

Thief 181

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Chapter 181: Profited From Disaster (1)

The young man didn't turn around and mildly said, "We're in this trash place for over three weeks now and you lot still didn't find any clues on a petty thief? I'm beginning to wonder if I need you anymore."

Those five cloaked figures trembled slightly when they hear this and suddenly an icy aura descend on them.

They knew this young man was furious now even if he seemed calm, and it was not a good thing for anyone present in this place.

"Where is that guardian who supposed to protect the treasury?" The boy spoke again while retracing his aura.

Those five have a massive sigh of relief when the aura on them was lifted and one of them quickly answer with no delay.

"Those slaves bring him back five days ago, and he is now in the dungeon. After we interrogate him, it seemed he knew nothing about it. But there are other parties involved in that early thief hunt and one of them is the famous Green Flame of Pill Flame organization while her protector was a very powerful woman, her cultivation realm was unknown. According to his words, it was unfathomed!"

A hint of astonishment flash past the young man's eyes, and he said, "Where is Green Flame at this moment? I want to hear her side of the story."

"Young Master, she's in Flame City."

"Which one?" The young man finally turned around with a gentle smile on his handsome face.

"Damien Kingdom!"

Inside Flame Palace,

The guest area was reserved for only VIP personal at least with high-level land's royal family status.

At this moment in a courtyard in the guest area.

Ace was sitting on a mat while healing his previous wounds from Lan's element Qi. Even though Lan only used one percent of his actual prowess it still jumbled Ace's inners quite a lot.

"I still required six or seven hours to heal completely." Ace mumbles to himself.

He didn't know what he was in for in the morning and what kind of test those two old men would conduct on him. But he was sure that it won't be any worse than Lan's element Qi.

Yet, he was completely ready for anything.

'I can't leave this place since Alvin is still monitoring me with martial sense, and he probably won't let me leave until he confirmed my identity as a real Element Physique.' Ace sigh helplessly. He still wasn't free and won't be anytime soon.

But he was patient and waiting for the right time to do his job.

Now that, he was in the flame city, which happen to be one of his targets of the system's mission. He won't let this chance slip past him easily. As long as Alvin became relaxed and stop observing, it would be time!

The night was spent in healing and when the first light shone, a knock sounded on Ace courtyard's door.

'You can't waste even a second, can you?' Ace thought in distress because he knew who was outside.

Ace slide opened the door and standing outside was none other than Alvin in green robes.

Alvin monitor Finn the entire night, and he come here to fetch Finn the moment the promised time approached.

"Let's go," Alvin said in a commanding tone and turn around while walking towards the main palace square.

"Yes." Finn nodded and close the door before following Alvin's footsteps.

There were servants, but Alvin didn't let them close to Finn since he didn't want anyone to come in contact with him before the element bath.

After walking for twenty minutes, they reached a grand hall, where a masked flame guard was waiting for them.

She was the same flame guard who escort them inside the palace yesterday.

Lan also didn't want any impediments, and he sent one of his flame guards to fetch Alvin and Finn.

This time, Ace notice they're going through different pathways and stairways. It was like he's walking in a maze.

He didn't know just how large this entire flame palace was, but he estimated this was as large as a three-star city of low-level lands.

They finally reached a large doorway, and a wide silver door with beautiful patterns was at the end.

'This...!' Ace's eyes narrowed when he entered this doorway because his soul sense was tingling in alarm, and it was far stronger than any warning he received after entering this palace.

When they reached the silver door, the flame guard stopped and said, "Elder is waiting behind this door. I'll be taking my leave now." The flame guard bow toward Alvin, and she left without stopping.

Alvin didn't stop her and merely looked at the silver door.

'Creek...'

The silver door was finally started to open and when it was completely opened, Alvin and Finn spotted Lan standing there with a warm smile on his wrinkled face.

Ace also notice the grand hall behind Lan and was astounded because it was a thousand square meters wide!

"Come." Lan beckoned them with a smile.

Alvin greeted Lan first before entering the grand hall and Finn did the same.

The grand hall was completely white as if it was made of white jade and there were many large murals on its walls. There was no door beside the silver one behind them.

The most eyes catching thing was a thirty-meter-tall, humanoid statue in the very center of the white hall. This statue was extremely vivid as if it wasn't a statue at all and was like a tranquil giant standing there.

But there was a peculiar aura around this statue that gives one a feeling of peacefulness.

This statue was of a handsome man with long silver hair and fierce eyes. In his one hand was a large golden cauldron while in his other hand was a Rune Crafter's Brush.

Ace's eyes shimmer when he saw that statue, especially that cauldron and brush because those two were real high-ranked treasures not the part of the statue!

"Heh, that's the founder of Pill Flame Organization, Nixon Otto!" Lan's casually revealed the extraordinary identity of the imposing statue.

"Oh, I didn't know." Finn showed an expression of reverence.

"Don't worry about it, Founder statue is in every branch of Pill Flame Organization. Trust me, you're probably the first middle-land person who saw the founder statue!" Lan stated while he walks toward the opposite side of the silver door.

"Thank you for giving me this honor, Elder." Ace act like he was extremely thankful for this.

"Young Friend Finn, if you can pass this last test, then you'll see far more than this statue." Lan chuckles lightly.

"Yes, I'll do my best," Finn stated.

Lan greatly approved of Finn's determined attitude because he knew Finn going to need it very soon.

Alvin said nothing, but he also likes Finn's spirit, and he was the one who hope for Finn to pass this test the most. Because without solid evidence he can't contact his father nor awake his grandfather.

He would rather kill Finn than give him to Flame Master William because besides being infamous for his greed, William's clan was also an enemy with Elias Clan!

That's why he was so hellbent on this sort of test and even involved Lan in it.

As for why he didn't take Finn directly to the high-level lands, it was because he can't return right now for a grave reason!

At this moment, when Ace was observing the paintings on the walls while following Lan, the system's voice rang in his mind abruptly!

"[Target in range!]"

[Did the host want to scan the target?]

[Cost: 500 Thief Points]

Ace's steps abruptly halted when he saw the black panel in front of his incredulity eyes!

"What's the matter?" Alvin finds Finn's blank expression and sudden stopping remarkably unusual.

"N-nothing." Finn's serious expression instantly returned and leaped again.

Alvin didn't press the matter anymore and also move.

'So, this is where the treasury of the city is located, and they lead me here by themselves.' Ace thought with rapture, 'It must be within 250 meters of my heavenly sense. But where!'

"System, begin the scanning!" Ace immediately commanded, he won't miss this heaven-sent opportunity!

"[Scanning Start]"

[Time: 04:59]

[Thief Point(s): 30,500]

Ace frowned when he saw the timer of five minutes because it wasn't enough, but he had no choice since he can't stop here for no reason and this hall was a thousand-meter-wide which means he'll be out of range soon.

Just as he dreaded, the moment Ace was on the opposite side of the Pill Flame's founder statue, the system's emotionless voice rang in his mind.

"[Target is out of range!]"

[Please go back, and the scanning will resume systematically!]

[Time: 03:21[Stopped]]

Ace instantly looked at the statue and his eyes shimmer with understanding, 'So that statue is the entering point to the treasury vault!'

Ace's lips curl upward, and he wasn't worried about the scanning anymore since he now knows just where to look and even found the entrance point to the treasury!

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Chapter 182: Profited From Disaster (2)

Ace didn't look at the statue anymore and kept up with Alvin's pace.

He saw Lan was moving toward a 3 square meters mural of a Black Pill Furnace. This Pill Furnace was antique with a silver flood-dragon carved on it.

When they reached the mural, Lan nonchalantly wave his sleeve and the mural tremble slightly before sliding upward, and a hidden pathway appeared in front of them.

This did not surprise Ace, since he had a hunch that this entire grand hall was a forbidden area because of the treasury location and powerful Qi fluctuations all over the place. Especially these murals in the grand hall.

"Let's go." Lan chuckles seeing Finn's flabbergasted face and enters the hidden pathway.

The hidden pathway was only ten meters long and at the end of it was a spacious white chamber, illuminated with glowing stones.

The room was filled with the fragrance of herbs.

In the center of this room was a 4-meter large crimson cauldron with golden patterns around it. The rest of the room was filled with shelves and there were colorful Pill bottles on them.

"Welcome to my forging room," Lan said with a prideful tone.

Ace inhale sharply when he saw thousands of pill bottles because they were probably purple rank and if he could convert them into EXP, his cultivation would probably soar!

But alas, he can't even take one pill bottle from here, much less all of them.

Alvin also showed a hint of astonishment because he never thought this craft elder would be rich to this extent, 'This probably is the privilege of watching over all these resources!'

Lan's smile become wider when he was Alvin's surprised expression and move toward the enormous cauldron which was tightly sealed at this moment.

Lan stood in front of the cauldron and deeply looked at Alvin.

Alvin impassively nodded.

'Sigh...' Lan sigh and looked at Finn, there was a hint of pity in his eyes when he said, "Young Friend Finn, this is the Golden Mark Cauldron a seven-start runic cauldron which means it used to make at least Purple Rank alchemy elixirs. As for why I'm telling you this, it's because there is a powerful medicinal liquid in it at this moment. It's not all, this medicinal liquid is at the very panicle of purple rank!"

"I-is it for...me?" It startled Finn.

"Yes!" Lan nodded solemnly, "It'll make your foundation unshakable if you overcome the pain and once you are done absorbing this medicinal liquid, you'll be an official member of pill flame organization!"

'He's lying!' Ace frowned.

Lan didn't tell Finn about the actual danger of element bath and only said this encouraging advice, so he could take this element bath willingly.

Alvin also know what Lan was doing and said nothing.

"I'm ready, elder, please tell me what I have to do!" Finn showed a determined expression.

'It's probably just medicine, right?' Ace was dubious about this, but the part about being the medicine liquid was true, so he followed Lan's instruction.

Lan gravely stated, "When I opened the Golden Mark Cauldron's seal, jump inside, and I'll seal it again, so the medicinal liquid won't lose its efficiency. But don't worry we'll take you out after a minute whether you absorb it!"

"Yes!" Finn nodded.

"When I give the signal, jump inside!" Lan said with a stiff face before he faces the Golden Mark Cauldron.

Lan didn't delay and formed strange hand signs as his fiery Qi manifested around him.

"Thousand Sealing Art: Unseal!"

The moment Lan said those words thereafter, the Golden Mark Cauldron hummed and the golden patterns on it shimmer brightly.

'An alchemy art!' Ace inhale sharply since it was his first time witnessing an art!

The cauldron's lid bang opened and a fresh scent of nature instantly filled the large forging room.

"NOW!" Lan gave the signal.

'Here goes nothing!' Ace gravely though and with no delay jump inside the cauldron!

"Thousand Sealing Art: Five Hundred Seals!" Lan's Fire Qi dance around him and the cauldron lid simmer in the fire Qi before shooting back on the cauldron and sealing it again.

The moment the cauldron was sealed, a strange symbol appeared on its lid in Lan's fire Qi. This was an alchemist seal that every alchemist used in alchemy and Lan was using a very high-level alchemy art that only a purple alchemist could cast.

"How much time do we wait?" Alvin impassively asked while deeply looking at the sealed cauldron.

"Half an hour, and don't use your martial sense. I don't need to educate you about not using any perception abilities during cauldron sealing." Lan said with a gloomy expression, "Ship or sink, it is on that lad now. But I still think we're doing it wrong!"

"It is for the greater good. Besides, we both know there isn't any formula that can create pure element Qi as strong as this one." Alvin shrugged his shoulder.

'Sigh...' Lan sighed again and again, 'In the fight between ten clans everyone is disposable, even a legendary element physique!'

Inside the Golden Mark Cauldron,

The cauldron was half full of crystal-green liquid that was boiling with dense wood element Qi.

Even a Qi river cultivator would feel extreme pain and the feeling of melting in this element bath. As for peak Qi foundation building cultivators, they'll melt to the last bone with no resistance!

However, at this moment, out of anyone's expectation Ace was nonchalantly resting inside the liquid, like he was in a hot spring!

'I didn't think it would be this comfortable!' Ace thought with a blessed expression on his face.

Ace first thought he would have to use his Qi to resist the heat but the moment he submerges in the element bath he felt nothing but comfort.

'They didn't use their martial senses. It has to be something to do with that alchemy art.' Ace mused, 'If I drink it, I'll get EXP?'

The system's next notification answered Ace.

[System detect high-level, Middle-Grade Elixir (Purple) surrounding host's body!]

[Quantity: 6 Barrels]

[Conversion Rate: 15Million EXP]

[Did the host want to proceed with the conversion?]

Ace's eyes contracted when he saw a large amount of EXP and a wintry smile creep out on his face, 'Heh, who would've thought I would get this much EXP delivered to me with no strings attached.'

Ace was smiling ear to ear, 'With this much EXP and those Pills I stole from that Rune Crafter woman, I probably enter the peak stage of Heavenly Foundation!'

"Start the conversion!" With no hesitation, Ace commanded. Since those two old men wanted to see how much he can absorb this elixir, Ace didn't mind giving them a tremendous surprise!

[The conversion is beginning....]

[Time: 00:14]

Ace felt a huge amount of suction force from his pores, and a large amount of Qi entered his dark meridians like a tidal wave.

The Qi destination was none other than the dark void and after being processed in the dark void the darkness Qi immersed in Ace's meridians and after completely nine cycles his heavenly slates absorbed the HD-Qi!

[Conversion Complete!]

[15Million EXP has been added to Host status]

[EXP: 44.95 Million/50 Million]

Ace opened his eyes and a dark current flash past them. He was astonished because when his eyes landed on the elixir which was supposed to be crystal green was now just water!

'It nothing but a bath now.' Ace smile faintly and thought, 'Should I breakthrough here? No, I don't know when he'll open this cauldron, so I should wait until I'm alone.'

Ace decided to not take any risk and wait for the right time since now he had the EXP he can breakthrough anytime he wanted!

Half an hour pass and Ace heard Lan's solemn voice,

"Thousand Sealing Art: Unseal!"

The lip finally opened and Ace jump outside with no obstruction.

When Lan and Alvin saw Finn jumping out completely fine, they were flabbergasted and quickly use their martial senses to probe Finn's physique and the element bath.

"H... H-how is this possible!?" Lan exclaimed out loud in bewilderment.

"Th... this!" Alvin also had a dumbfounded look on his face as if he has just seen a ghost.

Lan and Alvin, both looked at Finn in unison as if they were looking at a monster.

Lan inhale deeply to calm himself and asked Finn with a questioning tone, "What happened inside? I mean, did you feel anything because your cultivation is the same even after you absorb the entire elixir. How is this possible!"

"I-I don't... know." Finn pulls an innocent yet perplexed face and said, "I was blackout the moment I enter the cauldron and when I was awake, I only saw water."

"This is absurd!"

Lan's face was as dark as charcoal because he took out many precious herbs from his stash, yet not even the elixir was completely gone, he didn't even get to know the reason for it!

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Chapter 183: Alvin's Decisiveness!

On the side, Alvin also had a deep frown on his face because this was absurd, yet they had no way of knowing what happened inside the cauldron.

Finn also seemed to tell the truth, and he didn't have any reason to lie to them. Besides, in both Alvin and Lan's minds, Finn didn't have the guts to lie to them!

"Forget it." Lan sighed with regret and asked, "Tell me how do you feel after awakening from your...umm.... Sleep?"

"I feel fine." Finn wore a serious expression as he answered.

Ace saw Lan's face fell and know if he doesn't give this old man something he might do something.

"However, ... I suddenly can sense umm... how to put it." Finn ponders a bit while fondling his chin before his eyes brighten and said, "I could feel strange Qi in the air and the same kind of Qi surrounding Senior Flame General."

Ace spout some nonsense since they both can't tell he's telling the truth or lie because of the hundred-face deception mask and they neither didn't have powerful soul sense.

Alvin's eyes brighten when he heard and this and quickly ask, "Do you feel anything else?"

"Yes, but it is very vague as if this Qi wanted to... show me something. I don't know if this is just my imagination." Finn had an ambiguous expression.

"Interesting." Lan's expression suddenly lit up after hearing this and presumed, "It seemed like element reasoning."

"Yes, but it is still unknown." Alvin consider and said, "We know nothing of element physique, and it seemed many mysteries are surrounding it."

Lan nodded in agreement, "Now that we know, Little Finn can absorb this much element Qi like it's nothing. Furthermore, it seemed element bath helped him awaken some of the element physique's characteristics."

"Don't worry, now that we have this kind of evidence they have to believe us," Alvin said with a faint smile.

"I'll leave it to you then." Lan nodded.

All he wanted was his promised rewards and protection of Alvin's clan. As for what happened with Finn now it was completely up to Alvin's arrangement.

They were both treating Finn like wind and Ace didn't mind because the more they underestimate him the more information they reviled.

"Little Finn, congratulation on passing this test!" Lan finally looked at Finn with an elderly smile.

Now that, they were about 90% sure about Finn's authority as a genuine element physique. It means Finn would probably soar when the headquarters knows about it.

At that time, it would be almost impossible to come in contact with him, so it was a good time to leave a good impression on him.

"Here, it's a congratulation gift from this old man." Lan smiled warmly and flip his hand. A black wristband with silver runes appeared in his hand and he pass it to Finn.

"Thank you, elder." Finn quickly received the wristband while thanking Lan.

"You don't need to thank me, you've earned it." Lan nodded with a smile, "It's a sixth-star runic treasure called Silver Shield, and it can even block three full attacks of flowing river cultivator!"

Ace's eyes brighten when he heard this, he definitely needed this kind of treasure and quickly store it in his thief's space and imprinted his heavenly mark on it when he was alone.

"Here, this is my gift for you." Alvin know what Lan was doing and didn't stay behind. He took a blue cover scroll from his space ring and give it to Finn.

"Thank you, senior Flame General." Finn received it.

"This is a wood element fist skill of Master level, try to comprehend it and if you failed to don't worry about it, you can use it in Qi river realm and call me Elder Brother Alvin from now on." Alvin chuckles.

Lan rolled his eyes after hearing Alvin's last shameless words.

Ace also had the same thought as Lan's and this skill was not useful for him, but he still stored it since it was a skill that use the element Qi.

"So, I'm a member of the organization now?" Finn asked with an eager expression on his face.

"Yes." Lan chuckles.

Alvin also nodded before a black jade slate appeared in his hand.

Lan's smiling face instantly change when he saw this black slate, "YOU...!" Before he could complete his word Alvin wink at him and Lan stopped.

Ace on the side was also stunned to see this black stale because he had a pile of these kinds of slates in his thief's space.

'Slave Item Contract!' Ace's heart turn cold because he was too familiar with these slave item contracts, after all, Eva accosted him because of this exact contract!

However, the contract in Alvin's hand had much more complex patterns on it and there was a red gem on top of it. It was a 7-star slave item contract that can even control a peak Qi River cultivator and never let it enter the next realm!

Alvin smile, seeing Finn's hard face, and said, "Your family is in the business of slaves, so I won't lie to you about what this is. But you need to know that this is for your safety because I'll be able to sense your presence with this contract.

"Furthermore, Elder Lan here was also concerned about your safety because the information you know and with this mask, I can make you forget everything you hear. But don't worry you'll remain the member of Pill Flame and this contract will only remain until you reached the high-level lands."

Lan face turn ugly when he heard Alvin even dare to involve him to sell his lies, but he can't do anything since he was already stuck with him.

'So, he didn't want to take any chances with Finn now that he examined him.' Ace didn't imagine this guy would be so ruthless and decisive that he didn't even take the slightest bit chance with Finn.

Truthfully, this slave contract was for that thief but now that Alvin's found Finn he used it on him with no second thought because he can't have anyone know about this and Finn was still young, so he didn't trust him with this kind of secret.

"But I won't tell anyone." Finn timidly said.

"It's just a reassurance, don't worry I won't make you do anything. Even you could tell how important you are for the organization!" Alvin said in an unnegotiable tone.

"Ok, as elder brother command." Finn agreed with Alvin in the end, it's not like he had any choice.

"Good. Drop your blood on the gem." Alvin said with a smile.

Finn merely nodded and cut his finger and drop his blood on the red gem.

The moment the blood landed on the red gem, it instantly absorbed it, and the silver complex patterns on the black slate shimmered. Abruptly, a red streak was discharged from the slave contract and landed on Finn's glabella before dissolving.

[System has detected a high-level middle-grade martial slave item, that wanted to take over the Host's consciousness.]

[Host has two options]

[Option 1]

[Destroy the slave contract's owner conscious and Qi mark for 100TP.]

[Effects: The owner of this conscious and Qi mark will experience a backlash according to the martial slave contract's Grade.]

[Option 2]

[Create a fake conscious for martial slave contract for 500TP]

[Effect: The owner of Qi mark would not be able to detect anything and the Host will remain unaffected.]

[Please choose within five seconds, or the system will auto-select the first option.]

Ace's eyes turn sharp and transmit with no hesitation, "Go with Option 2!"

It was as if he already knew this would happen and was ready for it from the start!

[Activating Option 2....]

[Option 2 has been activated!]

[Thief Point(s): 30,000]

Ace observed that in his martial space a white smoke cloud has been formed, and suddenly the red streak entered it, turning the white cloud in crimson!

On Finn's face, a black mask formed with a red gem on its forehead. The mask had crimson patterns on its left side, and only Finn's eyes were visible now.

"Are you out of your mind?!" Lan finally speaks at this moment.

"No. It's for the best, I won't take any chance until I hand him over to my grandfather personally. It's also an assurance!" Alvin stiffly said, "Tell me, after those old fossils know I put a salve item on an element physique, would they dare to take action or plot against me?"

"You want to threaten them?!" Lan's face shone with fright.

"Hehe, I will, if they didn't give me what's I earned!" Alvin decisively said.

"Sigh..." Lan sighed helplessly in the end. He even wondered if Alvin was the craft elder instead.

But even he had to admit Alvin has guts, and this method was the safest way to ensure their awards.

"As I promised you're free just like before!"

Alvin coolly looked at Masked Finn and a peculiar glint flash past his eyes, "However, you can revile nothing you ever heard or going to hear between me and Elder Lan to anyone!"

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Chapter 184: Becoming A Slave!

Ace felt a peculiar Qi wave from the black could inside his martial space and instantly guessed Alvin was using slave contact to imprint this command on Finn!

Ace knew this was the cue and said, "As Elder Brother command."

Now that Finn's face was under that slave item's mask, beside his cold eyes one can see nothing.

Even with the martial sense it was hard to tell Finn's exact expression and this was in Ace's favor because he doesn't have to control his physical expression anymore, and believe it or not, this was the hardest part!

After all, copying someone's personality was never easy, and without Ace's soul probe it would be even harder.

Alvin nodded when he saw the familiar response and looked at Lan with a faint smile, "See, I didn't have any intention to turn him into a mindless slave, and I'm not using the slave contract full capacity. He can cultivate normally, and the slave contract would never hinder him."

Lan grimaced but didn't retort, since he knew a seven-star slave contract has this kind of function. Besides, knowing about Finn's potential Alvin would never dare to treat him like a slave!

'Sigh...' Lan sighed and faintly said, "Fine. Let's go I'll arrange a special token and appoint a Flame Captain level guard to him so little Finn can smoothly travel in the flame city."

"I'm relying on Elder Lan for this. After all, he'll be here for some time until we returned to high-lands and I have to contact my father as soon as possible."

Alvin knew Lan was appointed his loyal flame guard, so he could also monitor Finn, and he had no problem with it since Finn's life was now in his hand as long as he kept the slave contract secured!

"I only have three 'Millions-Miles Transmission Plates' and I can only give you one, so you better use it wisely." Lan gravely said, and a palm-size silver formation plate appeared in his hand.

Ace looked at the silver formation plate with great interest and thought, 'So, they used these special formation plates to communicate between long-distance places!'

Ace was always inquisitive about how these organization personals can communicate with each other so swiftly, and now he finally got the answer. He wanted to use the runic eyes to see the runic symbols on it, but he knew if he does it, Lan would notice it!

"Don't worry, the moment I got a replay, I'll come to you first." Alvin took the Millions-Miles Transmission Plate and ensure Lan.

"You better, don't forget I have two more..." Lan indifferently said with a wintry smile on his face. He was clearly warning Alvin.

Alvin's face stiffed a little and slightly nodded. He knew this old man was only playing along with him because of benefits and his background.

If it was someone else Lan would've never been allowed to put a slave item on Finn and probably done it himself!

Alvin knows if he played any kind of trick Lan would retaliate with no second thought, and he can't do anything about it since he wasn't Lan's match.

"Let's go, I need some rest since I prepare the elixir all night." Lan chuckles coldly seeing Alvin's tense face.

Following Lan, they all leave the hidden forgery and enter the statue hall again.

'I have to somehow complete the scanning before leaving this place.' Ace thought while moving close to the statue.

Suddenly, Ace's eyes brighten.

Then it happened, the moment Ace entered the 250-meter radius of the statue, the system's icy voice rang in his mind.

"[Target in range!]"

[Scan resumed!]

[Time: 03:20]

Finn stopped abruptly, and his confusing voice rang in the grand hall, "Umm.... Elder Brother."

Alvin and Lan also stopped and looked at Finn with questioning eyes.

"I think I felt something from that statue," Finn said with ambiguity.

"Oh, so you could feel the aura around the founder statue now as well." Lan was astonished because he knew what Finn was talking about.

"Heh, don't worry, this aura is coming from those two treasures in founder's hands, and that statue is also made from very precise minerals." Alvin chuckles.

"However, only someone at the foundation building stage can feel this aura, meaning you get many benefits from element bath that we still don't know yet," Lan suggested.

"Did you feel anything else?" Alvin asked, but he used the slave contract this time.

Ace felt that unique Qi fluctuation again and answer emotionlessly, "Yes, it seemed the realm wall is cracking, and soon I'll be entered the Qi foundation building realm."

"Oh, we can't let him build a five-gate foundation," Lan speaks with a grim tone.

"I have a seven gates cultivation technique. It won't be any problem." Alvin was completely agreed with Lan.

Because changing a cultivation technique after entering the foundation building realm was very painful. It sometimes damaged one's meridian which can cause very slow cultivation and cause intense agony!

That's why if someone wanted to change the cultivation technique they had to do it in the Qi gates realm.

However, if one cultivated a martial cultivation technique before they can only change it with other martial cultivation technique and the same rule apply with the soul cultivation technique.

If a person wanted to change its entire cultivation path, then it's too costly and probably only three giants have these methods to do it!

"Can I cultivate in the soul path?" Finn spoke again with emotionless eyes.

"Why do you want that?" Lan's pursed his lips.

"I don't know, I suddenly feel like soul path is better for me," Finn answered instantly.

Lan looked at Alvin with a sullen expression. He could tell Alvin was using the mask to question Finn, which mean Finn wasn't making anything up.

Alvin pondered for a bit and said, "Let me contact my family first before that don't breakthrough, or it would be impossible to change your cultivation path that time."

"Yes," Finn answered as his eyes returned to normal.

Lan also had no objection to this arrangement and let the high-lands decide for Finn since his importance is too great for the organization.

They moved again towards the exit.

When they reached two hundred meters on the other side of the statue.

"[Scan Complete.]"

Ace's lips curled upward, hearing this notification.

He was just wasting time, so the system could complete the scanning, and it worked after what he did.

Now, he doesn't have to pretend to cultivate while being constantly monitored by others. Because he can't mask a cultivation technique.

Moreover, because of the illusion created by the hundred-face deception mask, no one can see his real Qi flow and meridian which would rise different doubts and suspicion of others.

That's why he bought himself time after telling them he wanted to cultivate soul technique instead.

After this brief stop, they leave the grand hall and Lan closed the silver door with a formation pate.

To Ace's dismay, the silver door vanished completely after Lan use the formation plate and even the doorway was gone when they enter the maze.

Now, it was even more difficult to come back here!

After exiting the area, they enter the main hall, where the same flame guard was waiting for them.

Lan smiled at her and said, "Flame Captain Grey, from now on until little Finn is here your duty is to protect him and show him the Flame City if he wants."

Grey's eyes were shone with surprise when she heard this and deeply looked at masked Finn because this kind of treatment was very rare, and she didn't remember Finn wearing a mask when she left them.

"Yes, as you command!" Grey solemnly said she has to obey Lan's command whether she liked it.

"Also have someone make a VIP Golden Token for little Finn, so he could go visit any area in the Flame City." Lan coolly said.

"Yes!" Grey was shocked this time and thought, 'Just who is he?'

"Grey will escort you back, or anywhere you want to go. I'll take my leave now, if you need anything tell Grey to contact me." Lan smile knowingly at Alvin before leaving.

"Take us back first," Alvin command Grey after Lan was gone.

"Yes." Grey behave as she told and escort them back to their living quarters.

On their way back, now, and then she glimpses at Finn whose face was not behind the mask with great interest, but she said nothing since Alvin was with them and her pride as a flame guard won't allow her to speak with anyone.

After they reached Finn's courtyard in the VIP area,

Alvin coolly said to Grey, "Wait outside until I come out. I have something to talk about with Finn."

"Yes." Grey nodded in understanding.

Alvin took Finn into a room before using a formation barrier to isolate the room.

After making sure no one can hear them, Alvin command while using the slave contract...!

[Eternal Thief](#)

Chapter 185: Flame Library

After making sure no one can hear them, Alvin instructed while using the slave contract, "First, if you find any kind of changes occurring to yourself, you'll immediately report them to me.

"Second, never told Lan anything if he ever summoned you and report this back to me nor should you ever revile your identity to anyone!

"Third, you'll have to study the skill I gave you for ten hours a day and report the results of it after a week to me, as for the remaining day, you're free to do anything besides revealing anything about element physique.

"Fourth, don't try to cultivate until I give you the order and remain low-key..."

Alvin carefully impart many instructions to Finn while using the slave contract power, so Finn could not breach them. He didn't do it in front of Lan because he can't afford Lan's suspicion at the moment. Not until he can go back.

Lastly, Alvin has some personal thoughts about Finn's physique because it was of the wood element, and he also has the wood element.

That's why he wanted Finn to awake some unique ability and see if he could get Finn to teach him. After all, an ability from a legendary physique will cause a storm anywhere.

Finn's eyes showed no emotion and nodded impassively in recognition of Alvin's every command, "YES!"

Alvin nodded in satisfaction and stop using the slave contract, and Finn's eyes returned to normal.

"Good, I'll take my leave then. If you have any problem, my courtyard is right next to you, and if someone bullies you, just tell them who your elder brother is." Alvin chuckles and collected the formation barrier in the formation plate that he uses to soundproof the room.

"Sure." Finn nodded following ecstasy in his voice.

Alvin's smile wider when he saw Finn didn't seem to remember anything he imparted on him.

A seven-star slave contract has this kind of power that the slave never even knows what their master has imprinted on them or told them to command as long the master didn't want to.

Furthermore, unknowingly to slaves, these imprints automatically stopped them from doing these things they were commanded to, and they never even know they were doing it.

That was the scariest part about a powerful slave contract and the command imprinting was just the tip of the iceberg of what a high-grade slave contract can do.

As for how Ace was so easily able to turn Finn's eyes listless it was very simple, he just had to stop controlling the mask, and Finn's face would become like a corpse.

Ace just has to do it at the right moment and Alvin would never suspect a thing, like what happened just now.

He could tell Alvin was going to use that communication formation to contact his clan and didn't seem to be too concerned about Finn anymore after he turned him into a slave.

This was just the thing he needed to become free and practice his abilities, and seemingly he achieved it!

He followed Alvin who seemed to be in a good mood after what happened in these past three hours and bid him farewell.

Now only the powerful female flame guard, Grey remained who was looking at him with her inquisitive eyes.

"Come inside." Ace said to Grey, now that Alvin was finally gone, and he was free of constant martial sense monitoring, and he wanted the information that only Grey knows since she's the personal guard of Elder Lan.

How he was going to fish out that information was entirely a different story, though.

Grey didn't reject the offer and entered the spacious lounge with Finn.

"Where are the servants?" Grey asked in confusion.

"Oh, Flame General think I don't need them, and he's right, I like it alone." Ace chuckles as he sat on the set comfortably. He was telling the truth though.

Grey on the other hand found something has changed about Finn, and he didn't seem to be afraid of her despite being an insect of Qi gates realm.

"Can I ask you, someone, if you don't mind? You don't have to answer if you don't want to." Now that she was finally alone with Finn, Grey finally couldn't hold back her curiosity.

"You can, but in return, you'll have to answer one of my questions as well." Finn nonchalantly put his demand.

"I accept." Grey quickly agreed while thinking, 'Just what can this brat ask?'

"Ask then." Ace said with a rapturous expression. This was his chance.

"Why are you wearing this mask? I can sense a gloomy aura from it, is it a Slave item?" Grey asked the obvious.

She could tell Finn's mask was a slave item, but what truly bothered her was if he was just a slave, then why is he getting VIP treatment to this extent?

Finn impassively answered, "I join the organization, and you could say this slave mask was the price I paid for it."

Grey eyes narrowed, she didn't believe him because this reason was ridiculous, and a slave don't get this kind of treatment. But Finn was a VIP, so she could not force him.

"It's my turn, right?" Finn said with emotionless eyes.

"Yes." Grey nodded stiffly.

"Good. Can you tell me about those buildings outside the Flame Palace?" Ace asked because he was very inquisitive about those four pavilions and especially about that white pagoda!

Grey didn't seem to mind this question and informed him, "The four pavilions are Contribution Pavilion, Mission Pavilion, Treasure Exchange Pavilion, and Medicinal Pavilion.

"The white pagoda is the Flame Library which has thirty floors and each floor contains information, skills, and techniques. The floors' allocation is solely depending on one's rank and if someone wants to learn a skill or technique, they have to spend contribution points while the information is free."

Ace's eyes shimmered with ecstasy when he heard about the Flame Library and quickly asked, "Can I gain access to the Library with that golden VIP token?"

He didn't forget about that token Lan promised him and by Lan's words, this token can let him go anywhere.

Grey answers in a slightly dissatisfying tone, "25 Floors!"

"Oh, how many floors can you enter?" Ace asked with great interest.

Grey eyes turn cold and said darkly, "25..."

Ace was astonished because Grey was a very high-rank person here, yet she has the same clearance level as him. This means Lan didn't treat him badly at all.

Grey didn't know what Finn was thinking, but she took his silence for an act of provocation and scoffed, "Don't celebrate too early you still have to pay for skills and techniques!"

Ace could sense he hit a nerve somehow and blurted, "I understand, please don't take it personally. Look even if I can go to 25 floors what can I learn with my insignificant cultivation?"

"Hmph!" Grey didn't answer this time, but the anger in her heart eased a bit. She didn't want to offend Finn since he seemed very important to Elder Lan and Flame General.

That's why she was even talking right now, or she won't even glance at someone like Finn.

"Your turn." Ace didn't want to get on Grey's bad side, so he quickly changed the subject.

Grey ponders a bit and asked with some hesitation, "W-what is your relationship with Elder and Flame General?"

Finn impassively answered, "Same as you, I guess. But for some reason I'm important to them even I don't know why."

'Is he mocking me?' Grey eyes turn cold because this answer wasn't an answer, and she simply thinks this Qi gate junior was playing with her but alas she can't do anything.

Ace felt Grey's stony gaze and knew he was just making things worse, but he was only following Alvin's commands.

"I know you're not satisfied with my answer, but it's true, you can ask Elder Lan or Elder Brother Alvin if you wanted to know about me. But I can't tell you anything that I don't even know myself. I only know; I don't have permission to revile my background to anyone. So, don't ask these questions I can't answer." Finn emotionlessly stated.

Grey eyes gleam in astonishment when she saw this boy with a Slave item can talk so casually about Lan and Alvin. Which also reviled he wasn't completely restraint by the slave item since he can talk like this.

"My apologies." Grey didn't press the matter anymore, since Finn seemed to tell the truth, and it was hard to detect any kind of emotion from him.

"Thank you for your understanding." Finn faintly nodded.

Ace was relieved seeing Grey was quite considerate.

"If there is nothing else, I'll take my leave now. If you need anything, I'll be outside, guarding the door!" Grey decided to leave Finn alone and do her duty.

She had no more questions since Finn can't answer the ones she was truly interested in.

"Oh, I have some other questions actually, if you don't mind me asking."

Ace would not let this chance pass so easily!

Eternal Thief

Chapter 186: Peak Heavenly Foundation Building Stage

Grey's brownish eyes shimmer with annoyance after hearing Finn's still wanted to talk and coldly said, "Speak!"

"Why do you and the other guard I saw the other day wear that masks despite being Flame Guards? Is it also a slave item?" Finn asked impassively.

Ace knew Grey's mask wasn't a slave item and just make that point, so she could not think how a Qi Gates junior could tell the difference.

As for why he asked this, it was because he saw only two mask-wearing flame guards and wanted to know the reason behind the masks. If it was something he could use, it would be quite helpful in his mission.

"It is not a slave item!" Grey eyes turn sharp and coldly stated, "Every Female Flame Guard has to wear a mask like this in the flame guard regiment, and we're only allowed to remove it after we achieve the rank of a Flame General!"

"Only women huh." Ace finds it strange but didn't ask the reason behind it since Grey seemed to become enraged after hearing this question.

"Then tell me about contribution points." Ace changed the topic and asked about these contribution points.

He could tell these contribution points were quite important by Grey's previous tone, and they even built a separate pavilion for them.

Grey also didn't want to dwell on that topic and answered promptly, "Contribution points are the currency between the organization members and without them no one can purchase anything from treasure exchanging and medicinal pavilion even if they have the Qi stones.

"One can earn contribution points by exchanging medicinal herbs, pill, treasures, or by completing missions posted in Mission Pavilion."

"Thank you, it was very helpful." Finn nodded impassively.

"I'll be taking my leave then." Liz also nodded and turn to leave.

"Wait." Ace quickly stopped her and said with Finn's emotionless voice, "You don't have to stand outside like some door guard. Elder Lan's appointed you as my guard and I don't know how long I'm going to stay in this city.

"You can't always stand outside, so choose some servants and a room for yourself. I'll look for you if I needed anything. It's not like I'm going anywhere in this large city alone."

"Do you think of me as a steward?!" Grey took Finn's words offensively.

"No, don't take my words in the wrong way. I just don't want you to always stand outside, appoint some guards, there should be plenty, right?" Finn coolly stated.

Grey has to admit Finn has a point and, in the end, she coldly glared at Finn and stated, "Hmph! Fine, but I'm only doing it because Elder commands me to listen to you."

"As long as you don't feel uncomfortable." Finn nodded.

"Hmph!" Grey sneered and stomped out the place.

Ace's lips curled upward because he could sense Grey's mood become quite good after what he did, and it was good for him.

'As long as she drops her guard around me, I'll get that information!' Ace thought.

He knew Grey has important information about that maze, and he required it to theft that treasury. But first, he had to win her trust and make her content around him which he does not know how to do it.

Nevertheless, he didn't mind trying it!

Now, Ace was finally alone, and he could sense there wasn't any martial sense lingering in the air either, "Let's see the scanning report first." He mumbled to himself,

He casually summoned the notification panel and open the scanning report of Flame City's treasury.

[Notification Panel]

[[Target's Scan Report]]

[Total net worth: Host has to find himself.

Security:

1: High-level Middle-Grade Illusionary Formation (7th Ranked Mortal Runes)

1: High-level Middle-Grade Killer Formation (7th Ranked Mortal Runes)

1: High-level Middle-Grade Detection Formation (7th Ranked Mortal Runes)

10: High-level Middle-Grade Traps Formations (7th Ranked Mortal Runes)

1: High-level Middle-Grade, Illusion Lock formation (7th Ranked Mortal Runes)

1: Low-level High-Grade Lock Formation on High-level Middle-Grade Treasury (8th Ranked Mortal Runes & 7-Star Treasury)

Evaluation: 10% chance of success]

Ace inhale sharply and grimly thought, 'This is just the security around the treasury and not the other formations in the entire palace!'

The system scans only work on mission target's treasuries, not on the entire place where the treasury was located or there would be hundreds of formations in this shortlist.

Nevertheless, this report gave him the exact target he was supposed to steal, and he had only one treasury to steal from this time not any hidden treasury like the last mission.

However, this treasury was much more difficult to open than the last one, and he still didn't open the treasury inside his thief's space.

It's not like he can't open it now, he just doesn't want to use the soul-shattering eyes and sustain any soul injuries at a time like this.

'Now this is out the way, I should breakthrough in the peak heavenly foundation stage.' Ace thought and stood up from his chair and walk towards his chamber.

After making sure there was no one and Grey seemed to have gone somewhere he used the formation barrier that he stole from that rune crafter and isolate the area, so he would instantly know if someone approached him.

Ace sat cross-legged before calming his mind and transmitted impassively, "System, convert every pill in my thief's space into EXP!"

"[Starting the calculating...]"

[All the pills in thief's space can be converted into 16Million EXP]

[Did you want to proceed with the conversion?]

Ace pensively transmitted, "Proceed."

The very next moment thereafter, Ace felt a huge tsunami of Heavenly Qi rose from the dark void and engulf his dark meridian channels.

Ace abruptly felt something just break, and the dark void rotated while releasing the thick heavenly Qi. The foundation slates revolving around the dark void also glowed brightly.

The rotation cycles of the heavenly qi began the very next moment inside Ace's meridian channels and the qi circulates ninety-nine times in high speed, yet it didn't show any sign of slowing down.

At the 100th-cycle, Ace suddenly felt an intense pain start to gush out of his meridian's channels. He could feel the heavenly Qi was causing some kind of change this time and could only endure.

This painful process remained for 12 hours until the 999 cycle was complete, and the dark void finally absorbed the processed heavenly Qi and turned it into HD-Qi.

Ace was drenched in the dark sticky matter at this moment and when the HD-Qi entered his meridian, he felt intense comfort and groan in pleasure.

All that processed HD-Qi enters the nine dark foundation slates after coursing through his dark meridians. Those dark slates begin to rapidly expand!

When the HD-Qi was fully absorbed, the heavenly foundation plates have expanded nine square miles in size!

Now, they were like colossal dark walls revolving around the dark void in martial space!

"[Conversion Complete!]"

[16Million EXP has been added to Host status]

[Congratulation host on reaching the Peak Stage of Heavenly Foundation Building]

[Host status has been updated]

Ace slowly opened his eyes and a black current flash through them. He was feeling lighter than before while his mind was tranquil.

With no delay, he looked at the martial cultivation column to see the next amount of EXP he needed to enter the Heavenly River realm besides the elemental orb.

[Martial Cultivation: Heavenly Foundation Building [Peak-Stage]]

[EXP: 10.95 Million/100 Million]

[Elemental Orb:0/1]

Ace's eyes shimmered with astonishment when he saw the next elemental orb's row appearance below the EXP row.

"System does this mean I can accommodate the EXP without being worried about entering the next realm accidentally, now?" Ace asked while he made a wild guess.

This was an enormous problem for him and if he guessed was right, then he can be worry-free once and for all. Or just like last time that feeling of being instantly killed if he entered the next realm with no elemental orb, always has him on edge.

"[Yes. Since the host has already unlocked the hidden part of Heavenly Crystal Body, the system can now seal the host's cultivation until the host fulfill all the requirements.]"

"Heh, for the first time in a while, you did something useful." Ace grinned ear to ear while taunting the system.

System's emotionless voice rang again this time,

"[Soul Probing 20% Power has been unsealed!]"

[Host can now probe the soul of High Stage Qi Foundation Building Cultivators, and the time limits of soul probing have also increased to four hours a day]

[Light Element Qi [Martial & Soul] activation limit has been increased]

[Light Element Qi: The ability to freely use worldly light element Qi of both martial and soul path!]

[Limitation: Host can only use any type of Qi [Martial or Soul] for 24 hours and has to stop for 24 hours.]

Ace was thrilled especially about the Light Qi resting period reduced by half, and now he can use the light soul Qi more often. This means he can practice the rune crafting more frequently now!

[Eternal Thief](#)

Chapter 187: A Cultivation Room

After Alvin returned to his courtyard, without stopping, he directly enter his room and isolate it with a powerful formation barrier.

After making sure that everything was arranged, Alvin sat cross-legged and took the Millions-Miles Transmission Plate from his storage ring that Lan gave him to contact his clan.

Alvin use his Qi to activate the formation plate, and it glowed. Suddenly the round silver formation plate divided into two halves!

Alvin flip his hand and a green runic plate with complex black patterns appeared in his hand.

This was a Coordinate Array that have only one function, and that was to record a specific location. These coordinate arrays were used with communication formations and without them these formations were useless.

Alvin's coordinate array naturally has his clan's location recorded in it, and now he was going to use it to send the information about Finn.

With no further ado, Alvin activated the array plate, and it also hovered like the silver formation plate.

Suddenly, the two silver formation plates tremble, and they released an attraction force, pulling the green array plated between them.

The moment the Coordinate Array was between the Millions-Miles Transmission Plate, the upper silver plate rotated.

Alvin knew the recording has started and solemnly speak, "Father, I have something of utmost important to report, so please listen to this message alone and send your response as quickly as possible...."

Alvin addressed from the start and record everything from how he was searching for the thief, but he found Finn until today's test report.

"Qi Lock!" When Alvin was done he made a particular hand gesture and locked the recording with a unique Qi symbol.

This Qi symbol was a unique Qi lock that was commonly used to lock these recordings, so no other person could listen to them.

The Qi Key of this Qi Lock was also very special and if anyone tries to open this Qi lock without Qi Key, it will self-destruct with the recording!

Anyone can develop these Qi Lock and Qi Key with the method and only high-level lands, three giants, and top ten kingdoms have this formula to make Qi Lock or know about this method of communication.

After Alvin's put the Qi lock on the upper silver formation plate, he poured a large amount of Qi into the runic plates, and they shone brightly.

Suddenly, the lowest silver runic plate turned white, while the central coordinate array plate turns into dust particles.

The very next moment thereafter, the top silver runic plate completely vanished with a zap!

Alvin's lips curved upward when he saw the recording has been sent.

Now all he had to do was to wait for the reply which will come through the remaining white Millions-Miles Transmission Plate!

Somewhere in the land of empires,

An old man seemingly in his late sixties with long snowy hair and a light beard was sitting crossed-legged in a gorgeous chamber. Even though his face was filled with light wrinkles his eyes were full of blazing vigor.

Surprisingly, this old man's appearance resembled Alvin's, or Alvin resembled this old man, and it was not surprised since this old man was Alvin's father and the current head of Elias Clan, Henrik Elias!

At this moment, before Henrik was a silver formation plate hovering, and he was carefully listening to something with a small frown on his old face.

"... after the test, I put the slave item on him that was meant for the thief. However, I didn't use its full power and only restricted the knowledge, nothing else. Now, I just need to know; can you awake Grandfather and I don't need to tell you how important this matter is to our clan. Please notify me as soon as possible."

Henrik mulled over it for a long time as he wore a grave face and finally a deep sigh escape from his mouth as he mumbled with a hint of ambiguity,

"An element physique, huh? I should go to the forbidden library before taking any action and if that brat is telling the truth then this might change our fate..."

All this happened during Ace's cultivation.

Currently, inside Finn's resting chamber.

Ace was examining himself when he noticed the sticky substance and mutters, "So I still have impurities, and here I thought this process was over. I should take a bath first before anything else."

He quickly stood up while collecting the formation barrier. He knew Grey has returned eleven hours ago, but she didn't disturb him after seeing the barrier around his chamber.

She probably thought that he didn't want to be disturbed and leave him alone. This gave Ace the excessive time to cultivate without any worry.

Ace clean himself with hot water and felt renewed. He could feel the vigorous Qi in meridian channels. He wanted to test himself against an Empty River cultivator so, he could see, whether he can hold his own against one.

But he knew this wish of his was a pipe dream as long as he was in the flame city.

Ace returned after cleaning himself and nonchalantly opened the locked door.

He saw a dainty teenage girl was standing outside in a server attire.

"AHH!" The dainty girl gives the fright of her life when she saw this masked man suddenly emerging, she couldn't help but scream.

But she was a 5th gate cultivator and when she felt this mask man cultivation was equal to her own, she quickly calmed herself.

"F-forgive me, my lord." She quickly apologized.

"Why are you here?" Finn impassively questioned.

The girl didn't dare to raise her head and timidly answer, "Lord Flame Guard send me here to summon you in the main hall!"

"Summon me?" Finn mumbles and nods, "Let's go."

The girl quickly led the way.

Ace knew Grey took his words seriously and recruited servants and guards. He could sense ten fifth Qi gate cultivators inside the building.

While there were five high-stage Qi foundation cultivators outside, and he assumed that they were probably the flame guards by their powerful aura that can only emit from a six plates foundation!

Speaking of which, every cultivator of Qi foundation building realm had an aura like Dulce and Ace knew this kind of prowess can only be emitted by a six-foundation plate cultivator.

This also means every organization member has access to the cultivation technique that can open six Qi gates and build a flawed foundation1!

Ace saw Grey was still in her armor and mask, she was standing there waiting for him.

He coolly asked, "You summoned me?"

"You may go now." Grey didn't answer him immediately and ordered the servant girl to leave.

The servant girl didn't linger quickly leave them alone.

"I appointed five guards and ten servants, just like you ask." Grey coldly reports.

"You didn't ask for me, so you could just tell me this, right?" Finn looked at Grey emotionlessly.

Grey replied, "No, I wanted to know why you put that formation barrier?"

"Am I not allowed to?" Finn nonchalantly questioned back.

Grey said with a hint of irritation in her sweet voice, "If you want to cultivate there is a separate chamber in the basement with a much stronger formation barrier than yours so use it next time no one will disturb you."

Ace was astonished, he didn't know about this cultivation chamber.

"I didn't know about it." He said with a hint of awkwardness.

"This kind of treatment one gets in the VIP area, and you didn't have servants, so I'm not surprised you didn't know about it. Now that you know, please use the cultivation room next time." Grey coolly stated.

"Thank you for your help," Finn said.

Grey nodded impassively before she conjured a golden token from her storage ring and toss it toward Finn.

"This is the Golden VIP Token. You can see the information when you pour Qi in it, so I don't need to explain." Grey told.

Ace looked at the palm-size square golden token that was engraved with the pill flame logo and

'Esteemed Guest' was engraved on the other side.

"You have my gratitude." Finn again thank Grey with ecstasy.

"I'm only doing it what Craft Elder asked me to." Grey coolly stated and said, "I'll take my leave now, and if you need me just send some servant to summon me."

"Okay. I'll be going to the cultivation room to check it." Finn nodded and excuse himself as well.

From the start, Ace was planning to reinforce his cultivation since he just entered a new realm.

Now, that Grey told him about the cultivation room he'll naturally use it with no restrain.

Ace have that same servant girl escort him to the cultivation room and excused her when he reached the destination.

The cultivation room was fifty square meters in size and there was a jade table with a chair on one corner while different kinds of weapons were resting on the other.

"Not bad." Ace nodded in satisfaction, and he likes this room since he can practice his skills freely here.

Ace activate the formation barrier and isolate the entire room, after carefully examining everything and finding nothing out of the order, he took the Golden VIP token to see the information!

[Eternal Thief](#)

Chapter 188: A Precipitate Comprehension!

Ace used his runic eyes' technique to examine the golden token. He saw many complex runes and to his astonishment now he could see every line vividly.

"Is this change because of the heavenly rune crafting?" Ace was uncertain, but this was the only plausible explanation.

He also examined the cultivation room with runic eyes and finally saw the formation barrier protecting the room, and it was very complex.

Although he can now see the runes clearly, he still can't understand them.

Ace finally use his Qi to activate the golden token and examined the runes on it. He saw the runes release a bright light before his Qi connected them all and suddenly a projection appeared that was filled with words.

He knew this was the information Grey was talking about and carefully read it.

Ace's VIP token has seven functions.

First, one can buy anything in this city with a 30% discount in any shop.

Second, one can freely roam the city except for Flame Place.

Third, one can command low-ranking Flame Guards, as long as the command didn't go against the organization's rules and morals.

Fourth, absolute protection inside the city!

If this was a normal VIP token, then the fifth and final function was supposed to be the access to the flame library's 1 to 25 floors and only to just information, not skills or techniques. Even the information has to be from the outer area not the inner area of the floor!

However, Lan has made this token especially for Finn and has them add some special functions, alter the fifth one, just for him.

Fifth was, he can access up to 25 floors of Flame library and peruse anything and learn any skill or technique he wanted with any kind of information on these floors!

Sixth, he has 100,000 Contribution Points, and he can use them with the VIP token!

Seventh and last one, he can purchase from Treasure Exchange Pavilion, and Medicinal Pavilion like other Pill Flame members, and he even got a 20% discount on everything.

Ace didn't know the change in the fifth function and someone specially added the two new functions just for him.

"It seemed the organization is quite generous with its VIP guests." He simply exclaimed and show a hint of confusion, "But didn't she say I had to pay for the Library? Well, it's not like I have any problem with this arrangement though."

Ace cracked an ecstatic smile before storing the VIP token in this thief's space.

If his life was not in danger and those old guys didn't have any malicious motives, he might consider joining the organization for real and staying here until he learned everything he wanted to.

However, he only had 10 years to theft thirty strongest places of middle-level lands and ten of them were still unknown. He didn't have any time to waste and have to pick up the pace.

He has to, theft three places a year at least!

If he hasn't encountered Alvin, he would've wasted a year just to reach the first-grade lands, and even more, time just to reach this point.

That's why he was feeling the immense pressure right now. He had to begin the preparation and think of a miraculous plan that can help him theft and escape this city!

Ace started the preparation tomorrow because he also has to take Alvin's into consideration.

That guy was his biggest problem right now because he didn't know when Alvin would decide to take him to the high-level lands, and it wasn't in his interest even if he didn't have the mission to complete.

Ace clear those thoughts and calm his mind and sat crossed-legged. He just mulled over it after he has done reinforcing his cultivation.

After twenty hours, Ace closed eyes flicker slightly, and slowly opened. If anyone, see his real eyes now they were like an endless dark blue ocean!

His cultivation was now completely settled at the peak stage of heavenly foundation.

However, Ace didn't stand up and calmly transmitted, "Active the light soul Qi!"

"[Light Element Soul Qi has been activated.]"

[Time Remains: 23:59:59]

Ace promptly practiced the second rune of Basic Myriad Rune Symbols Encyclopedia, the Water Rune Symbol!

Before being captured by Alvin, he was very close to mastering its 5 runic structures, and he intended to complete it and move to the third one as soon as possible.

Just like that 23 hours passed in rune crafting and at this moment Ace's forehead was filled with crystal beads of sweat.

The light soul Qi threads were beautifully moving in the air while three triangles with a complex web of lines were hovering before him and he was making the fourth one.

The three-soul thread gently moved and finally completed the fourth triangle runic structure, and it hovered beside the three, glowing in gentle white light.

Ace didn't blink and with a solemn face, he moved his finger, and five soul threads made the fifth and final runic structure.

After half an hour, the structure was 90% done and Ace was immense in the process completely forgotten about his surroundings.

Time passed again, and it was finally the last juncture, he just has to form the outer triangle, and it would be complete.

Ace didn't dare to lose his focus because even this slightest distraction could render his effort useless.

The three soul threads were sliding toward the edges of three white lines and when the last soul thread complete the structure of the triangle, the fifth symbol was finally complete!

Ace didn't delay and released a large amount of light Qi and five structures merged and, in the end, only a single triangle left.

It was only the size of a talon and there were small complex structures based on four triangles and its color was gentle blue.

"Water Rune!" Ace's eyes shone with ecstasy. He didn't think he could complete the water rune on his first practice after entering the peak heavenly foundation stage!

"[Light Element Soul Qi has been deactivated.]"

[Resting Time: 23:59:59]

Ace snapped out of his excitement after the system's crisp voice rang in his mind.

"Just in the nick of time." Ace grin as watched the water rune fade, "Only two more left."

Ace was elated with his progress, "I spend almost two days here, and I should probably leave after recovering." He muttered to himself.

If it was on him, he won't leave until he also grasps the camouflage steps since he was very close, and he had a feeling that it won't be much longer before he would master it as well.

However, staying here for so long might make the person next door (Alvin) suspicious that he doesn't want to.

In his waiting period, he imprinted his heavenly Qi mark on the Silver Shield that Lan gift him after passing their test. The black wristband with silver runic patterns was now resting on Ace's left wrist.

Ace wanted to test it but can't because of obvious reasons. But this shield was very powerful, and now he can be protected against even flowing river cultivators. Even if it's for only three attacks, that can still make a vast difference.

As for Alvin's skill book, it was indeed profound, but it was useless for him since he was accustomed to using swords from the very beginning, so he was even less interesting in this fist-skill.

Nevertheless, he carefully remembered it and studied it for the time being because if Alvin inquiry about it, he can answer him that time.

However, when Ace saw the stance and read the profound explanation about this fist-skill he finds it very fascinating.

The more he read the stunned he become and after completely reading it his eyes shone in understanding as if he had solved a great mystery!

"So, all this time I was the one looking the wrong way!" Ace bitterly complain while sighing, "It was indeed my short-sight. Sigh..."

'I need more physical attacks manuals.' Ace deemed, and he knew just where he could get them. As for why he suddenly felt interested in physical attacks, only he knows.

He waits for six more hours until his soul was at optimal condition and leave the cultivation room after two days.

Ace didn't know what time it was, but he was full of energy and excitement after his precipitate comprehension in the cultivation room.

He exited the basement and saw that it was early in the morning.

"Summon Flame Guard Grey." Ace found a servant girl and order her to fetch Grey.

The servant girl naturally recognized Finn, after all, only the VIP guest and Grey wore masks. The servant girl didn't dare to look down on Finn just because his cultivation was equal to her own.

She knew any person who can live and even get a personal guard of Grey's caliber was of absolute importance. So, she quickly followed this VIP command and leave to get Grey.

Ace was naturally looking for Grey, so she could lead him to the Flame Library!

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Chapter 189: Black Fox?

After a few moments, an armor-clad woman wearing a crimson mask enter the hall where Finn was waiting, who could it be beside Flame Captain, Grey.

Although she was covered in the flame guard armor, one could still easily see her fine curves and slim waistline and white hands, with her beautiful intelligent eyes one could only wonder just what kind of beauty was hiding behind that armor and mask.

But Ace wasn't in the least bit interested in finding out and merely greeted her in

Finn's impassive voice, "Good Morning, Miss Grey. I didn't disturb your rest, did I?"

"Sir... umm." Grey's clear eyes flicker with an odd glint as she continued, "Don't need to call me 'Miss Grey' just Flame Captain is fine. I... I also didn't know your name..." There was a hint of awkwardness in her voice when she asked about Finn's name.

She completely forgets about it the other day, it wasn't her fault because she didn't interact with someone for too long, much less appointed as someone's guard.

Now that Finn called her Miss Grey she finally realized that she didn't know this mysterious VIP's name.

Ace found her embarrassment amusing but didn't show it since it would be equal to provoking her, and he could also surmise her lack of social skills.

Ace took a moment before replying, "Just call me Black Fox."

He clearly remembered one of Alvin's commands was not to reveal his identity to anyone, not even his real name, and he was happy to oblige since he didn't like 'Finn'.

So, he simply chose Eva's alias when he thought about how he was also wearing a slave mask right now, just like how Eva wore a fox mask all those years. This name also held a very heartfelt meaning to him, that's why he went with it.

'She probably would've quibble with me to no end if she was awake.' Ace thought as he felt a warmth in his heart.

"Black Fox?" Grey eyes flickered slightly, but she nodded in the end.

It didn't seem strange to her since many used an alias all the time and Finn's identity was very special, to begin with, 'But why fox, though?' She thought with ambiguity.

"Why did Sir Black Fox summon me?" asked Grey.

"Flame Library, I want to go there, if that ok with Flame Captain." Said Finn.

"I have no problem; please wait, I'll have a carriage ready." Grey agreed promptly and leave to arrange.

Since Finn has received the Golden VIP token, he naturally has access to the Flame Library.

Moreover, she has secretly viewed the information of Finn's VIP token, and those benefits he was getting despite being enslaved shocked her. Now she was treating him even more discreet.

Ace didn't have to wait for long. He saw the same kind of carriage pulled by demonic horses which he rid after entering the flame city. He embarked on the spacious carriage with Grey and leave for their destination.

They could simply go on foot since the Flame Library was in the territory of the Flame Palace, but it would be inappropriate since Finn was a VIP, so the carriage was necessary.

Inside the carriage, Ace was looking as the terrain changed and carefully remembered the route they were journeying. He didn't forget about his actual mission, and he needed to remember these routes to escape, so it would only do him good if remembered them correctly.

"Is there a map of Flame City I can buy?" He asked Grey who had been calmly sitting on the other side.

"Yes, you can buy it from Pavilions Lane." Nodded Grey.

"Pavilions Lane?" Ace was perplexed.

"You must've seen it in your way here, it is just before the Flame Place."

"You mean those private shops of alchemist?" Ace clearly remembered Alvin telling about how one could request those alchemists' assistance.

Grey nodded, "Yes, that the Pavilions Lane and only Blue Alchemist or higher can open a shop there."

Ace nodded in understanding, "Then what about rune crafters and crafters?" He remembered Alvin didn't mention these two professions.

"Rune Crafters are very rare and in the entire Flame City of Damien Kingdom there are only 121 and every one of them lived in the Flame Palace inner area where they learned and practiced under 10 fifth-moral rank rune crafting masters. They didn't make a public appearance much, but every one of them is considered geniuses among geniuses." Grey's beautiful eyes shone with reverence as she talks about rune crafters.

'This means there are 131 soul cultivators here!' Ace's face sank because this wasn't good news.

Every rune crafter has to be at least an empty soul river cultivator to learn the rune crafting, and he didn't expect this many soul cultivators present in this one city and ten of them were 5th-mortal rank rune crafters which mean they were probably half way in the soul river core realm!

However, with this information, he can now watch out for them and they didn't seem to meddle with anything, so it was also a plus.

Grey didn't know what was going on in Ace's head and continued to answer his question, "As for the crafters they're contrary to rune crafters. Since anyone can learn the art of crafting, their status is just above us, and the outer city area is filled with them. Only a 5 or 6-start Crafter may purchase a shop in the pavilions' lane." There was a hint of contempt in her voice. She didn't put crafter in her eyes.

Ace wasn't shocked by this since the art of crafting can be learned as long as you had good Qi control, but he would never underestimate them just because they're mere blacksmiths.

Every runic treasure was first forged by a crafter before a rune crafter engrave the runes on it and without a crafter, there would never be a runic treasure. They were just two different sides of one coin.

It just that because of soul Qi the rune crafter was extremely rare, while because of martial Qi crafters was common.

That's why people judge them with rune crafter solely based on the 'Crafter' title that should only belong to 'Rune Crafter' since in some people's eyes they were just 'Blacksmith' who know how to use Qi.

But real rune crafter knows the substantial importance of a crafter that's why the 'Crafter' title never replaced even now no matter how many people criticize them they didn't dare to try stripping crafters of their title.

Because if they retaliate then they can all forget about heaven-defying cold weapons and runic weapons!

After this question, Ace asked some more probing questions that weren't sound much important but for him, they were crucial to forming his master theft plan!

While Ace was collecting intel piece by piece from Grey.

A red eagle with blue strips on its wing landed gracefully in front of the colossal Flame City's gate.

This eagle was fifteen meters in size, there were two horn-like cavities on its skull while its intelligent beastly eyes were coldly observing the surrounding. This eagle was also giving off the pressure of the empty river realm.

Swiftly, a handsome young man in lavishing white robes jumped off the demonic beast. Behind the young man, two graceful figures also landed.

These two girls were extremely beautiful.

The one wearing a blue dress with a flowers pattern has an air of a mature woman around her. She had white glossy skin with rosy cheeks, a small mouth, and charming eyes shining with intelligence, with long

black hair and slim waist like a snake, she was a seductive beauty who could easily topple cities with her perfect figure.

The other one wore green loose robes with white strips, but one could still vaguely see her perfect curves, she looked very gentle with her innocent eyes, small nose, and oval face. However, one thing noticeable about her was her enormous chest. Even in those loosen robes, those Twin Peaks were bulging!

These two graceful beauties together were like a pair of enchantresses one seductive and one tempting.

The young man looked at the old beast tamer sitting on the eagle with a mild smile on his handsome face, while patting the eagle gently, he said to the old beast tamer, "You may go now."

The old beast tamer respectfully nodded toward the young man and didn't appear to mind his impolite speech. On the contrary, he seemed afraid of offending him. He controlled the eagle and fly away toward the beast city of the royal province.

The young man watched the eagle fly with a gentle smile and looked away when it was out of sight completely. Those two girls didn't disturb him and waited for him patiently.

"Let's go, it's been years since I saw my fiancé. I wonder if she goes mad with joy after seeing me."

The young man chuckles with skepticism, but there was a hint of chillness in his dark voice. He took gentle steps toward the tightly shut flame city's gates!

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Chapter 190: Entering The Flame Library

On the outskirts of Flame Place, a lavish carriage stopped just outside the palace's main gates.

Two masked personages disembark the carriage. One was a skinny boy wearing a black mask with a red gem engrave on it glabella while the other was an armor-clad flame guard wearing a crimson mask.

These two were naturally Ace and Grey who just reached their destination.

Ace saw the majestic and elegant Flame Palace surrounding between other five imposing structures. He was still amazed by the view even if he has seen it before.

Grey leads the way, and they crossed the gate instantly when those guards saw Grey's armor and mask. Everyone knows there were only two high-ranking women flame guards appointed in the flame palace and both of them have captain rank.

That's why he instantly recognizes Grey by her mask and more importantly, there were four crimson flame stars engraved on her golden chest armor which show her rank as a captain.

These Crimson Flame Stars helped represent the exact rank of a flame guard. One flame start was lowest which indicates the rank of a soldier, while the Nine Flame Stars was the highest, and it indicates the rank of a General.

Ace notice the respectful and adoring gazes of those other flame guards toward Grey and thought, 'She's drawing too much attention.'

Those guards naturally evaluate him as well, since a flame captain led him.

Ace wasn't used to this many prying eyes on him, but he could do nothing about it since he can't make Grey abandon her armor and mask.

Moreover, he was wearing a slave mask that would draw attention even without Grey's presence.

Grey, on the other hand, seemed to use to this kind of attention and with no hint of discomfort, she was leading the way.

Ace saw those other four large pavilions on the right four pathways and was tempted to have a look, but he remembered his primary aim that was the flame library and the insight he received while reading that Fist-skill.

He looked around after taking care of his main business.

Ace walk on the other four left pathways leading toward the thirty-story white pagoda or the Flame Library!

It would be a lie to say, Ace wasn't exhilarated to see the biggest Library of Flame Pill Organization in the middle-level lands.

Ace didn't see many people since it was still early in the morning, but there was still an excessive amount of people here and almost all of them were alchemists since they were wearing different color alchemist robes.

Their prime focus was the pavilions on the right side though and there weren't many going toward the flame library.

Grey notice Finn's looking toward the other side and guess what he was thinking. She said, "The Flame Library is the most expensive and most important place after the flame palace in the entire Flame City, and only after accommodating many contribution points can one learn the skills or techniques there."

"How much a master-grade skill or a cultivation art cost?" asked Ace curiously.

"Master Grade?" Grey stared at Finn as if she was looking at an ignorant idiot.

But it was her duty to answer his question, "Master Grade skills are very precious, and I heard there are few low-grade master skills stores above the 25th floor. As for middle-grade master skills, I only heard rumors that there is only a single one here, and it is on the top floor of the library.

"As for warrior grade skills they're price depend on levels, like a low-grade warrior skill or technique price is between 1000CP1 to 5000CP, while an Absolute-grade warrior skill or technique cost between 50,000CP and 100,000.

"Or it can go even higher if it's a soul skill. But soul skills and technique are only available for Rune Crafters since they're also soul cultivators.

"As for cultivation arts, they're even rare and expensive. According to my seniors, there isn't master-grade cultivation art in the flame library, or maybe in entire middle-level lands! Only middle-grade worrier arts exists above 25th floor."

Grey vaguely elaborates the use of contribution points and the structure of the library. There was clear longing in her gentle voice for those cultivation arts. But it seemed she can't get her hand on them.

Ace calmly listen and had a strange expression on his face when he heard about the structure of the flame library and the rarity of skills, techniques, and cultivation arts.

He didn't know master grade skills were this rare and finally understood just how generous Alvin was being when he gave him that master grade fist-skill as a gift so casually.

After all, master-grade skills were all based on elements and only Qi river cultivators can learn them!

All this time he was under the wrong impression that these skills were like cabbages, and he could get more here, but now he finally understood this wasn't the case at all.

Even the richest city of middle-level lands only had a single middle-grade mysterious skill. The middle-grade techniques and the cultivation arts were even rarer.

He abruptly thought about this self-created sword art.

He didn't know where 'Dual Swords Mirage' ranked among these grades, but he was sure it wasn't above middle-grade warrior art or even higher since he could use it with heavenly Qi.

'I should not use dual-swords mirage carelessly.' Ace took a mental note. He already has many people eyeing his secrets, and he doesn't want to give them even more motivation.

As for his unusual ability to create these skills so easily, he finally took notice and considered something is strange about this. But he had little to go with, so he just stopped bothering about it for the time being.

It's not like it was a bad thing, to begin with.

Between Grey's elaboration, they finally reached the golden gates of Flame Library.

Now that Ace was seeing this pagoda up close, it looked quite imposing and giving off a peculiar pressure. It was clear that the material used to make this pagoda was very special and the dangerous aura surrounding the structure was making Ace's soul sense tingled in alarm.

'This formation is evenly matched with the palace formation.' Assumed Ace.

"Hold the VIP token or sir, Black Fox will be dead if you enter with no identification provided by the organization," Grey advised as she also took out her silver identity token.

Ace was astonished and do the same. This also explained why there wasn't any flame guard standing outside.

Grey took the lead and enter the building while Ace followed her footsteps.

Just as he crossed the door, he felt a powerful aura locked on him, and it only disappeared when it verified the VIP token in his hand.

'She wasn't lying about instant death without this identity token.' Ace's face sank. He just witnessed something that could easily kill him, even if he used every trump card he had. He can only survive this if he used the invisible bead!

A fragrant scent finally drew Ace's focus, the inside was very peaceful and there wasn't any sound like Ace imagine. The first floor was quite spacious and just looked like any traditional library. There were chairs and tables between large bookshelves.

Ace felt satisfied since this environment was very much to his liking. His eyes landed on an old man who was lazily sitting behind a counter while reading something.

This old man seemed to be in his late fifties by his lightly wrinkled face, but his hair was still black, and he had thick eyebrows and with a slight tone chubby appearance and round eyes he looked quite... friendly.

At this moment, the old man had an excited expression on his chubby face, one could guess he was reading something very interesting.

"That Librarian Aaden and he's a..." Grey was stopped between the sentence when she realized she's talking too much.

Ace notice Grey stop before completing the sentence and find it strange, 'He's a what?' But since she didn't tell him then this mean it wasn't important and didn't inquiry.

Aaden finally noticed the new arrivals and suddenly his eyes lit up when he saw Grey and quickly wave at her with a wide smile almost covering his entire face.

As for Finn, Aaden slightly glance at his chest and after seeing it was as flat as the book in his hand, he completely ignored him.

Ace noticed this and thought this old man has some kind of relation with Grey that's why he was ignoring him.

For some reason, Grey took a deep breath before walking toward Aaden as if she was going to face some enemy.

Ace merely followed.

Aaden straighten his back and do his best to look dignified and greeted Grey, "So, if it isn't our one and only captain Magdalena, long time no see."

Ace nearly choked on his breath after discovering this old man didn't even get Grey's name right!