

## Mystical 241

### Chapter 241: Upgrade 1

Aquarius snapped her fingers lightly, her eyes narrowing.

"Big Sister, what are you thinking about?" Cena asked from beside her.

"It's nothing. I'll go out for a walk, you guys go ahead and sleep." Aquarius stood, opened the entrance to the tent, and walked out.

There was a smattering of guards standing around outside, and she could hear the voices of Prynn and the others talking beside a distant stream. The day was getting darker, only the campside fireplace was getting brighter.

Aquarius greeted a few guards, and took a female guard with her to the bushes, acting as though she was going to answer the call of nature.

That way, she avoided any other curious gazes.

She walked into the bushes, and looked at the shrubs surrounding her, all about as tall as half a person.

"You go look out around here," she said to the female guard softly.

"Yes."

Once she was alone, Aquarius flicked her finger. Two dots of blue light instantly flew out of her fingertips, falling into the bushes, flickering in and out of view. Like two small fireflies.

"Go and test that Acacia," she mouthed the orders.

The blue firefly lights immediately and lightly darted into the bushes, and utterly disappeared.

Standing on the same spot, Aquarius looked thoughtful.

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The excuse was they went out to gather firewood again, and decided to take a stroll at the same time. With Ulun in tow, Garen once more sauntered to the position from earlier.

Carefully he walked to the border of where the amejade grass was, and started patrolling while acting nonchalant.

Soon enough, he found a pinweed near the amejade grass. It had large leaves and a thick stem, which meant it was quite matured in years as well.

The pinweed was another more commonly used medicinal ingredient. Garen silently recorded this piece of information.

Then he started patrolling again. Ulun followed closely behind him, but didn't know what he was doing.

In this whole area of the forest, Garen continuously found about a dozen more amejade grasses. There were comparatively fewer pinweeds, only three in all. He was feeling increasingly more satisfied.

After taking a few more rounds in the surrounding forest, the sky had gradually darkened until he couldn't even see properly. Only then did Garen decide to head back.

They were standing on a slope, surrounded by thickets of trees and bushes. Without realizing it, they had wandered far away from the campsite.

As the light dimmed, the forest became a sea of darkness. Even the green trees and plants looked inky in the shadows.

"Young master, what on earth are you looking for?" Ulun asked out of boredom from behind Garen.

"My cousin likes herbs and flowers, so I thought I'd look for some that she might like, and bring them back to her." Garen answered casually, "It's just that we'll be out for a few days, so even though I already singled out some targets, it's pointless if we dug them out too early."

Ulun nodded in understanding. Suddenly, he reached out his hand to grab a little green snake that was pouncing at Garen.

His palm deftly and accurately pinched the snake seven inches from its head.<sup>1</sup> With a light press, the little snake immediately hissed, and the seventh inch was immediately flattened. He then casually flung the snake onto the floor.

Only then did Garen act like he was belatedly scared.

"It's another leaf snake! Why are there so many snakes in this forest! If you hadn't discovered it so early, this one would have bitten me!"

"It's nothing, this place is obviously a suitable habitat for leaf snakes, it's nothing much if there are a few more than usual. No matter how poisonous a snake is, it doesn't matter if it can't bite anyone," Ulun said calmly.

Suddenly a dot of blue floated towards the two of them. It was a small blue snake, looking lazy as it slithered, its movements slow and smooth.

Garen and Ulun both saw that snake.

"What snake is that?" Garen asked, frowning.

"I'm not sure either, if it's blue it should be a blue-scaled snake, but these sort of surroundings shouldn't be very conducive for this type of snake." Ulun frowned slightly too. "Be careful, this type of snake moves very quickly, and it has a lot of explosive power as well. You back down first."

"Okay." Hearing that, Garen immediately hid behind Ulun's back.

Ulun put on black leather gloves, his expression somewhat solemn. The blue-scaled snake's skin was hard and it moved fast, so it wasn't an easy adversary. He had also been a wandering warrior before, living off bounty money, so he was used to living in forests like these. But even then, he found this slightly challenging.

It'd be fine if he was alone, but there was a young master behind him that he had to protect, so that made things a bit harder.

"There shouldn't be blue-scaled snakes here, right?" he asked inwardly, as he stared at the lazy blue snake.

It was a little fella not half a meter long. It seemed to have noticed the two in front of it too, so it looked up and hissed softly, as though warning the two of them to get out of its way.

"We should leave her slowly," Ulun said softly. "Be slow, don't rush."

"Okay."

The two of them slowly move to the left.

Suddenly a blue spark erupted out of nowhere, headed straight for Ulun's face.

The blue spark shot out of the blue-scaled snake's mouth, and carved a thin blue line through the air, beautiful and crystallite. At the same time, a foul odor wafted through the area, as though this whole place had suddenly become drainage.

Just as the blue spark was about to hit Ulun's face, he abruptly raised his right hand and held it in front of his face.

Pff!

The blue spark landed on his glove, and immediately made an eroding hissing sound. It was evidently a spray of thick blue poison.

"Run!!" Ulun howled, quickly taking off his glove, and immediately tossing out a thin dagger. However, the blue-scaled snake instantly dodged it.

One man and one snake faced off with each other, neither willing to be distracted.

As soon as Garen heard the yell, he set off at a run towards the campsite. There were a lot of guards there, so there wouldn't be any big problems as long as he reached there. There were old hands and experts at dealing with snakes among the guards.

The forest ahead of him was rapidly retreating, his legs rustling through the bushes. Garen did not pause for even a moment.

The reactions and speed that Ulun and the blue-scaled snake demonstrated earlier, as well as their accuracy, had achieved an extremely high level. There was no way Garen could avoid the blue-scaled snake's poison without revealing his true abilities.

Behind him, Ulun yelled again, but the sound was coming from further away. Evidently the distance between them had gradually increased.

Garen quickly ran forward, but he relaxed slightly inside. He gradually slowed down, wanting to turn around and take a look.

Pff!

Suddenly, a blue shadow pounced from behind a tree branch, coming straight for his face. Before it even touched him, he could already smell an intense stench like from before.

"It's not a coincidence!!" Garen instantly understood inside, that someone was purposely trying to test him. He didn't think much about it, but purposely tripped underfoot.

"Oh, no!" he yelled out, and fell towards the right, just in time to avoid the attack of the blue shadow.

With a smack, the blue shadow rammed into a white stone on the ground, and the stone immediately split apart.

Garen half-sat on the ground, and only then did he clearly see what it was.

It was the same type of blue-scaled snake as before!

The blue-scaled snake's head had been bruised, but there wasn't any blood leaking out. It stared at Garen, its long sleek body slowly and gracefully slithering towards him.

Garen acted as though he was extremely terrified. He didn't even dare to move, just half sitting on the ground, staring at the blue-scaled snake slithering towards him in horror.

Strangely, he could actually see something familiar in this snake's eyes.

"That is..." Suspicion rose in Garen's heart.

Just then, the blue-scaled snake suddenly stopped, as though attracted by something, and then it turned around to head towards another direction. Totally ignoring Garen.

Garen slowly got up, putting on a pale face, but the confusion in his heart grew.

In the forest far away, Aquarius was also suspicious as she looked at the returning blue-scaled snake.

"That's a very normal reaction, but that fall was too coincidental..." she frowned slightly, looking down at the black paper scroll in her hand. "Forget it, let's get the important things done first."

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Trejon Estate, Vanderman Tower.

In the red and brown study room.

Vanderman was sitting opposite a person in black robes. The oil lamp on the table beside them emitted a dim but quiet yellow light, forming a yellow halo that was just big enough to cover both of them. Outside the yellow circle, everything was dark.

"What are you guys here for this time? Just tell it to me straight." Vanderman crossed his fingers, his expression calm.

"Old friend, I really don't want to see you stray off the path like this." The person in black had a deep voice, a man's voice. "You and I have worked together all these years, but at a pivotal time like now, you end up messing up like this. Even I will find it hard to smoothen this out for you."

His voice was calm and slow, but his attitude was dead serious.

Vanderman frowned and shook his head.

"This isn't my problem. Yes, the cargo was intercepted on my territory, but my control at the borders is too weak. You can't put all the responsibility on me." He paused. "There were three covers for this round of cargos' shipment routes. After taking so many twists and turns, there was still someone who could accurately comprehend the border shipment routes..."

"Indeed there is a traitor, but that is not the point here." The man in black shook his head, "The point is, someone who wants to make a move on your territory, can make a move on your territory. And even more importantly, someone kept silent and allowed this behavior. Everyone kept silent, that's the main point."

Vanderman fell quiet, his hand falling onto the chair's armrest and gripping it tightly.

The man in black's voice had a hint of pity.

"We're considered old friends now. Because of this matter, the branches are very unhappy with you. If you still do not decide..."

"I am a royal Luminarist!" Vanderman interrupted him, his voice deep.

"Royal..." The man in black was slightly disappointed. "Is that your decision? And here I thought you had understood the situation, to think..." He stood up. "Forget it, just pretend I was never here."

He turned around and walked towards the darkness outside the yellow circle.

"Tonci, I haven't forgotten about everything in the past. I hope you haven't either," Vanderman said suddenly.

"I have long since stopped being the Tonci from before." The man in black stopped, and replied calmly.

"The royal family will not lose!" Vanderman said determinedly.

"But the royal family does not represent everything." The man in black strode into the darkness, and instantly disappeared into the shadows. There wasn't the sound of an opening door, or footsteps. He integrated into the darkness like a breeze, disappearing without a trace.

## Chapter 242: Upgrade 2

Although the halo of light from the oil lamp was snuffed out, the bedroom remained strangely illuminated.

Moonlight crept in from the window and bathed the carpet.

Vanderman was sitting on a chair, quietly, with a rather perplexed expression on his face.



"The royal family still has us and the three major departments! It's impossible for us to lose!" He murmured.

At some corner of in a forest far away from the manor lied a person dressed in black. He was none other than Tonci.

He turned his head around and looked at the Trejons' manor.

"You and I have done our duties, Vanderman."

"Have we failed?" Another black figure slowly crept up alongside him from the dark. "I knew it, that old man had placed his hopes in the royal alliance. His household was in a predicament in the past, but he was blessed by the Kovitan's eldest prince. He had sworn loyalty to the royal family, to never betray them. To suddenly have that happen would be a miracle."

"Nothing can be done. We've failed. Have some consideration and stop harping on it." Tonci said coldly.

"Whatever. The split doesn't favor Vanderman from the get go anyway. Now that you, his only old friend, has given up on him, his life will not be that easy."

"That is his decision. Let's go." Tonci replied coldly.

Both of them went into a corner away from the moonlight, and disappeared into the darkness without a sound.

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Cia seemed to be shocked by the blue-scaled snake during his two days in the campsite, and lived his days in the tent with a very pale face. He didn't even dare to go near Aquarius and flatter her.

Occasionally, Prynne and Marin would come and accompany him. Garen didn't even participate in the group hunt, his excuse being that he was feeling unwell.

However, everyone knew that he was actually traumatized by the blue-scaled snake. He was almost bitten by the venomous blue-scaled snake, which had the lethal potential to kill a man. No one could blame him, anyone would have required some time to recover if they had a brush with death.

On top of that, it was a natural reaction from the spoiled Acacia.

Garen took this opportunity to bring Ulun out to search for different kinds of known herbal medicines in this wide area. He didn't have much knowledge in this field as he hadn't specialised it in this practice. However, he knew enough knowledge in herbal medicine to get by.

He explored at least a thousand-square-meter wide area, and hence, two days had passed in the blink of an eye, and it was already time to head back. Garen had finally dug up all the herbal medicine that he was searching for.

Amejade grass, pinweed and giant roc flowers were the ingredients he had been looking for in this journey. These were essentially ancient herbs, but it was obvious that these people treated them as a common weeds. Some of the ingredients even let slip that they had been stepped on.

Garen estimated that he would be able to successfully conjure up to three kinds of herbal soups with these ingredients. It was unfortunate that there were a lot more ingredients that he wasn't able to find, so he wasn't sure how effective the overall medicine might be.

He filled the exquisite wooden box that was used to pack meals with soil and planted the herbs into these small boxes. They became makeshift planters.

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Early in the morning, at the entrance of the road just beside the forest.

A few carriages were parked on both sides of the road, and a few bodyguards, in either white or black shirts, were engaged in conversation.

Prynne was ordering the guards to move the beasts they had hunted onto the car beside the carriage, while the remaining ladies were chatting and giggling over to the side.

Aquarius was standing in the shade under a tree, as she gazed at the rest of the people moving camping equipment into the carriage. She then had her sight on the Trejons Household's black carriage, and she looked at the bodyguards, carrying stacks of exquisite wooden boxes onto the carriage.

As she looked at the emblem of the Trejons Household, it reminded her of the results of her probes from earlier.

She hesitated for a moment as she looked at a guard in white, who was standing by a carriage not far away from her.

She flicked her fingers, and a blue colored flash appeared at the tip of her finger.

The curtains on the carriages were pulled down and a female guard in white came down from the carriage. Two of them whispered to each other for a moment before approaching the Trejons carriage together.

Garen was inside the carriage, carefully securing the small boxes to one corner with ropes. When he opened the carriage's curtain, he saw Aquarius and two of her personal guards whispering among themselves.

His heart threatened to jump.

"Could it be that those two blue-scaled snakes from earlier on..." He could faintly feel that the smell of those two snakes and Aquarius's smell were rather similar. Perhaps fragrance would be a better choice of word. "If the incident was man made... It's most likely Aquarius's doing."

He squinted his eyes as he gently touched his wooden boxes with his hands.

"The blue-scaled snakes are extremely fast and venomous. I can only handle two of them at best, since I am a martial artist who doesn't focus on speed. With more than two, I can only avoid them. I'll see how it goes when I regain some of my strength after drinking the herbal soup."

Based on his estimations, a typical Luminarist with an average threat level was at least level C and above. They might be able to reach level B if they really had a go at it. The Luminarist who were fighting against teacher Emin was definitely at least level B during his final struggle. This were just typical Luminarists, imagine the stronger ones.

"The only way to hasten my learning process to become a Luminarist, is to increase my physical attributes and recover as soon as possible!" As Garen recalled the details of the ambush; he was sure that it was a setup. The only person here who was capable of such a feat was Aquarius.

"I will remember this..." Garen closed the curtain.

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Back in the Trejons manor.

Garen noticed that Vanderman's mood was getting worse lately.

According to the female housekeeper, Vanderman's mood was affected by a letter he had received.

He had his suspicions, the only thing that could affect Vanderman's mood was the situation involving the Luminarists.

Garen didn't think much of it as it would be a better option for him to increase his own strength than to conjure a plan at this point in time.

He could only rely on himself during this chaotic period.

It took him three days to treat and cultivate all the medicinal herbs that he brought back, which were considered fairly simple tasks. Due to his inexperience, he had broken some of the roots of the herbs during the cultivation process and he felt quite saddened by it.

After that, he followed the ancient method in mixing the herbs together and stored them nicely into packets.

The final step was to soak them in the medicinal bath.

It wasn't easy to collect the herbs. He managed to follow an ancient recipe to create something called Endurance Liquid.

The source was unknown, its main effect was of a simple enhancement and supplement to the body. It only required one whole day of brewing in fire.

Garen hid in his building for that whole day as he carefully set the fire up. He kept adding in water every once in awhile to prevent it from drying up. He stopped the whole process when there was a faint, sticky green mud appearing in the herbs.

The whole building was completely filled with the slightly pungent smell of the herbal soup.

Every female servant was told to leave by him, hence he was operating this process all on his own. The reason for this was of course to keep it as a secret. As for Vanderman, a father that always went out early in the morning and only came back late at night, he would only be in the manor during the unearthly hours of the day. The building was filled with a strange aroma, The servants had no idea what he had been up to, let alone Vanderman.

Garen took five full days to brew the herbs into ointments. He placed them into three small jade green bottle since the day he came back from the camp.

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Garen told the servants to carry the bath tub into his own room, pour in some hot water, light up the fireplace and close the curtain.

Then, they delivered and the towel and body wash in a wooden basin.

"Alright that's more than enough. Get out, the lot of you!" Garen hushed them.

"Do you want us to add in the hot water for you?" An old lady servant asked.

"That'll be fine. I will do it by myself."

"Alright then. Please be careful not to fall asleep inside the bathtub young master Acacia." The lady servant warned him with care.

"I got it, Anna." Garen nodded his head. "Please don't disturb me. I need to realize some inspirations during my bath!"

Whenever Acacia reminded the servants about his poetry, the old servant, Anna, who had been watching Acacia since young, could even feel a chill in her nerves whenever he talked about his poetry.

"Then I shall take my leave. Please take your time to realize your inspirations." She forced out a smile and then gestured the rest of the female servants to leave the room before she closed the door gently.

Garen walked towards the door and locked the door with a chain.

As the sound of the footsteps gradually disappeared, only the crackling sound of the burning wood inside the room could be heard.

Garen walked towards the study desk gently and took out a palm sized emerald green glass bottle from the drawer. As he swung the bottle, the green liquid which was as viscous as the royal jelly was flowing gently in the bottle.

He walked towards the bathtub, opened the bottle cap and gently tilted the bottle.

Bloop!

A drop of viscount liquid went into the crystal clear hot water and swiftly dyed the hot water into faint green like an ink mixing in clear water.

He then poured the remaining viscous liquid into the bathtub. He even rinsed the bottle in the hot water to ensure there were no remnants left behind. It was only then that Garen took off his clothes, stepped onto the stool and entered the bathtub.

As he soaked his whole body inside the hot bath, it was no different than soaking in a normal hot bath, other than the pungent medicinal odor.

Garen took a deep breath, shut his eyes and immediately immersed himself completely into the water.

As the water splashed about, the sounds he heard were similar to being covered with a thick cloth. Everything sounded so far away, and was very quiet.

Garen recalled the ancient preparation method, using his index fingers and placing them on the other side of the shoulders to form a gesture which resembled him hugging himself. He started to expand and contract his chest periodically as he completely soaked himself in the water.

This was the most basic breathing technique from the Divine Statue Technique, which was used to build the foundation and train his skin, blood and qi. However, the original method did not require one to use any medicine for assistance. Garen was merely using the endurance liquid as the catalyst.

As he immersed himself inside the water, he occasionally got out of the water to catch a breath. This process continued for quite a while. He did not feel anything untoward happening to his body.

What he felt when he was immersing himself was that the water was getting hotter over time. It was as if there was someone who kept adding more wood under the bathtub to increase the temperature. The water's temperature was getting higher, and getting hotter over time.

The green pigment in the water became fainter as the water started to clear up over time.

Garen's skin started to become green at this point.

Splash.

As Garen came out of the water for the fifth time, he wiped off the water that was on his face and opened his eyes.

"It's getting hotter... This endurance liquid had proven itself. According to the ancient documents, the endurance liquid was one of the basic medicines for the Emerald Jade Panacea. It was unfortunate that it was a lost art and this medicine was now primarily used for body enhancement." Garen sighed repentantly. The Emerald Jade Panacea was similar in theory, compared to the Divine Statue Technique's White Gold Divine Statue. However, its specialty was not focused on defense and recovery, but full immunity to toxins and increasing of one's lifespan.

He was unsure of the effect when he used the breathing technique from the Divine Statue Technique to absorb the medicine into his body. He had to give all of his attention to the breathing technique and thus he did not see the changes in the attributes pane.

He was slightly stunned as he looked at the attribute pane just below his sight.

The attribution pane had an overall increase without his knowledge.

Chapter 243: Approach 1

'Strength 1.1, Agility 1.0, Vitality 1.2, Intelligence 0.6, Potential 1872%. Possess the qualities of a Luminarist.'

What made him even happier was the skill pane right below.



'Precision Blueprint: Not Learnt. (Max Level: 3)' There was a faint red symbol at the end of the sentence. It was the basic requirement for an increment via attribute points.

Garen had not noticed the symbol at the beginning as the skill Precision Blueprint was grey, which indicated that it could not be increased.

He quickly set his sights onto the faint red symbol for three seconds.

The symbol's meaning appeared in his mind.

'Requirement to learn Precision Blueprint: Intelligence 0.6, Vitality 1.1, Agility 1.0, Strength 1.0'

Garen finally understood that it was his weak physical body that forbid him to enter the beginner-level of the skill. If he were to purely follow the traditional learning path, he could only fulfill this requirement after understanding the theories, go through lots of practice and ensure that the body was used to it. What's shocking was that this was the requirement to enter the beginner level, and it would required at least half a year.

"Luminarists really do hold up to their name... This needs four different kinds of attributions." Without any hesitation, Garen set his sights onto the Precision Blueprint.

The skill's word moved slightly and went out of focus. When it crept back into clarity, it had already changed its form.

'Precision Blueprint: Beginner-level (Total of three levels: Beginner Level, Intermediate- Level, Master-level.'

Cool air flowed out of Garen's brain and entered both of his arms.

He suddenly felt that his agility and speed had went up a notch as he reached out and moved his hands.

"According to the manual, it would need half a year to reach this level. On top of that, continuous training and learning in between." He nodded satisfactorily.

Every Luminarist was a master of Precision Blueprint. Only when one became a master of the former skill could he unlock the beginner-level studies of the Luminarist, which was also the basis of tactics.

Even now, countless Luminarists-to-be ceaselessly practise this basic technique; they were mastering the Precision Blueprint via repetition.

Garen used the towel to clean his body and put on a bathrobe as he slowly got out of the bathtub. He stood still and closed his eyes, slowly moving his lower body. He was performing the most basic technique from the White Cloud Gate.

What was supposed to be the White Mammoth from the White Cloud Gate technique looked totally different than it should be. It became some sort of technique that used palm techniques as a base, after it had merged together with the Divine Statue Technique.

"East King Hand!!"

Garen pushed both of his palms forward with all his might, and two high pitched noise were generated from the air. The transparent air condensed for a bit before disappearing right after.

He shook his head in disappointment as he withdrew his hands.

"Looks like I still can't use the actual secret technique."

He had come up with four of his strongest secret techniques from merging multiple battle skills from his past life. They were the East King Hand, West Phoenix Fist, Southern Double Fist and Northern Capturing Hand. These four strongest techniques were derived from his understanding and experience in martial arts. It was his martial arts life's work.

When combined, these secret techniques produced massively different results.

His martial arts overall structure went something like this.

The first tier were his four strongest techniques.

The second tier was the combinations of techniques such as: Red Jade Thousand Mammoth Spring. This type of technique had the momentum of the Thousand Mammoth Traction, coupled with the effects of the Red Jade Palm.

The third tier were different types of battle skills that he freely used. The strongest among this tier was his integrated Mammoth technique of the White Cloud Gate, Thousand Mammoth Traction, third form.

The last one was the typical sleight of hand such as Capturing Hand, Combination Fist, Palm Knife, etc.

Garen sat by the study desk and penned a few lines onto white paper.

‘Four major tiers. First: Ultimate Technique, second: Secret Technique, third: Normal Technique, forth: Sleight of Hand.’

"Since the day I practice martial arts in the White Cloud Gate, I have not lost to anyone other than Sylphalan." Garen's gaze became dim as he recalled his two battles against Palosa. He started to feel emotional all of a sudden. "The Secret Techniques cannot possibly have this little strength..."

He was unwilling to accept the fact that there was a huge difference in strength between Secret Technique and the Luminarists. One relied on the user's own strength whereas the other used the strength from an external source. It was similar to comparing martial artists and sages in the legends of China. The difference between them was too huge!

On a whim, Garen started writing all the secret techniques that he had learnt on the piece of paper.

The Four Major Secret Techniques were written at the front, as these four techniques were the result of combining secret techniques and battle skills. Each of these skills required complicated techniques and aura to execute. These techniques suited Garen best, as no one could possibly have learnt such a technique, even if he taught them step by step.

Garen, who had practiced martial arts for such a long time, had accumulated boundless experience. He would obviously feel dissatisfied when secret techniques became insignificant all of a sudden. Releasing the emotions that were welling up inside him, he had listed down all the possible routes that he could take on the piece of paper.

Half an hour later...

Garen finally exhaled and placed down his pencil helplessly. He felt a sense of disappointment as he looked at the white paper, densely packed with handwriting.

"Is there no other path?" He muttered. He stood up, opened the window and allowed the cold night air to blow onto him and freshen up his spirit.

"No... There must be a way." This thought flashed through his mind as he looked up at the full moon in the sky, the disappointment within his gaze slowly turning to calm.

"My strength has recovered to the third tier, which is a little stronger than before. If I compare it to the handbook..." He took out the handbook, which was given by teacher Emin, from the drawer.

Black words littered the plain yellow pieces of paper, all of which were handwritten notes by teacher Emin.

Garen flipped it to the last few pages, which was where the remarks were located. There, it was clearly written:

-- Luminarist levels are very strict. However, understanding this is meaningless for you now. I have written down how we Luminarists categorise you commoners.

We Luminarists grade ourselves as Silver Level. Anyone below us would be categorised under Commoner Level. The following was the categorisation for the commoners.

Comoner Levels can be broken down into four levels: Master-level, General-level, Guardian-level and soldier-level.

A Soldier-level can fight against ten people, a Guardian-level can fight against a hundred people and a General-level can fight against five hundred people. However, they can be of different types and each has their pros and cons. A Master-level can fight against a thousand people and can completely overwhelm a General-level. They are, under any circumstances, at the peak of the Commoner Level. This is the limit of a commoner.

As for Luminarists, in theory they should not be affected by the Common Level, and they should not be a threat to a Luminarist. The attacks of a non-Luminarist to a Luminarist is very minor, and can even be considered negligible. You can ask your father to prove this point to you.

Only a Luminarist who has managed to completely forge his own totem and light his White Luminescence is officially a Silver Level Luminarist. At this point in time, do not reveal. --

There was another remark at the very back.

-- Do not tell your father that you are learning from me. Do not forget your promise. The moment you graduate is the moment I have fully cleared my life debt towards you. --

Garen closed the handbook, and he also knew why his teacher was reminding him so.

Emin didn't know why he had approached him to learn the ways of the Luminarist, and he didn't care for the reason he wanted to pursue this path. He merely treated this teaching experience as a trade. Perhaps he might have reasons to want to protect himself. He had considered some aspects in detail, but ultimately, this was just a trade.

He stowed away his thoughts, followed the instructions recorded in the handbook, and started to estimate his strength.

"Based on the categorisation here, when I was at my peak with my Divine Statue Technique, I should be in the Master-level, which was the peak of the Commoner Level. The current me who had just slightly recovered should be at Soldier-level."

He knew that the person that the writing was referring to was the standardised elite soldier who had undergone training. The elite soldiers in this world were slightly stronger than the previous world.

He was no more than a soldier-level at his current strength and his secret technique.

He could only handle three blue-scaled snakes from that day. Forget about going against Guardian-levels or above; the General-levels and Master-levels respectively.

Even his father Vanderman's strongest underlings were at the peak of the Guardian-level. The distance to becoming a Master-level was still far away.

"A mere Soldier-level, the lowest rank of all?" Garen looked at his hands as he felt his strength was constantly recovering. That was the soul's ability changing the structure of this body, which was a slow and irreversible process. Since it was a change from nought to one, the process required was slow and lengthy. "So weak... but only for now. If I were to use all three medicines, I will soon recover my physical attributes. I am currently constrained by my physical attributes, and I can't use most of my strength. My strength will recover tremendously if I can reach the threshold."

He turned his head around and looked at the crystal clear water in the bathtub.

"I should be able to recover to a decent level, and no longer remain at Soldier-level when I fully absorb these three medicines. The next step will be to do repetitive practising."

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Northern region of the Lush Forest District, somewhere inside the forest in the mountains.

Night time.

A woman in a green shirt walked slowly from a forest slope in Aquarius's manor.

With her attire being all green, she was like a forest ranger who had become one and blended completely with her surroundings.

The woman was around twenty, and had a long and slim body. She looked like a sexy female aristocrat who was about to go on a hunt.

She had a noble themed green colored lantern sleeve shirt and was wearing a small green circular hat which even had a white feather inserted into it.

On her lower torso, she was wearing a light green mini skirt and green floral patterned stockings. Revealed in between the stockings and the miniskirt was a swathe of her fair thigh.

The woman was wearing a green mask, and a green longbow slung across on her back. The quiver was hanging from her waist in a way that was hidden yet convenient at the same time.

She looked at the manor from far away, as the manor was lit by dots of yellow under the night sky.

The woman raised up her right hand and wound up her pinky finger as she placed her blue colored metal ring, which she wore, to the side of her lips.

"I have arrived." She whispered to the ring. Her accent was not of the Lush Forest region, and her tone was slightly high pitched at the end of the sentence. She sounded like she was singing.

Chapter 244: Approach 2

The woman stood in silence, having finished her sentence.

A few minutes later, a black figure soon appeared in the dense forest in the manor's direction.

"Did the division send you? Are you people lacking this much manpower?" The black figure asked dissatisfactory.

"It's a pity, your honor. Our division is the only one that is just slightly free." The green shirted girl replied respectfully with her head down. "Your request isn't of the best timing; most of our forces are being mobilized at the moment."

"Whatever. You people of Green Shade aren't half bad. It's just that you guys may not be good at the mission that I am about to give. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to belittle your people." The black figure's tone took a calmer stance.

"I understand. As long as your honor can forgive us." The green shirted woman replied with her head down as usual, which made it hard to see her expression.

"The current situation of the Lush Green district doesn't bode well. A few major leaders are coming up with something fishy. I need you people to take out a group of bandits publicly to show off your strength. Can you do it?" The black figure asked softly.

"That won't be a problem. However, they won't be your typical bandits if your intention is to mobilize us, right?" The Green Shade woman raised her head and asked.

"That's only natural. These bandits have high profits every year, and their locations are still yet to be known. We suspect that one of the major leaders are pulling the strings in the dark. Their strength is estimated to be at two General-levels, including the possibilities of any unknown external support." The black figure replied.

"No problem. Please pass us the mission briefing shortly." The Green Shade woman nodded.

"Please be careful. The mastermind could possibly be a Luminarist..." The black figure warned her with a deep tone.

The Green Shade woman squinted her eyes and nodded lightly.

As the black figure was about to turn her body around, she suddenly stopped in motion. "Also, another small thing. Please send a person to test Vanderman." Suddenly, a familiar figure flashed through her mind. "Actually, you should go and probe his son Acacia first, since that old man Vanderman is very experienced. I can't shake the feeling that they are hiding something."



"Yes." Green Shade woman complied with her head down.

"If Vanderman is indeed strong only in appearance but brittle inside, we will have to rearrange our plans. I heard that Vanderman was injured from his experiment when two Luminarists were fighting against each other and he hadn't realised in time. This resulted in his son almost involved in the crossfire. I need to know if he really is injured. You can kill off his son as a warning to him if he doesn't have enough strength." The black figure said coldly. "Do not get caught."

"Understood."

The Green Shade woman looked at the black figure entering the darkness, as the footsteps gradually went away into nothing.

"Other than Diaz, everyone else will be mobilized in this ambush." She said softly, as if she was talking to someone else. "I will assist you in going against two of those General-levels, and the rest of you will focus on encircling the remaining bandits. We need to show the communicator what we are made of, since the communicator looks down on us."

"Yes." Suddenly, multiple voices of different gender and age could be heard behind her.

"Diaz." The Green Shade woman turned around as she looked behind her. "You'll go and scout Vanderman's manor. Be careful out there."

"I understand, big sister." A dark green figure in the shadow replied with a clear and cold tone, which was clearly the voice of a young woman. "Don't worry. We are all bowmen. Vanderman will not be able to stop us from escaping without any preparation beforehand if we're far enough away."

"You're just a below average General-level." An arrogant woman said from the other side of the dark corner. "In the eyes of the Luminarists, you are merely a worm if you do not have the weakening dust."

"Mind your own business." Diaz groaned as she turned around and disappeared into the distance.

She only stopped moving when she was away from her sister's group.

Thud!

She stabbed the tree in front of her with a knife so hard that the tree leaves ceaselessly fell off from the impact.

"Someday, I will kill you!" She said with a cruel deep tone.

\*\*\*\*\*

Two days later...

Splash!

Garen's head came out from the bathtub's water. His naked upper body was completely soaked in the green medicine.

He wiped his face and dried his hair and upper body with a black towel as he got out of the bathtub.

The sunlight leaked through the gaps of the curtain and landed onto the floor, forming a golden, dazzling line. There were puddles everywhere in the bedroom, and the strong medicinal smell had made the whole room a stifling affair.

Garen took up a bowl of cold water and splashed it onto his face, and he instantly felt much better.

He let the female servant to drain away the bathtub water as he cleaned up his things. He then stood on a spot and examined his current physical status.

"The attributes are slowly increasing... I should be able to recover to a higher level when my body absorbs the medicine for another day." Garen gripped his fists as he felt the unstoppable blood flow

from within his body. He was rather excited, he could feel himself getting closer to his peak form from his previous life.

He absorbed all three packets of medicine within two days, and his body had recovered by a large margin. These weeds in the eyes of the locals, had become an extremely effective medicinal herbs through his mixing and collocation.

He look at the physical attribute pane just below his eyeline.

'Strength 1.4, Agility 1.3, Vitality 1.4, Intelligence 0.9, Potential 1772%. Possessed the requirement to become a Luminarist.'

"The medicinal effect has yet to be completely absorbed, so I should be able to recover even further within a day or two." Garen estimated in his mind. This ancient medicine had a gentle efficacy, and it had recovered his strength by a noticeable amount within two days. If this pace were to keep up, he would be able to fully recover in less than a month.

"When my strength and vitality has reaches 1.5 and above, I will be able to use the basic combinations of secret techniques and battle skills. This means my strength has recovered by half." He gently exercised his lower body and determined that his current body was able to fight against a Guardian-level at best.

After tidying up his room, Garen walked out and went downstairs. His cousin had dropped by to visit Vanderman today. Vanderman wanted him to apologize to his cousin on his own accord due to his hurtful sentences in his previous argument with Sofea Hathaway.

Garen reached Vanderman's building in the central manor in no time as he left his building. As he arrived at the manor, there was a female soldier. She seemed to be his cousin's companion, in white armor guarding by the door.

The female soldier even looked at him a few times as he entered the building.

Vanderman and Hathaway were sitting on different sofas in the first floor living room. Vanderman seemed to be inquiring something of Hathaway. The smile on her face immediately disappeared when both of them saw Garen coming in.

"Cousin." Garen greeted her on his own accord with a hesitant look. "You've arrived."

"It's been a while, Cia." Hathaway sighed as she looked at Garen with a hopeless expression..

She had been looking after Acacia since he was young, and he was on the best terms with each other compared to the others. Although she was angry over the insensitive words from Acacia, she hadn't place it in her heart. She knew that they were the words said by an angry child. Plus, she was the one who hit him first.

Upon this visitation, she heard from Malin that Acacia had become more sensible, and stopped going to the casino fooling around everywhere anymore. Originally, she had planned to teach him a lesson, to let him know words beget conflict. Now that she had seen Cia's remarkable performance, Hathaway couldn't help but feel soft-hearted.

The moment Garen saw her gaze, he knew that she had forgiven him. "Sister, it's my fault. I lost control of my anger..." He lowered his head to show his sincerity.

"I'm glad you know you've owned up to your mistakes." Hathaway stood up and walked towards Garen, and gently stroke his hair, just like old times. "You've grown. You're no longer the child you were. I heard from Malin that you have finally stopped going to the Casino. I'm glad."

"I promise, I will never live like that ever again!" Garen raised his hand and said with determination. "A few days ago, I've realized that it is meaningless to keep living like that."

"That's a relief." Vanderman, who was sitting to one side, nodding. His ever stern look softened up, "I have never heard of you saying such words. Looks like you're really determined to turn over a new leaf."

"I am serious." Garen replied calmly.

"Don't disappoint your cousin." After Vanderman finished drinking his coffee, he stood up and went upstairs. "You two have a good chat. I won't be participating in you youngsters' conversation. I have things to do and will be heading out later, so you two don't have to wait me for dinner."

"Understood." Garen and Hathaway replied harmoniously.

They both sat down after they looked at the Lord going upstairs.

Hathaway asked about Garen's recent situation in detail, and found out that he had not been fooling around recently. Her face was filled with joy upon this realisation. Both of them talked about the interesting events they had encountered; Hathaway wanted to admire Garen's new creation, in which he declined. Those creations were embarrassing.

After sitting around for about two hours, Hathaway gifted Garen a miniature model of the knight's sword, which could be used as a decoration for his study desk, before leaving the manor with the female soldier. She looked very cheerful as she left.

Garen could finally relax, as he was able to solve the issue regarding his sudden change in personality. He did not need to act and cover up his personality anymore. It was incredible stressful to act as a retarded child.

He just needed to slowly change, and not have any sudden change in personality.

It was almost noon when he came out of Vanderman's building. He went back to his room and started his usual routine, which was the recovery of his battle skills and secret techniques. He felt calm when he was focusing on recovering his strength. His pace in learning the Precision Blueprint was increasing as well. The current him, who had not used any potential points, was already in the upper range of the Beginner-level. He just needed the time to master the basics of the Precision Blueprint, and he would be able to enter the next phase: the Intermediate-level.

"In a few more days, when my body's strength and vitality passes the 1,5 mark, I will be able to safely use my technique levels which combine both secret techniques and battle skills. This would be equal to this world's General-level. The effect of the thousand year old medicine is indeed exceptionally powerful!" Garen said emotionally.

Chapter 245: Attacked 1

There was a dark green figure by the slanted forest just outside the Trenjons Manor. It was a young woman in a tight green shirt and dress. Although she had an average face and was slightly filled in her chest and backside, she was incredible sexy in the tight shirt.

She was carrying five black arrows on her back and holding a black longbow with her hand. She was looking into the Trenjons Manor coldly from afar.

The ray of light during noon landed on the right of her body, reflecting off a faint green light.

She squat down slowly and used a dagger to leave a shallow mark onto the grass beside her feet.

She then stood up, turned around, and disappeared into the trees.

\*\*\*\*\*

Two days later, in the morning hours.

A black horse carriage slowly came out of the Trejons's manor, headed towards the Black Flower Mountain.

The carriage was pulled by two strong black horses. They were going through the sea of trees at incredible speed, with no sign of stopping down anytime soon.

With the carriage's window wound down halfway, a handsome young man with golden hair and pale skin could be seen inside. He looked tired, as he supported himself with one hand on the chin by the window, as if he was taking a nap.

A set of blue eyes were staring at the moving carriage in the forest. As the carriage moved further away, the eyes followed suit.

Diaz was following the carriage closely, jumping around the branches swiftly. Everytime she landed onto a tree, she was perfectly hidden behind the branches and well hidden within the carriage's blindspot. She was as swift and stealthy as a civet, so stealthy even the grass wasn't disturbed.

She had one hand on her thigh the entire time. She was wearing a black long stockings, which had a line of thin black needles placed on them. The black needles connected the short green dress and stockings together, and no wind seemed to be able to coax the skirts upwards.

The carriage and her were moving without rest. Occasionally other carriages would pass by, and they would take a short break during the journey. After an hour or so, the carriages took a turn and went down a small, remote lane.

The carriages that were on the road could not be seen from here. Only the farmer natives, who were there to collect firewood, would occasionally seen on this road.

The carriage stopped as it reached the very end of the road.

The young man opened the car door and jumped out of the carriage, exchanging a few words with the driver. A tall person in black armour came down from the carriage, and the two of them formed a line and slowly went into the forest in front of them.

Diaz was confused, and slowly removed a black needle from her skirt.

"This place should be nearly outside of Vanderman's range of awareness..." She muttered as she slowly followed the duo.

\*\*\*\*\*

Garen was looking carefully looking for the medicinal herbs at the place where he had previously found the Amejade grass. This time, he went deeper into the forest. Ulun, who was fully equipped with his battle gear, was following him from behind. This calm middle aged man who always looked puzzled and suspicious was following him silently from the rear without asking what Garen was doing, owing to his good manners.

Eventually, they arrived at the location where they had their camping trip. Ulun walked in front of Garen on his own accord, pulled out a short sword and went into a state of alertness. Although the dangerous animals should not have recovered yet when he killed them off, it's better to be safe than sorry.

"Don't be so tight up about it. Hadn't we just left not long ago?" Garen laughed.

"It's always better to be more careful." Ulun was unswayed by it.

Garen shrugged his shoulders and let him do what he wanted. He was searching high and low for the things he was looking for with a container in hand, ready to place anything inside as he went on his search.

Two of them went straight into the deep forest without any detour. They could faintly see the mountain ranges that pierced through the clouds, the peak of the green mountains covered with white snow.

The grass on the ground had grown longer over the years. Occasionally, fierce venomous snakes and spiders would jump out of the grass to attack them, but they were all disposed of by Ulun.

Garen didn't recognize most of the plants, as there were only a little of them that looked similar to what was in his previous world. He was searching for those that he was familiar with, such as the amejade grass, pinweed, etc.

They eventually found two in the dense forest. However, they were only less than a hundred years old. It was as if they were extremely lucky to be able to find the thousand year old amejade grass last time.

Unsatisfied, he continued looking for it. He knew that the types of grasses similar to the amejade grass would be grouped in the same area. So when he found a few bunches of amejade grass, he kept on searching near the surrounding area.

"I've found it!" His eyes brightened up as he walked a few steps forward towards the thousand year old amejade grass, which was located just behind a green colored stone. The leaves were filled with tiny white spots, which gave off a sense of uncleanness.



"It's a thousand-year-old one! It's even older than the ones I've previously collected!" Garen was filled with joy. It took him great difficulty to find a thousand year old amejade grass among the bunch. This particular one that he found had the medicinal effect of two packets of herbs. He estimated that it could recover half of his peak strength with this.

At this point, he believed that he could not find any more in this area any longer, as these herbs had high requirements towards the environment in order to live. He could only depend on to encounter more of them, as the soil quality further ahead was not suitable for the amejade grass to grow.

Garen went straight for the herbs, preparing to dig it up before doing anything else.

Flap.

Suddenly a rattling sound came from behind him.

Afterwards, the sound of shirt flapping could be heard, and a greenish human figure jumped over his head and landed gently in front of Garen.

"Reveal your identity!!"

Ulun quickly pulled out a sword and place it in front of Garen with one hand and held a dagger with the other hand.

"Who are you?!" Ulun was staring at the girl in green skirt. The opponent had a green short hair and was holding a longbow in her hand. She was looking at the duo with a rather disturbing gaze.

"A forest ranger? No, there shouldn't be any forest rangers in this area. Who are you?" Ulun asked with a solemn look, as he knew that the move performed by the opponent was something he, a Soldier-level could only hope to do.

The woman laughed and didn't answer his question. She had her eyes on Garen the whole time.

"A rich playboy who doesn't go and enjoy his life, and instead decides to dig up some weeds in this deserted area? Acacia, what are you up to?"

"Who are you!" Garen retreated and hid behind Ulun. "How do you know my name?" He was trying his best to act frightened while paying attention to the woman in front of him.

The opponent was filled with energy spirit, which made him slightly anxious. It was an opponent that was currently stronger than him.

"My name is Diaz. Consider yourself unlucky because I am currently in a very bad mood!" Diaz started smiling coldly as she raised her right hand.

Suddenly, a soft sonic boom rang out.

Pew!!

Ulun forcefully pushed Garen away and shielded him. He grunted and swung both of his swords towards the woman only to be easily evaded by her.

"Run!!" Ulun shouted as he swung his swords at incredible speed at Diaz without any concern for his injury.

Garen stumbled about as he ran away. As he ran for a few steps, he saw a blue figure at the corner of his sight.

"It's the blue scaled snake! Of course!" He felt a chill in his body. The opponent was definitely related to Aquarius.

Shortly after, he heard Ulun shouted from behind him, and was completely silent after that.

"Can you even escape?" A woman's voice came from behind and a soft sonic boom was heard as well.

Garen pretended to sprain his ankle and tumbled on the ground as he avoided the black needle. He tumbled down the slope and landed onto a grass field.

He heard the sound of the footsteps approaching as he saw Diaz's figure in front of him. She pulled out her long sword and pointed it at Garen.

"You're so weak." She looked at him arrogantly.

She looked at him as if he was a joke when she saw the herbs that was in Garen's hand.

Slam!

She stomped onto the basket of herbs with all her might and as a result, the herbs were completely ruined, leaving no useful ingredients behind.

"Is this the garbage you've been looking for all over the place? It's very unfortunate that they're completely useless now~~"

"What the f\*ck!"

Garen's eyes were filled with rage. These herbs were collected with his sweat and time, and now they were completely ruined by her stomp.

As he looked out from the corner of his vision again, and still the blue-scaled snake was there. He was very sure that a Luminarist was controlling the situation in the dark.

"You dare to kill me!!? I am the only successor to the Trejons Household! You may want to consider the consequence before killing me! My whole household will never let you go!!!" Garen acted as if he was omnipotent. However, he was only strong on the appearance in the eyes of the blue-scaled snake and Diaz.

"Never let me go? Hehe, I'm so scared..." Diaz started to laugh loudly, so much so that she started to tearing up. "I didn't know garbage like you even knew how to threaten others."

Whoosh.

At this moment, Garen showcased a little of his battle skills. He got up, ran and jumped to the other side of the steep slope without giving Diaz a chance to react.

"You're dead!" Diaz quickly followed up and chased Garen down at full speed as she jumped to the other side of the steep slope as well.

The human-like eyes on the blue-scaled snake looked slightly disappointed.

"Is that what he is only capable of? This is the little strength that he was hiding?" It hesitated for a moment and eventually turned around and left the area. "I've wasted my effort to arrange a General-level to be here."

Splash!

A sound of a heavy object falling into the water came from the steep slope.

\*\*\*\*\*

The end of the slope was actually a deep green colored pond.

Diaz flew down, tracking Garen's rolling. She ended up at the cliff edge of the slope and looked down at the pond down below.

"There's no one here!? Where did he run off to? Did he fall down?" She was mortified as she looked down at the water ripple in the pond.

"If I die, someone will avenge me. What about you?" Suddenly a gentle male voice came from behind her.

Diaz felt a shiver from her head to toe and out of reflex, she struck back with her sword and shot out three black needles at the same time.

Pew pew pew!!

Chapter 246: Attacked 2

With a swift motion, he caught the three black needles with his bare hand.

Boom!!

She saw that Acacia's golden eyes were fused with a faint red color, as she felt two big hands silently placed onto her chest.

There was no sound of impact, only that her mind was sent to a chaotic state. It was as if her body was hit by a big vibration and lost her balance as a result of losing almost all her strength.

Diaz could do nothing but to watch herself falling into the pond, back towards the ground.

Splash!

Garen stood at the edge of the cliff and threw the three black needles with his left hand. At the same time, he jumped and went after Diaz who was falling into the pond.

"You bastard!!" Diaz wanted to scream but she was interrupted by the three black needles that were fast approaching, followed closely by a black figure from above.

As she looked up, she saw Garen fast approaching with a cold expression. The frail and fragile look that he had earlier had completely disintegrated. The gaze sent a shiver down her spine. This fellow had hidden too much of his strength! No! She had to report this intel immediately!

"Three Leap!!" She stomped with all of her strength and went after Garen, leaving behind a hemispherical wave behind her. She was like an arrow flying up from the pond. She stomped on the water three times, increasing her speed with each stomp and reached the edge of the pond in no time.

She was not an expert in fighting on the water or fighting in close range. In addition, she had been hit by his palm and her body was still numb from it, resulting her being unable to exert any force. She could only muster half of Three Leap's strength and speed, which was one of her proudest skills. This made her feel fear and aggrieved.

"When I recover...!!"

As she was about to utter a vengeful statement, an intense strength came from behind her silently.

"Myriad Water Jasper Technique!!"

Garen attacked Diaz's back with his glowing blue hands, and the ear splitting sound of waves followed suit.

All his might merged as one and released a sound that resembled a tsunami. The horrifying strength had formed countless of small vortices and landed onto Diaz.

Boom!

Fresh blood came out from Diaz's mouth. Blood could be seen everywhere, as if water was leaking from a water bottle. She limped a few steps and turned her head around.

"You...!!"

Garen walked up to her and kicked her. She was sent flying and landed hard on a green stone before falling to the ground. The total count of broken bones that accompanied the sound of snapping and breaking from her body was unclear.

"Any last words?"

"I... I..." Diaz tried to open her mouth with all of her might, but her mouth was completely filled with blood, and anything that came out from her mouth was completely unintelligible.

Garen squat down, picked up one of the black needles that was scattered on the ground, and gently took aim at the center of her head.

"Good bye."

Pew!

Diaz shivered as despair could be seen in her eyes. Her body started to tremble greatly. After a few moments, her trembling subsided and became weaker, eventually coming to a complete stop after a minute.

Garen stood up and brushed off the dirt and dust that was on his body. His casual clothes, which was originally white, had turned green.

"This is embarrassing." He sighed as he started to examine the traces he had left behind.

His footprints, special effects that was caused by the fist technique and the remaining clues that could possibly reveal his strength were completely cleaned up.

"This person that was sent to probe us by Aquarius... Diaz... I've seen this person in the images..." He looked at Diaz's corpse as he vaguely found this person in his memories.

He sorted out the major keys and main events related to Vanderman that occurred in this time frame, which was about the overall events within the next 2 years.

"This person should have appeared two months later. Why is she here?" His started to frown slightly. "If I hadn' ambushed her, I would have been in grave danger if she were to pull some distance between us and attack from afar with her longbow." Afterall, he had yet to reach General-level.

After ensuring that there were no strange noises from the surroundings, he squatted down and took off the longbow and arrows from the corpse. He then started fumbling around the corpse, and found a small brown pouch and some spare change.

He poured out whatever was inside the pouch onto the ground, and what came out were some pink pills and a stack of white long cotton cloth.

"What is this?" Garen picked up the cotton cloth and examine it carefully. He could faintly see a line of word saying: 'It's a relief to have Masona.'

There was another short sentence below: 'With the Masona pad, you can move about freely.'

Garen immediately knew what it was and threw away the pad.

The pink circular pills were very tiny. On the surface were the words printed 'AD'

"This is..." Garen seemed to have thought of something. "This might be useful."

He kept the the pills and picked up a tree branch filled with leaves. He started to wipe of his foot prints as he walked, and swiftly left the pond area.

He went back to where Ulun was. Initially, he hid himself carefully. Upon realizing that there were no blue-scaled snakes, he quickly rushed towards Ulun's side. Surprisingly, his loyal subject was alive. He had a hole in his head and was bleeding profusely.

Garen took out the pink pills and crushed it into a powder. He then rubbed it onto the wound and applied pressure onto it.



After a while the wound stopped bleeding.

Ulun started to wake up from being unconscious.

"Mas...ter, are you still alive?"

"Someone saved me. Let's not talk about this and leave this area first!" Garen acted as if he had yet to calm down.

"Al..alright."

Ulun's injury wasn't dire as he only lost too much blood from the bleeding. The bloodstain that was on his body would have shocked anyone. Although faltered as he walked, it didn't really affect him much at all.

As the two of them went back to the horse carriage, they saw the driver laying down on a pool of his own blood with an arrow stuck in his neck. The two horses ran off with the carriages about ten meters away and were stuck in between two trees.

Garen and Ulun got up the carriage and swiftly went back to the manor.

\*\*\*\*\*

There was an uproar in the whole manor when the news of Acacia being ambushed spread.

Angered, Vanderman sent out all of his forces to the Black Flower Mountain to search for any clues for two days, but to no avail. The corpse of the female assassin was dragged off by the wolves to an unknown place, and what could only be found was the trace of the battle near the pond.

Due to this incident, Acacia was grounded and could not leave the manor.

Vanderman had gone out for some reason unknown to Acacia. However, judging from the look of his face when he went out, he obviously was not out for vacation.

Garen took this opportunity to stay in the manor and study the handbook on a daily basis. He also trained his physical body in the hope that he would recover as soon as possible and raise his Precision Blueprint to the Intermediate-level.

As his physical body kept recovering, his learning pace had started to become faster as well. The requirement needed for the Intermediate-level was a matter of time.

He was able to attack the without any pause. The surprise attack to stun the enemy, and Myriad Water Jasper Technique as the finishing blow.

He obtained Myriad Water Jasper Technique from Celine, and it was very suitable to use it during an ambush. Furthermore, it didn't put a lot of strain onto the user's body. The only downside of this technique was that it wasn't lethal, and would be ineffective against a master. However, it seemed to be rather effective towards the General-levels of this world.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the certain part of the manor, there was a sea of bright red roses.

A girl in a tight short skirt and a green mask was standing in the center of the rose field, cutting off the branches with care. There was a girl in a green shirt reporting the situation to her, softly, with her head bowed.

"We have a few captains that are on the move to kill the bandits. Such is the situation regarding the bandits for these past few days. Furthermore..." The reporter looked at the masked woman in front of her cautiously.

"Furthermore, Diaz who had gone to Vanderman's manor had disappeared and has yet to return."

"Oh?"

The masked woman stopped cutting the branches and sighed softly.

"Have we received any secret signal?"

"None."

"Have the remaining people receive anything as well?"

"None."

The masked woman placed down the scissor as she frowned.

"Diaz is a woman who knows the severity of the situation. She would not have disappear for no reason. Looks like she has gotten into some trouble."

"I'm afraid so." The reported lowered her head.

"Vanderman... Even a General-level couldn't escape from you? You're a mysterious man..." The masked woman's green eyes were filled with murderous intent. "What about Tracy?"

"Isn't she on vacation?" The reporter was stunned.

"Call her back immediately. I cannot withdraw from this incident; I will leave the rest to her. We, the Green Shades, must not lose our value over this incident."

"Yes."

\*\*\*\*\*

A few days later....

Hoooo!

Garen threw a punch in his room and short vortices were formed in the air.

Garen threw the punches with both of his hands, and this time his clothes that were near his shoulder was slightly torn off.

His face was filled with satisfaction as he relaxed his fighting posture.

"My strength and agility are now more than 1.5. I am finally able to use my battle skills combined with the secret techniques. Now, my last step is to fully recover, and use my four ultimate techniques without worry. " Garen picked up the towel and wiped the sweat off his body and sat beside the circular table in the middle of his room.

It was a table that he wanted placed there so that he could conveniently pick up the items on the table.

He looked at the attribute pane as he poured himself a glass of water.

Although the the medicine was no longer in his body, the effect had yet to be completely absorbed. Hence his body would still be recovering for a while before it completely stopped.

His strength had recovered by half compared to the last time.

'Strength 1.6, Agility 1.5, Vitality 1.9, Intelligence 1.1, Potential 1772%. Possess the qualification to be a Luminarist.

Secret technique -- Divine Statue technique, Ten Thousand Mammoth Battle Skills.

287 days left until full recovery (a year).

Precision Blueprint: Intermediate-level. (Total of three level: Beginner-level, Intermediate-level, Master-level)'

As he had reached the Intermediate-level for his Precision Blueprint, his recovery time had naturally decreased. Furthermore, his intelligence level had finally reached 1 point, which was the average intelligence of a human. This was the point that Garen was most excited about.

His current logical thinking was different than before. In the past, he was slow, unresponsive and couldn't connect the major points most of the time. Memorisation was essential to the Precision Blueprint. In addition, it could be handy and he felt much more smoother as well.

This was indeed the advantage of having a high intelligence. He drank another hot cup of water with satisfaction.

#### Chapter 247: Recovery 1

Intelligence is a funny thing. It represents the ability to memorize, imagine, analyze, so on and so forth. If it's too low, it'd be severely impact the ability to learn and comprehend.

Garen rested on his chair, considering his next moves.

"The timeline is changing, that Diaz shouldn't be here yet, why is she sent here early?" He set down his cup, his fingers tapping the table.

"If I recall correctly, there were a few major events before Beckstone arrived. The RAL (Royal Alliance of Luminarists)\* had a fall out with the Obscuro preceding some riots. Within a year the power that RAL holds weakened significantly, until they were overturned by the Obscuro. The key turning point of that was the War of the Luminarists led by Rosette."

Reviewing the information from the memory, Garen started to finalize his plans.

"If that's the case, in this Totem World, there were three major factions, The RAL, Obscuro Society, and Terraflor Society. All three have their own top Luminarists. At first, the RAL and Obscuro had a clash, leading to their loss of power, Beckstone from Terraflor took the opportunity to rise up."

He meticulously picked at specific details in the memory. Soon, he found the strongest Luminarists under all three factions.

The Royal Alliance of Luminarists had three Luminarists leading the three departments, they represented the benefits of the Royal family and the nobles.

Obscuro's were Hellgate and his two disciples.

Terraflor's were Beckstone and his teammates, along with the Silver Knight's leader. They have a lot of people, but they were the weakest out of the three.

These are the strongest Luminarists from the three factions.

Viscount Vanderman was only one of the supporters outside the three departments, and was at the same time an outer member of the Obscuro, he was one of the initial opponents Beckstone faced.

"The leaders of the three departments of RAL, that's too far away. Any one of them would be stronger than Beckstone in his most powerful period. Vanderman couldn't even reach them." Garen analyzed. "If these three people were still alive, Obscuro wouldn't be so daring to attack the manor. In that case, the attack I faced was probably as a warning to Vanderman."

Frowning, he figured out the situation.

"The following event would probably be small-scale collisions between Obscuro and the RAL before it turned into large-scale ones. Right now, Terraflor is still a small fry. With upcoming battles, Obscuro wouldn't be able to pay attention to us, so they will only destroy the manor when Beckstone arrives."

Garen's brows were tightly knit, he stood up.

"But I was just attacked, that means both sides were not planning to do it secretly anymore. Time is running short, maybe the timeline would be shifted forward even more."

He paced in his room.

"I need to keep up..." He had made his mind.

His gaze fell onto the ability pane.

His Precision Blueprint skill was shown as Intermediate-level.

"I'll raise this to Master-level first, then I'll go look for Teacher Emin to learn the Tactics to get a head start with creating my own Totem. But before that, I need to recover my strength completely!"

He showed a sense of determination.

"No more keeping secrets, I guess."

\*\*\*\*\*

After Garen made up his mind, he started hiring the townsfolk in the town to pick amejade grass, pinweed and the other herb. With every individual plant, he bought it off of them with ten rumb\*.

The Rumb is the official unit of currency issued by the Kovitan Empire, its buying power is slightly higher than the American Dollar on Earth. That was not a bad value.

After asking his servants to man the booths for purchasing the herbs, they spread the news, many townsfolk started collecting them for Garen.

His father Viscount Vanderman found out, but he didn't ask. About his son's behavior, he reasoned as one of his passing fads.

Acacia used to like planting roses too, switching it for another isn't that big of a deal.

After the initial confusion, Viscount Vanderman found out that his son switched every single one of the roses to herbs. He guessed his son learned some alchemical formula from somewhere and that he kept wanting to have a mysterious potion for his own use.

With regards to this he scoffed, alchemical potions were debunked about a hundred years ago. It was just a scam, but one of the biggest scam in the century. It wasn't spending much of his money, so he ignored it.

Viscount Vanderman was busier than usual.

He went to the capital of the empire and visited scores of famous Luminarists and aristocrats, getting information about the Obscuro Society. As an academic Luminarist, he always had means to contact people. After all the trouble he went through, he even gotten himself two other Luminarist friends to stay over at his manor for a few days to show the Royal family's attitude toward them.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Good evening Sirs." Garen stood in front of the white-bearded old men, greeting them with the utmost respect.

These two were his father's Royal Luminarist friends from the capital city, Rob and Eric. They both wore white robes with silver lining, and had an aura of wisdom.

Both nodded.

"He's not bad, even though he's not intelligent, he's still a polite kid."

"I can see the respect for intelligence in his eyes." Eric boomed. His voice is loud, echoing throughout the study.



Vanderman sit at the side, his face slightly fark.

"This attack on Cia, I strongly suspect it's by the people over there. Several of the other lords were also attacked, reducing their powers. This is obviously a planned operation."

He eyed Garen.

"Cia, you can go now. Do go out unnecessarily, the situation now is a little unstable."

"Yes, father."

Even though Garen wanted to listen to the conversation, but all three Luminarists were much stronger than his current self. Even if he recovered all his strength, it's impossible to fight them. Eavesdropping is out of the question too.

He used his Turtle Breathing Technique and slowly backed away from the study. The hushed conversation carried on behind him. He left Vanderman's building briskly.

When he passed by the yard in front of the building, he looked up and stared at the candlelit room on the second floor.

"Looks like the RAL is going to fight back soon. They even got two Luminarists to support..."

He strode toward his own building.

Closing the door, he rushed to the second floor into his own study, closing all the curtains and windows.

He retrieved a redwood briefcase and unlocked it.

There were scores of bottles with a cornflower blue potions.

"I managed to concoct so much potion, it wasn't the millennium ones, but they can still work." He took out a bottle and chugged it.

If it was the potion made from the millennium old amejade grass, he wouldn't dare to drink it. It was too strong. But these amejade grass were only less than a century old, their medicinal properties were much milder. If he doesn't drink it, the effects would be even worse. Right now, it's just strong enough that his body could endure.

After one bottle, Garen kept the briefcase away.

His body started to heat up.

During the past few weeks, through collecting the herbs with his servants and brewing the potions himself, he had already consumed a large quantity of the potion, his body was almost back at his peak.

He glanced at the attribute pane, having a sense of expectation.

Just a little more to his peak.

'Strength 2.0, Agility 1.9, Vitality 2.2, Intelligence 1.7. Luminarist Talent detected.'

"This is a physical attribute built purely with the potion, I have developed resistance to the potion, but I'm also almost recovered." Garen was happy at the result feeling his strength.

At his peak, all the attributes were about 2.6.

As of now, his attributes were twice an average person's. When put together, his power would be exponentially more powerful than that. He can already use his strongest Four Secret Techniques.

All in all, he had already recovered 90% of his strength.

"However, this is no longer the original world. My strength here is not enough..." Garen sighed.

After resting for a bit, when the effects of the potion had subsided, his gaze fell upon the ability pane once again.

"Now that my body is almost back to normal, I need to work on my skills... Need to raise the level of Precision Blueprint."

Garen stared at the skill Precision Blueprint for three seconds.

Immediately, the name of the skill vibrated and blurred out and finally turned into Master-level!

The Potential Point decreased by 500% with just a second!

The skill pane has changed.

'Precision Blueprint: Master-level. (Levels: Beginner, Intermediate, Master)'

"It really is an advanced ability... I have advanced to Intermediate-level myself, so I didn't use up the Potential Points, but now to turn it into Master-level, I used up 5 whole points..." Garen thought begrudgingly.

The Potential Points looked like it was a lot when it was 18 points, but because of the Precision Blueprint skill, there are only 12 points left.

"I wonder if there are Antique of Disaster in this world..." He thought.

In this manor, he had already touched all the antiques Vanderman collected, but none of them were Antiques of Disaster. His Potential Points had not changed.

This made him wonder if Antiques of Disaster actually exist in this world.

Following the mastery of the skill Precision Blueprint, Garen felt another breeze as thick as ink flowing to his hands from his brain.

## Chapter 248: Recovery 2

Both his hands were warm, as if they were submerged in lukewarm water.

A never before experienced sense of dexterousness surged from Garen's hands. Raising his hands, he made a few poses.

Following the sound of his hands cutting through the air, his fingers created apparitions where they moved.

Garen squinted.

"What speed! This level of dexterity is only a foundation in being a Luminarist?!" He observed his own hands. With his current proficiency, he could form three complex gestures in a second.

Basically he could finish any gestures in an instant.

"I guess, it's Tactics next." Garen retrieved the handbook and pressed against the tiny wrinkles on the cover. "Teacher Emin said if I want to continue the study, I'll need to go to his place. I can't leave the manor yet, need ideas..."

His Intelligence had already returned to his normal level, so his thinking speed is really fast.

"Right now the manor has three Luminarists, the Obscuro wouldn't provoke us for the moment. But Vanderman would know that already. They're in a sticky situation at the moment, if the RAL could request for reinforcement, so could the Obscuro. If they clashed then, I'd be in even more danger."

He estimated that if he requested to go out, Vanderman wouldn't oppose to it after giving it a little thought. The Luminarists wouldn't pay much attention to a nobody like him anyway, there shouldn't be much problem if he hid himself appropriately.

\*\*\*\*\*

In a town a few thousand kilometers away from the Lush Forest district.

The setting sun sent its rays onto the streets, bringing out a sense of warmth and peace.

Children chased after each other in front of the fruit stall. Among the townsfolk coming home, some mercenaries walked with their weapons. Occasionally there were a few people from the upper class too.

In a yellowish private building made of some sort of wooden material.

The door opened with a creak before letting in a young man with a slightly pale face. His youthful, beardless face was accentuated with his calm, bright eyes. He wore a black set of suit with an equally black bowler hat, a black feather in his breast pocket, and a black walking cane in his hand.

He entered the hall and looked at an enchanting young lady sitting by the bar.

"Berlina, is teacher back?" He said, gazing at the staircase toward the second floor.

"Upstairs. He's waiting for you, go quickly." The lady was combing her long red hair with a small comb and answered him nonchalantly.

"I know."

The man hung his hat on the rack beside the entrance and rushed to the second floor.

Knock knock.

"Beckstone? Come in." An old raspy voice came from inside.

The door opened by itself, leaving space for the passage of one person.

The man in black entered.

It was an average-sized study. Bookshelves took up most of the wall space. Everywhere, the floor, the desk, were books and opened notebooks.

Sketch papers were filled with random notes, complicated formulas, symbols and shapes.

An old man sat in front of the desk by the window. His silver beard was so long, it drags from the desk to the door, spooling in front of it. It measured about twenty meters.

"Your beard has grown out again." Closing the door, the younger man avoided stepping on the silver beard and approached the older man.

"This is a curse, one that I can't ever undo..." The old man put aside his notebook, leaned back against the chair and sighed. "Compared to killing that person, I am willing to pay this price."

"Do you have any orders for me?" The younger man asked politely.

"Beckstone, when you were still a baby, I saved you from the stream. Even then you were able to understand my words. You promised me, don't hate the world, don't antagonize your parents who left you. Were you able to do that?" The old man stared into the young man's eyes, his own sparkling with evaluation.

Beckstone stayed quiet for a while before he answered with hesitation.

"I am working on it...:"

"You couldn't, I know..." The old man sighed, once more. "Life is constantly changing. You've lived in this town for the past nineteen years. Hatred can only create more hatred. At this point, I can no longer restrict you from doing anything. Your talent frightens me, I'm afraid that you will bring damage to mankind if you lost your way. Unfortunately, this is not something you can control."

"Teacher..."

"No words. Maybe you will become the strongest Luminarist in the world, but never forget this. Your hatred, your desire, your choices, everything you do will bring about huge impacts to the world. You may bring light and hope, but you may also bring suffering and pain."

The old man looked at the young man whom he taught for twenty years, his eyes kind.

"Go, it's time for you to leave here."

"Leave?" Beskstone was lost for words, "Where should I go?"

"Wherever you want to go."

Beckstone wanted to protest, but his vision blurred, and the next thing he knew, he was standing outside the building, his hand posed on the door, preparing to enter.

"Teacher... is this what you wanted to say to me?" He murmured, let his hand fall to his side, and left.

Creaking, the door swung open, an enchanting red-haired lady stared at his leaving with a weird look.

"Hey! Don't you wanna keep teacher company?" She hollered.

Beckstone waved with his backhand, and soon he disappeared into the crowd.

A beautiful face emerged from the depth of his mind.

"I will find you, and the person who took you..." Beckstone's grip tightened on itself.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lush Forest district

Manor of Aquarius

Clink! Clank! Crash!

Aquarius swept the vases off the table in her fury. Some of them crashed on the wall, some landed on the floor, but they all broke into pieces.

The room was a galore of her wrath. Crystal statues, life-size models, furnitures, flowers, everything was strewn around in the room.

"Dammit dammit dammit dammit!!"

Aquarius' face was in a state of contortion, her anger bursting out of her facade of divine beauty.

"Barr! Baphje!" She clenched her jaw as she tugged at the tablecloth, throwing it on the floor and stepped on it in frustration.

"Royal Alliance, you're pushing your luck! This is Lush Forest district! Obscuro's territory, MY territory!" Her rage was seething so much, it made her tremble. Her eyes were filled with killing intent as dense as mud.



However, being furious is one thing, sticking to the plan her higher up gave is another. The overall arrangements in different countries have yet to be finalized, and she's just a very small part of it. Even Barr and Baphje, the two district-level people in charge from Royal Alliance of Luminarists, were only considered as a small price to pay in exchange for their operation's success.

"Shouldn't jeopardize the whole situation. Or else I won't have my revenge, the higher ups will also..."

"You won't be seeing the last of me... just you wait!" Aquarius felt as if her chest was drowning in the air, her displeasure nowhere to be displaced. "I will remember this, but next time! I will throw you all in the sow barn, naked!"

Outside the opened door, one of her subordinates shivered as she heard the words.

"Re-reporting for duty!"

"What!" Aquarius yelled back in her fury.

"Two news..." The subordinate replied with hesitation, "A missing General-level in Lush Forest district had been found. Only bones were left behind by the wolves..."

"Oh? Those useless imbeciles! Not bad, Vanderman-" Aquarius' face was wild, as if she's going to break out. "What's the other news?"

"Master... Lonave is here."

"Lonave..." Aquarius was going to respond when she recalled her assassin Diaz's pursuit of that idiot Master Acacia through her blue-scaled snake.

"Interesting... What kind of elites does Vanderman have protecting his son? I wanna know!" She licked her lips and barked her order at her subordinate.

"Tell Lonave, compared to his boorish self, I'd rather have a handsome fellow like Vanderman's son Acacia. Tell him to never bother me again!"

"Yes... Yes..." Her subordinate didn't wait any longer as she backed out immediately.

\*\*\*\*\*

Three days later.

Every few days, there will be a team escorting exchange materials from the territory of the Trejons to the district of Hanna on the other side of the Red River.

The procession marched past a small bridge under the afternoon sun. The river itself is the border between districts, the carriages cast their reflections on the stream, seemingly calm and peaceful.

In one of the white carriages, Garen wore a white hood to hide his face, but he was by himself among all the cargo.

The captain of the team is Banq, a shrewd businessman. His official job is the leader of interdistrict exchange, but in secret, he's also a spy of the Trejons family.

This team looked like they're sending goods to another district, but their real motive is to escort Garen away from his manor. It was getting more and more dangerous, that's one of the main reasons Vanderman agreed to let Garen go.

His destination will be at the other side of the Red River, his aunt's house in Hanna district.

Staring at his own reflection under the bridge, it was like looking into a mirror.

A red maple leaf drifted slowly onto the water surface, creating ripples that spread out and disturbing that reflection.

Garen rubbed his hands lightly as the weather cooled.

At every period of peacefulness, he would think about the life he had on earth.

He kept going forward with his special ability, there was no pauses or stagnation. As he reached his goals, he kept thinking, what are all those for, but he had no answer.

"Maybe as I moved forward, I will return to earth one day." Garen fantasized, breathing out a cloud of white mist.

Only with enough power, he can feel safe. Sometimes he also doubted his motive of learning Martial Arts in the first place. Was it because he had fantasized it for the longest of time, or was it because he wanted to not be afraid anymore?

Afraid of disappearing.

Countless planets in the universe, countless civilizations, he wondered how many were stronger than the Luminarists. Even the powerful Warlocks had completely died out.

"What exactly, is forever...?" Garen lifted his jaw, looking at the orange sky.

A skein of geese flew past them, forming a V-shape.

A platinum-gold silhouette slowly appeared beside Garen, mirroring his action of staring at the sky.

Chapter 249: Dream 1

A sudden uncertainty arose from the depth of his heart.

As if he had lived several decades with no specific goal of his own, and one day, he starts asking questions about the meaning of his life.

This is the first time Garen thought about it. He was used to the passivity of his journey, being led on by the enemies in front of him until he climbed up the peak.

But now that he's in a different world, everyone was much stronger than he is that he can't catch up right there and then, but there's also nothing he could do to speed up the process.

In the gap between all the fighting he had done and he will do, he started questioning his own existence.

This uncertainty had only lasted a short moment before he shirked it off.

Garen shook his head, laughing at his sudden yearning.

"I haven't even resolved my current danger, who am I to think about existential questions?"

Laughing at himself, he continued his study of the handbook. Combined with the memories he'd watched previously, he started collating the details and information of Luminarists.

The whole planet is dominated by the East Continent and the West Continent, the rest are mostly just oceans and glaciers. All the countries of the two continents were controlled by Luminarists, and as of now, the Obscuro Society and the Royal Alliance of Luminarists are having a feud.

Riding on that opportunity, Terraflor Society which lacks a huge power will rise and turn into a syndicate as powerful as the Obscuro Society.

This was the overall situation. Aside from the three parties trying to get the biggest piece of pie, the rest were just normal Luminarists.

The support of the world comes from this large group of Luminarists, the only thing separating them were their ideals. This is not just a normal battle, but a war of ideals.

Garen compiled all the memory he had watched and started to collect events that may be happening in the near future, arranging them into a timeline for future reference.

The cargo stopped every once in a while to unload and refill their wares before continuing their journey.

Following the Red River, they passed by several villages. Garen kept searching for an opportunity to leave.

Teacher Emin stays in at the Red River Valley, but that wasn't where the team was heading to. The elites who are protecting him, Ulun and the two other quieter knights would not let him leave by himself. He needs to find an opportunity to sneak away.

A dozen days later, there was a raid from some mounted robbers, forcing the elites to make a move. In the chaos, Garen left the team with a note, and went on his way solo, following the map his teacher left him.

\*\*\*\*\*

At the other end of the Red River, in the small town of Vinker.

The town was built on the side of a hill-laden plain, an ocean of red flowers bloomed across the plain, surrounding the town, steeping it in its fragrance.

In the afternoon, a dust-covered Garen stood on top of a hill, staring at the town from afar. The town is shaped like two side-by-side crosses. It's small and could only fit several hundred people.

It was much smaller than the other towns along the river.

The houses were built with old wood boards, most had some clay bricks mixed into their infrastructure.

A stone wall marked the border of the town. Notches were left decorating the wall, clearly left behind through something charging at it.

Garen was looking at the town silently before he suddenly stomped his right leg.

Thud!

A red centipede crawled out of the dirt before rolling over and curled up, dead.

"It actually is quite dangerous, it seems..." Garen muttered. On his way here, he took the carriage path along the Red River, which fortunately didn't have bandits. However, creatures like this swarmed the road, and that's excluding the wolves and wild dogs. Those come in packs.

Especially the wild dogs, every time they appear, they'll bring hundreds of them along. Garen only scared them off using his intimidating aura. If it were any other people, it'll take a while even if they're not scared of them.

With such a terrible state, if normal people have not gone through special training, it's impossible for them to go for a trip. Before long, they'd be bitten by a plethora of bugs or injured by hordes of animals, and were forced to find some place to stay. Otherwise, once their food stock was exhausted, they'll have nowhere to go in the wilderness.

"Finally found this place after two days!" Garen took out his map and checked, confirming the accuracy of the location.

He kept the map and took out a whistle, preparing to blow it as a signal.

An unfamiliar shuffle came from the left.

By reflex, Garen lowered his body and took a few steps back, hiding behind the downhill slope.

On the only road leading into the town, two black horses raced toward him with two men with black capes on them. The two men had hulking statures and wore exquisite clothes, silver axes hung behind their backs.

Even from that distance, Garen could feel the strong but hidden aura they were emitting. From his Aura Detection, the two lit up like a torch in a moonless night.

"Guardian-level..." Garen squinted, noticing the symbols on their capes. It was red long-necked flying dragon, the symbol of the Royal Kovitan family.

"Them again..." Garen's brows furrowed, "The RAL had been everywhere on my way here. Pretty much every nooks and crannies had been covered by them. What are they planning?"

It's not the first time he saw these people. He had occasionally seen them in several places, in forts, towns, and even villages.

They seemed to be investigating something.

It's only a while that Garen had to hide behind the slope. They had left the town not long after, disappearing on their horses.

One of them seemed to have seen Garen, but he didn't think too much about it, he only urged his partner on to leave.

Garen stood up and witnessed as the two black horses disappeared into the horizon. He took his silver whistle and blew into it with force.

There was no sound except for the air rushing out of the whistle's other end. It feel just like a broken whistle.

Garen didn't stop, he just kept blowing the whistle.

Soon, another 'knight' came out of the town. It was a pretty girl in white clothing on a beardless white goat.

Meh-eh-eh!

The white goat ran toward Garen.

The girl in white yelled in excitement.

"Yah! Yah!"

Garen let down his whistle, and waited for the girl to arrive in front of him and got off the goat.

"Is that your whistle?" She asked without thought, pointing at the whistle by his side.

"Yes."

"Grandpa Emin asked me to bring you there. Come on." She hollered.

"Okay."

Garen answered without hesitation, the little girl in front of him didn't look weird. Her physical properties were estimated to be average. Garen glanced at her hands. They were rough with calluses.

"Not a Luminarist disciple as well. Should be a normal person."

He followed the little girl into town. Most of the population was made up of women and children, save for a few men who looked like they'd just woken up. Chimney smoke were coming out of a few houses.

Dogs were barking, and roosters were crowing.

The little girl led Garen to a wooden house at the edge of the town.

"Here it is. Are you Grandpa Emin's student? You're so young!"



"I am," Garen nodded. "My name is Garen, what's yours?"

"My name is Nicol, I'm a neighbor. Sometimes I come here to sweep the floor and learn some words." The girl answered. "Quick, go in, Grandpa Emin is waiting."

"Okay," Garen took out a small copper rumb, "This is your reward." He handed over the rumb copper to Nicol.

"You're so generous!" Nicol's eyes were shining and almost grabbed the copper out of Garen's hand. She sniffed the copper. "It really is money!"

"Have fun, I'll be on my way." Garen smiled and left the little girl to her own. He pushed open the fence and walked into the area of the house.

After a few paces, the door to the house slowly opened from the inside. An old man with snowy white hair stood in front of the entrance. He wore a white robe, his face lined with wrinkles that cross each other. The only familiar thing to him was the analytical look he gives.

"Teacher... Emin?" Garen asked hesitantly after laying his eyes on the gray-haired man. "How do you, how are you...?" From the aura that he give out, Garen was sure he was Emin, the Luminarist who had the appearance of a middle-aged man.

Emin smiled calmly.

"Come in, I'll tell you in a bit." He turned around and walked into the dimly lit corridor.

Garen strode into the house and closed the door.

Humidity filled the air of the dimly lit house, there was also a scent of burnt leather.

A beam of light shone onto the floor from the dormer, providing the only source of light in the entire building.

Emin sat at a sofa just outside the range of the lightbeam. He had a cup filled with warm water, which he sips occasionally. Observing Garen's entrance, he pointed at the sofa in front of him.

Garen went over and sat, proper and poised. His gaze fell upon Emin's hair and his beard.

"Get the water yourself if you need it." Emin gestured toward a dusty jug of water.

"Yes sir," Garen nodded, "Teacher, I'm here for..."

"If there's anything, just say it. Is it about the Blackguards? If it is and you want me to interfere, I will no longer owe you anything. Think about it." Emin said calmly.

"Blackguards?" Garen did a double take, "What Blackguard?"

"Huh?" Emin did a double take as well, "Aren't you here because of the Blackguards?"

"Of course not." Garen was completely confused until he remembered the two people in black capes.

"If you're not here for the Blackguards, what do you want from me at this point of time?" Emin frowned.

"I'm here to get my next part of the lesson." Garen stated flatly.

Chapter 250: Dream 2

"Next lesson?" Emin set down his cup and stared at Garen with burning eyes. "Kid, only such a short time had passed, and you want to learn Tactics already? It's not that I look down on you, but if Luminarists can be made so easily, there'd be tons of Luminarists in the world right now!"

He stood up with his hands behind his back.

"Don't be too ambitious, stick to your foundation first, that's the most important part. Consider this an advice from your elders."

He sighed.

"I was like you once upon a time. I have yet to master my foundations before I wanted to learn Tactics and create my own totem. My teacher gave me a rude awakening by making two gestures in a second. I was stunned silent." He looked up to the dormer, reminiscing his own past.

He only let Garen become his disciple then because he saw his younger self in Garen. Adding that to him saving his life, it made sense to do so.

Looking at Emin who was clearly in his own world, Garen doesn't know how to interrupt him.

"Teacher, actually I..."

"You shouldn't be too disheartened. You don't need to be at Master-level to start learning Precision Blueprint, that was only because I wanted to give you a high threshold. You actually only need to be at Intermediate-level." Emin interjected. "Usually with enough talent, reaching Intermediate-level in half a year is not that rare, as long as you're hardworking."

He raised his head and went into reminisce again.

"I used half a year to reach Intermediate-level, and even my teacher said I'm one of the geniuses that only come about once in a hundred years." His face was proud now. "So that's what I am holding you up to. Get to Intermediate-level in half a year, and I can teach you the basic Tactics."

"I..." Garen was close to speechless at this point.

"No talking back!" Emin said seriously, "You only need to answer me, can you or can't you! I don't need other excuses! None! I only look at the result! You'll know how strict I can be soon enough!"

Completely dumbfounded, Garen looked at Emin, unsure of how to convince him.

"I..."

"Can you! Or! Can't you!" Emin cut him off again.

"..." Garen went completely silent. From the beginning, he hadn't had the chance to form a complete sentence. "I can..." He answered dejectedly.

"Good! This is how my students should behave like." Emin patted Garen on his shoulder. "Intermediate-level is not that easy, you'll need to have an unbreakable will to succeed, an unrivalled tenacity, and a persistence beyond compare. Every day, tens of thousands of people faltered on this path. With your talent, you should be able to reach this stage in half a year, don't give up just because you don't see a progress."

"Teacher... I have progressed..."

"Don't be so full of yourself, when you reached the final stage, you'll meet one of the biggest hurdle in the Intermediate-level, the breakthrough of finger speed! But I have heard people with greater talent, they don't even have a hurdle when transitioning into Intermediate-level, even going into Master-level is only a matter of time. Geniuses like that, it's so inspiring..."

"..."

"The breakthrough of your speed will be your biggest hurdle in becoming a Master-level user. I'd spent countless days just working hard in my craft and exchanging experience with other Luminarists to achieve Master-level and learn Precision Blueprint. The difficulty in achieving this is harder than you can imagine... Even a genius like me need to work so hard..." He shook his head again, spacing out, yet again, into his memories.

Garen's head begin to ache. Teacher was just recovering when he was at his house, so he didn't show this level of bullheadedness, unlike now. Seeing Emin lost in his memories again, Garen clarified softly.

"Teacher... Actually, I'm already at Master-level..."

Emin snapped back into reality.

"This is your shortcoming, you keep boasting about your abilities, when will you actually be more grounded? You won't win other people's respects with just boasting, it's with real skill, your results..."

Fwop! Fwop fwop!

In one second, Garen made three gestures with exceptional accuracy and stableness.

Silence.

"..."

"..."

It felt as if the temperature had just dropped a whole notch. The two stared at each other, each not knowing what to say to the other...

Emin's raised arm hung in the air, his jaw dropped, his unfinished sentence gone.

Garen gulped, he looked at his teacher's eyes as it shifted from emotion to emotion, each one so complex that the most complicated mathematical equation cannot compete with.

Slap!

Emin's slapped his own head.

"Oh... This can't be, must have slept too late last night, I'm definitely not awake, go back to bed, Emin."  
Emin turned around, his palm still holding his head. "It's too early for a hallucination like this, weird..."

He paced upstairs, completely ignoring Garen.

Garen watched as Emin turned around and left, treating him like an illusion.

"Teacher!"

He yelled.

Emin froze in his tracks.

The situation turned sour with awkwardness.

It took a while before Emin turned around stiffly.

His face was as red as an apple.

"You... you're really at... Master-level?" His voice trembled as he spoke, reluctant to believe.

Garen nodded slowly.

Emin took a deep breath.

"It's so unfair!" He lowered his head, recalling the hardships he faced before he became a Master-level user.

He looked up at the extraordinarily young face, finally accepting the Garen he saw is real.

"I... need to go upstairs... I'll be down in a while." He waved his arm in dismissal, looking much, much older than when he started.

Garen watched as Emin moved upstairs dejectedly.

He didn't think it would be such a huge impact to his teacher. People who could go into Master-level in a short time were not rare, but actually relatively common. That was why he decided to show it in the first place, so that he could start learning Tactics as soon as possible.

However, he didn't know this was such a huge impact to his teacher who thought he's a genius.

Sitting on the couch, Garen wasn't sure what to do. So he waited.

After a long while, the sky outside started to dim. As the sun sets, its rays started to become golden-red.

Footsteps appeared at the staircase as Emin slowly took his steps.

His face was calm again, and he sat opposite of Garen, taking his time.

"I got it now... Some people were able to have extraordinary talent in a specific domain, however, this only indicate their slightly higher affinity to their crafts. Those who can reach the highest, not only do they need the talent, but also the persistence and their unyielding will." He said seriously. "Thank you, Cia."

"Call me Garen, Teacher. I ran away..." Garen answered.

"Fine, Garen it is." Emin nodded. "Your talent, at least your affinity in Precision Blueprint, is my first experience as a Luminarist. Can you show me... the gestures you did before?"

Garen nodded.

He raised his arms and made one gesture after another without much difficulty.

Only a few second had passed when he was finished, averaging three in a second.

Emin watched silently without much expression, but marvel was written all over his eyes.

"Such talent... Garen, your talent in Precision Blueprint is too terrifying... From the beginning of your lesson, you've only needed about two months..."

Garen nodded again.

"Then, can I learn some Tactics under you, Teacher?"

"Of course." Emin nodded with intent. "You must be tired on your way here. Rest up for tonight, we will start our lesson tomorrow, the essence of us Luminarists, the Tactics!"

"Yes, Teacher." Garen nodded.

"Your room is the master bedroom on this floor. You can clean up at the bathroom over there, and meals will be at the dining kitchen. Got it?"

"Got it, Teacher. I'm not as spoiled as I look." Garen said smiling.

"Good. I'll rest upstairs." Emin nodded and turned toward the staircase.

He stood hidden at the corner of the staircase and listened as Garen entered his room before continued walking up the flight of stairs.



Entering his study, he locked the door and approached a redwood shelf, pulling out a white notebook on the right edge.

He sat down in front of his desk and lit the oil lamp with a match.

He inked his quill and gently wrote on the opened notebook.

'This may be fate finally giving me my favor. In my nineties, I didn't expect a disciple with such immensely terrifying talent. It may be my luck, or yours, Resha. I will pass down the knowledge, every bit of it. Maybe I will finally be able to compile my clan before I pass on...'

Emin paused to think, and continued writing.

'Do you still remember when we were young? When we practiced the gestures together under the grapevines, you said you had a dream. Now, among the five of us, only I'm left. Life is such a beautiful thing, but time will always steal that away.' Emin's eyes flashed a sense of sentimentality at this point.

'Resha... What will you do if you're still here?'

He ended the two paragraphs with a final stroke at the top.

'To: The one who gave me happiness'

He closed his notebook and glanced at the darkening pastures, staring into the distance without movements.