the acolytes are part of his alliance and he wonders if he should join the battle.