

Chapter 4 Part 2



There are two examinations at the Vegalta Royal Magic Academy.

To determine the magic ability and skills of aspiring mages, and to evaluate whether they are suitable to use the powerful force of magic to protect the peace of the people and carry on the legacy of the Sage's magic for future generations, the evaluations must be conducted strictly and fairly.

And one of the two examinations is —

"— Well then, let me explain the 'Conditional Examination' again."

Alma announces to the students in a stern voice.

However, it was not just the voice that was different. The setting this time is not in the familiar classroom of the academy, but at the entrance to a vast forest with towering mountains in the background.

"As previously explained, you will be entering the 'designated danger zone' where magical beasts reside. Please be aware that there is a considerable risk to your lives."

Magical beasts are entities that have undergone evolution different from ordinary animals. They have experienced sudden mutations due to the influence of magic power that arises from nature and has grown larger than usual. This is Reid's understanding of them.

However, over the course of a thousand years, changes have occurred in the ecology of magical beasts. They now breed with other beasts and give birth to offspring that are also magical beasts. As a result, the number and variety of magical beasts have increased significantly compared to before, gradually expanding their habitats.

Therefore, areas with abundant natural magic power, where magical beasts are likely to be born, are 'designated danger zones', where entry is prohibited for non-mages.

And so, mages are stationed in areas where magical beasts are likely to appear. They patrol the perimeter of the 'designated danger zones' to subdue any magical beasts that stray into human habitat. They also regularly reduce the excessive number of magical beasts that have settled in the area.

"This exercise is the lowest E-rank within the 'designated danger zones'. All the magical beasts that will appear are limited to small and medium-sized ones. The medium-sized magical beasts that we saw during our inspection yesterday were already taken care of by our academy's personnel. So, there should be no significant danger unless something unexpected happens."

However, Alma continued,

"That said, injuries can still occur due to carelessness and overconfidence, leading to dangerous situations and even death. You must never forget that."

Upon hearing Alma's warning, the students nodded with serious expressions.

After observing their reactions, Alma continues with her explanation.

"Now, let me explain the details of this 'Conditional Examination'. The scenario we are simulating is, 'the rescue of civilians who have accidentally entered a designated danger zone!'"

Saying that, Alma took a doll out of thin air.

"Multiple dummy dolls will be placed within the zone, and the objective is to locate, retrieve, transport them out, and return to the assembly point within the time limit. Naturally, the more dolls you retrieve, the higher your evaluation will be."

While explaining, one of the students raised their hand.

"I have a question. We were told that the 'Conditional Examination' is linked to individual evaluations, but if we prioritize our evaluations, should we act individually?"

"I can only say 'it depends'. While it's true that doing everything alone would lead to a higher evaluation, achieving the objective is the most important aspect of this examination. That means it's much easier to succeed with multiple people than alone."

In other words, while succeeding alone would lead to a high evaluation, failure would result in no evaluation at all.

"All right, that's it for my explanation! We'll depart in thirty minutes, so please prepare your magic equipment and hold any necessary discussions among yourselves."

As soon as she finished, the students split up into their respective groups.

Similarly, Reid and his companions gathered to discuss their plan.

"Now then... let's decide what to do."

"On that note... we'll undoubtedly be a hindrance. Considering that it will affect our individual evaluations, wouldn't it be better for Reid and Elria to go alone?"

"That's true... Thanks to Alma-sensei's training, we've improved a bit, but there's still a significant difference in skill between us, so it might be best for me to team up with Wiesel-san."

However, Reid shook his head and denied their proposal.

"No, as for Elria, that may be true, but I need you two, especially in my case."

"...'Need' is an interesting choice of words."

"The objective of this examination is to 'rescue', and the rescue targets are 'immobile dolls'. Based on that, what kind of people do you think require rescuing?"

"If they're immobile... perhaps they are people who are frightened?"

"So, it means they are injured and can't move?"

Reid nodded in response to Wiesel's words.

"Both answers are correct. We need to calm down frightened people, provide medical treatment for the injured, and then transport them out of the zone... It's difficult to accomplish all of that alone. Especially since I can't use magic, it's impossible for me to use healing magic on the dolls. That's why I need you two."

"Hmm... That dummy doll was definitely a type of magic tool. So there's a high possibility that some sort of mechanism is built into it."

"Meaning that there's a possibility that it won't react unless multiple people find it or that it can't be transported without healing magic?"

"Yeah. That's why I think dealing with the magical beasts should be my job, Wiesel should handle the transport of the dolls using multiple magic tools, and Millis should deal with the mechanisms on the dolls."

Reid had almost complete confidence in this idea.

Considering that Alma had recommended working in a team, and added the word 'transport' along with locating and retrieval, it indicated that achieving the objective is crucial.

If the 'Conditional Examination' simulated actual scenarios, then it is safe to say that it recreated any possible variables that could actually occur.

The examination is designed in a way that prioritizes evaluation, so there is a high possibility of failure if one acts alone, but if one does not forget, they can surely get a good evaluation.

It could be said that it is content suitable for the first examination.

"But in that case, wouldn't it be better if Elria-sama is with us, too?"

"Mm... I'm told that I must do it alone."

"Huh? Is that so?"

"Yeah. The headmaster told me that if I work with others, it will be difficult to evaluate their performance. So she wants me to take the examination alone if possible."

"Ah, that certainly makes sense..."

Millis nodded in agreement, perhaps because she had seen Elria's magic up close before.

Although the headmaster restricts Elria from using magic beyond the fifth tier, the quality of her magic, such as its power, speed, and range, surpasses that of an average mage.

As a result, it becomes difficult to determine whether the results obtained by a team taking the examination together are based on their collective efforts or Elria's abilities.

"But Reid's proposal makes sense. If it were just transporting the dolls, it wouldn't be enough to make it an examination, so some sort of ingenuity must have been applied."

"Considering that, it could even be a part of the examination if we are not careful."

"...Both of you have thought things through so quickly in such a short time."

"I just thought I would retrieve the dolls normally..."

""I had a feeling it would be something like this.""

The two answered calmly in unison in response to Wiesel and Millis's words.

After all, Reid and Elria have experience in rescuing injured people on the battlefield and rescuing allies stranded in enemy territory.

As Reid and the others were deciding on a course of action —

"— Hah! It seems that you two understand nothing!!"

Such a commanding voice could be heard from behind.

Turning around, there was Faregh with a smug smile on his face.

"What's up, kid? You're looking lively today."

"Stop calling me that!! Our ages aren't that different, are they!?"

As soon as Reid replied with those words, Faregh spluttered with outrage. Perhaps due to the incident the other day, the nickname 'Kid' had become firmly established.

"So, do you have any other ideas?"

"Of course, I do! I think this examination has other objectives besides just rescue."

"...Other objectives?"

"Yes, that's right. Although Alma-sensei stated earlier that there are no medium-sized magical beasts, she didn't say a word about there being no large magical beasts!!"

Faregh spoke loudly with such a misguided idea.

"There is likely to be only one large magical beast in the zone! Whoever defeats it will receive a great evaluation —"

"Well, that's unlikely."

"I am not done talking, you know!?"

"An apprentice who hasn't even become a mage is more likely to die than just get injured when facing a large magical beast. If the academy prepares something like that, it would be a problem."

"If you want to think that way, then go ahead. I have the power to subjugate even a large magical beast!!"

With confidence, Faregh raised his magic equipment up in the air. It seemed that his magic equipment, which he had sent for repairs, had been fixed, making him feel invigorated today.

"Now that my magic equipment is back, it's the perfect opportunity for me to use my full power —"

"Hey, doesn't your magic equipment look shorter than before?"

"That's because you broke it!! Even the magic equipment engineer employed by the Welminan family said it couldn't be repaired, but I had it forcibly cut and fixed!!"

"Good thing you have a skilled engineer. Don't get too carried away just because you can use magic."

"How dare you...!! You will definitely be sorry for this!!"

After spitting out those words, Faregh left with his followers.

Watching them leave, Millis scratched her cheek apologetically.

"Ahaha... I'm sorry, it's kind of my fault..."

"Don't worry about it. He's been eyeing me since the beginning, and I think he has a lot of gall to come at me after being humiliated in front of so many people and having his magic equipment broken."

"Ah... when I hear you say that, it makes that noble seem pitiful..."

Millis looked at Faregh as he walked away with a sympathetic look. Faregh probably did not think he would get pitied like that.

"Well... let's go then."

"Mm, please be careful."

"Yeah, you too. You're alone, so be careful."

After patting Elria's head, Reid leaned forward slightly. Elria then reached out and put her hand on his head.

Watching the two of them —

"...Those two are already flirting even before the examination."

"Just think of it as the leeway of the strong. If we get influenced by them, our senses will be disturbed."

"You're right... since we're in danger, let's keep our guard up."

Wiesel and Millis nodded in agreement while looking at the two of them.