

Earths GMagus 311

Chapter 311: Absorbed

Emery remembered Kilgragah did mention something about looking for the master of Khaos, is this what the test was for? Test for getting this item? But then what is this the dragon talking about the crystal was actually for him.

"Of course, kid... Do you think such puny rock can help restore the power of Khaos? Hahaha! You're out of your mind!"

The dragon laughed for a few seconds and with each second, Emery grew even more annoyed. However, he knew this was not the time to express his displeasure, as the dragon still had something he needed. He still had to show his respect, no matter how much of it was mere pretense.

"Please, supreme being, guide me and help me understand."

Emery tried as hard as he could to keep the sarcasm out of his voice.

Thankfully, the dragon did not notice. It opened its maw, showing off hundreds of rows of sharp teeth.

"Haha, explaining is too difficult. The Lord of Shadow, the Master of Space shall show you how things work."

Suddenly Emery felt a strong force pushing towards the item in his hand. The egg-shaped void crystal twisted and turned before glowing in a black-colored light. As the light got more intense, it became painful to hold the crystal, eventually forcing Emery to release it from his hand.

Dots of white started to fill the crystal and blinking white light illuminated the room they stood on. All of a sudden, the crystal broke apart, creating a small explosion.

To his surprise, the energy of the explosion did not spread. It was contained in a dark, shadowy sphere swirling right in front of Emery.

Emery's body slowly float and moved towards the sphere as it expanded, engulfing his body into the light.

"Hey kid," The dragon said. "One piece of advice for you, don't waste this opportunity!"

The dragon was obviously unable to express emotions as humans do, but Emery somehow felt it was grinning at him.

Tendrils of shadows moved and caressed his body and the dark core within his body seemed to pulse and tremble, drawn to the massive amounts of chaotic energy.

The caress became more intense, more painful, until Emery felt like thousands of needles stabbed his organs. The pain was so great, Emery felt like his body was used as a pincushion. But, while it was certainly painful, he also enjoyed the feeling of energy flowing through his dark spirit core.

[Spirit Force increased]

[Spirit Force increased]

Each notification was music to his ears. Though it felt like torture, this was a massive fortune for him. Emery hadn't ever felt this sensation of power before. Not even taking the spirit foundation pill in the origin stone room was comparable to this.

[Spirit Force increased]

[Spirit Force increased]

Hours passed and Emery continued to resist the intense pain coursing through his body. The pain felt never-ending and after a while the increase of spirit force seemed to be slowing down. But he did not plan to waste even one drop of it.

[Spirit Force increased]

[Spirit Force increased]

For a while, Emery felt a slight difference in the feeling from the energy he received. At first, the energy was pitch-black similar to ink, but as the seconds passed, there was a slight difference that became more noticeable as time passed. As if there was a drop of mercury that eventually managed to turn the whole inky surface of the energy into a silvery color.

Finally, after the suffering, Emery reached the end. The shadows that engulfed him had finally started to disperse, taking the void crystal with them.

The forces that lifted him up finally released him, gently lowering him to the ground.

Right as he felt solid ground beneath his feet again, the symbol on his hand started to glow.

[Your understanding of the Darkness element has increased]

[Emery Ambrose]

[Battle Power : 49 (34)]

[Spirit Force : 208 (133)]

[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 process increased Emery's spirit force by 15 points and his battle power by 2 points in a matter of hours. Thanks to that, his spirit core had suddenly turned much stronger

Though he was ecstatic, that was not what caught his attention. He focused intently on the next line of notification.

[You obtained a new understanding on the power of space!]

"Power of space?" Emery read it in slight confusion.

The dragon was half sleeping, but right as Emery finished his question, the dragon started to stir and open its eyes.

"Oh, you're done, kid? Ah, I see you managed to absorb all of them. Impressive."

"Supreme being, what is this about the power of space? Please tell me." Emery asked.

"It's exactly what it means-"

Emery tried to keep himself from sighing. That was helpful.

"-use your brain a little, will you? Huh, I thought humans were supposed to be smart..."

Emery tried to keep his emotions in check. Patience, he still needed the dragon's assistance.

Well, from its wording, Emery at least could conclude it had something to do with space-based Darkness spells. Unfortunately, the only spell he had that fit the requirements was [Blink]

Emery casted [Blink] over and over again simultaneously. With each cast, he could feel his casting speed had increased, as if his body became more accustomed to it. The more he appeared and disappeared, the more he could feel it felt less like a spell and more like his natural ability, just like jumping or running.

The small happiness he felt was interrupted by the enraged bellowing of the dragon.

"Huh, stop it, will you?! You are making me dizzy!"

Emery stopped using the spell and reappeared in front of the dragon.

"You stand still now! Don't move"

The dragon opened its maw and breathed towards Emery's direction. The air it exhaled was black, just like the void, but dotted with white, making it look like a miniature night sky.

Emery breathed in the air and he felt new information for a spell quickly filling his mind.

[You just learn a new darkness magic spell]

[New spell received – Spatial Gate]

"Try this, it'd be a much better spell to test your new space magic talent."

Emery smiled, excited to try out his new spell.

Chapter 312: Spatial Gate

[Spatial Gate - Darkness tier 3]

"This is a low-level spell, but only those who are talented in space magic can cast it. It's the perfect starting spell to hone your skills in space magic. Anyway, give it a try."

From the dragon's breath, Emery had received some information about how to cast the spell. But, all he knew was random chanting and runes he needed to channel through his dark core. He had no idea about the spell's properties, let alone its function.

Emery's confused face made the dragon become impatient again, but it only sighed before speaking.

"Here kid, look at this."

The dragon moved one claw and took out one of its scales. The piece was about as large as a shield.

"You can take this kid, think of it as a reward for being able to return to Khaos... Hahaha! I don't know why, but I am feeling generous today."

Meanwhile, Emery merely stared at it and thought. "Hmm... What kind of reward is this?"

Though the scale looked unique, Emery had no idea what use he could get from such an item.

The dragon was able to hear what he was thinking and narrowed its eyes in annoyance.

"Huh! I'll let you know, this dragon scale of mine has been hunted down by people for it is a rare material with unique properties. It rarely fell off before... but if you don't want it, then don't bother!"

Emery realized his mistake right away and winced before quickly apologizing. "No, no, oh great supreme being. I do want it, I want it. Please forgive my useless brain for not knowing about such a treasure... Yes, I do want it."

"Huh! If you understand, good!"

The dragon used the tip of its claw to hold the scale far away from Emery.

"This is how you cast the spell. When you cast the new spell, imagine you want to reach this item without moving from where you are standing. Easy, isn't it?"

Emery nodded and closed his eyes, trying to redirect the flow of his spirit energy into his dark core, while chanting the commands for the spell. A tingle of energy could be felt forming in his hand.

He moved his hand forward unconsciously and swirled it, making a few small tears appear in the space right in front of his hand. The tear was black in color, with a silvery glow around it.

He took a deep breath and moved his hand into the hole. Right as he did, another tear appeared right above the dragon scale.

Then, Emery grabbed the black scale, feeling the smooth surface and took his hand out from the hole.

"Not bad kid... not bad..." Killgragah said with approval.

As he held it, he realized the thin, black scale was much heavier than it looked. Though it looked like a shield, he was sure that anyone without a high enough battle power would not be able to wield it.

Emery was elated. His efforts to locate the void crystal had paid off and now he had a new item, potentially some new spells and a sweet boost in spirit power.

"You have my gratitude, supreme being." Emery said, in sincere reverence.

"Hahaha! Why are you so happy already? You have not learned the best part of the spell yet."

There was more? Now the excited glint was truly visible in his eyes. The spell he obtained was merely the first of everything and that was music to his ears.

"Alright, this is a trickier part, but this is the foundation of real space magic. You have to master this if you want to advance and try out the others."

"Yes, supreme being, please guide me," Emery nodded.

"Now... The void crystal must have already made some changes to your dark core. Find the center of the alteration and try to channel it. This will be the foundation of your new spell."

Emery listened carefully to the dragon's guidance and tried to channel his energy according to his instruction. He remembered the slithering of mercury-like silver blended into his darkness element.

He closed his eyes and looked deep within himself. Right before him, he saw a shining rift.

Near the rift, Emery found the connection mentioned by the dragon and he cast the spell [Spatial Gate] yet again. Another swirling hole was created, but this time, the hole did not go anywhere. Instead, it opened up to a place, an empty place, just like an effect out of an item he was very familiar with.

It felt similar to the storage space he had used before with the aid of the storage ring. But there was no ring, nor any other items. At the moment Emery was conveniently able to create his own pocket dimension. Emery quickly tried it by putting his stuff inside including the dragon scale.

"Haha, exactly kid! It appears you are more talented than you look. This is the basis of your space magic and now you are able to create a personal space inside your spirit core. Do you like it?"

Of course Emery liked it. The storage ring was the most useful item out of everything he obtained in the academy and he always wished he could bring the item home. Now, he could have the same benefits without even needing a ring.

"Hahaha glad you like it, kid. Just wait until you master the spell; you will be able enlarge the space as you will, you can even create your own island inside. But that's still so far for you... so far... especially with your low aptitude."

He had just learned a really amazing spell on top of everything he had received so far. At first, Emery thought the dragon was only trying to use him to get the expensive crystal and before this he did not realize the dragon did everything for him. Of course, he felt nothing but gratitude.

"Thank you, supreme being, for the gift, the spell and the guidance"

Now Emery felt more confident about continuing his quest.

In the middle of his elation, the dragon seemed to read his mind, and said.

"Unfortunately, kid, you can't leave this place yet. Now that you are here, I will not allow you to leave until you become a magus."

"Huh?!"

Instantly, Emery felt like he was thrown from a great height and crashed into the ground.

Chapter 313: Behind Door

"What do you think this place is, kid!? A tavern where you can just come and go?!" Killgragah snapped as his voice boomed through the air, almost making Emery's ears go deaf.

Hearing the serious tone in Killgragah's voice made Emery's face change. He became worried and a little bit fearful because of the sudden roar.

"Err... No! Of course no, supreme being. I... It's just.. I still have things I really need to do... I am sorry if my words have offended you." Emery quickly added.

"Huh! You have to know that as long as you are in Khaos with me, our minds are interconnected! So don't lie to me, kid."

"I know the thing you wanted to do. Let me tell you that what the Leaf Lady asked you is just secondary. You have to always think of Khaos first! The Lord of Shadow is the answer to everything."

"..." Emery became speechless, as he did not know how to react to that statement.

Ignoring Emery's current condition, Killgragah continued his 'lecture',

"Your next recall will happen in three years time, right?!? With only your mere B aptitude, you will not be successful if you don't spend every second of your time training in this place!"

Naturally, Emery wanted to spend as much time as possible in here to increase his power. But at the moment, he still had many things he had to do in his list and people depended on him.

Reading what was currently on Emery's mind, Killgragah snarled, "Kid!"

"Aren't you forgetting about your dark core?! That should be your priority right now! You think too much about other things, when what you should do is to focus on yourself first!"

Upon hearing that, Emery immediately remembered that important part, the dilemma he currently had. His dark core, the core everyone in the Academy, even the headmaster, could not do anything about it.

Subsequently, he realized the implied meaning of Killgragah's words. With a doubtful gaze, Emery turned to look at the massive dragon and asked, "Then... supreme being... Do you... know the way... to solve my dark core issue?"

Emery swore he could hear Killgragah scoffing, as if he heard the stupidest question of the century, "You really are foolish, kid. If I didn't know the solution, why would I have told you to do it in the first place?"

Emery was surprised, then delighted. In an instant, he said, "Please supreme being. Tell me how!"

Seeing the eagerness in Emery's tone, Killgragah laughed, "Hahaha... The answer is... behind that door."

While saying so, Killgragah looked towards the door, the one that had been closed since the beginning, the one Emery couldn't open no matter what he did.

Emery followed Killgragah's gaze, saw the door, returned back to the dragon and asked, "What's behind the door?"

He was curious about what was hidden inside it.

Killgragah spoke his next words calmly, as if it wasn't something much, "The legacy of the Lord of Shadow is in that room."

"Then... How can I enter the room?"

"Like I said previously, kid. Only when you are worthy... You, as of now, are only worthy to take care of my poo, kid."

Emery once again sighed when he heard another of the dragon's mocking words. For a moment, he even thought that it would be nice if the dragon could cut down his mocking habit.

"Therefore, I forbid you to get out of this room until you are worthy."

Realizing that he would be stuck here for a long time if he allowed the dragon, Emery immediately pleaded, "Please, supreme being. Is there really no other way? There must be one."

"No. Other. Way! It's not negotiable! Huh! You are indeed a human. They think everything is negotiable. How laughable."

Emery wrecked his brain capacity, trying to think of a solution that could satisfy the two of them. After a period of time, he thought of one thing the dragon might be interested in.

"How about this, supreme being. What if I bring you the part of Khaos that was stolen.. That granny of mine. That must be something that you want, right?!"

By simply saying the first reason, Emery managed to change the dragon's expression.

"Actually... that would make things much easier..." Killgragah murmured, as his massive claw rubbed his chin like an old man.

Inwardly and silently, Emery recalled the word 'not negotiable' the dragon had just said a second ago. He chuckled at that.

Seeing his idea being bitten by the dragon, Emery quickly pushed forward to not let the momentum go, "And how am I going to find her if I'm stuck here..?"

"You... that's- Yes... You do make a good point, kid."

At the moment, Emery really thought his idea was brilliant. This way, the High Priestess' quest and Killgragah would be connected with each other. The exact definition of killing two birds with one stone. For a moment, Emery almost believed he was a genius to even think of this.

Killgragah fell into deep thought for several seconds. He then said, "No, no... with your level of intelligence, you would never find her. It would just end up being a waste of time. You have to stay here practicing."

Emery knew he only needed one more thing to negotiate, to convince the dragon. Hence, he pressed on.

"Alright, Killgragah. How about we do it like this.. I spend one month outside and then, I return here and stay for one month as well. And when I manage to complete my quest, I can stay here indefinitely. How's that sound? I think this is the best way."

Seeing the dragon show a more agreeable face, Emery decided to add the last push.

"And supreme being, I can bring you many, I mean MANY tasty things from outside whenever I return. What do you think?"

Apparently, Emery's last push was successful as the dragon became excited.

"Ahh. yes... It's indeed not a bad idea... Not bad indeed. But, one month is too long... No, no. You would only waste precious time..." Killgragah murmured, contemplating.

The dragon thought of an idea.

"Aha! Yes, you actually can do it like this."

Turning his attention back to Emery, Killgragah said, "Kid! If you master the Spatial Gate, you can return here everyday! Yes! Daily! And then you can keep bringing me those- I mean, you can still continue your training uninterrupted!"

Emery required a moment to follow and understand the dragon's words. When he did so, he was surprised. He just didn't think it was possible.

"Alright, kid! This is the plan! You will learn and increase your mastery of the Spatial Gate spell until you are able to return to this place whenever I need you."

Right in this moment, both the dragon and the man had the same target in mind, but for two completely, different reason.

...

It took Emery two full days before he could cast the [Spatial Gate] spell that would create a rift big enough for him to walk in and out the gate. Mastering the [Blink] spell had helped him a lot to pinpoint the location he wanted to teleport to with his eyes.

Now, the next challenge Emery had to face was to teleport to a location outside of his sight. Hence, he began with feeling the area outside the Khaos, outside this enclosed space.

"If you can have a glimpse outside of this Khaos space, it means you have mastered the spell. Then, we will proceed with the plan."

It took Emery three more days before he could finally do the task. He casted the spell and he could finally see the familiar stone formation through the rift he created.

"I did it!!" Emery exclaimed. He was truly excited to see the success of his efforts.

Thus, it was time for him to go.

Before Emery walked out of the Khaos space, Killgragah reminded him to not waste his time outside of Khaos and to come back as soon as possible.

Even though the dragon's words seemed sincere, Emery could clearly see what the dragon's true objective was.

After nodding and giving his respects to the dragon, Emery then took a step outside of Khaos.

Chapter 314: Invitation

At the entrance leading to the Forbidden Forest, Emery's senses flared and he could feel eyes watching him. He followed his senses and approached the bushes. There, he saw a man standing watching him

It turned out the man was one of the villagers that was merely assigned to check and report any news about him or any changes to the stone formation. Apparently, Chief Brennus was concerned that Emery was gone without any news.

Emery told the man he was alright and he would visit the village when he could. At the moment he was occupied in trying out his new spell.

When he was ready, he once again tried to spread the power of his spirit force to his surroundings.

From his time in the academy, he had learned about the use of spirit reading. Though he was not very talented in using the spirit force to move items or enchant minds, he could feel that his ability to probe and detect things in his surroundings had increased significantly.

Through the use of his spirit force, he could sense people gathering in the hidden village. By expanding the scope of his ability even more, he could even feel the presence of people in Venta, the town several hours away from where he stood.

Emery believed his understanding of the power of space had helped increase the scope of his spirit reading power.

Without further ado, Emery tried to sense and pinpoint the place he wanted to visit. He pictured the massive Quintins' family estate, before letting his power gather on the palm of his hand.

[Spatial Gate]

With the power pulsing beneath his fingertips, Emery drew a circle in the air with his arm, creating a glowing gate with the blurry image of the mansion beyond.

He stepped into the gate and felt the sensation of passing through a thin layer of film, before his feet touched the ground right in front of the mansion's gate,

After he arrived, the gate dissipated into pieces of rainbow light before disappearing.

Amazing. Emery thought to himself.

The guards spotted a man seemingly appearing out of nowhere and a few of them came by to check his identity. Seeing the familiar face, they smiled and greeted him politely.

"Master Merlin, welcome back." The guard bowed slightly.

Emery was welcomed as if he was a member of the family. The guards escorted him through the garden and opened the door for him, revealing the lady of the house was already waiting. Upon seeing Emery's face, Luna offered a sincere, welcoming smile.

"Ah, Merlin, welcome back, I guess I need to get used to your unique presence. I take your visit to the Forbidden Forest went smoothly, yes?"

Emery talked to Luna about what happened during his visit and made small talk, not forgetting to apologize that he was held by his own personal responsibility and thus unable to offer any real help to the family. Luna simply smiled and offered her own help back in response.

The talk quickly shifted, Emery was waiting for progress regarding the search for Keane, the silver knight working under the late Bagdemagus. Unfortunately, even though Luna had tried every method she knew, the only information she could obtain was that Keane had disappeared from the Lioness Kingdom for the past three months.

Emery asked Luna to try to narrow down the search. Instead of searching the whole continent, he suggested searching in the city of Camelot, the capital of Logress Kingdom. While on the topic of searching, Emery also asked Luna to find a woman and gave out Morgana's physical description.

Once again, Luna flashed a knowing smile.

"Ah, so it's all about a girl problem all along... You're telling me the wolf girl went missing? You should've told me from the start, Emery... Maybe I'm a little jealous, but I will be fine..."

"Haha, it's not like that. I just need information. I just don't want her to be hurt because of me."

The High Priestess had confirmed that Morgana was safe and that he shouldn't look for her until their paths crossed by themselves. However, Emery couldn't be content with such a vague reassurance and by knowing more, he hoped he would be able to sleep better at night.

"So, anything I can help you with in return, Luna? Apparently, I don't really have many things to do now, so I'm available to assist you."

"Haha, Merlin, you don't have to do anything. You have no idea about how much the name of a wizard can sway things in our favor. Just the mention of you being the benefactor of the Quintins already gave us a lot of positive responses, especially with the Venta residents who already knew you."

In the battle against the Crimson Fang Marauders and in the venture to the Forbidden Forest, Emery had the chance to show off some of what he was capable of. It appeared that even a little magic went a long way here.

Emery stared at Luna, she seemed reluctant to say what she needed.

"What is it, Luna?"

"Ah, Merlin, it's about..." Luna looked away. "The sway of your presence is bigger than I previously thought, actually... There was someone from the Lioness Palace who came here looking for you and they reported the King of Lioness is interested to meet you in the palace. What do you think, Merlin?"

The mention of the king piqued Emery's interest.

"Did they say anything about their intentions, Luna?"

"Well, no, but..." Luna thought for a few seconds. "Considering how respectful the messenger was being, I don't think they harbor any bad intentions. The only thing I can think of is that they're interested in wooing you, just like me." Luna laughed. It appeared she was teasing him again.

Though the invitation was a great honor, Emery himself was not too interested in meeting the king. At the moment, the only reason he would want to get involved with the court of politics was to find Fantumar and seek justice for his father along with the 12 Ambrose Family residents who died on his order. But for now, that was not on his priority list.

There was also the matter of his childhood friend. That made him even more reluctant to consider getting anywhere close to the palace.

"So, Merlin, what is your answer? I will ask someone to send a letter."

Emery gave a confident smile. "No, I am not interested to go, thank you"

Chapter 315: Feasible Goal

Emery knows soon or later he will have to face his past, but he wants it to go under his own terms. At the moment he would just wait and see how the king would go about his rejection. Either way, he still has things to do.

Emery spent the next few days going back and forth doing his daily routine between Venta, the Forbidden forest, and occasionally the Khaos space.

For now, his main priority was perfecting the new spell he acquired and increase his stage of cultivation.

Unfortunately, although the [Spatial Gate] spell was convenient, its range only extended as far as the places he could feel with his spirit sense, which were only about between Venta and the Forbidden Forest.

After his encounter with the high priestess, Emery believed he would soon start his quest and it would involve him visiting other places away from the forbidden forest. He could only hope that by then his new spell would be ready, so he could always teleport back to continue his training.

The dragon was surprisingly helpful during his practice. Every day when Emery came to visit the Khaos space, he would bring some special meal for the dragon. The simple gesture went a long way to set a positive mood and made the dragon pay more attention to his progress.

But recently Emery did feel suspicious about the dragon's change of behavior.

The dragon was being overly excited to increase Emery's realm as soon as possible. He had no idea what the dragon was planning but he knew that the answer lies beyond the large door.

He is curious about what being the master of Khaos means. But the dragon doesn't wish to explain it, the same with how he reacts to Emery's question on the grand magus Zenoia.

Though Emery never liked being used, getting stronger was his goal and at the moment as long as both their interests intertwine, it should be fine with him.

With the help of the dragon's annoying but useful info, as well as the rich aura of the Khaos room, within a week Emery was able to get three points of increase in his spirit force. That was almost as good as being in the Origin Stone room back in the academy.

[Emery Ambrose]

[Battle Power: 49 (34)]

[Spirit Force: 211 (136)]

Considering the rate he was progressing, Emery could reach his maximum rank 7 spirit force limit within three months at most.

Seeing the number, Emery was actually satisfied with his progress, but in contrast, the dragon seemed to be unable to share the same attitude.

"Kid... If only you had a slightly better aptitude, you'd be able to reach rank 9 by staying in here for just a few months." The dragon shook his massive head in disappointment.

Emery ignored the dragon and decided to count his days in comparison to his progress. His goal was to be able to breakthrough into rank 9 before the next recall and, in order to do that, he needed a total of 500 spirit force. Considering the 1000 days he had on Earth, with the current progressing rate he was on, the goal seemed to be feasible.

But his main problem was not the spirit force, but the cultivation of his other elements: Plant, Earth and Water.? They were all required to break through and attain the next rank.

Though Khaos could help him understand more about the darkness element, it was no help for the other three. To get more understanding of them, Emery would need to depend on the High Priestess' guidance.

To fulfill the requirement,? Emery took some time to visit the forbidden forest and stay within the shrine to cultivate his understanding of the three remaining elements. Fortunately, the high priestess was kind enough to guide him.

At one point, Emery decided to discuss certain unique plants and biomes in the forest with the high priestess. The fact that Emery found a few tier 2 plants only inside the forest but nowhere else would mean a certain special condition of the forest. The discussion leads to the discovery of the right spot to grow the seed he had brought from the academy, The Caracas seed.

He decided to plant it in a certain cave not too far from the shrine. The place had fertile ground, almost no sunlight and it was rich with the forest spirit energy. All around him, there was no trickle of light from the sun and only glowing moss illuminated his path. It took a while for his eyes to adjust to the darkness.

This Caracas seed held all his hope on his bloodline evolution.? Unfortunately, he has only one seed, therefore this was his only chance to ever succeeded in making one of the main ingredients for the serum. He really needed this to work.

Keeping that in mind, he slowly dug a small hole with his hand, placed the seed, and watered it. Emery depends on the information from his [universal flora knowledge- rank 2] and all the experience he had in tending a garden and hope it would be sufficient.? He also remembered to put a small marker in

order for the cave to not be disturbed. Other than that There's nothing much else to do other than to hope for the best outcome.

A week of training passed and with the help of Killgrahah, Emery was able to finally find the best way to use [Spatial Gate] in a longer range. Using the ambient energy of the blue stones, Emery came up with a stone formation that allowed him to create some kind of a marking for his spell.

Emery gathered a few blue stones and set a few markers around his maximum range. Some were placed right outside his range, while others were placed a bit further out. With this marker, Emery can easily pinpoint his spirit sense to that particular spot, hence his successful result. He just wonders how far away this marker would work for him. A silly thought came to mind, is it possible for it to go all the way to the academy.

With his multiple spells trial, he felt exhaustion seeping in his bones, he opening a rift to the gates of the Quintin family estate and decided to just clean himself up and rest for the day.

The next morning, Emery heard a little bit of commotion. From the little bits and pieces he had heard from passing guards, it seemed Kastan had returned and brought news from Camelot.

Chapter 316: The Path

To make sure this time their search will be thorough, Luna sent his head guard, Kastan himself. Unfortunately, the news was not what he hoped it would be.

"I am truly sorry, Master Merlin. I did not manage to find any news about a silver knight named Keane or a girl called Morgana."

Emery released a deep long sigh when he heard that. He was worried yet also hopeless about the situation.

Well, at least no news did not necessarily mean bad news, so he really should be grateful and just accept what the High Priestess said about Morgana.

Emery walked out of his deep thoughts, looked at the man standing in front of him and said with a smile, "Thank you, Kastan. For your time and efforts. I really appreciate it."

When Emery was about to leave, Kastan said something that made him stop in his tracks,

"Actually, Master Merlin. I have one piece of news that might interest you. Moreover, this might have a relation to what you are searching for."

Those words successfully piqued Emery's interest.

"What is it, Kastan? You can tell me."

"Here's the thing, Master Merlin. I heard Camelot City was currently preparing for their yearly event, a celebration of some sort. I know this might be a long shot, but I believe there is a chance for you to get more information about what you seek through this event."

Emery was confused as to how this event could have any relation with what he was looking for. On the other hand, he could see Luna becoming excited as well, as Kastan talked about this matter.

"Yes, Merlin! This could be a great idea!"

The still confused Emery became even more curious.

"What are you two talking about? What event?"

"It's-"

"It's the Knight's Tournament, Merlin!"

Kastan was about to answer but Luna beat him into it. Hence, he could only nod his head as an affirmation.

Hearing that, Emery finally realized now was that time of the year. The month of a tournament where hundreds of the most prominent and finest squires from all 7 kingdoms competed with the ultimate goal of being awarded a knighthood, the title of knight.

In fact, before he got into contact with the Magus Academy and magic, this tournament had always been Emery's dream since childhood. He had almost forgotten about it because of the Academy.

It looked like this could be a good way to gain inside information of the Logress Kingdom at Camelot City. After all, this yearly accolade was run by the Knights of Divine Order.

Emery also recalled one important piece of information his father had once told him. To make sure what he remembered was correct, he decided to ask Kastan about it, who was also a silver knight himself.

"Kastan, have you ever seen the Sword of Divine, the Excalibur? I heard that those who are knighted have all seen the sword."

Kastan was actually a little bit surprised by the unexpected question. But he quickly picked himself up and calmly answered Emery's question.

"Yes, Master Merlin. I have seen it. But we, silver knights, are only allowed to see it. We never had the honor to touch it. Nevertheless, it was the most beautiful thing I ever saw."

Emery could clearly see Kastan's eyes were sparkling when he said those words. This gave him more reason to join the tournament, to gain the accolade and see the Divine Sword with his own two eyes.

Suddenly it hit him that this must be the path that the high priestess told him about, the path that would lead to the sword and hopefully Morgana.

Seeing Emery was interested by the idea, Luna interrupted, "Merlin. You do know that not everyone can join the tournament, right?"

Emery was brought out of his reverie by Luna's remark.

"Of course. I did know that." replied Emery with a smile.

There were only three ways one would be eligible to participate in the tournament. First, they were part of a noble's squires. Second, they were recommended by a gold knight. Last but not least, they were suggested by the king itself.

Those who wanted to join the tournament had to be between the ages of 16 and 21. Lastly, they must represent a kingdom.

The more Emery thought about it, the more excited he became. He was ready to compete with the best the 7 kingdoms had to offer and emerge victorious over them.

Alas, Luna interrupted him again, bringing him out of the reverie.

"So Merlin, my point is, if you wish to join, I can help you too!"

When he heard that, Emery immediately contemplated his choices.

To get a recommendation by a golden knight was no simple matter at all, let alone that of the king. Hence, usually only certain people managed to enter the tournament itself. Those who had some influence or renowned themselves.

Luckily, Emery had Luna, who was resourceful enough to have a way to make him a noble out of thin air.

"How are we supposed to do that?" Emery asked for details as he had absolutely no idea on what he had to do and required for this.

Luna crossed her hands, thought for a moment and then said, "It will be a bit costly, but I can take care of it for you. You will be surprised at how many missing lineages there are in the kingdom."

"Wait, missing lineage?! You mean-"

"That's right! Simply put, you will take over someone's family's nobility." Luna said with a wide smile.

Emery was speechless and dumbfounded by the outrageousness of the idea.

"W-Wow! Is that even possible?"

"Yes! A lower 5th or 4th rank noble shouldn't be too difficult to 'recreate'," said Luna casually, as if it was something ordinary.

Emery himself, or rather, his father's family was one of those poor 5th rank nobles. However, he knew that using his real family name would create many problems in the future. He had quite a few "acquaintances" in Lioness Kingdom, after all.

Changing his name was probably not enough, as some people might recognize him. But it suddenly comes to him an idea that puts a smile on his face.? In the end, Emery finally found a very good way to join the tournament. Not only would it allow him to keep his true identity a secret, he could also sneak into the Lioness Kingdom basically undetected.

On the other hand, Luna found this project very interesting. She not only could help Emery in his endeavor, but also have her own share of fun. Besides, this wasn't a very common occurrence.

After the matter was decided, they both immediately jumped right into the plan, preparing certain and must-have things that were essential for a knight. Emery would need a horse, armor, sword, shield and lastly, a family banner.

With Luna's help, Emery managed to take a certain noble name and to make things more believable in the eyes of the outsiders, he chose an identity of someone he knew.

A week later, a young man about 17 of age arrived at the gate of Lionarch City. A backpack was slung over his back, while an entire set of well-made equipment was covering his entire body. His bearing was steady whereas his aura was impactful.

Seeing the young man's attire, the guard stationed at the gate quickly approached him and asked, "Did you come for the tournament?"

Hearing the question, the young man looked at the guard with a calm gaze that strangely made cold sweat roll down the latter's back.

An eerie silence ensued between the two of them.

The guard was about to signal his associate when the young man opened his mouth.

"Yes."

"Your name, please." said the guard, as he let go of the breath he unconsciously held back.

"Lanzo. My name is Lanzo."

Hearing the unusual answer, the guard awkwardly spoke once again, "Which family are you from?"

"The Dulat Family."

Upon hearing that, the guard quickly browsed over the list of names that was provided by the kingdom.

"There is no Lanzo registered here, as for Dulat family squire... the name here is not Lanzo... it's Lancelot!"

"Ohh yes my mistake, I am Lancelot, just people usually call me Lanzo"

The guard stepped aside as he said that. The young man nodded his head towards the guard, and also to his colleagues who watched him for a while now.

The young man walked through the gate and entered the city. He continued his walk until he found an inn.

Inside the room, the young man looked at himself in the mirror and saw the face of his dear friend, Lanzo.

Apparently, his once thought useless fey ability [shapeshifting] was very useful after all.

"Hope you are not Angry with me Lanzo"

Chapter 317: Across the Sea

Lionarch City

The yearly knights' initiation tournament would actually be held in the Logress Kingdom territory, but the rules stated that every squire who wanted to be knighted had to be in service of one of the seven kingdoms and join the tournament under their recommendation.

Hence, before they could participate, every squire would need to receive a proper invitation letter from a king of one of the kingdoms.

Therefore the plan was, impress the king, receive the letter, go to the Logress for the tournament, win it while finding the sword and the girl during the process.

It sounded easy enough on paper at least.

Tomorrow, all the squires would gather in the Lionarch Castle's courtyard to be presented before the king for assessment. Since he didn't have anything to do for today, Emery decided to kill some time by visiting the city.

There was never a time of quiet in Lionarch City, as it was located on a huge port. In fact, it was the home of one of the two largest ports in the south of Briton and the fastest way to access the three large kingdoms across the sea Celtic, Belgae, Germania, and of course the rest of the world. Thanks to that, merchants were thriving here and the streets were always filled to the brim with merchants selling their wares.

Carts and traders came in and out to restock or to barter their goods. Rich merchants garbed in luxurious and exotic daily wear walked around the streets accompanied by armed guards.

Emery decides to drop by in a particular shop, the largest shop he could find in the city of Lionarch. It was the same shop he went into the last time he came here with his friend Lanzo: its the Lionarch Apothecary.

Just like his first visit, the shop was fully guarded. Armed mercenaries stood at the ready, their eyes constantly scanning the crowd for potential threats.

Emery pushed the door and walked inside. This time, the fat owner wasn't standing behind the counter, only his young assistant stood there watching the door with slight boredom.

Upon seeing Emery, his eyes lit up and he gave Emery a warm welcome.

"Good day, sir, anything I can do to help you?"

Unlike before, this time Emery came wearing a tunic and cloak made of hand-made luxurious linen, given to him courtesy of the Quintins. It was no surprise he received preferential treatment unlike before.

He walked around and looked at the ingredients lining the shelves with interest. The last time he came, he had so little coin and he was only able to grab a bunch of them for analysis and contribution points.

The shop clerk watched Emery look around for a few minutes before chiming in. "Anything that interests you, sir?"

Emery turned around and looked at the young assistant.

"I would like to sell some potions. Can you help me?" Emery asked.

His face changed for a second and Emery was able to notice the disappointed expression right before the assistant flashed a cordial smile.

"Sure, sir. Please come to the counter."

In the last two weeks, Emery set aside some time in the middle of his routine to concoct some potions and supplies for later. After all, it paid to be prepared and he never knew when he might need some healing paste, strength paste or cleansing potion.

Emery took out one bottle of the three items and opened his mouth to ask.

Before Emery could get his question out, the assistant said with a straight face. "One coin."

Emery scratched the back of his head. How similar was this man to the fat man he encountered before?

He tried to show another bottle of potion, and the answer remained the same, just like the assistant's expression. Though he was a little bit taken aback when he saw the blue potion, he only smelled it before saying. "Two coins."

Emery had asked about all the potions he had on hand and he felt it was time to complain about the treatment.

"The last time, my half-done low quality cleansing potion got an offer of five coins from the owner. How could this perfected one be worth less?"

He was about to call out the man for trying to fool him, but he decided against it and held his tongue for now.

That question sounded like nothing, but it was enough to startle the young man's composure. With a surprised expression, he asked.

"You... cleansing potion... five coins...? Are you him?"

"... what do you mean?" Emery stared at him in confusion.

"Merlin. Are you Merlin?"

Emery was caught off-guard by the question, but he answered quickly and shook his head. "No, I am not him, but yes I know him. He is my friend."

"Sir, please wait, don't go anywhere!" The assistant ran to the back and entered the storage room, shouting a muffled name.

Not long afterwards, the fat owner Emery saw before came out from the storage room door and walked to the counter. He looked at Emery up and down before asking. "Yes, you... you were there, you are his friend, aren't you?".

Indeed, last time, Emery did come here together with Lanzo. It seemed the fat man's memory was quite good.

When the store owner saw the blue potion, his expression betrayed his interest. He mentioned how the potion that was left by Merlin before was proven to be very effective.

"Actually it's very important as it concerns the lives of many" he added

The fat owner mentioned that very recently, the war between Rome and the neighboring Gaul kingdoms leads to a pandemic outbreak across the sea.? This cause medicine for disease to become even more popular. The blue potion Emery left behind was tested by the apothecary association and among many, his seems to be the best one to stop the pandemic.

"I have been waiting for Merlin's return for weeks. Tell me, when will he come back? I need more of his potion."

Emery smiled and took out the few blue-colored cleansing potions he carried with him in his pouch. As he placed each bottle, the owner rubbed his hands together, while his eyes were glimmering with excitement.

He looked at the fat owner and asked the same question he had asked the last time he came.

"So... How much would you buy this for?"

Chapter 318: Lionarch Street

A pandemic that has taken many lives was a crucial and urgent problem, but even though Emery would love to help, he was no longer the innocent and naive kid who would do anything just out of the goodness in his heart. From the looks of it, he knew there would be a lot of coins involved in it.

"How much would these be worth?"

At this moment, though Emery looked like he was dressed to the nines, he didn't carry too many coins with him. Luna had offered him some, but he rejected it. The Quintins had provided a lot of things for him in return for him becoming their benefactor and Emery didn't want Luna to start giving him pocket money as well.

For his current quest, Emery didn't think he would need a lot of coins, but he was sure he would need some money for future problems.

Emery discussed payment with the owner and got to know more about him. The owner was named Allistair, while the young protégé and son was Allistair Jr. Due to their past encounter, the discussion proceeded quickly and smoothly and Emery assured him the newly-developed cleansing potions he brought here were of much higher quality than the ones before.

Emery took the half a dozen bottles of cleansing potion he was carrying in his pouch at the moment.

As for the price, Emery decided to settle with a similar deal to last time. In return for the bottles of cleansing potion, he wanted the permission to go through the owner's storage collection for study purposes. But this time, he didn't want to just analyze them. He would walk around the shop and grab a little piece of the things he needed to study.

At first, Allistair was reluctant to give access, knowing the room housed many exotic ingredients. But they had met each other once and Merlin had proven his capabilities, so he decided to put his faith in Merlin. Allistair hoped they would have a better relationship in the future.

[Unidentified herb rank 2 data received – you are awarded with 100 contribution points!]

[Unidentified herb rank 2 data received – incomplete – you are awarded with 30 contribution points!]

[Unidentified herb rank 1 data received – you are awarded with 30 contribution points!]

Emery took a little bit on the ingredients that said 'incomplete' in order to use the [Fragmentation] spell later. For the others, he decided to just save its information in his database in case he needed them for further advancing his potions and making new recipes.

After thoroughly checking all the items in the back room, Emery found 62 kinds of unidentified tier 1 plants and 14 tier 2 plants, but sadly, he found no tier 3 ingredients at all. Was Earth really that low in the scope of the galaxy at large, to the point a rank 3 plant would be too much to ask?

He obtained 2000 contribution points to show for his time there.

Emery looked at the symbol on his palm and willed the system to show his current amount of contribution points.

[Contribution points : 90.670]

Emery had no idea whether he would be fortunate enough to come across the means to obtain so many contribution points for such little effort. For now, as he had no steady way to obtain contribution points, it would be better for him to save as much as he could.

After making sure he had obtained everything he could here, the owner asked about making a fixed schedule for the delivery of Emery's cleansing potions. They talked about the current demand for the item and Emery tried to negotiate a decent enough profit in return for his time.

It was lucky the shop was otherwise empty at the moment, as it allowed Allistair and Emery ample time to talk about business and its intricacies.

Emery settled to promise a few dozens potions in a few days' time, but he did not say anything when Allistair asked about more definite supplies. The nature of the vital ingredient made him unable to promise such a thing at the moment.

The vital ingredient he was talking about was of course the blue flower required to make the blue powder. In order to ensure stable supplies, Emery had to make sure how much he could take at a given period of time.

Luckily, thanks to Killgragah's assistance, Emery had learned the [Spatial Gate] skill, and now he could just visit the cave whenever he had free time.

He thanked the shop owner before leaving outside to the busy streets. The thought of asking the Quintins for more information about the apothecary association had crossed his mind, but for now, he had a lot on his plate, the most important one being the knighthood.

The streets were still packed even as the sun started to descend and the blue, starry sky took over the beautiful twilight above. Doors started to close and torches were lit along the more busy roads, bathing everything in flickering colors of orange and red.

The hustle and bustle of the day started to wane as the night went on. As if a veil had been lifted, Emery started to notice what lied behind the facade of the city full of happiness and business – the people left behind.

It was such a surprising revelation. At night, the majestic Lionarch City transformed and was still swarmed by the poor.

Tap, tap, tap.

A pitter-patter of little footsteps could be heard right behind Emery and he followed the noise to see a little boy no more than 6 running as fast as he could while clutching a brown paper bag close to his chest. The boy looked left and right to make sure no one was following him before ducking into one of the dark alleys.

Curious, Emery followed the kid inside, while keeping his distance. He saw the boy running towards a group of other little kids. The boy smiled at them and opened the bag, revealing a loaf of bread they ate together.

The sight touched his heart and Emery walked closer. At first, the kids were afraid and the boy tried to protect them as best as he could, but Emery only smiled at them and opened his bag.

He took out the sumptuous food prepared by the Quintins for his dinner and shared them with the kids.

While the kids enjoyed the fresh bread and meat, Emery talked with them and realized the kids were orphans left alive after their family were drafted for the war up north and never came back, or after they were killed by bandits in this time of increased strife.

The sincere smiles of the children being happy from such a simple deed made Emery a little bit sad and irritated for the state of the kingdom. The difference between those who were poor and those who were rich seemed to be too great and from the looks of it, those in power would not do anything.

They finished eating and Emery gave the kids some coins before bidding his farewell.

As he turned around, one of the little girls tugged on Emery's tunic and said. "Thank you, kind mister. You're just as kind as our fair princess, Gwenneth."

Emery went silent. He merely smiled and swallowed the memories of his childhood adventures before wishing them a safe journey.

After a leisurely walk, Emery returned back to his inn, walked upstairs to his assigned room and locked the door behind him. Emery cast the [Spatial Gate] to open his storage space. He took out a handful of blue stones and created a small, circular formation on the room's wooden floor before casting his [Spatial Gate] spell again, this time to return to the stone formation at the Forbidden forest.

Emery made sure he would return to the Khaos space whenever he had some time to spare. He used the time to cultivate in order to make up for his low aptitude. Besides, he didn't need as much sleep due to his increased strength.

The next morning, Emery returned back to the inn, put the rock inside his storage space and walked outside in full spirit. After all, today was the day of the squire assessment.

Chapter 319: Fair Princess

Lionarch Castle

Tomorrow was the day. That time of the year where all the finest and exceptional squires of Lioness Kingdom would prove themselves to be worthy enough to represent the kingdom and to participate on the Knight Tournament.

At the moment, the palace was hosting a few of the nobles' squires, those who wished to be known by the king. Only noble families of the highest rank were invited to this private gathering hosted by the royal family.

Currently, the king could be seen sitting on the throne accompanied by a beautiful girl. Emerald green eyes, long blonde hair that curled at the tips and a gorgeous tiara on her head. Princess Gwenneth.

The two of them were sitting down, watching the procession, while an aide of a noble family would approach in front of the king and introduce their family.

"The Acton Family!"

A thin-looking boy was seen walking to the front of the throne and bowing before the king.

"Your Majesty, this is Lord Acton's third son. He's just turning 16 this year." said the king's aide.

Hearing it, the king unexpectedly frowned as he eyed the kneeling boy before him.

"He looks too small to be 16. Are you sure?" The king asked as he gave his aide a side glance.

Receiving the look from the king, the aide could feel sweats rolling on his back.

"Y-Yes... That's... what it says here, Your Majesty." the aide answered after he looked back at the parchment, which contained a list of names, in his hand.

The princess chuckled, "Father, I think he can wear a dress a size smaller than me. Look at those arms! What a man!"

The king and the aide could definitely taste the sarcasm on Princess Gwenneth's words.

The king was silent as he heard his daughter's remark. Then, he quickly made a gesture with his hand.

Seeing the gesture, the king's aide immediately instructed the kneeling boy to return to his place. In panic, the boy almost tripped himself over along the way.

The next noble's heir was quickly being introduced by their aide, this time he was too fat. Seeing the kneeling human blob, the princess once again commented.

"This one is quite good! Maybe you can approve of him, father. I mean, he looks healthy... That's an important quality of a man." the princess said, nodding her head over and over.

Looking at his daughter's antics, the king shook his head and continued with a smile when he said "Don't worry daughter, There are still many more lining up to see you."

Hearing that caused Princess Gwenneth to puff her cheeks, "Father, this isn't a matchmaking event for me! Why did you make it sound like that? They don't come for me! They all want to be knights, don't they?"

The king responded calmly, "Might as well, my daughters. These are all youngsters, heirs of nobles of the kingdom who are your age. Who knows, there could be a fine suitor for you."

The princess could only sigh when she heard her father's words. She truly couldn't handle this side of him. Hence, she turned her head to the side trying to find reinforcement.

"Sir Yvain, can you please remind my father about what this knighthood is all about?"

"I am sure Your Majesty knows extremely well about it, Princess Gwenneth." replied the knight with white armor and red robe that stood next to the throne. He was one of the three guardians of the Lioness Kingdom, the Knight of Lion, Sir Yvain.

When most kingdoms would find this yearly event, the Knight Tournament, to be one of the most important events of the year, unfortunately, the same could not be said for the Lioness Kingdom.

The Lioness Kingdom was known for a lot of things: its beautiful land, its mesmerizing Lionarch Port, its abundant riches, and so on. But sadly, home for talented knights wasn't one of them.

When other kingdoms would birth a few famous knights every year, the Lioness Kingdom had to do the opposite, which was bringing famous knights from out of the kingdom to their services. Eventually, years of failure on the Tournament made this yearly event less about knighthood and more about currying favor of the king.

The king once again released a long sigh.

With apparent exhaustion in his tone, the king spoke, "Is this all the future of the Lioness Kingdom, Yvain?"

The king said each word clearly, not hiding his obvious disappointment.

"Don't worry, Your Majesty. I am sure this year there will be a few worthy youngsters able to get their knighthood." Sir Yvain calmly said.

Not long after, a group of people suddenly walked into the hall. Within them, everyone could see there were several men clad in black armor.

When these people arrived, the atmosphere in the hall seemed to change significantly, turning gloomy. And with the changes, so did the king.

The ones who just came were two of the most influential figures in the Lioness Kingdom. One was Fantumar, the king's right hand man and minister, while the other one was Sir Breunor, the one people called the Dread Knight. The man was clad in dark steel armor with a black coat as its ornament.

This particular knight was one of the three guardians of the Lioness Kingdom and was known for its notorious deeds, which made him receive the title from the masses. If Bagdemagus was known as the most veteran of the three and Yvain was acknowledged as the young rising star, then this man Sir Breunor was the strongest among the three.

Now that the old knight has passed away, this black knight has become the most prominent figure of the Lioness kingdom.

Fantumar walking together with the Dread Knight somehow gave a proof of power to everyone. The sight of them walking side by side caused murmurs and whispers to occur around the people in the hall.

This highest ranking noble in the court gave the king a slight bow and said, "Your Majesty, I am here to happily announce that this year my son Abe will be joining the tournament. I am sure he will make the kingdom proud and bring glory to all of us."

Following Fantumar's words, a young man came out of the group. Seeing the current appearance of Fantumar's son made the king and princess both surprised. They didn't expect the past fat, ball-looking Abe would have turned into a muscular young man.

Abe walked forward with confidence until he reached the point he had to stop. He bowed to the king and gave a smile while glancing at the princess.

"My King, my princess. I am sure to bring honor to the kingdom this year"

The young man's particular glance toward Gwen somehow made her uncomfortable.

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When the gathering was over, Princess Gwenneth immediately retreated back to the royal palace and changed his sophisticated dress into something casual. She then walked out of the castle accompanied by Sir Yvain and several royal guards.

At the moment, the royal princess was walking through the streets of Lionarch City during the night, cloaking herself with a piece of robe. She wanted to hide her prestigious identity and for tonight, her anger as well.

Right beside her, walking at the same pace as her, was Sir Yvain, who had changed to casual wear as well. Even though he no longer wore his armor, the demeanor the man showed proved he wasn't ordinary.

"Do you see that, Yvain?! That Fantumar dared to show off in public, in front of the royal audience! He no longer has any respect for my father!!"

Upon hearing that, Sir Yvain stayed quiet and only nodded his head.

Receiving no response, Gwenneth continued her babbling, "We know he was involved in Sir Badgemagus' death. The old knight was killed while investigating him. Heh! Too bad we have no evidence to prove that."

The princess took a deep breath to calm her emotion down before starting to do what she came to do.

Princess Gwenneth occasionally walked around the streets at night and gave care to the hungry and impoverished people of Lionhart City.

This act of hers would sometimes ease her anger towards the drama that's happening in the court.

After handing out dozens of bread to the people herself, Sir Yvain couldn't help but ask, "Princess, pardon my disrespect, but I'm curious. Why do you insist on giving these yourself when you have so many servants to help you."

Hearing the question, the princess was silent for a moment before answering,

"This... this is so I can remember their faces, Yvain. ...this somehow reminds me who I am... and what is my duty" answered Princess Gwenneth, as she suddenly turns a little gloomy.

Deep down in her heart Gwen wishes to just run away from all of these. She always wishes for a carefree life but she now understands that those things are not for her.

A boy who looked no more than 6 years old approached her, bringing Gwenneth out of her thoughts. She quickly handed a pack of bread to him.

Receiving the bread with a smile, the boy said, "Thank you, fair lady!"

The boy then ran towards the darkness of the night.

Chapter 320: Assessment

The first step to reach knighthood started here, today.

Emery arrived at the courtyard of the Lionarch Castle and what greeted him was the sight of hundreds of people with different characteristics gathered together.

The castle yard, which was normally empty on a normal day, at the moment was filled with dozens of tents to its four corners. Each tent came with a different color and flag. Emery could see a myriad kinds of images embroidered on them. They were the emblems of each noble family in the Lioness Kingdom.

Walking past several tents near the entrance, Emery could see most of them were crowded with several people who were tending one person: the noble's squire. From stewards, guards, even coaches; anything was provided to those squires from the noble families to make sure they would succeed today's assessments.

Emery and the others who didn't come with their own tent and entourage would gather at the big-sized tents provided by the royal family. It was just a simple, unassuming, white-colored tent with no symbol nor banner on it.

When he walked past the thin layer of fabric that covered its entrance, Emery saw nearly one hundred squires in it. Most of them were preparing themselves, while others were just checking their equipment or talking to their acquaintances.

Even though the age limitation was 16 to 21 years, it seemed not many people here were the same age as Emery. Well, it was to be expected though. After all, most people didn't really join the competition

early in age, due to lack of courage, preparation or ability. Hence, most of the squires here were older than 18, which meant Emery could as well be the youngest.

While Emery was looking around, observing every squire he could lay his eyes on, he was suddenly interrupted by a voice coming from beside him.

"First time?" said a young man who approached him.

Secretly scrutinizing this unknown young man, Emery replied the question with a smile, "Yes, it is."

The young man introduced himself as Lucas, from the Buxton Family.

After a few moments, Emery realized the man didn't have any intention towards him and genuinely wanted to befriend him.

The young man was friendly enough to introduce Emery to several other acquaintances he knew. Apparently, most of them were joining the competition for the second time. Some even the third time.

At the moment, all the squires that gathered around Emery and Lucas were those of lower rank nobles. There were a few that came from rank 3 nobles, but most were from rank 4 or rank 5, just like Emery.

When the others were talking about their failures in the competition, Lucas suddenly patted Emery's shoulder and said, "Don't you worry, Lanzo. If you don't succeed this year, seeing how young you are, I believe you still have three to four chances to try again. So just do your best later and don't leave any regrets!"

"Cih."

Sound of tongue clicking was heard and caused Emery to look over. Mark, one of the squires Lucas introduced to, seemed unhappy with the remark.

"There's no point as long as they do what they always do."

Emery was curious about what the man meant. So, he asked about it and found out that apparently it was common knowledge for these veterans that this first assessment was rigged from the start. There was an obvious unfair treatment towards the nobles' squires, particularly those who came from lower rank families, throughout the years.

Upon hearing this, Emery could only shake his head and say nothing. He found this matter to be so predictable, especially with that bastard Fantumar being the one in charge of the event.

"Guys... I heard this time it's the princess who manage the event. I even heard that she insisted on that."

Everyone's faces changed when they heard that, as if it was something unbelievable.

"Really?!" Many eagerly asked simultaneously. Emery could see the long-time veterans were the most passionate.

Seeing and hearing about what they said about the princess, it appeared she really was everyone's favorite. Not only because she was beautiful, but also because she didn't differentiate class and social status in her interactions as she was friendly to everyone.

There was also the fact she was the sole heir of the kingdom, which automatically made whoever married her the future king of the Lioness Kingdom.

These facts were nothing new for Emery, he knew all of this to be true. There was just one fact that these people said wrong, or rather, didn't know. The fact that the princess did discriminate against one race, the Crutins. She didn't like the Crutins.

But at the moment, Emery had no capacity to worry about her, as he had to place his focus on the assessment.

Tuuuuttuuuuuuuttt! A rambunctious sound of trumpets resounded through the air and all the squires quickly went out of the tents, as the event was about to start.

"All hail his Royal Majesty, The First of His Name, The Fearsome Hunter, His Eminence, Richarch the Lioness and his daughter, The First of Her Name, Princess Gwenneth!"

The king's aide was loudly announcing the arrival of the royalties, as the related people were making their way to the wide wooden stage on one side of the courtyard.

The king and the princess quickly took the two main seats that were situated in the center. Afterwards, some of the highest rank nobles like Fantumar and also the two guardians took their seats on the stage.

The next thing that happened was a kind of ceremony that needed to be followed by all the squires, as a way to symbolize their pledge of loyalty to the kingdom.

When it was all done, the king's aide proceeded to announce the number of squires that participated in this year's competition. The total number of squires was 123, which was considered quite a lot compared to the previous year.

Unfortunately, the Lioness Kingdom could only send 25 people to the Tournament this year. This quota was lower than the previous year. The king's aide didn't specify the reason for the quota reduction, as he immediately jumped over the next matter.

This quickly made the squires next to Emery become dispirited. Mark once again became the one who made negative remarks about it.

"Hear me out, Lanzo. You will later see that most of those quotas would be taken by those high rank nobles. Heh, those bastards."

Emery only kept silent when he heard that.

Next, the king's aide explained the rules. All the participants would fight 4 times each, all four with the kingdom's knights. Then, the participants with the most wins would be selected to be sent to Camelot City to represent Lioness Kingdom in the Tournament.

Tootttootttt!

The trumpets once again blared their horns and the first batch of names were called.

"You will see Lanzo. That noble, yeah, the fat one! I'm sure that knight will let him win later. Just see..." Mark said in a derisive tone.

But contrary to his words, the fat squire was sent to the ground with just two moves by the said knight.
Emery turned his head to the side and saw excitement in Mark's eyes.