

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 17: Sweet Revenge

Facing Jackson's threat, John smiled. "According to the code, a knight shall protect his family and the weak. I don't see my fault here. Actually most people wouldn't stand for gangsters, don't you think so?"

"You need proof!" Jackson yelled. A gang was often very good at keeping a witness silent.

John looked a bit hesitant. What Alisa told him bothered him again.

"Proof?" Lucien smiled contemptuously, "John's a knight squire, while you're a gangster. What else do you need?"

From what he learned in the Copper Coronet, Lucien was aware that in the Duchy of Orvarit, knights were the real nobles, and their recognized squires also held status. Lucien believed Jackson definitely wouldn't dare slander a knight squire. And he had no reason as well: A gangster was also a businessman. Jackson couldn't gain anything big from Lucien and John from doing so.

Jackson, as Lucien expected, did not retort. Yes, they can put a knight squire into prison, but how much effort and resources they would have to use? Aaron, of course, would not do this for him, Jackson knew. Especially recently, something was going wrong in Aalto. The city was like a whirlpool where different powers were mingling. Aaron was often absent from the meetings, planning something.

Knowing he was no longer in an advantageous position, Jackson tried his best to repress his anger and shame.

"How much do you want, then..." He lowered his head and tried to make an agreement. "I only got two Nars with me."

Lucien turned to John, "The sheriffs are coming. We'd better leave before they arrive."

John nodded. "Well, two Nars."

Lucien was actually quite happy with the result. Knowing his table and chairs basically worth nothing, two Nars were more than two times what he had lost. By the way, he had already moved the rest of his money and hid it under the ruins of the witch's place. All the gangsters took away were just forty Fells and some useless rubbish.

Pulling out a small bag, Jackson threw it to John. The bag was pretty empty except for two shining silver Nars. "I left the rest to my men."

“Let’s go, John.” Lucien raised his chin towards the coming sheriffs and grabbed his club. He did not want to put John in trouble. Soon, they disappeared at the end of the street.

“All right, all right... stop. We’re safe now.” Leaning against the wall, Lucien was panting heavily and felt as if his lungs were about to explode. He let his body fall on the ground, smiling.

“Finally, I can’t run anymore.”

John sat down beside Lucien, also gasping for air. “Me neither... It was pretty cool, wasn’t it?”

“What?” Lucien’s mind started slowing down and feeling relaxed.

“The fight. I can’t remember the last time I had a good fight like this...”

They were just sitting on the ground, gasping, and looking at the blue sky.

“Yeah... it was cool.” Lucien smiled. It felt like a heavy rock had been lifted from his mind: All the pain, anger, and confusion Lucien hid at the bottom of his heart was gone like floating clouds. His mind was thinking clear, and he was more relaxed than ever before.

Also, Lucien knew that he still had a real friend in this world who would shield him and fight for him, regardless of the cost. Lucien started laughing, aloud.

“What?” John wondered.

“The future. I’m thinking... after I learn how to read, after I make some money, I’ll go travelling across the continent, to see different sceneries, to know more foreign tales, to taste many cuisines...”

Lucien stopped and stared at the blue sky. But he continued thinking to himself:

“I will learn magic. I will understand how this world works. I will discover the truth of the world... and then, I will find the way back home.”

“For my parents, for the friends in my world and in this life... for myself.”

Lucien had collected three Nars. He knew he had to start his learning as soon as possible. Who knew if the gangsters would take secret revenge on him secretly. The outside pressure from the bullies and his inner motivation mixed together and made learning magic the only way for Lucien to achieve his desires.

“Traveling?” John laughed, “It’s not safe, Lucien. Although most of the dark creatures in the east of our country have been eliminated by the church, they’re still breeding like rats. Cynocephaluses, vicious goblins, gnolls... Sorry, Lucien... I don’t think your dream will come true. At least you cannot go alone.”

“Umm... I wonder, are they edible, the things you mentioned?” Lucien asked subconsciously. For him, the most effective way for eliminating some overpopulated animals was turning them into food.

“Eww!! What the hell are you thinking about?” John was baffled.

“All right...” Lucien answered with a bit of disappointment.

“If I can turn into a real knight in the future, what will I do?” John asked himself with a lot of expectation, “I think I’d be the same as you, Lucien. I also want to travel to see what the world looks like outside of Aalto. I wish it were really beautiful, like the bards described.”

“By the way, ” John said to him, “be careful in the next few days. Don’t stray too far from the city walls, you never know what these bastards will do.”

Lucien nodded, “I know. And when you see Lord Venn, remember to tell him what you did right away, and ask for punishment yourself.”

John did not expect Lucien could be this considerate. He was also glad that his lifetime friend still cared a lot about him, even though sometimes he felt Lucien had changed quite a bit.

“I will. I wish I could teach you how to read, but I cannot read either.” John sighed, “Only the high-level knight squires receive classes on how to read...” He looked a bit upset.

“John, you’ve done a lot for me.” Lucien laid his hand on John’s shoulder, “I’m grateful for having a friend like you. I really am.”

John could see Lucien’s sincere eyes. Soon he smiled.

“I know. Who doesn’t want to have such a great friend like me? Let’s go home. Mom’s waiting for us.”

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Joel was home when they came back. Alisa was walking back and forth in the living room. It was such a relief for Alisa seeing them come back, better yet, in one piece. Opening his arms, Joel grinned to them.

“Welcome back, heroes.”

And he gave both of them a big hug.

“You guys remind me of my old days.” Joel lowered his voice and winked when he turned his back to Alisa.

“Dad, you and mom gotta be even more careful for some time.” John was kind of worried.

“It’s not a big deal. Those bastards only give the weak a hard time. You once beat the shit out of them, you’re no longer on their bullying list. Your mom and I will be fine.” Joel left some space so Alisa could treat Lucien’s wounds, and then he turned to John, dead serious.

“Actually, John, you should have asked Lord Venn first. You’re his squire, his representative. Your behaviour matters to his decency.”

“Yes, dad.” John was aware of his rashness. “Lucien told me to take the initiative and ask for Lord Venn’s forgiveness, and I will.”

Joel nodded, “Lucien’s right.”

A while later, Lucien excused himself to find some usurer in Copper Coronet. He needed to start his studies as soon as possible, and thus he was prepared to face the risks in case he for some reason didn’t manage to pay it back.

Before Lucien left, Joel stopped him. When he turned around, he saw Joel was holding an old plain purse.

“There are eight Nars in it.” Joel put it into Lucien’s hand, “Take it.”

“Joel...” Lucien was surprised. He never thought borrowing money from them because Evan was still young. “Auntie Alisa...?”

She was smiling to him. “That’s all we have for now. Not too much, but enough for you to start studying.”

“But...” Lucien’s eyes became filled with tears on the verge of falling. “But this is all your savings... I... I can’t...”

Joel laughed, “Before your father passed away, he helped us more than we could ever hope for. Now, you are in need. It’s our responsibility to support you. After you learn to read, and then find a good job, you can pay us back easily.”

“I’ll work hard.” Lucien nodded with confidence.

“All the money you have now can pay the fees for two months. If we work together, at least you can have a teacher every three or four months. That’s my plan.” Joel had regarded Lucien’s study as their shared responsibility.

Lucien grabbed the little purse tight, tears were falling from his eyes, “Thank you. Uncle Joel, Auntie Alisa, and you, John.” At the same time, Lucien made up his mind to pay them back with a better life. After learning some magic, Lucien knew he had to leave Aalto as soon as possible. He could not put this family under any kind of risk.

After leaving their place, Lucien still headed towards Copper Coronet. But this time, instead of finding an usurer, he was looking for a teacher.