

The First Order

- Chapter 1101 – 1110

Chapter 1101: Bounty hunter

Late into the night, it became quiet in the vast Sorcerer's Tower. The maids had returned to their quarters, leaving only a few of them behind in the standby room in case their sorcerer-master summoned them.

They would only start working again at 6 o'clock the next morning. Their first task would be to present a clean set of clothes to their sorcerer-master. If he needed to attend an event for the day, they would have to prepare several sets of clothes as alternates.

Then they would prepare a sumptuous breakfast that might include soy milk, dairy milk, steamed buns, fried dough sticks, and so on.

Initially, Ren Xiaosu was worried he would not get used to the food here after arriving at the Kingdom of Sorcerers. But in the end, he realized he had overthought things. Food preference was probably the last thing he needed to worry about in this place.

Right now, with everything quiet in the Sorcerer's Tower, Ren Xiaosu, who was lying on the velvet bed, suddenly opened his eyes and shot out of the window like an arrow.

He was staying on the fourth floor of the Sorcerer's Tower. If the Sorcerer's Tower were to be described as a castle, he would be situated on the topmost floor of the castle's structural foundation, and above that was the turret.

The exterior of the tower was lined with uneven brick, and Ren Xiaosu used his strong fingers to grip the handholds between them as he climbed up. In the dark of the night, no one noticed someone was actually performing the dangerous activity of free solo climbing here.

Ren Xiaosu climbed upwards silently. Meanwhile, somewhere higher, a black figure was sliding down a rope in the opposite direction of Ren Xiaosu.

"Old Xu," who had been hiding in the shadows of the tower's cupola, already saw everything that was happening. Since the prey came, the hunter had no reason to let it go.

However, this bounty hunter was much more alert than expected. Before Ren Xiaosu could get close, the bounty hunter had already noticed the commotion below.

The bounty hunter sneered at Ren Xiaosu and kicked off from the wall with both feet, fleeing in the air with kite-like grace.

In fact, these bounty hunters were indeed much more alert than normal people. Furthermore, they seemed to especially like carrying out sneak attacks and assassinations from the shadows. Once they discovered the situation was not right, they would flee far away without any hesitation. It was the same for the bounty hunter he encountered previously.

The current bounty hunter was holding an orange Eye of True Sight in his hand. It was unknown what kind of sorcery he was using to stay in the air for such a long time, but it was extremely weird to see him flying and gliding in midair.

However, Ren Xiaosu knew full well that this was not true flight.

'When the bounty hunter "flew" away, the knights outside guarding the Sorcerer's Tower seemed to have noticed something. But by the time they looked up at the sky, the bounty hunter had already fled far away.

The knights shook their heads and thought it might have just been the wind, so they did not suspect anything further. After all, everything was still quiet inside the Sorcerer's Tower.

Ren Xiaosu revealed a smile as he watched the bounty hunter gradually get farther away.

Naturally, the other party was able to discover him only because he had allowed it. Otherwise, if it were Old Xu that took action, there would not be many sorcerers in the world who could avoid Old Xu's sneak attack. This applied even to the Central Plains' superhumans.

In terms of assassination, Ren Xiaosu was truly a top expert in the field. Otherwise, would the Zhou Consortium fear him so much?

Of course, his methods might not be particularly stealthy.

But as long as the outcome was the same, the process was not too important.

Ren Xiaosu glanced at the knights guarding the Sorcerer's Tower before leaping off towards the other residential buildings' roofs in the distance with Old Xu following close behind.

He could not make his move here. He could not let outsiders know he wanted to steal a sorcerer's Eye of True Sight, or it would probably cause the entire magus order to target him.

'When Ren Xiaosu landed lightly on a roof, he did not even stabilize himself before exerting more strength through his feet and propelling himself forward again. It was as though he were carrying a nitrous oxide propulsion device on him. If anyone were to see this, they would probably start questioning what they had learned about physics over the years.

The physical fitness levels of people like Ren Xiaosu were no longer bound by the laws of Newton. That would have to be left to his younger brother, Twoton.

'The bounty hunter in front of him gradually descended from midair. He quickly jumped across the low roofs, thinking he should have successfully shaken off the pursuit.

But when the bounty hunter turned around, he was surprised to see Ren Xiaosu smiling at him from not far behind.

'The bounty hunter was shocked. He was inwardly surprised at how the young man had even caught up to him. Furthermore, he did not make any noise. He was like a ghost!

However, there was no time for him to think so much. Under such circumstances, he could only cast another spell to increase his speed.

Suddenly, the bounty hunter was enveloped by a swirling wind. His flighty steps were as light as a swan's, and every step he took was a leap of a dozen meters!

But after he increased his speed, he turned around and was surprised to find he was still unable to shake off the young man behind him. Furthermore, the young man's smile remained unchanged as though he were extremely laid back.

At this moment, the bounty hunter understood the young man in pursuit was much faster than him. The reason why he did not make a move on him was that he wanted to force him out of the city.

The bounty hunter sneered mentally, 'It looks like you don't wish to be discovered either, right?

Thinking of this, he suddenly rushed to the left. At the same time, the Eye of True Sight in his hand glowed, and a sudden ball of raging flames shot down towards a stable.

The stable had a thatched roof, so just a slight spark would set it ablaze, let alone the bounty hunter casting a fireball at it.

All of a sudden, dancing flames rose into the air, and the horses in the stable started neighing loudly. They even trotted anxiously forward in an attempt to break out of their reins.

The horses' reins were tied to the heavy wooden pillars in the stable. As the horses continued struggling, the entire stable collapsed.

This commotion woke up the city's residents. Someone started shouting, "Put out the fire! Put out the fire!"

"Go fetch water from the well!"

During this time, some people also saw figures flit across roofs and shouted that someone had committed arson.

The bounty hunter felt a little more at ease when he heard that. This way, he could probably delay the enemy behind him as much as possible.

But before he could fully breathe a sigh of relief, he spun around and saw the young man behind him was still calmly in close pursuit!

Honestly, Ren Xiaosu really did not appear flustered at all. A big prize like the orange Eye of True Sight was right in front of him, so how could he possibly give up chasing just like that?

Moreover, with his speed, it was impossible that the residents in the city would make out his appearance.

'The bounty hunter started panicking. He thought for a moment before finally stopping on the roof of an abandoned warehouse and turning around to face Ren Xiaosu.

'When he stopped, Ren Xiaosu also stopped. They stared at each other from a distance.

The bounty hunter said coldly, "Are you that sorcerer's servant?"

Ren Xiaosu laughed and said, "It's 'steward.' Don't demote me as you like. I'm different from the sheeple."

The bounty hunter was puzzled. "Sheeple?!"

'The bounty hunter was very confused and could not understand what Ren Xiaosu was saying.

Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu was also deeply puzzled. That was because the other party's voice clearly belonged to a young woman...

Chapter 1102: The book thief

It wasn't until they came to a standstill that Ren Xiaosu had the time to carefully size up this sorceress. Her clothing was no different from that of the previous bounty hunter he

encountered. She had a concealed arrow in her sleeve, and a crossbow and rope slung around her waist. However, her face was covered with a black scarf that made her look a little different from the previous bounty hunter.

His opponent was a little skinny. Ren Xiaosu did not manage to distinguish that earlier while chasing after her at high speed. Only now did he realize the other party had obvious female characteristics.

This was the first time Ren Xiaosu had seen a sorceress. To be honest, he had thought the art of sorcery was only passed down through the male lineage. After all, he had never come across a sorceress before, nor were there any records of one in The Sorcerer Chronicles.

However, this did not affect Ren Xiaosu from wanting to steal her Eye of True Sight.

Quite curious, Ren Xiaosu asked, "Did the Tudor family send you? Why do you want to assassinate Melgor?"

But when he asked that, the other party was taken aback. "Assassinate Melgor? For what?"

"Hehe." Ren Xiaosu gave a fake smile and said, "Not long ago, a bounty hunter attempted to assassinate him. I can already guess that you were both sent by the Tudor family."

Ren Xiaosu was being so honest with her because he had no intention of letting her leave.

The future commander of the Northwest was here, and if he said he was going to kill you, he would definitely make sure of it.

The sorceress frowned. "We don't care to associate ourselves with the lackeys of those sorcerer clans. Don't confuse us with them."

Ren Xiaosu stopped talking and started pondering. Could there be two types of bounty hunters? Melgor had not mentioned this before.

"What's the difference between you and them?" Ren Xiaosu asked puzzledly. He really was very confused.

"They work for money, while we have our own beliefs." The sorceress said coldly, "What does a sorcerer's lackey like you know? Is this the first time you've heard about such things? Why are you pretending to be innocent?"

Ren Xiaosu thought this was the first time he had been scolded for acting innocent. He wanted to hit someone.

“Y’all’re just bounty hunters, so why’re you acting all high and mighty? You even claim that they’re doing this for money while you’re doing it for your beliefs?” Ren Xiaosu said unhappily, “Whatcha believe in? Making money?”

“Yes, making money,” the sorceress answered.

Ren Xiaosu was left speechless.

He thought to himself, ‘You’ve got quite practical beliefs then…

The sorceress added, “But we never take money from sorcerers. All common folk can hire us to exterminate evil for the price of a copper coin! How can a lackey like you understand the saying that only faith, the sun, and the moon are eternal?”

Ren Xiaosu was really stunned this time. It was not because the other party had talked about exterminating evil. Actually, Ren Xiaosu was not particularly interested in such chivalrous people, because he had seen organizations and people who carried out evil deeds under the guise of doing good.

However, he had heard of the saying “only faith, the sun, and the moon are eternal” before!

Qin Sheng had said it before, Zhang Qingxi had said it before, and Li Yinglong had also said it before. It was the maxim of the Riders.

He was just thinking of searching for the offshoot of the Riders organization in the Kingdom of Sorcerers, and now, he actually heard a phrase related to them being uttered. Ren Xiaosu’s eyes lit up.

Actually, Ren Xiaosu knew very well the sorceress was probably trying to stall for time when she felt she could not defeat him. Otherwise, with her cautious style, why would she suddenly converse with him so much for no reason?

However, Ren Xiaosu didn’t really care. Whether his opponent was waiting for reinforcements or had some other trick up her sleeve, he still had to ask her a few more questions. “Rider? Ren He?”

The sorceress frowned. “What are you rambling on about? Sheeple? Rider? Is there something wrong with your head?”

Ren Xiaosu chuckled to himself. He wondered if it was just a coincidence the other party had uttered that phrase, and that she might really have nothing to do with the Riders.

However, Ren Xiaosu could not make any conclusions on that. He had to probe further.

“Y’know, if you weren’t trying to kill Melgor, what did you sneak into his Sorcerer’s Tower for?” Ren Xiaosu wondered. “Don’t tell me you went up there for the view? If you really wanted to enjoy the view, you could’ve just gone to the cathedral next door. That building is even taller.”

“Lonely wanted to retrieve a book from his place.” The sorceress said calmly, “If you hadn’t appeared, I would’ve left after taking the book. It wouldn’t have become so troublesome in the first place.”

Ren Xiaosu laughed. “You went to steal a book? Are you saying that others can’t interfere when you’ come and steal it now? What? You find it more exciting to steal books when there’s people around?”

the one who’s trying to steal a book? How overbearing of you! And who do you think you’re fooling with that excuse? Y’all didn’t come and steal the book in all the years that Melgor has been away, so why

“None of your business,” the sorceress said.

“Since you’re not here to kill Melgor, tell me which book you were searching for. Maybe I can make a decision and give it to you. That way, we can turn this hostility into friendship,” Ren Xiaosu said.

“Hehe, do you think I’m stupid?” the sorceress sneered.

After that, a huge cloud of dust suddenly appeared under Ren Xiaosu’s feet and quickly enveloped his entire body!

In that instant, the nanomachines, the little cuties, that were surging in Ren Xiaosu’s bloodstream instantly formed armor around him.

But even so, Ren Xiaosu was startled. The other party clearly wasn’t holding the Eye of True Sight in her hand just now, and neither had he noticed any of her accomplices approaching.

As Ren Xiaosu was enveloped by the smokescreen, the sorceress tuned around to continue fleeing. But right as she turned around, she saw Old Xu standing emotionlessly behind her.

“Ah!” The sorceress was shocked by the white mask Old Xu was wearing!

To be honest, it was quite scary to suddenly see a white mask with an ambiguous smile when turning around in the middle of the night.

When the smokescreen almost dissipated, Ren Xiaosu deactivated his armor and sneered, “You wanna flee? Not so fast!”

As the future commander of the Northwest, the Stronghold Destroyer, and the one in charge of the Prosperous Northwest plan, he had nearly fallen for the tricks of a sorceress. Ren Xiaosu could not stand this injustice!

'When the sorceress saw her path was blocked, she turned around and said to Ren Xiaosu in seriousness, "This is actually a misunderstanding."

Ren Xiaosu stood calmly in place with his arms folded. His hand hidden in his sleeve was already holding his black Eye of True Sight. He said with a smile, "Do you think I believe you"

But just as his words trailed off, several arrows suddenly shot out from the shadows not far away from where the two of them were standing. They were accompanied by a sharp whooshing sound!

The dozen or so crossbow bolts flew in from seven different directions and were aimed at both Ren Xiaosu and Old Xu.

Before the arrows could even get close to Ren Xiaosu, he had already jumped backward out of their way. Meanwhile, Old Xu handled it even more domineeringly. It simply crushed the incoming arrows one by one.

When Ren Xiaosu regained his balance, he saw that the sorceress had disappeared.

"can let you go, but you better not disappoint me." Ren Xiaosu looked towards a certain direction in the dark and muttered, "Bring the news to your companions. I hope yall will voluntarily come look for me someday.."

Chapter 1103: Bounty hunters and sorcerers

If Ren Xiaosu really wanted to kill the other party, he was totally capable of doing so. It might get very intense during the battle, but as long as Ren Xiaosu went all out, how could they possibly escape his clutches with just the few of them?

Did they really consider the Stronghold Destroyer a pushover?

However, Ren Xiaosu still had some doubts regarding what the sorceress said. What if she had only denied it to conceal her identity as a Rider?

Or perhaps she was not aware of the inside scoop but others in the organization might be?

Therefore, Ren Xiaosu was willing to let her go and wait for her to relay the news to her colleagues. He believed that after the young sorceress went back, someone would definitely ask her about what happened, and she would definitely voice her doubts.

Of course, there could also be another possibility. She might really have been sent here by the Tudor family.

But Ren Xiaosu was not afraid of that outcome either. As long as the entire magus order did not band together to launch an attack on him, he could just leave the Kingdom of Sorcerers on the steam locomotive. After that, he would just bring Zhou Yingxue and the others back over to raze the Tu-Manor to the ground.

Right now, even if the enemy suspected him, they would just send some cannon fodder to deal with him. Was dealing with a trivial matter like that worth the time of those revered archmages?

Although the battle tonight was fierce, it wasn't that intense. Ren Xiaosu was sure of his judgment.

At this moment, there was an uproar in Yorktown. The owner of the stable that got burned down by the young sorceress was seemingly from a rich family. He was organizing a group of people to help put out the fire and assembling another group to go after the arsonist.

Judging by their actions, they had also discovered the figures flitting across the roofs earlier. Therefore, they concluded someone must have maliciously started the fire.

Ren Xiaosu did not want to get involved in this mess, so he simply made a detour on top of the roofs and went back to the Sorcerer's Tower. He initially thought Melgor would be awoken by such a loud commotion, but that guy actually slept through it all! After more than two years of reconnaissance work in another country and getting plunged into that pathetic escape on their return, Melgor was beyond exhausted.

The next morning, Melgor suddenly ran over to Ren Xiaosu's room and banged on his door. "Something terrible has happened!"

Ren Xiaosu reluctantly got up and opened the door. "What's the matter?"

"Did you hear the tumult that went on in the city last night?" Melgor said.

"No, I was too tired, so I slept very soundly. What happened?" Ren Xiaosu said sleepily.

"Not unexpected," Melgor muttered. "I didn't notice it at all either. But I have to warn you: Please be very careful these days. They're coming for us!"

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. "What's going on? I thought you didn't notice anything?"

"But some people saw an arsonist." Melgor said, "When I summoned witnesses over to be questioned this morning, they said some people saw a person in a white mask leaping across the roofs. Everyone's now saying that was the arsonist!"

Ren Xiaosu was speechless.

Melgor continued, "Do you remember what happened on our way back? That sorcerer in the white mask has attacked us so many times!"

Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry. He had used Old Xu as a front to mislead Melgor. But now, he had gotten himself into trouble for that. He wondered how Melgor would react if he saw Old Xu in the future.

But what was certain was that he most probably contributed to Xu Xianchu's black cauldron growing bigger again.

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "Is it possible that someone else was responsible for the fire?"

Melgor said firmly, "It must be him! He must be the one who cast Flame Pillar at me too! He's sent by the Tudor family!"

Alright, Ren Xiaosu thought to himself, 'If you say so...

Melgor added, "He must've been discovered while on the way to kill me, so he set the stable on fire to distract everyone while he made his escape. I think he'll definitely be back. You have to be careful."

"Mhm, alright, I'll be careful," Ren Xiaosu replied.

"Why do I get the feeling that you aren't taking me seriously? I'm just worried he'll try to kill you. Are you not afraid of death?" Melgor said anxiously. With such a powerful sorcerer trying to ambush them, they might really die if they weren't careful!

Ren Xiaosu changed the topic. "By the way, do you have any particularly valuable books here in your collection?"

Melgor was taken aback. "Er, no."

Ren Xiaosu wondered if stealing a book was just that young sorceress's excuse, so he asked again, "Then do you have any books that are more notable? Such as books with a long history? Or something that carries special significance to you?"

Melgor was stunned again. "How'd you know?"

Ren Xiaosu's eyes lit up. "Quick, bring it here and let me read them!"

"I don't think that's a good idea," Melgor said hesitantly.

"Why not? I'm your steward. What's wrong with me having a look at your books?" Ren Xiaosu said unhappily, "I still have to help win your childhood sweetheart back!"

Melgor mulled over it for a long time. In the end, he went back to his bedroom and took out a metallic box, which he handed over to Ren Xiaosu.

Ren Xiaosu took a deep breath before opening it.

“Are you serious?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“Of course.” Melgor said, “Why? You asked whether I had any books that were precious. This one carries special significance to me.”

“But I didn’t say that I wanted to read the love letters between you and your childhood sweetheart, did I? Is there something wrong with your head?” Ren Xiaosu suddenly felt helpless. How on earth did this guy become a sorcerer?

But upon further thought, could any secrets be hidden within these love letters? For example, something his sweetheart wanted to reveal to Melgor but regretted now, so she had someone try to retrieve these love letters for her.

Thinking of this, Ren Xiaosu endured the mushiness and read over 20 love letter exchanges. In the end, Ren Xiaosu looked up in shock. “How old were you when you wrote these?”

“Nine,” Melgor answered matter-of-factly.

Ren Xiaosu stuffed the metallic box back into Melgor’s arms. It was no wonder those two were discussing in the letters if they should secretly go and catch frogs the next day.

Catch frogs? Fuck off! You started developing feelings for someone when you were just nine? Do you have any morals?

“Are there really no other books that’re more notable?” Ren Xiaosu was unable to accept it.

“There really aren’t any,” Melgor said.

This time, Ren Xiaosu could confirm the young sorceress was actually lying to him. But since she was not here to steal a book, what else could she be doing here? Steal a peek at Melgor while he was taking a bath?!

Ren Xiaosu felt that Melgor was not as attractive as that!

“Then let me ask you.” Ren Xiaosu asked again, “Are there different kinds of bounty hunters?”

Curious, Melgor asked, “Why are you suddenly asking about this?”

“Just a random question,” Ren Xiaosu said.

“Yes, the past bounty hunters were a little different. Actually, bounty hunters started off performing chivalrous deeds initially and often robbed the rich to help the poor.” Melgor said, “The magus order tried to exterminate them on several occasions. Although they managed to kill some of them, other bounty hunters remained hidden in the shadows and continued performing chivalrous acts. Their whereabouts were extremely secretive, and they gradually gained the admiration of the residents who started saying that not even gods could kill them.”

“What happened after that?” Ren Xiaosu wondered.
Melgor said, “Then the Magi had some of their people pose as bounty hunters to carry out nasty acts. After that, they hyped those atrocities up so much the residents immediately lost trust in the bounty hunters.”

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. Disregarding everything else, the magus order was really good at playing politics!

Chapter 1104: Poisoning

“I need to know what exactly these chivalrous bounty hunters have done and how they were framed,” Ren Xiaosu said.

“Actually, the upper class knew full well that those bounty hunters were truly chivalrous.” Melgor said with a laugh, “At that time, many children dreamed of growing up to be chivalrous heroes like them. Some of them made shoddy crossbows out of wood for themselves and tied them on their arms.”

“Did you try that as well?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“Yes,” Melgor said.

“Why would you tie a crossbow on your arm? To shoot frogs?” Ren Xiaosu snapped.

Melgor was speechless.

Melgor said with a dark expression, “You came to me asking for books with a special significance, and I’ve even taken out my scrapbook of love letters for you, yet you’re talking to me with that attitude? Do you think people show their love letters to others so easily? I’ve already shown it to you, yet here you are grumbling about it!”

“Alright, alright, continue with what you were saying,” Ren Xiaosu said, “You tied a crossbow on your arm, everyone admired them very much, and then?”

“And then, the bounty hunters raided an archmage’s clan in the secular world in the dark of the night.” Melgor said, “Actually, the common folk don’t know about this. If my

family weren't a reputable clan in Ghent City back then, I wouldn't have known about it either."

"Raided a sorcerer clan? They actually dared to do that?" Ren Xiaosu asked curiously, "Didn't the sorcerer clan put up a fight?"

"No, how could the House of Voss have expected that anyone would dare to attack them? You have to know that even if the Voss family weren't in the top five clans in the Kingdom of Sorcerers at that time, they were still among the ten most powerful clans. They were a true behemoth," Melgor said.

"So how much money did the bounty hunters steal?" Ren Xiaosu asked, "Was it so much that the sorcerers needed to tarnish the bounty hunters' reputation like this?"

"Money isn't important to those sorcerer clans since they have plenty of it." Melgor said, "Moreover, it isn't easy to carry off valuables like gold. They stole 21 Eyes of True Sight, including a gold one."

"Such a big heist?" Ren Xiaosu gasped. He could even imagine how furious the Voss family must have been. "However, 21 Eyes of True Sight would mean that they had to deal with 21 sorcerers. How did they pull it off? Were there any powerful individuals among those bounty hunters?"

"No, they didn't take the sorcerers head on." Melgor shook his head. "Rumor has it that someone infiltrated their servant ranks for two years and found an opportunity to lace the food at a clan gathering. Hundreds of people were poisoned to death in that incident."

"I think they weren't there just for the stones. There was probably immense hatred between them as well." Ren Xiaosu frowned. "Is the Voss family still around now?"

"Yes, a large clan like them has many members. For example, the House of Tudor probably has several thousand members. The current monarch of the Tudor family has 71 children. As for the Voss family, the clan authority no longer rests with the main household. During an internal power struggle, one of the ancillary branches inherited all that authority."

"Was that why the Magi could no longer tolerate the bounty hunters and started to exterminate them?"

Melgor nodded. "Mhm, but they were unsuccessful even after many attempts. Those bounty hunters are really good at hiding their tracks. They blend in among the residents, so you don't even know who's a bounty hunter." Melgor shrugged and said, "And when they gained their reputation for being unkillable even by the gods, the Magi started slandering them, causing them to lose their reputation."

Melgor continued, "From then on, the residents no longer trusted them. Some of the bounty hunters were betrayed by the people while others went even deeper into hiding. In more recent years, there's occasional activity from the bounty hunters, but it's rare. If you hadn't mentioned it, 'd've even thought they had ceased to exist."

"The residents are way too gullible." Ren Xiaosu sighed.

But after hearing what he said, Ren Xiaosu's impression of that young sorceress and the organization backing her changed.

It was not that he admired their attitude, but that he would have to be careful of being poisoned in the future!

If that sorceress were unrelated to Ren He, he would have offended her deeply last night. He really was not afraid of getting in a fight, but he did not know whether he could survive being poisoned.

After all, some types of poison were so lethal that just five grams would be enough to kill a person!

In the morning, the sheeple returned to the Sorcerer's Tower and resumed their role as Melgor's servants after just one night of rest.

Ren Xiaosu initially thought the sons of such influential families would rest for a few more days before coming back. Actually, Melgor would not mind taking a few more days of rest either. After all, everyone was exhausted.

This time, the two servants came back together with the heads of their respective clans, Li Chengguo's father and Liu Ting's father.

Ren Xiaosu gave a half-smile to the two servants in the main hall of the Sorcerer's Tower. After they came in, the fathers of Li Chengguo and Liu Ting realized their sons did not pay respects to Lord Melgor first but ran over to greet this unfamiliar young man instead.

The heads of the Li and Liu clans looked at each other, unsure of what was going on.

However, the two of them could not be rude. After entering the Sorcerer's Tower, they went over to Melgor and knelt on one knee. "Your Excellency Lord Melgor, how have you been? Please forgive us for not coming by immediately yesterday. We thought you also needed some time to rest and reorganize."

Although Melgor was a sweet idiot in private, he still held his composure when facing outsiders. "Mhm, you may rise. You two are rather considerate, but I wonder, what's the purpose of your visit today?"

'When the heads of the Li and Liu clans got up, the head of the Li clan said, "I heard from my son that Lord Melgor intends to head to Ghent City soon and will be assisting him in buying an Eye of True Sight?"

Melgor nodded. "Yes, that's what I plan. Li Chengguo and Liu Ting have worked hard and performed outstandingly for the past two years. I was moved by their drive, so I decided to grant their wishes as soon as possible."

Li Chengguo and Liu Ting looked over with gratitude. Just as they had said, there was also rivalry within their own clans, so they needed to maintain their competitiveness in the face of their siblings' jealousy.

Now that Melgor was heaping praise on them, it would help push their standing a little more.

However, Ren Xiaosu nearly laughed out loud. What outstanding performance? Did they eat more grass than other sheep? But he definitely would not say that at this time. After all, it would directly affect the two servants' personal interests.

Li Chengguo and Liu Ting were most worried that Ren Xiaosu would start spouting nonsense at this moment. Fortunately, they were able to put their minds at ease when they observed his expression and realized that he didn't intend to spoil their party.

The head of the Li clan said, "To express our gratitude for Lord Melgor, our clans are willing to pay in advance 5,000 gold coins each as a reward. If the purchase of the Eye of True Sight does not work out, we won't ask for a refund either. This is to show our sincerity. However, we hope that Lord Melgor can set off as soon as possible.."

Chapter 1105: A different approach

The Li and Liu clans controlled the local salt and cotton trades, respectively. In terms of status, the Li clan, who controlled the salt trade, was more influential. Ren Xiaosu could also tell that Liu Ting's father was actually more like the subordinate among the two and that these two families should be closely related.

These two clans had suddenly approached Melgor to suggest moving up their departure date to Ghent City. The change of plans was probably not just motivated by their haste to train a sorcerer in the clan.

After Li Chengguo and Liu Ting went back home, they must have talked to their clans about the ambush they encountered on the way back, as well as the personal feud between Melgor and the Tudor family.

Now that a small fire had broken out in Yorktown, it was reported by many people that someone in a white mask was responsible for the fire. Melgor felt that "Old Xu" was here to kill him, and Li Chengguo and Liu Ting definitely thought so as well. Therefore, the Li and Liu clans hurriedly came over to urge Melgor to set off for Ghent City. This was because they were worried that Melgor, the tool they engaged to assist their sons in getting the Eye of True Sight, would get killed before they could buy it. At this moment, Li Chengguo's father said to Melgor, "Lord Melgor, I also know you encountered some trouble and might be worried for your safety during the journey, but you don't have to worry about that. We'll send people to protect you during the trip." After hearing this, Ren Xiaosu was sure his judgment was correct.

But were the Li and Liu clans that determined? They knew the Tudor family wanted Melgor killed, so why did they send their people to protect him?

Melgor was also a little puzzled. "How will I be protected?"

"The York County Chamber of Commerce has just organized an expedition for a trade caravan to travel north to Ghent City to procure gold and silver wares." Liu Ting's father said, "The caravan is very large, with several hundred people traveling together. The guards we've arranged for have already infiltrated the group and will be protecting Lord Melgor in secret."

The Tudor family was way too influential in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. Therefore, if local gentry like the Li and Liu clans wanted to protect Melgor, they would have to do so discreetly.

Melgor thought for a moment and said, "When would you like me to leave?"

"Why not now?" Li Chengguo's father suggested. "The trade caravan has already assembled north of York County. They were supposed to leave this morning, but I got them to wait for you, Lord Melgor."

Melgor felt helpless. From the look of things, Li Chengguo's father was truly worried that something bad would happen. He was actually hoping Melgor would set off immediately.

He thought for a moment and said, "Alright, let me get packed, then we can set off."

After that, Li Chengguo and Liu Ting's father bade farewell in satisfaction.

The sheeple stayed behind and were immediately ordered by Ren Xiaosu to do the packing. He did not want them to overhear his conversation with Melgor.

Ren Xiaosu wondered, "You agreed to their request just like that? Where's your dignity as a sorcerer? They're obviously using you."

"It's a little different when it comes to the local aristocrats. Although they might appear very respectful, that respect is to the magus order backing me, not me," Melgor said

helplessly. "Although York County has been conferred to me as my fief, the true lords of the six counties in the south are... the House of Berkeley."

"Is that also a sorcerer clan?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"That's right." Melgor nodded and said, "The Berkeley family is also a certain archmage's basis of power in the secular world. It's just that their authority isn't as extensive as the Tudors since they only possess a gold Eye of True Sight. In fact, the Li and Liu clans are both under the command of Duke Berkeley. It's just that they aren't of high standing."

"Oh." Ren Xiaosu understood now. So the Li and Liu clans were just considered fringe figures of the Berkeley family's influence and were now seeking to be recognized by the system. As such, they were trying to raise sorcerers in their families to raise their statuses. As long as their families produced sorcerers, Duke Berkeley would view them in a different light and give them more benefits.

'The Kingdom of Sorcerers was a place where only sorcerers were qualified to become the true upper class.

'The Li and Liu clans were trying to earn this status so they could boost the standing of their own clans.

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "I don't think we need to leave right away. It's too hasty."

"Forget it, there's no need to harp on this." Melgor said with a bitter smile, "Since I've already accepted their money, let's just do it for them."

"Alright then." Ren Xiaosu felt a little helpless. He was planning to stay around and wait for that young sorceress's accomplices to show up.

But on second thought, with the capabilities of those bounty hunters, it would not be difficult for them to find him even if he had already set off for Ghent City.

"Do you have anything to pack?" Melgor asked. "I don't really have much to bring, so I'll just take a few books and read them along the way."

"I don't have much to bring either." Ren Xiaosu said, "I'll also pick a few books."

"By the way, is the Introduction to Sorcery still with you?" Melgor suddenly asked. "Don't read that for now. It's quite heavy to bring along."

Ren Xiaosu froze at the mention. Wait, could the book the sorceress was trying to steal be the Introduction to Sorcery he was holding?

Ren Xiaosu had scoffed at the idea the intruder had come here to steal a book. After all, Melgor had been away from his Sorcerer's Tower for over two years, so of all times, why did they choose to steal it when Melgor came back? Who were they fooling? However, if the other party were trying to steal the Introduction to Sorcery, it would make sense. Because Melgor had taken that book with him to the Central Plains, they could only retrieve it after Melgor returned.

Ren Xiaosu told Melgor, "I think I'll bring the Introduction to Sorcery with me. find it quite an interesting read."

Melgor gave Ren Xiaosu a strange look. "There's no need to put on that strong front. Everyone knows the Introduction to Sorcery has no practical content in it. Even if you don't read it, no one will make fun of you."

"But I really find it quite interesting," Ren Xiaosu said.

"Well, whatever makes you happy..."

The sheeple brought Melgor's clothes down and joined up with Ren Xiaosu. "Lord Melgor, the maids have packed your belongings. We can set off now."

Melgor looked at them. "It's been tough on you two so far. Don't worry, I'll take you both to the black market once we get to Ghent City."

"Thank you for helping us, Lord Melgor." Li Chengguo chuckled and said, "By the way, can you teach us the language of the Magi along the way? That way, if we get our hands on an Eye of True Sight in Ghent City, we can start practicing sorcery immediately."

"No problem." Melgor nodded. Then he said to Ren Xiaosu, "You can also learn together with them."

"Me?" Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "Forget about me. You can just teach them."

Melgor was stunned. "You don't want to learn? Weren't you quite eager to learn it?"

"It's too difficult, so I don't want to learn it anymore," Ren Xiaosu said. He had carefully considered the higher level spells would still have to be paired with meditative visualization diagrams if he chose to cast them in the language of the Magi. However, the meditative visualization diagrams were firmly controlled by the sorcerer clans and were too troublesome to obtain.

Now that he could cast spells in Chinese, which did not even require meditative visualization diagrams to do so, why would he put in so much effort to learn a new language? Although it was a little troublesome to compile the Chinese spell incantations, he would only need to rely on himself and wouldn't be constrained by external factors.

Next to them, Liu Ting muttered, "So it turns out he was just pretending to be enthusiastic. No wonder he used to be a lowly servant in the Central Plains.."

Chapter 1106: Knight commander

"Don't you want to be a sorcerer?" Melgor was puzzled. "If you don't learn the language of the Magi, how are you going to become one?"

"Just as yall've said, it ain't easy to buy an Eye of True Sight. Besides, I don't have any money." Ren Xiaosu said, "So even if I can save up to buy one, I don't know how long that will take. It's not that I don't want to learn, but that I plan to learn slowly. I'm not in a rush like the sheeple. You can teach them first while I listen in on their lessons."

"But what if you suddenly get the chance to become a sorcerer someday? Wouldn't it be very awkward if you don't know the language of the Magi?" Melgor was a little disappointed. "And I thought you were enthusiastic about learning."

"There's no rush, I'll read up first and gain a better understanding of what sorcerers are really about," Ren Xiaosu said.

He could not explain to Melgor that he had found another way to cast spells, so he did not need to learn the Magi's tongue anymore.

After all, if someone had stolen an Eye of True Sight and even secretly developed Chinese incantations, that would indeed be a huge problem for the entire magus order.

The sorcerers regarded the Magi's tongue as the language of the gods and said their divine power could only be wielded if one could speak it. But in the end, they got bitch-slapped by Ren Xiaosu.

As such, the prideful sorcerers would definitely come after him if they knew!

Speaking of which, others from the Central Plains should have obtained an Eye of True Sight before, right? Why didn't they manage to figure out how to cast Chinese spells? Was it because they were not polite enough to the enemy?

Of course, Ren Xiaosu also had to admit the way he discovered Chinese incantations was way too unorthodox.

He would definitely still learn the language of the Magi. But based on the current circumstances, that was not his priority. Therefore, he would only learn whenever it was convenient, mainly so he would know if others were cursing him in the language!

Ren Xiaosu suddenly thought of something. When he was chasing after that young sorceress last night, she had used a smokescreen to hinder his pursuit. At that time, the

sorceress was not holding the Eye of True Sight in her hand, so could it mean she had a way to cast spells without it?

If such a method truly existed, that would really be great. He would not even have to use the Eye of True Sight or recite any incantations, and no sorcerer could guard against him.

Thinking of this, Ren Xiaosu nearly laughed aloud.

Nearby, Liu Ting muttered to Li Chengguo, "I told you he was pretending, but you didn't believe me."

Li Chengguo had said he would give an Eye of True Sight to Ren Xiaosu if he managed to get an extra one. But he did not talk about it anymore. When they were escaping, they felt like they could go through thick and thin together. But after calming down, Li Chengguo understood he could not make such an important decision on his own.

The atmosphere turned heavy. Li Chengguo was about to say something, but he got stopped by Liu Ting.

All of a sudden, Melgor said to Ren Xiaosu, "I know you might've lost your confidence and feel that you can't get your hands on an Eye of True Sight. How about this? Since you've saved my life, I'll cut open a stone for you this time. Regardless of whether you can get an Eye of True Sight or not, consider it as me repaying the favor."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. "Cut open one for me? How?"

"The price for each stone cutting is 10,000 gold coins. This time, the Li and Liu clans have each sent over 5,000 gold coins as additional payment." Melgor said, "Without you, I couldn't have gotten back to York County alive. So I'll use these 10,000 gold coins to cut open a stone for you one time."

Ren Xiaosu was moved. He was really touched. There really were not many sweet idiots like Melgor these days!

"It's decided then." Melgor took a deep breath and said, "This journey to Ghent City will definitely not be peaceful. Everyone, be careful. Let's set off!"

Their mode of transportation for this trip was a horse-drawn carriage. In the carriage were even snacks and sweetmeats prepared by the maids for Melgor, while the books were all placed in boxes and stored in the back.

Ren Xiaosu felt a little unused to this. He somehow felt very awkward and bored with the four of them cramped inside the carriage.

As such, Ren Xiaosu simply got a horse and rode on it alone.

They passed through the city and headed north. After joining up with the trade caravan, Melgor took some time to meet with each merchant and accepted their gifts before leaving the city in a grandiose manner. The entire entourage numbered nearly a 1,000 people.

There were ox carts and horse-drawn carriages in the trade caravan as well. The entire group was extremely large and they stretched out for about a kilometer.

There were men and women, old and young, in the group, and a quarter of them were not merchants.

Some of the young people who came along wanted to strike out on their own in the big cities and towns. York County was too small, so it was not in line with their expectations of what prosperity should be like.

The young people were laughing and chatting in the group. They were all filled with anticipation of what the big cities and towns could offer and the dreams they had.

‘There were also some travelers heading to other counties to visit their relatives or to emigrate there.

With so many people gathered together, it was an extraordinarily lively sight to behold.

Based on the plan, it would take them a month to reach Ghent City to the north. In the afternoon, a knight from the trade caravan suddenly approached Melgor’s carriage.

He said to Melgor through the curtain of the carriage, “Lord Melgor, I’m the knight commander in charge of protecting you this time. My name is Mox.”

Melgor lifted the curtain and asked, “Are you from the Li clan?”

The knight commander, Mox, said in a low voice, “Yes, there’s a total of 36 of us in the caravan. If you need anything, feel free to look for me. If we discover any suspicious people approaching you, we’ll intervene on time. The guards will be divided into three shifts to ensure that you’re protected at all times.”

Melgor nodded. “Thank you. By the way, if you guys need anything, you can also communicate with my steward, Ren Xiaosu. He’s in charge of my schedule.” Although guards had been assigned to protect him, Ren Xiaosu’s alertness had left a deep impression on Melgor.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu came over. “What’s the matter?”

Mox said to Ren Xiaosu, “Nice to meet you, sir. I’m the knight commander of the escort detail this time. Please work together with our plan and remind Lord Melgor not to leave

the group on his own.”

“Oh, OK,” Ren Xiaosu said offhandedly.

‘When Mox saw that Ren Xiaosu did not seem like he was particularly concerned, he repeated, “We’ve already drafted a rather meticulous protection plan. I hope you won’t disrupt our work. You might be quite skilled in combat, but don’t act rashly if you encounter any suspicious people. Some of the actions you took while escorting Lord Melgor back to York County were actually quite dangerous.”

Ren Xiaosu raised an eyebrow. This was probably something the sheeple had specifically communicated to their families. It was clear the two of them did not trust him!

“Don’t worry.” Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, “I’ll definitely work with all yall!”

After that, Ren Xiaosu ignored Mox. He took out the Introduction to Sorcery and started reading.

Chapter 1107: Spying

As the grandiose group made their way north, some people were looking through the gap in a covered carriage with their gaze locked on Ren Xiaosu’s back.

Ren Xiaosu flipped through his book unsteadily as he rode slowly on his horse. The horses knew to keep with the group, so he did not have to worry it would veer off course.

Ren Xiaosu quite liked the feeling of the autonomous riding. There was no need for him to control the horse himself, and it would not deviate from the group either.

In the past, when Luo Lan talked to him about artificial intelligence, he said it had quite a broad application field, with one of them being autonomous driving.

For example, if someone needed to travel a long distance, they would only need to set a destination after getting in the vehicle. Once that was done, they could just sleep all the way until they arrived.

Ren Xiaosu thought that even though he did not fully understand what artificial intelligence was, he could still enjoy the feeling of being driven around autonomously.

As Ren Xiaosu was letting his imagination run wild, he seemed wholly unaware there were people spying on him at the back of the group.

Someone in that carriage asked softly, “Was he the one who troubled you so much?”

Someone else in the carriage answered in a quiet voice, "Yes, that's him."

"Are you sure he's not a sorcerer?" someone asked. "We calculated the route and speed of your escape last night. If he were just a normal person, he couldn't have caught up to you without the aid of sorcery."

"I can't be sure he's a sorcerer, but what I can be sure of is that he did not cast any spells during the pursuit," the young sorceress answered.

"That's a little strange then. Could that person have been born with superior physical fitness compared to normal people?" someone wondered.

"I think so. I saw him leap a dozen meters with my own eyes while I was escaping. Normal people don't have such fitness. We've also tested it out before. Without spell enhancement, eight to nine meters is probably the limit for us," the young sorceress replied. "So we have to be more careful than usual."

"He should count himself unlucky. We were already leaving under the guise of the trade caravan, but they came knocking on our door," another person said in a low voice.

Based on what he just said, this group of bounty hunters had given up on the mission and were planning to return north.

But coincidentally, Melgor and his band suddenly joined up with the trade caravan.

"By the way, didn't you say there was another person in a white mask? Can you identify him from his physique?" someone asked.

"No. White Mask's physique is similar to this young man's, but I can't confirm who it is," the young sorceress answered. "When I was trying to escape, White Mask's presence was crushing. I found him utterly terrifying. If you guys hadn't arrived in time, I'd probably have died there."

"Wait, could White Mask be Melgor?" someone asked. "It feels to me that Melgor's height and physique seem to fit the criteria quite well."

"That's true." The young sorceress thought back and said, "But why would he need to put on a mask?"

Ren Xiaosu was entirely unaware of how much more trouble White Mask would cause. Melgor, Liu Ting, and Li Chengguo believed White Mask was the assassin, while the young sorceress thought Melgor was White Mask.

What a mess!

Ren Xiaosu sat on his horse and paged through the Introduction to Sorcery in an attempt to find any information of value.

After the Introduction to Sorcery was edited, the contents of the book had become shambles. Many of the things written did not seem to fit together and baffled the reader.

It was no wonder Melgor and the others did not want to read it. There really was not much value in reading this book.

Li Chengguo and Liu Ting were still memorizing vocabulary in the carriage. When Ren Xiaosu got bored of reading, he put down the Introduction to Sorcery and spurred his horse towards the front of the traveling caravan.

As Ren Xiaosu moved forward, he scrutinized everyone he could see. This was mainly to check if there were any suspicious people in the caravan.

Before he could go far, the knight commander, Mox, approached him and said, "Sir, you shouldn't move about as you please. If there's an assassin hiding in the caravan, you might get put in danger."

"Don't worry, I know what I'm doing." Ren Xiaosu answered in seriousness, "They can't hurt me."

Merckx was speechless. After Ren Xiaosu left, one of his subordinates came over and said, "There's no need to worry about him. Our mission is to protect Lord Melgor, anyway, so it's not our business if anything untoward happens to that kid."

"True." Mox sighed and said, "Let's ignore him then. Remember to stay vigilant."

"Understood."

Before long, Ren Xiaosu came back from his stroll of the front of the trade caravan. This time, he rode his horse towards the back of the group.

When he passed by a certain carriage, he found it a little strange.

It was the end of May, and the scorching sun hanging overhead was shining so fiercely it felt like you could even smell your own hair burning. Almost all the carriages had lifted their curtains to keep the air flowing.

But the strange thing about this carriage was that the windows were firmly blocked by the curtains, while the curtain door was also tied shut.

There was nothing unusual about the coachman, but weren't the people on the inside afraid of getting heatstroke?

A moment later, Ren Xiaosu reached out and tried to pull open the window. But before he could do so, someone lifted the curtain from the inside.

A middle-aged woman had a stunned look on her face when she saw Ren Xiaosu and his outstretched arm. Then she said with a polite smile, "Are you Lord Melgor's newly recruited steward? I saw you on the streets when you all entered the city. You're really quite handsome."

"Hahahahaha, that so?" Ren Xiaosu laughed happily.

"Is something the matter?" the middle-aged woman asked with a smile.

Ren Xiaosu looked through the window and examined what was inside the carriage. He said, "It's nothing, I was just wondering, don't you find it hot?"

"Oh, you see, I fell sick a few days ago, and the doctor in town said that I mustn't catch a chill," the middle-aged woman said with a smile.

"I see." Ren Xiaosu breathed a sigh of relief and said with a smile, "It's alright then. I was just a little curious, so don't worry."

After that, Ren Xiaosu was about to spur his horse to continue to the back of the trade caravan when the middle-aged woman suddenly said, "Why don't... would you like to enter the carriage and have a seat, sir? I have some issues I'd like to discuss with you." This woman was wearing a layered dress with a plunging neckline and lace ruffles on her collar. She had a fair complexion.

When she saw Ren Xiaosu looking over, the woman even leaned forward a little more. It was as though she was trying to make it easier for his eyes to see her.

"Ahem, there's no need for that." Ren Xiaosu clenched his legs around the horse's rib cage and left quickly.

From the back, it almost felt like he was fleeing.

The middle-aged woman giggled. "That's interesting. He's different from those sorcerers who look decent but have dirty minds.."

Chapter 1108 The House of Tudor owes

"Could he have discovered something?" The young sorceress in the carriage asked, "Otherwise, why would he suddenly come and check on our carriage?"

"That's possible." The middle-aged woman had already lowered the curtain. "Based on your description of him, that man should be extremely good in combat. You guys should understand what I'm getting at, right?" A person's combat skills could not be nurtured through training alone. The keen intuition, attention to detail, calm judgment, and so on had to be honed through real combat. "He's killed before, and it's not just one or two people either. I would guess he has at least ten kills." A young man in the carriage said, "Of course, ten might be a little much."

The young sorceress said, "I don't think it's realistic that he's killed ten people before, but I agree with Aunt's judgment. It's still very possible that he has four or five kills."

The three of them started discussing how many people Ren Xiaosu had killed before while staying hidden in the carriage. In fact, if Ren Xiaosu told them the true number, they would definitely think he was bullshitting! But actually, for the Great Hoodwinker and the others who were aware their future commander had already begun the Prosperous Northwest 3.0 plan, they were wondering if they were being too ruthless to the Magi by sending him to deal with them.

Ren Xiaosu's status in the Central Plains was completely different from his status in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. The Kingdom of Sorcerers was so self-sufficient and extremely arrogant that they did not even bother sending spies to the Central Plains to gather intel.

In the eyes of the Magi, Fortress 178, which they had devastated over the years, and the territory behind it did not have the ability to conquer their lands at all. It was good enough they could survive under the intimidation of their sorcerers.

Therefore, due to the policies of the Kingdom of Sorcerers, it was not a big deal even if Ren Xiaosu openly used his real name here. Instead, it made it even more convenient for the Northwest's intelligence agents to meet up with him.

Based on what the Great Hoodwinker had said, the Northwest had already sent at least a 100 spies here over the years. Furthermore, not only did the Kingdom of Sorcerers not send any spies to the enemy's territory, but they were also extremely unfamiliar with how to clear them out from their own territory.

In some of the residences of the spies, they did not even need to deliberately hide their radio sets. It was very safe to just shove them under their beds.

Many of the Northwest's intelligence agents were already aware the future commander was in the Kingdom of Sorcerers, but they did not know his exact whereabouts.

At this moment, the middle-aged woman took out her red Eye of True Sight and started casting another spell. The inside of the carriage quickly cooled. She said to the young man in the carriage, "Little Cheng, it's no longer suitable for An'an and me to go outside. That person is extremely alert. Although Little An's face was obscured last night, we can't be sure he won't recognize her figure. So you should go outside often after we set up camp tonight and keep a close eye on that young man."

The young man whom she called Little Cheng nodded and said, "Alright, Aunt, you and Sis can stay in the carriage while I check on the situation tonight."

"By the way, Aunt." The young sorceress, An'an, said, "He suddenly mentioned some strange words last night."

“What words?” the middle-aged woman asked curiously.

“Riders? Ren He?” An’an recalled. “I think it was just those three words. I thought he might’ve been referring to the knights, but those can be found all over the street, so I feel like he meant it as an organization?”

The middle-aged woman was stunned. “Wait, I think I heard your father mention Ren He before, but my memory’s vague. I can’t confirm whether what that kid said were the same words as what I’ve heard. As for the term ‘riders’... I have no idea about that.”

“Alright.” An’an nodded. “He might’ve gotten the wrong person then. By the way, where did Father go?”

“Your father is handling something more important. He should be leaving Alpine County right now and will rendezvous with us in Ghent City.” The middle-aged woman said, “The others will also be heading to Ghent City together.”

An’an’s eyes lit up. “Are those elders planning something big?” “Why do you ask?” the middle-aged woman said with a broad smile.

“Because so many people come together when only something big is about to happen.” An’an said excitedly, “I’ve heard about what you guys did in the past. It sounded so exciting!”

“It’s all very dangerous. You two still cannot participate in the operation.” The middle-aged woman shook her head and said with a smile, “Your training isn’t complete, so stop thinking about such things. When you turn 21, I’ll of course lead you two in an assassination of a real sorcerer and complete your coming-of-age ceremony.” “21...” An’an muttered unwillingly, “But that’s still another three years away.”

Little Cheng asked, “Aunt, why do you say that we have to assassinate a real sorcerer? Won’t Melgor do? I think he’s quite easy to kill.”

“Melgor’s just a poor ol’ sorcerer within the magus order. He was fortunate enough to obtain the Eye of True Sight, but that’s only a tool used by the magus order to amass wealth.” The middle-aged woman explained, “In fact, the legacy training Melgor received isn’t even close to the core of sorcery. They don’t teach him the more sophisticated incantations, nor do they bestow unto him any meditative visualization diagrams for the high-level spells. The reason why the magus order sends such sorcerers to the borders to live in luxury is just so that they can tell more people, ‘Hurry up and buy some stones. You might just get an Eye of True Sight. This is a shortcut for you guys to jump ranks.’”

“I see,” An’an said.

“With this method to get out of their miserable lives, the people at the bottom won’t constantly think about toppling this dynasty.” The middle-aged woman sighed and said, “But when someone climbs the social ladder, they soon realize this is actually just a system designed by the magus order.” “Aunt, why are you guys going to Ghent City this time?” An’an asked.

“We’re going to the House of Tudor to obtain the meditative visualization diagram for the Meteor Shower spell,” the woman answered.

“Meteor Shower?” An’an wondered.

“That’s right.” The woman said, “Your father said it’s what the House of Tudor owes us.”

Ren Xiaosu circled around the trade caravan twice and did discover some suspicious people in the group. However, he could not be sure if they were related to the bounty hunters from before.

Or rather, the suspicious people looked more like standard outlaws, thieves, and fugitives. They did not have great combat awareness or counter reconnaissance awareness.

They were different from the sorceress from last night. It was obvious she had undergone many years of training, with her every move planned out.

It was precisely because of this that Ren Xiaosu was sure there was a hidden organization backing her. Without one, she could not have received such systematic training.

Chapter 1109 The Northwest Army assembles

It was late at night at Stronghold 144 in the Northwest.

There was no longer any differentiation between refugees and stronghold residents here, and the fortress gates were not closed at night anymore. Although this would increase the workload of the garrison troops, no one said anything about it since Commander Zhang insisted on doing so.

Some people were worried that the open door policy would cause a large number of Wang Consortium and Qing Consortium spies to flood to the Northwest. However, the Great Hoodwinker and company were not worried as they had Wang Yun on their team.

In just half a month, Wang Yun had identified more than 70 spies in Stronghold 144. Six of them were from the Qing Consortium, while the rest were from the Wang Consortium.

They expected the Wang Consortium would send their spies to the Northwest. But finding so few Qing Consortium spies was surprising.

After all, the Qing Consortium had a lot of loyalists, and Qing Zhen was a prudent leader. As such, during the war in the Southwest, the Qing Consortium's information warfare and infiltration and assassination annoyed their enemies quite a bit.

Therefore, how could anyone not be surprised that the Qing Consortium had planted so few spies in the Northwest?

In the end, everyone felt it might be related to the future commander. Due to the two parties' close relationship, it was probably a little awkward for the Qing Consortium to plant too many spies in the Northwest. And it was also because they did not treat each other as imaginary enemies.

At this moment, the Great Hoodwinker quietly left Stronghold 144 and headed for the military base outside the stronghold. When he arrived in the conference room on the base, Wang Yun, Ji Zi'ang, P5092, Zhang Xiaoman, and the others were already there.

The moment the Great Hoodwinker entered, everyone's gazes locked onto him. Wang Yun said, "C'mon, tell us, where did Future Commander go?"

"Y'all called me here in the middle of the night just to ask about this?" The Great Hoodwinker was slightly taken aback.

Wang Yun sneered, "Your pupils have started contracting. The rate of contraction is about the same as when you tricked me back then. The wrinkles at the corners of your eyes are also changing. Don't you dare lie! I'm watching you!"

"Actually, y'all can be considered the core members of our Northwest Army, so there's no harm in telling you." The Great Hoodwinker said, "Future Commander has gone to finish up his Prosperous Northwest 3.0 plan." "3.0?"

Everyone's eyes lit up. How interesting!

P5092 analyzed, "Future Commander went to tour the outposts with Commander Zhang, but Commander Zhang suddenly appeared at Stronghold 144 today to inspect the irrigation infrastructure. Meanwhile, Future Commander is nowhere to be seen. So did Future Commander go somewhere beyond the Northwest?"

"Yes." The Great Hoodwinker sighed and said, "When he and Commander Zhang were touring the outposts, they were ambushed by a sorcerer. But before a battle could break out, he discovered the enemy's tracks and had Commander Zhang leave first. When we returned to the battlefield with Commander Zhang eight hours later, we saw the number '3' etched on the ground. Commander Zhang was quite sure that it referred to the Prosperous Northwest 3.0 plan. When Wang Fengyuan searched for evidence at the scene, he determined that the future commander had been taken captive by someone. But actually, we aren't too worried for him...."

The Great Hoodwinker paused for a moment before continuing, "Y'all should know what kind of person Future Commander is. If he could spare the effort to leave that writing on the ground, it means that the sorcerer's situation is more precarious than his."

"I think Future Commander must've detected some kind of opportunity after encountering the enemy." Wang Yun said, "Recently, Future Commander's maid and his wife have gone missing as well. Could they have already figured out the truth and left quietly to look for him?"

"That's right." The Great Hoodwinker smiled bitterly. The scene of Yang Xiaojin tricking him was still fresh in his mind. All these years, it had always been him bluffing others. That was the first time he got tricked by someone else. "Then what should we do now?" Wang Yun looked at the others.

"Do you even need to ask?" Zhang Xiaoman got excited. "We'll slaughter our way over there together, of course. The people of Fortress 178 have always dreamed of launching a counterattack on the enemy since we were young. Now that Future Commander has made the first move, shouldn't we quickly seize the opportunity?"

P5092 nodded. "Currently, with a formidable enemy like the Wang Consortium creeping up on us, we need to eliminate any potential threats to our rear before the Wang Consortium fully consolidates the Central Plains. If we get caught in a hammer and anvil strike, the Northwest will really be in danger. So I also suggest we take advantage of this window where Future Commander has headed to that unfamiliar nation to handle things once and for all."

The Great Hoodwinker was stunned. "Although I'm not worried that something will happen to Future Commander, y'all don't have to be so optimistic either, right? Why does it suddenly sound like we're talking about going to exterminate the Magi?"

Wang Yun was also stunned. "You're doubting Future Commander's ability."

The Great Hoodwinker's face darkened. "Get lost! Stop trying to set me up. When have I ever doubted Future Commander's ability? Alright, so who's going?"

"Me, me, me!" Zhang Xiaoman was the first to raise his hand.

Wang Yun smiled and said, "How can I miss out on this event?"

P5092 said, "I need to collect intelligence regarding their military. 'Words are but wind, but seeing is believing.'" Ji Zi'ang laughed. "I think I'm good enough in combat and should be able to help everyone."

Everyone's gaze turned to the fair-skinned chubster who remained silent at the end of the table. "Xun Yeyu, aren't you gonna go?"

Xun Yeyu had remained in the corner quiet like a quail the entire time...

He had been sleeping when he was suddenly dragged here by Wang Yun. He could not figure out what was going on for a long time; only now did he understand. So it turned out they were about to go to a foreign nation together... and massacre them?

The Great Hoodwinker looked at Xun Yeyu. "Aren't you going? Don't you think that you're part of our crew? In that case..."

Feeling insulted, Xun Yeyu said, "I didn't say I don't wanna go. I'll go, alright? But I don't have any combat strength, so you all will have to protect me!"

"Are you saying that all of us here are not strong enough to protect you?" The Great Hoodwinker raised an eyebrow.

Xun Yeyu hurriedly said, "No, no, of course

not..."

"Alright, it's settled then." Zhang Xiaoman said in high spirits, "Let's set off immediately and flatten the nation of sorcerers!"

"No, you'll stay behind to guard the rear," the Great Hoodwinker told Zhang Xiaoman.

"And why's that?" Zhang Xiaoman said agitatedly, "All of you are going, so why should I be the only one to stay behind?"

"Because you're not a superhuman." Wang Yun agreed with the Great Hoodwinker's suggestion. "When you go to a dangerous place like that, you might very well die if you're not a superhuman. So there's no need for you to take the risk. Besides, the developments in the Northwest are going very rapidly, so we need someone to look after things here."

"I can't do that alone." Zhang Xiaoman muttered, "I can't run things here all by myself."

"There's Wang Yuexi in charge of internal affairs, so what are you afraid of?" The Great Hoodwinker said, "As for defending against enemies... P5092, appoint someone to oversee the troops." "Black Fox." P5092 said, "He used to be my adjutant. He returned with us from the steppe, and I trust his ability to lead the troops. It just so happens that new units are getting to know each other and recruits are enlisting for boot camp during this period. He's the best at these military affairs. In fact, I'm the one who's unfamiliar with handling such details."

Black Fox was different from P5092. P5092 had retained his serial number as his name. However, to show he had cut ties with his past self, Black Fox had chosen a new call sign for himself.

“Alright.” Wang Yun got up. “Let’s set off immediately. We’ll detour around the outpost via Ramhorn Ridge and head straight for the nation of sorcerers!”

Chapter 1110: Going on campaign

When the Great Hoodwinker set off for Stronghold 144, Wang Fengyuan specifically instructed him not to share with the future commander’s trusted aides that he was launching the Prosperous Northwest 3.0 plan.

After all, they were currently at the developmental stage of Stronghold 144. If those core figures were to suddenly find out about Ren Xiaosu’s plan and lose rationality, a lot of plans would probably get affected.

However, the Great Hoodwinker felt the matter could not be kept under wraps. Surely he could not make Commander Zhang hide himself before Ren Xiaosu’s return, right?

Moreover, he really wanted to go to the Kingdom of Sorcerers to have a look too.

In the past, he suggested he make a trip there personally. However, Zhang Jinglin and Wang Fengyuan did not agree as they were afraid he would encounter danger.

But now that he had revealed the information to Wang Yun and the others, it was equivalent to having 50% of the Northwest’s superhumans head to the Kingdom of Sorcerers together. In that way, he would not be in that much danger.

Based on their current situation, everything would be under control!

In the Great Hoodwinker’s opinion, if Commander Zhang stood for the Northwest’s present, Ren Xiaosu would represent the Northwest’s future. Although the future commander was very powerful, what if something were to happen to him?

On the same night, Wang Yun and the others packed their belongings and drove off. They were planning to abandon their vehicle at Ramhorn Ridge where they would start trekking on foot. This was the best route to avoid the outposts, but it wasn’t easy to travel, so only superhumans could pass through.

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In case they were stopped from leaving the Northwest, they even chose to travel off the beaten path while driving.

In truth, there was no need to do that. After all, with the Great Hoodwinker’s ID, he could basically go anywhere in the entire Northwest other than the private residences of residents.

However, the Great Hoodwinker was worried Wang Fengyuan and company would personally come and stop them after receiving the news.

As they traveled westwards in the car, Wang Yun and company were laughing and chatting happily. Even P5092, who was known to have a cold personality, was smiling throughout the journey.

It was as though they were not venturing deep into danger but going on a hike instead.

“Hey, what do you all think Future Commander’s Prosperous Northwest 3.0 plan is about? Raze the nation of sorcerers to the ground?” Ji Zi’ang asked.

Xun Yeyu said meekly in the car, “It might be about the same as the 2.0 version, like abducting some people back to the Northwest or something. Wouldn’t it be a little unrealistic to raze the entire nation of sorcerers to the ground?”

“You’ve underestimated Future Commander too much.” Wang Yun shook his head. “Didn’t the Great Hoodwinker say we have some intelligence agents stationed over there? They should have sent back some information. Great Hoodwinker, why don’t you give us a briefing on that place?”

“There’s nothing much to brief you on.” The Great Hoodwinker said, “All we know now is that there are extremely powerful sorcerers in that kingdom. They control the entire nation with a divine authority that’s above imperial authority. The secular society is also basically run by the various sorcerer clans who control the economic lifeline of the entire kingdom. Actually, that’s the situation we hope to see as well. After all, with the sorcerer clans acting like feudal lords, it’s only a matter of time before their nation collapses. Only then will there be heroes or the ambitious stepping up to unite it.”

The Great Hoodwinker continued, “Initially, Commander Zhang’s plan was to wait until the interests of the magus families became divided. That isn’t something we can induce upon them but just how human nature plays out. So when the Kingdom of Sorcerers shows signs of falling apart, we’ll start our counterattack plan. However, no one expected that Future Commander’s plan would be one step ahead of ours. Although we don’t really know what he’s thinking, we can only let him be.”

“Sorcerer clans?” Wang Yun muttered, “How many sorcerer clans are there in the entire kingdom?”

“About 40 something.” The Great Hoodwinker said, “We’ve only just started our intelligence gathering operations there, so the information we have is not complete.”

Wang Yun suddenly said, “Why don’t we make a bet then? I’ll bet 10,000 yuan that Future Commander can wipe out eight sorcerer clans.”

P5092 assessed Ren Xiaosu's combat strength and said, "My bet is on 10 clans."

The Great Hoodwinker said, "Then mine is 14."

After that, everyone looked at the fair-skinned chubster in the car. Xun Yeyu was so nervous he nearly cried as his powerful teammates stared at him. "C-Can I not place any bets? I don't have much money..."

"Bullshit." The Great Hoodwinker said, "Future Commander pays you such a large salary every month, yet you don't even have 10,000 yuan?"

"I guess 16 then," Xun Yeyu said, feeling wronged.

Just as the young sorceress and her group were guessing how many people Ren Xiaosu had killed before, the all-star crew of the Northwest Army was making similar speculations. However, unlike the sorceress and her group's grasp of Ren Xiaosu, the all-star crew was not guessing how many people would get killed but how many sorcerer clans would get wiped out by their future commander.

At this moment, Luo Lan had just emerged from a waterfall in a mountain range somewhere in the Qing Consortium. Luo Lan no longer had any fat on his body. His burly figure was ripping with muscles, making him look like a large wrestler. Although he still looked very fat, he was completely different from the past Luo Lan.

The logistics officer immediately brought him a towel and handed over a document as well. "Boss Luo, you instructed the intelligence agency to keep an eye on Ren Xiaosu's movements. There have been some unusual observations, indeed, recently."

"What's unusual?" Luo Lan wondered, "Did he go back to the Central Plains again? Wait a minute, didn't they say he was going to tour the outposts to visit the sentries?"

"Yes, him and Zhang Jinglin headed to the outposts outside Fortress 178 together. Their original plan was supposed to last for two months, but Zhang Jinglin returned in advance. However, there was no sight of Ren Xiaosu," the soldier answered. Luo Lan gasped. "He disappeared? He didn't return to Stronghold 144?"

"Our spies at Stronghold 144 have all been sent back, so we don't have any specific information. However, they can confirm he didn't return with Zhang Jinglin," the soldier said.

"Could that guy have gone to the territory of Fortress 178's enemy to stir up trouble?" After Luo Lan dried himself, he shouted to a tent not far away, "Zhou Qi, stop sleeping! Hurry out. Let's pack up and head to the Northwest!"

Zhou Qi walked out of his tent sleepily. "What's the matter? Has the war with the Wang Consortium started?"

“The Wang Consortium still has to reorganize after taking care of the Zhou Consortium. It’s not their turn to attack us yet,” Luo Lan snapped at him. “I was asking you if you wanted to head to somewhere beyond the Northwest for a visit!”

Zhou Qi was taken aback for a moment before answering bluntly, “No!”

“I’ll pay you!”

“Even if you pay me, I won’t go. It’s just the Gobi over there. What’s good about going to a godforsaken place like that?” Zhou Qi snapped.

“I heard the Kingdom of Sorcerers is located on the other side of the Gobi. As if I’d have the free time to visit that desert!” Luo Lan said, “Besides, don’t you want to experience the exotic culture of that kingdom?”

Zhou Qi was a little tempted. “Uh... tell me, what are we going there for?”

“To support Ren Xiaosu in battle, of course,” Luo Lan said proudly, “I’ve been training this hard for so long, so surely I must show off to him a little!”

Zhou Qi chuckled. “Of all the people you can show off to, why would you choose him?”

“That’s true..” Luo Lan said, “Whatever, let’s get moving immediately!”