

D. of Pride 281

Chapter 281

On the busy streets of the capital city of Ellesmere, a man roamed around in his casual black clothes. His hair was just like the night itself absorbing all of the light and his handsome face evoked peals of exclamation from the ladies walking by.

"Where did that little girl go? From her over the top excitement, I would not be surprised if she ran all around the city in trace of her disciple" Simon remarked looking at the hundreds of stalls set up around the corner of the street.

It seemed the stalls were in preparations for the upcoming tournament. Since the tournament attracted people from all walks of life and region to the capital; naturally, there would be a horde of customers looking for food and drinks during this time.

The time right now was when these businesses will boom. There was still more than a week remaining for the upcoming 'Battle of the Finest' tournament hence these stalls were still being set up and were not functional yet.

Feeling that he had not eaten anything for a while, Simon searched for a good place to eat. However, since he was new to this place and every street was crowded with people, he didn't know where to go or where he was.

"Haha, I can't believe a grown man like me has become lost. Should I ask somebody for directions?" the only silver lining was that he knew the name of the inn he was staying at.

Simon walked cluelessly for a while trying to find a restaurant where he could eat, he crisscrossed around many winding streets and before he knew it, he had ended up on a street devoid of any people.

The place here reeked of a pungent smell and gave off a gloomy vibe. Even the buildings here were broken and dilapidated, made with whatever was available and no plan in mind.

Looking at the place, it seemed that he unknowingly arrived at the slum district. Just when he planned to walk back to where he came from, a gang of people with brusque faces, surrounded him from front and back, cutting off his path of retreat.

Seeing each of them give him a mocking look, Simon suddenly understood what kind of situation he was in and sighed in exasperation.

"Haah... so they are trying to mug me huh. Well given that I am walking all alone and clueless, I cannot blame them. But seriously what is with this cliched trope".

The scene was the very same where the main character from a novel or a movie suddenly finds themselves lost in a narrow backstreet and encounters hoodlums who try to make life difficult for them.

Simon couldn't believe he was experiencing the very same thing. He looked at the thugs who were surrounding him, currently each of them wore a black tank top and carried a wooden bat with nails sticking out of them.

Looking at their appearance, it was like they were screaming 'Look at us, we look like thugs'.

While Simon was observing this group of men, they too were silently snickering and examining him. Their eyes showed a greedy glint when they landed on the space ring in his hand.

Space ring was not uncommon in this land and many people had it, however, no matter how common they were, they were still out of reach for the poor as they needed at least a hundred silver coins to even purchase the lowest grade space ring.

It was no surprise that these thugs would immediately have their eyes on Simon's space ring.

"Oi Oi~ do you see this? A fat lamb had just stumbled himself in front of us. Hehe, how can we not feast on it?" the thug who had the most muscle out of the group and seemed to be the leader, licked his lips and commented.

The other thugs laughed and played with their bats trying to intimidate the other party. Perhaps because Simon was alone and his human appearance made him look like a son of some noble or wealthy family, these thugs had mistaken him as an easy target they can fill their pockets with.

"Tch... look at him cowering so much that he can't even speak..Kehehe" the other thugs remarked and laughed.

"Look here fat lamb, there is no need to be afraid. As long as you comply with us and hand over everything you have with you, we won't mind letting you walk back... naked that is hahaha" the leader of the thug revealed their intentions before laughing out loud.

From how smoothly they talked, it seems that were used to this line of business. Simon pondered intensely; he was thinking about what to do with these thugs. Although fights would break in the capital in some corners, killing someone was strictly prohibited. This was something that he had learned from Cynthia who had told everyone not to kill even if they were provoked.

"Not kill them huh... that would seem difficult" he used [Analysis] on these group of thugs and the result he got was utterly disappointing. Each of them were below level 60 and the leader was barely level 80.

They were so weak that if Simon did not control his strength well, even a simple punch from him would end up killing them.

"What the hell is this guy mumbling? Throw everything you have on the ground and kneel if you don't want us disfiguring that pretty face of yours" Mistaking his silence as him scared out of his wits, the thugs started to become even bolder.

One even tried to push him on the ground only to realise that he couldn't even flinch the other party.

"Eh?! Why is this guy not budging?" the thug put more strength on his arm that was pushing down on Simon's shoulders from behind. However, even after using all of his body strength, the other party was just like a huge boulder that refused to move from its place.

When the other thugs laughed at him, the man's face flushed red with embarrassment and he couldn't help take it out on the young man. The thug brandished his bat and smashed it on Simon's back in a fit of anger.

SMASH... the bat broke apart and its splinters flew around in the surrounding.

"What?" the thug who was holding the other end of his now broken bat, looked at his opponent in disbelief. His lips repeatedly opened and closed, it looked like he wanted to say something but before he could, Simon turned around and flipped the man upside down before smashing him on to the ground.

BANG... the road shattered when the thug was implanted on the ground and small cracks appeared in a few meters area around them.

"O-Oi... Buno?" the other thugs called out to the thug buried on the road. Buno's unmoving body told them that he was knocked unconscious in just one move.

Everything happened in a couple of seconds which made this ragtag group of thugs unable to believe their eyes. When they pulled the thug named Buno out, they saw several of his teeth shattered and his nose bent in a weird way. His eyes were rolled up and he was turned into a vegetative state where it would be impossible for him to continue with his current profession in the future. After all, who would be afraid of a thug with several of his teeth missing and having an out of shape nose.

Nevertheless, seeing their friend beaten like that, all of the reason flew out of the other thugs and they all pounced at Simon together...

"Stop right there".

When a shout that halted their advance came from behind them. Judging from the depth of the voice, it seemed to be from a boy, a relatively young at that.

When Simon and the thugs turned around to see who it was, they saw a boy no less than thirteen years of age, wearing a black uniform and a navy hat appear out of nowhere.

The face of the boy was delicate, he wore a smile around the corner of his lips, and carried a rapier buckled to his belt. From his unique appearance to his feeble presence that was even able to escape Simon's senses, it could be seen that the young man was anything but ordinary.

At the same time, the royal palace of the capital city of Ellesmere. A knight who seemed to be quite high up in the ranking, ran through the corridor and approached the study room of the king in a hurry before being stopped by the other knights and soldiers stationed there.

"Haa... haa... I have an urgent message from the knight captain Lord Cyrus. I need to see the king immediately" the soldier reported.

Just by mentioning the name of the Knight Captain, it was enough for the other soldiers and knights to understand the gravity of the situation. One of the soldiers stationed outside went in to notify the king before beckoning the latter to come in.

The king who was seated on his chair glossing through the documents on his table, put the document down and looked at the soldier. It must be because he had run all the way here without stopping, that the soldier was perspiring a lot.

The king first told him to catch his breath before continuing with his report.

"Your Majesty... haa.. haa... they are here. The delegates from the Sanguine Empire are here" the soldier reported.

"What?!" the king exclaimed dropping the document on the table.

"When did they arrive?" he questioned pacing out of his table.

"Lord Cyrus is currently meeting with the delegates. He sent me to inform your majesty to send someone from the royal family to welcome them" the soldier detailed.

Chapter 282

At the same time, the southern gate of the capital city of Ellesmere, was particularly bustling for some reason as the inhabitants of the city peeked at the carriage that was being received by multitudes of soldiers and knights.

These people might not have been that shocked if it were any other knight; however, the one that came to receive this entourage, was none other than the strongest knight captain of their Kingdom Cyrus Skyler.

The name carried such weight that there was not even a single soul in this city or perhaps this entire region who have not heard of his name. His valour of single-handedly erasing a guild that could even take place in the list of top ten guilds of their Kingdom, slaying a Disaster class monster along with various other achievements still rang to this date.

It was because of the existence of this man, that the royal family was able to somewhat keep the top five guilds of their kingdoms in check.

If not for the name of Godwin from the Sea God's Trident, making its wave during this past couple of years, perhaps the name Cyrus Skyler would be on the lips of every individual of this city.

For a man of such calibre to have come personally to receive the guest in this carriage, it would be a lie to say that these average citizens of this place were not curious about the identity of the people sitting inside.

Their shock of personally witnessing the Knight captain had only just subsided when another shock hit them out of the corner. An entourage led by the first prince of the Kingdom of Ellesmere, Alstin Elrand Ellesmere was also here to welcome these people.

A commotion immediately erupted amongst the crowd, people who were normally very difficult to meet or even lay eyes on, were coming here one after the other.

Ignoring the ordinary mass who were crowding all around them, the first prince got down from his ride which seemed to be a different breed of horse like the Bane Moose from the north-western territory.

Alstin after getting down from his horse, approached the entourage and saw the Knight captain who was already here to welcome them. He performed a courteous bow that was expected from his royal standing and introduced himself to the people inside the convoy.

An old man wearing a black robe that carried the insignia of a castle and a sword in blood-red colour, stepped down. He was holding a staff that was engraved with a large core stone and used it as a support.

Behind him followed a lovely young lady whose appearance was just like a flower delicate yet beautiful to the eyes. She released a calm presence that gave others a feeling of a serene and tranquil lake. Just like the old man, she too was wearing a uniform like black robe and carried a staff that was a little less impressive than the one in the hands of the old man.

After the two got down from the carriage, the dozen or so guards accompanying them, stood quietly a few steps behind the two. All of them were wearing red armours with the insignia of the Sanguine empire.

"Hoho, we are quite honoured to be greeted by the First prince and the renowned Knight captain of the Kingdom" the old man thumped his staff on the ground and nodded at the two people who had come to greet them.

"What is Sir Vouves saying, it is our honour to meet with the royal court magician of the Sanguine Empire and a world-renowned Ranker," Alstin said smiling brightly.

The old man in front of them who had tied his white beard in dreadlocks was not only a powerful Ranker of the Adventurer's Association but also one of the three protectors of the Sanguine empire. As long as these three giants stood by the empire, they wouldn't topple even if dozens of low ranking kingdoms like the Kingdom of Ellesmere or Ingolf attacked them.

"Haha, all this means nothing to an old man like me," Vouves said before propping the lovely young lady behind him forward.

"This is my disciple that this old one is proud of, Alice introduce yourself... haha". His carefree laughter rang around the surrounding which had turned silent at some unknown time.

The pretty lady beside Vouves, gave a bow of courtesy and spoke in a dreamlike and sonorous voice.

"Nice to meet you all, I'm Alice Elma Sanguine".

The first prince and the knight captain wore shocked expressions as they gazed at the pretty lady who appeared to be less than twenty years old. However, what shocked them was not her appearance but the last name that she carried. Sanguine, this single word was enough to tell them that the lady was from the royal family.

"So it's Princess Alice, forgive me for not being able to recognise you," Alstin said in a tone that sounded humble yet not servile.

The princess did not reply and simply stood there motionless. Seeing her attitude, the royal court magician, Vouves explained.

"Please don't mind her, her temperament is like that, other than magic, she does not hold interest in anything".

Alstin laughed and shook it off as nothing; however, internally he was thinking 'So the princess of the Sanguine empire being an oddball was true after all'.

There were many rumours floating about the only princess of the sanguine empire being an oddity, despite being born into royalty, she had no such regalness. Her behaviour was unlike what would expect from a person of her standing. The rumours were so peculiar that they even reached their Kingdom of Ellesmere.

While these were the thoughts of the First Prince Alstin, the knight captain was considering something else entirely. While it may be true that she was an oddity amongst royals in the way she carried herself, the powerful aura she released, told others something else.

Even from his view, the girl standing prettily beside Vouves, was a huge clump of talent to the point where even he dreaded her a little.

'Well if she wasn't a genius, there was no way old man Vouves would have made her his disciple in the first place' Cyrus sighed. He then ordered the dumbstruck knights and soldiers of the kingdom to create space for the delegates to pass through.

"Sir Vouves, Lady Alice allow us to escort you two to the palace" Cyrus stated. He was just about to lead the carriage driver when the royal court mage of the sanguine empire spoke up.

Vouves revealed a bitter smile "About that, we are waiting for one more person".

"Hm? One more person?" the knight captain scrunched his brows and repeated.

Old man Vouves nodded his head and said with a heavy sigh "That troublemaker ran out somewhere the moment we entered the city saying that he wanted to explore this place on his own. Haaah... it seems that Cedrick did not teach him any common sense or manners at all".

Cedrick... the moment that name came up, it was not only the knight captain but even the first prince of the kingdom wore an astonished face. Why wouldn't they? After all, Cedrick Just like the old man Vouves, was one of the three protectors of the empire and a strong ranker whose name thundered across these parts of the continent.

However, they had no time to react to that as the meaning behind those words from Vouves finally dawned on them. It was no longer a secret that Cedrick the [Sword King] had accepted a disciple not too long ago. That disciple had an unimaginable amount of talent when it came to swords and was even rumoured to be groomed as the next [Sword King].

The news spread like wildfire to the surrounding kingdoms and the reason for that was because the disciple that he had chosen was none other than the young crown prince of the sanguine empire.

"What?!" As expected, the first prince and the knight captain could no longer keep their emotions in check and voiced out.

The young boy wearing a black uniform and a navy hat looked at the gang of thugs surrounding a man in black robes and smiled. His energetic face and that cheeky smile of his, gave others a friendly and harmless presence.

"No matter if it's the empire or the kingdom, you are bound to always have hoodlums like them" he said without trying to mind his words. Since he did not keep his voice low, of course, these rough and tough thugs heard him clearly.

They made a face as if asking who forgot their kid here.

"Now now, I'll give you three seconds to scam from my sight. I cannot guarantee anything after that" the young boy whose height could only reach till the waist of these thugs, waved his hands and declared nonchalantly.

These thugs who were already in a bad mood after one of their companions was knocked unconscious, did not have the patience to go along with the antics of a child and snapped.

The leader amongst them, took heavy steps towards the boy as if trying to appear more intimidating and pulled the collar of the latter.

"Listen brat... run back to your mama if you don't want us to break those milk teeth of yours. This is not the place for kids like you to run your mouth" the thug snarled bringing his face closer towards the boy.

He thought that this would scare the boy and compel him to run, but contrary to his expectations, the boy seemed to be unfazed.

"One..." he suddenly heard a word coming out of the latter's mouth.

"Two"...

"Three.."

Chapter 283

Just as those words came out from the young boy, the thug leader tried to kick the boy with his knee and teach him a lesson, when suddenly he realised that his entire body had become numb and a chill rose from the depth of his heart.

His body temperature fell and he started shivering as if he was suffering from a cold. Before long his entire vision became white and the thug fell down on the floor unconscious.

From the moment those words sounded out from the boy to the situation where the thug was knocked out cold on the road, only a few seconds passed. The other thugs looked at the boy and the absurdity of the situation with wide-open eyes.

Nevertheless, before they could make sense of the reality, a chill wind that came out of nowhere, seeped into their bodies and just like their leader, they too fell onto the road out cold.

The boy patted his clothes and fixed his collars before walking forward towards the only person that was standing still.

Simon who had kept his eyes on the boy from the moment he appeared till now, silently observed him approach closer. The peculiar phenomenon that knocked the thugs out cold, was due to the activation of some skill from the other party.

A skill that attacks other's spirits and make them fall unconscious; fundamentally, the skill used was similar to his [Demonic Eyes] in the regard that both can intimidate an enemy and exert pressure on their spirit.

Since he was not the target of the skill, Simon couldn't guess what tier the skill used belonged to nor what the skill was.

The boy carried himself without a hint of disorderliness, his posture was straight and his gait was like a sword. Even from a glance, it could be seen that these qualities were drilled onto him since young.

What was even more astonishing about the boy was that no matter how many times Simon used [Analysis], it would always get blocked by something. The young boy stopped a few inches away from him and looked at his surrounding excitedly.

"Hehe, brother there can you tell me where I am? I was curiously looking around my surroundings and following the crowd when suddenly I ended up here".

The boy scratched his hair and said in an embarrassed tone. Looking at his floundering eyes, it did not appear that he was lying; however, Simon who himself was lost had no answer to that. He could only shake his head and disappoint the boy that he did not know the answer.

Since he was getting this bad feeling of being caught up in some trouble from the moment this boy appeared in front of him, he thus chose to turn around and not get involved in it.

"Hey wait up, where are you going? You can't leave me here and go away... didn't I just help you before" the boy hurriedly followed behind him and protested.

"Your help was unwarranted, I could have easily taken care of those goons" Simon replied nonchalantly. His dispassionate words immediately made the boy shut his mouth.

A tall young man and a boy, weaved around the alleyway of the slum district for some time before coming to a stop.

"Why are you following me?" Simon asked impatiently, from the looks, presence and aura the young boy was releasing, he could tell that the latter's identity was anything but simple. Even though he had told the boy not to follow him, they still followed him no matter which turn or crossroad he chose.

"Hehe, don't be like that, I'm not following you because I want to. Just lead me out of here and I'll be gone before you even know it" the boy said not missing a beat. He then looked around his surroundings before remarking.

"Didn't we just pass by this signboard a few moments ago? Are you by chance also lost?".

Simon tried to maintain a poker face, he was a grown-up, at least mentally. There is no way he would admit that he was lost. Ignoring the words of the boy, he turned around towards another corner before coming to a stop once again.

At this moment, he felt his face heating up that was because the road came to an end. There was a wall at the other end of the path, a dead-end to be exact.

The boy following behind him, narrowed his eyes getting suspicious. Simon felt his piercing gaze on his back, he was just about to tell him to find his own way back if he was so confident when he heard the boy's stomach make a growling noise.

Seeing the boy's face turn red like tomato, Simon smirked but the next second another growl sounded out. This time, it came from his own stomach.

At this moment he realised, that he had not eaten anything for quite a while. Although being a demon viscount he can make do even without eating anything for a few days, it was not like his body did not need any nutrients to sustain itself.

The boy leered; but maybe he was too hungry, he didn't have the energy to rub it on Simon. When Simon was internally debating whether he should buy something from the shop to satiate his hunger, the boy who had gone unusually silent squinted his eyes and pointed at the distant signboard that was at the end of the road.

Following his gaze, Simon was able to spot an obscure signboard on one of the dilapidated buildings that read 'The Nifty Table'.

The sign was so murky and placed in a way that made it extremely difficult for someone to spot it if they didn't pay a lot of attention to their surroundings.

Though the placement of the signboard was odd, it wasn't the only unusual thing. The signboard read The Nifty Table, but couldn't see anything neat or attractive about this rundown shack.

However, maybe he was not thinking clearly or he was just following the commands of his stomach, he had unknowingly stopped in front of the building.

From the way there were spider webs and moss growing at the corner of the building, it could be seen that the place was not doing well. It was already surprising for Simon that the place had not shut down yet.

'Do they even get customers?' while thinking that internally, Simon slid open the old fashioned door and entered the place which only had two story.

The moment he entered the place, a stale and a musty stench from improper ventilation, assaulted his nose. The inside of the place was dim with wooden tables and chairs which had seen their fair use during their time, strewn around the place.

Perhaps because he had misjudged the ceiling, he had knocked his head on one of the wooden planks which made a creaking noise.

"Welcome" the noise must have alerted the owner, a weary and old sound came from the counter which had varying bottles of liquor in the showcase.

The head of an old man wearing a cap popped up from the other side of the counter. He was wearing a round sunglass even in this dim and gloomy interior of the place.

"What would the two of you like to have?" the old man whose height could reach till the table of the counter, asked.

Only when the old man laid it down, that Simon realised the boy in black uniform was still following him. At some unknown time when he was not paying attention, the boy had sneaked towards the counter and was ordering something while looking at the bunch of papers that was the menu.

Obeying the signal of his growling stomach, he too plopped himself on a seat near the counter. Next, he ordered a dish called Braised Pygmy Drumette, Pinecore Bread and Innewi beer when the old man passed him the menu.

After taking the orders of the both of them, the old man then went into the kitchen adjacent to the counter.

Now when he had nothing occupying his mind, Simon observed his surroundings and fell in thought. There were more than a few bizarre points about this shop which was located at an extremely shady corner of the city where people were less likely to travel.

Doubting the business plan of the man and how he was still profiting from it, when the door to the shop was opened once again.

Simon who couldn't that the store was getting customers other than the two of them, turned his head slightly to observe the newcomers. Yes, there were not one but two people who had entered the shop which he had deemed should go out of business soon.

Out of the two people, one wore a grey robe, and the other an off white. Both of them were covering their faces with a mask. What was more peculiar about them was that the moment those two entered, they stopped in their track after seeing that there were already customers inside.

Even if their faces were covered with a mask, their behaviour at that moment seemed to be saying that they didn't expect other customers in this goddamn shack of a building in this secluded corner.

Their reaction was exactly the same as him when he realised there were other customers besides them. Simon who was about to shift his gaze away from them, frowned at that moment when he felt the intense glare of one of the two newcomers on him.

How should he put it, the glare was not hostile nor did it have any ill intentions, it was the kind of stare that one would give when they unexpectedly met a familiar face.

Chapter 284

Simon arched his brows, he had never met a peculiar person who liked to cosplay as them and hence he discarded such thoughts from his mind and turned around.

"What's wrong Eight? Why did you suddenly stop?" Eleven asked gazing at the counter. Though it was a surprise; No an astonishment to see customers here, it was still not a valid reason for Eight to freeze his steps all of a sudden.

"It's nothing. Let's go up" Eight said before climbing up the stairs to the next floor. The way they acted, seemed like they were not new to this establishment and had visited it quite a few times.

"Old man we are going up, prepare the same food as usual" Eleven commented following behind eight.

Right after the two disappeared, the old man came out of the kitchen and gave the two new customers a sidelong glance.

Putting two bowls full of food that they ordered, he brought two more plates and passed them to Simon and the young boy sitting beside the counter.

Looking at the food that was passed to him, Simon first scrutinised it with the eyes of a connoisseur. From the presentation of the meat to the piping hot broth wafting with a delicious smell, was something that would evoke the appetite of anyone looking at it.

Added with the toppings of different kinds of sliced vegetables gave the food a unique kind of charm. The Pinecore Bread looked like any other loaf of bread with the exception that when eaten a different kind of taste that gave the bread its uniqueness came out. Pinecore, perhaps a common fruit or a nut of this world that he had never eaten before.

When Simon who was immersed in tasting the food lifted his gaze, he was met with the questioning eyes of the old man. His aged eyes seemed to be asking 'How is it brat?'

Simon only had praises for the culinary skills of the old man. To be truthful, he did not expect this level of food when he entered this rundown shack. He opened his mouth and the first thing that came out of his mouth was "It's delicious".

Hearing that, the old man laughed and got up from his seat to bring the beer that Simon ordered from the drawer. TAK... he put the mug of beer on the table in front of Simon and gestured with his chin.

How many minutes passed by? Simon and the young boy he met accidentally in an alleyway focused on devouring their food silently. There would be chewing and gulping sounds coming from time to time.

With a satisfied burp, Simon kept his mug back on the table and glanced at the old man who was currently sitting at his chair playing a board game that he had never seen before.

"Thanks for the food old man" he said patting his stomach.

"It's just business, you don't need to thank me. Well, in any case, I'm glad that you liked it" the old man said without tearing his eyes away from the board game he was playing.

Curious, Simon leaned his body closer towards the other side of the table and watched the old man playing. At a glance, the flat board and the pawns on it looked just like chess. However, there were many unusual pieces and the whole game itself only had a tiny resemblance to it.

"It's called Blender and is a very famous game in Viridian Empire" after moving a piece that looked like a mixture of a horse and a wyvern, the old man looked at Simon and explained.

Simon nodded his head and appeared calm on the surface nevertheless, he was burning with curiosity inside.

"You look like you have some question for this old man. No need to bottle it up, just ask".

His intention being seen so plainly, Simon gave an awkward laugh before asking in a straightforward manner.

"Old man how can you still run your shop with so less customers? I mean the appearance of the establishment is one thing, but even its location is in a very obscure corner".

The old man was silent for a while before releasing a sigh "Young man you don't really hold back do you? Haah... I am very much aware of the public opinion of the shop that I'm running, there is no way I wouldn't know".

"However, just like every human has their own reason to keep struggling till the bitter end, I have my own reason to keep the shop open. Whether I get any customers or is secondary".

Simon nodded his head at those words and stopped probing. He then glanced at the seat adjacent to him before jolting in surprise. The young boy who was supposed to be seated next to him, was nowhere in sight.

'Did he just dine and run?' he thought internally, he knew next to nothing about this young boy so it was only natural he would think so.

Seeing Simon's confounded face, the old man while keeping his attention on the board game, said "If you are looking for the boy then he sneaked upstairs".

"What?!" Simon was surprised not at the fact that he was unable to detect the boy sneaking onto the floor upstairs but because the old man was able to do so when even he failed to notice it. A kind of suspicion that the old man of this dilapidated establishment, wasn't an ordinary person rose within his heart.

"Is that alright? Aren't those two people upstairs your regular customers?" Simon inquired to which the old man simply shrugged it off.

"What regular customers? These two are just troublesome kids coming and going out of my establishment every day as if they own the place hmph".

Looking at the vexed attitude of the old man it didn't seem like he saw the other two as his important customers which made his previous words all the more believable.

"Who are those two anyways, their garbs and masks make them look quite the chary person" Simon nonchalantly asked, he was not expecting any reply particularly; however, the old man blurted whatever he knew as if it was not his problem.

"Well, you are not wrong. These two have been coming and going around this shady corner quite a lot. One look at their behaviour and I can tell that they are up to no good. Well, as long as my shop is not at the risk of getting destroyed, it doesn't really bother me much".

'Aren't you indirectly also calling this shop a shady place?' Simon wanted to retort but held himself back. He remembered the moment when one of the mask-wearing guy was intensely looking at him.

Was he right to suspect that one of them knew him from his familiar gaze? While he was internally debating something, the young boy stealthily stepped down the stairs leading to the floor above.

He had a bratty smile plastered on his face as if he had done something mischievous without getting caught.

"What were you doing there?" When Simon asked him, the boy simply smiled saying he heard something interesting. The notorious intention that he had in his eyes was apparent.

Well, whatever he did was none of Simon's concern and thus he got up from his seat and asked the old man what his bill was.

"One Braised Pygmy Drumette, Two Pincecore Bread, a bottle of Innewi Beer and one honey mushroom pud. Let's see the grand total comes to three silver coins". The old man took out something akin to an abacus and started calculating.

"W-wait a minute old man... what do you mean honey mushroom pud and two pinecore breads?" he stopped the owner midway and asked.

The old man gazed at him with confused eyes before pointing at the boy next to him and said "Those were the food ordered by that boy that came along with you".

Simon glanced at the boy smiling embarrassedly at him and clarified "Old man it seems you are mistaken, we are two different customers, the boy will pay for the food he had eaten himself".

The boy scratched his hair and seemed somewhat troubled, he opened his mouth a few times before squeezing out a few words. "Um, I did not bring money with me".

Simon eye's twitched when he heard that, who goes inside a restaurant and orders whatever they want without having money with them? It was unrealistic, from the appearance of the boy, he didn't seem poor then what was the reason that he was not paying for his own food?

When the boy saw his disbelieving eyes, he couldn't but lash out as if he was accused of something he was not.

"Hey what's with that look of yours? I don't carry such trivial things on me, there are already people there for such kinds of menial jobs".

"Oh? Then why don't you tell all those people to pay the bill for you" Simon commented, from the words of the boy, he understood that the latter did not even have a single copper coin with him. What was even more intriguing was his attitude towards money as if it was something extremely inconsequential and he had never had a shortage of it.

'What is the background of this boy? He couldn't be a prince of this kingdom could he?' Simon thought internally.

"Um... can mister not pay the money for me?" the boy asked tilting his head. His clueless behaviour and appearance seemed to suggest that he was still too naïve about how the world works. If Simon had to use an appropriate word for him, then it would be sheltered.

"Why should I pay for you? We don't even know each and have only just a while ago" he asserted trying to see what the boy will do next.

Chapter 285

Will he finally use his authority to pressure Simon or would he use force to cower the old man? However, what the boy did next was totally beyond his expectation and surprised him greatly.

After fidgeting and looking conflicted for a while, he took out something from his space ring and passed it to Simon. When Simon observed the item in his hands which was a short sword, he couldn't help but frown.

That was because the [Analysis] was showing him that the short sword was a [B] tier weapon and was imbued with only one skill, [Indestructibility]. No matter how Simon saw it, the cost of the food was nowhere near what a [B] tier weapon would cost.

He carefully observed the boy who had a determined expression at this moment on his face. to be willing to take out something like, what was he thinking?

"This a very special weapon passed on by my master to me. Other than the weapon I use myself, this is the only thing of value on me currently. I'm giving it to you in exchange for the money I owe you. Hold on to it and do not sell it, also there is no point in running with it since my master can track it back. I will come to buy it back from you"

The boy spoke with some difficulty. It was clear to any onlookers that he was extremely unwilling to part with it and only did so because he had no other choice.

Simon sighed, he didn't expect the boy to go so far as to sell a keepsake from his master just so he could pay back his dues when he had so many other forceful methods available to him. Especially, given the presence the boy had at such a young age, Simon could tell that he was strong.

It wouldn't be surprising if the boy thought that martial prowess could solve everything. But the approach he took, left a good impression of him on Simon.

Simon glanced at the fancy looking short sword a few more before passing it back, he then waved his hands and rejected the offer from the boy. If he had to state a reason, then it would be because he had the [Armory] and [Ga?????] option with him thus weapons had the least appeal to him.

Other than that, Simon was currently masquerading as a human and didn't want to take something as troublesome as the short sword that could be constantly tracked by someone.

Handing over the three silver coins from his space ring, Simon got out of the establishment and started walking when the boy hurriedly followed. Before he could get annoyed at him, the boy ran in front of him and bowed his head in thanks.

His straight poise and well mannerism, made it seem like that too were drilled onto him.

"I sincerely thank you for paying my share of the food too. Although you have rejected the short sword, I don't have any other valuable thing on me. So at least let me state that I, Denzel Caius Sanguine owe you one".

Simon nonchalantly nodded his head at those words and started walking once again. He wanted to get away from the boy as soon as possible since he could tell that the boy's background was anything was simple and also because he didn't want to get encompassed in all of it.

"Ah wait mister since you have been so nice to me, I'll let you know about something interesting," the boy said while looking at his back.

"You can earn a massive sum of money if you report it back to the authorities of this kingdom" the boy pressed on but Simon did not stop, he simply waved his hands back in an attempt to get away from this kid when the next words the boy said made him stop in his tracks.

"Demon"... Simon's eyes widened and his body had frozen on the spot.

"Those people upstairs were saying something about seeing a Demon Noble" the boy iterated grinning ear to ear.

Simon turned around and carefully observed the boy, his genuine expression told him that the latter was telling the truth.

The trinket of Grimlock was still working and he didn't come across a truly strong person that could break the effect. If that was the case then how? While Simon was wondering that, Denzel approached closer and spoke lowering his voice.

"What do you say mister, do you want to track those two and see what they are up to? Looking at their dress up, I'm pretty sure that they are goons of some organisation. Who knows we might even be able to find that Demon they were talking about".

His mischievous character was on full display.

Simon fell silent for a while, it would be a lie if he said he was not curious about the Demon they were talking about and thinking back to the gaze the grey-robed guy threw at him, he knew that something was up.

Was he too confident and overly reliant on the trinket of Grimlock that his identity was busted without even him realising? But then again, this was an item said to be an ancient artefact and given to him by Adalinda. How can it be so easy to see through it?

Sorting all of his thoughts using the evolved Superior tier normal skill [High-Speed Thought Processing], Simon decided to follow the boy and investigate more about those two people who were regarded as troublemakers by the mysterious old man.

In any case, now that he was aware of it, he couldn't just ignore it.

Inside the royal palace of Ellesmere, in one of the halls specifically made to receive guests.

The room was spacious with windows spread open to provide plenty of sunlight and air to come in. Placed in the centre of the room, was a set of sofas. Seated in those sofas were the royal family of this kingdom and the delegates that had arrived from the Sanguine Empire.

King Henry, smiled and exchanged a few words of pleasantries with the royal court magician of the Sanguine Empire. Vouves laughed at the flattering words of the king of Ellesmere, given his position as a Ranker approved by the adventurer's association, he was used to people trying to get on his good side.

"Haha, I'm truly sorry to trouble you all with this matter" he said humbling himself.

"What is Sir Vouves saying, helping to find prince Denzel who has gone missing in our capital city is only natural and what we should be doing. There is no need for you to be worried, we will find him soon before he gets into any danger" Alstin said.

Alice seated beside her master, kept her eyes closed and sat elegantly without trying to comment. However, the guards that came with them tried to stop their laughter from leaking out at those words.

"What is elder brother saying, how can the sole disciple of the [Sword King] and one of the two greatest talents of Sanguine Empire, get into danger?" at this moment a clear sound of heels clacking on the floor rang out and the beguiling figure of Cynthia came into view.

She first addressed her father, brother and the people from the foreign nation before finding a seat.

"Hoho, so she is that exceptional daughter of yours who at the tender age of just thirteen managed to create a merchant organisation of her own and established herself as a successful businesswoman" Vouves caressed his beard and commented.

"Sir Vouves praises me too much, I just did what I excel at the most. Setting aside all that, the Serene Palace Merchant guild has still not reached the stage where I can be proud of it yet".

Vouves laughed, whereas King Henry nodded his head. Her words meant that establishing an organisation that was able to set its foothold all over the kingdom, was still not big enough of an achievement for her to take pride in.

Her temperament and attitude, pleased them greatly.

Alstin's brows twitched ever so slightly; however, he never allowed the amiable smile to falter from his face. He said:

"Dear sister is right, prince Denzel's martial achievement is something to be awed at. However, it is still not good for a royalty to roam around the streets without any escorts. Who knows if people with evil intentions would try to trick him or not? That is why I have sent my soldiers all around the city to find the prince".

King Henry watched all of this with a peaceful face, it was clear to him that his eldest son wanted to have the support of Vouves which would help him in the future to claim the throne.

'His mind is sharp and his determination does not lag behind anyone else. However, his martial prowess and temperament leave much to be desired' King Henry thought internally.

,m 'Now then should I probe around their intention behind bringing their two greatest talent here?' although the answer was clear to him, he still wanted to hear it with his own ears.

Was the reward item this time which even he knew very little about, tempting enough for even the mid-tier nation such as the Sanguine empire to send two of their best talents?

"As Sir Vouves can see we are quite busy at this moment with the preparation of the upcoming 'Battle of the Finest' tournament that our kingdom holds every ten years and is something the citizen of the whole kingdom keeps an eye on. Can I ask to what do we owe the pleasure to for a person of your standing giving us a visit?".

Chapter 286

The royal court magician laughed at those sophistries of words. With his age and experience, he had come into contact with hundreds if not thousands of said nobles trying to use their eloquent tongue against him.

How could he not see through the hidden intention behind the words of King Henry? The other party might already be aware of their objectives thus there was no need for Vouves to mix his words.

"Your Majesty must have already received a report from the Adventurer's Association. We are here to participate in the upcoming tournament of your kingdom".

King Henry narrowed his eyes a little, he was already aware of their motive behind coming here but hearing it from their own mouth made him realise once again how incredible the first price reward that the Adventurer's Association offered was.

The royal family of Ellesmere interacted with the delegates of the Sanguine Empire before leaving a few parting words and allowing them to rest.

"Our soldiers are looking for prince Denzel all around the city. The moment we find him, we will bring him here".

King Henry took heavy steps as he walked out of the room, his expression grave. Behind him followed Cynthia and Alstin his two children who were similarly not saying anything, understanding the gravity of the situation.

The motive behind the Sanguine Empire sending its two greatest prodigies here in this kingdom was to achieve two objectives at the same time. First was to get their hands on the reward that the association was providing and the second could be said as a show of force.

They wanted to show the surrounding kingdoms the power of their younger generation and establish a diplomatic situation with them.

"What should we do father?" Alstin asked in a somewhat apprehensive tone.

"Sigh.. what can we even do at this moment? The proposal was accepted by the headquarters of the Adventurer's Association themselves. Now I can only hope for your third brother to do his best" King Henry shifted his gaze in a certain direction of the palace.

Soldiers wearing the armour engraved with the insignia of the royal family ran across the city and searched it's every nook and cranny; nonetheless, prince Denzel was nowhere to be found.

The person in question for which the whole city was being disturbed was currently trailing two men who were making their way across the mountain range overlooking the city.

To escape the detection of the soldiers around the city, he even deliberately changed his clothes to a more casual one. What was same was that he still wore his black navy hat and strapped his rapier around his waist.

Simon who was also following the two men together with the boy, was looking at his surroundings with a hint of confusion. The two men after leaving the restaurant followed a particular path that led

deeper towards the alleyway of the slum district before dropping down inside a large unused manhole.

They followed the path the two men took closely and after winding long hours, a path opened up that led outside of the city directly.

The discovery of such a route that evaded all the patrolling and detection of the soldiers and even the protective barrier of this city, stunned Simon. He was sure now that the two people definitely had something to do with the underside of this society.

At the same time, the feeling that he shouldn't involve himself with them was getting stronger and stronger. However, his curiosity to know who that demon they were talking about, ruled his other various emotions.

During their long hours of trailing, the two men used various crisscrossing paths and methods to throw off any pursuers following them.

After finding that there was no presence following behind them, they finally decided to drop their guards a little and started rushing off in a certain direction.

Simon who was hiding behind a thicket, used the item Ice Phoenix's Sigh given by Irene to erase his presence to a minimal.

"[One Sword]" He heard a silent mumbling and then looked at the little boy whose aura had become very thin, if not for the fact that the person was still visible to him, he would have thought that the boy had disappeared entirely.

Denzel opened his eyes and let go of his sword that he was clutching in his hand. He then eyed Simon and said, "As I thought, mister is not normal. To be able to erase your presence to such an extent, other than my master, I have never seen anyone capable of doing it".

After a brief moment, they started tracking the two men once again for hours and just when the sun was about to go down, they halted their steps in front of a cabin located at the deepest ridges of the mountain.

The cabin was so well hidden that they would have entirely missed it had they not followed those two people closely.

The two shady men stepped towards the cabin and at that moment, Simon noticed that their figure undulated for a second before their whole body disappeared.

They hurriedly approached the cabin and stepped forward just like the two men; however, no peculiarities happened and their bodies were still there. Simon looked at the cabin in front of him and silently opened its door only to find a dusty place that have not been in use for a while.

'What was going on?' thinking that there was something that they had missed, Simon thoroughly checked the place upside down trying to find if there was any hidden entrances or such. But no matter how long they searched they couldn't find anything unusual.

"This can't be... where did they go?" Denzel flopped himself on the ground tired after relentlessly searching the place upside-down to no avail.

Simon was similarly also frowning, he had seen them stepping towards the cabin and suddenly disappearing. If there was no hidden entrance then how to explain the situation earlier? There must be an explanation.

Just when those people stepped near the cabin, their body suddenly started... undulating!

'That's right, if we want to enter we need to find how did they do that' Simon deliberated. He walked outside the room and surveyed the cabin intensely.

Seeing him behave as if he solved something, the boy propped himself up and asked "What wrong mister? Did you find something?".

Nodding his head Simon replied, "Search for a hidden teleportation item or formation around. Those two people must have used that to teleport somewhere".

"Oh!" the boy nodded and did as he was told.

The sudden disappearance and undulation that he had seen earlier was definitely the signs of space magic involved. Although he was not sure, he had seen a similar scene before where the orc general had used the space magic which distorted and created a ripple around the space to teleport himself and his subordinates away.

During his travel with Adalinda, Simon got a certain understanding of the space magic and he would even try to learn it in his spare time. Thus he knew a thing or two about space magic and that's how he could tell that the space magic was involved here or else there was no way to explain the sudden disappearance of those two people.

After spending some time thoroughly inspecting the place, they finally found an area engraved with peculiar runes hidden by dried up leaves.

This was the exact same spot that the two men had stood on before their bodies started undulating and they disappeared. They followed the previous example and stood themselves in between the formation.

However, even after a while, nothing happened and the scenery around them remained the same. The boy who had no knowledge about space magic, poked the formation as if trying to invoke some sort of reaction from it.

'Hmm, even putting mana onto it is not working than does that mean that there is some criteria involved to pass through it?' Simon thought as he tried to recall how easily the two men passed.

'Does the formation require them to have space magic? No if that was the case those two wouldn't have taken such a long and winding way instead of just using space magic to teleport here'.

Just when they were pondering what to do, the formation lit up and one of the men in off white robes that they were following, came out of it.

The moment Eleven saw two strangers in front of the cabin which should be well hidden, he first became stunned then alert and finally killing intent overflowed from his body.

Simon and the boy named Denzel were the same, they didn't expect to see one of the two men that they were following, come out of the formation.

"Who are you two and how did you reach this place?" Eleven asked taking out a longbow from his space ring. He tugged on the bowstring and an invisible arrow made of mana, immediately formed which he used to point at the two of them.

The pressure that flowed out of his body, was enough to stop the rustling of the trees and halt the blowing wind.

Simon observed the man using [Analysis] which showed his level to be above 400.

A level 402 [Nightfall Ranger] was currently pointing his arrow towards them and Simon who was considering his options, was stunned to see the boy make the first move.

SHIING... even before one could blink their eyes, the boy had unsheathed his rapier and charged towards the opponent with a ridiculous amount of speed that one wouldn't expect from a boy of his age.

Even though Denzel did not use any wind or electro magic to augment his speed, his swiftness was comparable to or even excelled those that do.

Chapter 287

The floor would crack wherever he stepped from the sheer force applied by his feet onto the ground powerful enough to leave afterimages behind.

"Shit" Eleven immediately shifted his bow towards the boy and shot consecutively. Each of the mana arrows that he shot, was highly compressed and could easily turn a boulder into fine granules.

Nonetheless, none of them managed to even touch the hem of the little boy's clothes.

"Flame Magic Mastery- [Flame Imbuement], [One Sword], [Piercing Enhancement]" Eleven heard the silent mumbling of the young boy who had appeared behind him like a ghost. His rapier which was almost as tall as him, had at this moment, turned a glaring crimson.

Denzel used his vast speed and mastery over the sword, to deliver a swift attack that even his enemy would have difficulty avoiding at this range.

It was just like he predicted, instead of running, Eleven used his abilities to counter the sword. A blue light condensed into an arrow and immediately set forth to clash with the tip of the rapier.

RUMBLE... a loud rumbling noise reverberated across the surroundings and pushed the two of them back.

ZzzSssTttt... Eleven stabilised his footing and pulled on the bowstring again which had sparks of electricity latched onto it. The arrow that he had shot previously, was also imbued with his mastery over Lightning magic.

Hoping to see some effect on his enemy, his eyes glanced over at the boy who had nimbly deflected the force from their clash by performing a few summersaults while in the air. Not even the edge of his clothes was harmed by the attack.

Whereas he on the other hand, was forced to take a couple of steps back and even his mana was slightly contaminated by the flame magic the boy had used. If one was a high levelled master, they could see the difference between their skills from that clash alone.

Grinding his teeth at this unexpected loss that he suffered, Eleven conjured one more Lightning arrow but this time he had also applied multiple of his skills onto it.

The dreadful aura around the arrow went up a notch and there was even a faint roaring sound like that of a wild beast coming from the arrow.

"Little boy don't think you can run wild just because you have some attainment at your age. Since you all are unwilling to answer, I have no choice but forcefully open your mouth" Elven barked and shot his arrow at the boy whose gaze was a little hollow.

"Feel the attack, sharpen your senses, empty your mind [One Sword]" Denzel muttered in a trance unaware of the impending arrow that was the size of a snake targeting him.

The arrow which to Simon's surprise had taken the shape of an animate snake was just about to hit the boy when the scene that happened next, broke every misconception he had about the boy like a glass.

Stretching his left arm that held the rapier, Denzel brought it towards the snake. The moment the sword that contained no power connected with the arrow, instead of all the condensed power inside the arrow erupting out creating a huge shockwave, it latched on to the sword.

The boy simply flailed his rapier and deflected the attack as if it was nothing.

BOOMM...

The lightning arrow charge toward the distant mountain and created a huge trench, rocking the place for a few seconds. Cracks spread around the steep mountain wall and rocks fell down from above.

The lightning attack just now could be said to be ten times more powerful than any other lightning arrow the white-robed man had used earlier; nevertheless, the boy deflected the attack effortlessly.

Simon had to; No, he was forced to admit that when it came to attainment on the sword, he was lagging far behind the boy. At the same time, this moment also served as a wake-up call of some sort telling him who was overly reliant on his stats and magic to also train his sword skills. Or else, the scene that had just unfolded, would also happen to him if he met a truly strong person in the future.

Knowing the areas he had to work on, Simon intensely observed the boy's battle with the masked man.

After deflecting the attack of his opponent, Denzel flashed a cheeky smile.

"It appears I'm still far away from the state of being [One with the Sword] teacher was talking about. I need to concentrate all of my being just for that moment".

His mumblings was only heard by him. Straightening his sword once again, he looked at the flabbergasted expression of his enemy and felt delight welling up within him.

"This is fun... let's fight more" Flame Magic Master- [Flame Imbuement], [Super Enhanced Agility], [Precise Senses], [Piercing Enhancement], [Cut Enhancement], [Super Enhanced Magic], [One Sword].

Denzel activated all of his skills at once and steam started coming out of his body. His fair skin had turned a shade of red and brilliant light mix of crimson and gold radiated from his rapier.

STEP... the moment he stepped forward, the grass near his foot, was burnt into ashes and his entire figure disappeared at this moment.

Eleven was jolted awake by the implausible scene that was occurring in front of his eyes one after the other. Before he could even recover from the shock he had received earlier, his instincts that he had honed after numerous battles, started acting up.

The moment he saw the boy disappear from his line of sight, he hurriedly used all of his escape skills and increased his agility to duck to his right.

CHIII... Immediately, the moment he stepped aside a crimson rapier stabbed at the place he was just a fraction of a second ago. The air around the sword was distorted, indicative of how high the temperature around the sword was.

Simon gaped at the boy's mastery over flame magic. His attainment was not any less than his and was on the verge of breaking through to the Advanced stage.

The stab was just the start, the speed of the boy even without the augmentation of Wind or electro magic was so fast, that the Lightning magic user Eleven, was having a hard time dodging it.

Although the rare class he got after the class change was categorised as an Assassin class, his defence was weaker than all his other stats due to his high magic and agility. But even the agility he was so proud of, was slowly being encroached upon and trampled by a young boy less than 16 years of age.

The tip of the battle as time went on, started favouring the boy as his attacks were finally starting to connect with his enemy inducing screams of agony.

Simon who found no need to interject in this battle, silently observed the fight between the two. If he was asked, how the battle looked from his point of view, he would say that it was incredibly one-sided and the strength and weaknesses of each parties were coming out at this moment.

On one hand, was the masked guy whose class might have been that of an assassin but the way he fought was like that of a mage and on the other was this highly trained and meticulous boy whose every movement was polished so that he did not have even a single wasted second.

Simon did not know what the level of the boy was, since he couldn't use [Analysis] against him, nonetheless, even if he wasn't level 400, his skills and attainment over sword made up for it.

Additionally, Simon instinctively felt that the boy was holding back a lot of his power.

"[Flame Light]" mumbling something once again, the boy charged towards his opponent once again and hacked at him dozens of times. This time, instead of simply piercing, the flames imbued on the rapier took on the form of the rapier that charged towards their target.

Eleven was panting desperately to dodge the attacks that left him with no time to counterattack. His clothes were burned and his skin was singed all around, looking at his appearance, it was obvious that he had suffered quite a lot of injury.

At this moment, he was cursing the heavens for making this annoying kid his opponent. Utilising his class-specific skill [Night Step] to dodge yet another stab from that rapier when suddenly, there were nine more crimson rapiers headed towards him.

Gawking at this kid for stepping up his game yet again, he used all of his skills in a desperate effort to dodge the attacks.

STAB... However, unlike the previous times the rapiers this time were not following the command of their user and were just like speeding bullets intending to take the life of their target.

Elven was unable to dodge all of the rapiers in time, two sword projections managed to pierce his abdomen and leg. That was not all, each of these sword projections were created through the high concentration of Flame magic, thus his insides were burned quite badly.

Eleven unable to maintain his centre of gravity, fell hard on the floor, blood continuously seeping out of his wounds.

"FUCK... I'll kill you brat" Eleven shouted and attempted something in his rage that he would have otherwise never done it.

Pouring all of his mana into the bow in his hand, he overloaded the core stone inside to create a lethal attack that would destroy the weapon along with its target.

The mana in a fifty-meter area around them started convulsing and trembling before gathering towards the bow. The mana being released out, was so potent that even the air took on a bluish hue.

RUMBLE... space distorted severely when the lightning arrow started forming, even Simon who was standing around in the distance, felt the severity of the situation.

Chapter 288

When he looked at the next action of the boy, he was surprised to find that the boy was standing still and not doing anything.

'What does he intend to do? Don't tell me he wants to face against the attack his enemy is conjuring?' Simon thought, the boy not making any move when this was the perfect time to take out his opponent who was going for a powerful attack that needed a couple of seconds of channelling.

The motive of the boy was plainly obvious, even Eleven understood the intention of the boy and called him naïve internally. He smiled widely as if this was his victory when suddenly an indifferent voice rang out from behind him.

Eleven turned around only to momentarily see a flaming fist strike his lower jaw, the next second his entire vision blanked out. The dreadful mana releasing out of the bow also swiftly dissipated.

Simon who had knocked the man out, walked towards him and checked his belongings to find if he had any escape items on him.

At this moment, hurried footsteps sounded out and the figure of the boy stood in front of him. His face flushed with anger and he was glaring at Simon.

"Why did you do that? I was going to defeat his attack even without your help" Denzel complained, he was indeed planning on taking the attack head-on and dispiriting the last hopes of his enemy. But before he could, the mister in front of him, knocked the enemy out, drowning his hopes of facing the attack.

Simon glanced at the fuming boy lazily and commented "We never decided that he was going to be your opponent, you just arbitrarily ran at him. Besides, the attack he was just conjuring, would have created a large commotion even if you could win against it".

"At that time, the uproar would have attracted the soldier or sentries of the kingdom around the mountain. Would you be able to take the responsibility then?".

Hearing his words, the boy's mouth immediately became shut and deeply contemplated over his actions, a quality that even Simon was impressed with.

"Anyways our goal is to interrogate these guys and see what's on the other side of this teleportation circle; fortunately we found ourselves the perfect person to ask these questions. It will be too much of a shame if you kill him here"

Simon reminded before unarming the enemy. He took his space ring and everything, leaving him with just his clothes. Although Simon deliberated over whether to tie the enemy, he refrained from doing so because unlike earth, all the people here were superhuman capable of easily tearing through a rope.

He didn't have to worry about the enemy suddenly running or attacking them since the latter was already heavily injured and after he disrupted the last attack, even their mana should be in a state of turmoil where they won't even be able to properly conjure a novice tier magic or invoke any skills.

The two of them waited patiently for the man to wake. The moment Eleven woke up, he found himself being stared at by two people. He tried to get his body up only to flop back down, his current state could only be described as miserable.

"Don't try anything funny or else I can guarantee that your ending won't be a nice one. You won't be able to find peace even after death" the one who said those words, was the tall man who had used a sneak attack to knock him out before he could complete his attack.

Eleven tried searching for his weapon only to see the man flash him a wicked look and take out a longbow from his space ring that belonged to him.

"Are you perhaps searching for this?" the man asked to which Eleven only gave him a hateful glare.

"You bastard do you have no shame to sneak attack a person and even snatch his belongings" Eleven cried in injustice.

"What was that? Since when did it become a common sense to wait for the enemy you know is going for a powerful attack that takes a long time to channel? Sneak attack? Don't make me laugh. You think we are all chivalrous knights here?" Simon pulled his ears forward and asked.

He was tired of enemies talking like they were wronged. It was okay when they did it, but they can't take it lying down when they suffer the same blow.

"You" Eleven was so angry that he felt like he was about to blow up from the pent up frustration.

"Who are you all why are you doing this?" leaving all things aside, he did not even know who they were.

"Shut up, we are the ones who will do the questioning. If you refuse to answer or give us wrong information, I'll make sure you die a long and excruciating death" Simon barked back taking out the [C] tier Twin blades from his inventory.

Eleven displayed a fearless smile in front of such an act, his defiant attitude was saying do it if you can.

STAB... Simon stabbed one of the blades in the man's torso and activated its lightning magic.

"Aaaaarrrrggghh" the man whose whole body was already battered by his own mana going rampant, howled in agony as he was repeatedly electrocuted. His body jolted up and down, like a fish splashing in a puddle of water.

The process continued for a while and just when the enemy seemed that he would faint, Simon would stop and let him recover for a while before continuing.

"Stop..stop..stooooop. I'll speak" after a while, the willpower of the man finally broke down and he decided to spill the beans.

Simon smiled and pointed at the cabin behind with his blade and asked "We saw the two of you approaching this cabin and suddenly disappearing. How did you achieve that?".

Eleven opened his eyes wide when he heard that, so they were indeed being followed. He contemplated whether he should tell them, the man in front of him for some reason looked just like a demon who would do anything to get the answer from him.

After hesitating for a while he decided to come out clean and told them about the teleportation formation.

"As I thought, that formation was indeed a teleportation one"

"Right" Seeing the man and the boy look unfazed at his answer, Eleven realised that they had long found the teleportation formation that was hidden outside the cabin.

"So how do we enter it?" And as expected a question he was hoping to come, soon arrived.

"You can't" Eleven replied. Just when the other party narrowed his eyes and was about to stab him with those blades, he clarified.

"Wait, listen to my whole explanation, I'm telling the truth. The teleportation formation was set up by a powerful space mage and only allows people from our organisation to pass through. This means that no matter what you do, you cannot pass through" Eleven looked at the two people hoping that they would understand.

"What should we do?" the boy asked.

Simon intensely observed the man, from his behaviour and words, it didn't seem like he was telling a lie. Plus earlier when he was investigating the formation, he did find that there were some parameters set for the formation to activate.

Eleven observed the man and the boy, from what he could tell, they seemed oddly familiar, even their voice was something that he heard recently.

He watched their expression change a few times and just when Eleven thought that they had no choice but to give up this time, the question the man asked next, boggled his memory and he remembered where he saw them.

"You to were the other customers inside that run down shack!"

"Correct, sadly you don't get anything. Now answer my question, who is that demon you were talking about?" Simon glared at the man intending to torture him until he gets his answer.

Eleven hesitated, then asking him this question meant that their earlier conversation inside that restaurant was overheard. He wanted to answer them but whenever he remembered the Demon earl who pummeled him like an ant, he instinctively closed his mouth.

Simon narrowed his eyes after seeing the man refuse to talk, it seemed that the dose of lightning he had given the man earlier, was not enough.

Five minutes later---

"Alright, Let's go in, now I'm quite curious to see what's on the other side" Simon said propping himself up and stretching his body. Lying on the ground beside him was Eleven whose whole body was writhing with electricity nonetheless, he was still conscious.

"But how? According to him, the teleportation circle only allows their members to go in and out" The boy asked sounding perplexed.

"Since we can't go on our own, we can just take someone with us who can pass through the formation?" Simon mused over the idea.

The boy looked surprised, even he felt like the idea was plausible.

"W-wait" Eleven started panicking, he knew what his end would be if he allowed the intruders to pass through.

Simon glanced at the panicked and terror-stricken expression of the man and knew that his guess was on the spot. Without waiting for a second, he grabbed the powerless man and walked towards the formation, the boy silently followed behind him.

When they reached the formation and inserted some of their mana into it, some changes finally occurred. He could feel a mysterious energy scan his body and the two other people around him, the runes on the formation finally started glowing.

A kind of energy that was different from the elemental energies engulfed their surroundings and a peculiar sensation of being weightless assaulted them. Before they knew it they were in some unknown place.

Chapter 289

They were no longer in the mountainous region surrounding the capital and were inside what looked like a basement of some building. The place was dark with very less lighting, instruments, artifacts and books strewn around the surrounding messily.

The place was quite big but most of it was occupied by things that Simon had never seen before.

"Woah, what is all that" Denzel glanced all around him excitedly.

Looking at the enthusiasm of the boy Simon couldn't help but smile bitterly, he too had the same reaction.

"You guys shouldn't have come here. Now not only you guys are destined to die, but even I'll die because of you" As if to dampen their mood, the gloomy voice of the man sounded out.

Simon did not ignore the warning of the man and kept it in the back of his mind. If worse comes to worst, he will use the man to teleport themselves back again. Since the man could go back to the cabin, that must mean that the teleportation formation below their feet worked both ways.

In a way, it was just like the gate he had installed in his dungeon. Simon first knocked the man unconscious so that he couldn't run away before investigating the place.

There was still one other person who had used the teleportation formation along with the man. That grey-robed guy that was giving him an uneasy feeling at the restaurant. He wanted to know why that person had given him such a look.

"Is it because he is involved with that Demon earl that he was able to recognise me?" Simon who had heard the whole details from the mouth of Eleven contemplated.

According to the man, they went there to take something from the demon as for that what that item was, he had no clue since he was not higher up in the rankings yet. Something that the humans wanted from a Demon Noble... what could it be?

As he roamed around and observed his surroundings, he soon came in front of a huge mechanical thing that was in the shape of a pot. It had many tubes, gauges and meters connected to it and was the most eyes catching thing out of all the artifacts in this basement.

His thoughts were also shared by the boy who was also staring at this peculiar artwork with amazed eyes.

As Simon observed the thing, he noticed that it had a big radar protruding out from its top and in the centre of its body, it had a place which meant to insert something.

90% out of curiosity and 10% because he felt like he knew the item that was placed at the centre of the mechanic, Simon extended his head to peek only to stand gobsmacked in place.

Seeing the peculiar behaviour of the mister, Denzel too peeked at the thing that was placed inside only to get confused. He did not understand what the thing that looked like the remains of a broken dark black orb was.

Though the boy did not know, how was it possible for Simon a Demon Viscount to not know what that item was? After all, he too has one of those sitting in the basement of the white palace of his dungeon.

Yes, the thing that was placed inside the mechanic was none other than the shattered fragments of a dungeon core. As absurd as it sounded, Simon couldn't be mistaken about it since he felt a sense of familiarity with it.

Only after staring at it for a while and organising his disorganised mind, did he tear his eyes away from the thing.

'What was going on, what is that thing doing here?' he thought internally. His thoughts was answered by no one; however, he soon arrived at the answer himself.

From his inherited memories, he knew that the reason behind humans diving inside the dungeons created by Demon Nobles was to gather resources and riches. However, the fuel driving their motivation was not these small benefits but the dungeon core, the highly guarded and the life of the dungeon itself.

Simon cursed his incomplete memories again. He did not know why but for some reason unknown, powerful kingdoms and empires seek these dungeon cores and even go to such lengths as to provide immense benefits to those humans who are able to conquer one and bring the shattered core back.

They must have a compelling reason, a motive that had enough enticement to throw away lavish rewards and destroy an entire dungeon just to get the remains of its shattered dungeon core.

'Did that Demon Earl Avrox give them this shattered dungeon core? Is this machine related to that objective of theirs? If so then what did it do and how did it work' thoughts like a stream were constantly running inside his head.

Simon now had one more reason that he must investigate for coming here.

"What are you doing?" Seeing Simon look so interested and spent on the machine, Denzel couldn't help ask.

Although the machine at the corner of the basement was the most eyes catching of all, it wasn't like it was the only thing around here. There was many other peculiar things stored inside here that ordinary people couldn't even come in contact with it their entire life.

Simon did not answer him and kept on examining the artefact which should have a use and a way to activate that he didn't know.

In a spacious room that was filled with many training dummies and cracked walls, a middle-aged man with his upper body bare, could be seen standing still. His body had many scars reminiscent of the battles he had gone through and the aura he was releasing was as sharp and ferocious as a tiger.

His face had slight wrinkles and his long black hair was mixed with some white in between. At this moment, a man in grey robes walked inside through the door and hurriedly bowed towards the man.

"My lord everything has been prepared. The machine has been set up and as a sign of goodwill for us working together, we even got you that item". Eight stated, his face was covered with a mask so there was no way to tell what his expression was.

,m "Hmph, you dogs of Cerberus only know how to wag their tails in front of clients you deem important. Did you really think I would believe you all that easily?" the man opened his eyes and a palpable pressure descended onto the room.

Eight was accustomed to being exposed to this kind of pressure, simply laughed and did his best to sound sincere.

"What is lord saying? We will not dare to trick the guild master of one of the top five guilds of this kingdom or should I say the number one guild of this country. We simply speak the truth, the dungeon core has been acquired and the machine is installed in the basement of your headquarters as per our agreement".

Eight asserted with an aura of confidence.

Perhaps the so called guild leader of one of the top five guilds of this country was affected by this news or maybe because the thing eight mentioned held too much enticement, the man revealed a shocked expression.

"Leaving aside the coordinator prototype, how did you get your hands on the dungeon core?".

"Hehe, please forgive this one for not being able to answer your question. As you know, in our line of business, we do need to maintain some secrecy and identity of our clients" Eight replied sounding a little troubled by that question.

The guild leader simply snorted and dropped the practice sword on his hands. He then reached out for his shirt kept on the table and walked towards the exit at the other end of the room.

Eight who followed behind, remarked, "Please don't forget our conditions. Our leader would be quite sad if you failed to hold the other side of your bargain and in that case, the higher officials from Cerberus will give you a visit".

The guild leader who was walking at the front, stopped and turned around his head to face the grey-robed man "Are you threatening me?".

Eight did not cower at this display of strength and simply stood still as if saying he was just simply stating the truth.

The guild leader of one of the top five guilds made a scowling face before turning around to leave the floor. Walking out of the training room, they followed a corridor before taking the stairs down.

The building had a total of five floors, hence they had to walk down a couple of stairs to reach the basement. Just as they were about to reach their destination, a loud rumble that shook the entire building generated from the basement followed by a burst of extremely wild and chaotic mix of energy.

The shockwave that burst out of the ground floor, was so terrible that it completely wrecked the building and forced the guild master and Eight to use their powers to hurriedly guard themselves.

However, even after all that they were blown back like a ragdoll and smashed into the walls. When the disturbing energy and the smoke settled, the guild leader and Eight looked at each other with shocked expressions before hurrying towards the basement only to find that everything was a mess.

The place looked just like an area where a disaster had stricken.

Eight looked around and only sighed in relief when he saw the coordinator was safe and sound but the next second his face became ugly.

Eleven, his comrade from Cerberus, who should have gone back to the city, was lying down on the floor unconscious.

"What happened here?" the guild leader asked knitting his brows. He could see many members of his guild lying on the floor, some knocked unconscious on the floor, some buried by the debris.

Chapter 290

The building was owned by their guild and hence he knew that it didn't look like that from the start, his anger was warranted.

"G-guild... leader" one of the adventurer who was barely conscious, reached out unable to get out from the debris.

The guild leader walked towards the other guy and stretched his hands to get the person out of the debris.

"Oi, you alright? What happened here? Who did this to you all?" he repeated.

The adventurer opened and closed his mouth and finally squeezed out a few words before losing consciousness.

"Intruders?" the guild leader had a face as if he couldn't believe what he heard. They were currently inside the headquarters of their guild, the security around here was so tight with many barriers

deployed that leave alone intruding, nobody would be able to even step foot around their area without them noticing.

Him being unable to notice could only mean that... the secret teleportation formation laid out in the basement and known only to a handful few had been used.

Naturally, his first suspicions went towards the grey-robed man who was similarly astounded by this series of events.

"Who did this? Who has the gall to come to my guild and injure my members?" the guild leader barked unable to take this incident lying down.

Eight sighed before taking out a healing potion from his space ring and scattered it on Eleven.

"It's not an attack. The coordinator was activated, this was the result of the spatial portal closing".

"What?!" Before he could go recover from this blow, another shocking news hit him out of nowhere.

Eight didn't pay attention at the man who was going insane with fury and was instead intently looking at the coordinator, more precisely the shattered dungeon core placed in the centre of it.

He could sense that the vast energy within the fragments, had gone down by a lot and that is why he could tell that the coordinator had been used. In any other case, this could be seen as a success since the prototype was working just like the original without any accident happening or loss of life.

However, this time, the coordinator was used by an intruder and the number of times they could dive through it had also gone down by one. With only a limited number of uses left, if they still couldn't achieve their objective, they would have to look for a new dungeon core.

Anyways they couldn't do anything now that the intruders were gone and could only wait for Eleven and others to wake up to know what had actually transpired here.

WHOOOSH... snow, as far as the eye could see, thick arctic snow covered the area. A snowstorm was currently raging on at this place and made it difficult to even see a few meters of area around you.

Where was this place? Simon did not know, he found himself here after being teleported by that peculiar machine.

But currently, that didn't matter. He was fuming, he was not fuming at this world of snow but rather at a woman who had followed them inside.

Yes, currently besides Simon and Denzel, there was one other additional person along with them. Lustrous white hair that complemented with the world of snow itself, tangerine pupils and a voluminous body overflowing with temptation.

This was not their first time meeting so how can Simon forget her? In fact, he was only in this situation because of this woman. The alluring beauty in front of him was none other than the Disciple of Adalinda and also the one who taught him the [Ancient Draconic Compel] technique.

How was she here? Well when Simon was tinkering and investigating the pot-shaped construct all over, he felt a sudden resonance from the shattered dungeon core and unwittingly inserted some of his mana onto it. Causing a reaction which even he didn't expect.

At that moment, the machine started becoming alive and trembled intensely causing vibrations to travel through the ground and spread over the whole building.

Simon had a face that said he had fucked up, the commotion was so obvious that it would be surprising if nobody came down. Soon, the people in the building who had heard the commotion rushed inside only to find two people that they have never seen before.

The boy was also surprised by the chain of events that he did not know what to say, his plan of intruding inside the base of the two shady people and know more about their work, had gone up in smokes now that they were discovered.

Just when he was about to shout that this was all Simon's fault for touching something he shouldn't, the machine started acting weird once again.

All the mana around the basement was sucked dry and more and more was flowing in from the surrounding outside. The rotors around the two sides of the machine, started spinning and a fluctuation of energy so wild and berserk that it even caused him to be scared witless, started emanating from it.

"What are you two doing? This is the territory of the..."

BOOM.. the people who rushed in were about to say something when their voices were drowned out by a deafening noise. A shockwave spread through the pot like machine and pushed everybody back.

Every eye was now focused on the machine whose energy had reached such a level where if anything goes wrong, it could erase a few kilometres area with them as the centre.

Finally, when everyone thought that the only eventual ending would be the machine blowing up, all that energy flowed into the radar on top of the machine. Next the radar lit up with a brilliant light and condensed all that energy into a beam that broke through the space and travelled to some unknown destination.

SHATTER...

After that, it was just one event after another, the space above the machine was shattered where the beam had dug a hole in space and what came forth was a dark portal that led to who knows where.

The portal that appeared, had the attention of everybody present as they cautiously stared at it. They who were just ordinary members of the guild, did not know what it was since they were not privy to such information. If they knew, they would have immediately apprehended Simon and the little boy before they committed more shenanigans.

At this moment when nobody moved an inch due to the incomprehensibility of the situation, a powerful presence could be sensed approaching closer. The aura was so powerful that even these members who usually acted so high and mighty had to drop their noses.

The presence couldn't be any familiar to them after all, this was the headquarters of their guild and other than those few members who are currently outside, there was only one other person present who could release such a powerful aura, their guild leader.

"This is bad" Denzel mumbled, this was the first time he had a grave expression on his face. The presence approaching closer, represented that serious of a problem.

The teleportation formation through which they came from, was currently being surrounded by the members of the guild. Just when the boy was panicking internally, Simon's calm voice rang beside his ears.

"On my mark, get ready to dive inside the portal".

"Wha..."

The boy did not have the time to retort back when from the corner of his eyes he saw a faint figure dash towards the portal.

It was also at this moment when Simon saw another person dive inside that he gave his signal "Now".

Without saying anything further, he dived inside the portal whose energy had started to become volatile. Although the boy appeared apprehensive, he still followed behind him.

Why were some kingdoms and empires collecting shattered dungeon core? What uses did the machine have? Where did the portal lead to? Who were these people who were working with a Demon Noble?

Simon had many questions running through his mind; instinctively, he knew that some of them will be answered once he dived inside the portal.

ZIING... right after they disappeared, the machine started trembling and making noise once again. The powerful energy supporting the portal started to become more and more volatile before the shocked eyes of the members of the guild and before they knew it, the portal burst apart causing a powerful shockwave to hit each and every one of them.

When Simon came to himself, the next thing he found was this vast snowy world all around him. He examined his body to see if he had suffered any damage by forcefully diving inside the portal but to his surprise, there was not even a scratch on his body.

Just as he propped himself up to see where he was, out from the corner of his eyes he spotted the boy who had dived inside the portal with him and was yet to become awake and a woman who couldn't be any familiar to him.

Well, that was what led to the current situation.

As Simon continuously eyed her, Lucine couldn't help but glare back at him only to get momentarily surprised the next second.

"It's you?! What a surprise, I didn't expect to see you here".

Those nonchalant words of hers served even more to fume Simon; however, when he thought about how she would be soon captured by her master and forced to cut her trip short and return back home crying, his heart was finally consoled a little.

"I'm the one who is surprised, what are you doing here?" he asked trying to probe about her motive behind coming here instead of roaming the capital which was currently teeming with festivity.