

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 18: Acquaintance

The afternoon sunlight send some light into the noisy pub. Bards were singing, and mercenaries were talking loudly. Lucien noticed that there were beautiful women sitting beside the bar tables.

Pushing through the crowd, Lucien finally squeezed his way to the counter.

“Any drink?” Cohn asked without raising his hairy head.

“It’s me, Lucien.”

Cohn was surprised when he saw Lucien’s face.

“What did you do to yourself?” His beard was slanted with concern, “Wait... Jackson came and asked about you earlier... Are you in trouble, my boy?”

Lucien was not quite willing to repeat what happened one more time. “I’m fine, Cohn. The problem was solved... I’m here to look for a teacher who can teach me how to read.”

“Oho! You made it?! You didn’t rob the gangsters, did you?” Now Cohn was even more surprised.

Lucien had no choice but to explain what happened briefly to Cohn. After hearing that, Cohn was very impressed.

“Lucien! You and John are finally real men now! I’m proud of you lads!” Gulping his ale, his face turned red, “But be careful, both you and John. Although chances are slim that they dare take revenge on a knight squire, but still, be wary of the bastards... you never know.”

Lucien nodded seriously.

Cohn pulled out a paper, on which there was a list of strange patterns and symbols. “I cannot read,” He laughed and continued, “but as a pub owner, you gotta put down something to help you remember.”

On the list, there were a bunch of scholars who registered here and were willing to teach. While Cohn was speaking the names out loud, Lucien noticed a familiar name, which was written on a note beside the list.

“Victor? You just said Mr. Victor?” Lucien stopped Cohn.

“Yes, you know him?”

“I met him once in the association.” Lucien stared at the name, “But he’s a musician, isn’t he? You put a note beside his name as well.”

Twirling his moustache, Cohn took another look at the list and nodded. “Yeah, it’s the same Victor we’re talking about.”

“I heard that he’s gonna present a play in the Hall. Last time I saw him... he was quite busy.”

Cohn laughed. “That’s why he had to. Having a chance to play in the the Psalm Hall is even harder than you think. I heard this from other guests as well.” Cohn climbed on a bar chair, “Six month ago, Mr. Victor got the invitation from the Hall. Since then he turned down all his other presentations, even the one in Syracuse, to focus on his preparation. He was digging into his savings for the past couple of months.” Cohn shrugged his shoulders.

“But why doesn’t he find another job related to music?” Lucien asked.

“I have no idea, boy.” Cohn took another sip of his ale, “Those musicians... tend to be quite sensitive, or say, even crazy sometimes. I guess probably Mr. Victor also needed something to be his distraction. Who knows, those artists...”

Mr. Victor made an impression on Lucien last time, when they met in the association. Compared with the others that he did not even know, Lucien felt the musician would be a good choice.

“How can I find Mr. Victor, then?” he asked.

.....

The Gesu District was named after the most well-known instrument, the Gesu violin, and was where most musicians in Aalto were gathered.

Big trees stood on both sides of the street, through whose branches the sunshine scattered into slightly trembling golden fragments that formed patterns on the ground. Light mixed with shadow. The street was like a painting.

It took Lucien quite a long time to find the address Cohn offered. After getting lost a few times, finally he was standing in front of Victor’s place, n. 12, Snehva Street.

It was a two-floor small building covered with green vines. Everything was quiet and elegant here. If all went well, Lucien was going to have his reading lessons for the following two months, which could help him change his whole life.

Knocking at the door gently, Lucien got a bit nervous. Soon a servant showed up inside the iron gate. Seeing Lucien, a boy wearing rough and old clothes, he frowned.

“Yes?” He asked coldly.

After Lucien explained, he was still in doubt, “Five Nars a month. Pay first. Are you sure?”

As Lucien expected, he pulled out his money from the bag. “Yes, I’m sure.”

The servant was surprised. He couldn't believe this poor young boy could afford the price. As a servant of a famous musician, he earned ten Nars a month and could only save one every month, sometimes even less.

"Mr. Victor enjoys high reputation. He has some acquaintances in the town hall." Opening the gate, the servant was still eyeing Lucien with suspicion. Who knew where the guy got so much money, he thought.

Lucien just smiled without saying anything. The servant's attitude was within his expectation. Feel offended? That belonged to the wealthy and powerful.

He followed the servant through the garden and stopped in front of the wooden gate, waiting there. A couple of minutes later, the servant showed up again.

"Follow me inside. Later you may give the tuition fee to Mr. Athy, the steward."

It was quite a spacious hall, decorated with a tea table, some brown couches and small desks. On the other side there was a long dining table, made of fine rosewood.

Victor got a few students here as well. His study was too small for all of them. So they just sat in the hall. There were five boys and three girls sitting there, all pretty young, probably between thirteen and twenty.

Quills and papers were lying in front of them on the small round tables. Some of them were transcribing something, while some were humming or reading in a low voice.

According to Lucien's observation, the students also came from different backgrounds: some were of humble birth, and the others were dressing quite decently. The latter ones were usually from noble families. Most of them were not qualified to inherit their family titles and could not activate the Blessing either. For those children, becoming a graceful musician was quite a good choice.

Mr. Victor, wearing his red jacket, was moving around and helping the students one by one.

Looking around, Lucien noticed the steward in his decent black suit. From his black and white mixed hair and his wrinkled face one could tell he was not young anymore. But he was standing there straight and serious.

The steward looked like a gentleman, Lucien thought. He walked towards him and asked, trying to keep his volume down.

"Excuse me, are you Mr. Athy?"

"Yes, I am. May I know your name and your past study?"

"Yeah, sure... I'm Lucien. Lucien Evans. I never learned how to read before." While he was talking, Lucien took out five Nars.

Taking the money, Athy was impressed. Apparently, the young lad was from the poor district. Most young people in Aderon were quite rude, based on his experience, while Lucien appeared pretty polite and mature.

Then Athy walked to Victor and whispered to him a little bit. Victor turned around and nodded to Lucien kindly, pointing at a spare armchair.

The students just noticed Lucien and were looking at their new classmate at the door curiously. Black hair, eyes, and well-formed features...the new guy had a good-looking face. But he was wearing linen clothes and plain shoes. Although they were clean, they could tell from the first sight that Lucien came from a poor background.

“A poor wants to learn how to read?” That was their first thought.

Soon most of them lowered their heads and went back to study again. Only the ones from ordinary families were still peeking at him carefully.

As soon as Lucien sat down, the boy next to him moved a bit away subconsciously as if Lucien stank.

Lucien did not feel offended. He shook his hand slightly and pulled out his new paper and quill. They were new. Lucien bought them with his left Fells.

Victor came to Lucien a while later, with a black hard-covered book in his hand.

“Standard Pronunciation of Lingua Franca and Basic Grammar, very suitable for a beginner. Turn to page 1, chapter 1. We start from the pronunciation of the thirty-two letters.” Victor said gently.