

H P D WIZARD 270

Chapter 270: Citizen POV (END)

After Chris apparated to the main conference room, a few people were already inside. The people who knew him or had some relationship with him saluted him and he responded by nodding his head and taking a seat.

A few seconds later, a man wearing shades walked into the room.

“Wild night, Jacob?”

“Yes. I went to this new club opened in Saturn, and I had too many psychedelics.”

The majority of drugs are now considered psychedelics because of the simple fact that their addictive measures can be treated with one potion or using science to change the chemical composition of these drugs to have the same effect without the side effects.

Of course, some drugs are harmful to people. And there is even classification. For example, drugs are also labeled based on Arcanist’s Tiers.

A Tier 1 drug might be psychedelic to a Tier 1 Arcanist, but a destructive drug to Tier 0 Apprentices. The same for Tier 2, 3, and upward. Additionally, some powerful substances are detrimental to anyone who used it—no matter the Tier.

The substances are banned and strictly regulated.

Most medical treatments in the Empire are free—unless they are things that can increase the Tier or strength of any individual. However, there are exceptions to this rule: when a citizen actively broke the rules or placed themselves in harm on purpose—not including for mental reasons.

For example, if a person overdosed on a banned drug and is sent to the hospital, they will have to pay a bill based on their income and whether this was their first offense or not.

If that person is a repeated offender, their Authority Level will be decreased, preventing them from gaining access to certain information, knowledge, and other benefits.

And if they keep repeating their actions, then they will be sent to jail—unless they can prove that other mental reasons were at work. After all, in the Empire, there is no such thing as a drug addict.

If a citizen wanted, they could buy some Soul Potions targeting this area. So, if they continue such self-destructive behavior, it is only their own decisions or some unknown factor.

“Why don’t you go to the hospital?”

“It will be fine. With my Aura, the headaches will be gone after 2 to 3 hours.”

Suddenly, Jacob looked at Chris, making the latter uncomfortable. Chris did not like how this youngster had no respect for his elders, was very blunt, and said anything that came to his mind.

“Chris, took the train to work today again?”

“Yes. Is there a problem?”

“I’ve always been wondering, why are you so cheap? I mean, with your salary, you can be considered middle class in the Empire and live a fulfilling life, and yet, you treat money as you were a dragon hoarding gold.”

People were given Jacob looked to admonish for his rude question.

“For a better future,” replied Chris calmly.

“What do you mean?”

“I have witnessed the day when all wizards and witches revealed their existence to the world. That day, this planet was forever changed. I have lived through the Dementor Invasion and watched with my own eyes the epic confrontation between the Arcane Emperor and the Dementor King.

“Although this fight was only a Tier 3, however at that time, the power of the Emperor was like a god. Ever since that day, I have always wanted to wield magic, to become a powerful caster.

“Unfortunately, I was nothing but a muggle.”

After saying that, Chris sighed, lost in his memory.

“When the first magetech product was created, I waited in line for more than 8 hours to buy one. Being able to wield magic even if it was thought the use of an item was a fascinating thing for me. I would spend most of my money on those products.

“Then, I heard of the project of mages which would allow ordinary people to wield magic. When the product was completed, I was one of the first people who got tested.

“Well, as you can guess, fate was not kind to me as I did not have any talent for sensing or controlling mana. The only good news of that test was probably the fact that I was not one of the people whose bodies were poisoned by mana.”

All the staff members also began to reminisce about that day as it was a recent event, not even a decade ago. At that time, they all faced the same disappointment as Chris.

The hard truth is that this is a world where magic reigned supreme. Although the Empire have strong control of Caster and they appeared to be equal before the law, a vast difference exist between the two classes of people.

And this was not only because of the difference in strength, but to have a high status, wealth, and political or military strength in this Empire, being a high-level Arcanist is a requirement.

It's not to say that ordinary people have no chance to rise to the top. No, they can, it is just extremely difficult compared to the magically gifted. The only exception to this might be in the field of politics, and that is only because most powerful Arcanists are busy with their research and increasing their strength, so they leave the "mundane" tasks of ruling to ordinary people.

However, the sad truth is that a member of the Arcane Council have to be respectful to a Tower Master—just because the latter has so many connection and resources that it could affect their political careers.

"On top of that, after I acquire my Gate of Truth, my talent for energy manipulation only allowed me to do basic transmutation," continued Chris.

"I thought that my dream of being a great Arcanist was ruined until I knew the existence of the Dragon Potion. I was determined to buy one to get at least get me a Level 3 Talent.

So, I will not waste my money on useless things until I achieve my goal."

"What? Are you crazy?" said Jacob. "With your job and salary, it will take you at least 50 years to save enough Arcane Merit to buy something like that.

"62 years to be exact. However, if you think about it carefully, I am 80 years old. In 62 years, I will be 142 years old. Considering my 200 years lifespan, it is worth it."

"I don't think it's worth it," commented another coworker. "That's too long."

"Not really," replied Chris. "After becoming an Arcanist, it will be easier for me to live a few hundred years, even thousands of years or more. So, I will live a reserve life for 60 years in exchange for the possibility of immortality: this is a great exchange to me."

Chris knew that the Empire valued talents above everything else—especially in the field of magic where often time, talent is more important than anything else.

Luckily, as a meritocracy, the Empire still left a way out for ordinary and talentless people. They can sacrifice their time in exchange for an opportunity to change their fate.

A perfect example of that is the Dragon Potion; it is a very precious resource in the Empire. As such, requires a tremendous amount of money to buy.

Truth be told, money cannot even buy this as Arcane Merit is required, and to acquire merit, you have to contribute to the Empire through research or technological developments.

This method of acquiring merit is applicable to the elite of the Empire. Another method to acquire them for ordinary people is through hard work or exemplary behavior.

For example, if a citizen is always on time at work and is never absent, at the end of the year, they will acquire certain merit. Based on their performance at their jobs, they will receive an evaluation that determined the number of merits they will receive.

And if they feel that their job did an unfair evaluation of their performance, they can ask the government to send someone to investigate and re-evaluate.

Additionally, ordinary people can exchange Arcane Coins for merits. However, if a person's annual income reached a certain number, this privilege will be revoked from them.

Another popular method is the lottery. Every four months, a nationwide lottery is conducted by the Empire to choose three people. The first person is guaranteed all resources to become a Tier 4 Arcanist, the second to become Tier 3, and the last Tier 2.

The official announcement says that this is a way to test people with tremendous luck. Of course, measures to counter the Luck Potion are used during the selection process.

In conclusion, there are many ways for normal people to acquire merit. And Chris was prepared to do whatever it took to buy a Dragon Potion and change his destiny.

After Chris' words, his coworker understood that his words were logical, but not everyone can be as disciplined as him, dedicating everything to pursue their dreams and goals.

So, even if they knew that his method worked, they could not follow it. Many of them are content to live their 200 years of life enjoying themselves. And if they are lucky, they can change their fate through the lottery.

And in their twilight years, they may save their saving to undergo another genetic modification to add another hundred years to their lives.

Soon, the manager arrived and the morning meeting took place. Taking his assignment for the day, Chris went to his office. As a computer programmer, he had to tap all day.

Although people can use Neural Link to tap codes, Chris preferred the old method. Plus, with his enhanced physical stats, he was not slower than his coworkers.

Throughout the day, Chris noticed that many of his coworkers looked at him differently; a sense of awe or respect could be detected instead of the usual odd looks. He could guess that what he said in the morning was now common gossip in many of the lounges, but he did not care.

Near the end of the day, an idea suddenly popped into his head. So, he immediately log in to a website on Skynet and submitted it. A few minutes later, he received a very brief email:

“Dear Mr. Chris,

Your idea has been verified to be possible. And according to our analysis, it is temporarily worth 25 Arcane Merits. Thank you for your support of the Empire and its development.”

A smile appeared on his face.

‘With these points, I can now shave 2 years on my time.’

One way that ordinary people can gain merit is to provide ideas to the Empire. The idea can be anything for an invention, laws that could help the Empire, or some random question that popped in someone else’s head: the idea does not have to make sense or be logical.

Then, an Artificial Intelligence will determine if that idea has any merit or is possible to be created and judge its value before rewarding the sender. And if that ideas eventually lead to the creation of a new invention or some new magical theory, or a new research direction, more points will be rewarded to the sender.

Because of this system, writers of science-fiction and fantasy are very valuable and popular in the Empire. Some random ideas that they come up with in their books might inspire the research of an Arcanist or Engineer, thus leading to the further development of the Empire.

While Chris was smiling at the fact that he took one small step closer to his goal, he—along with all the citizens of the Empire received a notification:

“A massive upgrade was made to the Arcane Library.”

All the citizens remembered how much things changed the last time this message was sent. Now, they were wondering if this was the case as well? With anticipation and bated breath, they all log on to Skynet to check things out.

Meanwhile, the rich and powerful knew that this upgrade signified that the mighty Arcane Emperor had returned, and he was more powerful than ever.