

Magic Era 1281

Chapter 1281: Questions

‘No wonder Sir Agalon told me there was a problem with my fighting style, especially against stronger opponents. It turns out my fighting style was just getting worse, with just a small change in the way I use my Natural Demiplane I was able to injure that oppressing puppet and almost got rid of it.’

The large bat puppet was thoroughly enraged, the talent rune on its throat kept on shining and its attacks became even more frantic. Despite the fact that it could no longer hide its sounds and tracks, it filled the area with afterimages of itself.

Lin Yun remained calm and placed the tip of the Draconic Staff on the Book of Mantras, extracting a complex spell covered in blinding lightning out of the Book of Mantras.

In an instant, countless lightning bolts converged together to form a twenty-meter-long electromagnetic track. Lin Yun placed his special artillery shell at the start of the track.

Lightning bolts frantically flickered in circles and the special artillery shell sped up along the tracks before instantly disappearing.

Less than a second later, an explosion echoed eight hundred meters away. The large bat puppet’s silhouette reappeared, seemingly out of nowhere. The artillery shell shot by the Railgun hit its right cheek and shattered, but it took out most of the puppet’s head along with it.

Instant kill...

In an instant, the headless body of the large puppet fell down from the sky and fell towards the steel city like a meteorite.

Lin Yun flew over and caught its body mid-fall before flying away without even looking back.

The steel city’s defensive buildings and weapon systems were all activated when Lin Yun caught the puppet’s body. Innumerable thick lasers and flaming lightning bolts covered the sky and charged towards Lin Yun.

But these attacks no longer had an effect on Lin Yun. By the time the puppets came out of the steel city, Lin Yun had already returned to Agalon’s hiding spot with the bat puppet’s corpse. Only a ruling puppet which surpassed the Heaven Rank could find tracks of Agalon’s hiding spot.

Agalon was also grinning, he was clearly very satisfied by Lin Yun’s battle, even if he didn’t express it.

“5th Rank Heaven Puppets’ ability to use law power is very limited. Even if they possess talent runes, they aren’t as flexible as human mages.

“Even though they are inflexible and use law power in very inflexible ways, their talent runes make them very powerful and the spells they release are far more powerful than 5th Rank Heaven Mages.

“But the parts of the laws they possess and the way to use them are already set in place. 4th Rank Heaven Mages who could truly use law power could deal with a 5th Rank Heaven Puppet, especially if they had some comprehension towards the puppet’s laws. It’s just a matter of qualifications.

“As for you, the projection of your Natural Demiplane’s laws is very comprehensive. Most of the laws used by 5th Rank Heaven Puppets should have already evolved within your Demiplane. Getting rid of these guys should be very easy for you, you spent a lot more time than needed...”

Lin Yun listened to Agalon’s words with an open mind. Agalon was right, it wouldn’t have taken more than ten minutes if Lin Yun had understood earlier and broke away from his old fighting style.

Even a puppet which had awakened wisdom was very dull compared to a mage, they were too inflexible. The time Lin Yun had wasted would have been enough for a 5th Rank Heaven Mage to get rid of him a few times.

Lin Yun was surprised by the power created after merging the original abilities of the Spell Wheel, Book of Mantras, and the Magic Array.

The puppet’s fighting style and movements were mostly controlled by the control system, and thus there was a pattern. Moreover, Lin Yun had been able to hit with the Railgun after analyzing that pattern and correcting the irregularities. This made Lin Yun realize the true use of the Magic Array.

The Magic Array was the strongest Magic Conducting Rune during the peak of Noscent, it had the most formidable computing ability. And now, Lin Yun could experience why the Magic Array was the best.

Increase in magic power, casting time reduction, mana consumption reduction, accelerated mana recovery...

More than 90% of its functions were inferior to other Magic Conducting Runes, yet the Magic Array was still publicly known as the strongest Magic Conducting Rune. After all, talent was the least valued part during Noscent’s peak, Heaven Rank powerhouses were roaming the earth and it wasn’t an exaggeration to say that Archmages were inferior to dogs.

Lin Yun thoroughly understood now, even if he had the information and descriptions, it wasn’t as good as experiencing it himself.

Not the strongest spells, nor the fastest casts, but it was the most efficient when dealing with enemies. As long as the user was powerful enough, they could perfectly analyze and predict their opponent’s path and actions. It was like they knew in advance what their opponent would do ahead of time and just needed to put a trap on their path.

Trying to use brute force against an inconceivably fast flying 5th Rank Heaven Puppet with a talent rune was simply impossible.

After a battle, Lin Yun felt reborn, as if he had completely undergone the transformation of the Heaven Rank.

He dismantled the bat puppet and put away all the components. Many of the components could be used to upgrade Pabiete, and there was even a ball that could continuously devour mana like a black hole.

Lin Yun’s expression shook when he saw that black substance and took out a mana isolating device he had previously prepared to gather that black substance.

Agalon still had a serene expression, he wasn’t shocked to see that black substance.

“Sir Agalon, what is that black substance?”

Gandaph had been unwilling to explain last time. He wouldn't stop talking if it was another matter, but he would only chuckle whenever that black substance was mentioned.

Agalon didn't directly answer Lin Yun's question. He instead looked him straight in the eyes and asked, “How is your research of that black substance faring?”

Lin Yun shook his head, “I've only discovered that this black substance keeps devouring mana, all kinds of mana. Even when lying down on the ground, it's still devouring the mana in the surroundings. I haven't figured out where the absorbed mana is going, I've tried all kinds of methods to track it, but I couldn't track it down.

“I've used some of it to create a puppet devouring system...”

“Sir Agalon, what is it?”

Agalon nodded, before disappointment flashed in his eyes.

“I originally hoped that you would gain some enlightenment towards the future by researching that thing, but it looks like it didn't work.

“That kind fell from the Starry Sky Battlefield. The Puppet Plane doesn't have an outer protective layer, allowing all meteorites to successfully fall down. That black substance is such a thing.

“This place has the most of it, it simply can't be found in Noscent. As for what it is exactly, you'll have to figure it out yourself.”

Since Agalon didn't explain, Lin Yun knew that there was no point in asking about it anymore, he instead asked about something else.

“What's going on with the Starry Sky Battlefield?”

Lin Yun kept hearing about this Starry Sky Battlefield. There was that Starry Sky Path controlled by the Merlin Family, back then he had seen a large number of corpses floating within the void, including a Deity's corpse.

And he just heard about the Starry Sky Battlefield again. The Merlin Family's Starry Sky Path most likely led to that Starry Sky Battlefield.

‘Just what is the Starry Sky Battlefield?’ Lin Yun had been looking for an answer for a long time. There had only been bits and pieces of information left in the future Noscent. Most powerful existences weren't recorded as dead, they had left for the endless void, never to be seen again.

When Lin Yun just transmigrated to this era, he only thought that the formidable mages appearing within these few dozen millennia ended up lost within the endless void.

After all, the space occupied by the endless void was far greater than Noscent, they simply couldn't be compared. It was hard finding a stable Starry Sky Path with the starry sky's fluctuations. They could end up lost in the starry sky for all kinds of reasons, never to find their way back.

But it now seemed that there was very little possibility of that being the case. These people didn't get lost, they definitely went to the Starry Sky Battlefield.

Faced with Lin Yun's question, Agalon remained silent for a moment.

"As for the matters of the Starry Sky Battlefield, you'll know in due time. This isn't a suitable time, you'll gain nothing from learning about it now.

"Let's go to the next location, I've found another opponent for you."

Lin Yun was helpless since Agalon didn't give him an answer, he knew that asking anything else was useless.

They arrived at another steel city after flying for a day. That steel city was about the same size as the previous one, and once again, Agalon threw a rune towards that steel city.

Lin Yun still didn't know what it was, but a level 45 puppet flew out of the steel city within a couple seconds.

The puppet was over eight-meter-tall, had six legs, and four arms. It was holding a seven-meter long silver bow in its right hand.

The longbow had a metallic shine to it, it didn't have a bowstring, was covered in a large amount of strange patterns, and a talent rune could be seen in the very center of the frame.

Lin Yun's expression changed when he saw that puppet, and he ended up being kicked out by Agalon once again. The centaur-like puppet raised its bow and put its left hand where the bowstring should have been.

In an instant, a bowstring made of light suddenly appeared, along with a silver white arrow of light.

Lin Yun felt a sense of crisis when he saw the archer puppet's actions. To be more precise, it was as if his soul had been targeted. His soul was instinctively shuddering from this sense of crisis.

A spatial fluctuation appeared and Lin Yun was dragged a meter to the side, as if he had been sucked through space.

At that exact same time, that silver arrow flew past his head and disappeared into the sky.

The radiant arrow grazed the surface of the Fusion Shield and triggered half of its law runes.

Lin Yun felt a chill, that was a scary experience...

That arrow was unfathomably fast, it was even faster than his Railgun. That bright arrow kept flying into the sky until it disappeared, crossing over a few dozen kilometers in a few seconds.

Even though it was far from the speed of light, it felt just as fast. It could only be dodged ahead of time. Lin Yun was less than two kilometers away from the archer puppet, this was close enough for the arrows of light to instantly hit upon being shot.

Lin Yun used everything he had after dodging, the Spell Wheel, the Book of Mantras, the Book of Death, the Draconic Staff... He even cast Wind Elemental Spirit Incarnation, letting his body drift in the air and continuously dodge without a pattern.

The Spell Wheel swiftly revolved, analyzing the movements of the centaur-like puppet and casually releasing a storm of Four-Element Bombs to interrupt the other side's casts.

But the archer puppet's six legs surged through the air, galloping as if it was on the ground. Its airborne movements were agile and terrifying, it looked like a true Heaven Rank Centaur.

The Spell Wheel couldn't figure out a pattern in the other side's movements, they could even be said to be unpredictable. Ultimately, the analysis revealed a dozen possible paths.

While easily avoiding Lin Yun's interferences, the archer puppet once again drew its bow and shot three silver white arrows. These three radiant arrows were a lot slower than the previous arrow, but they flew in a very strange manner.

The three arrows intertwined as they flew over, flying as if they were revolving around each other. Using pure archery skills, the puppet made the three arrows of light influence each other's power. It looked like there was a pattern, but any small influence would thoroughly ruin the previous analyses.

The three arrows needed five seconds to travel two kilometers, but Lin Yun stopped analyzing them after three seconds and cast a Law Runic Bomb at them.

The exploding power affected the arrows' paths, they instantly scattered in three different directions. They flew into an arc around the explosion before converging and aiming at Lin Yun once again.

'That's definitely cheating...'

Lin Yun was shocked. It's not like he had never seen a Heaven Rank Archer, it's just that the puppet was far stronger than a Heaven Rank Archer!

He had used the explosive power of a Law Runic Bomb, but the three arrows scattered before the explosion could reach them.

Seeing this scene, Lin Yun knew that the only answer to these three arrows was dodging or blocking at a close range, it wasn't possible to dodge ahead of time.

The three arrows flew towards Lin Yun's Fusion Shield. One of them directly landed on it while the other two separated.

The first arrow caused a large amount of law runes to pulsate. The second arrow flew in an arc and hit the other side of the Fusion Shield. The sudden burst of power made 90% of the Fusion Shield's law runes flicker.

Two arrows almost reached the limits of the Fusion Shield in an instant, but the third arrow was the true danger.

Because the explosive power of the arrows was too powerful. The law runes had gathered on two sides of the Fusion Shield, weakening the center.

The final arrow hit the center of the Fusion Shield and tore through it as if it was made out of paper, approaching the hovering Lin Yun from below. It would pierce through Lin Yun's body upon impact.

Destroying his heart and soul in a single hit.

'What a vicious puppet...'

Upon impact, Lin Yun's body shattered into pieces, as if it had been made out of glass, before dissipating like an afterimage. Ripples flickered behind it as a sweating Lin Yun reappeared.

'My life would have ended if not for the timely analysis of the final arrow's path and that last minute Mirror Image...'

Lin Yun had barely dodged when he discovered that the archer puppet was drawing its bow once again.

The Natural Demiplane's projection appeared and the laws' projections started operating against the current laws, offsetting this puppet's law power. But this had little effect against that archer puppet.

The other side was relying on their terrifying archery skills and talent rune to deal with him. Their path, patterns, and the trajectories of their arrows couldn't be analyzed. This battle couldn't continue like that or the next arrow would definitely take Lin Yun's life.

Chapter 1282: Training and Being Trained

The Fusion Shield, which was the sturdiest, had been torn apart, and couldn't be reassembled until several seconds later. That was the minimal time required to reorganize the law runes, and make use of the elements to build a shield. It would've taken an ordinary Heaven Rank mage a dozen seconds to reestablish a Fusion Shield.

Facing the crisis, Lin Yun became calmer than ever. The illusion of an ancient bronze scale appeared underneath his feet. The Book of Ten Thousand Mantras and the Ten Thousand Spell Wheel fell on the two ends of the scale.

The horrifying power that he absorbed from the void was injected into the Ten Thousand Spell Wheel, allowing it to carry out level-43 power for now, which could not only be used in casting spells, but also in computation.

Having been upgraded to an Extraordinary Magic Tool from a True Spirit Magic Tool, the Ten Thousand Spell Wheel's computation ability was increased 100 times.

The archer alchemy puppet on his opposite side had fired another arrow while it constantly moved in midair.

Instantly, Lin Yun adjusted himself to his best status. With the power from his Natural Demiplane, the computation of the Ten Thousand Spell Wheel, and the arrays of magic power, he came up with a perfect solution.

His Draconic Staff glittered. A spell flew out of the Book of Ten Thousand Mantras, which absorbed Lin Yun's power, and formed a silver mirror three meters tall in front of him. It was a combination of Space

Reflection and Water Mirror. Only someone who had grasped the laws of water and space could release it.

After releasing the first mirror, endless data was flowing crazily in Lin Yun's eyes. One spell after another flew out of the Book of Ten Thousand Mantras.

The silver mirror in front of Lin Yun became slanted. When the silver arrow hit the mirror, it was instantly broken. However, the arrow was deflected towards the bottom of Lin Yun's feet.

He hadn't dared to use the spell until this moment, because the silver mirror would've been shattered before it deflected the enemy's attack, and Lin Yun would've been killed even if he had been hiding behind the mirror.

However, after accurate computations, Lin Yun reached the conclusion that if the silver mirror was perpendicular to the arrow, it would be useless, but if there was a much smaller angle between them, the arrow would be deflected even if the mirror was broken.

When the arrow was deflected like light, another mirror surfaced in its way, and deflected it again. After six continuous deviations in its course, the arrow of light took a circle around Lin Yun, and darted towards the archer alchemy puppet from the top of his head.

The arrow of light was so horrifyingly fast that it penetrated the archer alchemy puppet's chest, and broke its mana reaction furnace into pieces.

Holding the giant bow, the alchemy puppet was overwhelmed with disbelief in its crystal eyes. It had already drawn the bow, but it was quickly losing its strength due to the destruction of the reaction furnace.

Lin Yun cast another black wind blade, cutting off its metal head. Immediately, the archer alchemy puppet's enormous body fell to the ground.

With the lesson he learned from the last time, Lin Yun immediately picked the puppet's body, and fled. As he expected, the moment the puppet died, the counterattack system of Steel City was activated. It was like dozens of level-1 and level-2 Heaven Rank experts were attacking at the same time...

Returning to Agalon's shelter, Lin Yun almost felt exhausted.

That archer alchemy puppet was using the law of light, which Lin Yun hadn't perceived at all. It hadn't even been created in his Natural Demiplane yet. There was nothing but a prototype.

He hadn't grasped the law yet, and there was only a prototype in his Natural Demiplane. He couldn't have fought at all without the experience from the last battle.

Besides, even the Ten Thousand Spell Wheel couldn't infer the enemy attack's trajectory at all. The enemy was even two levels stronger than him. It was impossible for him to fight that puppet at all...

"You must know the importance of the Natural Demiplane now. The perfect evolution of a Natural Demiplane is significantly beneficial. You've already learned to protect yourself with laws from your Natural Demiplane.

“However, it’s not so easy to protect yourself with laws that haven’t successfully evolved in your Natural Demiplane. Not bad. That puppet could’ve killed any mage below level 5 of the Heaven Rank except the spatial mages and the light mages.

“Alright, let’s continue...”

Lin Yun looked rather awful. Such battles were like dancing on the tip of a blade. Although he could learn things fast under the pressure of death, he might really get killed...

Even though those alchemy puppets were not really good at using laws, and any Heaven Rank mage was better than them, their levels were still too high...

Though a bit scared, Lin Yun didn’t reject the proposal. He had benefited a lot from such battles. It was as effective as the extraordinary evolution.

All his opponents had been carefully picked by Agalon. They were the most suitable for him. He had to try his best to fight them, and they couldn’t kill him in one attack. He could win the battles as long as he controlled himself well.

However, not everybody could’ve achieved what Lin Yun did. It was like throwing a rookie who had practiced sword techniques for only a few days into a bloody battlefield. Chances were slim that they could survive...

A month later...

Lin Yun tiredly walked out of a puppet graveyard. Watching a black spot disappearing in the distance in the sky, he was slightly relieved.

Agalon appeared behind Lin Yun.

“Well done. You’ve been making progress very fast. I believe it won’t take long before you advance into level 4 of the Heaven Rank. Your control over your Natural Demiplane and your understanding of laws cannot be further improved.

“Your training here is completed...” Agalon remarked with mixed feelings, a smile of satisfaction in his eyes.

What a genius. He has extraordinary gift, aptitudes, and responsiveness. Adding his Natural Demiplane that has evolved perfectly, it’s really possible for him to become as strong as I am in 10 years.

Previously, I thought it was impossible for him to rise to level 9 of the Heaven Rank in only 10 years even though he had a Natural Demiplane.

It took me almost two years to accomplish what he did. Yet, it only took him one month...

Agalon was satisfied, but Lin Yun felt rather bitter. He looked at his ragged robe and half burnt hair. There were burns all over his right arm. His body even emitted the fragrance of barbecue.

That was the result of him hiding from an infuriated level-46 alchemy puppet. He didn’t know what Agalon did or how he taunted them, but every alchemy puppet had charged at him with such wrath as if he had killed its entire family...

During the month, he was asked to kill level-45 alchemy puppets at the beginning, but later, when his opponents became level-46 alchemy puppets, all he needed to do was keep himself alive...

Any of the level-46 alchemy puppets could've torn apart his Fusion Shield easily. His attacks couldn't possibly break their defense.

In the previous 20 days, he had been fighting level-45 alchemy puppets. He was only able to kill them in the first 15 days. In the latter half of a month, he was unable to kill any alchemy puppet.

In the last 10 days, every alchemy puppet he fought was level 46. When he fought a level-46 alchemy puppet for the first time, it tore apart his Fusion Shield, and almost gouged his heart out the moment they encountered each other.

He had been running for life during the 10 days. Each alchemy puppet had hunted him for one day. After a day of hunting, they would give up. There was no telling whether Agalon did something, or it was just the alchemy puppets' setting.

During the 10 days of escape, he had been constantly on edge because he would've been killed if he'd slowed down for one second.

Now that the training was finally completed, Lin Yun hurriedly took out a bottle of Health Potion. He drank half of it, and smeared the other half on his wounds.

Leaving the Puppet Plane with Agalon, the first thing Lin Yun did was to return to his Demiplane, and have a good sleep.

After a month of intense battles, his nerves were almost breaking down. He needed some sleep to soothe himself. As he fell asleep, his soul fell asleep too. The impurities in his soul were discharged, making his soul purer. His soul power rose significantly.

The Magic Array that had been used for a month was relaxed too. Then, it began to recover and perfect itself.

The mana inside Lin Yun's body became purer and more powerful too. Extraordinary power spread on Lin Yun's skin, and fluctuated as Lin Yun breathed...

Three days later, Lin Yun slowly opened his eyes. The illusion of a wheel appeared in his eyes. As Lin Yun blinked his eyes, the illusion was gone.

After three days, he had completely recovered from his tiredness. His mana wasn't exhausted, as he had plenty of it; it was his soul power that was exhausted.

To survive against the level-46 alchemy puppets, he had been anxious every day, but the training had been beneficial too. His soul had been purified and consolidated. It contained twice as much power as previously. His head became clearer than ever.

After he woke up, the first thing Lin Yun did was to return to the Gilded Rose, and check what happened during the month when he was away.

He had deployed Xiuban, Reina, Pabiete, and even the mage army in the Gilded Rose to prevent anyone from causing trouble.

He even sent a message to the Raging Flame Plane, asking the three allies there to fly The Intrepid to Noscent if necessary.

After hearing Faleau's report, Lin Yun was finally relieved.

Nobody came to the Gilded Rose for trouble at all in the past month. Many people knew of the battle between Lin Yun and Wilder in the last month, but few knew its result.

It was because both Lin Yun and Wilder were still alive...

Although the majority didn't know the result, they could tell that the Gilded Rose won because the Lodney Family had been keeping a low profile. It stopped having more conflicts with the Gilded Rose. Even if the Gilded Rose's branches were swallowing the Lodney Family's market share, the Lodneys simply stayed away.

Many people were shocked and suspicious. The Lodney Family had dominated the potion business in the north of the Odin Kingdom for years, not because it sold the best potions, but because it suppressed or simply acquired its competitors that had invented great potions.

It had been very domineering, yet this time, the Lodney Family chickened out on their own.

The Gilded Rose had planned to establish 38 branches. The 13 branches of the second batch had been opened. Some of them had opened in cities where the Lodney Family's stores monopolized the business so far. After they opened, the Lodney Family's revenue in those cities plunged by half.

When the Lodney Family's branch in one of the cities had a conflict with the Gilded Rose's, the Lodney Family simply closed the branch, without giving the Gilded Rose any chance to complain...

The branch program had been going well. In terms of potions, the Gilded Rose's market share in the north of the Odin Kingdom had risen from the ninth on the rank to the third. Judging by the trend, it would only be a matter of time before the Gilded Rose rose to the top.

"We've been doing well with respect to potions. A lot of people are hoping to cooperate with us. However, the revenue from magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays combined cannot even compare to half of the potions' revenue.

"It's mainly because we don't have any star product that we can promote. Although we have advantages in quality and price, the advantages aren't too obvious.

"Sir Merlin, do you think we should enter the magic tool market first?"

Faleau reported the monthly events to Lin Yun, and then asked a question. He wanted Lin Yun to develop a star product that could be sold.

The alchemy puppets in Lin Yun's base would crush any alchemy puppet of the same kind on the market if sold. Unfortunately, those puppets carried advanced technology. Also, they were his secret troops. He certainly couldn't sell them for money...

"Let's not rush into anything yet until I come up with a suitable idea. Continue opening more branches. When all the 38 branches are opened, and we have regular customers, we will release our star magic tool."

The Gilded Rose expanded as planned, faster than any other alchemical corporation. Its reputation was improved and consolidated during the expansion...

Reputation wasn't something that could be built in one day. Only with a good reputation could a store have regular and new clients. The alchemy products had a huge market because everybody from mage apprentices to Heaven Rank experts consumed alchemy products, especially potions.

However, there was a fixed amount of potions that each of the customers would pay for. That amount wouldn't change very much. To attract the customers to the Gilded Rose, its reputation had to be better than that of its competitors.

Most people loved potions that were effective and affordable. That was definitely the Gilded Rose's advantage. The materials of all products of the Gilded Rose were all carefully filtered. There were even three quality assurance processes during the making of any potion before it was sold. It was possible to track down every person that had worked on any given bottle of potion.

The material supplier, the material processor, the tool makers, the refiners, and the QA managers... Everybody could be tracked down. Under such circumstances, it was as difficult to buy unqualified potion from the Gilded Rose as to let a mage apprentice rise to the Heaven Rank in one step.

Also, the Gilded Rose's potions were classified according to their quality. Different quality meant different prices. Also, all the prices were slightly lower than market price. Although the potions' tag prices were similar to market price, they had been sold at a discount, so they were actually cheaper than other potions on the market.

Most importantly, the Gilded Rose sold perfect potions, which were the most attractive products, and mostly appeared only at auctions. Alchemists mostly bought low-level potions for studies and high-level potions to save their lives at critical moments.

However, the perfect potions were sold as ordinary items in the Gilded Rose...

A lot of potions didn't even have low-quality versions. Even the worst of them was still more effective than the best products in some small stores...

Therefore, the Gilded Rose gained reputation quickly. Even the most picky person couldn't say that its products were bad.

The Gilded Rose had been growing quickly, but Faleau's level didn't rise as fast. As the Gilded Rose's manager, he was getting too weak, and might get caught in danger.

Ensuring that the Gilded Rose had been growing smoothly, and there was nothing important recently, Lin Yun pulled Faleau into his Demiplane, and started training him.

Having been played by Agalon for a whole month, Lin Yun watched Faleau fight a few alchemy puppets covered in cold sweat, and put on a smile.

Now that he was in Agalon's shoes, he was sure that Agalon did it on purpose because it felt great...

He asked Faleau to fight the alchemy puppets for eight hours. Then, he threw Faleau to the peak of the pillar, and let him learn the manifested truth runes for eight hours. The last eight hours were at Faleau's disposal.

Half a month later, Faleau started to fight alchemy puppets for six hours in a day. Then, Pabiete was asked to hunt him in the last two hours. Pabiete had limited himself to Faleau's level, but could still kill him easily...

Chapter 1283: Purification and Dispersal

Faleau truly suffered a lot. He was wounded dozens of times every day. The exhaustion of mana was not a problem, as there was plenty of it in the Demiplane. The wounds could be healed easily too as long as he didn't lose his head.

After a month of torture, plus the studies on the truth runes, Faleau had been upgraded to a level-7 Archmage. Also, thanks to Lin Yun's help, it was much easier for Faleau to grasp laws in the Demiplane than in the outside world.

When Faleau almost couldn't persist any longer, Lin Yun finally ended the training, though not entirely satisfied. He then opened the treasury in his Demiplane, and asked Faleau to pick materials and craft his own True Spirit Magic Tool.

Every mage had different core meditation laws, Magic Conducting Runes, and specialties. Their personalities were different too. It was impossible to unleash 100% of their power if they used a True Spirit Magic Tool someone else crafted.

The True Spirit Magic Tool that they crafted for themselves would naturally be 100% fit for them, and it could display 120% of their power in battles.

Looking at Lin Yun's treasury that didn't seem very large from the outside, Faleau remained peaceful, but after it was opened, Faleau was completely dumbfounded.

In front of him was a boundless square with rows of shelves that were 100 meters tall. There were even glittering numbers in the sky that marked different areas.

At the entrance of the treasury, there was a crystal table, on which a ball of light floated.

"Lay your hand on the ball, and see what you need. You can take whatever you need from here. I suggest you make a staff and two True Spirit Magic Tools for yourself. You're the one who knows what you need, and how you should do it."

After saying that, Lin Yun turned around and left. Faleau swallowed. Even though he had seen a lot of good stuff as the Gilded Rose's manager, he was overwhelmed with disbelief when he saw the treasury.

After he laid his hand on the ball of light, and read the information of the items in the treasury, Faleau was stunned for quite a few minutes.

"Abyss Water, the Demon Unicorn's horn, the Fire Demon's heart... There are so many ultimate materials from the abyss. You can't find so many ultimate abyss materials even in all the auctions in Noscent..."

"There are also Troy Gems, Crimson Gems, Elemental Ambers..."

“Unbelievable. This is the most complete treasury of materials. Oh, damn. There’s even Eternal Dark Gold. Oh my God. Such pure Eternal Dark Gold. Did Sir Merlin find a few large Eternal Dark Gold mines?”

It took Faleau half an hour to just sort out the materials. Many of the materials were even unknown to him. He had to read their detailed introductions to know what they were for. Most of the materials were from the abyss, and couldn’t be found in Noscent.

The Abyssal Magic Iron, which was so common in the abyss that every demon built their fortress with it, was a rare resource in Noscent, not to mention the materials that had never been seen in Noscent before...

Faleau couldn’t remain calm any longer. Like a hungry man who hadn’t eaten in a long time seeing hundreds of tables of delicious food, he lunged at the treasures...

Three days later, Faleau left Lin Yun’s treasury in satisfaction with a bunch of materials. It was more of a warehouse with top materials than a treasury. What Lin Yun collected as treasures was only Extraordinary Magic Tools and materials...

After all, Lin Yun could create any True Spirit Magic Tool or anything else that he needed.

After training and improving Faleau, Lin Yun took out a lot of good stuff, and offered it to the Gilded Rose. Many of the items were obtained from the Gilded Rose. They were rewards for the Gilded Rose’s employees, especially the alchemists that had been working here since the Gilded Rose opened in Andlusa. All of them got good materials that they couldn’t buy.

For an alchemist, techniques and materials were always more important than magic tools.

Lin Yun kept the precious materials that weren’t easy to get in his treasury for the Shelter Tower that he was going to build in the future. He shared all the other materials. His every follower got a lot.

The Gilded Rose kept expanding steadily, and Lin Yun stayed in his Natural Demiplane for studies. After the recent improvement, he was able to study more of the truth runes. Ever since the gathering in the Starry Sky College, he had studied 1,000 truth runes, which had all been melted into the Demiplane.

To be more exact, they were melted into the pillar of the Natural Demiplane. However, their influence on the Natural Demiplane didn’t dwindle. The laws of earth, fire, water, and wind were already evolving in different branches very fast. Considering the speed, by the time he studied 5,000 truth runes, they would evolve into a gigantic tree from a sapling.

By then, the laws of earth, fire, water, and wind would be no different from those in a complete world. Even though the Natural Demiplane was significantly smaller than a real world, they would be the same when it came to laws.

After the truth runes were melted into the pillar, the pillar became more and more powerful. It had essentially changed. Inside the mountain, the ordinary soil had been replaced by rocks. There were even metals growing there.

There was no telling what the pillar would grow into in the end.

After studying the truth runes, and melting them into his Demi-plane, Lin Yun began to modify Pabiete. During the month in the Puppet Plane with Agalon, he had collected a lot of parts that could be applied to Pabiete. Even the unsuitable parts could still be modified with other materials and applied to Pabiete.

Those parts and materials were all from level-45 alchemy puppets, and were perfect for alchemy puppets to use. Pabiete was only in level 43 at this moment. It seemed truly extravagant to apply those parts to it...

But Lin Yun didn't find it extravagant at all. Pabiete's wisdom had been awakened again, but the key part in its memory system had been sealed. The most important thing was to improve Pabiete's level, and remove the seal on its memory system.

During the modification, its control system and its engine system were improved. A lot of black substance was added to its swallowing system. All its parts, critical or not, were replaced by better versions.

After the modification, Pabiete was improved to the peak of level 44, very close to level 45. The tiny gap was not because of the parts being a problem, but because they weren't fitted well yet.

Pabiete carried three talent runes that had to be adjusted to its body. The new parts needed adjustment too before they fitted into the body perfectly. Pabiete's level wouldn't rise to 45 until all its parts became perfectly compatible with each other.

This time, Lin Yun had focused on improving Pabiete's agility. Having stayed in the Puppet Plane and fought for a month, Lin Yun gained a better understanding of the Heaven Rank battles and the advantages and disadvantages of alchemy puppets.

Level wasn't the most important thing. Even strength wasn't the most important thing. The most important thing was to hit the enemy in battle.

Back in the Puppet Plane, Lin Yun had confronted a level-46 alchemy puppet which boasted the talent of critical hit. It was so strong that Lin Yun would surely die as long as it hit him. However, after a day of fighting, Lin Yun didn't die, because all of its attacks were futile...

Alchemy puppets fought according to the guidance of their battle system. Even though the Heaven Rank alchemy puppets had awakened their wisdom, they could still count on the battle system's help. The stronger an alchemy puppet was, the less dependent they would be on the battle system.

Because of this feature, it was very easy to infer what an alchemy puppet would do, especially for Lin Yun who had a Magic Array and a Ten Thousand Spell Wheel. He could kill alchemy puppets that were two levels stronger than him, and escape from those that were three levels stronger.

If he had fought a real Heaven Rank mage with that strength, he would've died a million times...

After Pabiete's upgrade, the seal on its memory system was further loosened. Unfortunately, judging from the trend, Pabiete wouldn't be able to fully remove the seal until it rose to level 47 or level 48.

After upgrading Pabiete, Lin Yun began to study the black substance. Agalon didn't explain what the black substance was, but he told him where it was from.

Remembering the Merlin Family's ancient path, Lin Yun felt an urge to explore it, but it was just an urge.

Agalon strongly suggested that he shouldn't go to the space battlefield just yet. Last time, in the depths of the ancient path, he had detected unimaginably strong experts fighting and even the destruction of a star...

That battle was so destructive that he would've been torn into pieces by its aftermath even if he had just observed it from the sidelines.

Although he was curious, Lin Yun didn't intend to go to the space battlefield at the risk of death. In the future, there would be hundreds of experts whose names would be left in history, yet they all went missing after setting off to the boundless void...

Lin Yun continued studying the black substance, but to no avail. He tried many ways, but was unable to figure out what the black substance was, why it could swallow mana, or where the mana it swallowed went to.

He let a piece of black substance the size of a fist swallow a level-39 mana crystal. There was no obvious change in the black substance. He let it swallow a bottle of mana water, but it didn't change, either.

A bottle of mana water was more than enough for Lin Yun to completely replenish his mana. It contained such an astronomical amount of mana that it could power dozens of normal level-9 spells.

Also, because of the black substance's features, almost no detection spells worked on it at all. Lin Yun even created a machine that wouldn't be invented until 8,000 years later, but he was still unable to track down the swallowed mana...

Seated in his lab, Lin Yun watched the black substance swallow mana while frowning. He had tried many methods, but reached no conclusion. He couldn't even tell what the black substance was, or how to use it. Only the swallowing system on the alchemy puppet could make use of the black substance...

Unable to proceed, Lin Yun abandoned the research for now. He decided that he should continue perfecting the magic electromagnetic cannon. The moment he took out the cannonball, Lin Yun was stunned...

Right, because of the black substance's features, it was impossible to study with magic methods. But why did he have to use magic methods?

The magic electromagnetic cannon was created in light of the electromagnetic cannon's mechanism, but it was still very primitive at this moment. Both the electromagnetic tracks and the cannonball weren't perfect yet. They were only so powerful because he had strengthened them with law runes and extraordinary power.

If the electromagnetic cannon could be perfected, would it be possible to create special tools to study the black substance from a different perspective? For example, a microscope?

The optical microscope, in particular, didn't depend on any magic power during the observation...

Lin Yun felt a headache as he thought of that. He knew the basic mechanism of the optical microscope, but he didn't know how to make one at all. Fortunately, he had the power of magic...

After three days, he was finally able to create a half-meter-tall microscope with the power of magic and alchemy. It could magnify a hair hundreds of times after adjustment. When he plucked a hair, and

observed it with the microscope, he saw a halo around his hair, which was a feature of a natural-born extraordinary creature...

After exploring and trying for more than half a month, he finally created an enormous optical microscope that could magnify an item 800,000 times.

Lin Yun took one-tenth of a drop of black substance, and put it under the microscope. He saw a surface that looked like the smoothest magic silk. Although he was unable to see the specific structure, he could already see the surface clearly.

He continued processing the black substance with ordinary alchemy technology, and divided a drop of black substance into hundreds. He then stretched and flattened one piece before he observed again. He saw the congregation of countless tiny black spots. Also, they weren't very clear. Without careful observation, they would still seem to be a black surface.

Seeing that, Lin Yun was thrilled. After such a long time, he was finally making progress. He could even see with the microscope that while the black substance was swallowing the mana like a bottomless hole, its speed wasn't as high as when it was a large ball.

It matched the conclusion of his previous research. The more black substance, the faster it would swallow mana.

After figuring out the components of the black substance, Lin Yun had an idea. According to his theory, the more black substance, the greater its swallowing power. Conversely, the less black substance, the smaller the swallowing power.

Density was what mattered. What if the density of the black substance was endlessly lowered in a certain range?

Thinking about that, Lin Yun came up with more than 30 methods.

Not all materials were readily usable. For most materials, the purer they were, the better they would be. In such a case, their error would be small, and could be tolerated in usage.

However, in more than 10,000 years, countless new materials would appear every year. A lot of those materials were very valuable.

Take the Tungsten Manganese Gold for example. There was a lot of it in Noscent, but at this moment, it was just a lowly material that nobody was interested in. Mages wouldn't use it at all. Only ordinary people might use it when they crafted weapons.

Pure Tungsten Manganese Gold could increase a weapon's elasticity. However, it would be garbage if its purity was lower than 99%...

Things never changed until 10,000 years later, when a refiner was purifying a new material that wouldn't be discovered in a new plane until 7,000 from now, and he accidentally dropped a drop of Tungsten Manganese Gold onto it.

Then, a new material appeared!

At that moment, the alchemists who had been blindly pursuing purity realized that if a gram of secret silver was added to a kilogram of star iron, a new material that was much better than star iron would be generated. One drop of the Lava Crocodile's tears, dissolved in 10,000 kilograms of pure water, could generate a new fusion agent...

If a material was dissolved and separated, its performance might be better. Did the rule apply to the black substance?

If one drop of black substance was evenly distributed in a space that was hundreds of times bigger, would the black substance's ability of swallowing mana be weakened? Would it even lose the ability of swallowing mana?

Thinking about that, Lin Yun devoted himself to studies with the ecstasy of an alchemist. The method to create a fusion agent had already been etched into his head. He simply didn't need any of that yet. Besides, many of the new materials required raw materials that couldn't be found yet.

A lot of new materials and ores wouldn't be obtained until Noscent's age of colonization.

Lin Yun had never planned to use this method so quickly, because the Gilded Rose was still on the rise. It should be safer for him to release the new material when the Gilded Rose grew powerful enough.

After configuring the fusion agent, Lin Yun immediately started running experiments with all the materials he had.

23 days later, Lin Yun looked at a piece of metal with a complicated expression.

After so many days of experiments, where so many precious materials were wasted, the only material that succeeded was actually the Abyssal Magic Iron...

Chapter 1284: Universal Core

One drop of black substance plus 3,000 kilograms of the purest Abyssal Magic Iron would transform into a new material that wasn't black as the Abyss Iron at all when a fusion agent was added. It was bright silver, with dark golden patterns on it.

The only material that could facilitate the fusion of the black substance was the Abyssal Magic Iron...

Lin Yun's lips cramped. The Abyssal Magic Iron? Of all the materials that were delivered from the abyss through sacrificial rituals each month, the percentage of the Abyssal Magic Iron was the smallest...

Even the brainless abyss creatures knew how worthless the Abyssal Magic Iron was. If Lin Yun hadn't demanded it, the demons' subordinates wouldn't have dared to offer the Abyssal Magic Iron at all...

One drop of black substance to fuse 3,000 kilograms of Abyssal Magic Iron. That was an unbelievable ratio.

Also, the new material was very powerful. It was much harder than the Abyssal Magic Iron, and could compare to the precious materials that were used to forge the Sword Sages' weapons. Also, it carried the feature of automatic restoration. It could be sold by grams.

One kilogram of this material, named Black Pattern Silver, could easily be sold for 100,000 purple gold. More importantly, after the old materials were melted, they were combined into a new material, which wasn't the alloy that was commonly used in weapons these days.

With the new material, it took Lin Yun only three days for him to create the first Universal Core.

The Universal Core could be applied to magic tools, alchemy puppets, and even alchemy arrays.

It was because Lin Yun's speculation had been confirmed. After the devouring power of the black substance was weakened, it could not swallow mana anymore. The new material could attract mana as the black substance did, but it wouldn't swallow mana until none of it was left.

With such a feature, the Black Pattern Silver could be used to draw runes and alchemy arrays. Also, as the core, it didn't require any additional supply of mana. The Universal Core could work eternally based on the mana that the Black Pattern Silver attracted...

Besides, thanks to the features of the new material, it was hard for the core to be damaged. Even if it was, it could still repair itself.

Most cores of magic tools and alchemy puppets weren't very sturdy. Otherwise, they wouldn't have needed so many protective measures to cover them.

The cores that were manufactured in bulk with the Universal Core's self-restoration ability could be applied to most magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays.

More importantly, this thing was very powerful. All the magic tools that were built with it would be Spiritual Magic Tools.

It could be used on alchemy puppets that were below the Heaven Rank. Even if one of the cores wasn't enough, multiple cores would definitely suffice.

Lin Yun was quite amazed. He didn't expect the black substance to be so powerful as a material.

He went to Faleau with the prototypes he made, and introduced the Universal Core to him. Then, Faleau rushed out as if he had seen a ghost. An hour later, Faleau returned with a few alchemy puppets, a few different magic tools, and the array plates of several alchemy arrays with a thrilled expression...

"Sir Merlin, this thing is truly powerful. All of the Gilded Rose's magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays can use it. Also, after the Universal Core is installed in them, the magic tools' power is improved by 30 percent on average, and the alchemy puppets are strengthened by 50 percent! Even the alchemy arrays are 40 percent more effective.

"If it's used on special items, then its effect will be more obvious. In particular, the Gilded Rose's alchemy array that can gather mana is twice as effective as before with the help of the Universal Core!

"Sir Merlin, it's time we march to the markets of magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays. With this material, I'm sure that we will expand smoothly, and that the Gilded Rose's market share of magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays will be as big as that of our potions.

"Their profits will be even greater than the alchemy potions!"

Faleau seemed excited, but Lin Yun shook his head.

“No, we will only sell the Universal Core! At least for now. We won’t use it with the Gilded Rose’s magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays.”

Faleau was shocked, as if someone had poured a bucket of cold water on his head.

“Sir Merlin, as long as we have the core, we’ll be able to—”

Lin Yun shook his head. “Faleau, don’t be too hasty. After all, we’re outsiders for the Odin Kingdom.”

Hearing that, Faleau heaved a sigh, and didn’t say anything else.

“Sir Merlin, you’re right. The Gilded Rose has been developing really fast, and making huge progress. Right now, many influential forces of the Odin Kingdom, such as the Lodney Family, have noticed us...

“However, the Lodney Family has stopped causing trouble for us. Our alchemy potion business is thriving too. Our profits from magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays are not nearly as great as those from alchemy potions.

“If we seek to expand our market share in those three aspects, we probably won’t be able to survive in the Odin Kingdom.”

Lin Yun smiled and shook his head.

“That’s not the main reason. The main reason is that even if the Universal Core is applied to our products, the profits won’t improve much. After all, even the magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays to which the Universal Core has been applied will be no better than Spiritual Magic Tools. They can hardly influence the market of the True Spirit Magic Tools.

“Such an improvement won’t bring an absolute edge to the Gilded Rose. The best we can expect will be an advantage in the prices of our products.

“We have unique alchemy potions, which give us an absolute edge. If we recklessly enter the markets of magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays without an absolute edge, it won’t be good for us.

“On the other hand, if we only sell the Universal Core, we will earn even more because the stores that sell magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays will all need them.

“They have regular clients. One tiny bit improvement of the core will significantly increase their competitiveness. By selling the cores to them, we will make money without hurting anyone’s interests. It will help us stabilize in the Odin Kingdom.”

Faleau nodded and agreed with Lin Yun. That was for the Gilded Rose’s best. The Gilded Rose had caught too much attention, and stolen the Lodney Family’s market share of potions as an outsider, leaving a bad impression on other forces in the Odin Kingdom.

More importantly, the Gilded Rose was so much weaker than the top forces of the Odin Kingdom. It didn’t have nearly as many strong warriors or Heaven Rank experts.

The only right direction was to cooperate and make profits together, and that was what the Gilded Rose was doing. At this moment, a dozen small forces were already following the Gilded Rose to make money. However, it didn't have any large partner except the Starry Sky College.

Lin Yun looked at the Universal Core, which was five centimeters long and looked like a metal piece, in his hands with a weird smile.

"Besides, this is just an experimental product that's far from perfection. The key of the product is the materials it's made of, and I assure you that I'm the only one in Noscent who has such materials.

"Also, once created, it's impossible for the Universal Core to be cracked. Whoever tries to crack it will only destroy it in the end. It isn't very difficult to create the core. Anyone with Master-level expertise should be able to make it easily.

"We can sell the Universal Cores to our partners for 50,000 purple gold apiece, and to independent customers for 80,000 apiece. That's not too expensive, right?"

Faleau nodded solemnly. "It's too cheap. We should peg the price at 100,000 purple gold, and give a 20% discount for bulk purchases..."

Lin Yun shook his head, and disapproved of Faleau's proposal. "Just make it 50,000. And 80,000 for independent customers. Tell the news to the organizations that have been cooperating with us first..."

Faleau heaved a sigh, and still thought that it was too cheap...

The powerful Universal Core was better than all existing cores in terms of hardness and abilities. More importantly, it was applicable to most magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays, and it was made of a new material.

Yet, it was only sold for 50,000 purple gold. It seemed that Sir Merlin was determined to earn a respectable position in the Odin Kingdom with generosity...

Lin Yun was silent. He couldn't explain to Faleau the cost of the Black Pattern Silver...

The Abyssal Magic Iron? There was enough Abyssal Magic Iron to build a Neverwinter City.

The black substance? One drop of black substance could create 3,000 kilograms of Black Pattern Silver, and one kilogram of Black Pattern Silver could create at least half a million Universal Cores.

The only thing that cost him purple gold was the fuse agent, whose price was 40 purple gold.

One Universal Core for 50,000 purple gold. Lin Yun couldn't even calculate the profit rate. The net profit from one drop of black substance was at least seven billion purple gold...

The Black Pattern Silver that Lin Yun had created was enough for the Gilded Rose to use for at least three months, even if its sales were most ideal.

More importantly, Lin Yun was truly not interested in the item. After all, it was just the material that proved successful in the first experiment. It wasn't exactly what Lin Yun needed.

If the Gilded Rose intended to march into the markets of magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays, it would need a real star product, like the potions. That would be in the best interest of the Gilded Rose.

As for the Universal Cores, they could be used to fool idiots. After all, they were only suitable for the mid-class market, and the Gilded Rose was only famous in the high-class market, which it depended on.

Each bottle of the best potions that the Gilded Rose sold was more profitable than tens of billions of bottles of regular potions.

Additionally, selling the Universal Cores was also a way to stabilize the Gilded Rose's position in the Odin Kingdom. When all the stores that served the mid-class market needed its supply, it would become an indispensable part of the Odin Kingdom.

Besides, who could be sure that the Gilded Rose only had the first-generation Universal Core, and wouldn't develop a second-generation Universal Core?

Lin Yun gave the Black Pattern Silver to Faleau, and left the matter alone. He returned to the Demiplane for studies.

In only three days, things were already changing in the Odin Kingdom's alchemy business. The families who had been working with the Gilded Rose were the first to receive the news.

Even though most of the families didn't sell alchemy products, they had all signed contracts to purchase products in bulk from the Gilded Rose.

They were fully aware of the importance of the Universal Core. There was no telling who leaked the news, but very soon, more and more stores came to the Gilded Rose, seeking cooperation.

The fastest store to react was the one named Hammer of Magic.

A magic lamp was emitting gentle light. A lot of alchemy tools had been placed in this hardcore laboratory. Plenty of uncompleted magic tools were piled on the iron tables.

A few alchemists gathered together, and looked at a magic tool that was on a crystal table full of runes. They looked quite grave.

"How did the test go?" A middle-aged man, who wore a black gold-edged robe, stood aside, and looked at the alchemists hopefully.

The alchemists, however, seemed to be bewildered. Their eyes were filled with passion as they stared at the magic tool on the table. The magic tool was a ball with four metal wings. It was shrouded in a halo of mana.

After the man asked several times in a row, the alchemists finally stood straight in amazement.

"Masterpiece. An amazing masterpiece. After the Gilded Rose's Universal Core is applied to our protective sprite, the latter is at least twice as powerful as before."

“This Universal Core does require mana supply. It attracts mana to make up for its consumption. Also, there’s no telling what it’s made of. It must be a newly developed alloy. The Universal Core has been designed quite creatively.”

“Also, this Universal Core is even harder than the protective sprite, and won’t ever be destroyed. At least, even if the protective sprite malfunctions, it won’t be because of the Universal Core.”

“General agility improved by 131%, reaction speed improved by 82%, protection power improved by 70%, and general mana consumption reduced by 33%...”

“Even if the Universal Cores are sold for 50,000 purple gold apiece, they will still be a great bargain. We can sell our new protective sprites twice as expensively as before. Our profits will be 60% more than before.”

Hearing the alchemist’s report, the black-robed man was rather dumbfounded. Another alchemist was very thrilled as if he had seen a great opportunity.

“No, that’s not the most important thing. You should know that if your product is 10% better than similar products, the sales of your store will be boosted. Also, it will improve your store’s reputation, which is what matters most.”

“We must get the Universal Cores ahead of others, which will give us a greater edge. After we release new magic tools, our general sales will be boosted, not to mention that the new magic tools will be very profitable themselves. This is a rare opportunity for us!”

The more the alchemists talked, the more reluctant the black-robed man became.

“If this Universal Core is truly as great as you claim, how come the Gilded Rose is not using it?”

The oldest alchemist in the room shook his head.

“I don’t think they don’t want to use it; it’s simply not valuable enough for them. The Gilded Rose’s revenue comes mainly from potions. They’re only selling magic tools by the way. The Universal Core is truly powerful, but cannot ensure enough profits if used on low-level magic tools.”

“It won’t be very effective on True Spirit Magic Tools. It’s best for lower magic tools. However, the Gilded Rose doesn’t have the time to conquer the mid-class market. Their returns won’t be able to cover their investment. They might as well just sell the Universal Cores so that they won’t need to add their investment...”

Hearing that, the black-robed man completely relaxed.

The mid- and low-level market was pretty much fixed. It was impossible to earn any share in the market without presenting an ultimate product.

Even if a customer was only trying to buy a Spiritual Magic Tool, between a store that only sold Spiritual Magic Tools and one where True Spirit Magic Tools were available, they would certainly choose the latter one, which was more trustworthy.

Besides, after all these years, the mid- and low-level markets were already very stable, and the general shares didn’t change very much.

The Gilded Rose had surely realized it too. The Hammer of Magic had to be the first to purchase the Universal Cores! It was a great opportunity!

The black-robed man gritted his teeth, and left the room in a hurry. An hour later, he arrived at the Gilded Rose, and left with 100 Universal Cores a dozen minutes later...

On the same day, a lot of people came to the Gilded Rose, and bought plenty of Universal Cores sneakily like thieves. More than 3,000 Universal Cores were sold in the day for more than 160,000,000 purple gold, which was greater than the revenue from all the other products that the Gilded Rose sold in the day. Their profits were almost as much as the Gilded Rose's net profits for a whole month!

Even though Faleau knew that the sales couldn't be so great every day, he was still quite shocked. He had managed the Gilded Rose for a long time, and he had never seen such sales in only one day. Not to mention that he was not selling a product at all, but only a part...

The second day, the Sky City came, and purchased 10,000 Universal Cores, enjoying a discount because of the bulk purchase. Still, it meant an income of 450,000,000 purple gold.

Faleau suddenly realized why Lin Yun insisted on selling the Universal Cores directly—they required no further investment at all. No more studies, researchers, or gold coins were needed. All they needed to do was to cut the Black Pattern Silver, and ask the Gilded Rose's craftsmen to embed runes and alchemy arrays in a fixed way. The manufacturing process was very simple...

Chapter 1285: Sold Out

More importantly, even the stores that hadn't been very close to the Gilded Rose were coming to ask for its help...

The Mosh Family, which was best at creating alchemy support tools—especially measurement tools, sent two Heaven Rank experts for negotiation, and ordered 50,000 Universal Cores.

Undercurrents were rising during the three days. The Gilded Rose still hadn't released its new product yet. Only the informed families had learned of the news, and only the families who had been working with the Gilded Rose got products.

That was Faleau's way of strengthening their partnership. Those families got products three days earlier than others. So, by the time the Gilded Rose officially released the Universal Core, they would already have new magic tools for sale, and could occupy the market faster. One step ahead could mean every step ahead.

In only three days, the Gilded Rose had a dozen more partners. All of them had signed rigorous long-term contracts.

In the Mosh Family, Reed Mosh read the report in his hand carefully.

"The Universal Core will be a paradigm-shifting product when it's released. It can be used in magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays. It can even be used in the alchemy tools of our family.

“The very same tools that we have already perfected, if added with a Universal Core, are improved by 48% in the worst case. Also, multiple Universal Cores can be applied to it.

“Instead of using the Universal Cores directly, the Gilded Rose is selling them. This Faleau is truly a genius. This can ensure the Gilded Rose’s development in the Odin Kingdom...”

Nearby, another Artisan was deep in thought.

“I heard that the Sky City purchased 10,000 Universal Cores at once. They must’ve discovered that more than one core can be installed in the same device. Most of the cores they bought must’ve been applied to the Sky City itself. Their main city, which hasn’t appeared in 10,000 years, must be even more horrifying than before...”

On the third day, a tremendous amount of orders flooded in. Three days were enough for the alchemists to ascertain that the Universal Cores were much more effective than the Gilded Rose’s description claimed.

Even though they didn’t know how the cores were made or what they were made of, they didn’t hesitate to purchase the Universal Cores. After all, their competitors were buying them too. Nobody wanted to be left behind...

On the fourth day, when the Gilded Rose officially released the Universal Cores, the spacious streets became crowded again. People from various families and stores were waiting here.

In the first three days, Faleau declined all the families except those which had been cooperating with the Gilded Rose. As a matter of fact, the Gilded Rose already had a storage of more than 30,000 pieces. By the time the team developed manufacturing facilities, the productivity would definitely be multiplied...

The news that they released in secret had been learned by those who should know. Those who didn’t know were incapable of buying the Universal Cores.

At 12 P.M., Faleau appeared at the gate of the Gilded Rose, and put on a smile at the crowd outside.

“I believe many of you already know what the Gilded Rose is going to sell today. We’ve added a simple introduction on the invitations we sent out yesterday.

“Today, the Gilded Rose is releasing a crucial component called the Universal Core, which can be applied to most magic tools, alchemy puppets, and alchemy arrays. They can also perfect alchemy items, and let them possess unimaginable abilities.

“I’m not telling you about the performance, because I believe you trust your own measurement. I’ll only talk about sales and pricing.

“From today on, the Gilded Rose’s store in Neverwinter City and its 21 branches outside will sell the Universal Cores simultaneously.

“Their price is 80,000 purple gold apiece. Bulk purchases will enjoy a discount. However, our productivity is limited, and only 80,000 Universal Cores are available on the market in the first month.”

The release meeting was quite shabby. However, nobody thought that it was wrong. They didn’t care even if Faleau barely introduced the Universal Cores.

After the sale was announced to begin, people from all organizations and stores crammed the Gilded Rose. Everybody bought the Universal Cores with whatever money they had.

Faleau had stated that only 80,000 pieces were available in the first month. If they were slow, they would be left behind by others for a whole month.

If everybody used the Universal Cores, those who used them first would be ahead of others at every step, not to mention that many people had insider information. The Sky City, which had been cooperating with the Gilded Rose, had already bought 10,000 pieces. Considering the other cores that had already been sold, probably only 60,000 were left...

The 30,000 Universal Cores in stock were sold out in only three hours. The other buyers would have to wait for restocking.

More importantly, the Gilded Rose was not accepting any orders, because the productivity was unstable, the success rate was low, and the raw materials weren't enough...

Due to all these reasons, the Gilded Rose could only regretfully announce that, to avoid violating the contracts with its partners, it could only refuse new orders until more products were available...

Nobody looked well after they left the Gilded Rose. They got few of the products. Even the biggest buyer only bought 100 Universal Cores, so they had every reason to be angry. However, their passion for purchasing the Universal Cores wasn't quenched. They wanted the products even more badly.

Unfortunately, no goods in the Gilded Rose were available, and there was nothing they could do...

"The Gilded Rose is not taking new orders. God damn it. Why would they refuse purple gold? I've only bought 10 Universal Cores. Apart from the one that the Gilded Rose gave me for tests, I only have 10.

"Also, I heard that many people bought a huge number of Universal Cores. The Sky City alone claimed 10,000 pieces..."

"Alright, stop complaining. I've already investigated. The Gilded Rose started internal sales three days ago. All the buyers were the Gilded Rose's good partners. They were only charged 50,000 purple gold apiece."

"Damn it, those people are truly lucky. They bought so many Universal Cores so cheaply. There's nothing we can do. The Gilded Rose considers its partners first instead of the greatest income. Very few stores in the Odin Kingdom do that..."

"We must blame ourselves for despising the Gilded Rose, and refusing to work with the outsider..."

"Damn it, I heard that a material supplier got 300 Universal Cores. Damn it, why would a material supplier need the Universal Cores?"

Hearing the last complaint, a few people had glittering eyes and left quickly. After they left, they immediately rushed to investigate material suppliers that cooperated with the Gilded Rose. When they found out the answer, they immediately sent representatives to purchase the 300 Universal Cores at prices that were much higher than the Gilded Rose's retail price...

The Gilded Rose's new product immediately ignited all the businesses that were related to alchemy. Any store that wasn't aware of the Gilded Rose's Universal Cores would have to shut down...

Unlike what happened when the Gilded Rose released new products before, everybody cheered for it this time, and nobody spoke ill of it. It wasn't because of the Universal Cores' good quality, but because the Gilded Rose didn't harm anyone's interests by presenting the Universal Cores.

Even though it was widely acknowledged that the Universal Cores should be applied to magic tools, the corporations that were fighting in the magic tool market didn't hate the Gilded Rose at all.

It was because the competition was still among them, and the Gilded Rose had nothing to do with it. The Gilded Rose didn't enter the market of magic tools at all, and in fact expanded the market in general.

Who would go to the Gilded Rose for trouble? None at all. Rather, they would try to make friends with the Gilded Rose.

After all, the Gilded Rose didn't take orders for the Universal Cores. Nobody knew when the cores would be available. Many people had sent representatives to the Gilded Rose, and wanted to be informed upon the delivery of Universal Cores.

However, too many people were doing that. Some even sent managers who had the power to directly purchase items there. Only the fastest of them could get the products.

Therefore, what mattered the most was to make friends with the Gilded Rose. After all, the long wait couldn't compare to the insider information.

The specific hour wasn't needed. As long as they knew which day the cores would be available, they could just wait at the Gilded Rose to purchase the goods.

In such an atmosphere, the Gilded Rose's expansion became a lot easier. It signed contracts with 13 material suppliers in the Odin Kingdom, and acquired supply of all materials. Also, rigorous terms had been stipulated in the contracts. If the suppliers stopped supplying materials, they would almost go bankrupt...

In half a month, as the Universal Cores were sold consecutively, the Gilded Rose's third batch of branches was established. After they were opened, the Gilded Rose's annual plan of establishing 40 branches would be completed. Its sales network would cover all the important cities in the north of the Odin Kingdom.

In three years, its market share of potions would definitely be the biggest in the north of the Odin Kingdom, and its position could hardly be challenged. By then, it would be much easier to enter the magic tool market. Also, the Gilded Rose would have already developed a star product in that aspect by then.

It was possible to produce True Spirit Magic Tools at this moment, but the cost was just too high. If Lin Yun were to take action in person, he could make peak True Spirit Magic Tools, but those tools couldn't be sold. They were too costly to manufacture. Making one or two of them was pointless, and would only attract unnecessary attention from competitors.

When everything was going on, something happened in one of the Gilded Rose's branches...

“Idiot, sell your Universal Core to me, or you won’t leave League City...”

“Are you insulting me? Idiot, everybody knows that the Gilded Rose’s Universal Cores are 50,000 purple gold apiece, yet you charged me 100,000? Damn it, you’re challenging the dignity of a Heaven Rank expert...”

“Get the hell out of here. Here’s 5,000 purple gold for your Universal Core...”

Five minutes later, Wolkrie Carter looked at the Universal Core in his hand with a smile. Then, he waited not far away from the Gilded Rose’s store. After 10 minutes, his eyes glittered again...

10 minutes later, Wolkrie gained another Universal Core.

“Hahaha. The Universal Cores are already 100,000 purple gold apiece on the market. They’re so tiny, yet so valuable.

“80,000 purple gold is too expensive. Those idiots were stupid enough to pay all their money for this, and I’m the one who gets them in the end.

“I’ve only paid 50,000 purple gold for more than 60 Universal Cores. If I sell them, I will earn more than 6,000,000 purple gold. That’s easy money.”

Greed flashed in Wolkrie’s deep eye sockets. In the dark corner of the street, he looked like a ghost in human skin.

Wolkrie was quite infamous in League City. He had never been a good guy, but he was exceptionally gifted in magic. He was found to be strongly intimate with fire elements, which meant that he had been touched by the law of fire before he was born. That was a positive effect, and led to his terrifying talent.

Unfortunately, Wolkrie had been surprisingly naughty and disobedient since he was five. He killed a servant of his family brutally with magic when he was 13.

Then, he committed all kinds of evils, including breaking into houses and molesting girls in the middle of the night, and torturing whomever he found disagreeable. He didn’t have the dignity of a mage at all. He was just a strong mobster.

If the Carter Family hadn’t been one of the most powerful families in League City, Wolkrie would’ve been killed. As a matter of fact, he had been attacked plenty of times over the years, but he survived every time. Before he reached the Heaven Rank, when he was hunted by a Heaven Rank mage, he had the audacity to hide in the area of ordinary people and spread his aura throughout the region.

To escape, he caused the death of a dozen mages and dozens of ordinary people, which gave his pursuer a headache. The mage couldn’t slaughter ordinary people in a city, or he would be doomed.

The mage left, and Wolkrie came out again. After he reached the Heaven Rank, he became even more unbridled, and did anything he wanted to. Nobody dared to offend him.

Unfortunately, as a Heaven Rank, he was incapable of making money despite his strength. He didn’t know the first thing about alchemy, either. The Carter Family had little support for him. They wouldn’t have supported him at all had it not been for his strength.

As he was a Heaven Rank mage, it was too risky and profitable for him to work as a bandit.

If he were to beat and threaten other mobsters, they couldn't offer much purple gold to him, either, at least not enough for a Heaven Rank...

This time, the Gilded Rose's Universal Cores were quite heated on the market, so an idea occurred to Wolkrie. It wasn't appropriate for him to rob the Gilded Rose, and it was too risky. However, he could forcefully buy the cores from those who had shopped in the store...

Those who had paid 80,000 purple gold for the core had to sell it to Wolkrie for several hundred gold coins. Also, the guy was a talented robber. He knew exactly what kind of person he could rob, and how much he should give them.

The victims were all weak, and didn't have powerful backgrounds. Some were even lone mages. Wolkrie wasn't scared of those people at all.

After robbing and reselling for a few days, Wolkrie had earned more than 10,000,000 purple gold.

At this moment, Faleau received a report on that. Reading the information, he frowned hard with a strong headache.

That wretched guy. At the time when the Universal Cores were the most popular, he was robbing the Gilded Rose's customers.

As a Heaven Rank, Wolkrie was truly shameless to do such a thing. Also, he was selling the Universal Cores he looted at much higher prices. Many people were already waiting for his stock.

That was truly a problem. The man didn't cause trouble to the Gilded Rose. He didn't even commit the robbery near the Gilded Rose's stores.

He had given every victim purple gold, so it was only forceful buying at worst. Also, he was from the Carter Family, which was one of the most powerful families in town.

If the Gilded Rose left the matter alone, more and more people would do the same. Then, the Universal Cores would be meat that everybody could eat. Maybe someone would even plan to rob the Gilded Rose later.

Negotiating with the Carter Family wouldn't end well, either. If they insisted that the deals between the parties were agreed upon, the Gilded Rose would have no right to intervene. It couldn't impose any pressure, either...

Faleau was quite upset. This was truly a tricky matter. He thought for a moment, and decided to send someone to talk to the Carter Family first. After all, the Gilded Rose had already sold the cores before the latter were looted. The Gilded Rose was in no position to care about what happened afterwards.

The person that the Gilded Rose sent out came to League City, and the Carter Family was informed immediately.

Chapter 1286: Robber and Protector

“Wolkrie, that stupid scoundrel, robbed other people of their Universal Cores. Such cores are indeed very valuable, but the Gilded Rose is definitely dissatisfied with what he did. Now that the Gilded Rose’s people are here, what do we do?”

“Damn it, the Lodney Family and the Gilded Rose had a conflict before, and the Lodney Family gave in. The Gilded Rose is even more horrifying than we think. Also, I heard that Mafa Merlin, the real controller of the Gilded Rose, is a strong man. It’s possible that the entire Carter Family will be in trouble...”

“Ask Wolkrie to come here at once. If he doesn’t give us an explanation, then the Carter Family will be in great trouble...”

Wolkrie came to the meeting of elders. Facing the angry elders, he wasn’t nervous at all. He simply took out 5,000,000 purple gold, and threw it onto the table in the room.

All 5,000,000 purple gold was heaped as a hill on the table, dumbfounding the angry elders, who had never seen so many gold coins in their entire life.

The Carter Family wasn’t an alchemist family, but a mage one. The family enterprises had only enough revenue for everyone to study magic, but everybody needed more resources. Among the juniors of the family, only a couple of them were talented enough to receive enough resources...

,000,000 purple gold was enough for a Heaven Rank expert to have a True Spirit Magic Tool tailor-made for him, although the True Spirit Magic Tool wouldn’t be too great...

Seeing how dumbfounded the elders were, Wolkrie laughed in satisfaction.

“Did you see? What’s the annual income of our family? 30,000,000? Everybody in the entire family has to share the 30,000,000 purple gold. How many does each of them get?”

“Those 5,000,000 purple gold is only half of what I earned in the past three days. Who can possibly do that? Of course, I’m part of the family, and I certainly won’t keep all the money to myself.

“Second Elder, you are already a Heaven Rank expert, yet you only have two True Spirit Magic Tools, counting your staff. They’re both inferior True Spirit Magic Tools, aren’t they?”

“Let’s split up the purple gold. Second Elder, take a million and get some good materials. Then, find a decent alchemist to improve your magic tools. Also, Chief Elder...”

Wolkrie went on and spoke for a long time. He didn’t ask for anything, and only came to give the elders money. Each of the five elders got a million. In the Carter Family, that was a huge amount of money.

Although, as Wolkrie stated, he made the money in three days, everybody knew exactly how he made it...

After giving away the money, Wolkrie left, and the five elders looked at each other in bewilderment. They all looked at the hill of purple gold, and couldn’t hold back their greed...

The second elder, who was in need of money the most, swallowed.

“Wolkrie is finally growing up. He knows that he must repay his family now. Not bad...”

“Indeed. Although Wolkrie is always naughty, he’s part of the family anyway. Also, he’s an important Heaven Rank expert...”

“What about the representative of the Gilded Rose?”

“What do you think we can do? Wolkrie didn’t cause trouble in the Gilded Rose. The transactions were fair. Those people willingly sold the cores to him. Nobody can say anything about that. Besides, it’s possible that those people tried to set up Wolkrie. They spread the rumor because they thought they should’ve asked for more money...”

“Indeed. Wolkrie was quite disobedient in the past, but he’s much smarter right now. How could he have done that?”

A day later, Faleau heard the report, and seemed grim.

“You said that the Carter Family claimed that all the transactions were fair, and that the sellers were taught a lesson because they tried to set him up? He bought the cores for 90,000 purple gold, and someone is spreading the rumor to ruin the Carter Family’s reputation?”

“What about the victims that Wolkrie forcefully bought things from?”

“What? You only found three? The rest is gone? All three people say that they sold the cores to Wolkrie for 90,000 purple gold?”

“Is the Carter Family declaring war on the Gilded Rose?”

Faleau breathed heavily because of fury, and a gust arose around him. He was at a loss about what to do.

The Carter Family insisted on the fake truth. In League City, it was very easy for the Carter Family to shut the buyers up. Those who refused to submit were already gone...

The Gilded Rose was just an alchemy store. After the buyers paid purple gold and left the store, they had nothing to do with the Gilded Rose anymore, unless the robbery happened at the Gilded Rose’s door.

After the buyers left, even if they were robbed or killed, it would be none of the Gilded Rose’s business.

Also, the robber was a Heaven Rank expert, which made the situation even trickier. Should they send another Heaven Rank expert to defend against him?

Of course not. The Carter Family was not nearly bold enough to attack the Gilded Rose. However, the latter couldn’t send a Heaven Rank expert to protect every buyer, either.

Even if it was not sending Heaven Rank experts, it didn’t have so many men to protect every buyer—not while it was trying to run business.

If things went on like this, would anyone still dare to shop at the Gilded Rose? They might be robbed and even killed soon after they made the payment and left the Gilded Rose.

Also, that was just a branch, which wasn’t nearly as important as the main store inside Neverwinter City. It was impossible to send too many forces to a branch. Also, the Gilded Rose wasn’t rich enough to keep a Heaven Rank expert in every branch...

However, this was the best time for expansion to the Gilded Rose. The branches were its tentacles. If the branch in League City was crippled, then the other branches' fall wouldn't be far away. The Carter Family, which wasn't really powerful countrywide, was bold enough to do that and blatantly defend itself later without being punished, so the other families would definitely follow...

When the same situation happened in all the cities that the branches were in, the Gilded Rose would have to shut those branches. If this incident wasn't taken care of, it would be impossible for the Gilded Rose to expand...

Also, if the Gilded Rose was wealthy yet not intimidating at all, a lot of people might try to bite it to get a mouthful of flesh and blood...

However, if it reacted too strongly, and simply demanded the Carter Family to compensate, or if it killed Wolkrie directly, then the Gilded Rose would seem too domineering, and the local families of the Odin Kingdom might loathe it. It was possible that other powerful noble families would come for trouble...

Whatever the Gilded Rose did, the result wouldn't be in its favor. Getting to the bottom of it, it was all because the Gilded Rose was an outsider...

Faleau had a headache. He could only send two level-9 Archmages and five level-39 alchemy puppets to League City as the Gilded Rose's protectors.

Many people were watching. Even though they were not protecting the customers at the Gilded Rose, it showed the Gilded Rose's attitude that the Carter Family should stay back...

However, three days later, when a batch of new Universal Cores were delivered to the Gilded Rose, a new report came from League City.

Reading the new report, Faleau became completely sullen. A dozen people had been through forced transactions again. The one who got the most money only received 1,000 purple gold. The rest mostly got 500-600 purple gold...

The buyer was none other than Wolkrie of the Carter Family...

Reading the report, Faleau put on a bitter smile.

He underestimated their greediness. He didn't expect that even when the Gilded Rose's people intervened, the man would simply declare that the thing was unrelated to the Gilded Rose. The people who had paid 80,000 purple gold in the Gilded Rose had to give away the cores for only 500 purple gold in three minutes...

The man had no respect for the Gilded Rose at all. He had gone crazy...

Having no choices, Faleau could only send Layford to League City. After all, only the presence of an expert who was in the second level of the Heaven Rank could ensure that nothing would go wrong.

However, even though Layford had personally come to League City, the robberies didn't stop. Nothing happened around the Gilded Rose while Layford was there. However, the customers with no backgrounds would suffer misfortunes the moment they left Layford's reach.

One time, Layford followed a man who spent all his belongings on a Universal Core, and hoped to make a profit with it. Layford watched over the man, and nothing happened to him. However, only a dozen minutes later, another customer was killed not far away from the Gilded Rose's branch while he was away.

In no more than a week, all sorts of rumors came up. The customers in other branches got robbed too after buying the Universal Cores. Some experienced forceful exchanges, and some were blatantly robbed.

Rumors spread out when the incidents kept happening. As a result, the sales of the Gilded Rose's branches seemed to be dropping even though the total sales were on the rise.

Many people would rather travel further and shop in the Gilded Rose in Neverwinter City than buy things in the Gilded Rose's branches in their own city.

The trend became even more significant. There was even a rumor that the Gilded Rose was seriously short on goods, so it would kill the buyers, loot the Universal Cores they bought, and then sell the products again. Why else would the buyers be robbed only a few minutes after they left the Gilded Rose? If the Gilded Rose weren't behind this, then why was it not taking any action?

All kinds of rumors were spreading out. When one of the Gilded Rose's branches was attacked, the whole thing turned big.

Although it was just a group of brainless robbers that attacked the Gilded Rose, and they were killed on the spot, they set a very terrible example for others...

They led people to believe that the Gilded Rose was wealthy and easy to take advantage of. That could be a serious problem.

Faleau sent a lot of alchemy puppets, Archmages, and Sword Saints to the branches. However, the rumors spread faster and faster. The sales of the Universal Cores in League City were plummeting. At first, they were sold out whenever a new batch was delivered, but at this moment, there was still stock after two days. The problem was getting serious.

Also, the robbers in League City were getting more and more fearless. Layford never caught Wolkrie in the action. In one of the incidents, the other party even accused Layford of committing the robbery. He had a bunch of witnesses who stated that Wolkrie wasn't at the crime scene...

The whole thing was getting out of control. If nothing changed, the Gilded Rose's plan of expansion would be destroyed, and it would encounter all sorts of problems.

Lin Yun, who was doing research, received a message. Soon, he left his laboratory in the Demiplane.

After hearing the report of recent events from Faleau, Lin Yun frowned too.

"Sir Merlin, if things continue like this, we'll have to close the Gilded Rose's branches, or they will seriously affect our reputation. Our expansion plan with the branches will have to be suspended.

"To continue running the branch in League City requires the support of the Carter Family, one of the most powerful local families. At first, Wolkrie only forced the buyers to resell things to him, and we were in no position to intervene. As an alchemy store, we can only manage things within and near the store.

“After the forced transactions were conducted, the Carter Family simply denied it, and we don’t have any witnesses. So, we have to keep negotiating with them.

“A lot of people have been forced to resell their cores, but most of them are locals in League City, and do not dare to offend the Carter Family.

“However, if things go unchanged, then our other branches will experience the same problem...”

Lin Yun nodded.

“Alright, I’ll take care of the matter. You’ve done a great job.”

Lin Yun looked quite awful. The Gilded Rose didn’t belong to the Odin Kingdom. It was never close to the most influential forces of the Odin Kingdom, especially the nobles.

The Gilded Rose was only able to enter the Odin Kingdom because of its expertise in alchemy. It opened a store in Neverwinter City not because Faleau operated well, and not because it pulled strings, but because the Starry Sky College expressed its support. The other people didn’t want to oppose the Starry Sky College, and preferred to make a nice gesture at the Gilded Rose.

However, they weren’t really close. They simply got what they needed, and then showed their friendliness...

During the incident with the Lodney Family, a lot of people were watching the drama, but nobody stepped up for the Gilded Rose. When the Lodney Family backed off, they finally thought that the Gilded Rose had something. But that was it. After all, Wilder Lodney was still alive, which suggested that the Gilded Rose wasn’t too powerful. Otherwise, it definitely would’ve killed him.

Lin Yun left Neverwinter City with some men. He considered how to take care of the matter. Reading the information that Faleau had sorted out, Lin Yun gradually put on a smile.

Now that the whole thing had gone big, since it was impossible to destroy the Carter Family or ignore it, he might as well just subdue the Carter Family. As it happened, the Gilded Rose needed vassal forces at this moment. The Carter Family was a local force. Although it wasn’t very powerful, it would be a good beginning.

The Carter Family was a pure family of mages. It only had a small Demiplane that wasn’t very resourceful. It was quite shameful that the family only mastered this small Demiplane even though it had Heaven Rank experts. Also, there was no alchemical heritage in the family. It only had low-level alchemists that couldn’t bring wealth to the family...

Only one of the Heaven Rank experts of the family had tailor-made True Spirit Magic Tools...

Lin Yun read all the information in disbelief. As a family of mages in the Odin Kingdom, the Carter Family was definitely very poor. It was usually not easy for a mage family to be so poor.

However, on second thought, while the Odin Kingdom was more powerful than the Andlusa Kingdom and even the Biston Kingdom, it was understandable that the mage families weren’t as powerful as each other. Even though they were as powerful, the wealth under their control might be different.

The Henry Family, for example, was not very strong in general, but it had plenty of money, and accumulated a shocking amount of wealth. Also, there weren't many members in the family, so each of them got a large share of the resources, which made it easy for them to grow stronger.

As for the Carter Family, Lin Yun almost didn't have the heart to read its miseries in the files anymore...

Arriving in League City, Lin Yun went straight to the Carter Family. He pulled Xiuban, who was sound asleep in the Demiplane, out, and asked him to watch over the branch, and kill whoever forcefully bought the Gilded Rose's goods...

When Lin Yun appeared, the five elders of the Carter Family welcomed him together. Unlike other families, the Carter Family was controlled by the five elders, and the family leader was just a tool to make money for the family. Also, the family leader hadn't even reached the Heaven Rank yet...

Lin Yun casually entered the Carter Family's meeting room, followed by the five uneasy elders, who looked at each other with worry in their eyes.

The second elder, who was the first to let Wolkrie go, was the most uneasy one. He looked at Lin Yun as if he were looking at an ancient, ferocious beast.

Damn it, didn't they say that Mafa Merlin barely cared about the Gilded Rose's business? Why is the guy here in person? What a terrifying man. I cannot detect any of his presence, yet I have the feeling that I might get killed at any moment...

It was said that Wilder, the current leader of the Lodney Family, who was in the fourth level of the Heaven Rank, and who was adept at the iron skills of his family, was defeated by Mafa Merlin, and had never shown up in public ever since. It was even rumored that half of Wilder's body was blown up, and he was nearly beaten to death...

Chapter 1287: Submission

Such a dangerous person had come to visit the Carter Family in person. Goddamn it. If he dared to beat up the leader of the Lodney Family, he certainly wouldn't be afraid of the Carter Family.

This brutal man had destroyed two huge bandit groups ever since the Gilded Rose started its business. Nothing good ever happened wherever he went. Was he here to deliver the ultimatum to them?

The five elders of the Carter Family were quite uneasy. Their confidence was gone the moment they saw Lin Yun, who gave them such a dangerous feeling that their souls were trembling. More importantly, they couldn't detect any vibe from him. When they closed their eyes, they weren't even sure whether or not he was there...

It meant that the man could kill them easily if he wanted to. He probably could beat all of them together using only one hand.

The chief elder gritted his teeth, and said, "Sir Mafa Merlin, the Carter Family is honored by your presence. I wonder if there's anything we can do for you. We will gladly do whatever we can for you."

In fact, everybody knew very well why Lin Yun was here...

Lin Yun casually glanced at the chief elder of the Carter Family, who instantly turned pale, and had dripping cold sweat. Even his back had become wet from sweat too.

Lin Yun's eyes made him feel that he had died once. The man's cold, emotionless eyes had seen through his body into his soul. His soul seemed stiffened. He could not make use of any of his soul power, and his body turned rigid.

"I received a report today on recent events in League City. Apparently, some bold people have been robbing the Gilded Rose's customers. I'm not happy about that.

"But that's alright. My man is already on it. Today, more Universal Cores are available in the Gilded Rose. I believe that the bold guys will definitely take action again.

"My man does not have a good temper. I told him to catch the robbers alive, but I don't think he can stop himself from breaking their heads. It doesn't matter. When they dared to go against the Gilded Rose, they were certainly prepared to go to hell..."

Lin Yun spoke casually, yet all the five elders were uneasy as if they were seated on nails. They were all pale, and their cold sweat was dripping.

The elders looked at each other, and all had a strong headache. Not just a headache. They were frightened from the bottom of their hearts...

The chief elder sweated so hard that he almost wanted to leave immediately. Unfortunately, none of the five elders could leave...

Damn it. They were completely screwed. Wolkrie had to be robbing again. Now that Mafa Merlin had personally arrived, any of the men he came with could easily kill Wolkrie.

If they found that Wolkrie was from the Carter Family, then they would be doomed. He would give the Gilded Rose the most perfect excuse. Considering how domineering Mafa Merlin was, he certainly wouldn't let them go so easily. It was possible that he would raze the Carter Family to the ground like how he dealt with the bandits...

"Huh, elders, are you uncomfortable?"

Lin Yun looked at the Carter Family's elders, who were all sweating and pale as if they were gravely sick.

The chief elder of the Carter Family managed a smile.

"Sir Merlin, no need to worry. We only encountered a problem during our magic study. We'll be fine in a couple of days..."

"Sir Merlin, have you come to League City just for that audacious robber?"

Lin Yun shook his head and heaved a sigh.

"Of course not. I wouldn't waste my time on the trip if it were just for such trivia.

"It's just that I'm concerned about the safety problems in League City, and I need someone to help look after the Gilded Rose. The Carter Family is one of the two families qualified for the job in League City.

“I thought that the Carter Family was more suitable, so I came here first.”

Hearing that, the elders' eyes widened and mouths opened, yet they couldn't utter a word. They'd thought of many possibilities, but this wasn't one of them.

They'd thought that the Gilded Rose might attack them, or demand compensation. However, they didn't expect that Lin Yun would try to get a vassal family...

Thinking about that, the elders seemed quite reluctant. The Carter Family's miseries were also partly due to the fact that it didn't have powerful supporters. As a pure mage family, it didn't want to attach itself to anyone else, but preferred to grow independently. That was why its life had always been hard.

The second elder seemed infuriated, and was about to say anything, but the chief elder was quick enough to stop him.

“Sir Mafa Merlin, this whole thing is too big for us. Can you let us discuss it for a moment...”

Lin Yun nodded.

“Alright, discuss it. Don't bother me.”

After that, Lin Yun walked out of the meeting room. As a result, the elders were unable to leave the room. They all blushed, and had to stay in the meeting room, however unwilling they were.

“What do we do? He wants to swallow the Carter Family. Also, we cannot inform Wolkrie anymore...”

All the three elders were worried. They were completely at a loss about what to do.

The second elder snorted coldly.

“He wants the Carter Family to become the Gilded Rose's vassal family? Not a chance. The Carter Family has never been anyone's vassal family ever since it was founded!”

“The Gilded Rose must know that Wolkrie is behind the robberies in League City, and that we support him. If we don't surrender to the Gilded Rose, I'm afraid that our family will be destroyed...”

The second elder was still sullen and grim.

“The Carter Family has existed in the Odin Kingdom for years anyway. However powerful and wealthy the Gilded Rose is, it's just an outsider. It's fine if the Gilded Rose destroys bandits, but if it dares to destroy the Carter Family, the other forces of the Odin Kingdom won't let go of the opportunity to deal with the Gilded Rose. It's a perfect excuse!”

The great elder heaved a sigh.

“Stop fighting. You're not thinking thoroughly enough. We only have two options. Firstly, we become the Gilded Rose's vassal family, and Wolkrie will be dead for sure. Whether he is killed or he luckily escapes, we must deny our support for him, and we might even have to banish him from the family.

“If we continue supporting Wolkrie, it will be a perfect excuse for the Gilded Rose to destroy us.

“Also, the Carter Family isn’t unique in League City. The other family who’s as powerful as us has no conflicts with the Gilded Rose. As long as the Gilded Rose pays them well, they’ll be happy to deal with us for the Gilded Rose.

“With the Gilded Rose’s support, the Carter Family will soon fall even if the former doesn’t do anything openly.

“We have to become the Gilded Rose’s vassal family...”

After the chief elder said that, everybody fell silent. After a few minutes, the third elder finally managed a smile.

“In fact, it isn’t a terrible thing to become the Gilded Rose’s vassal family. At least, we’ll have sufficient resources when we train the young descendants. We’ll get a lot of resources for ourselves too. Our family will be more wealthy and powerful.

“Also, considering the Gilded Rose’s trend of development, it will surely grow into a huge enterprise in a few years. It’s lucky enough that the Gilded Rose didn’t attack us directly. We’re in no position to decline its offer...”

All the elders heaved a sigh. They all knew what they should choose.

Lin Yun came in again. Then, the chief elder of the Carter Family bowed at Lin Yun.

“Sir Merlin, on behalf of the Carter Family, I pledge loyalty to you. The Carter Family is now the Gilded Rose’s vassal family.”

Lin Yun stared at them casually in silence. It was not until they were all sweating that he finally took out a contract, which was made of the best materials and constructed by Lord Shawn himself. Such contracts were generally not sold in the Gilded Rose at all.

Only the closest partners could pay a fortune for one or two of them.

Lin Yun drew a rune, and landed it on the contract. A lot of terms and conditions surfaced. Then, Lin Yun left a magic signature at the end of the contract.

Reading the contract, the chief elder put on a bitter smile, and the other elders felt bitter too.

The contents of the contract weren’t too crazy, but they were still the best terms that the Carter family had ever seen. They were much better than the best conditions that the people who came to hire the family offered earlier.

However, the cost of betrayal was terrifying too. As long as any member of the Carter Family betrayed the Gilded Rose or Lin Yun, their magic foundation, including their mana whirlpool and their runes, would all collapse.

The stronger the traitor was, the more badly they would be punished. The Heaven Rank experts would lose all their foundation. Even their souls would be torn apart into pieces.

Apart from the cost of betrayal, the rest of the terms were actually quite friendly. It was impossible to look back now. All the five elders left their magic signatures on the contract.

The contract was established, and the beast hide it was written upon rolled, and turned into light that disappeared into Lin Yun's body and the five elders'.

"It's an honor to meet you, Sir Merlin."

The five elders greeted him obediently.

After taking care of the Carter Family, Lin Yun didn't bother anything else. He simply asked the Carter Family to send their talented descendants to the Gilded Rose to receive teaching. It was one of the benefits in the contract. The Gilded Rose would help teach the Carter Family's talented juniors.

However, the five elders of the Carter Family didn't feel happy at all. If the talented descendants that were destined to master the power of their family one day grew up in the Gilded Rose, no brainwashing would be needed. After two generations, the Carter Family would be the Gilded Rose's loyal vassal family even without the contract...

Leaving a bunch of resources, Lin Yun said goodbye to the Carter Family. When he saw Xiuban again, Xiuban was quite angry.

"Sir Merlin, I waited for two hours until that obnoxious guy showed up. However, he turned out to be as slippery as a cunning maggot. I chased him for an hour, but he escaped in the end. I don't know where he is right now..."

Lin Yun shook his head unconcernedly.

"Don't bother him. Let's just head back."

On the other hand, Wolkrie crawled out of the toilet in a brothel in League City. His face was pale, and his arm had been twisted into a weird shape. His staff had fallen apart. In this smelly place, Wolkrie didn't dare to use any of his mana. He simply held his breath, and endured the smell.

He quietly left the brothel through the back door, and observed the surroundings with fear for minutes. Finally, he gritted his teeth and cast a detection spell. Then, he was finally relieved.

Damn it, that stupid beastman who had no brains but only brawn must be from the Gilded Rose. Although he was stupid, he was terribly strong. He broke Wolkrie's fusion shield with one knock. If Wolkrie hadn't reacted fast enough, he would've been reduced to a pulp of meat...

That terrifying man was not just strong but also fearless in battle. He was not restrained at all even though he was fighting in League City.

Wolkrie ran to the neighborhood of ordinary people, but that man followed and attacked him without caring about collateral damage. If Wolkrie hadn't hidden himself in this filthy toilet in the brothel, he would've been killed...

That stupid beastman who had nothing but brawn in his head couldn't possibly know that he was hiding here...

Just wait for it! He would definitely get back at them after he returned!

The old men of his family got so much money from him. It was time they played their part. The Gilded Rose's branch in League City had to be shut. Or rather, none of the Gilded Rose's branches should be let open any longer!

Wolkrie returned to the Carter Family, heavily wounded. However, what the five elders said the moment they met dumbfounded him...

"The Carter Family has announced it became the Gilded Rose's vassal family."

Wolkrie was astounded. The five elders were casual. Having controlled the Carter Family long enough, they were sophisticated and decisive. They didn't feel sorry or embarrassed to face Wolkrie at all.

"Wolkrie, it's been so many years. You've caused countless troubles to the Carter Family since you were born. However, none of the troubles you caused is as bad as this one."

"We have to obey the Gilded Rose to avoid the family crisis. Just go. Leave the Carter Family."

"You are a Carter, after all. We didn't rat you out, but we won't offer you any protection or help. This is the last thing we can do for you."

With fury glittering in his eyes, Wolkrie pointed at the elders, his lungs almost bursting because of anger.

"You old bastards, I gave half of the purple gold I earned to you, yet you're doing this now that I'm in trouble—"

Before Wolkrie could finish, the second elder sneered, and interrupted him, "Wolkrie, you've only given us no more than 10,000,000 purple gold in total. You think that's enough for the entire Carter Family to die with you?"

"We never told anyone where you were, which was already a great risk. We could've been destroyed because of you, yet you want us to die with you?"

"Idiot, it's quite lucky for you to return in one piece. The person who hunted you was only Mafa Merlin's weakest Heaven Rank subordinate. If you continue this, you probably won't be lucky enough to survive the next hunt."

"From now on, the Carter Family is no longer related to you. You have 10 minutes to leave League City because in 10 minutes, we will have to enforce the contract and ensure the safety in League City."

Wolkrie blushed in fury. He had been a cunning and shameless mobster ever since he became a mage apprentice. However, he didn't know what to do in this situation at all.

Absolute power could crush any scheme. As long as he dared to show up in public, he would immediately be hunted. Without the Carter Family's support, he didn't have a position in League City anymore. Furthermore, as soon as the Carter Family released the news, a lot of people would come for trouble...

If he stayed here, by the time the news spread out, it would be hard to tell whether or not he could see the sun the next day.

Wolkrie kicked open the meeting room's door, and stormed off. However, after he left the house, he instinctively became prudent. He had grown up from a little mobster to a Heaven Rank expert without being beaten to death mainly not because of the Carter Family's protection, but due to his shameless cleverness.

Who could've thought that a Heaven Rank expert was hiding in the toilet of a common brothel?

Leaving League City quietly, Wolkrie was at a loss. He looked back at League City in regret. He simply hid himself not far away from League City, and waited for the next turn of events.

However, only three days later, someone discovered Wolkrie, whose notoriety was well known in League City. Even half of the ordinary people who lived in the city could recognize him.

Then, the news was sent to the Carter Family's rival family. Two Heaven Rank experts personally came to hunt Wolkrie down. Wolkrie, who had been heavily wounded in the first place, was badly wounded again. He didn't dare to concoct any more schemes, and had to keep his distance from League City.

Chapter 1288: Unpersuaded

A few days later in another city, the news that the Carter Family became the Gilded Rose's vassal family spread out too. Posters with Wolkrie's bounty had been hung in several places. His name was not on the posters. There was only his picture. He was wanted like a bandit...

Seeing the bounty, Wolkrie almost fainted. Whoever caught him would be given 5,000,000 purple gold. One could even claim 50,000 purple gold for any information about him.

He quickly left the city, and snuck into the towns nearby. However, there were posters in the towns too. Whoever provided information about his whereabouts would immediately receive 50,000 purple gold.

Wolkrie prudently hid in the wild, and didn't dare to enter any city. He was infuriated and desperate...

Everything was back to normal. The Gilded Rose had subdued the Carter Family, and turned it into its subordinate. All of the Gilded Rose's branches immediately became the safest places in the city. Nobody dared to attack the buyers who had just paid a huge amount of purple gold in the Gilded Rose anymore.

The people who planned to rob the buyers as what happened in League City earlier went missing. Nobody saw them again.

The sales of the Universal Cores had been rising. The Gilded Rose had sold 10,000 more Universal Cores than scheduled in the month, but that couldn't meet the demand at all. Many families and organizations had sent representatives to stay in the Gilded Rose's street so that they would purchase the new Universal Cores the moment they became available.

The stores that had obtained the Universal Core three days in advance developed magic tools that used Universal Cores. In fact, not many of such magic tools were sold, but the overall revenues of the stores were doubled in this month. Their profits were even three times greater than before.

That was the advantage of getting ahead. The alchemical items that were of a higher quality than the items with the same prices were very competitive. The potions that were 10% better than those of the same kind could be sold for a price 10 times higher.

As long as there was one great item in the store that other stores didn't have, the overall sales of the store would be boosted. That was the general situation of the alchemy business.

While the Gilded Rose's profit from the Universal Cores was catching up to the profit from potions, the Lodney Family, after months of silence, received the first visitor.

"Sir Reynolds, welcome to the Lodney Family."

Wilder was wearing a smile. His metal arm which was blown up earlier had been restored. He had recovered from his wounds too. He stood there with the pride of the Lodney Family. Although he sounded courteous, everybody could hear that he was proud of himself.

On Wilder's opposite side was a mage in a white robe. He wore a black hairband, and had green eyes and chocolate skin. He also had a neatly trimmed beard on his cheeks.

With a smile, Reynolds followed Wilder into the Lodney Family's meeting room.

Wilder walked with Reynolds, his eyes glittering.

Why did Reynolds come to the Lodney family? This cunning man had already become the second most powerful man in the Roosevelt Business Alliance's branch in the Odin Kingdom, right?

He was responsible for all matters of the Roosevelt Business Alliance in the north of the Odin Kingdom. The Lodney Family had never cooperated with the Roosevelt Business Alliance. Why was this man here?

The family didn't discover any new planes or resources. Why would this fox, who could smell nothing but purple gold, visit them?

These vampires of the Sten Kingdom would never have even bothered to look at the Lodney Family unless the returns were huge enough. The Lodney Family was in the potion business. It barely had a chance to cooperate with the Roosevelt Business Alliance, which earned most of its wealth from magic tools...

Wilder was befuddled. He had no idea why the Roosevelt Business Alliance, which was in an entirely different business from the Lodneys, would come to him.

The Sten Kingdom was unlike the Andlusa Kingdom and the Odin Kingdom. It was founded in the most desolate place in Noscent. There wasn't even a royal family when the kingdom was established. It was a union of a few business alliances at first. Then, it swallowed the small kingdoms nearby, and became one of the three biggest kingdoms at this moment.

The parliament held absolute power in the Sten Kingdom. Every member of the parliament was the leader of a business alliance. It was divided into the Upper Parliament and the Lower Parliament. The Lower Parliament consisted of regular businessmen. Although they made a lot of money too, the things that they sold were all for the ordinary people to use, such as food, clothes, and low-level magic lamps.

All members of the Lower Parliament combined weren't as powerful as one member of the Upper Parliament, which held the real power of the Sten Kingdom. Members of the Upper Parliament sold almost all the alchemy items that mages, swordsmen, and archers needed, which made them the most powerful force. The dozens of business alliances that they controlled had the greatest profit from selling alchemy items.

From basic materials to final retails, those business alliances controlled everything. Therefore, even though the Sten Kingdom's land was much more barren than the Andlusa Kingdom's, the Sten Kingdom was much wealthier than Andlusa. With enough gold, the country would grow more and more powerful. Also, the Sten Kingdom was home to many special materials, which made the business alliances even richer.

Even yourself has a price. That was a proverb popular in the Sten Kingdom. It meant that everything and everybody could be sold out, even if they were families or friends, as long as sufficient price had been paid.

The Roosevelt Business Alliance's leader was a member of the Upper Parliament in the Sten Kingdom. It had been in the magic tool business. Reynolds was one of the top most powerful men in the Roosevelt Business Alliance, or he wouldn't have been in charge of all affairs of the Roosevelt Business Alliance in the north of the Odin Kingdom.

It was impossible to meet such a man unless there were enough interests. Yet, he had come to visit...

Wilder was baffled. The other elders of the Lodney Family were confused too, not knowing why Reynolds had come.

Wilder prudently didn't ask anything. He simply chatted with Reynolds on all sorts of stuff for more than half an hour, without asking about the visitor's purpose.

After the near-death experience, Wilder became less arrogant and much more cautious. It was unlikely for him to cooperate with the Roosevelt Business Alliance anyway, so he simply regarded the visitor as a normal guest and chatted...

After a three-hour-long conversation, Reynolds found it impossible to continue.

Damn it, didn't they say that Wilder was a reckless, short-tempered genius? Why was he still chitchatting after three hours? Did he not know that this was not a regular visit?

Oh my goodness. Did this guy really not feel anything? Fine. Reynolds decided to cut to the chase. He might have to wait until the next day before the guy asked him about his purpose otherwise.

Reynolds heaved a sigh, and thought that Wilder was an absolute idiot despite his great gift.

"Sir Wilder, I'm here because I hope to cooperate with the Lodney Family."

Reynolds couldn't afford waiting any longer. Although Wilder was the current leader of the Lodney Family, the family would be fine even if he was away for half a month. However, if Reynolds left the Roosevelt Business Alliance for three days, bad rumors would definitely pop up.

Wilder was confused. How could he cooperate with the Roosevelt Business Alliance? From materials to alchemy products, there was not any field that they could work in together.

“Sir Reynolds, is the Roosevelt Business Alliance planning to enter the market of alchemy potions?”

Hearing that, Reynolds immediately heaved a sigh in his heart.

As he expected, that guy was a moron. He asked such a stupid question. How could the Roosevelt Business Alliance possibly enter the potion market? The business alliances back in the Sten Kingdom had already monopolized that market. If the Roosevelt Business Alliance intended to enter the potion market, it would have to construct a complete business chain by itself...

To think that the Lodney Family had chosen such an idiot as their leader... But that was great. He would definitely lose his rationality under provocation, and would make the finest cooperator for the Roosevelt Business Alliance...

“Sir Wilder, you must be kidding. The Roosevelt Business Alliance is not entering the potion market. We’re here to cooperate with the Lodney Family in something else.

“I heard that an alchemy store from Andlusa set up a branch in the Odin Kingdom, and unscrupulously stole the Lodney Family’s market share. This time, they’re even trying to dominate the magic tool market unreasonably and control the stores that sell such tools.

“The Roosevelt Business Alliance cannot stand by any longer. Therefore, we’ve come to you, Sir Wilder, hoping that we can work together to kick the Gilded Rose out of the Odin Kingdom.”

Reynolds wore such a confident smile, as if it wouldn’t be a difficult task to crush the Gilded Rose at all.

Wilder looked at Reynolds in shock and fear. Upon hearing the name of Gilded Rose, the right half of his body automatically turned into metal...

Damn it, I knew that this bloody idiot who can only smell purple gold came to us for no good. Just as I expected. It’s not just no good; they’re trying to get us killed!

This bastard really wants me dead, right? Or does he want to destroy the Lodney Family?

No wonder he chatted with me for hours. He simply wants to use the Lodney Family to deal with the Gilded Rose. Then, he can show up and take advantage of our victory.

I remember now. The Universal Cores. He must be doing this for the Gilded Rose’s Universal Cores. Stupid man. You want to get the Lodney Family killed. How vicious.

Mafa Merlin is supported by a Great Astrologian, who is unimaginably strong. Can we afford offending such a man?

Even the ancestor was almost remotely killed by the Great Astrologian. He was then imprisoned in the forbidden land for 100 years. If I’m to attack the Gilded Rose, the ancestor won’t be able to help me even if I’m dying. If he does anything, the Great Astrologian will surely kill him...

Damn you, Reynolds, the vampire that should be purged in the holy light! How dare you speak of that?

Wilder gazed at Reynolds coldly, the whites in his eyes turning black. His right eye was bloodshot and filled with aggression. Examining the man’s strength, Wilder wondered if he should just kill Reynolds so that the man couldn’t cause further trouble to the Lodney Family.

“Sir Reynolds, does anyone else know that you’re here?” Wilder asked aggressively. Reynolds was stunned for a moment. He thought that Wilder was asking whether the cooperation was the Roosevelt Business Alliance’s decision or his own. So, he nodded with a smile.

“Our president has personally agreed with the cooperation.”

What a young genius. He can’t be older than 50, yet he’s already an expert in the fourth level of the Heaven Rank. How remarkable. Still, he’s just a young man. He’s already losing it at the mention of the Gilded Rose. Look at his aggression. How great. I’m sure he’ll work with us to deal with the Gilded Rose as soon as I provoke him more.

If we swallow the Gilded Rose, the Universal Cores will belong to the Roosevelt Business Alliance. Of course, what matters more is the material that the cores are made of. Those idiots who have been using the Universal Cores don’t realize that they aren’t made of alloys, but a new independent material.

The Gilded Rose was truly lucky to discover such a powerful material. After we swallow the Gilded Rose, we will get the source of the new material. Then, we will monopolize the market of magic tools. No, not just the market of magic tools. With the Universal Cores, we can enter the markets of alchemy puppets and all other alchemy products except potions...

How profitable will it be! By then, the Roosevelt Business Alliance will definitely become a top five, wait, a top three organization in the Upper Parliament. If we operate well, the Roosevelt Business Alliance may even grow into the most powerful business alliance in the Sten Kingdom!

As a price, we only need to give away the Gilded Rose’s potions to the Lodney Family. We’ll let them do everything for us so that the Odin Kingdom won’t see us, and the Roosevelt Business Alliance won’t be exposed. We only need to work in the dark...

Reynolds wore a smile, and simply made his offer.

“The Roosevelt Business Alliance will help the Lodney Family swallow the Gilded Rose. In return, everything in the Gilded Rose that’s related to the Universal Core will belong to the Roosevelt Business Alliance. Everything else, including the potions and even the stores, will belong to the Lodney Family.

“To show our sincerity, we will give you five best True Spirit Magic Tools for starters. We’ll even send five Heaven Rank experts to assist you. Four of them are at the first level, and one is in the third level.

“Of course, if you’re dissatisfied, Sir Wilder, you can propose your own conditions. Everything is negotiable...”

Reynolds was quite confident, and Wilder changed his expression quickly opposite of him. He eventually calmed down, and looked at Reynolds with complicated feelings.

So, someone else knew that Reynolds came to this place. If that had been his own decision, then Wilder could’ve just killed him so that he couldn’t cause trouble to the Lodney Family.

Damn it, if you want to die, just kill yourself. Why do you have to get the Lodney Family involved?

That man definitely doesn’t know that a Great Astrologian is behind Mafa Merlin’s back. It’s possible that Mafa Merlin is already the Great Astrologian’s disciple.

Huh, right, your ignorance is none of my business. If you want to get killed, be my guest. I won't get involved or intervene with anything that concerns the Gilded Rose anyway.

"Sir Reynolds, please go back. The Lodney Family is not interested in the cooperation."

As he spoke, Wilder stood up, obviously ready to see the guest off. Reynolds was stunned, not having the vaguest clue what was going on.

"Sir Reynolds, something about your intelligence is wrong. There was just a minor misunderstanding between the Lodney Family and the Gilded Rose, and it is no more now that we've explained ourselves. We're not interested in participating in your endeavor at all.

"This meeting never happened. Please go back. I have other things to do. Forgive me for not walking you out."

After that, Wilder left in a hurry, as if his butt was burning. Reynolds' smile was frozen. He had no idea what just happened.

It was not until the Lodney Family's men walked him out of the gate and then closed it that Reynolds finally realized what happened. He sneered, and then walked away.

What a loser. This Wilder was obviously frightened because he had been nearly killed in the duel. He had been scared off upon hearing the proposal of dealing with the Gilded Rose. With such a leader, the Lodney Family would definitely lose all its market share.

Reynolds was quite disdainful. He didn't even bother to look back. On one of the mage towers in the Lodney Family, Wilder looked at Reynolds' back pitifully, and spoke to the elders behind him, "Tell everybody that nothing will happen between the Lodney Family and the Gilded Rose. I don't want to hear anything about the Lodney Family and the Gilded Rose. Understand?"

Wilder was quite sullen. He was truly scared. Both he and his ancestor were almost killed. The Gilded Rose was almost a name that would bring misfortune to him. He didn't want to even hear it, much less deal with it.

Reynolds spoke to the Lodney Family, but failed to strike an agreement with them. He couldn't find any other suitable partner, as the Gilded Rose didn't really have a lot of enemies in the Odin Kingdom...

Chapter 1289: Scheme

The families that had a history with Lin Yun were all unsuitable for the task of dealing with the Gilded Rose. Besides, they were too weak as well...

Three days later, in a cave in the wild, Reynolds, who wore a white robe and a black hairband, emerged with a smile.

"Sir Wolkrie, don't be excited. I'm here to help you fulfill your wish. I heard that the Gilded Rose has been oppressing you..."

Wolkrie's life had been quite miserable. As a pure fire mage, he could've learned spells that could cover his look, but he hadn't learned any. He didn't dare to show up in any city at this moment.

Every time he appeared in a city, he would be recognized in several minutes, and whoever saw him would sell the intelligence. He had retaliated against a dozen ordinary people who sold his whereabouts to others.

Besides the people who were chasing him for the bounty, a lot of other people were chasing him because they had been forced to sell their cores to him. Any random person that he passed by might sell him out. He could be recognized from 100 meters away in a city...

For his safety, Wolkrie could only hide in the wilderness, and didn't even dare to go to a town. He was truly poor...

After Reynolds' persuasion, Wolkrie followed him and left the ragged cave...

On the second day, a Great Swordsman was kicked out of the Gilded Rose for causing trouble. However, on the third day, his body appeared out of the city. He had obviously been killed by an alchemy puppet.

On the fourth day, all sorts of rumors were spreading out virally.

The Gilded Rose was powerful and domineering. Anyone who caused trouble there would be killed...

It has forced the Carter Family to submit, threatening to destroy it if it didn't submit. The resister of the Carter Family was treated as a robber and given a bounty.

Every person who worked in a small alchemy store died in three days because they didn't sell the Gilded Rose's products...

A material supplier who provided materials for the Gilded Rose's competitor died in his own home...

There were more and more rumors that had convincing details, and they spread faster and faster. Almost in one day, such rumors had appeared in dozens of towns around Neverwinter City.

In the end, a noble from a declined family sent a word, saying that he accidentally offended an employee of the Gilded Rose, and hoped that the Gilded Rose would spare his life.

Instantly, the Gilded Rose left everybody with the impression of domination and power. Besides the great products it sold, it was turning brutal and fearsome too.

The Gilded Rose's business was affected. Many people were scared when they came to the Gilded Rose's stores, fearing that they might accidentally piss off anyone. They wouldn't come if some of the products weren't only available in the Gilded Rose...

All sorts of rumors were spreading in three days. Then, an earl of the Odin Kingdom expressed his dissatisfaction with the Gilded Rose during a banquet in private.

However, he did nothing more than express his dissatisfaction. It seemed that everybody became scared of the Gilded Rose in only a couple of days. The Gilded Rose was more and more intimidating...

Nobody came to the Gilded Rose's headquarters in Neverwinter City or its branches for trouble anymore.

Previously, because of what happened in League City, the people in the towns of the Gilded Rose's branches had been planning to take advantage of it, especially the malicious mages and swordsmen. After all, the Gilded Rose had to pay a price to establish branches.

However, these days, nobody came to seek trouble again. Even the mobsters who wanted to take advantage would rather circumvent the Gilded Rose.

It was because a dozen mobsters had been found dead outside the towns where the Gilded Rose had branches these days. All those mobsters had tried to take advantage of the Gilded Rose.

Although there was no evidence that linked the Gilded Rose to their deaths, and they died in different ways, everybody knew that the Gilded Rose had killed them. Those mobsters had no background at all. Only one of them had connection with a bandit group out there.

However, the Gilded Rose was on the blacklist of the Odin Kingdom's bandit groups. Even if the Gilded Rose's caravans didn't have any protectors, those bandit groups could only drool, and didn't dare to attack at all.

The two bandit groups that had attacked earlier had been destroyed, and their camps were razed to the ground. It was a bloody lesson for other bandit groups. The Gilded Rose was justified in eliminating the bandit groups that attacked it. Even the people who disliked or even hated the Gilded Rose had to hold back their anger and cheer for it.

The bandits' assault was completely different from the conflicts and attacks among families.

No bandit groups dared to mess with the Gilded Rose. Even the nobles of the Odin Kingdom simply expressed their dissatisfaction with the Gilded Rose's domineering behavior on certain occasions. They didn't dare to do anything other than complaining in private.

The powerful organizations didn't have conflicts with the Gilded Rose. They were even in a partnership. At this moment, many major families were purchasing from the Gilded Rose. In particular, after the Universal Core's release, the Gilded Rose had multiple times more partners.

With the Universal Cores, almost all of the Gilded Rose's partners had a 50% more profit. Some even had twice as much profit as they did in the past.

All these partners were glad to see the Gilded Rose's influence rise because the more powerful the Gilded Rose was, the more likely their business was to flourish.

Faleau didn't think too much after hearing the news. After all, the dead people were just unimportant mobsters who had done too many bad things. They weren't killed sooner only because nobody was there to deal with them. Now that they pissed off people they shouldn't, it was time for them to die.

Faleau knew that the Gilded Rose didn't do it, but he didn't really care. The Gilded Rose certainly didn't have time to clarify that it didn't kill those scumbags and scoundrels.

Besides, the Gilded Rose was an outsider anyway, and was not very influential in the Odin Kingdom. It was a good thing that the Gilded Rose was getting intimidating. A lot fewer troubles were reported. That was definitely great.

However, as per Lin Yun's instruction, Faleau reported the matter to Lin Yun in the regular reports.

Recently, Lin Yun had been studying truth runes and understanding laws in the Demiplane. He was almost reaching his limits. Adding the Great Astrologian's training, it was only a matter of time for him to reach the fourth level of the Heaven Rank. He might make a breakthrough in a month, or maybe in a few minutes if he had an epiphany.

Finishing his studies, Lin Yun picked up the report that Faleau submitted, and frowned after reading for a moment.

Most of the report was fine except the growing influence of the Gilded Rose. It seemed that the Gilded Rose was getting not influential, but threatening.

There were only a few short paragraphs on the matter in the report, but Lin Yun keenly realized something was wrong.

He left the Demiplane, and found Faleau. Hearing it from Faleau, Lin Yun put on a grave expression.

"The Gilded Rose is not getting more respected; it's getting more and more feared. Someone is hoping that the Gilded Rose leaves a brutal and domineering impression on everybody.

"The Gilded Rose is an external force anyway, and just an alchemy store. Someone is trying to elevate the Gilded Rose to a height where the local forces won't be happy to see it.

"With the potions and the Universal Cores, nothing will go wrong for now, but we'll be in trouble if this continues. This must be someone's scheme."

Faleau was stunned for a moment. He, too, realized something was wrong at this moment. Things were changing so fast these days that Faleau found it hard to believe, and thought the Gilded Rose was already deeply rooted in the Odin Kingdom.

While Lin Yun was trying to sort things through, a piece of shocking news came out.

An alchemist store in a small town near Neverwinter City was destroyed. Alchemists and the boss in the store all died miserably.

It was just a small store. The boss was just a level-8 Archmage. The place only sold several kinds of magic tools. There were three alchemists in the store. The main reason why the store could operate was that the boss was a Master who could create Spiritual Magic Tools.

The destruction of such a small store was not important. What mattered was the reason. An alchemist who luckily survived told everyone why the store was destroyed, and who the culprit was.

The culprit was the Gilded Rose. The reason for the store's destruction was that they bought 20 Universal Cores from the Gilded Rose. However, the 20 Universal Cores were all faulty. For its reputation, the Gilded Rose hoped to buy the Universal Cores back. After it bought the Universal Cores, it immediately destroyed the store. Only the alchemist who had a special body survived.

Immediately, the news spread in dozens of towns in the north of the Odin Kingdom, and the Gilded Rose seemed to be the last one to receive the news.

Hearing the report, Lin Yun seemed quite unruffled.

“Find out who’s been smearing the Gilded Rose.”

Faleau had cold sweat on his forehead. He looked rather awful.

It was not unusual for a bottom-level alchemy store to be destroyed. Even in Neverwinter City, which was the safest city, hundreds of people got killed every year. Hundreds of bottom-level alchemy stores opened and went bankrupt every year. Even the bigger shops often encountered robbers.

Yet, the destruction of a bottom-level store spread throughout the towns within thousands of kilometers overnight, and all the details were vivid.

Undoubtedly, there was a powerful organization behind all this, and it was specifically targeting the Gilded Rose!

20 of the Gilded Rose’s Universal Cores were faulty. To prevent the information from being leaked out, it destroyed an innocent alchemy store after taking away the faulty products!

In such a story, it didn’t matter whether or not there were any faulty products. Thanks to the rumors that spread in earlier days, everybody would subconsciously believe that the Gilded Rose did it.

The sales of the Universal Core would probably plummet. Many people would even seize the opportunity to take advantage of it.

Seated inside the store, Lin Yun wondered who was smearing the Gilded Rose. Did any organization that was powerful enough have to smear the Gilded Rose in such a way?

It was just a trick anyway. If the organization was truly powerful, it should be crushing the Gilded Rose instead of causing such minor trouble to it. The Gilded Rose wouldn’t be fundamentally hurt. Or rather, only the Gilded Rose’s Universal Cores would be affected...

Yes, the Universal Cores. The Universal Cores!

The enemy smeared the Gilded Rose with the Universal Cores as the point of breakthrough, so they had to be doing this for the Universal Cores.

The Universal Core wasn’t very technologically advanced. Any good Artisan could figure out how it was made. However, the key was the material.

Without the new material, it was possible to make the Universal Core. Also, all the technologies were actually based on the new material, which contained the black substance that could automatically attract mana. It was absolutely impossible to crack the Universal Cores.

No magic methods could figure out the internal structure of the material. Only the people who used an electron microscope instead of magic could possibly find out the technologies applied to the Universal Core.

However, there was nothing they could do even if they identified those technologies, because they didn’t have the material...

The enemy had to have realized the existence of the new material. They had been smearing the Gilded Rose using the Universal Cores probably because they were trying to get the new material it was made of.

Lin Yun put on a cold smile. With that in mind, he could narrow down the range of suspects.

The enemy was seeking after the material instead of the Universal Cores, so they had to be in the alchemy business too, and magic tools were the most profitable.

There were few powerful magic tool dealers in the Odin Kingdom. It was impossible for the enemy to leave no leads at all in such a huge operation. As long as any lead was found, it would be easy to find out which magic tool dealer was involved.

The enemy failed to present any evidence probably because they couldn't create fake Universal Cores even if they wanted. The new material was not an alloy, but an independent material made with a fusion agent.

It was a new substance that was generated by changing molecular forms. It was impossible to copy the Universal Core by analyzing its material.

Not everybody had access to the black substance. Although the fusion agent wasn't complicated, and any Artisan could create it easily with the special materials from the abyss, the formula of the most basic fusion agent wouldn't appear in another 5,000 years.

Lin Yun calmly stayed in the base, not caring about what happened outside. Ever since the incident, many people had been returning the Universal Cores and asking for a refund, especially the customers who had bought only a couple of them.

Three days later, a former partner came to return the 100 Universal Cores he bought earlier.

"What kind of Universal Cores are they? They're all garbage. I paid so much purple gold for garbage! Why do you not refund me? You're selling fake products!"

Lin Yun came out from the rear of the Gilded Rose, and saw a lot of people arguing in the store.

Faleau looked rather awful.

"We can refund the unused Universal Cores for the prices you paid. However, the Universal Cores that are used can't be applied to other magic tools. They cannot be returned..."

Lin Yun drew near casually, and looked at the guy who was demanding a refund. He remembered that the guy was from a medium-sized alchemy store.

"Faleau, just give their money back to them. There's a number on every Universal Core. As long as it's confirmed that the Universal Core was made and sold in the Gilded Rose, refund it whether it's used or not, or even if it's ruined.

"Keep a record of the people who have returned the cores."

"What's the matter? You sold fake products to me, yet you don't want me to return them? Do you want to get back at me later?"

Lin Yun casually glanced at the guy, imposing a terrifying vibe on his soul. Instantly, the guy turned pale.

“You are not qualified for the Gilded Rose to get back at you.”

The guy wanted to say something tough, but he could not utter another word.

Lin Yun turned back and walked to the rear. Then, he thought hard.

A moment later, Faleau came in with an awful expression.

“Sir Merlin, this is getting huge. The rumor that the Universal Core is useless is spreading out. More and more people are demanding refunds, including some of our partners.

“Earlier, a couple of nobles of the Odin Kingdom returned the Universal Cores they bought too. They were one earl and three viscounts. They all expressed their dissatisfaction with the Gilded Rose in public—”

At that point, Lin Yun suddenly interrupted Faleau’s report.

Chapter 1290: Divulge

“Where is the alchemist who luckily survived?”

Faleau was stunned. His expression changed, and he thought of something.

“In that earl’s house...”

“Investigate the partners who came to return their goods, the customers who are reasonably strong, and those nobles. Find out what they have in common.”

After saying that, Lin Yun seemed rather delighted. He gave Faleau another instruction, and left for the Demiplane.

“Don’t change anything in the Gilded Rose. Whoever comes for a refund, just give them their money. However, keep a record of their names and find out who’s behind them.”

Entering the Demiplane, Lin Yun saw Lord Shawn, who had been dormant, floating in the sky surrounded by mysterious light.

Lord Shawn’s eyes were closed. However, the third eye between his eyebrows was opened. The mysterious light around his body was flowing into the eye, making it glitter.

Suddenly, Lin Yun’s expression changed, and he took out the ring that Lord Shawn was attached to, only to find that it was glittering too. Then, the connection between the ring and Lord Shawn dwindled until it disappeared.

Had Lord Shawn left the magic tool? Was he independent again?

Thrilled, Lin Yun immediately inserted a tremendous amount of mana into Lord Shawn’s body.

Immediately, Lord Shawn evolved much faster. He swallowed at least 100 bottles of mana. The light around him suddenly disappeared.

A wolf that was five meters long and two meters tall appeared in the sky.

“Hahaha. Lord Shawn is finally free. He’s no longer the transformation of that goddamn magic tool...”

Lord Shawn floated in the sky and laughed. The third eye between his eyebrows was still glimmering. Anyone who saw the eye would feel uncomfortable.

“Lord Shawn, in case you forgot, you were the one who signed a contract with me, not the magic tool...”

Lin Yun’s casual voice entered Lord Shawn’s ears. Immediately, Lord Shawn’s grin froze. He descended from midair in frustration.

“Damn it, I’m truly regretful. I should have scared you off. If I had done so, I wouldn’t have had to go through this...”

Earlier, Lord Shawn had personally created the contract with his best expertise. However, Lin Yun noticed his trick, and Lord Shawn became a victim to his own scheme...

Lin Yun looked at Lord Shawn with a smile. It was definitely a good thing that Lord Shawn was no longer the transformation of a magic tool.

Without the limitation of the magic tool, as a Soul Walker, Lord Shawn would be able to make consecutive progress.

Having melted the Eyes of Calamity and the Evil Eye, the third eye between his eyebrows had evolved into the Eye of Misfortune. It could bring forth disasters.

With the replenishment of mana and the completion of the Eye of Misfortune, Lord Shawn finally made a breakthrough to the Heaven Rank successfully.

However, Lord Shawn could easily kill a level-1 Heaven Rank mage with his abilities and the Eye of Misfortune, even though he had just reached the Heaven Rank. All he needed was one opportunity.

Lin Yun changed his plan after Lord Shawn’s breakthrough and newly regained independence. He took Lord Shawn out of the Demiplane, and quietly flew 1,000 kilometers to an earl’s manor in a town.

Lord Shawn was unhappy, but he followed Lin Yun anyway, knowing that it was not time to cause trouble. A tiny bit of mana surfaced. Then, it was gone and replaced by soul power.

The power enshrouded Lin Yun and Lord Shawn as they entered a heavily guarded manor, which was almost empty for them. The defenses were absolutely useless against them.

They entered the manor through the main path. The alchemy arrays on their way didn’t work at all. The three-headed hound, which allegedly could discover any approaching creature, didn’t seem to notice Lin Yun and Lord Shawn at all when they passed by.

They searched for a while, and finally found their target, the lucky alchemist who claimed to have survived the Gilded Rose’s assault.

The moment he saw the alchemist, Lin Yun was rather astonished.

The guy claimed that his chest was penetrated on the left side, and he survived because his heart wasn't there. Lin Yun thought that it was just a cliché excuse, but it turned out to be true. That man had some elven blood, and his heart was in the center of his chest.

Lin Yun observed quietly from outside of the window. Inside the room, the alchemist looked healthy and not wounded at all. There were more than 30 plates on the table, with a smiling mage on his opposite side.

"Sir John, are you prepared for your speech tomorrow? Whether or not we can encourage other nobles to deal with the Gilded Rose will depend on your speech. It wasn't easy for the earl to get the opportunity for you to speak in the business center of Neverwinter City..."

The alchemist laughed and waved his hand delightedly.

"Mr. Butler, rest assured. I've already prepared. Tomorrow, I will ruin the Gilded Rose's reputation as we agreed upon."

"They're just an outsider from Andlusa. They're as good as dead now that the earl has locked his eyes on them."

"We've signed a contract, and I'll certainly get this thing done. Don't worry..."

Lin Yun listened for a moment, and then narrowed his eyes.

The earl? This earl was not one of the founders of the Odin Kingdom. He was just an individual noble who didn't have a noble family. Why would he try so hard to smear the Gilded Rose?

Would the man ever do such a thing if he wasn't generously paid?

Lin Yun stood outside of the window quietly for half an hour until he figured out everything. This alchemist seemed to have been the earl's subordinate. He only worked in the destroyed store to set up the Gilded Rose.

Why would a Master Alchemist work at a bottom-level alchemy store?

He had a speech the next day? He had also signed a harsh contract?

After the butler left, Lin Yun looked at Lord Shawn who was standing on his shoulder in the size of a hand.

Lord Shawn seemed quite angry.

"It's just the soul of an Archmage and an idiot who's bound to a soul contract. How boring..."

While he talked, the Eye of Misfortune on his forehead opened, launching an invisible streak of light that hit the alchemist in the back...

"Let's go. He's screwed tomorrow. Let's just wait and see..."

Lin Yun looked at the alchemist with pity in his eyes. This level-1 Archmage had been hit by Lord Shawn with the Light of Misfortune. All kinds of accidents and disasters would happen to him, making him feel that he was abandoned by luck. It would be more miserable than death...

Lin Yun turned around and left. He returned the way he came. However, when he passed the back door, he unexpectedly saw a bearded man who wore a white robe and a black hairband.

The butler was standing right next to the bearded man...

Confusion flashed in Lin Yun's eyes.

That man's clothes indicated that he was from the desert of the Sten Kingdom.

He had come to the earl's residence in the middle of the night using the back door. There was definitely something wrong with him...

When Lin Yun intended to draw closer, he discovered that the bearded man looked in his direction in surprise.

"Sir Reynolds, what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing..."

After the bearded man left, Lord Shawn finally explained.

"That bearded man carries a rarely seen soul magic tool. He almost caught me. His soul is under the protection of the magic tool. If I want to see his soul, I will be seen."

Returning to Neverwinter City, Lin Yun asked Faleau to pay more attention to organizations from the Sten Kingdom during the investigation.

On the second day, in the business center which was the most crowded place in Neverwinter City, and where the Gilded Rose was located...

A high platform was established. Many people stopped around the platform because it usually indicated a rich store here was going to release something new. A public exhibition in this place could be very costly.

At noon, when there were the most passers-by, the alchemist named John climbed the platform with a pale face.

"A lot of you might wonder who I am, and why I am here. My name is John, and I'm an alchemist from the Mages' Cabin..."

Standing on the platform, John convincingly elaborated on how the Mages' Cabin bought the fake Universal Cores, how it was destroyed, and how he survived. He even took off his clothes, and showed a terrifying scar on his chest.

Seated next to a window on the top of the Gilded Rose, Lin Yun watched the aggrieved alchemist speak.

"This dude is about to get unlucky..."

Lord Shawn was holding a bottle of mana water, and sipping now and then as if it were a beverage.

On the platform, John was reaching the end of his speech. His pale face had turned red, and he sounded as if he were yelling. He seemed very excited.

“...I’m standing out because I want everybody to know the Gilded Rose’s ugly true appearance.

“As long as I ruin the Gilded Rose’s reputation, I’ll be able to get a new identity, 10,000,000 purple gold, and two stores, and I can live another life in the south of the Odin Kingdom.

“Fortunately, my elven bloodline gave me a heart that grew in the center of my chest, which saved my life 80 years ago, and brings me tremendous wealth right now.

“Hahaha. I’m ruining the reputation of the Gilded Rose on my own. I’m so proud of myself. That stupid boss of the Mages’ Cabin thought that I was just a common alchemist.

“That stupid man died with disbelief in his eyes. He didn’t expect that I was an Archmage or a Master Alchemist...

“I’ve finished my speech, and completed the agreement with the earl...”

Many people had been shocked and infuriated as they listened to John’s speech. Their emotions had arisen. However, towards the end of John’s speech, everybody was dumbfounded at what he said, and gazed at him.

John’s expression suddenly changed. He finally realized that he seemed to have said something that he shouldn’t have.

“...No, no. That was a mistake. I didn’t say any of that. Damn it. I was controlled—”

Unfortunately, before John could finish, runes had surfaced in his body. All those runes assembled into a glittering roll of paper that floated in midair.

“No, no. I didn’t violate the contract. I didn’t say any of that...”

John screamed and moved back quickly. However, the glittering paper turned into a streak of light, and disappeared into his body. Instantly, a terrifying amount of mana erupted from John to the sky. His presence then quickly plummeted at a higher and higher speed...

In only a dozen seconds, John had no more mana to lose. He had completely turned into an ordinary person, and he seemed to have grown older by 30 years. He fell and mumbled to himself...

“How could this be, how could this be...”

The expressions of the audience who were listening to his speech all changed. The smart people knew that John violated the contract and was punished. Remembering what John said, they knew that he was here to smear the Gilded Rose, except that he somehow misspoke, and was punished by the contract.

The people who came with John were all dumbfounded. They didn’t expect John to be so stupid as to divulge those things at this moment...

Nobody could think of a second possibility except that he was stupid.

He wouldn’t have been punished even if he had said those things under someone else’s control. Only if he violated the contract himself would he be punished by the contract...

After the whole thing settled down, Lin Yun didn't pay his attention to the aftermath. Even though his enemy likely wouldn't give up so easily, the Gilded Rose would have more time to deal with the scheme. After all, all the accusations against the Gilded Rose started with the destruction of the alchemy store.

Now that the truth was revealed in public, the criticisms against the Gilded Rose would be eased, even though they wouldn't be gone. Lin Yun would have time to deal with them.

Also, it was a good opportunity for him to eliminate the partners who had come to demand a refund and cause trouble. The partners who continued supporting the Gilded Rose after the incident had proved their loyalty, and he could work with them in other aspects.

After all, the Gilded Rose had never explained anything ever since the rumor came up, and it simply accepted every customer's demand for refund, which seemed to be confirming the rumors.

Lin Yun didn't care about the incident at all. Some of the Gilded Rose's employees resigned, and Lin Yun asked Faleau to just let them go.

It seemed that the Gilded Rose accepted that there was nothing they could do.

The internal and external problems could all be taken care of together. However, it was impossible for his enemy to obtain the Universal Cores or the raw materials...

The Gilded Rose's raw materials and even the entire Noscent's were all in Lin Yun's Demiplane. If his enemy thought that the Gilded Rose had found a special mother lode or alloy formula, they should just keep looking...

The Black Pattern Silver could never be leaked. However imaginative his enemy was, they couldn't foresee this brand-new material.

The Gilded Rose remained silent after the huge turn of events, which surprised everybody. Faleau, on the other hand, combined the leads he found, and got three names.

One of them was the Roosevelt Business Alliance from the Sten Kingdom, and its director in the north of the Odin Kingdom was named Reynolds.

At this moment, an unexpected visitor came to the Gilded Rose.

Looking at the mage, Lin Yun remained casual.

The visitor wore a bright blue robe, and emitted undisguised coldness. His eyebrows and hair were white. As a level-3 Heaven Rank ice mage, he clearly carried such features because of his bodily conditions, not magic.

His blue eyes, his big nose, and his body that was as muscular as a warrior's all indicated that he was from the Sten Kingdom.

The Sten Kingdom had a very special terrain. Half of the country was a desert, and the other half was always covered in snow. There were two ethnic groups in the kingdom, and they engaged in fierce competition. At first, the two ethnic groups fought like archenemies, but after the fall of the Third Dynasty, many small kingdoms were established. They swallowed each other.

The two ethnic groups that occupied the Sten Kingdom's territory at this moment had to abandon their hate and merge into a kingdom so that they could stand independent. At this moment, although the two ethnic groups were still competitive, they were still one country.

"What can I do for you, Sir Dick?"

Lin Yun was quite casual. He knew what Dick was up to the moment he saw him. He even realized who had been dealing with the Gilded Rose.

Dick represented the Lincoln Business Alliance, which was headquartered in the snow-covered half of the Odin Kingdom. It was a business alliance of magic tools, and its major competitor was the Roosevelt Business Alliance in the desert.

One of the three suspects that Faleau had found out was the Roosevelt Business Alliance...

With a confident smile, Dick opened his mouth unhurriedly.

"This time, I'm here as a representative of the Lincoln Business Alliance. We hope to cooperate with the Gilded Rose. We can help you get rid of your problem and deal with your enemy in the dark. Sir Mafa, do you not know who has been targeting the Gilded Rose in secret?"

Lin Yun glanced at Dick casually.

"Who else could it be if not the Roosevelt Business Alliance?"

Dick had to drop the words that he was about to say out, and shock flashed on his face.