

Magic Era 101

Chapter 101: Obsidian Flower

Lin Yun's eyes opened wide when he noticed the black flower, his breathing even accelerated.

'Worthy of a Bone Devil's lair...' Lin Yun jumped into the hole, not paying attention to the thick, rotten smell, and he crouched in front of the black flower. He used the priceless Spiritual Magic Staff to gently dig around the black flower.

Lin Yun's movements were very careful, taking a lot more time than necessary, digging the soil bit by bit. One minute passed, then two, then three... Ten minutes later he started sweating as the digging didn't seem to be making any headway. A bit of worry could be seen on Lin Yun's face, but he still focused and slowly dug at the soil.

Lin Yun knew that this was an Obsidian Flower, rumored to be the root of all evil. Lin Yun would suffer from unbearable loss if the Obsidian Flower suffered the slightest bit of harm.

Very few mages had seen a living Obsidian Flower during the peak magic era. It was the crystallization of the resentment of thousands upon thousands of the undead. It represented this world's most malicious and most sinister existence. Each petal contained incurable poison. A High Mage powerhouse would instantly die with a mere touch.

Moreover, it was said that even the soul of a man poisoned by the Obsidian Flower would have to suffer pain and torture for all eternity.

However, the fruit of a blooming Obsidian Flower was an extremely precious magic material. The Obsidian Flower could bear three kinds of fruits, and each kind was enough to create miracles when used for alchemy.

Lin Yun remembered that approximately five hundred years later, an unlucky Master Alchemist named Lawrence lost the entirety of his family property in a storm. With only a hundred golds to his name, Lawrence used that money to buy a withering fruit. Everyone felt that Lawrence was finished at the time.

But no one thought that a year later, Lawrence would rely on the withered fruit to make the first True Spirit Magic Tool, joining the ranks of the Artisans.

At that time, people only knew that the fruit Lawrence bought with his hundred golds was called the Heart of Light. That was one of the three fruits that came from the blooming of the Obsidian Flower.

It was a miracle of alchemy created by the Obsidian Flower.

It let a Master who had been at an impasse become an Artisan.

It took Lin Yun thirty minutes to dig up the Obsidian Flower, and still, he didn't dare to use his hands to touch it. Instead, he put on a pair of gloves made out of Gold Essence. With those, he pulled out the entire Obsidian Flower. A sinister cold wind blew over, and countless ghosts flew up from the hole in the soil. Mournful cries echoed as the entire world became sinister and eerie at that moment.

Lin Yun knew that this was the crystallization of the resentment of the Obsidian Flower.

He didn't panic and instead just cast Spirit Defense, followed by Banish Evil.

In a flash, the cold wind stopped and the ghosts faded away as peace returned to his surroundings.

After everything was over, Lin Yun held the Obsidian Flower in one hand and the Spiritual Magic Staff in the other as he crawled out of the hole.

'Time to go back...'

After climbing out of the hole, Lin Yun took a last glance at the black wasteland.

In doing so, he saw a strange phenomenon.

'There are so many Skeleton Warriors here?'

This was strange... The hegemon died, yet not only did the amount of Skeleton Warriors not lessen, but it had also shockingly increased.

Lin Yun's eyes shone as he looked at those thriving Skeleton Warriors.

He had originally planned to bring the alchemy puppet back to Noscent to repair it. But after seeing so many Skeleton Warriors, Lin Yun couldn't restrain himself. These Skeleton Warriors looked so lively, it would be a shame if he didn't harvest them.

Lin Yun thought for a bit before giving two orders to the alchemy puppet.

The first was to hunt nearby, and the second was to gather Undead Essences.

For the Skeleton Warriors of the black wasteland, these two orders were simply a nightmare.

Naturally, this had nothing to do with Lin Yun anymore. After arranging the situation of the alchemy puppet for the next month, Lin Yun patted the dust off his robe and once again used the incantation to open the Planar Path.

He would begin mining the Nether Iron Vein during his next trip, and also look for that shortcut to the Book of Death.

After a short spatial distortion, Lin Yun once again returned to Noscent. He didn't check his rewards in the hidden chamber this time. Instead, he immediately rushed to the garden and planted the Obsidian Flower that he had brought with him.

And then, the entire garden...

The Obsidian Flower wasn't called the root of all evil for nothing. Its toxicity was enough to instantly kill High Mages, so how could a small garden escape from the ravages of its power? Just by planting it, the entire garden underwent huge changes. Trees withered, flowers shriveled, and in a short time, all the plants in the entire garden died.

For a moment, Lin Yun was a bit unsure of how to proceed.

But he ultimately thought of something and drafted two alchemy arrays at the garden's entrance to prevent the toxicity from leaking out. At the same time, he told the servants that no one was allowed near the garden. Lin Yun could only relax a bit once he was done with this. But he knew that this was only treating the symptoms but not the root. There might not be any problems for now, but once the Obsidian Flower bloomed completely and started bearing fruits, those two alchemy arrays would be unable to keep the toxicity at bay. At that point, the only option would be to have everyone move out.

But before he could come up with a better solution, these two arrays would do the job for now.

Naturally, if he was fortunate enough to find a Parasitic Tree later on, then everything would be much easier to will with.

A Parasitic Tree planted with the Obsidian Flower would not only absorb the Obsidian Flower's toxicity, but it would also make the Obsidian Flower bear two fruits instead of one!

'Looks like I have to find an opportunity to search the Savage Highlands...' Lin Yun scratched his cheek and returned to his study to check on his harvest.

Chapter 102: True Cousin

Thirty minutes of stay had become three hours. Lin Yun's harvest in the Bone Plane had truly seen a substantial increase. When Lin Yun came back the first time, he had only gained a few precious magic gems, and besides a Frost Lich Heart, the rest of the harvest together wasn't even worth an Inheritance Magic Tool.

But this time, Lin Yun obtained the 23 Dark Fire Bullets from the Bone Devil's corpse, each of them worth at least a Splendid Magic Tool. He also found the magic staff in his hand, which was a genuine Spiritual Magic Tool, and even the Obsidian Flower, known as the root of all evil. There was also the alchemy puppet that was powerful enough to contend with a Bone Devil, as well as the Sage Chapter's additional two Ultimate Spell slots.

In other words, this harvest from this trip was far beyond what Lin Yun could have ever imagined.

'Oh, and there is that Inheritance Ring.'

Because of the lack of time in the Bone Plane, Lin Yun hadn't had the leisure to carefully inspect the ring. After extracting the control runes from within, he had put it aside. But now that he had left the Bone Plane, Lin Yun could finally research it.

Cracking an Inheritance Magic Tool wasn't anything complicated for Lin Yun, as he had mastered that skill in his previous life.

It took him less than half an hour to understand the ring.

'Spatial Magic Tool!' Lin Yun was actually shocked that this was a Spatial Magic Tool!

Normally, an Inheritance level Spatial Magic Tool wouldn't be enough to move Lin Yun.

In this era, the alchemy array technology was already approaching maturity. It wasn't impossible to get the effect of spatial distortion. In fact, the pockets of Lin Yun's black robe had been treated with a similar alchemy array. The actual volume of his pockets had been more than doubled.

The truly shocking Spatial Magic Tools were those at the Spiritual level or at the True Spirit level because Spatial Magic Tools could display their true power through their Spirit or Incarnation. An Inheritance Ring Spatial Tool like the one he found couldn't be considered a particularly valuable Spatial Tool.

What moved Lin Yun was the origin of that Spatial Magic Tool.

This particular tool had belonged to a High Mage.

Lin Yun had always been troubled by an oddity while in the Bone Plane. How could an esteemed High Mage leave only one staff behind? But he now understood after seeing this Spatial Ring... The rest should be within that ring.

Cracking it became a lot easier after knowing that this was a Spatial Magic Tool.

Lin Yun only drew an alchemy array and after cutting off the source of the mana flow, the radiance of the ring dimmed, followed by a loud "bang".

Lin Yun didn't have time to react before being buried by various things.

"Fuck..." Lin Yun struggled out of the pile. After looking around, he couldn't help cursing.

Such a big study was now filled with ore, deep blue and cold to the touch. If this wasn't Nether Iron, what was it? And some of those ores were shining, definitely Magic Gems. Lin Yun started counting, but he quickly gave up because there were too many.

'This High Mage from the Black Tower was very hardworking...' Lin Yun looked at his study filled with Nether Iron and Magic Gems and was speechless for a while.

He originally thought that his previous harvest was shocking enough.

But he hadn't expected this additional bounty.

Now he had an entire study full of ore and gems. If he sold them now, he would most likely get over 10,000,000 golds. And this was only the material price. If they were processed by the Gilded Rose, that number would increase quite a bit.

Lin Yun scratched his face and called a servant, "Go tell Uncle Pave to get me a few ca... No, a few dozen carriages!"

...

That pile of unexpected Nether Iron Ores and Magic Gems immediately sent the alchemy workshops into a craze. After Faleau forced the Great Alchemist Hawkins to withdraw, the prestige of the Gilded Rose had been completely solidified. And with Hauss fanning the flames, those few dozens of Alchemists sent by Bassoro were put in order.

Under Faleau's supervision, the Nether Iron Ores and Magic Gems were quickly turned into alchemy items, which then appeared in Thousand Sails City's marketplace, shocking many businessmen.

Now, the Gilded Rose could be said to have skill, talents, and resources. In a short ten days, the old butler expanded the operations four times in a row. The Gilded Rose opened thirteen shops and spread to almost every corner of Thousand Sails City.

Lin Yun had rarely appeared in the Gilded Rose recently. He would mostly stay at home to take care of that Obsidian Flower. He didn't have much choice, as the toxicity of the Obsidian Flower was too high. Servants couldn't approach, and only a Great Mage like Lin Yun could rely on the protection of mana to barely approach the Obsidian Flower.

It was the same today. After taking care of the Obsidian Flower, he read a book in the study for a while, and just as he prepared to go check if the caravan for Edge Rift was ready at the Gilded Rose, he heard some hurried knocking on the door.

"Knock knock knock, knock knock knock!"

Lin Yun looked at the door with a strange expression as he said, "Come in..."

"Young Master, Young Master..."

"Uncle Pave?" Lin Yun was startled. From the frantic knocking, Lin Yun had expected Remy, Faleau, or maybe even Raymond coming back from Oakland, but Lin Yun had never expected it to be the steady old butler.

"Young Master! There is a guest outside, he..." The old butler's expression turned strange as he hesitated. "He said he was your paternal cousin!"

"That can't be. Doesn't my benevolent uncle Fario only have a daughter? Don't tell me he is an illegitimate child?"

"No no no, he isn't Fario's son, he said he was your true uncle's son!"

"What?" Lin Yun almost choked. 'Since when is there a real and a fake paternal uncle?'

Chapter 103: Blind

"How about you go and check it out?"

"Good, I'll go take a look and see if I truly have more uncles..." Lin Yun felt gloomy. There were too many annoying people... Apparently, one Fario wasn't enough, turns out there is another uncle. 'Damn, will they never end?!'

"Young Master, I saw him and I don't believe he is a fake." The old butler quietly whispered on the way.

"Oh?" Lin Yun suddenly frowned.

"In those days, your grandfather and your father indeed came from another place, I still remembered hearing some rumors that they were in fact part of a great family, but because of some sort of family conflict, they had to hide in Thousand Sails City. Th-that..." The old butler tried hard, but he found that he didn't know how to address that person, so he had no choice but to be vague. "That person downstairs said something similar..."

“No way...” Lin Yun’s expression wasn’t good. “Then what about Fario?”

“This I know about. Fario is indeed a Merlin, but he is a distant relative. But once your father became rich, he came over and wept for help, and with your father’s soft heart, he immediately acknowledged his relative.”

“That fucker...” Lin Yun truly felt conflicted. He had rejoiced at first because Mafa Merlin’s relationships were simple enough, allowing him to save a lot of energy. But he hadn’t expected the situation to suddenly change. Not only was his cousin waiting downstairs, but another uncle had also appeared.

‘Forget it... In any case, this doesn’t have much to do with me. I’ll decide what to do after seeing him.’

Lin Yun left the study, and while walking down the stairs, he noticed a young man in his twenties sitting in the living room. Lin Yun walked over with a smile on his face and extended his right hand as he greeted, “Hello, I’m Mafa Merlin.”

“I am William Merlin.” The young man looked at Lin Yun’s hand, but he didn’t shake it or stand up. He merely looked around at the living room with some undisguised disgust. “You can call me Great Mage William, or Great Alchemist William, I don’t care. Also, your living room has such poor arrangement, you had better change it soon. I’m not accustomed to receiving guests in such a rough place.”

“Haha...” Lin Yun was suddenly stunned...

This young man calling himself William Merlin truly had the power of a Great Mage and was at least at the 5th Rank. From the fact that he wasn’t even thirty, this could be considered fairly shocking.

After all, Ryan, who had become a 1st Rank Great Mage in his twenties, was called a genius rarely seen in a hundred years in Thousand Sails City, yet William here was far more powerful.

The 1st Rank and the 5th Rank only seemed separated by a few ranks, but the two were poles apart. Not only could a 5th Rank Great Mage learn 4th Tier Spells, but they could also have five Magic Conducting Runes. There would be a qualitative change when a Magic Conducting Rune reached five runes. This kind of change would give a 5th Rank Great Mage the power to push for a new realm.

Lin Yun estimated that it would take ten Ryans to fight this one William Merlin.

One could indeed be arrogant when they had such strength at this age.

But when Lin Yun was the one targeted by that arrogance, his mood went somewhat sour.

“Right, Mafa Merlin was it? I came this time to let you know that your paternal grandfather and my paternal grandfather are both from the Merlin Family. From the perspective of familial relations, you should call me Older Cousin or Older Brother, but I’m not quite willing to hear this. Thus, if there aren’t any specific circumstances, you can only address me as Great Mage William or Great Alchemist William.”

“Sure, Great Mage William...” he acquiesced.

“I came this time because some elders made some inquiry about this family branch through who knows what channel and heard about your unpleasant situation, your father’s shipwreck, your debt, and you being a 9th Rank Magic Apprentice that had yet to become a Mage after years of efforts. Thus, those elders sent me to help you deal with the debt your father left behind, as well as to give you some

pointers in magic to let you quickly put on some pitiful black robe so that you won't tarnish the Merlin Family's reputation."

"This... Great Mage William, I need to ask something..."

"Knowing too much isn't good for you, it's better to not ask what you shouldn't ask." The young Great Mage didn't even look at him as he stopped his question with the kind of bossy tone and appearance that seemed like what he would use when ordering a family servant.

"..."

"Also, Mafa Merlin, I heard you have an alchemy shop called the Gilded Rose under your name?"

"Yes, that's right." After nodding, Lin Yun once again looked at William Merlin with a strange expression. The Gilded Rose should now be on the path to greatness, but it should only be famous in Thousand Sails City, so how could this young Great Mage from Okland know about the Gilded Rose?

Unfortunately, the young Great Mage showed no interest in continuing his conversation and got up after getting the answer to his question. "Well, rushing over from Okland in a day had left me feeling a bit tired, Have someone prepare a quiet guest room for me, and dinner will be delivered directly to my room."

Lin Yun didn't even want to bother rolling his eyes at him.

The old butler couldn't stand it, so he promptly called two servants and made them arrange a guest room and a meal for that Great Mage, yet the young Great Mage still hadn't moved. Rather, he was looking at Lin Yun doubtfully. When he saw Lin Yun's baffled expression, he coldly snorted in dissatisfaction. "What are you still looking distracted for? Do you expect me to move my own luggage? Are you blind?!"

'Fuck, he is really looking for troubles,' Lin Yun inwardly cursed.

He called a servant to help this Great Mage William move his luggage, and after he managed to send off this suddenly appearing cousin, Lin Yun slowly calmed down and started thinking about what had caused this situation.

'This William Merlin shouldn't be lying. The body I took over is most likely from the influential Merlin Family he mentioned. But the Merlin Family had no dealings with Thousand Sails City for the past decades, so how come they suddenly recalled that they had a missing relative there? Could it really be as William said? Isn't this a bit too coincidental?'

After thinking through the possibilities, Lin Yun came up with something. 'Oh right, he just asked if I had an alchemy shop called the Gilded Rose. Could it be because of the Gilded Rose?'

Chapter 104: It Was This Simple

'It seems like I'll have to live with this cousin for a few days...' Lin Yun chuckled and told a servant to take very good care of his older cousin before leaving for the Gilded Rose with the old butler.

The development of the Gilded Rose had been very quick recently. The old butler had opened thirteen branch stores in the past ten days, which now covered all of Thousand Sails City, but most of the time people would call these branch stores something like the Lion King Street Gilded Rose or the Quality Research Street Gilded Rose... Only the store on the Victorious Return Street would be directly called the Gilded Rose.

By this point, the Gilded Rose was already considered a giant on the Victorious Return Street. It occupied a whole street and was comparable in size with the Sage Tower it was facing.

But whether it was the old butler or Lin Yun, they both felt that gathering too many alchemy items in one location wasn't good.

Thus, a part of the street was rebuilt as a technology center, a great number of alchemy workshops and a great number of alchemy laboratories, so that every Alchemist had the best work environment possible. As for the storefront, all that remained the same was the original Gilded Rose so that when people came for the first time, they couldn't see that it was the 1st Gilded Rose alchemy shop of Thousand Sails City.

After Lin Yun entered the Gilded Rose, he went to the 2nd floor after greeting a few alchemists.

Since the Gilded Rose was booming, it had been a long time since Lin Yun had made something himself. Even if he occasionally got a few precious magic materials, Lin Yun would give them to Faleau and wouldn't bother asking if they'd been wasted.

Like this, he would be able to reduce the amount while letting Faleau accumulate a lot of experience.

That young Alchemist broke through his bottleneck two days ago to become a true Great Alchemist.

This was the first Great Alchemist of the Gilded Rose besides Lin Yun.

Lin Yun came today to chat with Faleau so that they could plan his path from here on.

After all, the Great Alchemist rank was very important. At the peak of the Magic Civilization, becoming a Great Alchemist was considered taking the first step on the path of alchemy. If someone took improper detours on their path, it wouldn't be as easy to fix as before. Some paths might lead a Great Alchemist with boundless prospects to fail and be unable to get any decent achievements.

Lin Yun waited for a bit in his laboratory before a knocking sound echoed at the door, but when the door was opened, Lin Yun was surprised by the newcomer. Instead of Faleau, it was Remy.

"Remy, what is it?"

"It's like this... Boss Merlin, there is a guest outside. He said he was your older cousin. He said that you had to go down immediately... To go down to meet him..." Now that he had officially become an Alchemist, Remy couldn't help feeling nervous when facing Lin Yun.

As one of the oldest employees of the Gilded Rose, Remy's understanding of this young boss far surpassed that of these new Alchemists. Remy had seen Mason eat a glass bottle, and he had seen a Great Mage getting slapped twice by his young boss.

Remy was more aware than anyone else that this smiling young boss was far less good-natured than he appeared to be.

“...” Lin Yun could feel a vein throbbing on his forehead. That William fellow still wasn’t done!

After taking a few breaths, Lin Yun repressed his urge to curse and only replied with a sullen expression, “Okay, Remy, I understand. You go first.”

Lin Yun quickly went downstairs and discovered quite a few people already standing in the lobby. Faleau, Hauss, Remy, William, and a forty-year-old man wearing a black robe.

William seemed to be a bit impatient as his expression wasn’t good, and when he noticed Lin Yun, he coldly snorted, “I’ll say it once, my time is limited, and you already made me wait twice. I hope there won’t be a third time.”

“...”

“I hope you won’t make the same mistake, otherwise I’ll leave Thousand Sails City and won’t care about your situation.” After William strictly tossed out those words, he took a look around the Gilded Rose, sizing it up with undisguised disdain on his face. “Mafa, I have to say, your Gilded Rose business is very bad. Look, your father left you a golden spot for a shop, and you barely manage to keep it. I have to ask, do you even have a hundred alchemy products in this place?”

“There should be over a hundred...” Lin Yun thought about it very seriously, as it seemed like there weren’t many left. Ten days ago, dozens of carriages filled with Nether Iron Ores and Magic Gems had piled up their contents in the storage of the Gilded Rose. In order to make space, the old butler had sent all the items in the lobby to be delivered to various other branches. Now, only a hundred or so items were left here.

“So you do know that there are only a hundred items?” William was watching Lin Yun strictly, and his look expressed his disdain for Lin Yun failing to meet his expectations. “I already investigated, this place is called the Victorious Return Street, the best location in the Gilded Rose. You are occupying such a golden place, yet you only have a hundred items here, how weak is the alchemy skill of your Gilded Rose?”

“Hey, watch your words!” Faleau intervened before Lin Yun could even speak.

The current Faleau was Thousand Sails City’s youngest Great Alchemist, Lin Yun excluded of course. The day he broke through and became a Great Alchemist, almost all the forces of Thousand Sails City had expressed their congratulations. Many of them had directly expressed the intention to hire him, giving him all kinds of beneficial conditions. Even after working for the Black Horn Auction for many years, Faleau hadn’t been able to resist being shocked at what they offered.

But after the initial surprise, Faleau didn’t even hesitate and directly refused all invitations.

Because Faleau knew that the reason behind him becoming a Great Alchemist in his twenties was neither because of his own natural talent nor his hard work. It had happened because he was working for the Gilded Rose, and more specifically for a boss called Mafa Merlin. It was this simple.

Chapter 105: Put It Back

“Who are you?” William Merlin frowned. He looked at Faleau for a few seconds with his high and mighty gaze, as if he felt like he was looking at trash. It was to the point that even Faleau, who was known for enduring, couldn’t help bursting out.

Faleau took a deep breath and forcibly refrain from cursing. “I am Faleau, the Gilded Rose’s Chief Alchemist.” He introduced himself in a neither servile nor overbearing tone.

“No wonder...” William only sneered at Faleau’s introduction. He then turned, no longer paying Faleau any attention. When he looked at Lin Yun again, his expression was even more impatient. “Well, Mafa, I don’t have that much time. I also don’t want to take care of your trivial matters. But before coming over, the elders of the family repeatedly told me to help you get rid of this pathetic debt. To shut those elders up, I brought you a Great Alchemist...”

After saying that, William moved aside slightly to let that black-robed man move forward. “This is Angma, a Great Alchemist I brought from Okland. From today on, he will take over the technical work of the Gilded Rose. Have someone hand over all the magic materials and alchemy formulas to him, and he will tell you how to break away from that pathetic debt.”

“There might not be enough time...” Lin Yun’s words were true, as the Gilded Rose had expanded too fiercely lately, to the point that the magic materials they’d gathered now filled quite a few storehouses. The number of alchemy formulas had also already multiplied to the point that even Lin Yun didn’t quite know how many of them there were. It was basically impossible to do that in a day.

Unfortunately, Lin Yun’s opinion was once again ignored by William.

In fact, from the beginning, William was giving out orders and didn’t plan to listen to anyone else’s opinions.

“Angma, you are good at potioneering right? Go take a look at the alchemy laboratory and the magic materials. Compound a few potions to fill the shop front for now. For fuck’s sake, the store is located in a golden location but it only has a hundred items, I really don’t know how a boss of a store can act like this...”

“Okay, Young Master William.”

Angma nodded, and just like William, ignored all the others. After receiving his instructions, he went up the stairs and entered Lin Yun’s laboratory on the 2nd floor.

“Go, Mafa, go watch how a true Great Alchemist works. Oh right, there is also you, Gilded Rose’s Chief Alchemist...”

Lin Yun was too lazy to roll his eyes. He just said, “Let’s go Faleau...”

“Great Mage Merlin, what’s wrong with your cousin...” While the two climbed the stairs, Faleau couldn’t help asking Lin Yun while pointing at his cousin’s head.

“He might have hit his head as a kid...”

After Lin Yun muttered that with an evil expression, he suddenly heard a shocked voice. He thought there might have been a problem in the alchemy laboratory, but when Lin Yun ran up, he only saw William standing in front of a refining table, shock and disbelief plastered all over his face.

“How could it be so primitive!”

“What’s primitive?”

“Fuck, you really think those alchemy tools aren’t primitive? Take a look at this, a glass beaker produced by the Crystal Workshop ten years ago, it can’t even prevent mana from scattering. And this, these are test tubes produced by the Crystal Workshop 7 years ago. They can’t even maintain a constant temperature. You are not afraid a change of temperature could create an accident? What kind of alchemy laboratory is this, how could it still use these kinds of primitive tools?”

“Well, Great Mage William, this is Thousand Sails City, not Okland...” Lin Yun felt a bit speechless. Okland was the kingdom’s economic center. The main store of the Crystal Workshop was located in Okland. Of course the alchemists there could enjoy the most advanced alchemy tools. But no matter how large Thousand Sails City was, the Crystal Workshop wasn’t willing to open up a branch here. The old butler had spent a lot of effort to have these items transported here from Oddrock City.

“Good, good...” William shook his head helplessly. “Now, get your best magic materials here. If Great Alchemist Angma fancies some of them, he’ll quickly help you break away from your pitiful debt. I heard you owe 8,000 golds? Truly pathetic...”

“Faleau, go check what magic materials are left.” After not coming to the alchemy shops for several days, Lin Yun indeed wasn’t sure what they still had left in stock at this location.

Faleau felt quite resentful. He quickly found several magic materials left over from the time when Lin Yun crafted the Angel Potion. If they were used properly, they would be enough to craft 17 or 18 Angel Potions.

But when these magic materials were put on the table, that Great Alchemist’s face became very bad. As for William Merlin’s reaction, it was even more outrageous. “No way. Mafa Merlin, you only have these poor magic materials left?”

“Poor magic materials?” Faleau was unhappy. ‘Fucker, you think these are poor magic materials? Do you even know what you are talking about? Those poor magic materials in your hands were used to compound an Angel Potion. You don’t know about it, but body strengthening, mana recovery increase, as well as holy power, this was a potion compounded from those “poor magic materials,” so get your eyes checked!’

Once again, the unhappy Faleau had been ignored by William Merlin. This cousin that appeared all of a sudden from nowhere simply went over Lin Yun and Faleau’s heads and cast a Detect Magic spell.

William’s face showed an expression of pleasant surprise realizing what the spell had detected.

“Eh, I really didn’t expect that such a run-down alchemy store would actually have a rare magic material!”

“Rare magic material?” Lin Yun was uncertain at first, but his expression soon changed. ‘The rare magic material he is talking about, it shouldn’t be...’

Sure enough, just as Lin Yun thought about it, William Merlin crouched down and took out a crystal test tube from under the alchemy table.

Complicated alchemy arrays were drawn onto it, and it contained a few drops of black liquid inside.

“Not bad, there is actually a sealing array on it, it looks like this Gilded Rose isn’t that primitive after all..” William Merlin laughed, satisfied.

“Put it back.” Lin Yun frowned.

What a joke, that was Obsidian Flower Sap. One drop was enough to create a massacre in Thousand Sails City, exterminating tens of thousands of people. Lin Yun had originally planned to run some experiments with a few drops, but he hadn’t expected it to be found by that ridiculous William Merlin.

Chapter 106: You Are Truly Fortunate

“You are ordering me around?” William’s voice turned cold. He looked at Lin Yun with extreme disdain. “Mafa Merlin, do you know who you are talking to? Don’t think that you can prance around in front of me just because the elders of the family told me to take care of you...”

“I told you to put it back!” Lin Yun’s voice suddenly rose as fierce mana fluctuations were emitted. A tearing sound spread through the air. William was still talking when he felt an acute pain in his chest, his whole body flying back.

At the same time, the crystal test tube in his hand also fell down.

“It doesn’t matter if you are courting death, but don’t implicate others,” Lin Yun scolded as he reached out and caught the crystal test tube. After carefully checking it once, he gently put it back in his pocket.

This was Obsidian Flower Sap. If just a bit leaked out, there would be no one left living in the Gilded Rose.

“Mafa Merlin! You dare to make a move against me?” William struggled out from the corner. The Tornado Whip hitting his chest had burnt like an iron branding.

But compared to the pain of getting up, he cared more about the fact that this failure had dared to offend him.

William Merlin, as a famous member of the Merlin Family’s younger generation, had an almost innate feeling of superiority. In his eyes, Lin Yun was merely a youth of a branch of the family that was stranded away in the middle of nowhere. Who knew how many of these branch family youths there were in the huge Merlin Family.

William should have been worshipped as a savior when he arrived! How could it not be? He had come to extricate Mafa from his debt, and if he was willing, he would even let him become a Mage. Mafa’s life would be a thousand times better than before.

In William's eyes, this younger cousin should be prostrating in worship.

But William had never expected that the other side would actually fail to appreciate his kindness!

'Who do you think you are? You are merely a youth from a side branch of the family, not even living in the family land! You didn't even obtain the family's acknowledgement. In Okland, you wouldn't even have the qualifications to use the Merlin Family name!'

'Such an ant dares to attack me? This is courting death!'

"Freeze!" he shouted.

William Merlin softly covered his chest, his eyes full of rage. He muttered a hurried incantation as ice appeared under Lin Yun's feet. That was Cold Death, a 4th Tier spell that only high-rank Great Mages could master. That ice spread crazily past Lin Yun's feet, reaching his chest in a short moment. In a blink, Lin Yun was turned into an ice sculpture.

Immediately after, William Merlin incanted something else, and the Cold Death was followed by a Wind Python.

That was another 4th Tier Spell!

After William chanted his long incantation, a burst of wind spread through the alchemy laboratory as a cyan python roared amidst the gale. Even Faleau and Angma on the side could smell the fishy stench emitted by the python.

William Merlin kept his mouth open as he continued with his incantation. He looked extremely pleased with himself. This time, he was set on punishing this Mafa Merlin. He had to make him suffer. These reckless branch family kids would only understand how to respect the main family members if a few of their limbs were taken.

He had to teach him that even if the same Merlin Family blood flowed in their veins, William was far superior.

William's incantation echoed even louder, louder than the Wind Python.

After the incantation was over, the fishy smelling cyan python pounced at Lin Yun. The huge, meter-tall python tightly coiled around the motionless ice statue. At this time, even the Great Alchemist, Angma, couldn't help closing his eyes, unwilling to see that bloody, bone-shattering scene of carnage.

"Mafa Merlin, these are the consequences of putting your hand on me," William Merlin coldly said. He then remained silent as he stood there, waiting for the other side to struggle in pain and plead in despair.

He ended up waiting for a while.

But there still wasn't any sort of response after waiting for a while. At that moment, William couldn't help checking the Wind Python, thinking that he shouldn't have lost himself in rage and cast such a powerful spell. It would definitely be bad if Mafa died to that Wind Python. He would have to waste a lot of time explaining to the elders after going back...

Just as William Merlin was getting anxious, a “bang” came out of the ice statue as it burst into flames.

...And not only the ice statue.

Even that coiling Wind Python was set aflame in a split second. Only the mournful cry of the Wind Python was heard at this moment. It didn't have time to struggle before turning into a pile of ashes. The ice statue shattered at the same time.

William looked at this silhouette covered in flames, walking out from within the shattered ice shards.

“El-Ele...Elemental Incarnation!”

This time, William Merlin simply couldn't close his mouth due to shock.

He wasn't even given the opportunity to recover...

Because before he could, that flaming silhouette crossed ten meters, appearing in front of him in an instant. A flaming right hand fiercely grabbed William Merlin's neck, lifting him up.

William struggled while he stared in shock as the silhouette's left hand rose...

Immediately afterwards, two slaps echoed.

William Merlin felt pain in his heart as a deep feeling of humiliation washed over him. One of the most outstanding children of the Merlin Family was slapped twice in a small place like Thousand Sails City by a branch kid that hadn't even received the family inheritance.

But at this moment, William Merlin wasn't feeling anger, but fear!

He could feel this right hand's grip on his neck was tightening. Tighter and tighter, and those two eyes shrouded within the flames were turning colder and colder.

That proud son of the Merlin family could feel death approaching. In that split second, William Merlin had countless thoughts floating in his mind. He wanted to curse, he wanted to threaten, he wanted to beg for forgiveness, he wanted to call for help, but in the end, William found out that he couldn't make any sound.

As breathing became harder and harder, he began to hallucinate, his mind gradually turning blank, his vitality slowly draining.

“Knock knock knock, knock knock knock!”

William was suddenly saved by the hurried knocking on the door. After entering, Remy was startled by the sight of Lin Yun wreathed in flames. The young Alchemist only dared to talk once Lin Yun removed his Elemental Incarnation. “Boss Merlin, L-L-L... Leader Lys came.”

“Okay, I'll head over.” After sending Remy away, Lin Yun slowly released his grip on William's neck. He watched as that proud scion of the Merlin Family gasped for air and then vomited. Lin Yun slowly crouched down, showing a smile that made William fear for his life, “Next time you touch something in my alchemy laboratory, it won't matter if someone comes knocking.”

With these words, Lin Yun turned and left the alchemy laboratory.

Angma, to the side, was already thoroughly terrified. The young 5th Rank Great Mage, William Merlin, was a famous figure among the younger generation of Okland, but in such a small place like Thousand Sails City, he was caught like a chicken by a youth that wasn't even 20. 'Di-Did I just hallucinate all that?'

Faleau had long been accustomed to all this. Before leaving, he patted William's shoulder with a smile, "You are truly fortunate. You actually survived after Great Mage Merlin made a move. Oh right, after leaving, don't forget to thank Leader Lys, he accidentally saved your life..."

"L... Leader Lys?"

"Leader Lys, Leader of the Alchemist Guild. Of course, you can also call him Master Alchemist Lys."

Chapter 107: Vaughn Treasury

"Leader Lys?! How could he be a Master!?" William gasped. How could he not know the Leader of Thousand Sails City's Alchemist Guild, Lys? A few decades ago, Leader Lys had been in a good relationship with the Merlin family, and ever since then, he would leave for Okland every year and visit as a guest of the Merlin Family. He even gave some pointers to William the previous year.

But William never could have imagined that the Great Alchemist from last year had already become an esteemed Master Alchemist!

After all, there were only 6 Master Alchemists in Okland, the core of the kingdom. Every single one of them had a very influential position in the kingdom and they weren't people that even the powerful Merlin Family would rashly offend.

Master Alchemists had reached a frightening level of proficiency in their craft, giving them nearly boundless power as each of them had a peak power of the kingdom standing behind them. Even if the Merlin Family had over a thousand years of history in Okland, the consequences of offending a Master Alchemist was far too grave.

'Damn, am I in the right place? Is this really Thousand Sails City?' William wondered, feeling disoriented. 'Is this really the eastern part of the kingdom, famous for being barren and primitive? The Thousand Sails City that was only acknowledged for its shipbuilding industry? Is someone playing a trick on me?'

He was having trouble accepting the situation.

'If this place really is Thousand Sails City, how could a Master Alchemist appear here? ...Hold on, Master...'

As his line of thought reached this point, William suddenly calmed down. 'Isn't it great that Leader Lys became a Master Alchemist? After all, the Merlin Family's friendship with Leader Lys has lasted for decades, and he even gave me pointers last year. It's perfect, I can take advantage of this and have Leader Lys seek justice for me! With the decades of friendship, he wouldn't allow me to be bullied in a place like this!'

William could practically see his revenge playing out.

'If Leader Lys learns that this damn Mafa dared to attack a direct scion of the Merlin Family, he would definitely not let him off. Just a word from Leader Lys would close down the Gilded Rose. I wonder what kind of expression that Mafa Merlin will have once his store is closed down!'

William Merlin promptly wiped the corner of his mouth and arranged his black robe, covering the scar on his neck as much as possible. Once he was done, he chanted a Water Screen spell and made sure that he looked fine and proper. Only after that did he push open the door to the alchemy laboratory and head downstairs.

Lin Yun had already been talking to Leader Lys for some time.

However, Lys didn't mention that alchemy formula, and neither did Lin Yun mention the fifty Alchemists. The two seemed to maintain a tacit agreement not to say anything about the lucrative deal they had made.

Their discussion seemed to revolve around potioneering. One was a Master Alchemist, leader of the Alchemist Guild, while the other was someone who had mastered alchemy knowledge that transcended time. If outsiders heard this discussion, they would think that it was an exchange of knowledge between two alchemists of similar level, but who would think that of these two people, one was a Master Alchemist that was nearly a hundred years old, while the other wasn't even twenty.

"Great Mage Merlin, do you have some free time?" This was the first time Lys brought up a topic other than potions.

"Haha, Leader Lys, why are you asking this?" Lin Yun had a smiling expression, but he was inwardly vigilant. He had talked with that person for about ten minutes and Lys hadn't hinted at anything during that time. But how could Lin Yun not know that he was a fox that could compare to Solomon and Monchi?

'Suddenly asking if I have time right in the middle of a discussion about potions! Leader Lys, you are a sly one aren't you...'

"Not long ago, our Alchemist Guild found an ancient ruin," Lys explained. "After conducting some research, we confirmed that it was left by the 3rd Dynasty's last Artisan, Vaughn."

'Vaughn Treasury!' Lin Yun realized, feeling quite startled.

At this moment, Lin Yun really wanted to tell Leader Lys, 'Aren't you a bit too direct?'

'That's Vaughn Treasury...'. He thought about what he knew about it. 'The 3rd Dynasty's final Artisan, a famous existence in Noscent's history. The only Artisan to name three alchemy formulas with his own name.

Those six alchemy formulas were called the Hexagram Star of Vaughn.

But these six formulas were lost after the 3rd Dynasty. It was rumored that before his death, Vaughn hid these formulas in his own tomb, and that tomb was named Vaughn Treasury.

Lin Yun knew that this rumor was correct.

Because a thousand years later, the major forces of the kingdom would be caught in a chaotic, decade-long war due to Vaughn Treasury. That war swept in all the major forces, and ultimately, the Hexagram Star of Vaughn landed in the hands of the Ivory Tower. Heaven Mage Bane stood out during that chaotic war as he finally stepped into the Heaven Rank.

But it was a thousand years too early, so how could the Alchemist Guild have found it already?

Furthermore...

“Why me?” Lin Yun asked.

“Haha, Great Mage Merlin, you are underestimating yourself. If people had to pick out the most talented alchemist of Thousand Sails City, I believe that 99% would choose me, Master Alchemist Lys...” As Lys said this, his smile gradually vanished. “But I would definitely choose you.”

“Hmm...” Lin Yun was suddenly at a loss. To be honest, Lin Yun really didn’t think that he had such a great position in that Master Alchemist’s mind.

“Vaughn’s ruin is filled with alchemy puzzles. I think that you might be the only one talented enough to solve these puzzles,” Lys continued.

“Crystal Island is a bit far away...” Lin Yun truly felt pained. He obviously didn’t want to go to Vaughn Treasury, but he couldn’t say it.

Nothing could be done about it since Lin Yun couldn’t just tell Lys, ‘I already mastered the Hexagonal Star of Vaughn, so I have no interest in Vaughn Treasury, go have fun with it...’

A lot of trouble would come his way if he said something like that...

Thus, Lin Yun made it look as if he wanted to go but couldn’t because he was busy and because it was too far away. If Lys insisted and wanted to drag him on a boat trip, he would use the trauma of a shipwreck.

“Crystal Island? No, no, no...” Lin Yun hadn’t expected that Lys would laugh instead when he heard that. “Everyone thought that Vaughn Treasury was located in Crystal Island, but they were actually wrong...”

“Eh?” Lin Yun was stunned. This didn’t make sense. The Ivory Tower’s people recorded that they found Vaughn Treasury at Crystal Island!

“The ruin we found is located in the Four Seasons Canyon, north of Edge Rift.”

“It truly isn’t in Crystal Island?” Lin Yun wasn’t convinced. Heaven Mage Bane’s personal notes recounted the scene of the battles happening on Crystal Island, ten years of battles. Could Heaven Mage Bane have lied about that?

Otherwise, how could Vaughn Treasury appear in the Four Seasons Canyon?

‘Hold on... Four Seasons Canyon! Isn’t that the location of Vaughn Laboratory?’

“Hm... Okay, Leader Lys. Who is participating?” Lin Yun suddenly made his decision when he thought about that. Vaughn Laboratory was a lot more valuable than Vaughn Treasury.

After all, that laboratory not only had all kinds of alchemy items made by Vaughn, but it also had all kinds of precious materials that Vaughn had plundered during his life.

Speaking of plunder, the Hexagram Star of Vaughn had to be mentioned.

It was rumored that the Hexagram Star of Vaughn was a Teleportation Gate leading to Hell. Besides displaying the outstanding achievements of Vaughn, that name also secretly was ridiculing Vaughn's greedy and ruthless nature.

Vaughn sat on the position of Chief Alchemist of the 3rd Dynasty for over a hundred years. During those hundred years, Vaughn plundered in an almost berserk fashion. Countless innocents lost their lives, and countless precious magic materials were sent to Vaughn Laboratory, some of which could be considered amazing even during the peak of the magic era.

Lin Yun wasn't interested in the Hexagram Star of Vaughn, but he absolutely couldn't miss out on Vaughn's collection of magic materials.

"In addition to Thousand Sails City's major forces, the Mercury Tower will also send a powerful team."

"Good. I'll also go, but I have one condition before we set off. I have no interest in the Hexagram Star of Vaughn, but I want priority when it comes to choosing materials from those left behind by Vaughn." Lin Yun paused, but before Lys could turn him down, he tossed in a hard-to-refuse condition. "I'll be in charge of cracking all alchemy arrays!"

"Cracking all alchemy arrays!" Lys repeated. He almost gasped when he heard that.

He had thought that his evaluation of this young Great Mage was high enough...

But it seemed that his understanding of Mafa Merlin was far from clear enough.

Those were the alchemy arrays left behind by the final Artisan of the 3rd Dynasty. Even if that Master Alchemist from the Mercury Tower came, he would only dare to say that he would do his best. But Great Mage Merlin here treated all the alchemy arrays as one package and didn't say he would "try" but that he would crack them...

What amazing courage and self-confidence.

What frightening level of alchemy was behind that courage and confidence?

"Great Mage Merlin, this isn't a game..."

"Rest assured, Leader Lys, I can guarantee it."

"..." Lys look at Lin Yun for a short time before helplessly sighing. "Okay, I need to consult with the others. I'll give you an answer three days later at most."

"Haha, then I'll be waiting for Leader Lys' good news." Lin Yun actually kept an indifferent expression on his face because he knew that Vaughn Laboratory wasn't like the Gilded Rose Laboratory where even a piece of trash like William Merlin could rush in. That place was the laboratory of the final Artisan of the 3rd Dynasty. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to compare it to a tiger den or a dragon lair. Those who hadn't been there wouldn't know how terrible it was.

Not to mention everything else, even if one only considered those defensive alchemy arrays, they couldn't be broken by just any Master Alchemist.

It could even be said that in this era, the only one able to break those alchemy arrays before entering the Artisan realm was Lin Yun.

Thus, Lin Yun felt quite at ease as he boldly announced his conditions.

Because he knew that no matter the result of their discussion, they would have no choice but to ask for his help in the end.

"Youths nowadays are getting more and more difficult to deal with..." Lys shook his head and stood up from his chair after refusing Lin Yun's invitation to stay longer. He was in a confused state of mind as he went to the reception room, planning to return and digest everything that he had heard today.

But when he was about to open the door, it was fiercely opened from the other side.

The newcomer was William. This older cousin had a pleasantly surprised expression on his face as he approached. "Leader Lys, it's great that you are here!"

Lys took two steps back to take a clear look.

Lys actually had some impression of William Merlin.

When he visited the Merlin Family the previous year, Lys had given a few pointers to that youth. He'd had no other choice but to admit that this youth was truly a rare talent in the field of alchemy. The young man was merely in his twenties, yet he had reached the rank of Great Alchemist already. Thinking about it, Lys couldn't help being impressed. The Merlin Family was worthy of being a millennium-old family. When it came to the field of education, they were far more outstanding than those nouveau riche families.

Chapter 108: Ridiculous

"Leader Lys, I am William Merlin, the one who consulted you last year when you visited the Merlin Family." William looked as if he had seen a savior. Regardless of whether he had hit the old man when pushing the door open, he introduced himself with an expression of pleasant surprise.

"Ah, it's you, William. Why are you so flustered..." Seeing that the newcomer was William Merlin, Lys' expression softened and his unhappy feelings disappeared. Over the past decades, Lys had taught several dozen alchemists in the course of his work at the Alchemist Guild. It was hard to avoid being partial to someone as talented as William.

Even if one disregarded his good relationship with the Merlin Family, he could still be considered William's elder. And it wasn't good for elders to bicker with the younger generation. But he couldn't help thinking that last time he met William, the latter had been very steady. How could he be so flustered in Thousand Sails City?

Unfortunately, William didn't know what Lys was thinking. All William could think about was how to make Mafa suffer.

“It’s like this, Leader Lys. This Mafa Merlin fellow cheated me of an alchemy formula. I wanted to discuss with him just now and make him compensate me, but I didn’t think he would be so unwilling that he would attack me inside the laboratory!”

After saying this, William threw a provocative glance at Lin Yun.

But this glance gave off the feeling of a weak person trying to appear to be strong.

William Merlin could contain his sense of superiority, unlike that idiot, Mason.

William knew that he had been wrong about Mafa being a failure that couldn’t become a mage. Mafa was clearly a true, high-level Great Mage whose strength was far above William’s.

This was undoubtedly a huge blow to William Merlin.

That realization was even worse than the two slaps on his face.

It turned out that this unknown outer family member was, in fact, a lot stronger than he was. He had been fostered to be an heir to the Merlin Family every since he was a child, and he was at least in the top five of the young generation in terms of strength.

But he hadn’t expected that he would be knocked down in one move and then slapped twice in a small place like Thousand Sails City.

William couldn’t accept this.

But being a scion of a major family had many advantages. Regardless of whether he accepted it or not, he would be able to come to terms with reality and immediately react.

William’s method was very simple. ‘Since I’m not as strong as you, I’ll drag you down by competing in alchemy. I don’t believe that you are as formidable in alchemy as you are in raw power. That’s right, I’m going to frame you.’

William was quite confident that this was the correct way to approach the situation.

‘I, an esteemed Great Alchemist, am going to frame you in front of a Master Alchemist. What can you do about it? Going to try to explain? Are you as knowledgeable as I am when it comes to alchemy? Are you as close to Leader Lys as me?’

Thus, after complaining to Lys, William threw a provocative look at Lin Yun and then revealed a smile full of confidence.

“Ridiculous!” Sure enough, Leader Lys’ expression sank.

At this time, William’s Merlin was feeling extremely delighted. ‘Heard that, Mafa? Leader Lys is already scolding you. The boss of a broken down alchemy shop in Thousand Sails City is being scolded by a Master Alchemist. I want to see how you can stay in Thousand Sails City from now on.’

“It’s okay, Leader Lys. You don’t have to get angry over such a trivial matter. I’ll settle this.” Lin Yun actually had a smile on his face as he said a few comforting sentences to Leader Lys.

William wanted to snort. ‘You still think you can get away with this?’

William threw a disdainful smile at Lin Yun, thinking that Mafa was truly too naive. 'After getting an alchemy formula gained from cheating the Merlin Family, do you think you can get away with just a few sentences? Aren't you too naive?'

"This isn't a trivial matter, cheating an alchemy formula!" Lys was someone who would always keep his anger hidden, yet he was showing an extremely ugly expression on his face right now.

"Yes, yes, I know. Cheating an alchemy formula, I'll have a chat with William later." Lin Yun had a helpless expression. Lin Yun didn't know what he should say concerning this older cousin he had never met before. 'Seems like I need to have a proper chat with this older cousin after Leader Lys leaves.'

William didn't know what Lin Yun was thinking about.

The worse Lys' expression became, the more cheerful William felt.

'Yes, yes, this Mafa Merlin will quickly run out of luck.'

William was carefully keeping his thoughts from showing on his face while he looked at Lys' reaction from the corners of his eyes.

"Do you know what you are talking about?" Lys pointed at William Merlin. "Do you know how grave the accusation of cheating someone's alchemy formula is?"

William's mood rose as he inwardly repeated that sentence, but once he did, he couldn't help feeling strange.

'Why is Leader Lys pointing at me?'

"Truly ridiculous. You are framing Thousand Sails City's most outstanding alchemist of cheating you of an alchemy formula? William Merlin, is that how your Merlin Family educated you? Looks like I'll need to have a proper discussion with your grandfather when I visit the Merlin Family this year. We will discuss whether you are truly suitable to be the Merlin Family's heir!"

'Wait wait, did he just say... William Merlin? Damn, what does he mean by the most outstanding alchemist of Thousand Sails City? Shouldn't the most outstanding alchemist of Thousand Sails city be Master Alchemist Lys? When did I accuse Master Lys of cheating me of my alchemy formula?'

William's mind was in chaos...

All sorts of questions were popping in one after the other. But the answer to each question made William Merlin feel alarmed. He didn't even dare to confront these answers. If everything was true, it would be too frightening. Was this old man, Lys, talking nonsense, or was the world going crazy?

"Considering the reputation of the Merlin Family, I won't bother about your deception today. But, William Merlin, I will recount everything that happened here today to your grandfather, without missing a single fact." Lys glanced at William and coldly snorted. He then turned around with an apologetic smile. "I'm really embarrassed, Great Mage Merlin, I let you experience a farce. About the earlier condition, wait until I return to discuss it with everyone, I'll give you an answer in three days."

"Okay, I'll wait for Leader Lys' good news."

“Good, I’ll leave first.” Lys softly sighed before opening the door of the reception room, but he glanced at William again before leaving.

Although he didn’t say much, the warning in that gaze made William Merlin’s legs shake.

“So, dear Older Cousin William, don’t you owe me an explanation?”

“This... That...” Only Lin Yun and William remained in the reception room at the moment. Thinking about everything that happened in the alchemy laboratory, William’s already shaking legs couldn’t keep straight. ‘Fuck, this is a monster far stronger than me... If I’m caught again, would it still be two slaps?’

William was on the verge of panic.

‘If Leader Lys stayed here, I could have counted on him to rescue me, but now that he left, I have to face that monster alone. That’s too much pressure...’

“Oh right, I have yet to move my luggage!” After William Merlin said this, he ran away like a rabbit.

“...” Lin Yun watched as William Merlin escaped and couldn’t help feeling stunned for a while.

After returning to the Merlin House’s guest room, William Merlin was filled with worry.

‘Damn, I’ll really suffer this time... Not to mention being slapped twice, I offended the esteemed Master Alchemist Lys. How could Thousand Sails City become such a frightening place? Let alone a rising Master Alchemist, even that Mafa Merlin is far more powerful than me. Wasn’t this place known for being barren and primitive?’

William Merlin truly didn’t want to stay in this place, it was too strange and too abnormal.

If he could, he would immediately leave Thousand Sails City and return to the Merlin Family, never to meet that Mafa Merlin again.

Unfortunately, William couldn’t leave yet.

Because he had come to Thousand Sails City this time to carry out a mission.

Besides helping a cousin that he had never met before, William Merlin had another mission.

The Merlin Family was in dire need for Nether Iron, but Nether Iron was scarce in all of Noscent. It was hard to mine, and there was a pitiful amount. The Merlin Family thought of various means, but they couldn’t find a steady supply of Nether Iron.

But a few days ago, the Merlin Family suddenly received news that a large amount of Nether Iron weapons and armors appeared in the eastern Thousand Sails City. This news stirred the entire Merlin Family, and after following the clues, they found out that these Nether Iron weapons and armors came from an alchemy shop called the Gilded Rose.

And that alchemy shop belonged to a youth named Mafa Merlin.

It was actually someone surnamed Merlin.

Thus, the Merlin Family began paying attention to this matter.

As a result, they found out that this Mafa Merlin was actually a child of their Merlin Family that had ended up living outside the main family. His grandfather, Judd Merlin, was the younger brother of the Merlin Family Patriarch, Ofran. Several decades ago, he suddenly left with his son for Thousand Sails City.

After that, a lot of things had been excavated.

At this time, the Merlin Family found out that this child of their family living outside the clan wasn't in a good situation. Although the father, Locke Merlin, established a huge chamber of commerce, he had died in a shipwreck a few months ago, and his chamber of commerce went bankrupt overnight, leaving behind a debt of 8,000 golds.

Moreover, that Mafa Merlin wasn't fortunate. He was approaching twenty years but was still a 9th Rank Magic Apprentice.

Thus, the Merlin Family Patriarch, Ofran Merlin, personally gave an order, sending a youth of the Merlin Family to Thousand Sails City to help that child who was stranded in the outside world.

Naturally, the most important part was to make Mafa hand over the Nether Iron Vein, or whatever source he was getting the Nether Iron from. In exchange, the Merlin Family was willing to acknowledge him as a child of the family.

Chapter 109: Pressure

At the time, William had felt that this mission was truly a simple one.

That Mafa Merlin was in such a difficult situation. Not only did he have a debt of 8,000 golds, but he was also still a mere Magic Apprentice. The chance to be able to gain the acknowledgement of the Merlin Family, and furthermore, as a direct child, was like reaching heaven in a single step, something that would only happen in dreams.

William Merlin felt that the task was too easy. He only had to take a trip to Thousand Sails City and directly express his intentions. Would Mafa dare to reject the Merlin Family? Once he had control of the Nether Iron Vein, he would give the poor fellow some pointers to let him smoothly become a Mage, and as for the debt... That was a joke, how could 8,000 be regarded as a debt?

Moreover, William felt that he was quite considerate. Thinking of Mafa's future source of income, he specifically brought Angma from Okland. He was a Great Alchemist, and once he started working in the Gilded Rose, business was sure to boom.

Such a perfect plan... Meticulous planning...

It all went up in smoke...

'Cousin, Cousin, I came to help you. Why didn't you understand? And you even slapped me!'

William felt like he had been wronged.

‘Damn, this is too troublesome... It’s fine if you don’t need my help, but you can still give me the Nether Iron Vein! Without the Nether Iron Vein, how can I report to the Merlin Family?’

Before what he had experienced today, William would have been willing to fight for it, but when facing a monster like Mafa Merlin, William truly didn’t dare to think of fighting him now. No kidding, he was a Great Mage that could complete the Elemental Incarnation spell while being attacked by the Cold Death and Wind Python spells.

Although William was quite proud of being known as a genius when it came to magic, he didn’t have any confidence in front of this younger cousin.

‘At his age, wasn’t I a 7th or 8th Rank Mage?’ Should I find someone to help?’

William remembered that before he left, his father had specifically told him that he had some acquaintances in Thousand Sails City. If he ran into any trouble, he should look for a particular person’s help. That person was called Sauss, and he was apparently the leader of the biggest underground force.

Recalling this, William Merlin’s eyes shone. The leader of Thousand Sails City’s biggest underground force should have some weight behind him. It might not matter to Leader Lys or High Mage Solomon, but there shouldn’t be any issue with exerting some influence on his younger cousin, right?

In fact, he didn’t need Sauss to help him too much. As long as he was willing to put a bit of pressure on Mafa Merlin to have him discuss the Nether Iron Vein with him, William would be able to use all kinds of conditions. He didn’t believe that Mafa would refuse at that point.

‘But... How should I contact that Sauss?’

When his father mentioned Sauss, it was only in passing. He never could have expected that William would actually run into any trouble in Thousand Sails City, so he hadn’t even told him how to contact Sauss.

‘Doesn’t matter, I’ll ask around.’

William left the guest room. Just as he was about to ask a servant, he suddenly noticed Faleau walking in from outside.

“How did it go? Did you thank Leader Lys?” Faleau smiled at William.

Faleau wasn’t magnanimous. He had been humiliated earlier, so now that he had the chance, how could he not return the favor?

“You are annoying!” William felt a vein twitching on his forehead. ‘Fuck, that’s a low blow. He definitely knows that I have been scolded by Leader Lys, yet he still asked if I thanked him... Bastard!’

But after stewing in his anger for a few moments, William thought of something.

‘Hold on, aren’t I looking for someone that can tell me about Sauss?’

As he considered his goal, William’s gloomy expression gradually eased, and eventually, he managed to squeeze out a stiff smile.

“Hmm, Faleau right?”

“Yes...” Faleau sat on a chair, nearly closing his eyes. His voice was so soft that it was almost imperceptible, to the point that if one didn’t look closely, they would think that he had fallen asleep.

‘Damn, that bastard is definitely doing this on purpose!’

William Merlin took a deep breath to suppress the anger rushing to his head. Maintaining his stiff smile, he asked, “Faleau, is there someone called Sauss in Thousand Sails City?”

“Sauss? You are looking for Sauss of the Viper Nest?”

“Sauss’ force is called the Viper Nest?” William’s eyes shone. Once he got the name of the group, the problem would be a lot easier. He could just go out and ask anyone. Why would he need to ask a snake like Faleau? William didn’t even bother to keep up his smile anymore. “Did anyone ever tell you that you are as annoying as a chatty vegetable-selling auntie!?”

William left with those parting words.

“...” Faleau was stunned for a moment, but then he couldn’t help laughing. ‘Want to get Sauss to help you out? Wait until you see him and you’ll understand...’

After leaving, William caught a passerby and asked him for information. He quickly learnt that the Viper Nest was located in the Poison Fog Canyon north of Thousand Sails City. He unhesitantly called for a carriage to leave straight for the Poison Fog Canyon.

...

Arriving outside the Poison Fog Canyon, William threw a hundred golds to the driver without looking back, before looking for one of the sentries.

“I am William Merlin, I wish to see Leader Sauss!”

The hands of that sentry shook when he heard the “Merlin” name. He shot one signal arrow into the sky and the entire camp acted as if they had seen a great enemy. Several hundreds of bows and crossbows were readied on the dozens of sentry towers, all taking aim at William Merlin. Inside the camp, an entire square formation of fighters with swords and shields in hand was ready to charge at any time. There was also a group of mages behind them... Which seemed to be casting already!

‘Damn, this isn’t fun!’ William was feeling sweaty. ‘What is this? Father shouldn’t have tricked me, didn’t he say that he had a decent friendship with that Sauss? Why do these guys look like a great enemy has come to their doorstep?’

“Don’t be impulsive! Don’t be impulsive!” William waved his hands crazily while hurriedly taking a few steps back. “I have no evil intent, I only want to meet Leader Sauss!”

Fortunately, Sauss came out.

“William? How come you are here?” Sauss was surprised to see William here. He hurriedly shouted to his nervous subordinates before inviting William back to his wooden house to have a cordial discussion.

A few years ago, Sauss had received a lot of help from William Merlin’s father, and he also wanted to rely on the major force known as the Merlin Family, so he was very amicable with William.

So when William asked “Uncle Sauss” for a small favor, Sauss straightforwardly agreed.

“No problem, William. Your Uncle Sauss could be considered a bit influential in Thousand Sails City. When I faces some troubles in the past, your father helped me. I’ll also help you.”

“Thank you very much, Uncle Sauss.”

“So polite...” Sauss smiled.

“It’s like this, Uncle Sauss, I recently got into a small issue in Thousand Sails City, a guy named Mafa Merlin...”

“Wait, wait, what Merlin?”

“Mafa Merlin.” William threw Sauss a strange look before patiently repeating himself.

“Mafa Merlin!” William didn’t expect that Sauss would suddenly jump up when he heard that name. “Fuck, Mafa Merlin, you said Mafa Merlin!”

“Yes, Mafa Merlin... Uncle Sauss, what’s wrong?”

“Hmm, William...” After sitting back down, Sauss’ expression wasn’t as natural as before. “What’s going on with Mafa Merlin?”

“It’s like this, Uncle Sauss, I have a bit of business I need to discuss with Mafa Merlin, but he seems to be rejecting me, not giving me any chance to talk. So I wanted to use Uncle Sauss’ power in Thousand Sails City to put some pressure on him...”

“Pressure!” Sauss suddenly cried out in alarm, sweat flowing down his forehead.

He felt like cursing as he looked at William.

‘Damn it, didn’t you call me uncle? How about I call you uncle and you let me go? Asking me to put pressure on that Mafa Merlin... Do you think I don’t have enough problems in the Poison Fog Canyon? Last time I put pressure on him because of the Hope Potion and ended up suffering badly. He single-handedly killed his way in and bombed two sentry towers, forcing me to open up a trade route.’

Sauss shuddered at the memory of those events.

‘And you want ME to pressure HIM... Do you want me to waste all the time I invested in the Poison Fog Canyon?’

To be honest, Sauss was very willing to help him with most things, as he was friends with William’s father and could build a relationship with the Merlin Family.

But when William asked him to pressure Mafa, Sauss only felt like seeing him out quickly.

“William, I am unable to help you this time.” It wasn’t that he couldn’t help, but that he didn’t dare to. Sauss clearly remembered the two potions in Mafa Merlin’s hands.

One was called Magic Spring, and Sauss had already tried it and found it very useful. Putting a bottle in a ventilated room would make all of the members of the Viper Nest immune to the effects of the Poison Fog for about three days.

But Sauss would rather never learn of the name of the other potion, because he knew that the appearance of that potion would signal the end of the Viper Nest.

'Pressuring him... Who is pressuring who?'

Chapter 110: Fear

"Why?" William Merlin was a bit worried. Sauss was his last hope in Thousand Sails City! If even Sauss couldn't help him, then his only remaining option would be to force himself to face Lin Yun directly.

"William, I still have something to do. I won't be able to keep you company. Say hello to your father when you return." Sauss' voice was a bit apologetic. He truly felt sorry that he couldn't help William. He couldn't repay his friendship and wouldn't be able to take advantage of this chance to get closer to the Merlin Family.

But Sauss would rather be sorry than become Mafa Merlin's enemy.

Sauss awkwardly chuckled and then left the wooden house.

"Gr-Great Mage Bell, wha... What is going on?" William was stunned for a while. After recovering, he asked Bell, still at a loss.

"Less than a month ago, Mafa Merlin came to the Poison Fog Canyon, killed dozens of people, exploded two sentry towers, and then had Leader Sauss open up a trade route for him."

Once he was done explaining, Bell also left.

Only William was left in the spacious wooden house. Firewood was cracking in the fireplace and the cold of winter couldn't be felt in the room, but at this moment, William Merlin felt an intense chill.

He had been looking down on his younger cousin all along, but it turned out that he was actually someone that could make Sauss shrink away in fear.

That was Sauss.

The leader of the number one underground power of Thousand Sails City, which was said to have several thousand subordinates ready to give up their lives for him, jumped up from fear at the mere mention of Mafa Merlin's name!

William felt that the world was becoming crazy...

After returning to Thousand Sails City, he felt that he didn't have enough information concerning his cousin.

Since Sauss had refused to help, he would have to rely on his own ability to figure things out.

He had no confidence to face his younger cousin.

But whether or not he had any confidence didn't matter at this point. He could only try to get a better understanding of his cousin.

Thus, William Merlin spent the entire afternoon outside, walking around half of Thousand Sails City, asking everywhere about his younger cousin.

...

While William wandered through Thousand Sails City, Lin Yun was working hard in the Gilded Rose.

The test tube of Obsidian Flower Sap was placed in front of Lin Yun, along with a huge pile of discarded draft papers. A lot of alchemy arrays were drawn on these discarded pieces of paper. Some were completed while some only had a few lines.

'It's no good, the addition of the gloom array would destroy the cycle of mana...' Another draft paper was crumpled and thrown on the refining table.

This was already the 30th design that Lin Yun had discarded.

Lin Yun spent a whole day in the alchemy laboratory, repeating this process, designing, drafting, and discarding.

In fact, these designs were all just short of perfection. If they spread about and were seen by others, they would make many Great Alchemists go crazy with fervor.

But Lin Yun was still dissatisfied.

Because he wanted to use the Obsidian Flower Sap this time!

Lin Yun had extracted some sap by taking advantage of the fact that the Obsidian Flower had just been planted so its toxicity hadn't reached its peak yet. Lin Yun thought that he could use it to compound some potions. If a potion was successfully compounded from that, it would inevitably be a Master Alchemist Rank Masterpiece.

But Lin Yun quickly found out...

He didn't have materials formidable enough to pair with it. The Obsidian Flower's toxicity was truly too frightening. Lin Yun had rummaged through his collection, but he hadn't been able to find one that would work.

In the end, Lin Yun had no choice but to give up on compounding a potion and started working on a Magic Tool.

But ultimately, after over twenty designs, he still hadn't been able to come up with one that satisfied him.

It was troublesome because the Obsidian Flower Sap's toxicity was truly too fierce. If that Magic Tool could be crafted, it would definitely have the power of a High Mage, but at the same time, there couldn't be a single mistake during the crafting process. The design would also have to be perfect, as even a negligible flaw could create a huge accident.

By the evening, Lin Yun had discarded 36 designs.

After throwing away another draft, Lin Yun didn't prepare a new piece of paper. He massaged his eyes and looked away from the table for the first time since he had started working on this.

Lin Yun knew that it would take more than a day if he wanted to use the Obsidian Flower Sap to make a Magic Tool. Seeing the color of the sky, Lin Yun started packing, ready to wrap up for the time being.

“Knock, knock, knock.” The sound echoed from the door.

“Come in.” Lin Yun cleared away the draft papers while acknowledging the arrival. Knocking at this time in such a respectful way, it should either be Faleau or Remy.

The doors to the alchemy laboratory opened, but contrary to Lin Yun’s expectations, it was neither of those two. Instead, it was his older cousin that he hadn’t seen for the whole day.

“It’s you?” Lin Yun slightly frowned. To be honest, this uninvited older cousin was giving him quite a headache. Becoming hostile didn’t work, yet appeasing him didn’t work either. That guy had a lot of pride, gesticulating and talking all day, making Lin Yun quite angry in the past two days.

But he couldn’t just drive him away...

Because Lin Yun had yet to figure out why the formidable Merlin Family residing in Okland was interested in him. The answer to that question lay with William Merlin.

William had said that the Merlin Family couldn’t tolerate his “situation”...

But Lin Yun knew that this was purely an attempt to coax a child. What kind of major force was the Merlin Family? There were hundreds of Merlin children each generation, so how could they care about tending to all of the scattered members? Here, a child of the main branch had rushed over to help him settle his debt and propel him to the Mage Rank, what was that?

Thus Lin Yun was waiting, waiting for William to be straightforward...

“This... That...” But what surprised Lin Yun was that today’s William didn’t seem to be in a good state. As he stood outside the alchemy laboratory, he was cowering slightly, as if the presence of a monster in the laboratory was preventing him from taking a few steps forward.

Lin Yun didn’t know that his guess was actually right.

Now, in William’s eyes, this younger cousin from outside the main clan was similar to a monster.

For the entire afternoon, William had kept asking about Lin Yun through half of Thousand Sails City.

And the more he asked, the more his fear grew.

William Merlin finally knew why the Merlin Family’s intelligence was so inconsistent...

It was because Mafa Merlin had indeed been a worthless Magic Apprentice just a few months ago, and moreover, one that had been stuck at the 9th Rank for many years. A few months ago, the Gilded Rose was a mere empty husk, and aside from a few poor magic materials, it only had an empty lobby.

Yet, everything seemed to have changed a few months ago.

The originally listless Mafa Merlin seemed to have transformed in one night. He broke away from his status as a Magic Apprentice and became a true Mage. Afterwards, he spent over a million golds, won four rare magic materials, and then the Hope Potion, Dragon Strength Potion, and Meditation Potion

were compounded, and the Gilded Rose underwent an extremely fast spurt of growth and was now the biggest alchemy shop of Thousand Sails City. It wasn't far behind that year's Flashing Gold chamber of commerce.

The most frightening part was that...

For unknown reasons, that Mafa Merlin had managed to get some sort of a relationship with many peak existences of Thousand Sails City. He went to Lion Monarch Street and reached a cooperative agreement with the Silver Moon Mercenaries, and then, when he took a trip to the Black Horn Auction, Cadgar had regarded him as an important guest and even sent Faleau, who he treated like a son, to the Gilded Rose. There was also the Sage Tower, with Solomon himself going to the Gilded Rose and scolding a member of the Alchemist Guild's market supervision team for making trouble for Mafa.

William couldn't understand all this.

If High Mage Solomon scolded a member of the Alchemist Guild on Mafa Merlin's behalf, then why did Mafa still have such a good relationship with the Alchemist Guild? Not only had Great Alchemist Bassoro frequently visited the Gilded Rose, but even Master Alchemist Lys personally visited him. Wasn't that a bit too illogical?

William Merlin was truly frightened.

Now that he was standing in front of Lin Yun, William didn't even know what he should say. Should he mention the previous slaps? Or the earlier attempt to framing him through Leader Lys?

"If you have something on your mind, just say it..." Lin Yun shook his head in exasperation. Though this older cousin felt like a different person compared to before, Lin Yun managed to adapt.

"I... Can I come in?"

"Come in." Lin Yun looked at the time, and noticing that it was still quite early, he wasn't in a rush to leave. He wanted to hear what his cousin had come here to say.

After entering the alchemy laboratory, William Merlin noticed the draft papers on the alchemy table and the blood suddenly drained from his pale face.