

## Earths GMagus 281

### Chapter 281: Improvement

Standing alone in the middle of the dense forest, Emery was deep in thoughts, thinking what he should do from this point on. Shaking his head, he proceeded to make his way back to the rave. After the patriarch had left, he honestly also wanted to leave this place.

Alas, the moment he returned to the rave, he was caught by Brutus and the other acolytes and forced to join the party. Emery obviously wanted to refuse, but seeing there were so many people who wished to know him better and noticing the numerous eyes watching him, he could only reluctantly stay at the rave until the event finished. It wasn't good for him to offend these people, after all.

It wasn't until the sun rose on the horizon that people started leaving, signifying the end of the gathering. Pack by pack began to leave to their own home, until there were only Chief Beowlf and his main pack at the area.

The academy acolytes left together, walking through the portal and returning to Zodiac City. After that, they split up and headed towards their own destinations.

The first thing Emery did when he arrived at the city was actually checking out the Bloodline Gene place mentioned by the patriarch. After scouring through the bustling streets of Zodiac City, crossing through countless alleys, he finally found the place.

It was a small place located in a shady corner of the city. Emery had quite a difficult time to search for it as its location was quite remote. Fortunately, he found it.

Alas, Emery's happiness did not last long as a board seen in front of the place brought cold water over him. The words written on it caused his face to twitch.

'Leaving for 10 days. Will come back on the 10th. - Bob"

Checking out the date, Emery realized that he could only return here later, after his second 5 days elite class training. Knowing there was still time in the future, he only sighed at his unluckiness and came later.

At the moment, Emery still had 4 days to spend, before his second round of mandatory class began. So, he decided to go cultivate in the origin room, taking advantage of every second of his available time.

After thinking for a while, Emery decided to start from the element he was most confident with, the Plant element.

That very same day, he made his way to the Plant Institute,? Elder's Respite. Even though he had seen this massive tree quite a few times, Emery was still overwhelmed by the magnificence and fleur it exuded.

When Emery went into the institute, he saw Magus Erica in the main hall. She was one of the plant element instructors who was badly injured during the previous attack incident. He was glad to see her back to her former self.

After saying a short greeting to the female magus, Emery went to the acolytes who handled the entry into the origin stone room.

Unexpectedly, the moment the acolyte knew he was an elite acolyte, Emery was offered to stay in the room overnight, which was completely different to when he was a regular acolyte restricted to only 12 hours a day.

This was another benefit of being an elite acolyte. They were given access to use the room fully, similarly to a magus. Of course, the privilege was only similar, not the same.

Emery quickly asked the reasons behind such rules. Fortunately, the acolyte was kind enough to explain.

Apparently, the origin stone room was not recommended to be used for an extended period of time to those who had low talent. In the past, the academy found out that those people, who had low talent, would only receive detrimental results on their cultivation if they used the room too long.

Therefore, the academy made such rules to prevent unnecessary harm towards the acolytes and prevent wasting resources on those who could not use them properly.

After hearing the reasons, Emery immediately ordered four straight days worth of access to the room, which totalled the staggering eight thousands contributions points.

[8.000 contribution points used]

[146.650 contribution points left]

Before he entered the familiar room, Emery checked his status again, to keep track and compare the improvement he would gain for the next four days.

[Emery Ambrose]

[Battle Power : 47]

[Spirit Force : 185]

[Plant Spirit – Mid-Foundation]

[Water Spirit – Mid-Foundation]

[Earth Spirit – Mid-Foundation]

[Spirit Core of Darkness – Stage 4]

[Fey Bloodline – Rank 3]

[Acolyte Rank: 7]

The next milestone he aimed to reach was the rank 8, which meant he needed a total of 250 spirit force. Thanks to the B aptitude he had, Emery had prepared himself for the worst. This time, he came prepared.

He had two Spirit Foundation Pills in his hand. One he received as the reward for entering the elite class, while the other for successfully defeating the 10 third years acolytes in duel.

Making sure he was ready, Emery entered the room and walked towards the Origin Stone of Plant as close as he could. After reaching the point where he felt he couldn't advance anymore, he proceeded to sit cross-legged.

Emery took out one of the Spirit Foundation Pill out of his ring and swallowed the nail-size pill whole.

Immediately after, he felt a rush of energy building up inside his body. Without wasting any more time, Emery began to slowly channel it into his dark core, guiding it into the green-colored spirit element. He used the rich energy coming from the pill to aim for a breakthrough in his cultivation.

As Emery was concentrating on the floating stone before him, illusions once again began to fill his mind. This time, he found the illusion of being part of a forest to become even more vivid than before. From the previous small leaf, Emery felt its growth until it grew into a huge tree.

...

[Spirit force increased]

[Spirit force increased]

[Spirit force increased]

[Spirit force increased]

The first two days of his marathon went on very smoothly as Emery's spirit force successfully increased by a total of 4 points. Indeed, the uninterrupted meditation did help make the cultivation result much more effective.

...

Third day.

[Spirit force increased]

Fourth day,

[Spirit force increased]

Unfortunately, Emery only got an increase of one point per day during the next two days. He wasn't sure if it was because of the weakening effect from the pill or just the side-effect of doing long duration meditation.

[Total Spirit Force : 191]

The moment his time ended, Emery walked out of the origin stone room with a yawn. After all, it was tiring to continuously cultivate for four days. Later that day, he returned to his estate.

That night, as promised, he had planned to have a meeting with his five friends.

Julian, Thrax, Chumo and Klea, one by one, arrived at Emery's estate. From their current state, Emery assumed they were all just returned from their own personal training.

The five friends shared their results of each of their training. One particular result that caught Emery's interest was Klea, who used her Spirit Foundation Pill during her cultivation in the lightning origin stone room. Coincidentally, she also used the room for four days in the row, the same as him.

However, unlike his pitiful 6 point increase in spirit force, Klea gained three times that, resulting in the downhearted Emery.

Klea's result further encouraged him to find a solution to his problem, not wallow in it. Otherwise, he would be left behind faster than he ever thought.

## **Chapter 282: Training Ground**

Day 41

Today, the second period of the 10 days interval elite class compulsory training session began.

Right after Emery and his friends entered the training ground, he saw familiar faces all around him. Only ten days had passed, but Emery could sense that everyone carried a different air about them

Unlike the previous period, this time the session started with the combat lecture by Magus Rommy. At first, there was confusion amidst the class, but when everyone saw another figure flying into the training ground, all of them let out an exclamation as they realized the purposes of the lesson.

The figure that just came from the sky was Grand Magus Aimon, the head instructor of Elite Class 7.

As the stern middle-aged instructor landed on the field, everyone in the class unconsciously straightened their back due to the inviolable aura he exerted. The grand magus opened the class by giving a compliment to Orycon. He was the lightning combat magus Emery defeated in the second game of Magus Games.

The muscular guy with broadsword on his back apparently had succeeded in defeating 50 third year acolytes during the first 10 days. Emery heard from the others he spent all his personal training days in the facility, doing countless duels against the third years.

It looked like his efforts were not in vain, as Grand Magus Aimon rewarded him with his second Spirit Foundation Pill in front of everyone. Seeing the small box where the valuable pill lay, Orycon could not help but let out a wide grin.

Afterwards, they went into the material of today's class. It was not started with lectures regarding combat, instead they went straight into practice, or rather, live duel. It appeared the duel would be between the elite acolytes, where Grand Magus Aimon decided who would be fighting against who.

All in all, the first duel began. Grand Magus Aimon started the class with a fight between one of the half-blood from Goat Bloodline, Igor and Akiyo, the Jade Flash.

After the first pair to fight was decided, everyone immediately spreaded out, leaving a wide clearing in the middle for the two of them to brawl it out.

Even though at first Igor seemed to have the upper hand due to his monstrous beast transformation, he could not do anything substantial against an opponent that was fast and could turn invisible.

Sure, he would be able to knock Akiyo in one blow, but that would only happen if he managed to land the blow in the first place. Looking at how the young girl zipped around through the clearing, appearing in and out of existence, Igor had no idea what to do. He was completely helpless.

Using her towering advantage in speed and mobility, the Jade Flash chose to play the slow game, hurting the massive body of the half-blood bit by bit.

In the end, Igor lost the match.

The second match was Chumo against Okoye. The two worked together and fought side by side during the second stage of Magus Game, now they were standing opposite each other.

At first, Chumo appeared to be reluctant about this match, but after a while, he took out his bow and began launching a barrage of arrows towards Okoye. Initially, Okoye still managed to fend off the arrows and got closer to Chumo.

Alas, the moment Chumo noticed he could not suppress Okoye with his arrow attacks, he immediately used his skill [Shadow Self]. With the addition of his other self, he sent a combination of close-range and long-range attack on Okoye.

Unable to receive the strikes and arrows from both Chumo and his other self, Okoye was at her last straw. She continued to be pushed back by the two of them, accumulating injuries over time.

At last, the match was won by Chumo.

The third was a match between Klea and Gerri. With both of them were known as the powerhouses of spellcasting, everyone expected the fight to be spectacular. Their expectations were not betrayed as the battle between the two was extremely flashy. Thunderous lightning strikes and fiery blazing flames were flying around, causing extreme destruction to the area.

Half an hour through the match, Gerri suddenly started joking around, which eventually resulted in him losing the fight. Thanks to his antics, Magus Rommy harshly scolded Gerri, saying he had to stop not being serious.

After a few other matches, the next interesting one was a match between the two rivals in Emery's group, Thrax and Julian.

Even though this was not considered as an official match, but merely a practice between peers, it did not stop them from fighting seriously.

Everyone, without exception, could clearly see Thrax tried to dominate the fight through his ever-flowing spear strikes. However, the defensive Julian would always find his way to block and dodge each attack sent to him.

The other elite acolytes and the magus didn't foresee that the two acolytes from the lower realm would be able to show such a good duel. In fact, some of them were amazed by the two's fight and recalculated their thoughts about the other acolytes from the lower realms.

At the end, Julian emerged victorious because he managed to play with Thrax's emotion, causing him to make a lot of blunders and mistakes. In short, the Thracian was fooled and defeated.

"Damn you, Roman!! I will beat you next time!"

"Keep saying it again and maybe it will come true... in your head! Hahaha!"

After a round of bickering which was quickly stopped by Magus Rommy with a series of scolding, it was finally Emery's turn. Grand Magus Aimon matched him with Lymord, one of Roran men, who was also a half-blood.

When the fight began, the man quickly transformed into a tiger. Looking at the ferocious tiger before him, Emery shook his head and transformed as well.

Even though Lymord had the top tier bloodline, Tiger Bloodline, it was a pity that his gene was one of the lowest ones.

Rank 2 Black Tiger Bloodline against Emery's Rank 3 Fey Wolf Bloodline.

As the fight went on, it was surprising that although Emery's has a higher rank bloodline gene, their stats seem to be similar. Strength, speed, durability, and mobility. The only reason Emery has the upper hand was because of his battle art immortal gate. Fortunately, when Emery starts to change his tactic into spells battle, with his versatility in spells, Lymord was unable to keep up with him at all. Lymord battle experience and martial skill only able to made him hold on for a few minutes.

Seeing Lymord was on the brink of losing, Grand Magus Aimon suddenly called out another name, Malara, to join the fight. The red-haired earth acolyte, who was also Lymord's teammate.

Out of nowhere, Emery was presented with a two versus one duel. Even so, he did not lose his cool and began to pick a different approach, as two versus one fight was completely different than one on one fight.

The other acolytes thought the Grand Magus' decision to make the fight like that was proof of Emery's skill and capability. However, if Emery could hear their current thoughts, he would say that, unless he could win this fight, there was nothing he could gloat about.

The main problem Emery had to face in this fight was, the two of them were veteran acolytes, who also had excellent skill and teamwork with each other. Sure, he could overwhelm Lymord when he was alone, but the situation drastically changed when Malara joined the fray.

Lymord's close-range skill coupled with Malara long-range sand spells were truly a headache-inducing combination.

When Emery wanted to land a strike on Lymord, there would always be a spell coming at him, causing him to cancel his attack in order to dodge the spell. On the other hand, Lymord would always try his best to obstruct and block Emery when he tried to approach Malara.

The situation continued on until Emery dropped to the ground, kneeling.

Grand Magus Aimon stopped the fight, without giving the result of who won and lost. Some acolytes wanted to ask about the reason, but a single glare from the grand magus was enough to halt them.

In conclusion, the next few hours were filled with Grand Magus's insight about all the duels that were happening before. These were the most important and valuable lessons of entering into an elite class.

An opportunity to learn with equal peers, combined with the guidance by a thousand years expert was invaluable to an acolyte's progress.

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The second day was led by Grand Magus Aimon and Magus Rommy again. But this time, the matches were a team battle, five against five. The grand magus tried out multiple combinations, seeing each and everyone's strengths and weaknesses.

The day ended with some went into the medical center and all the rest lying dead tired on the ground.

### **Chapter 283: Racism**

Day 43

The third day was the turn of the spirit reading and spirit control lessons. Magus Nayla entered the room and started her lecture.

Today's she would focus on the important skill of defending oneself against the attack of spirit readers.

The magus scanned the students and decided to call upon Micah to stand in the front. Micah was chosen for the demonstration as it was well-known he had the best defensive spells among all the elite class students. Emery had seen his crystal barrier in action and it was strong enough to withstand multiple tier-4 spells.

Confident with his prowess, Micah stood up, walked to the front of the class and cast his spell. Magus Nayla merely watched him walk to the front of the class before starting her spirit reader demonstration.

There was no actual spell shown but within the span of a second, Micah's earlier confidence completely disappeared and he fell kneeling on the floor while clutching his throbbing head. The shield he had manifested instantly broke into pieces and disappeared in particles of light.

Magus Nayla gestured towards the fallen Micah and explained she did no enchanting spell or anything similar, all she did was direct her spirit power to forcefully attack Micah's mind.

She explained about how spirit energy works and taught the acolytes how to defend against an opponent trying to probe their mind. The first trick, as she had demonstrated, was to quickly use one's own spirit power to protect the mind and attack the opponent. The second trick, which was to use loud sounds or inflict pain, was best reserved for when they have to face a powerful spirit reader, who could withstand their spirit attack. If all else failed, there was always the third trick, that was to retreat from the fight.

After the lecture, Magus Nayla spent the latter half of the class by letting everyone be probed, to make sure each of them knew what to do and learn how to withstand the attack.

As a talented spirit reader and a light element acolyte, Anas was able to withstand the attack for more than 5 minutes, while Klea was able to withstand it for 3 minutes. The others were usually only able to hold out for around a minute, while the untalented ones or the ones who were not fast enough to defend against the mind probing were only able to last less than five seconds, just like Micah did before.

As for Emery, he was able to hold out for more than 2 minutes. According to Magus Nayla, his resistance might come from his powerful dark core.

The second day rolled in and it was time for the Ethics and Principles lecture by Magus Minerva. In this class session, they were focusing on races.

Unfortunately, even in such advanced civilization, racism still existed, just in different forms. From Magus Minerva's lectures, it seemed lower world racism would happen between humans with different skin colors. In middle worlds, racism usually happens between humans and half-humans or even non-humans, while in higher realms no matter how advanced their civilisation, racism still happens between those of high-born society and those of lower-born society.

There would be no perfect society free of racism as long as humans still had the desire to commune in a group. Therefore no matter the level of the world, humans would always favor one group over the other, and racism would always be there.

Time passed quickly, Emery almost did not realize the class time was up.

On the third day, Magus Clio explained about artifacts, specifically weapons and fighting equipment Magus and acolytes could use. There were several different tiers of artifacts depending on their craftsmanship, strength and levels, but Magus Clio focused more on unique weapons, such as projectile weapons and energy weapons. The two aforementioned weapons were stand-alone weapons that didn't get affected by the user's power, hence almost everyone used them.

To demonstrate the strengths of each weapon, Magus Clio asked everyone to clear the middle of the class and used each weapon against a defensive barrier to see how many attacks it took to shatter the barrier. The test fire piqued everyone's interest and every acolyte in the room looked at each demonstration intently. The excitement only intensified when Magus Clio used a screen to show some of the most powerful weapons ever created in action.

The class watched a flying machine around the size of the moon fire an attack at a planet with billions of people, vaporizing the planet and every single living being on it into a fine mist.

The weapons he showed could erase a whole plane from existence.

Though it was awesome, it was a reminder that with certain artifacts or technology even the strongest magus could be defeated.

Among the five friends, Julian was the one most interested with this information. With such technology, even the simplest projectile weapons were enough to destroy a whole Roman legion.

When the lecture ended, Emery still had a question lingering in his mind. A question that would lead to big problems if not solved as soon as possible,

Julian's example was one of the main reasons acolytes from lower worlds were restricted from bringing items back to earth. However, without the item, he would not be able to finish the quest from Kilgragah and the scroll given by the patriarch would just be sitting uselessly in his ring if he couldn't bring it back.

Emery decided to meet the magus and ask for ways to bring back an item as an acolyte of a lower world.



Fortunately, Magus Clio said there was a way. As an acolyte of an elite class, there was a certain privilege that was rarely used.

An acolyte from the elite class could access the magus hub to purchase certain special storage. The storage would let him store restricted items to be brought back to his world. But it had limits of what item it could store and it would cost him contribution points.

This system was set up as a reward for acolytes who were deemed worthy of the Magus Academy's special services.

Emery had to restrain himself from jumping in excitement along with his friends. Thanks to this hint, he knew what to do next.

It was time to go to the hub and spend his contribution points. He had gathered a bunch from his efforts and it would be a waste to not use them.

Hearing the plan, Klea becomes excited "Yes! Shopping Time"

### **Chapter 284: Shopping**

Right after they finished their fifth day lesson, Emery and his friends decided to make their way straight to the Magus Hub. The five friends walked through the portal gate and arrived among the crowds at the massive circle hall plaza. Even though the group had come to this place a couple times, the view of colorful and unique drawings at its ceilings still somehow amazed them.

The group immediately walked towards one of the long tables, as they looked for an unoccupied counter. The moment they spotted one, they approached said counter, which was attended by a beautiful young girl in white uniform.

"Welcome to the Hub, dear acolytes. What can I do for you today?"

Julian, who strangely became energetic, quickly said, "Items, miss. We like to check on the items we can buy with our contribution points."

The young girl nodded and said, "Certainly. Please wait a moment as I check your credentials."

Right as she said that, a small cube suddenly flew to the front of Julian and proceeded to throw light at him.

"Aah! I'm sorry, dear acolytes. It was my carelessness to not notice you are from the elite class." The attendant quickly said as she looked at Julian's clothes carefully and finally saw the elite mark on them.

"My apologies. Since you are from the elite class, this place is inappropriate for you. Please follow me as I take you to the second floor."

"Then, my friends will also come with me."

The attendant was about to say it wasn't possible when she finally realized all five teenagers in front of her had the elite mark on their clothes.

"O-Of course! Please follow me." the girl said with a bright smile.

Looking at how polite the attendant was to them, coupled with her charming smile, the group, or rather, the boys felt a sense of entitlement.

"Haha! Now! Roman! This is the reason! This is why we fought so hard to enter the elite class! Hahaha!"

The group quickly followed the attendant as they walked to one of the few spiral stairs. The moment they stepped out of the stairs, they were greeted by the sight of a similar hall, but with much fewer people.

Emery could tell the people here were all either third year acolytes, elite acolytes, several privileged acolytes as well as Magus of the academy. This place truly felt like it was only reserved for the VIPs.

The attendant from before turned around and said, "Would you like to use the private room for your business?"

Everyone, once again, was speechless with the privilege they received. Chumo raised both of his thumbs up, signifying his agreement. The others also nodded their heads, causing the attendant to smile and lead them to the room.

They entered the private room, which was a circle-shaped room with seats all around its edge. When Emery sat on the seat, it felt soft and comfortable. There were also multiple floating cubes for their access and two white-uniformed girls standing nearby ready for any possibility of assistance.

Seeing the young and beautiful girls, Klea frowned, "Why everyone has to be a girl... I want to be served by boys with perfect abs!"

Klea only said those words as she wanted to tease the boys who seemed to be unable to tear their eyes away from the beautiful attendants. But unexpectedly, it looked like one of the attendants actually took her words seriously as she said, "That could be arranged. Please wait for a moment, I will go find..."

Panic, Klea immediately cut her off, "No!! No! I was just kidding... Thank you..." As she said that, Klea's face turned red. She was blushing in embarrassment.

After the little farce, Emery and the others began to access the floating cubes around them. They discovered the cube was reflecting lights with words to choose from.

[Store]

[Spells] [Consumables] [Artifacts]

Emery started by checking the spells. The moment his finger touched a word, a list of spells immediately appeared in front of him. Inside, he could see all the spells from the ten main elements. There were also dozens of battle art skills similar to the one available in the Combat Institute.

He then took a look at the pricelist of the spells. Tier 1 spells cost around 100 to 500 contribution points, while Tier 2 spells began from 1.000 contribution points. The cheapest Tier 3 spell was at 3.000 contribution points, while the price of Tier 4 spells started from 10,000 points, and so on.

Emery saw a Darkness spell that had a similar effect to his [Blink] spell called [Phase Shift]. The spell was a Tier 4 with a staggering 15.000 contribution points price tag. The similarity between the two spells were in the aspect they touched, which was space.

Different from [Blink], [Phase Shift] only made its caster shift into another dimension, causing the body to turn into an ethereal form. However, the caster was still standing in the same spot where they casted the spell.

At first glance, the spell was much worse compared to the [Blink], but its advantage lay in its speed. [Blink] had a buffer time in its activation, while [Phase Shift]'s effect was instantaneous. Even though [Blink]'s delay was miniscule, it still existed.

For the current level where Emery was, no one would be able to stop him if he wanted to blink away. However, he wasn't sure if that would be the case when he was at a higher level, for example, Magus level.

Emery kept the Tier 4 spell in mind as he read the other spells. Honestly, he was drawn to most of the spells on the list. As he had 4 elemental affinities, he really wished to check all of them, one by one. When Emery took a short break from the reading, he noticed his four friends seemed to be in the same situation as him.

He then decided to check the other category, [Artifacts]. The list of weapons, armors, and other items in it truly impressed him.

[Metal Golem - Tier 2]

[290 centimeters high, 310 kilograms weight]

[20.000 contribution points]

[The metal golem can be controlled via telepathy, requires spirit stones as energy]

Reading through the description, Emery was shocked to see the golem had the strength of a Rank 8 acolyte. That meant it was even stronger than him!

Looking at the image of the massive, sturdy figure, he couldn't help but think, 'Wouldn't things be much easier if I have a few of these golems protecting me?'

As for weapons, Tier 1 cost in the hundreds, Tier 2 between one to three thousand, while Tier 3 began from 10.000 points.

Emery heard a shout of excitement from Julian when he showed an item

[Energy Weapon - Tier 2 - 9.000 contribution points]

[Length 110 centimeters, weight 22 kilograms]

[long range rifle, requires spirit stone to shoot]

"This one very affordable" said Julian

Emery continues checking the list and was curious to check the higher tier items. Unfortunately, his access was limited to the simple Tier 4 and Tier 5 weapons, which cost from 30.000 to 100.000 contribution points. Emery starts to find items that cost hundred of thousands of contribution points that he can't recognize.

Within the [consumables] he saw

[Legendary Bloodline Elixir - 40.000 contribution points]

[Spirit Foundation Pill - 30.000 contribution points]

"Damn these items are very valuable"

Seeing the enormous number, Emery checked his accumulated points.

[146.650 contribution points]

Emery grinned, thinking that all the sweat and hard work he did in order to get this much points would be finally awarded to him. But then, he suddenly remembered that none of these items would be useful for him unless he could bring them back to Earth.

It was probably the best to ask about that special storage box first.

### **Chapter 285: Storage Box**

The restriction that was imposed by the academy was something hard to accept for Emery and the others. This was the most disadvantageous thing an acolyte from the lower world would be facing.

When Emery, Klea, Julian, Chumo and Thrax finished their second year in the academy, this time there would be a break period of 3 years. It meant they had to stay on Earth during that period of time before they could go for their third year.

During those 3 years, all acolytes would try their best to increase their cultivation. Even though they didn't really need an item or artifact to improve, it would still be very beneficial to have some leverage of sorts against others.

For Emery, all the top magus, even the headmaster himself, thought his Dark Core would be the bane on his road to becoming a magus. Therefore, his future to be a magus laid in the hands of Kilgraga and the Khaos Space. So, it was crucial for him to bring the item that the dragon needed back home.

Julian, on the other hand, also had his own agenda. He was eager to find the answer about the special storage box.

It took the female attendant some time to bring out the item requested by them. The moment Emery and the others saw the 'special' storage box, they were shocked because of how... unassuming it looked. It was a rectangular box one meter long and half a meter wide with thickness only around 30 centimeters.

"Here is the special storage box mentioned." said the female attendant, as she placed the box on the table.

Looking at the size of the box, Julian was disappointed, "Damn! Is this really the special storage box?!" he said as he threw his gaze towards the female attendant, earning him a nod of confirmation.

Dumbfounded, Julian continued, "This is so small! I don't even think that my sword would fit in this."

"Definitely not my spear." added Thrax, as he was also surprised by the box's size.

While the others were debating about the questionable size of the box, Emery asked the female attendant just to be sure, "So each of us can bring one of these boxes home?"

"Yes, acolytes. You will be allowed to bring one if you pay for the fee." She said with a smile.

The words 'pay' and 'fee' made everyone stop their debate and perk their ears listening to the attendant's words. Emery then asked, "And that would be...?"

"One box would cost 50.000 contribution points."

"..."

The amount of points required to bring this box back home was beyond debatable. This surely and instantly made the five friends flabbergasted.

"Is this a joke?!" said Julian, half shouting. It couldn't be helped, the mind-boggling contributions points needed caused him to be emotional.

Thinking about the contribution points one would receive from the three Magus Games, it meant that only those who made it to the finals could afford such a steep price.

Taking Emery as an example, the only reason he had more than one hundred thousand points was because, not only did he reach and win the final game, he also won the first place in the second game.

Klea herself, who managed to reach the final, only accumulated no more than 70.000 contribution points.

This comparison truly highlighted how astonishing the price of this special storage box was.

"This is crazy!" Klea added, as she also felt that the price was absurd.

Knowing he had more than enough points, Emery decided to calm his agitated friends.

"Guys, don't worry. Let me buy the box and we can share it. Later, we can just meet up on Earth. How's that sound?"

Before Julian, Chumo or even Thrax had time to respond to Emery's offer, Klea beat them to it. Emery noticed that Klea was strangely excited about the matter. "That is a great plan, Emery! From Egypt, I think... it would only take one or two weeks by boat to your place. I can visit your place!"

Unbeknownst to him, Klea was thinking about a different matter altogether.

Upon hearing Emery's words, Julian seemed to calm down a bit. Alas, the next words that came out from the attendant sent him to rage once more.

"I apologize but, only 3 items are allowed to be put in the box. It is also forbidden to bring anything labeled as advanced technology."

There, Julian's plan to bring home a projectile weapon to strengthen his troop just gone, disappearing without a trace. It appeared just as Magus Minerva had explained to them, these rules were placed to not hindering the world's natural evolution process.

"This is freaking unfair!" Julian shouted furiously, before he proceeded to leave the room with loud thumps.

Emery thought about sharing the three quota with his friend, but he already had 2 items he planned to bring back. Therefore, he paused and decided to hold back his intention.

Chumo and Thrax had no intention to bring anything back to Earth as they knew the cost it needed. As for Klea, it seemed like she was still in hesitation.

The next thing Emery did was checking up the two items he had on his checklist. One was a skill called [Universal Formation Pattern - Rank 1]. Searching through the myriad of items, he finally found it. The skill cost only 2.000 contribution points.

After reading through its description, Emery believed this was the first thing Kilgraga needed, something that would help to reinforce the rock formation.

The second item he needed to look for took him a little bit of time to find. Even though Kilgraga did not mention its name, Emery would never forget its unusual, striking look.

Several minutes later, he decided to ask the attendant for help and after going through the effort of describing the item, they finally found it under the [Consumables] category. It was an egg-size black sphere, with countless tiny sparks that made it looked like a star in the dark sky. Apparently, it was known as Void Crystal.

"That's it! That's what I need." Emery exclaimed.

He checked the price tag, only to find out the item was unavailable. Even a faculty as big as the magus academy didn't have one in stock, how could Emery be able to find it then

'Damn... Kilgraga did say it would not be easy...''

Even though Emery wasn't able to acquire the Void Crystal he desperately needed, at least the visit to the Magus Hub gave him the [Universe Formation Pattern] and the special storage box that allowed him to bring three items back to Earth.

At the moment, he was not in a hurry to trade his contribution points for those items. After all, he still had forty plus days before his return to Earth.

Thanking the female attendants for their hospitality, Emery and the others left the hub and went their own separate ways.

## **Chapter 286: Bob**

The next morning marked the first day of his 5 days free training. Therefore, Emery returned to Zodiac City and made his way towards the Bloodline Gene store that was closed the last time he came. Hopefully, the guy named Bob had returned.

Just like it always did, Zodiac City was also completely filled by half-blood people. More than half of them had a certain, striking characteristic in their figures that varied with each other. One of them was hairy to the brim, one had unique, unusual ears, one had gleaming blue skin and so on. The city truly was an unprecedented sight for the eye.

Emery walked across the bustling streets, through the familiar alley, until he reached the store. This time, instead of a closed door and a piece of paper on it, there was an [Open] sign attached on the half-wooden half-glass window.

\*Ting\* \*Ting\* \*Cling\*

The chimes of a small bell stuck on the door welcomed Emery as he entered the store.

"Kkrrr Wait up...! I am koming!"

The voice was coming from the back of the store, where Emery could faintly see a busy figure through a piece of cloth that covered most of the doorway.

While the man was busy with his matter, Emery took the opportunity to look around. The place looked like a normal store, but all its shelves were full with big and small jars that contained interesting things. Some were filled with blood, some with clear liquid, but all of them had their own kind of weird objects inside them.

Several minutes passed, but the shouting figure had not come out yet. When Emery was about to go to the back, to find the person himself, he saw a figure rushing to the front.

"Who is it?!"

The figure walked to the back of the long counter table. Even though Emery could hear the sounds of footsteps, he did not actually see anyone until the figure walked up, showing himself behind the table.

The figure standing right in front of him did not look human at all, not only was he short, he also had two huge bulging eyes, wide mouth and greenish skin. The figure looked so much like a frog. In conclusion, its look was not pleasant at all.

"Kkkrrr... Yes, I am Bob the Frog. Who are you? What do you wank?"

Not trying to disrespect him, Emery schooled his expression and answered calmly, "I am Emery Ambrose. Patriarch of-"

Before Emery could finish his words, Bob interrupted him, "Yes, yes... The wolf boy, isn't it? Alrighk. Kome. Follow me to the back."

Emery nodded his head and followed the frog guy that was already walking ahead. Much to his surprise, the back room was apparently much scarier compared to the front.

Emery did not notice this from the front, but the lighting at the back door was actually incredibly bad. Rows of familiar shelves were seen, but instead of their counterpart that looked normal, all of them were covered with some kind of dark substance that gave off a gloomy feeling.

Scanning through the jars that were in the shelves, Emery could swear that some of them were still moving!

It did not stop there. Something caught his attention from the corner of his eyes and when he looked over, Emery saw a plant-like, meat-like, indescribable thing that was wriggling on the floor.

If this place and the short guy in front of him weren't recommended by the patriarch, Emery would have already made up some kind of excuse to leave. This place was too bizarre!

Bob pointed his finger and said, "Juss sit on the khair over there and relax."

Emery climbed up the wooden chair and Bob then proceeded to put a restraints on him, to his arms and feets, causing him to become more nervous.

Sensing Emery's tense body, Bob said, "Relak... Relak, you wanted a way to boost your genes kthrough your current gene sampling, righk?"

Even though Emery didn't completely understand what the frog was saying, only half, it seemed to be the same thing that was mentioned by the patriarch. Hence, he nodded, albeit nervous.

"Then this is the only way, wolf boy."

After making sure Emery was locked and secure, Bob then opened a box where there were half a dozen clean tubes inside it. He then began to take one of the tubes and attach it to some kind of needle.

Next, Bob grabbed Emery's arm and pierced the needle into it.

Emery could clearly see as his blood was taken into the tube. Bob did the same process to his feet and then his neck, taking a sample of his blood from those areas.

"Alrighk. We are done. Next, you need to use your first transformation."

Emery quietly followed Bob's instruction, no matter how strange the request and what he did was. The frog then continued by taking three more tubes of blood from the same sources.

His next request shocked Emery.

"Alrighk! Last is your second transformation. Let's do it."

Emery was about to persuade Bob about the matter as he was still unable to control his second transformation.

In fact, he was afraid that he would go on rampage in this store and end up accidentally killing the frog guy. However, the frog assured him that all would be well and he only needed to follow his instructions.

Emery was still reluctant, but he followed suit. He just hoped the restraint were strong enough to hold him.

[Fey Transformation - Second Stage]

While Emery slowly lost control of himself, as his body transformed into the gray beast, he could tell the frog continued to take a few more tubes of blood from him. He knew this was a bad idea the moment he saw the restraint on him loosening.

Just before the restraints broke, Bob suddenly threw unidentified white powder to Emery's face, covering his vision with whiteness. A moment later, one could clearly see the loosely restrained Emery slowly returned to his human form.



It took him quite some time before Emery managed to regain his sense and, personally, it was such a weird experience to him.

The frog guy walked towards Emery, "Are you awake yet? Everything is done."

Without waiting for Emery, Bob walked to the front counter. Still dazed, Emery could only follow the guy, coming out of the back room. The moment they reached the front store, Bob said, "I need time to research this and come up with the recipe that's right for you. Give me 14 days and I think the serum will be ready by then. "

"S-Serum...?" asked Emery, clearly still in daze.

"Krrrr Yes. Remember to bring the money later."

"Money...? Money?!" Emery asked again, he sobered when he heard the word money.

"Are all wolves stupid? Krrr Yes. money! 10.000 spirit stones per serum."

"If you want the recipes, I will part with it for 100.000 stones. That's a great deal, considering the patriarch recommended you."

Emery was silent. He needed more money, much more money. He could only blame his bad fortune for his awful condition. It was not only his core that made him feel like crying, his bloodline as well.

"Remember to come in 14 days!" Bob said, as he sent Emery off.

Emery walked out of the store with his head so low it almost reached the ground. He was brooding over his sorrow, his unluckiness and more importantly, his fate.

Right after Emery left the store, another person walked inside. A girl with white lustrous hair.

"Uncle Bob! You're already back from home!? That's good! I need more boosters! I ran out of them."

"Kkrrrrr... Of course! Anything for my favorite niece."

The girl was smiling happily when she noticed something, "Uncle... What is this smell? It seems familiar..."

"Ooh, that? Don't worry. A customer came in just now. A Wolf bloodline."

"Aaa... I see... What's his name?"

### **Chapter 287: Distressing**

On one hand, Emery was glad to have an unique wolf gene with equally unique powers. On the other hand, however, there was no known fey wolf in this universe, and thus there was no one who could help him progress. This would greatly hinder his improvement. Meanwhile, the solution to this problem that was recommended by the patriarch would cost him 100.000 spirit stones.

Emery touched his storage ring and checked the amount of spirit stones he had and compared it to his contribution points.

[Spirit stones: 365]

[Contribution points: 146.650 points]

The difference between the two was way too great.

Emery knew the Academy Hub could trade contribution points to spirit stones in a 1:1 exchange rate. However, during his time in this academy, he had been reminded time and time again that there were things that could only be obtained with contribution points, such as the cost of using the stone origin room or the use of the special storage box. Besides, even though he could exchange contribution points for spirit stones, he couldn't do it the other way around.

Emery racked his brain, trying to find out how he should use his meager 365 spirit stones.

The solution to his bloodline problem was hidden behind a 100.000 spirit stones cost, while the void crystal, the solution for his dark core problem, was nowhere to be found.

During such a distressing time, Emery decided to find Master Xion right after his visit in Zodiac City was over.

Despite the need for secrecy, Emery decided to tell his master he was looking for Void Crystals. As his master was a darkness element magus, he hoped he would have some clues about the void crystals' whereabouts.

Emery knew his search for Void Crystals would only raise many questions and his decision to break his secrecy could be detrimental to him in the long run. However, for now, he couldn't be too choosy. He was desperate for a way.

He decided to pay a visit to his master's residence, but he found out the place was empty. His master was nowhere to be found.

He had no idea where Magus Xion was right now, but he knew a magus must have their own busy schedule and his master couldn't just sit around waiting for him.

Emery felt his panic rising and a part of him thought of asking Grand Magus Zenoia for help. However, he banished the thought within a few seconds. Though the idea was tempting, Emery knew first-hand how scary that woman could be and he needed to think about what the wolf bloodline acolytes had told him.

He was left without a clue as to what to do next. Emery finally decided to stay and spend the next 4 days training in the darkness origin stone room. While meditating and increasing his strength, he could think what to do next.

[8000 contribution points has been used]

This time, Emery decided not to use his spirit foundation pill. The last time when he used the pill, he received 6 points increase in spirit force. He wanted to know how much he could get if he decided to meditate without the pills.

Upon entering, Emery looked around and saw that the room was empty. He had all the spacious room for himself at the moment. He spent a few seconds picking a good place, before sitting cross-legged on the floor and entering a meditative state.

[Spirit Force increased]

[Spirit Force increased]

He spent four days meditating without stopping, not even to take a little break, but he only managed to obtain two points of spirit force increase. He was meditating in the Darkness element, which was the element he was most proficient in and he only managed to obtain such a small amount of spirit force. The result was far too disappointing.

Emery touched the symbol on his palm and rechecked his current stats.

[Spirit Force: 193]

He still needs 57 more points of spirit force before he could even think about attempting a breakthrough. He did a quick calculation in his mind and he realized that, even with the maximum amount of spirit foundation pills he could obtain in his time here, he wouldn't be able to max his spirit force out before he had to return back home

Not only that, considering the contribution points needed to use the origin stone room, Emery was really losing out a lot for such tiny gains. There was no way around it, he had to find other means of progress aside from depending on the origin stone room.

There was no solution in sight and Emery walked out of the room with mental and physical exhaustion weighing him down. His training made him feel even worse and right as he returned to the elite residential area, he threw himself on his bed and fell into a restless, fitful sleep.

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Day 51

The third 10-day interval training had started. Just like the previous intervals, the first 5 days were spent in a series of lectures and workshops, each invaluable to every acolyte's growth in magic.

In this third interval, the elite acolytes already learned which ones among the 100 third-year acolytes were considered easier to defeat. With this information, a few elite acolytes managed to defeat 50 third-year acolytes and receive their second spirit foundation pill.

However, despite the information offered, some acolytes with pride and skills to back it up would always choose the strong ones even though they knew which ones were weaker.

Lodos was one such acolyte. Since his repeated defeats against Emery, he had focused on his improvements at the expense of everything else. Emery himself saw how much Lodos had improved and he was no longer sure he could defeat him with his current strength. All the improvement happened within just 20 days of practice.

Emery quickly realized that, if this went on, he probably would be the weakest acolyte in the elite class by the end of the second year.

Then what would happen to him after his third year? Emery didn't even dare think about it.

Time passed quickly and the five-day training ended. Emery checked his schedule with the help of the symbol and his eyes started to glimmer with sparks of hope. The next schedule might hold the answer to his current problem.

It was time for him to do his rank 3 Apothecary Exam.

## **Chapter 288: Second Exam**

Golden City

The day for the second rank apothecary apprentice exam had come. Emery walked to one of the portal gates and was transported in an instant.

Upon arriving, he took the time to admire the flying boats dashing across the city. Though he had visited the city several times, the sight was still as wondrous to him as the first time he came here with Master Grom.

He walked towards the iconic triple tower of the apothecary institute and went straight towards the building to meet with the dwarf receptionist. He received the benefit of being in the elite class (free examination fee).

Emery was relieved, as the second exam cost was 20,000 spirit stones. Being an elite acolyte really had quite a lot of advantages.

After completing his registration, Emery went towards the examination hall. Just like last time, more than a hundred people had gathered, all of them were rank 2 apprentices just like him. Among the crowd, Emery spotted Sabil, the acolyte from class 92 and Karin, the little girl who helped him before.

"Brother Emery! Come here!"

The little girl saw him looking and waved her hand.

"Hey, Karin! How are you?"

The little girl gave a gleeful smile and answered. "I am good, brother Emery... Ah, by the way..."

"What is it Karin?" Emery asked.

"I saw the Magus Games! Brother, I didn't realize you were a finalist... You were so cool! So, are you in the privileged class now?"

On one hand, Emery felt much better after hearing the compliment, but he was also reminded once again of his failure of entering the privileged class due to something he could not change. In addition, he still had his progression problem. Each second he spent not training was a second another acolyte could use to surpass him. It was already clear the elite class had tough and competitive standards, so he definitely could not fall behind.

Despite all the mixed feelings, Emery smiled and answered. "Thank you, Karin... I think I am doing okay so far."

The little girl in ponytails raised her eyebrows, surprised with Emery's answer.

"No, brother, that's not it... You're more than okay. Look, you're great at fighting, you're good at apothecary and most importantly... You are still a good person despite how skilled you are." The little girl gave Emery a sincere smile. "Never underestimate yourself brother, never."

The little girl's words made Emery feel much better about himself. He could not deny he had his own problems, from his dark core, to his pack and even his progression in the elite class... However, he should really be more grateful for what he had, rather than sulking because of his problems.

"Thank you, Karin." Emery answered. The weight crushing his heart didn't feel as heavy anymore.

In the middle of their conversation, Sabil suddenly approached them and said. "Emery, This time I will not lose to you, nor will I ever lose to you again."

Emery could only sigh in his heart before mustering the patience to at least give a cordial smile. "Let's try our best, Sabil. Nothing is set in stone at this point, you too Karin. I wish you all the best."

Sabil gripped his knuckles, "I have studied hard for this. I will obtain success with my own hands." Though it was admirable, Emery found himself staring at Sabil.

"Studied...?" He muttered under his breath.

Emery realized he had no idea what the exam would entail. He was about to approach them and ask when suddenly Master Aemir walked up onto the stage.

It was the same examiner who gave out the previous instructions.

"Welcome apprentices. Here, we will hold the second rank exam."

The announcement was made with an ordinary, if rather loud voice, but everyone immediately turned around to look at him. In a moment the chatter they each had with their respective groups quietened down, all eyes focused on the examiner.

"As first-rank apprentices you are required to understand about ingredients, but for the next step you need to show your understanding in concocting recipes."

Master Aemir clapped his hands and a group of people walked in, pushing a dozen carts in the middle of the room. From a quick glance, Emery saw there were around half a dozen different ingredients shared across the dozen of carts.

Master Aemir gestured at the carts and continued.

"These carts contain affordable tier-one ingredients, which you will use for concocting today."

Right as the words left Master Aemir's mouth, a new notification was sent into his mind by the symbol on his palm.

[You received Freezing Potion recipe – Tier 1]

[The freezing potion can freeze an object, a person or a creature when it hits.]

"For this exam, everyone has to use the same ingredients we provided. You are not allowed to add any other ingredients. If you get caught doing it, you will be disqualified."

Master Aemir took out a glowing blue-colored bottle from his own storage ring. Right as he took the potion out, everyone saw a flash of light. When the light subsided a wooden puppet stood in the middle of the room.

Master Aemir took the bottle and threw it towards the puppet instantly freezing it. Right as frost covered the puppet the master told all the apprentices to focus on the screen that appeared behind him.

[Freezing Potion – Tier 1]

[Potency strength: 100% - Masterpiece]

Emery had heard about this system before. Not all potions were made equal and there was a sorting method to determine the quality of a potion. The distinctions were:

[100% = masterpiece]

[90%+ = excellent quality]

[80%+ = great quality]

[70%+ = fine quality]

[60%+ = standard quality]

[50%+ = low quality]

[Under 50 = failed product]

"Here is a chart to show you what the percentages mean. If you want to pass, you have to get at least excellent quality. Moreover, just like the last time, the first 5 acolytes who manage to create a product with 95% or more potency, will receive a special reward.

At the mention of a special reward, everyone instantly started murmuring and talking with each other. However, unlike the acolytes, Master Aemir remained calm.

"You have 8 hours and if you can't make any potions with the required potency by then, you will have failed. Choose any table you like from the ones available in this room. The exam begins... Now! Good luck apprentices!"

Emery looked around for a table and right as he was about to search for the best position, he overheard someone talking to his friends.

"Ah, this year is the freezing potion? This is easy, far too easy..." He said with a smug expression.

"Are you crazy?!" One of his friends screamed. "I've practiced making one for a few years now, but I've never reached an excellent grade, Not even once!"

Emery was confused and anxious. There was mixed information all around him, some claimed it was easy, while others claimed it would be difficult. Though the name implied it was a simple potion, Emery had no experience creating this kind of potion at all.

## **Chapter 289: Concoctions**

Emery set up his table with the [Beginner Cauldron] and the [Beginner Mortar and Pestle] placed upon it, in orderly fashion.

He then took a small portion from each of the five ingredients that he had and spread them across the table for easier access and differentiation.

[Asphodel Flower - Tier 1]

[Valerian Root - Tier 2]

[Mallowseet - Tier 1]

[Saltpetre dust - Tier 1]

[Kelp - Tier 1]

With the limited amount of time he had and no guarantee of success, Emery could only try to be smart about it. Therefore, the first thing that he did was study the characteristics of each of the ingredients with the help of his [Fragmentation] skill.

After the ingredients were being 'handled' by the [Fragmentation] skill, Emery then continued the process by comparing the texture, smell, and colour of the ingredients with those that were contained inside the [Universal Flora Database]. In short, he was doing a cross examination with each and every ingredient.

It was indeed a longer way to solve the problem, however he understood it was the right way nonetheless.

At the moment, Emery did not dare to dream about becoming the fastest among the 100 apprentices that were currently taking the same exam as him, it was too unrealistic. With his current amount of accumulated knowledge, which was ordinary at best, it would be great for Emery if he managed to pass the test.

Hence, he wished that he could pass the exam, and just attain Rank 3 today.

Emery quickly removed the random thoughts inside his mind as he began to study the provided recipe carefully. The last thing he wanted to do was make a mistake he couldn't fix afterall.

As he read through the recipe, the contents were quite similar to what he had thought. The recipe had only shown the specific amount of each ingredient that was required and how to process it through either boiling, burning, simmering, and so on. It did not provide any further information.

Fortunately, Emery had some experience in concocting before, courtesy to Granny. Therefore, he was able to quickly think of a few dozen ways before immediately diving into action.

The first step, preparation.

By studying the ingredients, he could tell that the white plant that looked like a lily flower from Earth named Asphodel, showed an increased intensity in its unique smell after being turned into a powder. Even though it may have looked insignificant, this unique change could cause a world of difference upon the end result.

The same could be said for the other ingredients. The Valerian Root for example, had a very weak structure where it would crumble incredibly fast and lose its effectiveness. This fact made Emery believe that the root should be included towards the very end of the process.

The next step, the concoction.

Concoction was mainly about how to use the correct amount of liquid to mix the ingredients and how to control the heat throughout the concoction process. As for this, it was mostly about trial and error, there were no shortcuts.

Therefore, as he had to adhere to the essence of concoction, Emery quickly created a dozen combinations from what he thought would maximize the ingredients' potency. After doing so, he immediately dived into action, cutting, boiling, grating the ingredients that would be concocted into the final result.

Not even half an hour passed, Emery could see several apprentices had begun to bring their finished product to the appraiser of the exam. The next thing heard from that direction was the harsh words from the Master Apothecary.

"82%. Do it again!"

"This one is good, 88%. But not quite enough. Try again."

"You dare show this trash to me?! 45%!"

And so on.

All the apprentices who joined the Apothecary Institute were definitely talented or had a certain background related to apothecary. Hence, it was normal for them to be able to quickly make a successful product. But none of them had made one that had satisfied the appraisers, yet.

Emery returned his attention to his stuff as he made his way to his first one, but halfway through, he realised that the end result would be a failure. Thus, he quickly set that aside and prepared another one.

"Congratulations! You are our first successful apprentice to reach a 91% result!"

The words containing commendation caught the attention of everyone in the room, including Emery. When he looked over, he realized that he knew who the apprentice was, Sabil.

The appraiser looked at Sabil and asked, "Are you finished or do you want to give it another try?"

Without hesitation, Sabil answered, "I will do it again, master."

It was obvious that Sabil wasn't satisfied with his 91% result. He must be attempting for the position of the first five to make a potion with the 95% result.

After an hour, Emery finally managed to finish his first completed potion. He knew that it wasn't perfect, however he still went ahead to get the potion tested.

"It's 66%. Mediocre, go and try again!"



Emery could clearly see several apprentices laughing at him when the result was announced by the appraiser. But he didn't really care for their reaction. In fact, he was quite satisfied with his first try.

An hour later, Emery once again saw Sabil approach the appraiser with his second potion, the result was far better than his previous one. "96%! Congratulations, you did it."

Sabil appeared to be extremely happy that he managed to reach 96%. However, his happiness was cut short when a little girl managed to get 98%, exceeding even him. That little girl was Karin.

Emery wished to celebrate with her, but he wasn't in the position to do so as he still had a lot on his plate currently.

He quickly returned to his business, trying multiple different combinations. Emery then realized he was quite proficient when proceeding through trial and error. When he pondered it more deeply, it seemed to be the case because he had been rather used to doing meticulous work like this since he was small.

...

The next hour, Emery created his second potion and tested it.

"76%. It's fine quality, but not enough. Again."

...

And the next one, "82%. Great quality. You have improved but not enough. Again."

From this point on, Emery began to have a headache. Beyond great quality was excellent quality, and making an excellent quality was no walk in the park. However, giving up was not in Emery's vocabulary.

Emery could feel his brain and arms working even more efficiently with every attempt, and finally he managed to complete his potion, just before the exam time ended.

"91%. Congratulations! You finally pass."

In the end, only 43 apprentices had passed the second year exam and became a Rank 3 Apprentice.

[Congratulations! You are now Rank 3 Apothecary Apprentice]

Emery did not get the reward, but he wasn't too sad. In fact, he had managed to keep a dozen of great quality freezing potions from the exam.

It appeared because there was actually a fee for the exam, they didn't really care if the examinee brought their completed potions out. Even though Emery entered the exam for free... Still who doesn't like free stuff?

At the end of the exam, before the apprentices had dispersed. Master Aemir delivered the final speech, congratulating those who passed the exam while encouraging those who had failed to do so.

Unexpectedly, the little girl that had become known as the genius apothecary apprentice, Karin, congratulated Emery before they separated. Emery let out a faint smile as he saw the little girl walk away.

When Emery walked out of the exam room, there was already someone waiting for him.

It was Cedric, the senior apprentice that had helped him in the past.

### **Chapter 290: Apothecary facility**

"Congratulations on becoming Rank 3 Apprentice, Emery!" the young man with wavy hair enthusiastically said.

Receiving the compliment with a smile, Emery replied, "Thank you, Senior." Then, he remembered Cedric also had his own exam before, "What about you, Senior? Did you pass yours?"

The young man played with his glasses, moving it up and down. He then put on a proud expression and said, "Of course. You are currently looking at a Rank 5, an Artisan of Apothecary." Cedric also did not forget to flash a smug smile.

Emery clasped his hand together and said, "Congrats, Senior!"

"Hahaha! Thank you! But surely, my achievements are nothing compared to this year's Magus Game champion." Cedric said.

"Thank you, senior, although, in the end, I didn't really make it."

Unexpectedly Cedric completely understood what Emery meant by that. Cedric then approached the downhearted teenager and patted his shoulder, "Who are you kidding, Emery?! You didn't get the reward, sure! But everyone knows you are the winner. Those higher-ups are making a big mistake in not letting you in the privileged class!"

Emery let out a grim smile, "Thank you for your kind words, senior."

Noticing Emery thought his words were just a mere consolation, Cedric once again said, "I am completely serious, Emery. I am proud of your achievement and proud of you. Even though it was a rigged competition, you made it through them all. You got through and emerged as the winner"

Emery recalled this senior was the one who warned him about the competition, saying it was rigged. It seemed Cedric looked even more excited than he was, as the young man continuously talked about the matter.

Realizing he was getting off track with his rambling, Cedric quickly returned to Emery and said, "Anyway, the reason I am here was because our master wants to see you, Emery."

"Our master?" Emery's mind was blank for a second, thinking who his master was, before he remembered the dwarf who brought him here, Master Grom.

Without waiting for Emery's response, Cedric swiftly beckoned, "Let's go! He doesn't like to wait."

Emery quickly followed Cedric, who took him to the second building of the Apothecary Institution. They then took the same box-like machine that delivered them up to the 15th floor. Looking at the walls around him, Emery still wondered how this machine worked and on what mechanisms it was based on.

Alas, his 'observations' were interrupted by Cedric that nudged him, reminding him they had arrived at the place. When the machine's door opened, Emery was greeted by the sight of a lavish room, with a reception desk and a beautiful lady attending on it.

Cedric approached the lady and said, "Master Grom is expecting us."

The lady casted her gaze at Emery, which contained a particular look that made him uncomfortable.

Cedric then took him for a walk through the long hallway. Along the way, Emery could see a vast garden through the glasses on both sides of the hallway. Countless common as well as exotic plants and herbs could be seen there, tended by several acolytes.

Seeing the myriad arrays of flora in this place, Emery was mesmerized. He also could recognize a few of them that were said to be exclusively grown in nature. He was surprised by how the Apothecary Institution managed to cultivate them in such a closed space.

After walking through the herb garden, Emery thought that was the only place where plants were cultivated. So, he was surprised when he passed a few rooms, all with the same view. Surprisingly, all the acolytes who looked after the garden were beautiful women. Emery suddenly remembers how Master Grom once said about his interest in magus Minerva, probably this is what master Grom really is.

When they arrived at their destination, Cedric proceeded to knock on the door and it was quickly opened from inside by another beautiful lady.

Inside, sitting on the luxurious chair at the end of the room was Master Grom, the dwarf. With his back is the wide view of the golden city behind the glass.

Cedric secretly gave a gesture to Emery, to give a proper respectful greeting to the dwarf, before saying, "Master, the new apprentice, Emery, is here."

"Aah... yes, you are here..." The nonchalant words came from the dwarf, who replied without looking at him, keeping his attention on the light panel floating in front of him."

"Emery Ambrose... 91%, That's a very bad score just for a simple freezing potion..." The dwarf then sighed and murmured, "Never mind... You are already here now."

Master Grom finally tore his gaze away from the panel and looked at Emery, "Now that you are a Rank 3 apprentice, you may start working as one of my assistances. This will surely increase your knowledge in apothecary and receive remuneration with every successful work. But because of your elite status, you are free to choose your own schedule."

The dwarf then set the panel aside, walked around the table, and stood in front of Emery, looking at him. "I never go back on my word. Therefore, you are now my official apothecary disciple and you are welcomed to use the facility here. I will personally teach you when you reach Artisan level. As for now, you can work with Cedric and gather experience."

Hearing such a word surely made Emery nodded in gratitude.

The dwarf kept his gaze on Emery and added, "I know that you are currently some kind of celebrity. But I don't need any trouble in my place. I don't care what kind of success you did outside, but here in the apothecary institutes, If you want my attention, create an original product and I assure you that you'll be a very successful artisan.? Power, money, and women. You will have it all."

After saying that, Master Grom immediately gestured for the two of them to leave the room.

It was such a short meeting, where the dwarf only said what he wanted to say. Emery suddenly wonders if Master Grom would act differently if he's a beautiful female.

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Cedric took Emery around to see the facilities on the 15th floor. The work station, which shook Emery with how advanced it was; the garden, with its wide arrays of plant and herbs, and the warehouse, where the acolytes were given access to the ingredients.

Looking at how many and diverse the ingredients this place had, Emery's eyes instantly bulged with surprise. Cedric quickly explained, "I really know that look. But unfortunately, you can't just take whatever you want. Hahaha..." Noticing the disappointed look on Emery's face caused Cedric to chuckle.

"Here, most of the common ingredients are available and there are many. Meanwhile, the more rare ones still come with a price tag."

Emery gave the smiling Cedric a wry smile.

After that, Cedric took him to the Institute Hall, the one he had visited last year. Cedric talked with the person in charge and gave Emery the two scrolls he deserved.

[Universal Flora Knowledge - Rank 2]

[Analyze Flora - Rank 2]

With these two skills, Emery would now be able to analyze the plants up to Rank 4. This would be very useful to his future progress. However, the thing he really needed right now was still his main concern.

Thinking about that, Emery sighed deeply. Realizing it, Cedric became concerned.

"What's wrong, Emery? Do you have something to say? If there is anything I can help with, just ask! I'll definitely help you!"

Emery glanced at the fired-up Cedric and said, "You don't happen to have 100.000 unused spirit stones, don't you, senior?"

Cedric's smile froze.

"..."