

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 10: The Musicians' Association

Lucien had read many novels about how to make big fortunes from scratch. Sadly, none would be helpful for him. Seven Fells were insufficient to start anything.

While the morning sun was shining on the market, Lucien was already carrying a heavy bag of goods towards the gate. No matter what great dreams a person got, survival always ranked first.

Beads of sweat poured down from his face. His linen clothes were all wet. What's worse, the fat guy called Gutche kept nagging from the side:

"Damn... A child? Watch out! Don't ruin my stuff!" He wiped his forehead with a handkerchief.

"Or you can just pay more to find someone else..." Lucien fought back in his mind. At the same time, he was also glad that he could earn one more Fell by doing all the work by himself.

Finally, they reached the gate. Lucien laid the goods safely on the cart.

Gutche reluctantly pulled out his purse and gave four Fells to Lucien. He then paused and said, "Young lad, you did a good job. Um... The work will be yours next time as well."

Lucien did all the work alone for a much lower price. No wonder, Gutche now forgot all his complaints.

As soon as Lucien got his pay, two hooligan-looking guys approached them.

"We work for Aaron. I'm Andre." The brown-haired man identified himself. He had a scar on his face.

Lucien was already prepared for this. He handed him a Fell.

The other guy just stared at Lucien and said, "Two!"

Lucien blurted out, "But it should be one! Everyone gives one!" He knew that he was in no position to argue, but he just could not stand being robbed like this.

"Um... Usually, Gutche hires two people, so we charge one Fell for each person. We charge you double cos you did all the work alone. I don't see any problem here." Andre smiled like he was a decent businessman.

A second later, Lucien lowered his head and passed the strong guy another Fell. Lucien did not want to offend these gangsters.

“Smart boy. You know the rule. Some young lads... they love challenging us. But you see, we’re still here, while... some of them are at the bottom of the Belem River. All right, Mag. Let’s go.” Andre threatened him like it was usual and left.

Of course, Lucien hated this. He was already prepared for this but still, could not control himself. He understood that either high status or strength could help him get rid of all the suffering.

“I wish there were some magic potions in the notes that would help to improve my strength, then...” Lucien tried his best to stop thinking. He knew that it was a dangerous sign. A sign that he was getting tempted to learn magic.

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Almost everyone in the city knew the unique-designed building of the Musicians’ Association. Very quickly Lucien found the place called “Sparkling Flame”.

Assembled with lines, small towers, flying buttresses, stained glasses, and flame-shaped window lattices, the whole five-floored building held a particular unsymmetrical and flamboyant beauty.

A skinny middle-aged man with a mustache hurriedly came down from the stairs, “You’re late! I told you one o’clock!”

This man was George. Cohn had already introduced him to Lucien. George worked for the association, and it seemed like he knew quite a few guys there.

“George, there are still ten minutes before the appointed time.” Lucien pointed to the golden bell tower in the wealthy neighborhood, whose minute hand still had some way to go from number twelve.

Waving his hands, George complained to Lucien, “The cleaners finished their job earlier. You gotta remove the rubbish piling up in the back as soon as possible. I don’t wanna piss the musicians off. Some of them still have a performance this afternoon.”

Lucien left his rented trolley to the guards and walked into the bright and grand hall.

Covered with soft and thick carpet, the floor made no noise at all. There were just a few people walking across the cold, quiet hall.

Following George, Lucien came to a waist-high counter in the center of the hall, behind which sat a green-eyed and pretty young girl.

“Uncle George! Is he your helper?” She greeted.

While she was talking, she took out a tinkling purse and handed it to George. According to Lucien’s estimation, approximately forty Fells were in there. However, after paying the trolley rent, he could only get eight Fells.

Holding the purse in his palms, George grinned showing his yellow teeth and his eyes narrowed into two slits, “He is a good worker although a bit young.”

Then, he turned to Lucien, "I'll leave your pay with Andre. Just find him after you finish."

Lucien nodded. He was not worried that George would keep the money himself. Even though the Aaron Gang was overbearing, they too had to follow the rules. Cohn mentioned before that someone tried to keep some money, and later he had to compensate twice the amount.

When Elena was about to find a servant to show Lucien the way to the back yard, a middle-aged man wearing a red, loose coat came in. She hurriedly stood up and bowed slightly.

"Good Afternoon, Mr. Victor."

"Good Afternoon, Elena." The man replied politely. He had blue eyes as deep as an ocean, "May I have the latest Music Criticism?" His voice was deep and rich.

Lucien was surprised. He did not expect to find a newspaper in this world, and even specialized ones. What impressed him more was the polarization here, thinking about the fact that many people in Aderon were still illiterate. Lucien guessed not many people would buy newspapers.

He also wondered how much the newspaper cost.

Victor roughly went through the pages and gave Elena ten Fells. He then went towards the stairs after nodding politely to both of them, with the newspaper under his arm.

After he left, Lucien asked Elena curiously.

"The newspaper costs 10 Fells?"

Having worked in the association for a whole year, Elena was proud that she could share her knowledge with someone, who was also from the same poor background like she was before.

"In the year 426 of Saint Calendar, the Cardinal Adelaide enhanced the method for papermaking. Since then, the paper price continued declining. Now you can buy a dozen newspapers with just a couple of Fells. But only members of our association can buy Music Criticism with 10 Fells. Others, including nobles, have to pay a silver Nar."

"Both Music Criticism and Symphony News are the most authoritative music publications across the continent." she then continued, "Every piece of music and article is produced by brilliant musicians and scholars. This month's Music Criticism published the comments from His Majesty and Princess Natasha on the concert held last week in the Psalm Hall."

Aside from showing off, Lucien's good looking face was another reason why she kept offering so much information.

"A Nar?!" For a moment, an exciting plan of robbing newspapers appeared in his mind. Five Nars could easily solve Lucien's problem! A second later he realized the thought was too ridiculous: No one would buy from him.

"Sure!" Happy with Lucien's interaction, Elena kept talking. "You think it's too expensive? In places like Tria, Antiffler, Ifai, Tilis and Anhadur, these newspapers are very popular. People there honor Aalto's music very much and would even pay one gold Thale for an old one."

Lucien took a glance at the newspapers under the counter while trying hard to resist his impulse. But, he also got some information from her words: Under the mighty church, currency across the continent should be unified; Secondly, there was no such spell for teleportation. If there was, it must have very strict rules, or the nobles in other cities would not read old newspapers.

More than ten minutes later, it finally occurred to Elena that Lucien still had work to do. She reluctantly stopped herself and asked a servant to lead him to the backyard garden.

“Be quiet. Don’t talk loud. Don’t move loud. In three months, Mr. Victor’s gonna hold his first concert in the Psalm Hall. Recently, he’s being pretty... um... sensitive,” Elena kindly reminded him.

Lucien nodded to her gratefully and followed the servant towards the garden.