

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 351: The Board Member

Oliver also looked at Lucien and adjusted the gold-rimmed spectacles on his nose, "So... Lucien should become the member of the review board and be responsible for deciding what kind of findings can be regarded as being subversive, right?"

"His way of thinking is pretty subversive." After about a minute, Hathaway commented short and brief.

Morris also added, but in a bit unhappy way, "Recently we've got quite a few pieces of shocking news all from Lucien. Obviously, he has his own unique understanding in the current arcana system and he is not restrained in his own thoughts and beliefs. He's capable of putting forward these subversive points of views and thus it's reasonable for us to believe that he will also be open-minded enough for the job. Also, he's not a senior-rank yet, and this makes him even more suitable for this position."

The reason why Morris was unhappy was that he clearly knew that this finding would again win Lucien another Holm Crown prize. Morris needed to raise the rewarding standard of the prize. Morris had no idea since when the old standard—making a breakthrough contribution to the field of Element and being able to leave a footprint in the history of element magic—became so easy to achieve?

The vault of the Will of Elements gathered its wealth from the gains of the grand arcanists, legendary archmages, archmages, and senior-rank mages when they explored the other dimensions. Although the wealth came from the parts that the powerful sorcerers did not need, the value was still very considerable, plus the Will of Elements' additional income from their

alchemical industry and the rewards from the daily tasks, Morris was able to give out the prize once a year without digging deep into the vault, as long as the prize-giving did not happen two to three times a year.

Hearing that, the other senior-rank arcanists all nodded silently. Obviously, they could not do the job. Although this time they were fine with accepting the new idea, it was because before today they had already doubted the atom theory.

Therefore, choosing a young and creative arcanist was a good option.

Being stared by the many arcanists, Lucien felt that he deserved this.

"I agree. But as for Lucien's rank and reputation... I'm not sure..." Oliver shrugged.

Lauren also had the same concern, "He's only a level five arcanist, fifth-circle sorcerer, I don't know if he's capable of reviewing all the papers, and whether his judgment is reliable enough."

Fernando responded, "Although he still has some problems in mathematics, in Element, Thermodynamics, Light-darkness, Electromagnetism, Force Field, Alchemy, and Astrology, he's no inferior to other senior-rank arcanists. People think he's not qualified simply because he's too young. He can be the one judging whether a finding is a breakthrough and whether it's subversive, and then the paper can be handed to other arcanists for further review."

Arcana level was an important standard, but not the only one.

"If his arcana level is six, it shall be good enough," Hathaway said all of a sudden. The look on her face was still cold.

A level six arcanist was a senior-rank arcanist.

Lauren doubted again, "Your Excellency, Lucien Evans' paper hasn't proved that the newly-discovered particle is part of the inner structure of an atom, so the paper was only going to bring him four hundred to six hundred arcana credits. With all the citation credits, I have to say that he's still far away from becoming a level six arcanist."

The finding of a new particle was very valuable and it deserved a very considerable reward. Compared to the periodical table of elements, the discovery of the new particle brought the arcanists and sorcerers one step closer to the truth of the world. According to the tradition, the reward should equal that of Brook's finding which proved that light was a kind of electromagnetic wave. Brook got a thousand credits, and Lucien would probably get half because his paper had not proved the relationship between the new particle and an atom.

"You've forgotten our recent discussion?" Raventi roared at Lauren, "The influence factor of Arcana has been decided to be three. It will be put into effect next month!"

Currently, Lucien had four papers on Arcana, and the influence factor meant that the citation credits that Lucien got would be three times more than what he was gaining right now by the end of next month. It was very hopeful that Lucien could get more than two hundred credits every month.

"Raventi, you'd better remember that right now there's a trend, and that's why the citation of Lucien's paper is bringing him this many credits. I don't think the trend will last long. Even if it can, it's still going to take Lucien Evans another four to five months to become a senior-rank. We can't make him a review board member right now! People won't believe in him!" Lauren refuted.

Knowing that the trend of the heated discussion on Lucien's new findings was actually going to last for a quite long time, Lauren was just trying to postpone the decision and make it end up with nothing definite.

Many arcanists and board members agreed. The tradition that the board members must be senior-rank arcanists should not be broken.

Raventi also calmed down a bit and nodded. In his eyes, Lucien becoming a member of the board was just a matter of time.

"He can reach level six right now," Hathaway said to the rest of the room.

All the people present, including Fernando, were a bit confused. They wondered where Lucien could get eight hundred to nine hundred credits right now.

Morris was the first one who understood what Hathaway meant. He turned to Lucien, seeking for his opinion.

Lucien also understood what Hathaway was suggesting, and he nodded seriously.

Morris turned around and there was a forced smile on his face, "The designer of Miracle Experiment is Lucien."

Arcana's above. That meant another Holm Crown Ring, or probably plus an Immortal Throne award!

The meeting room was completely shocked. Many arcanists and board members were right now staring at Lucien as if they had never known him before.

"He... designed the experiment?!" Lauren could not believe his ears.

The fact that the experiment could produce the life ingredients in the synthetic primitive environment naturally was a great shock to every single arcanist, including the ones who did not stick to the theory of Life Force—every arcanist wanted to dig into the secret of life.

Facing this kind of response, Lucien could see his rank on Cleansing List rising like crazy.

"Morris! You can't speak it out!" Raventi was very angry.

Although he saw Lucien nodded, Raventi did not think that Lucien was ready enough to handle the great threat from the Church.

Morris smiled, "Although the discovery of the new particle can't strike the Saint Truth as severely as Miracle Experiment, it is still subversive to the improved divinity system. No matter whether Lucien is the designer of Miracle Experiment, Lucien is going to be stricken by the Church either way. Also, when Felipe's name got into the top hundred list, he was only of the fifth-circle. I don't think Lucien was inferior to him at all."

"Hathaway has kept the secret for a really long time," said Douglas very kindly to Lucien. "Today, I finally got to know who designed the experiment which I really liked. The experiment has revealed many things to us. You're the most outstanding young man I've ever seen, and I think you're qualified enough to be a member of the review board."

Fernando rubbed the side of his forehead, and he felt that his student was pretty much a big trouble.

As the member of the board in the field of Element and Alchemy, Gaston grinned, "The credits for Miracle Experiment should be around six hundred. Plus all the citation credits, Lucien should be able to get close to a thousand credits at once. Also, Lucien has the new paper on the newly-discovered particle. Basically, Lucien's a level six arcanist already, and the only thing he needs to do is to update the badge. You still have any problems?"

"None," Lauren said in a bit pissed manner.

Lucien was very likely to be the one who was going to win Holm Crown prize for three times, and also likely to be the future winner of Immortal Throne award. And right now he was of level six. Lucien was definitely qualified to be the member of the review board!

Oliver slightly nodded and agreed. Douglas announced, "In the future, when submitting papers, the author has to note whether the paper contains any subversive findings or viewpoints and whether the finding conflicts with any currently existing theories. If yes, Lucien shall be the one reviewing the paper."

"Congratulations, Mr. Evans," Morris said to Lucien with a bitter smile.

He was the youngest member of Arcana Review Board in the history ever!

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Chapter 352: The Truth

After the warm applause, Douglas smiled. "In the past month, many arcanists, including me, have proved the existence of cathode ray based on your findings, and the experiment you just showed us is of good validity. We can say it preliminarily that it's a new particle smaller than an atom. As the one who discovered it, you've got the right to name it."

Although Lucien's paper on the finding of cathode ray would not be published on Arcana until the month, the arcanists and sorcerers present had all read it.

"Let's call it... electron." Lucien decided to stick to the name that he was familiar with.

"Good. Pretty nice name. The electron will lead us to take our first step into the microworld, and it's a great progress for us to approach the truth of the world."

Douglas lectured to the senior-rank arcanists, trying to turn this great theory shift into the glorious victory of arcana, "But we shouldn't just be proud of it. We want to take a step back and think: why gas, when discharging, can produce the stream of electrons? What kind of properties does an electron have? What is its precise mass and charge? Is it related to an atom? What is the inner structure of an atom? Can an electron be further divided? We need to keep working on it."

That was very typical of Douglas, and Lucien found that hearing Douglas' lecture was bringing him some slight headache. Now he had realized why Fernando had given Douglas the nickname - Hundred Thousand Whys. From Fernando, Lucien had got to know that, when conducting Miracle Experiment, Fernando and Douglas were also present watching him from upstairs, and thus they had heard Lucien's response to the hundred and thousand questions.

Lucien turned to look at Fernando. Fernando slightly lifted his chin.

At this time, Oliver grinned and said, "Mr. President, let's give Evans some time. He's the main character today."

Douglas laughed, "My apology. I am being too excited. Let the young man take the stage."

"Evans, I'm very curious, and I'd really appreciate it if you can share with us how you jumped out of the cage of the current arcana system." Oliver smiled elegantly, "You know, Florencia's a firm supporter of atom theory and I need to spend time on gradually changing her viewpoint. Don't take me wrong... I'm not forcing you. If you want to keep it to yourself, I'm fine with it."

Oliver was not the only one being curious. Even Fernando slightly straightened his back, wondering how his student's way of thinking was like. Hathaway was the only one who remained the same cold and quiet.

Standing in front of the grand, senior-rank arcanists and legendary archmages, Lucien was very confident, "In fact, I do have a personal philosophy belief that I would like to share with your Excellencies. In my opinion, there are also differences between truths. Some are absolute truth and some are the relative truth. Absolute truth refers to the essence and the law of the world. It does not change because of the proposal of any new theories, and, that is, the truth we always endeavor to seek for."

The easy smile on Oliver's face slowly disappeared. Frowning slightly, he looked more serious.

"But due to the limitation of our knowledge, our way of thinking, the ways we explore the world, and our physical and mental capabilities, we can only get close to the absolute truth as possible as we can, but finally obtain the relative truth in the end which applied to a certain range. This kind of relative truth can only serve our needs within this certain range, and when the range is exceeded, the relative truth will turn itself into an error."

Fernando's red eyes squinted, while Douglas' body leaned backward, trying to find a more comfortable position to rest. Hathaway posed her chin on her right hand, and unconsciously and gently rubbed the arm of the chair, just like how Natasha usually did when she was thinking.

"Therefore, many of the theories that we have overturned are not simply meaningless, as they are the relative truths under certain conditions. However, with the development of arcana system, the range of our exploration has exceeded the conditions when they were first established, so now they have turned out to be wrong, and even absurd. For example, in the most ordinary alchemical reactions when producing the most common potions, based on our observation, an atom is indeed the most fundamental unit, and it is the relative truth in this condition. Also, I once asked myself why the ancient magic empire still managed to develop itself into a great power and had produced so many legendary archmages despite the fact that many of their beliefs have been criticized by us right now as being completely ridiculous. I am convinced that it is because their beliefs are some relative truths that work under some certain circumstances."

All of the arcanists, even including Raventi and Lauren, never expected that such a young arcanist like Lucien would have this profound and well-developed insight. They thought that Lucien's accomplishment was from his energy of youth, intelligence, and courage.

"As we explore further, the real world is getting closer and closer to us, the range that the truth should serve also needs to be expanded, and the relative truth is approaching the absolute truth. However, the world is so big while we are so tiny. It is definitely safe to say that, for a very long time, we can never obtain the absolute truth, but the relative truth is getting closer to it step by step. And thus we have to be mentally prepared that our truths can turn into errors at any time. Therefore, we should always keep in mind that the truths recognized by us right now are not the ultimate answer that we are looking for. We can use them, and we can trust them, but we should also know that the truths only work within a certain range. Therefore, we can be more ready when facing the subversive findings."

When giving the speech, Lucien was also working on solidifying his own philosophy belief, and also preparing himself for the future cognition shifts. Also, he hoped that his sharing could inspire some of the arcanists and sorcerers.

However, he was also aware of the fact that it was very hard to change one's belief once it was established, which was especially true when it came to sorcerers and arcanists. There was no way that their belief could be transformed by Lucien's single speech. If one could restrain one's subconscious and completely control one's body and mind, in the world of the Earth, the person would not be regarded as a common human being anymore.

Therefore, in the future, there were definitely going to be more sorcerers who would have their heads exploded from the collapse of their cognition world; there were still going to be sorcerers arguing with each other or even killing each other because of the conflicts of their beliefs; and there were also going to be sorcerers who would fail to use the new theories and philosophy belief to guide their own practice. Lucien was just hoping that what he was saying could help some of them.

After the speech, silence presided in the meeting room for a while.

Then, Douglas first applauded, "Very good point! Very good philosophical belief! Lucien's words explained why the ancient magic empire managed to grow successfully and how the Congress has come all the way. We've grabbed some of the truths in our hands, but we cannot follow them blindly. We should ask more questions, more whys. Lucien, you are more mature than I thought. I'm not talking about age, but here."

He pointed at his head, "I have nothing to worry even after you became that member of the board."

It was obvious that Douglas loved philosophy very much.

The words discussing the absolute truth and the relative truth made many senior-rank sorcerers think, but also, they still felt more or less suspicious towards the claim, because many theories and laws in the arcana system looked so valid and solid that it was hard for them to doubt it.

After a round of short discussion, the senior-rank arcanists started to leave, as they needed to go back and tell their students and friends the problem of atom theory as soon as possible, and thus gradually enabled Lucien's new finding to spread out, hoping that the most of the sorcerers could change their viewpoint slowly.

"Lucien, when your paper is published... I will talk to the senior levels... about your next Holm Crown prize," Morris said to Lucien word by word. And the look on Morris's face was sophisticated, but there was definitely sadness in there.

"I am totally fine with it." Lucien did not want to further upset him.

Morris nodded, and when he saw that Raventi had already left the meeting room, he put on the smile again and said, "In fact, Miracle Experiment is enough to win you the Immortal Throne award... I mean, you don't really need another ring, right? Ha, I'm just joking. Don't mind me."

Morris hurriedly walked away when noticing that the Lord of Storm was approaching.

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A few days later, in Cole's magic tower.

A gas servant was about to give its master a letter, but found the message left by the latter, "I'm doing an experiment with my teacher. Leave the letter following the keywords."

Therefore, the gas servant opened the envelope and started to read the letter to get the keywords:

"...Cole, it's really hard to believe that my teacher, Lauren, has discovered the conflict between the periodicity of the elements and the atom theory. He said that there was going to be something even smaller than an atom, which goes the opposite way with your belief! Atom is very possibly not the most fundamental unit of all of the substances. In fact, the substance is just people's illusion. Energy should be the essence of everything!"

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In Heidler, the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness, over the meeting among the senior levels.

"Recently, there are rumors spreading out that the theory of atom is problematic, and many senior-rank arcanists have pointed out many problems in atom theory." Rogerio gently knocked on the table with his knuckles, "It is weird."

Pesor sneered, "What is weird about it? Obviously, there has been a new experiment showing that atom theory might be wrong. The Congress is trying to slowly change the viewpoint of the arcanists. We have done the same things before."

"Very possibly. Unfortunately, we don't know what kind of experiment it is, or we could really teach the Will of Elements a harsh lesson," said a senior man in a venomous way in the corner.

Felipe, sitting in another corner quietly, looked up and said sarcastically, "Mr. Sousa, you think right now we could really do this without letting the Congress know? You think they are all idiots?"

Under the great pressure from the Congress, at least in Allyn, the conflicts between the powers and parties remained relatively reasonable.

"But if somehow we get to know what the experiment is, it is going to be their fault." Sousa put on a cold smile.

The meeting ended earlier after the task of figuring out what the experiment was given out.

When getting back to his own magic tower, Felipe said to his servant directly, "Bring the recent papers from Lucien Evans to me."

When Felipe started to read the papers again, the look on his face became more and more serious, "They are all about cathode ray... Particle stream... negatively charged?"

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In the Radiance Church in Holm.

A secret piece of information was sent to the room where the several red-robed cardinals gathered.

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Chapter 353: Conflict

As the Church's most recent strategic center, the kingdom of Holm had assembled four legendary knights, and seven to eight gold knights, which had way surpassed the power that the Church would usually lay in an area as, for example, the Duchy of Violet. Therefore, even when changing the shifts, there were still three red-robed cardinals in the retreat room.

The three cardinals looked up at the same time when hearing someone knocking at the door. One of them stood up and walked to it.

"Is it from our person in the Congress?" This red-robed cardinal had a very lean face, with blue deep eyes.

Taking out a letter, the night watcher answered respectfully, "Yes, Your Excellency."

Taking over the letter, Andrade crossed in front of his chest, "God bless you."

"Only truth lives forever!" said and night watcher in a solemn way and then turned around and left.

"Andrade, what is it about? Shall we report it to the grand cardinal?" asked a red-robed cardinal in a very concerned way.

To figure it out what the letter was about, Andrade flipped the envelope and checked the keywords on the other side. Due to the few great shocks that overwhelmed them in the past, the Church had asked their spies in the Congress to leave the keywords suggesting the theme of the information on the back of the envelop where the letter lay in, especially with those that were possibly able to shake the doctrine and the fundamental theories of theology, thus the grand cardinals and red-robed cardinals could be more mentally prepared for most of the great shocks. Last time, even the leader of the ascetics, Varantine, was injured because of the sudden, unexpected cognition shift.

"Saint, new particle, shakable, atom theory."

These were the four words in Andrade's deep eyes.

The first word stood for the importance level of the intelligence. The most confidential and important level was Archangel, then Angel, and then Saint was the third class. A piece of third class intelligence was still regarded as being important and it must be sent only to a grand cardinal immediately.

Andrade's eyes squinted slightly and answered as if nothing unusual ever happened, "Pious follower level. It's about the Congress's routine."

"Then you can take care of it," said another red-robed without any doubt.

After all, if a red-robed cardinal had abandoned his or her belief, the only ending for the cardinal would be death brought by the holy light.

In the retreat room, the three desks formed a triangle. Sitting behind his own table, Andrade started to read the letter undisturbedly like he was just reading a common piece of information. And then he wrote it down, "Because of the conflict between the periodicity among the elements and atom theory, many senior-rank arcanists have started to reflect on atom theory, but no solid findings have been discovered yet."

Then some more pieces of intelligence were sent here into the retreat room. Each of the three red-robed cardinals handled some and developed them into the reports.

When it was close to ten, the bishop responsible for giving out the information came into the room and took away the reports.

Later, at ten thirty, the reports were sent to the different ranks.

In the quiet retreat room, the three cardinals started to exchange what they had read to put them together. At eleven thirty, the joint report should be in the hand of Philibell, the grand cardinal, and Vaharall, the leader of the inquisition.

"So the Congress has started to doubt atom theory?" said a red-robed cardinal a bit sarcastically. "I wonder if his saint highness is busy with changing the chapters in Theology again?"

Andrade squinted his eyes, smiling, but did not say anything.

Cannon was the doctrine, the words of God, the gospel for the followers, which was vaguer and of greater metaphysics value, while Theology was the interpretation of Cannon, which involved more detailed discussion in all the fields.

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Cardinal Abidal had always been respecting the updated theology by the Pope, as he was clearly aware of the fact that, without the Pope's contribution, his own intelligence could have never pushed him this far to let him become a level five bishop at the age of thirty-five, and now he was in charge of the biggest abbey in the entire district.

"This is the giving of the almighty Lord, to the Lords's most pious followers. The speaker of the Lord under his holy light has brought us the truth." Abidal prayed every day, "Greed and timidity blind us to lead us to ingratitude, though gratitude was the most precious value of human beings. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven..."

At the end of the prayer, Abidal crossed in front of his chest and said in a low voice with his eyes closed, "Only truth lives forever."

When opening his eyes, Abidal saw that the young pastor was waiting for him respectfully and holding some intelligence documents. Abidal nodded to let him in.

"Anything important?" Abidal asked casually.

"Not really," answered the young pastor full of respect.

Abidal nodded slightly and started to read. He read rather fast, having approached the end of the report in a short time. He looked rather serious and he was very stern when it came to teaching Theology, thus many pastors in training secretly called him the demon angel. However, right now

there was great fear on this face as if the cardinal had fallen into the hell and found out that something had turned him into a real demon!

"About... one in two thousand..." he murmured. His voice sounded very hoarse like sandpapers rubbing against each other.

"The divinity of atoms... the foundation of Theology... have been destroyed by His Almighty..."

The young pastors did not leave, waiting for further orders from the cardinal.

After a while, the young pastor felt that the room was getting hot, and some vague sounds came out from Abidal's throat.

The young pastor hurriedly looked up, and he saw the scene that he could never forget in his whole life.

Abidal's face was written with great fear and loss. Then, a beam of pure and holy light burst out from his body and devoured the shocked face.

The small pieces of light were everywhere in the room. The young pastor failed to make a sound.

Under the bright light in the afternoon from outside of the window, the holy light seemingly had been dyed with touches of scarlet.

Abidal was not alone here in the parish of Holm. Other several bishops who were rather devout were also devoured by the holy light. As the report was sent out after the Church's verification, no one ever felt suspicious before opening it.

As for another twenty bishops, although they were lucky enough to have their lives spared, they had started to doubt the doctrine and theology, thus it was going to be very difficult for them to go any further with their divine power.

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At noon, in the Radiance Church.

When Philibell was about to pray, he heard the scurried footsteps outside of the door from the red-robed cardinals.

"What happened?" asked Philibell, having a bad foreboding.

The red-robed cardinal was still in panic and answered a bit confusedly, "Sir... six bishops have been devoured by the holy light... twenty-three have been severely injured. Also, a red-robed cardinal, Vily, was also injured in his belief."

"Devoured by the holy light? Injured in belief? What did they see? They shouldn't get the access to the newspapers," Philibell asked coldly.

"It wasn't the newspaper... It was the intelligence." The red-robed was also in a great shock and his utterance was not organized at all, "A new particle has been found, inside of an atom..."

"What?!" Philibell could not believe his ears.

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It did not take the inquisition long to figure out that Andrade was the one who did this.

In the interrogation room sat Andrade and Vaharall, the Adjudicator, while Philibell and Varantine were standing beside the glass, observing what was going on inside of the room.

"When... When did you give yourself up to the Congress?" Vaharall was furious, but also, at the same time, he felt curious. He wondered why Andrade could still use divine spells.

The smile on Andrade's face was rather pure and calm, "I don't have anything to do with the Congress. The pope, using the Congress's theory to alter the theology, is the biggest defiler! He is messing with the divinity of the power, and showing no respect to the Lord. Again and again, the Congress juggled us between their hands! We shall abandon the theology of this kind!"

Outside of the interrogation room, Varantine's eyes squinted and he said to Philibell, "Since when the power of this kind of radical conservative has risen again?"

"When facing the Congress directly, and facing the great shifts over and over again, there are some of us who would start to doubt the necessity of reforming theology."

While in the room, Vaharall roared, "So that's why you decided to kill the bishops, your siblings! What do they have to do with your so-called piety?!"

"Anyone who got severely injured by the experiment is the defiler, as they had completely given themselves up to the profanity! Killing them is my best way to show my piety to the Lord!" said Andrade with no fear. "Burn me down to ashes, Your Excellency, Vaharall! I shall ascend into Mountain Paradise in the fire!"

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In the headquarter office of the Congress.

Atlant Forman, the Eye of Curse, grinned to Douglas, "It is true that we cannot force the pastors to do things that conflict with their fundamental belief, but what if they have already let the seed of doubt grow? We find the holes in their mind, and then we make the most use of them. I call this the ultimate application of Illusion."

Atlant opened his eyes. In his black pupils, there were creepy shadows and figures.

"As long as one can think, one can never avoid being affected by Illusion!"

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Chapter 354: Message

In the Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City.

Except for Bellia the God's Glory, Stone the Four-winged Knight, and Philibell the Bright Angel, who were too important to leave the fortresses unattended, all the major members of the grand cardinal group had gathered together. Their power was so great that the air in this hall was beyond heavy.

"Your Saint Highness, the Congress has been progressing toward prying into the exclusive reign of God, and we cannot stay timid and hesitant anymore. We must destroy the Congress completely before it grows even stronger," said Azaro, another leader of the inquisition, the Light Guard. He was the one who first started talking, and it was evident that Azaro wished to declare war against the Congress.

Holding his scepter, the Pope, Benedict II, listened to Azaro without saying anything.

Then, Sard, the grand cardinal in the parish of Violet, stood out, saying:

"Your Saint Highness, the discovery of the new particle is only an overturn in the understanding of atom theory in theology, which has nothing to do with the doctrines in Canon. We have discussed this before as well, and we also once doubted atom theory before. This so-called overturn cannot affect most of the cardinals, bishops, pastors, and followers, and it cannot do any harm to your dignity and glory."

Sard was as quiet as a lake, which seemed to be rather clear but, in fact, hard to see through. His flat, unhurried voice and tone was like a spring breeze.

"I think Sard just made the point. Since the former several popes started to reform theology, we have been altering our theories constantly. This time, nothing is really special compared to what happened previously. There's no reason for us to prudently declare the war," agreed another grand cardinal, Astira, the Wind Angel.

In another several grand cardinals' eyes, Sard and Astira were beyond cunning.

It was true that the former popes had been working on reforming theology, so an overturn like the discovery of the new particle was very likely to happen every few decades. However, the decline of the Pope's reputation and dignity was also due to the repetitive changes to theology! As the only speaker of the Lord, how could the Pople keep making the mistakes like this?

Although knowing that Sard and Astira's words were not true, many grand cardinals lowered their heads without saying anything. Being able to stand here, no one in the Bright Hall was stupid. The truth was not always that important.

When the Pope lost his stateliness, the members of the grand cardinal group must be the ones who would get most of the benefits! The same thing had happened to the North Church!

At the same time, there were also many grand cardinals standing by the Pope. They were saying that it was now time for the Church to switch the focus onto the Congress, instead of the North Church. The Church had made the bad mistake and thus left the Congress the chance to grow this fast.

When more and more grand cardinals were involved in the argument, the Pope raised his scepter and said solemnly, "The thing has happened. What we need to do now is update the theology

theory as soon as possible so that most of the clergy can avoid being affected. Meanwhile, we shall put greater pressure on the Congress, and when we're ready, we destroy them."

The Pope had chosen a neutral viewpoint.

The Pope's words surprised many of the Pope's supporters. In the history of the Church, although there were only few times when a war was declared to defend the glory of the Lord, way more frequently a war was launched when a pope's dignity was challenged, including the war between the South and North Church over several hundred years. They did not expect that the Pope would just handle it so easily.

There was an imperceptible smile on the Pope's face. He took a glance at Sard and Astira meaningfully.

"Your Saint Highness, we can't just sit and do nothing before we are ready. If that's the case, the devout followers would doubt us that we're doing nothing to defend the glory of the Lord." suggested Azaro, "We shall figure out who the finder is and put the person onto the Cleansing List. We shall purify the person."

Benedict II slightly nodded, "Philibell shall be the one handling this."

Sard knew what was in the Pope's glance. Now he stood out again and said, "Your Saint Highness, we should keep a close eye on the clergy in Holm. The presence of such a radical conservative like Andrade is not just an accident but shows that there's a trend in Holm. We shall treat it very carefully."

"Let Varatine and Vaharall handle this. They're members of the grand cardinal group. They are pious and capable," said Benedict II in the same calm manner as if he did not have any negative emotions such as anxiety or anger.

Varantine was the leader of the ascetics, the representative of the most devoted follower, while Vaharall, the Adjudicator, was also one of the leaders of the inquisition. They were the best ones to handle this kind of issue.

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In the Radiance Church in Holm.

Philibell just got the command from Lance and the updated version of theology.

"So, we have deleted the chapter talking about the divinity of atom and added the part that God created many basic particles to build the world. Our major focus is that God is the first and foremost reason for the existence of the world and the first and foremost drive for the world to develop—called First Cause. After building the world, human beings and everything else in the world, God does not directly get involved in the functioning of the world, but makes sure that the world is progressing on the right path through showing us those holy signs and the saint adjudication." Philibell read the lines to Vaharall, Varantine, and Stone, the major three members of the grand cardinal group.

There was a miserable look on Varantine's face, "The power of God... had descended to such an extent?"

Facing the great pressure from the Congress, the Church was always trying to get ready whenever a new cognition shift came to them. Through all these theology meetings and discussions, the Church could always find a new explanation based on their previous belief in order to weaken the power of impact.

As the original explanations of the overturned theories most came from the cardinals and bishops, it was not hard for most of the clergy to accept the changes of the theories. At the same time, the dignity of the Pope could thus be maintained, as the Pope was never directly responsible for it.

All the three grand cardinals had attended the meetings which took place a few days ago, and the updated content was not a surprise to them. Varantine was strongly against the modification, however, there was nothing he could really do.

The updated theory believed that there was the law of causality between any things in this world, and the first and foremost reason was God, called First Cause. Meanwhile, when all the laws of the world had been built up, there should be an initial push to drive the world, and, again, God generously offered the push.

Stone, the Four-winged Knight was a bit upset, "So we should just sit here waiting for some ridiculous chances? We are not going to do anything, right? Again and again, the Congress keeps challenging the dignity of the Lord... What kind of guards of Lord are we?"

Although they believed that it was the radical conservatives in the Church who should be mainly responsible for the great loss, the grand cardinal still regarded the discovery of the new particle as a provocation from the congress.

There was a slight smile on Philibell's face, "This time, our loss resulted from the leak of information, which in turn shows that the Congress isn't prepared either. They are still working on persuading their own people. So, as we have suffered from the loss and already paid for it, why don't we just publicize the finding of the new particle. After all, many middle and senior-rank mages are taking a much firmer viewpoint on the side of atom theory than us."

As for the pastors and those in training, they were still studying the development of theology, and thus they would not be affected too much.

"I agree. We can't lose more." Vaharall nodded, "We can make a good use of it to strike a blow to the Congress."

The only thing was that it seemed to be rather weird and even ridiculous that the bishops and pastors started to inform the arcanists and sorcerers new arcana theory.

"We start from Rentato, where the headquarter of the Will of Elements lies." Varantine suggested, "Many of those sorcerers from the Will of Elements believe in atom theory."

Stone showed his support, "Good plan. But we still have to figure out who found the new particle. We must purify the person!"

...

In a quiet corner close to the Holm Royal Magic Tower, a pastor was promoting the new theology theory to a coachman aloud, while taking a glance from time to time at the gate of the magic tower not far away from them, "God first created the particles, including atoms. There are also even smaller particles than atoms. God used all the particles to build the world..."

The coachman felt confused. He could not understand the words very well. He was only capable of repeating, "God is sacred and almighty. God has created the world."

After a long time, not a single sorcerer came over or even walked by. The young pastor was a bit concerned, "Why does the tower seem to be so quiet?"

"Sir, I've heard that those sorcerers in the tower are doing some kind of... closed... training." The coachman grinned, "I don't really know what it is."

...

In the Radiance Church, the report that their action had failed soon arrived.

"The Congress is well prepared," said Philibell seriously. "Andrade's thing... did not happen by accident."

Vaharall was responsible for this and he put forward his own thoughts: "Andrade was indeed a radical conservative. But I don't think it's a mere coincidence that the intelligence happened to arrive at the retreat room when Andrade was on his shift. There are two possibilities: either the senior spy has betrayed us, or the spy has been found out by the Congress, which is using this as their weapon. Also, Andrade's way of thinking is way too radical, I think he was affected by some illusions. Illusion is the most difficult magic to be noticed..."

The study became very quiet. They did not want to face the fact that very likely their senior spy to which they had devoted lots of effort had been exposed.

For many times, they had given up using the senior spy just to protect him!

The grand cardinals started to get quite upset.

All of a sudden, something hit Philibell and he hurriedly took out the original piece of intelligence and started to decode using the rules they had agreed on a long time ago.

Within a minute, Philibell got the short message from the senior spy:

"Win trust."

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 355: The Inscription

The periodic table of elements had been used for more than two years, and its periodicity had been suggesting the arcanists and sorcerers that an atom was way more complex than they thought. When the senior level, including Morris, Raventi, and Gaston, gradually pointed out the problems and suggested the possible errors in atom theory, most middle and senior-rank mages started to feel suspicious of the theory.

In the closed training, Hathaway gave another heavy blow to atom theory established by herself using the discovery of the isotope. Almost all the middle and senior-rank mages had accepted the fact that atom theory might be wrong. As for the junior-rank mages and apprentices, accepting a new theory was not that difficult for them.

And it was even easier for the sorcerers and arcanists who did not specialize in the field of Element to switch their belief.

It was an era when all the theories were developing rapidly. Not only the Congress was working on it, but also the South Church, the North Church, and the druids, all seizing the chance to grow. Whoever was left slightly behind would probably completely disappear one or two hundred years later. Therefore, when seeing the positive trend of the switching of viewpoint, the highest council had decided to publish Lucien's new paper, The Discovery of a New Particle, as the leading paper on the issue of Arcana in October, and the curtain behind which the microworld was hiding should now be pulled up!

As for those stubborn ones who still stuck to atom theory, the Congress had decided to abandon them.

"It's cruel. But we have to." Outside of Sorcerer Administrative Department, Lucien said to Lazar and the other sorcerers.

Lazar was an elemental sorcerer with a firm belief, and when hearing Lucien's words, his smile looked a bit sad, "I still remember what you said before, Lucien. The wheels of history are always rolling forward. No matter what is in the way, it will be completely crushed into pieces. But it is still hard for me to accept the fact that those outstanding arcanists have been abandoned just within a month."

Lucien was in charge of Atom Institution, so it was also his responsibility to switch the belief of sorcerers and apprentices from his institution.

Fortunately, as the finder of the periodicity among the elements, and the first arcanist ever who dig into the law behind it, Lucien's attitude had influenced his friends directly and indirectly. Also, the arcanists and sorcerers also contributed to many of the experiments of finding the cathode ray. Two weeks earlier, Lucien had sent them the paper and showed them the experiments in person. All of the institution members had successfully changed their belief.

"It is cruel. But we have prepared them for the cognition shift, and they still have the hope to restart over again if they could force themselves to accept the new theory with their modified cognition world." Lucien tried to comfort Lazar.

Lazar grinned, "Thanks, Lucien. I am just being a bit emotional. Many sorcerers have stopped making any progress because of all these reasons, but they're still much luckier than those who somehow died from doing the experiments in the lab."

Then Lazar pretended a cough and lectured in the way of a divine judge, "Those sorcerers try to pry into the realm of God. They have violated the law. Thus they become exhausted; they die; they are cursed! That is the cost!"

"No! The so-called God of Truth is afraid of us! The closer we are to the real truth of the world, the more terrified the so-called god is! We are cursed because we are on the right path. One day, we shall tear up the pretender's mask!" Lucien also joked.

These were the lines from the most popular play in Allyn these days. The opera named Siroid was loved by many sorcerers and the lines could be heard everywhere. The main character, Siroid, was a made-up figure who had outstanding arcana and magic talent. Siroid managed to improve many powerful magic spells but he was later betrayed by his lover and was burned to death by the Church. The lines that Lucien and Lazar just repeated was from the part of the inquisition scene.

And the author of the play was the grand arcanist, Oliver.

Watching them playing the roles, Rock said to them, "If you guys are that fond of the play, go directly onto the stage. Lucien, you're always talented in music and perhaps you can turn the play into an opera. Anyway, I need to go now and update my arcana badge. I can't wait to see it when I can become a middle-rank!"

Nagging, Rock walked between Lucien and Lazar, followed by several apprentices. Although the apprentices cast Lucien a sorry look, in the next second, their faces were written with great excitement—they were going to become real arcanists now!

Before they were being busy with all the experiments, and it was Lucien who reminded them to come here and update their badges.

"Maybe... I am already a middle-rank...?" Lazar realized why he came here and quickly walked to Eric's office. In the past month, he still got some citation credits.

Lucien slightly shook his head and smiled. He also walked into Eric's office.

Today, all of the institutions' members were here updating their badges.

"You only need another five arcana credits to reach level three. Lazar, the finding of cathode ray has really fed you full." Eric made fun of Lazar using the slang in Allyn.

If it had been before, there should have been a big smile on Lazar's face. However, Lazar sucked his lips and shook his head, "Still needs five more credits..."

Seeing that Lucien came in, Eric stood up and shook his hand, "Congratulations, Evans. When you first started Atom Institution, many committee members were taking a rather pessimistic attitude, and they did not believe that you could achieve anything in three years. However, you've proved them wrong. Unfortunately, my major is not Element, or I would have quit my job and applied to join your institution."

"Thank you very much for your trust and compliment, Mr. Eric. At least, we don't have to worry about the three-year target anymore, and so we can focus on our research interest." Lucien handed his arcana badge to Eric, "Sir, can you please update the badge for me?"

There was a small smile on Eric's serious-looking face, "The Influence Factor for each journal has been decided. Among the journals, Arcana and Magic are the highest—3.0. Anyone who is capable of publicizing his or her paper on the two journals should get a very good reward, and of course, including you. You're probably going to become a level six arcanist in two to three years. Your arcana level is going to be higher than your magic level once more."

As he was saying that, Eric put Lucien's arcana badge in the cage and rang the bell.

"Today should be the day when the system of Influence Factor comes into effect. What about the other journals?" asked Lucien.

Eric picked up a newly-received piece of document and said, "2.5 for Electromagnetism, Force Field, Element, and the other four schools' individual journals. 2.0 for Light-darkness, Illusion, Transformation, Summoning, and the six small branches including Golem and Snow. 1.5 for the nine smaller journals including North Magic Newspaper, Solar Island Journal, Sound Wave. 1.0 for the four small-field journals including Blessing and Cursing, and the five comprehensive journals including Arcana Study."

Because there were more sorcerers now, Arcana Review Board had approved the establishment of some more journal branches.

As for the evaluation standards, as the committee member-to-be, Lucien knew better than Eric. The reason for setting up the standards was to encourage the development of arcana and magic study.

At this time, the cage burst out the silvery light, but it was also mixed with milk-white light.

Eric slightly frowned, wondering what was going on here.

The corner of Lazar's mouth twitched. Everywhere Lucien showed up, something different should happen...

Besides the arcana badge, there were other items: another badge with its back upwards, two documents, and a journal in black cover.

"Arcana?" Eric picked it up. He never expected that the journal would be sent directly to him through the magic circle.

There was a line of silver-stamped letters on the cover of this month's Arcana,

"The Gate of the Microworld is Opening for Us. - Lucien Evans"

Eric turned around and looked at Lucien, feeling shocked. Those times when Arcana had an inscription on its front cover were very limited—about thirty times so far. Every time when this happened, it meant that something very important and groundbreaking had been discovered, and thus a grand arcanist or a legendary sorcerer would develop the inscription to show its value. However, this time, the inscription was from Lucien Evans?!

Lucien thought to himself in his mind that he wished to add another sentence:

"Arcanists, if you want to ascend the Throne of Arcana, go to explore the unknown microworld!"

Chapter 356: The Two Documents and Two Badges

Chapter 356: The Two Documents and Two Badges

Knowing Lucien quite well, Lazar was aware that sometimes Lucien would say things that they did not understand. So Lazar smiled and said, "Mr. Eric, please take a look at the first paper. You'll see what Lucien's inscription mean."

Eric hurriedly opened the journal and jumped to the first paper. He saw Lucien's name on it—Lucien Evans X, fifth-level arcanist, fifth-circle sorcerer.

The title of the paper was: The Discovery of a New Particle.

Thinking of all the rumors that he had heard during that month, Eric suddenly felt quite nervous.

"You probably want to calm down a bit first, Mr. Eric." Lazar joked. Knowing that Eric was not an expert in element spells, he had no worries at all that Mr. Eric would get hurt from reading it.

After Eric quickly scanned the paper, he suddenly looked up and his gray eyes were shining with the light of excitement, "It's way smaller than an atom! It's a new particle! Evans, your contribution is so great that can definitely be compared to the discovery of planets! The world is way more complex than we thought!"

For the arcanists, the finding of the new particle was way more meaningful than that of the periodic table of elements. The latter was just a summarized finding, while the former had led them to the new era of arcana study.

Lucien did not expect that, after working in the office for so many years, Mr. Eric was still this passionate about the study of arcana and curious about the truth of the world. However, Lucien was still holding the suspicious attitude toward whether other planets really existed in this world.

"I'm not sure if the existence of other planets is true..." Lucien murmured.

"No... I mean... yes, we haven't figured out if the planets are really there." Eric quickly corrected himself and said, "The value of the discovery of electron should be compared to that of the finding of the fact that light is a kind of electromagnetic wave, the proposal of electromagnetic equation, the establishment of the three laws, and Miracle Experiment! The world is so big and at the same time so small. But we're even smaller living in this world!"

Eric used some quite long sentences. He was being a little too excited.

Lazar grinned at Lucien, "I've never seen Mr. Eric acting like this before."

After a few minutes, Eric slowly calmed down. He combed his think hair a bit with his hand and said, "Your inscription is definitely valid! You're right—the gate of the microworld is opening for us. How small can a particle be?"

"Our knowledge's still rather limited," said Lucien with his fingers crossing. "We can talk about it later, but Mr. Eric, can you please take out the documents and badges for me?"

Lucien's words reminded Eric what his true job was. When he hurriedly reached the badges and documents in the cage, he said to Lucien, "There's another line on the cover—Vol. 10, 789, for Mr. Evans."

Lucien realized that this issue of Arcana was a special edition for him.

"Le... level six?!" Eric stammered a bit when he saw the dazzling stars on the badge.

Lazar was also shocked. Although he knew that the discovery of electron could bring Lucien a very good credit reward, Lazar never really expected that Lucien could become a level six arcanist this fast.

Lucien was now a senior-rank mage. He was now a member of the upper class in the Congress!

"Credits... Three thousand and sixty-nine..." Eric double checked to make sure this was not a mistake.

Lazar put on a confused smile and said, "Maybe the discovery of electron is so important that the reward is even more than what we expected."

"Can I take a look at the document, Evans?" asked Eric politely. After all, Lucien was already a level six arcanist.

Lucien did not mind, "If you want, please read to us, Mr. Eric. I think Lazar wants to know as well."

Lucien just turned in the paper a few days ago. The review comment was sent back together with the journal.

"Sure I want to know the comments." Lazar grinned.

"The comment from Mr. Raventi is: 'Simple but classic experiment. It has discovered a new particle which is smaller than an atom. The experiment has shown us a brand new field with endless possibilities. It has pushed open the gate of the microworld for us. The finding will probably change the world we live in, and maybe not until many years later can we see the true value of it. The paper is worthy of in-depth discussion and it has overturned atom theory. Six hundred arcana credits and five thousand arcana points are suggested to be given to Lucien Evans as the reward'," Eric read the comment.

The comment from LockLynn was close to that of Raventi, and the suggested credits given was also six hundred. The combined review comment was:

"The groundbreaking finding in the microworld. The finding has proved the theoretical limit of atom theory and is of great significance to the school of Element. Worth of detailed discussion. A new era shall begin. Six hundred credits and five thousand arcana points are given as the reward."

The given credits were not much higher than their expectation.

"These are really high comments, even higher than that of the periodic table of elements! You're really putting great pressure on us!" Lazar joked, "But... the finding of the electron has just brought you six hundred credits. What about the other a thousand credits?"

"There's another document." Lucien pointed at the file in Eric's hand. Since the document was directly sent to the office, there was no need for Lucien to keep it as a secret.

Eric hurriedly opened it. After he scanned the file, he suddenly looked up and said to Lucien in the trembling voice, "You... You designed Miracle Experiment?"

"What?!" Lazar could not believe his ears. Although he was not on the scene when Raventi conducted the experiment in the manor, Lazar repeated the experiment on his own in the lab. He was deeply shocked by the result—the secret of life was so charming!

"I was not able to handle the consequence brought by the experiment, so I chose to keep it as a secret. But now things are different." Since Lucien's cognitive world had started to substantialize and the existence electron had become part of the structure of his mental world, the efficiency of Lucien's meditation practice had doubled. Now, Lucien had enough money to buy all the potions and materials. Maybe in four or five years, Lucien's soul and spiritual power could become strong enough to directly interfere with the reality.

"You... You're such a monster!" Lazar was more than shocked.

Eric was absent-minded for a while and then he forced a smile on his face, "Miracle Experiment almost dragged the God of Truth down from the throne. Lucien, you're a genius arcanist."

"And also crazy..." Eric thought to himself.

Then, Eric reminded Lucien, "Be careful, Lucien. The church must be watching you, and some of the crazy sorcerers might go extreme as well."

"Thank you, sir." Lucien nodded, "I am prepared."

"The final comment on Miracle Experiment is: 'The experiment has shown us a possible answer about how life first came to this world. It is simple yet very mysterious, just like a miracle. The experiment is pioneering and pathbreaking and is of great value. Six hundred arcana credits and five thousand arcana points are given'," once again, Eric read the comment.

Plus all the citation credits that Lucien had got, he had obtained enough credits to become a senior-rank.

"Congratulations, you've become a senior-rank arcanist." Eric handed Lucien the badge, the two files, and the journal.

As for Eric, he never expected that one day he would become a senior-rank arcanist. His only wish was to become a sixth-circle sorcerer before his soul was drained up, so he could prolong his life-span.

Lucien left his own spiritual mark in the badge and found that there was another permanent magic effect enchanted in the badge. The wearer was going to be immune to the common magic spells restraining one from moving such as Slow, Spider Web, and Grease.

The magic effect was a good one. Lucien nodded, feeling satisfied. Obviously, this precious badge was previously made. The original data saved in the old badge was transferred to the new one.

Lazar took an envious glance at the badge on Lucien's chest.

At this time, Heidi knocked at the door. She saw it from the gap of the door that Mr. Evans and Mr. Lazar were just about to leave. She gently pushed the door open and walked into the office, "I'm an arcanist now."

The black badge with a silver star on it was shiny.

"Good for you." Lucien nodded approvingly.

"Six... six stars..." Heidi was very surprised, "Are you already a level six arcanist, Mr. Evans?"

In the corridor, Felipe walked past with his hands in the black pockets. He looked quite sick. On the first day of October, he was also here updating his arcana badge and borrowing some books from the library.

When walking past the door, the corner of Felipe's eyes saw Lucien standing in the office. Felipe saw the arcana badge with six stars on it in front of Lucien's chest on the left.

Lucien also noticed Felipe and the six silver circles on his magic badge. Lucien smiled and nodded as his greeting.

Felipe looked the same gloomy so he would not show Lucien his surprise and bewilderment. After a quick nod, Felipe walked past the door.

"There's another badge?" Eric picked it up and saw the badge on which a quill was drawn.

Lucien thought that there was going to be a formal procedure for him to work in the review board. He did not expect that the badge was directly given to him.

"Arcana Review Board, Lucien Evans..." Eric read out the words and could not believe his eyes

Felipe was still not far away from the door. In the corridor, he heard Eric's voice. His hands in the pockets clenched tight for a moment, but the look on his face remained the same. Calmly, he left the corridor.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 357: The Rank

Haze and mist always lingered around Heidler, the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness.

With his hands in the pockets of the long, black coat, Felipe looked out of the window attentively. Beside him on the desk lay the latest issue of Arcana. The title of the journal's very first paper was: The Discovery of a New Particle.

"... Only about 1/2000 of the size of an atom..." Felipe murmured to the gray sky, "He's faster than I thought. But the discovery of the new particle shouldn't be enough for him to become a senior-rank arcanist..."

Felipe was confused.

Suddenly, Felipe reached out his hand and talked to the black wristband, "Mr. Rogerio, did you figure it out about Lucien Evans?"

Rogerio's voice came out from the wristband, "I did. They are not keeping it as a secret. The Miracle Experiment... was designed by Lucien Evans."

"Was it?" Felipe was shocked, but it did make sense. He had once guessed whether Miracle Experiment had anything to do with Professor, or there was no way that the Will of Elements could manage to put forward such a shocking experiment within such a short period of time after Felipe published his paper.

Thinking of this, Felipe's face turned even paler.

Felipe gritted his teeth and the words squeezed out from his teeth, "Professor..."

Rogério also disliked Professor, and he said, "So... I think he's still working on overthrowing the Life Force Theory."

"I don't think so. It was probably just an accident." Felipe recalled what happened at that time and he believed that Lucien was not capable of taking every factor, even those accidents that happened later, into consideration. In fact, except for the Prophet, even the legendary archmages were not able to do so. Even if it was the Prophet, he was still not capable of seeing every detail when facing a strong enemy.

"We should thank Traquair. He disturbed Lucien's plan, and thus things went to the direction as we wished," said Rogério. "Alright, Felipe, we cannot change anything that has already happened. Although he has become a member of Arcana Review Board, your magic level is still higher. You know, he's only a fifth-circle sorcerer. No matter how many high-rank magic items he has, Lucien is still in great danger from the Church. Maybe we can attend his funeral in a year or two. A year or two... It's quite long. The Church won't take any actions in the next few days when he is closely protected by the Congress."

As a member of Affairs Committee, Rogério knew clearly that Lucien had had a funeral before already, and he also knew that Felipe disliked Lucien Evans very much and regarded Lucien as his biggest competitor, although they were only competitors in the field of Element and Alchemy.

"After a year or two..." Felipe shook his head. He did not believe that what Rogério just said would happen.

He never doubted that Lucien could become a senior-rank sorcerer before turning thirty. Felipe just wondered how fast Lucien could do it.

After sharing the intelligence with Felipe, Rogério stopped the connection. He was working on his own research. After the Influence Factor of Magic had been improved to 3.0, Rogério saw the great hope of him becoming a level eight arcanist in ten years.

Felipe released a long sigh and said bitterly, "Miracle Experiment... New particle... Good for you, Lucien Evans!"

"You don't look very pleasant, Felipe." A deep and hoarse voice came out from the empty room.

Felipe was not surprised. He slowly turned around and responded, "Do I? This has aroused my passion for studying arcana. Both Magic and Arcana have the Influence Factor of 3.0. If I can develop several good papers, I can become a senior-rank arcanist in a year."

Felipe was not far away from becoming a level six arcanist.

On the chair across the desk, there was a figure appearing. To be more specific, it was a horrible ghost with a rotten face and the white skull. The ghost was wearing a long, black robe drawn with many fancy patterns.

The ghost giggled, "You need my help? Although I am not an expert in arcana, I know some of the special materials from the World of Souls that can really help you to progress further. As long as you can sign the compact with me, I can guarantee that you can become a seventh circle sorcerer in five years."

"Angwoods, I can take care of my own stuff. Keep it in mind. You're summoned by me, so I am your master. When I don't need you to talk, you don't talk. Get it?" Felipe's deep eyes looked at the ghost in an imposing manner.

Angwoods' skeleton slightly cracked, "Yes, my master."

Putting back his hands into the pockets, Felipe walked to the door of the study. When walking past Angwoods, Felipe said to the ghost just like he was talking to a servant, "Good. I am going to conduct the magic experiment. If there's no emergency, don't let anyone bother me."

"Yes, my master," said Angwoods with great respect. When Felipe left the office, Angwoods angrily swore, "Arrogant idiot!"

In the corridor, the corner of Felipe's lips curled up, "Idiot. The ghosts in the World of Souls just can't send me a better one to sign the compact with me... Do I look so silly that I would follow that thing's words?"

When stepping into the lab, Felipe turned on the magic circle and the look on his face became very attentive.

It was very cold in the lab, and the white fog was always lingering. In front of Felipe, on the operation desk, there lay a human body. The body was bought.

For this poor man, using his dead body in exchange for money to support his family was a sweet thing.

From the previous experiment, the dead body's eyes opened wide. The reflection of Felipe's cold and gloomy face was in the blue pupils.

Picking up a silver dagger, Felipe cut it down in the dead body's chest and took out the dark red heart. After putting the heart in the magic circle, he walked to another operation desk where a strong undead creature lay—a ghast, the advanced form of the ghouls. The ghast looked rather

short, like a kid, however, the smell of its rotten skin made one want to throw up, and the bones underneath were thus revealed.

Felipe was very used to it. Using the dagger, he took out the ghaſt's black, rotten heart and put it in the ſame magic circle.

Activating the magic circle and getting rid of the irrelevant tissues, Felipe cut down a thin piece from each heart. Then he uſed a bottle of reagent and dyed the cuts ſilvery.

Felipe put the two pieces in the enlargement magic circle functioning as a microscope, trying to find the ſecret hiding behind human's cells and the undead creatures' cells.

The magic circle did not work well enough. Felipe could not ſee better.

...

In Radiance Church.

"The damned defiler! He did it!" Vaharall's furious roaring lingered in Philibell's ſtudy, "I'm going to ſentence him! Purify him!"

"He's for ſure a demon, a demon that fools people! Or there was no way that he could write Ode to Joy!" Varantine ground his teeth.

The four pairs of white wings covered with spots of light stretched out behind Stone, the Four-winged Knight, "We must purify him. He's the biggest defiler in a hundred years!"

"Not only him... Including his relatives and friends!" suggested Vaharall coldly.

The look on Philibell's face was gloomy, "Lucien Evans must die. But his relatives and friends have reported him to the Church, so we cannot touch them. Also, I don't think Lucien Evans will care."

"Anyway, it's time for us to take action." Varahall's eyes were very dangerous.

Philibell looked at Varantine and Stone. Both of them nodded seriously.

"So, we put Lucien Evans on the Cleansing List," said Philibell seriously. "Inform the clergy, we must purify Lucien Evans... at any cost!"

"I agree. Also, as the designer of Miracle Experiment and the finder of the new particle, Lucien Evans has threatened the divinity of the Lord more than once. He's a dangerous and cunning demon, and he should be put on the fifty-third place on the list," said Varahall.

The number of the legendary level was of course more than fifty-two, the reason why Lucien could rank No. 53 was that the legendary from the church, the noble knights, the demon dukes and the devil lords which had not arrived in the main world, and the powerful magic creatures in the Dark Mountain Range, or the prehistorical evil creatures in the other dimensions were not on the list.

"I agree." Philibell nodded, and so did the other two grand cardinals.

"Then we'll send them the material of Lucien Evans, the Demon of Primary," said Varahall coldly.

The Demon of Primary was the code name for Lucien Evans. It came from Miracle Experiment that Lucien designed. At the same time, it also referred to Lucien's treacherousness and hypocrisy, just like a demon.

"We shall take action as soon as possible. We seek for the chance; we wait, and finally, the chance will be there." Philibell reminded Varahall in the end.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 358: The Vase

On the fifteenth floor of the headquarter of the Congress, in a bright office.

The exotic, dark-yellow carpet was thick and soft. The magic crystal light on the ceiling was dazzling even when it was not on. Several complicated magic circles were carved on the surface of the dark-red table made of precious wood. In the corner of the room, behind the bar counter, there were the bottles of wine and Lucien's favorite drink, Sky Blue... This was the office for Lucien Evans, the fifty-fourth member of Arcana Review Board. The papers would be sent to Lucien through the magic circles.

"If I am not in the office, sort the papers first and then send them to me every evening," said Lucien to the steel golem. "If I am not around, you can send the papers to my teacher, the Lord of Storm."

Lucien dared not send out the papers to the other members of the institution. After all, the reason why the papers were sent to him was that they were all possible bombs. However, fortunately, this kind of papers were very few.

The eyes of the golem shone with red light, and it responded in the metallic voice, "Yes, master."

After becoming the board member, Lucien not only got his exclusive office but also a magic servant. He could choose from the arcana puppets, gas servants, elementals, and the golems. After selecting carefully, Lucien chose the most expensive one—the steel golem made in the year of 812. It was said that the golem could fight for its master for a few minutes even in a very strong magnetic field.

Lucien adjusted his collar a bit and stepped out of the office.

Walking along the corridor, Lucien ran into the several junior and middle-rank arcanists working in Arcana Review Board.

When seeing the badge on Lucien's chest, they greeted Lucien with great respect, "Arcana's above, Mr. Evans."

"Morning." Lucien slightly nodded.

When stepping into the hall, the gate guard, an adamantine golem, also greeted using its low voice, "Take care, Mr. Evans."

Lucien heard that an adamantine golem was capable of fighting against a gold knight. Looking at the golem up and down, Lucien's eyes lit up and he wished that he could have one.

In the entire Congress, there were only a few adamantine golems. Each one or two of them were responsible for safeguarding the most important places in the tower such as the highest arcana and magic library, the major warehouse, the high-level summoning chambers, and the highest council office.

And Lucien's current wealth could not even afford a senior-rank mithril golem.

...

On the thirty-third floor of the magic tower of Allyn.

As usual, Lucien was in his teacher's office having his homework checked.

In the office, besides the Lord of Storm, Thompson and Alferris were also there. Right now, Alferris was sleeping on the carpet next to Fernando's feet just like a little puppy, slightly snoring.

"Thompson, I'll talk to you about the paper later..." Fernando put down the paper in his hand and looked at Lucien, "Lucien, it's time for you to switch to a new meditation method now since the new power of your soul has become more stable. Your spiritual power level's about the fifth circle, so your current meditation method is not really working for you. I have a new meditation method here that's quite suitable for you, and it's enough for you until you reach the eighth circle. Do you want to try it?"

Of course, Lucien would love to follow a better meditation method. He felt that his teacher should not even bother asking. Lucien had been prepared to buy a new meditation method from the highest arcana and magic library if his teacher was not going to make any offers.

"Sure, sir. Thank you very much!" Lucien's eyes were full of excitement.

Fernando took out a black old book and said to Lucien seriously, "My meditation method isn't bad, but the best meditation method for you should be developed by yourself based on your own situations and needs. When your cognition world has been basically substantialized, you can alter and amend your spiritual power and soul bit by bit using the several high-level mediation methods. If you can come up with your own meditation method that really works for you, it will be more hopeful for you to reach the legendary level. However, improving meditation is a risky and tough job. Before you're prepared, don't try it like a fool. I don't want to have a student like a fool."

Fernando's red eyes stared at Lucien in a very stern way, and he added, "Even one day when your cognition world has been basically substantialized, you also have to be very careful, or after a big bang, nothing of you would be left. You hear me?"

"Yes, sir." Lucien dared not to tell Fernando that his cognition world had been basically substantialized, so he was going to wait for another two to three years in case Fernando would feel suspicious. At the same time, Lucien was also glad that he was still being busy with something else and so far he had not got enough time with improving his meditation method. There were two reasons why Lucien could substantialize the cognition world so fast: one was that he knew that the transmission of power was not consistent; and the other was the fact that the two cosmical constants in the two worlds were, in fact, the same, which had brought Lucien great cognition impact and his cognition world had thus been reformed. This was Lucien's biggest secret, and it was very difficult for him to find other excuses to explain.

Taking over the old book, Lucien was a bit embarrassed to see the name of the book: Fernando's Meditation Method. It was obvious that Fernando was not an expert in naming things.

"You'd better stay in Allyn in the next three years, Lucien. If you have to, you must report to me or Affairs Committee." Thompson reminded Lucien, "You're on the 53rd place on the list now, the first person under the legendary level. Countless night watchers, red-robed cardinals and saint knights are eagerly trying to kill you. I even wouldn't be surprised if Philibell or Vaharall come to kill you in person."

Lucien nodded seriously, as he knew that the Church was like a crazy hound and he was right now like a little hare. Even Felipe, a person who was definitely very proud and arrogant, had also been staying in Allyn or Heidler for the two years and improving himself quietly. However, two to three years later, there would be for sure other big things happening and the Church would be distracted.

This was why Lucien was willing to reveal the fact that he was also the designer of Miracle Experiment when putting forward his discovery of the electron. He was prepared to stay in Allyn in the following two to three years, and then things should be fine.

"Then... Can I go to Rentato?" asked Lucien. As one of the senior members of the Will of Elements, Lucien should attend the meetings.

Fernando waved his hand in a straightforward manner, "Let them come to Allyn... Or you use Hathaway's demiplane to go directly to the Royal Magic Tower of Holm."

...

After Lucien left the office, Thompson sighed, "Lucien's going to get another two items with the Holm Crown prize, and maybe also an Immortal Throne. I'm already an eighth-circle arcanist, but the highest honor is still like a dream to me."

The ears of Alferris also twitched a bit in the dream, as if the little dragon also heard Thompson's words.

"If everything goes well, an Ice & Snow Medal should also go to Lucien," Fernando said so to motivate his student.

Alferris slightly opened its eyes and it seemed that its amber-colored pupils could see the precious stones on the rings and the many powerful amulets.

Thompson put on a bit bitter smile and said, "Before becoming a senior-rank, Lucien can probably get the highest honor in the three different fields. Something like this has only happened four or five times in history so far."

"Lucien found the electron from gas discharging... It reminds people of lightning..." Fernando suddenly switched the topic. "Brook has seized the opportunity by taking the risk of entering the cloud layer where flashes of lightning and thunders were in. He has proved that the electron is one of the reasons for the formation of natural lightning. In other words, if Moonsong League can be more generous, Lucien should be qualified of getting a Silver Moon Medal as well."

Fernando's words made Alferris's mouth water. Hurriedly, Alferris raised its claw and wiped the drool away. Its eyes were shining with excitement.

"The highest honor from the four different fields... This has never happened before..." Thompson felt that it was better for him to stick to his career as a battle mage.

"But Lucien's from the Will of Elements, so I don't think Moonsong League will be that generous. They will find an excuse." Fernando grinned since he did not care, "They can play blind, and I'm not going to accuse them of doing so. One day, they will find no more excuse other than giving Lucien the medal."

Thompson never expected that Fernando would speak this highly of his student.

"I'm going to teach Lucien more things about electromagnetism," said Fernando. He confidently picked up Thompson's paper.

Thompson realized that Fernando was actually speaking highly of himself.

When waiting for his teacher reading the paper, Thompson felt a bit nervous. Meanwhile, Alferris quietly moved to the door of the office.

After Alferris tiptoed out of the office, Fernando smiled, "I'll be more assured if Lucien has Alferris following him around."

"I wonder this time how many years will Alferris sell itself to Lucien for?" Thompson joked.

...

Lucien went back to his office in Atom Institution.

"Mr. Evans, good afternoon," greeted Lazar humorously, but also with some respect. "Hey, if I directly submit my paper to you, can you give me some more credits?"

Rock, Lazar and the rest of the arcanists in the institution had been playing the joke a lot recently.

"No problem. But if it's not a subversive paper, I'll take a hundred credits from you." Lucien grinned and opened his office door.

In the office, Lucien smelled the refreshing fragrance of the flowers.

"Flowers in my office? You did this for me?" Lucien asked. There was a lovely designed vase on his desk holding a bunch of bright flowers.

"It wasn't me." Lazar shook his head, "Maybe it's a gift from someone else... Many sorcerers have been coming to us recently to say congratulations to you, and, of course, wish to join the institution."

"So I've been hiding in my office recently," as Lucien was saying, he walked towards the desk. When he walked past the vase, he suddenly noticed a slight burning feeling on his skin. His cognition world that had been basically substantialized also suddenly thrilled from the burning feeling, and the electrons circling around were moving very fast.

"Radiation? A radioactive element? Curse?" Lucien was shocked.

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Chapter 359: The Investigation

The many thoughts flashing past Lucien's mind rooted him there beside the desk, and Lazar almost ran into him.

"What happened?"

"There's some kind of curse on the vase," Lucien said to Lazar straightforwardly.

"What?!" Lazar's pitch suddenly rose. He could not understand why Lucien remained so calm.

"Arcana's above! Lucien, someone's trying to kill you!" Lazar grabbed Lucien's arm and fiercely pulled him away from the vase. However, he was certain that, for one second, he saw the excitement in Lucien's eyes.

Lucien was indeed excited, but he knew that he should play like a victim. His voice became angry, "Lazar, close the gate of the institution! Do not let anyone out! Collect all the gifts received! I'll report it to the Affair Committee."

"Got it!" nodded Lazar seriously.

After Lazar left the office, Lucien started to check the vase very carefully under the protection of a magic circle. As the radiation had caused the stir in Lucien's cognition world, Lucien guessed that it was very likely to be the β -ray.

In fact, a long time ago, Lucien had started to find the powerful radioactive elements, as the application of these elements was very wide. However, although many unstable isotopes were indeed radioactive, neither of them could meet Lucien's need. Until today, Lucien finally found the ideal one from another people's evil curse against him.

Making the most use of the time, Lucien adjusted the monocle that he was wearing on his left eye and said, "Thompson, I found a cursed vase in my office in the institution. Please send someone here as soon as possible to inspect it."

"I'll send the investigator from Punishment Department there right now. And I'll get back as soon as possible as well." Thompson got back to Lucien instantly.

After submitting the paper, Thompson had gone out to deal with some of his personal stuff. But he was aware of how serious this issue was, not to mention that Lucien was his fellow, and also the senior-rank arcanist with the highest potential.

Three minutes later, the investigators from Punishment Department had already stepped into Lucien's office.

There were five investigators, and the leading one was a middle-aged man with brown curly hair and dark skin color. He was wearing the badge from Punishment Department on which there was a black scepter. Besides the badge, there was also a four-star arcana badge and a six-circle magic badge.

"Mr. Evan, I'm Bellak, from the Punishment Department. Mr. Thompson sent us here to investigate the cursed vase," said Bellak rather seriously. His dark skin revealed the fact that he was very likely from the desert nation originated from the south part of Calais and Brianna.

There was no minister in Punishment Department, as it was directly led by Affair Committee. There were twelve vice ministers in charge of the department. Their arcana level was not very high, and their magic level was of seventh or eighth-circle. Therefore, although Bellak was already a senior-rank mage, he was still just an executive.

Lucien asked the sorcerers and apprentices to gather in one of the offices to undergo the questioning by an investigator. Lucien and Lazar led Bellak into the small meeting room and showed him the vase.

Bellak used the magic spell to check it, however, the vase seemed to be rather normal.

Bellak was very confused. He activated another magic item that he was wearing. The green light spots were speckled on the vase. But still, nothing special happened.

He checked over and over again but found nothing at all. He turned to Lucien, "Mr. Evans... I don't see any curse here. Did you use a special spell when checking it?"

"I don't have any special spells, but the magic circle in the lab can tell," explained Lucien.

"Can you show me, sir?" Bellak responded, "As an investigator, I have to check every detail."

"No problem." Lucien nodded. He asked Bellak to bring the vase and the other cursed items that Lucien sensed.

...

"This... This is cathode ray?! The power is much greater!" When seeing the familiar reactions and features, Lazar was shocked. And then he realized why Lucien could discover the curse so quickly - no one was more familiar with cathode ray than Lucien!

For the sorcerers whose soul had been substantialized, when they got familiar with something, they were very likely to sense that thing in many ways, which was more common among senior-rank sorcerers.

"But how does this have anything to do with cursing? Isn't this your newly-discovered particle?" Bellak was still confused, "Maybe the material of the vase is special and it can send out streams of electrons... Maybe it's just a coincidence."

"I don't think so. My Host Star of Destiny sensed the danger." Lucien found an excuse.

Bellak wrote down Lucien's words carefully, "I'll report this to Affair Committee and have a senior-rank mage or archmage to help out. Mr. Evans, please give us some time. Meanwhile, we'll still investigate the vase."

That was what a review board member should deserve.

"Thanks." Lucien nodded, and then he came to the outside of the small meeting room with Lazar and Bellak.

Bellak asked Lucien and Lazar to stay here in case there were any other curses, while he went into the office where the other investigators were in to see if they had found anything.

"What is the vase made of?" Lazar asked, "Bellak said that the vase was probably able to emit cathode rays... If we had known a material like this, we would not have used gas discharging for our studies."

Lucien answered and he could not help grinning, "It might be some special material. Hopefully, I can get something out of this assassination attempt."

"No wonder I saw the great excitement in your eyes." Lazar finally understood, "You're really a money-digger, Lucien. One day your passion for wealth should surpass that of a dragon."

Lucien took a glance at him and said jokingly, "I don't think you know a dragon very well."

After about ten minutes later, when the several investigators had finished putting together all the record, the gate of the institution suddenly opened. A tall and thin elder man walked in accompanied by Thompson.

The elder man looked ordinary. His eyes were closed tightly, and his hair was covered by the hood. The magic robe he was wearing was of pure black like the deepest night.

"Sir... the Eye of Curse?" Lucien recognized him. He was Atlant Forman.

"I am not leaving for Calais any time soon, so I am going to stay in the headquarter for a while. Fernando told me what happened to you. I am here to take a look. My hobby happens to be collecting all kinds of weird curses," said Atlant. His voice was gentle and soft. Although the way he spoke was quite slow, his tone was assuring.

"Thank you, sir. Thank you very much." Facing the Eye of Curse, although it was not Lucien's first time standing in front of a legendary-level archmage, he still felt the great pressure and fear.

Atlant nodded casually. He walked slowly to the vase. After a few seconds, he suddenly opened his eyes, and the entire vase was covered with a layer of deep green light.

When the eyes of cursing opened, Lucien felt a sudden dizziness.

There were countless figures in Atlant's deep, black pupils.

"Indeed... it's a curse." Atlant made his conclusion.

There were black spots in the deep green light.

"The magic structure itself is not complex, but the material used is very special, therefore, most of the inspection spells have failed to work. If being affected by the curse for too long, your organs would wear away gradually and you would die from all the fatal diseases."

Lucien nodded, and he was now certain that the use of the radiation was also part of the cursing spells. However, he did not know anything else about curses.

"Thank you, sir, for your confirmation..." Bellak reported to the Eye of Curse, Lucien, and Thompson. "We've found a couple of suspicious sorcerers but we cannot make sure whether they did this on purpose or not. Because all the cursed items made from the special material are from the same shop, and the details of the items resemble each other."

"I want a thorough investigation!" Although Thompson was always rather nice, right now his tone was stern and cold.

Atlant smiled, "So my job is done. But... can I take the cursed vase? I'm especially interested in the curse and the special material."

"No problem," said Thompson, since, of course, there was no way that Thompson would say no to a legendary archmage. "There is more than one cursed item."

Lucien hurriedly added, "Can I keep a couple of them as well? I am interested in the special material as well because it might be closely connected to the electron that I've been studying recently."

"Sure. The Congress is putting much emphasis on the exploration in the micro-world." Thompson nodded, as he was very impressed with Lucien's research attitude. Facing the evil assassination, Lucien was still dedicated to his study. No wonder he had won so many honors at such a young age!

Leaving an investigator safeguarding the items, Bellak led the three investigators to dig deeper into the assassination attempt.

Because there was not yet a conclusion, except Lucien, the rest of the institution members were asked to spend the night in the Congress. Lucien also comforted Heidi, Katrina, and Annick that everything would be fine.

After finishing all the work, it was already late. Lucien had decided to stay in the lab tonight to hurry up studying the radioactive elements in the vase.

The fact that the cursed items were sent to his office only a few days later after Lucien published his finding made Lucien feel quite insecure. Therefore, he suspended his work on producing the new fourth-circle spell—called X-ray, which used the power of cathode ray, and instead started to work on producing two to three new attack or defense magic spells to protect himself, just in case.

There were a lot of new magic spells that could be put forward using radioactive elements, besides the theory of relativity and mass-energy equation that Lucien was so far not able to derive because of his limited knowledge, there were still other things that Lucien could do, such as producing more cursed magic spells and find the element called Helium.

Once Helium was discovered, Lucien would be able to use its liquefied form to produce another new spell and further push forward the limit of ultralow temperature. He would even be able to make the power of the spell reach the temperature which was only three or four degrees higher than the absolute zero.

The books in his spirit library were still locked as Lucien had never learned about the theories before. Even if Lucien could figure out how to use these most challenging theories, the correspondingly constructed spells should be of the legendary level, which was far from being practical to him.

This ice and snow spell could be even more powerful than a senior-rank one!

The only problem was that Lucien needed to find the right material when casting it, so he could make sure the caster would not die from it.

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Chapter 360: The New Magic

Late in the night, after Lucien finished separating the three rays and managed to figure out some of their characteristics, his cognition world changed again: two brand new light spots representing the two new elements showed up, and following the periodicity, the two light spots joined the trajectory of how the previously existing elements were operating.

With no special feature, one of the two elements did not have color and seemed to be rather "lazy", while there were three different rays shooting out from the other silver-colored spot—one ray had no color or smell, one had mixed colors that were hard to describe, and the third one had some special connection with the electrons surrounding the elements. The rays contained many missing magic symbols in them and together they constructed a rather weird model.

From the incomplete model, Lucien felt the power of cursing—the power to kill when one had no idea of what was going on.

Lucien was not good at using curses, and so it would take him at least half a year to complete the model and turn it into a real magic spell. Experienced as he was, he made the conclusion very quickly. So, if he wanted to improve an existing curse spell, it was going to take him at least five years as there was no guidance from his own cognition world to help him.

It seemed to him that this curse spell was of a quite high level, probably around the sixth circle, as its structure was more complex than that of Elemental Order. If Lucien had some radioactive elements as the reagent, as a senior-rank-mage-to-be, he should be able to cast it two to three times before his spiritual power was drained up.

Before the discovery of the electron, Elemental Order was a third circle spell. Now, Lucien had improved the spell to the standard of the fifth circle, and its power had been strengthened by twenty percent.

Although the structure of this cursing spell was complicated, with the help of the reagents and proper casting, Lucien should be able to use it with his outstanding mathematical knowledge and magic analysis ability, but the cost was great.

Lucien started to consider how to name the cursing spell: Invisible Death? Arcana Curse? Evans's Shadow? Lucien's Stare? Professor's Solicitude? Knowing that in a year or even half that he would obtain a new cursing spell, he was in a pretty good mood.

Later, Lucien started to use the element of helium as the reagent for casting. He was trying to get helium from the air. Lucien was doing so by using the fifth-circle spell called Hathaway's Collecting Spell, which was a must-have for most advanced magic labs. However, its magic circle was too expensive for the common labs.

After casting the spell, Lucien did not sense any gas gathering. Frowning, he guessed that it was because the proportion of helium in the air was too low. Fortunately, Lucien's lab was equipped with the fancy magic circles. So Lucien turned them on and finally collected a few tubes of helium.

This made Lucien think of his future methods for collecting his casting materials. Maybe in the future, Lucien could gather adequate materials in the space, but the radiation there was too terrible. So far, Lucien could only turn to Mr. Fernando for help.

The Eye of Curse, Atlant, was studying the cursed vase. Although he did not have a specific target like Lucien, and he was not an expert in arcana, it was also just a matter of time for Atlant to find the fact that a certain kind of ray was actually from the atomic nucleus of helium and create the new cursing spell.

Therefore, Lucien was planning on developing the paper about the new cursing spell as soon as possible and waited for the proper chance to publish it, so hopefully, he could get a few more years of the exclusive right of the new magic spell.

The Congress had developed its mature way of thinking to come up with new spells once a new theory or finding was put forward, no matter it was for constructing a new cursing spell or the improvement of a new ice and snow spell. Therefore, it totally made sense that Lucien could come up with these two new spells within such a short period of time.

Staying focused, Lucien started to use the magic circles to liquefy helium.

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It was close to the early morning. In an advanced magic circle, there were drops of colorless liquid in front of Lucien.

Suddenly, in Lucien's half-substantialized cognition world, part of the colorless light spots turned into a light drizzle and then ice and snow followed. The mysterious, crystal-like magic symbols showed up. Although the symbols were complex, they were still not complete.

Following the Congress' mature way of thinking, and according to what he had learned from his fellow students, Lucien made a quick evaluation that he could complete the magic structure within three days. However, the magic spell was going to be very dangerous and complex, and it required a more powerful pressure magic spell than Pressure Cage to be completed.

To maximize the power, the ultimate version of the spell should be of the ninth circle. At the ninth circle, the temperature created by the spell would be one degree above absolute zero!

If to make it more practical, Lucien did not have to use a very powerful pressure, the temperature created by the spell would be about three or four degrees Celsius above absolute zero, and the level of the spell should be about the seventh circle.

It was a very powerful and terrifying ice and snow magic spell! Even Lucien himself was very surprised. The temperature created by most of the spells owned by Ashikana, the senior-rank mage who specialized in snow and ice magic, was still about fifteen degrees above absolute zero. Lucien started to wonder whether that was the limit for ice and snow magic.

However, he was never an expert in this field, and he had never studied the legendary snow and ice magic spells. Maybe the temperature created by some of the legendary level magic spells had already got very close to the absolute zero, but they cost too much to cast.

What made Lucien's upcoming ice and snow magic spells more terrifying was its practicality. The most challenging part of the spell—the construction of the structure of helium, its liquidation, or even solidification—could all be prepared in advance using the casting reagents, which could bring the degree of difficulty for casting the spell to about the sixth circle.

Right now, however, Lucien still had to solve one problem—how could he cast the spell without freezing himself to death?

Lucien carefully collected a tube of liquefied helium in an expensive tube, inside of which there were vacuum layers and heat shields.

One single tube like this was worth a level five magic item. After the discovery of the electron, the Congress had finally approved the institution's application and gave the institution five of the tubes. To make further progress in developing this ice and snow spell, Lucien needed a lot of money!

Lucien had some clues to solve the biggest problem: first of all, it should be a ray spell instead of range attack; Also, Lucien had to activate a vacuum shield to protect himself. But no matter how Lucien designed the magic, using the magic was still going to be dangerous for him. Lucien then started to consider how to name this spell. After a while, he had decided to name the seventh - circle version Evans' Freezing Ray, and its ninth-circle version Snow Goddess' Whip.

After putting forward laser and magnetic trap, Lucien thought to himself that he would be able to construct a legendary spell probably named Snow Goddess' Forgiveness... or maybe Professor's Forgiveness. Lucien amused himself when thinking of this. When he became more capable and was ready to enter the upper air or the starry sky, Lucien would find the existence of positive electron, and then possibly he could create the magic spells such as Substance Demolishment or Positive Electron Artillery...

...

Although he had been working for the whole night, Lucien was super excited. Because he was going to carry around the tube in which the liquefied helium was stored, he was quite concerned that once the tube somehow got broken, that would be the very end of him.

"So, your experiment is done?" A familiar and childish voice came into Lucien's ears.

Lucien was taken aback. When he looked back, he was amused. Alferris, the little crystal dragon, was wearing a white apron and holding a plate on which there was a bloody steak. The little crystal dragon was right now looking at Lucien in an ingratiatory manner.

"What's this, Alferris?" Lucien asked, trying not to laugh.

"Your breakfast!" said Alferris as if it was too obvious for Lucien to ask, "I can cook well!"

Looking at Alferris' crystal scales, and the rare steak on the plate, Lucien rubbed his forehead, "Where did you learn how to cook... Wait, why are you cooking breakfast for me?"

"I learned it from a book called A Cannibal's Secret Recipe. Many dragons have told me that I'm a good chef!" Alferris did not answer Lucien's second question.

Lucien asked, "What's the recipe...?"

"Tear it, roast, eat." Alferris tried hard to recall what was on the booklet.

Lucien cleared his throat a bit, "So... Why are you following me, then?"

Alferris suddenly jumped forward and licked Lucien with its red tongue, "Boss, please keep me!"

"Don't!" Lucien was scared, "I don't want to die with you!"

He was still carrying the tube!

When Lucien was considering whether he should spend a barrel of money to have the little dragon be his guard for the following few years, Bellak came back with the first-round investigation report.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 361: The Safeguard

Bellak was taken aback when he saw the monster squatting next to Lucien. The monster had beautiful and crystal-like scales.

"Dragon?" Bellak immediately recognized the monster and recalled that the Lord of Storm did have a dragon student, so he calmed down.

Alferris lifted its chin and hummed in an arrogant way. It did not want to talk to Bellak.

Seeing the arrogant look on Alferris' face, Lucien was amused. He turned to Bellak and asked, "Any findings, Bellak?"

"According to our first round of investigation, the sorcerers who brought you the cursed items did not know what the items really were. They all bought the gifts from Lorban's Shop and since the shop sold these items, it never reopened again. We have no idea whether the owner, Lorban, is still alive or not. However, we can say for sure that the fact should be way more complicated than just some random careless people making the items using the special material by mistake."

Although a senior-rank mage was not able to invade someone's brain to read and rewrite one's memory, he or she could still use some illusion spells to get what they wanted to know from the middle and junior-rank mages.

"No idea whether Lorban is alive or not..." Lucien repeated, murmuring. He wondered whether Lorban had been killed after being utilized as a tool or he had run away as the chief plotter... Lucien believed that the latter was more likely to be the case, as the former would require too much luck and involve a lot of uncertainty to carry out the vicious plan.

Bellak turned the page and said, which confirmed what Lucien was thinking, "So far we believe that Lorban was involved in this whole thing and he knew what he was doing. According to the several sorcerers, they were encouraged by Lorban when they went there buying some common-used potions that they should build a good relationship with you so in the future they could possibly work in the institution. The several sorcerers were regular customers of that shop, and it was Lorban who recommended them to buy those cursed items."

"I see..." Lucien rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Any further information about this person?"

Alferris seemed to be rather bored. It bent over to the ground and soon fell asleep.

Bellak turned his page again and said, "Lorban, born in Rentato, Holm. His family has been living here since his grandfather's generation. His magic talent was discovered at the age of twelve and thus he was sent to Allyn magic school. With a relatively good score, he graduated four years later and became a sorcerer, specializing in Light and Darkness, Astrology, Element and Alchemy. Soon after becoming a middle-rank, his soul was severely damaged and became broken in one of his adventure outside of Allyn, and he could not improve his rank any further. He was also not good at studying arcana. Therefore, he started to run the alchemy shop in Allyn. Lorban is single. He's got no children, and his parents have passed away. He didn't talk much, and neither did he really have any friends. However, in the last five years, he had become more calm and mild and started to get along with people. He went missing about two days ago and we currently have no clue. We have informed the senior-rank sorcerers specializing in astrology in Punishment Department to see if we can get to know where he is right now. I guess that he has joined the Night Watch."

"Do we have other methods to approach the case?" Lucien slightly frowned. It seemed that this thing would soon come to an end since Lorban had gone missing.

Bellak was still wearing the same serious look, "We're still trying to figure out where Lorban got the special materials. Maybe we can catch more spies in this way. Affair Committee is very concerned about your safety, Mr. Evans, so I will be your guard for the following three months since this time period is most likely to be dangerous to you. In Allyn, you can just feel free to walk around and do your own things—don't mind me. I'll check around and examine the items that you use. If you're going to leave Allyn, Mr. Evans, please inform me in advance so I can report to the committee to protect you outside of Allyn."

"Thank you." Lucien slightly nodded. At least Affair Committee had shown their proper attitude.

When Bellak was checking the other items in the office, Alferris suddenly stood up and stared at Lucien with his amber-colored, big eyes, "I can do a better job than him! I can be your guard! If you can give me a beautiful Holm Crown ring, you will have me protect you for ten years! I have fulfilled my last compact, so don't worry, boss!"

"I remember... You once said that a Holm Crown ring could buy you as a guard for a hundred years." Lucien grinned.

Alferris was a bit surprised and its eyes turn round, "Did I?... I wasn't really thinking at that time... Boss, you're getting more Holm Crown rings very soon, and also Immortal Throne amulet, Ice & Snow Medal, Silver Moon Medal..." When Alferris was saying that, its mouth started drooling again, "You just give me one ring, and then you can have a dragon! A dragon that can fight, cook, you can play with, and do experiments on! It's worth it!"

"These are my honors... I can't use my honors to pay you..." said Lucien in a pretended serious way. "Also, these magic items are enchanted with senior-rank spells. I should wear them to protect myself."

"I'm more useful than your items! I know how to cast many senior-rank spells, and I can also fight physically!" Alferris was trying hard to sell itself, "I'm really good at spiritual and mind-affecting magic, and also the ones that work on one's soul!"

"I don't think so. Maybe when I become an archmage or a legendary sorcerer, and when these items become my collection, I can consider lending you the rings, amulets and medals for a couple hundred of years." Lucien was trying to lure Alferris while promising the little dragon nothing really solid.

"A few hundred years?" Alferris's eyes lit up. For a little dragon like Alferris who was still young, the fact that it could keep the precious items to itself for one or two hundred years was already very tempting. Also, Lucien did not say that it could borrow the items for only once.

Alferris made a cough, and it said in a pretended serious way, "Even if you can become an archmage, I have to wait for many years. Your promise means nothing. I'm not a stupid dragon."

The tone of Alferris really resembled that of Fernando.

"I'm not just promising you a fake hope. I'll pay you every month," said Lucien. He was saying so because right now he was already relatively rich. The cost of buying the experiment materials was covered by the fund for the institution, and Lucien's monthly share of profit from Holm Mineral and Harvest was already close to three thousand.

At the same time, after becoming a senior-rank arcanist, Lucien was getting three hundred and eighty arcana points from the Congress. Lucien was also getting three hundred from the Will of Elements. Plus the one thousand and five hundred arcana points that Lucien was getting from Arcana Review Board, his income was no less than that of most senior-rank mages.

Lucien was going to receive a few highest honors, so there was no need for him to make any magic items recently, and thus the cost was saved. So even if he was going to hire a dragon, Lucien would still have enough money for his future senior-rank rites and the construction of his own magic tower.

"I'm expensive," Alferris emphasized. Then it stuck out its red tongue and licked at Lucien's hand using moderate strength, "Boss, how much do you want to pay me?"

"Two thousand Thales every month. When I am not out of Allyn and when I don't need you to be my experiment subject, you're totally free. So you can earn some more shiny gold coins from other people if you want." Lucien's tone was very tempting.

"Really? And I can also borrow your rings, amulets, and medals when you become an archmage?!" Alferris' big eyes were shining, and it fiercely pulled out a piece of parchment from beneath its belly and said, "Boss, let's sign a hundred-year compact!"

Lucien was very happy. It was really worth the money he spent to have a dragon whose illusion level was very likely to be the seventh circle as his guard!

"If you are okay with it... Can I pay you in arcana points?" asked Lucien. He guessed that Alferris would prefer to receive shining coins and pieces of jewelry.

"Arcana points? No problem! I can use the points to buy the gems and crystals I like!" Like doing magic, Alferris pulled out a magic badge on which there were seven circles, and, at the same time, it looked at Lucien confusedly, "You don't like using arcana points? It's so convenient!"

Lucien felt that he was quite out of date.

After signing the compact, Alferris licked the piece of parchment and folded it carefully. Using the childish voice, it said, "Boss, I need to finish my last compact now."

"But you said..." Lucien was a bit speechless.

"Almost, almost! Up to five days!" Alferris blinked and waved his claw. In a second, Alferris had already run out of Lucien's office.

Lucien was just standing there, rubbing his chin thoughtfully.

...

Three days later.

Lucien received the notice from the Will of Elements that he was invited to attend the meeting held in the Holm Royal Magic Tower to discuss the Holm Crown prize, and they had also informed him how to get to the magic tower using Hathaway's demiplane.

"Mr. Evans, for your safety, I have to follow you," said Bellak.

Lucien nodded. He and Bellak arrived at the top floor of the Will of Elements' magic tower in Allyn and then turned on the magic circle. The dim light shone.

After feeling a great dizziness, Lucien and Bellak arrived at the land which was seemingly surrounded by the starry sky. The stars were dyed with all the colors, just like the different elements. Up and down, the land had colors of green, yellow, red, gold and more.

Not far away from them, there was a very high tower directly extending to the starry sky. It was the magic tower of Hathaway, the Lord of Elements.

Lucien and Bellak did not have the time to appreciate the breath-taking view in the demiplane. They walked to the other side of the magic tower and activated the magic circle there.

When the light disappeared and when they could see everything in front of them again, they were already on the top floor of the Holm Royal Magic Tower.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 362: The Change

In the Royal Magic Tower of Holm, as soon as Lucien pushed the gate open, he saw the leading characters in the Will of Elements who he was familiar with including Morris, Gaston, Florencia, and so on. There were in total about fourteen or fifteen of them here. Some of them did not make it either because they were out of Allyn for their adventures and explorations or they were in the middle of the key stage of their magic study.

"Mr. Evans, you should be safe here. I'll stay outside." Bellak whispered to Lucien.

Lucien slightly nodded and walked in slowly. He smiled and greeted the sorcerers in there, "Morning, Mr. Morris, Mr. Gaston... Very nice to see you, Ms. Florencia..."

"Welcome Mr. Evans, our youngest Review Board member in the history, and also the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize," Morris stood up and introduced Lucien to the rest of the important leaders of the Will of Elements, "and he is also going to win... win... Umm, the Immortal Throne award, which is going to make him the second winner of the award in the Will of Elements! A very promising young man!"

The first arcanist who won Immortal Throne award was Hathaway, who put forward the theory explaining the basic elemental constitution of the human body.

Morris was quite unhappy with the fact that Lucien was going to steal another great sum of money from the organization's pocket by winning another ring. The leading sorcerers present were already very used to it and they even tended to make fun of it. Seeing the look on Morris's face, they murmured Morris' nickname that was given by them—the Silver-grey Miser.

Florencia was amused and also felt a little embarrassed. As a senior-rank sorcerer who was good at real fighting, and as the wife of the grand arcanist, she never worried about getting money or materials. However, for sake of the fact that Morris was her teacher, sometimes she would be on Morris's side when Morris put forward some suggestions to save the budget.

"Lucien, this is our president, Mr. Donald, the member of the Highest Council, and he just came back from the other dimension." Morris introduced Lucien to the elderly man with the mixed black and white hair.

Donald was the typical gentleman sticking to the classic, elegant tradition of the Kingdom of Holm. He was dressing in a rather formal way, and beside him, there was a black top hat and a walking stick. His light blue eyes were neither dull or sharp, but mild and gentle.

Facing the leading sorcerer who had won over the many powerful ninth-circle archmages and one of the members of the Highest Council, Lucien definitely needed to treat Donald very seriously. His titles—a level nine arcanist, a ninth-circle sorcerer, the winner of Holm Crown prize, and so on—could easily make him a dazzling role model.

"It's my great pleasure meeting you, Mr. Donald. I've been very curious about those mysterious dimensions and thus I am always holding my very respect to you and the sorcerers who are able to go there. Can you share with me some of your experiences in the dimension?" said Lucien to Donald very politely and he was trying to build a closer relationship with the president.

Donald's voice was hoarse as if his throat was somehow damaged, "Evans, as the member of Review Board, you have the access to most of the information stored in the senior rank arcana and magic library to know about the dimensions. But, of course, we all know that you're rank on the

Cleansing List is rising fast, so I guess you probably do not have the time to read the books and materials."

Florencia grinned. Before Lucien, Donald, the Elements Chaos, ranked no. 53 on the list. Lydia, who had part of the succubus blood, also turned around and looked at Lucien with interest in her dark red eyes.

Before Lucien answered, Donald went on, "There are many types of dimensions, but because we haven't managed to find the newly-born ones, so far we still haven't figured out the reasons of their formation, which maybe involve the deepest secrets of the formation of the world. The two oldest, dangerous and board dimensions are not strange to us—we call them hell and abyss. They are divided into layers just like a magic tower."

Lucien listened to Donald's words carefully, and so did the arcanists and sorcerers around.

"As for the so-called Mountain Paradise by the Church, it remains quite mysterious. Mount Paradise has the most features shared by the dimensions, and the angles in Mount Paradise can be summoned just like how the other creatures could be summoned from the different dimensions. However, just like these missing planets, we have no clue where it is, and thus there is no way to explore it, " said Donald, "and the common dimensions are much smaller than the main word. We can reach the boundary of it beyond which there is darkness chaos. The geographical features, creatures and the ores produced there are also of a single variety. There is a Fire Dimension where the flame is everywhere; A nature dimension where unicorns live... In some dimensions, some planets do exist but no lives can be found on them; There are also Star Tombs where there is no gravity or any light; and also, of course, some worlds like a human society where countries are established."

The name of Fire Dimension came from the ancient magic empire, and the Congress kept it.

When hearing the name - Star Tomb, Lucien recalled the science fiction films that he watched in his last life. It sounded that a star tomb resembled the universe that Lucien knew. But why there was no gravity and light in a star tomb?

"So far the Congress has explored 87 different dimensions and we have control over 11 of them. For the rest of them, some are under the control of the South or the North Church, some have changed hands multiple times between the aborigines and the Church, and some are being controlled by the Dark Parliament or the groups believing in other gods or goddesses. Some, for example, hell and the abyss, are out of our control because we're not powerful enough. The purposes for us to explore the dimensions are to get the precious materials and resources and to find the truth of the world. I went to the star tomb this time trying to figure out if it has anything to do with the unfound planets, but unfortunately, I did not find anything."

After Donald's brief introduction, and when Lucien's curiosity was satisfied, Morris introduced Lucien to the rest of the leading sorcerers and arcanists from the Will of Elements. At this time, the gate of the hall was pushed open again and the grey-haired Raventi walked in. On the black magic robe he was wearing, the periodic table of elements was drawn.

"Alright, since we're all here. We can start our discussion now." Seeing that Raventi sat down in the chair which was quite far from him, Morris was in a pretty good mood.

Lucien slightly nodded to Raventi in order to show his thankfulness. The reason why Raventi was late was that he needed to safeguard the branch of the Will of Elements to secure Lucien's safety while he was using the demiplane.

Raventi did not care. In his eyes, it was just his responsibility.

"The first thing... about... Holm Crown prize..." Morris rubbed his forehead and then said, "The ring for Larry called ionization is ready. Shall we wait until Evans's two rings are ready so we can give the prize together?"

"Together. One ceremony is enough." said Raventi directly, "What is important should be the ring and the honor. Don't waste each other's time."

Raventi had given out the idea, and the rest of the arcanists did not think there was a need to dispute with him. So they all nodded.

"Al... Alright, I personally agree with Raventi's words. What really matters should be the honor, not the prize... So maybe we can just use a level-four or five ring to..." Seeing the angry look on the face of the many arcanists and sorcerers, Morris hurriedly corrected himself, "... I'm just joking... Now let's talk about the name for the two rings for Evans."

The senior arcanists would be really embarrassed if the Will of Elements was going to use a level-four or five ring as the prize.

"It's simple. One named Origin, and the other named Electron, Micro-particle, or Gate." Florencia smiled.

At this time, Lucien, as the winner of the prize, could only remain silent. In order to avoid irritating Morris again and also keep this as his secret weapon, Lucien was planning on submitting the paper on the radiant element next year. This paper could prove that electron was part of the inner structure of an atom and show that elements can be transformed. Therefore, theoretically speaking, the paper had proved one of the highest dreams of the school of Alchemy to be possible, and thus it was definitely worthy of another Holm Crown ring. Following the method used in submitting Miracle Experiment, the paper would be read by Fernando and Cole first and then be sealed.

The school of Alchemy originated from the skills of making magic items and potions in the ancient magic empire. Later, the sorcerers specializing in this field tried to change the properties of the substances fundamentally and tried to turn the common materials into real gold. But it never worked.

After the discussion, the two rings for Lucien were named Electron and the Origin.

Later, the senior members started to discuss some important issues in the Will of Elements. As a new member, Lucien rarely talked but only listened patiently and voted when it was necessary.

According to Lucien's observation, although the atmosphere in the Will of Elements seemed to be quite harmonious, in fact, there were also conflicts: Morris seemed to have some friction with Donald and each of them had some supporters; Gaston and the other two senior-rank arcanists formed their own group and they belonged to neither side; as for Raventi, he did not care about this at all, and he just directly yelled at anyone who he believed was being stupid.

...

The meeting ended an hour later.

"Lucien, the Hand of Paleness has decided to confer you Immortal Throne award. They want to ask you whether you prefer an amulet, a necklace, or something else? "

Morris was happy to see the money coming out from some other people's pocket.

Lucien opened the gate of the meeting room for Morris and smiled, "A magic robe is great."

Lucien had Sun's Corona, so it was not ideal for him to have two amulets together.

Morris nodded and put on a bitter smile, "Hope that I won't have to ask you what you want in the future."

Lucien and Morris walked together, chatting, and Bellak caught up with Lucien.

"Mr. Evans, do you want to stay here or go back to Allyn?" whispered Bellak.

"We go back." Lucien smiled. And then he said goodbye to Morris, Gaston, Florencia and the rest of the arcanists.

Florencia stared at Lucien using her green eyes, and said in a pretended unhappy manner, "I was about to discuss with you about the discovery of the new particle."

"We should have a lot of opportunities in the future." Lucien grinned, and then he walked to the gate connecting the demiplane. Raventi was also about to go back to Allyn with Lucien, as he was on duty today.

...

At this time, two middle-aged sorcerers happened to walk out from the demiplane warehouse.

They exchanged a look and they saw the deep hatred in each other's eyes.

The black-haired sorcerer pulled the necklace on his neck and murmured something. Then he turned around and walked to the core of the magic tower. The blond-haired sorcerer adjusted his collar and cuffs, and then he walked to the intersection of the two corridors.

It was only a short distance. Soon he arrived at the corridor and saw Lucien.

Meeting Lucien face to face, the blond-haired sorcerer slightly lowered his head and kept walking.

The second when he walked past Lucien, the blond-haired sorcerer lowered his head even deeper in a seemingly respectful way. However, the smile on his face was rather vicious.

It was the last moment... Then he would be free...

Streaks of burning light burst out of his magic robe, and a large amount of powerful alchemical explosives attached to his waist and chest blasted all together!

Bang! The power of a middle-rank sorcerer's self-destruction and the rows of high explosives blasting could match that of a sixth-circle magic spell!

"Demon! Go to hell, demon!" The sorcerer's last desperate and shrill cries lingered in the air.

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Chapter 363: The Interlocking Plot

The blasts together with the tumbling flame were about to overwhelm Lucien. The gray slates covering the corridor were lifted fiercely with the great power, as if they were paper pieces. The bombing was deafening, so no screaming or crying could be heard.

However, when the flame and air billows were about to cover Lucien, they were instantly restrained inside an invisible cage, and thus Lucien was not hurt. In the cage, the white gas shining with the glow of fire simply could not move even an inch closer to Lucien.

The seventh-circle spell, Forcecage!

The person who was walking with Lucien was Raventi, the ninth-circle archmage, a member of the Highest Council, and the friend of the Astrologer, who was one of the leaders of Tower. Therefore, even though he did not specialize in the school of Astrology, Raventi still had the magic item enchanted with some precautionary spells. When the blond-haired sorcerer lowered his head, he immediately had the bad foreboding. In the next second, Raventi activated the spell, Forcecage, and it caged the blond-haired sorcerer within when the burning streaks of light first appeared.

Although the power of the explosion was astonishing, it was not magic. The air blast slowly died out, failing to do any damage to the magic cage. The fading sound from the air blast was full of desperation.

In front of the archmage, the middle-rank sorcerer's assassination did not work.

At this time, the movement of the dust in the air suddenly slowed down, and the colors in this space faded away.

The ninth-circle spell, Time Stop!

Lucien heard Donald's hoarse voice, "All of you, leave the place."

Unlike Raventi, Donald studied the school of Astrology, and he had rich experience in exploring the starry sky and the star tombs, therefore, his Host Star of Destiny was more sensitive than that of other people. He noticed that something was wrong even earlier than Raventi, however, the casting time of Time Stop was a second or two longer than that of other magic spells, so Raventi's Forcecage was first activated to win some time.

Lucien was a bit perplexed. He did not understand why Donald just asked them to leave. After all, the explosion had been stopped by Raventi's spell, why did Donald still choose to cast the ninth-circle spell? But Lucien still followed Donald's words, and, meanwhile, Bellak took a step forward to protect Lucien.

As soon as they started to retreat, Morris started to cast the weird spell which made him feel really dizzy. When Morris was prepared, Donald stopped the ninth-circle spell two seconds before it expired. The dust in the air started to roll and tumble again, but a half-transparent figure was pulled out of the flame and dust by an invisible power.

The ninth-circle Necromancy spell - Soul Bind!

Unlike the low-rank magic circles that shared the similar name with it, this ninth-circle spell could catch the soul before it dissolved in the air and trap it in a precious stone. Unless the spell-caster was an expert in the field of Necromancy, he or she must chant the spell first instead of directly activating it.

Lucien could see, although very blurry, that the soul of the blond-haired sorcerer was pulled into a flame-like ruby, screaming and crying. The ruby was thus covered with a layer of dark green light.

In front of an archmage, killing oneself was not even that easy!

"I'll figure this out." Holding the precious stone, Morris walked to Lucien, "Are you alright?"

"I'm...I'm okay." Although Lucien was always quite calm and quick-reacted, in front of the three archmages, he still appeared to be rather slow.

At the same time, the rest of the leading sorcerers including Gaston and Florencia of the Will of Elements also came. They cared about Lucien, and they also wanted to know what just happened here. They could not believe that Lucien Evans, one of the senior members of the Will of Element, just encountered assassination in the headquarter.

This had to be thoroughly investigated!

"Stay where you are!" Bellak suddenly raised his hands to stop them.

The arcanists and sorcerers including Lucien, Morris, Donald, and Raventi all looked at Bellak, feeling very confused.

The look on Bellak's face was rather serious and he said at a fast pace, "Forgive my rudeness, your Excellencies. The blond-haired sorcerer's target was for sure Mr. Evans. It seems that he is one of the sorcerers whose cognition world is permanently damaged because of Mr. Evans' discovery of the new particle, and he wanted to die with Mr. Evans in despair. In the past several hundred years, we have dealt with this kind of case multiple times, and it is not a big deal. However, the problem is - why the assassinator knew the time so well? Why he walked out of the demiplane warehouse only a few minutes after the meeting ended?"

The corridor along which the blond-haired sorcerer walked here was only connected to the demiplane warehouse, and the security on this floor was very strict - No one was allowed to wander around here. If the blond-haired sorcerer was doing an ambush in the corner, the patrolling golems and the built-in magic circles must have activated the alarm.

"So, my guess is that - At least one of the senior members in the Will of Elements was helping him! For Mr. Evans's safety, please stay no closer to him, your Excellencies, in case the real ringleader of the assassination can find the chance!"

Hearing what Bellak just said, the senior members of the Will of Elements were all very surprised and they looked at each other - His reasoning made sense! But who did it?

Subconsciously, they were divided into three groups, and they were on the alert toward each other. Only Raventi roared angrily, "This's a shame! Shame!"

"Mr. Raventi, Mr. Donald, Mr. Morris, please launch the investigation as soon as possible. Mr. Evans should not stay here any longer, and I'll safeguard him back to Allyn." suggested Bellak. He trusted the three archmages who just helped, especially Raventi.

Except for Lucien whose story was like a miracle, the rest of the senior members of the Will of Elements were at least senior-rank sorcerers. If there was a traitor among them, only the archmages could handle.

Donald nodded to Morris, "Let's handle this. Raventi, please send Evans back together with Mr. Bellak."

The second after Donald finished his words, the entire magic tower started to shake fiercely. A series of deafening explosions came from some distance away.

"The core!" Morris's facial expression suddenly changed. Reaching his hands forward, a mysterious gate drawn with many magic symbols suddenly showed up in the air.

The rusted, heavy black gate was pulled open by Morris. As soon as he stepped into it, Morris and the gate disappeared together.

The ninth-circle spell, Precise Transfer!

The spell worked within the range of a thousand meters. And it worked the best within the spell-caster's magic tower!

"The assassination is for distracting us?" Donald murmured to himself. Although he wanted to send out the senior sorcerers present to safeguard around, he was concerned that this might provide the traitor with the opportunity to do any further damage to them.

So he said to Raventi, "You go to the control core and turn on the second level defense of the magic tower, in case the tower is further damaged. I'll handle the assassination case."

Except for the two legendary sorcerers, only the president and the vice president had the right to turn on the top three levels of defense of the Royal Magic Tower of Holm.

Then Donald turned to Bellak and said seriously, "You safeguard Evans back to Allyn."

Allyn was very carefully designed by the congress, and the teleport magic circles were everywhere. Any fight in Allyn would be spotted immediately, and thus Allyn was now way safer than the Royal Magic Tower of Holm.

Also, right now, Lucien's teacher, the Lord of Storm, was also in Allyn, while the other two major leaders of the Will of Elements were being very busy: Hathaway was out of the city, and Davy was fascinated with trying to create a new transformation golem.

"As your command, Mr. Donald." Bellak bowed seriously, and then turned to Lucien, "Let's go, Mr. Evans."

Lucien took a glance at the senior members of the Will of Elements who had divided into three groups in a subtle way. Lucien shook his head in his mind. Then he followed Bellak to the room where the demiplane magic circle was in.

Pushing open the gate, Lucien and Bellak walked to the magic circle. When they stepped on it, the magic circle was about to activate when the light burst out.

However, the same light covered Bellak as well.

The light suddenly swelled, and the whole space was filled with the light!

Feeling extremely dizzy, Lucien was not able to stay focused. He looked at Bellak in great shock and realized that the darkness had enveloped him. In the background of darkness, the many time curves were creepy and mysterious, and the light spots were surrounding.

Bellak...Bellak was the one who plotted all of these?!

Lucien was shocked.

And they even wasted a ninth-level magic scroll, Space Countercurrent.

Space Countercurrent was a ninth-circle spell used for interrupting the process of teleportation!

When the darkness disappeared, the sudden light dazzled Lucien's eyes. But in the next second, he activated Douglas' Absorbing Wall immediately.

When the dizziness disappeared, he found himself in the middle of a broad lake. Bellak, floating in the air, was right in front of him.

There was a triumphant smile on his dark-skinned face. Putting his right hand on the left side of his chest, Bellak bowed at Lucien elegantly,

"Black Revenger, no. 135 night watcher, sends greetings to you, the Demon of Primary."

It was him!

When Bellak was waiting outside of the meeting room, he could do the timing based on the sound of their footsteps.

There were two purposes behind the cursed vase.

If Lucien had not found the problem in the vase, he would gradually drain out and die, and the Church would use this as an excuse to attack the congress because they would say that Lucien's death was because of the God's condemnation.

But Lucien did find out, and Bellak thus managed to have the opportunity to get close to Lucien!

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 364: The Retribution

When Bellak bowed to Lucien, a layer of dim light covered the creepy black ring on his right hand.

The ring was designed in the shape that the two black snakes joined head to tail. Targeting at Lucien, a dark ray suddenly and fiercely shot out.

The magic wall shielding Lucien disappeared, and so did the enchanted magic effect on the senior-rank arcana badge—Freedom of Movement (Common). A small anti-magic field was formed around Lucien.

The seventh-circle spell, Anti-magic Ray!

As a battle sorcerer, Bellak was more cautious than the senior-rank sorcerers that Lucien once had fought against. At the very beginning, he had picked the spells that worked the best on Lucien and activated his best magic item. Also, he had limited Lucien from using any high-rank magic items by building the anti-magic field.

Lucien was unable to activate his ring, Element, and thus the magic spells built in it could not be used. Fortunately, he was relatively experienced facing the anti-magic ray, so he immediately dodged aside and tried to find somewhere to hide, as the anti-magic field would not last long.

When Bellak saw Lucien's swift movement, he realized that Lucien was also a quite competitive knight, but it did not matter to him. Smiling, he reached out his hand and gently pointed at the air in front of Lucien, and instantly, a tall and invisible force field wall rose straight from the ground.

Bang!

Lucien failed to change the direction of his movement and he ran into the wall.

Having no time to waste, using the rebound momentum, Lucien altered his direction and started to run at his full speed along the wall.

The biggest problem of this fifth-circle magic was that it was just a wall, not a cage!

When Lucien was about to jump into the lake, Bellak's buffering time for casting had ended and another gray ray shot out from his finger. No matter how Lucien tried to dodge, the ray still got him.

Lucien's eyes became glazed, and the body part struck by the ray began to harden like a grayish-white rock.

The grayish white color rapidly expanded, and in just a second, Lucien was transformed into a stone statue.

The sixth-circle spell, Stone!

"Ha, the so-called Demon of Primary... How weak you are!" Bellak put on a triumphant smile and he could not help making the sarcastic comment.

As a spy, Bellak was always under great pressure. He needed to take the chance to vent on his enemy or he would definitely go crazy. But although he was being sarcastic, he did not lower his alert. With the following series of casting, Bellak constrained Lucien completely.

After that, Bellak finally felt a bit relaxed. After all, Lucien was the student of the Lord of Storm and who knew if he had any strange magic items or scrolls.

Staring at Lucien who was right now a stone statue, there was a smirk on Bellak's swarthy face, "The command was to end the life the Demon of Primary ranking No. 53 on the list, but I just caught him alive! When the Church burns him down into ashes in public in Lance, my reward shall be abundant and my honor shall be recognized by everyone!"

He knew that he was going to spend the following several decades hiding in the Holy City, Lance, as Holm parish would have no way to protect him when facing Fernando's fury.

In Holm, all the night watchers were hiding very carefully. Once they were exposed, that would be the end of them.

Then Bellak looked around to figure out where he was right now.

Although the magic scroll carrying the magic Space Countercurrent just sent them to this random place, based on how long they had traveled just now, Bellak had the rough idea that they were not far from Rentato, and to be more specific, they should be right beside the Chirag Lake in the southeast of Rentato.

Using magic, Bellak turned Lucien's stone statue into a miniature that he could hold in his hand. The miniature looked very lively despite the gray color.

"You're a defiler, and you're doomed to be burned down by the sacred flame. What a pity... or I could ask the Pope to turn you into a permanent statue and place you in my collection room. So far

you're the sorcerer ranking the highest on the list among those I've hunted, but, surprisingly, you're the weakest one as well!" Holding the statue in his hand, somehow Bellak went a bit out of control, "You get it now? With no strong enough magic power, no matter how big an achievement you have in arcana, it's just a phantom. A so-called great arcanist can easily be caught or killed by a senior-rank sorcerer!"

The fact that his arcana level was low was a wound in his heart. Bellak was not good at arcana and he had always been mocked by his fellow schoolmates and even his teachers and colleagues. No matter how his magic level improved, people around him just could not see it. And his beloved girl also jumped into the embrace of the guy who he hated the most—the guy whose arcana level was two levels higher than his, but at that time, Bellak's magic level was still one-circle higher.

"You know what? Later in an adventure, I caught him... I killed him, but slowly. I tortured him... He begged me so desperately. But I was so happy. He was always up there, looking down upon me, but finally, he knelt down in front of me, and he even wanted to send me his wife as the gift. Your high arcana level doesn't always help you, you know?"

If Lucien had been able to think, he definitely would have mocked Bellak that he was being overly sensitive and thus his life was turned into a failure. In the Congress, no one dared to mock a sorcerer face-to-face whose magic level was higher than his or her arcana level.

Bellak calmed himself down after venting out his anger. He was ready to set off for the Radiance Church as there was no more time for him to waste. Once the senior members of the Will of Element arrived, that would be the end of him.

Bellak knew what he should focus on right now despite all the emotions in his heart.

"Confess, Mr. Lucien Evans, the Demon of Primary! Confess good before going to hell! You should regret that you did not focus on improving your magic level!" Bellak shook his head when taking a glance at the miniature in his hand.

However, at the glance, Bellak saw that the statue was putting on a creepy smile!

Something was not right!

Subconsciously, Bellak immediately tried to throw out the miniature statue. He did not care whether the statue was going to be broken.

However, it was too late, as the cone breath fiercely came out from the mouth of the statue. The breath was dim and gloomy like the human beings' dark and ever-changing mind. Bellack was too close to the statue, and he got affected by the breath.

Instantly, Bellak's brain was paralyzed. He had so many thoughts flashing past his mind, that he could not stay focused!

At this time, some strange light flashed past and Bellak disappeared. At the next second, he reappeared on the other side in the air. He had got rid of the influence of the cone breath and the power of his mind was slowly recovering.

Meanwhile, a senior-rank magic armor covered his whole body.

The sixth-circle spell, Spell Trigger, which was a powerful magic spell used by senior-rank sorcerers to handle the emergencies such as assassination or surprise attack!

As soon as the paralyzation was gone, Bellak realized that it was the paralyzing breath from the crystal dragon, Alferris!

Not all of the crystal dragons had this kind of power. Alferris' dragon breath had been improved by Fernando.

Layers of stone power fell from the statue, that became bigger and bigger. The breath of the dragon was imposing, and the fish in the lake all sank to the bottom out of fear.

After signing the compact with Lucien, Alferris had suggested that no matter where Lucien needed to go, it would turn itself into Lucien's substitute using the illusion magic in order to find out who did all the plotting behind the cursed vase. As the real Lucien would follow Alferris like a mirror reflection while using the invisibility spell, Alferris' way of talking and movement would be exactly the same as that of Lucien.

However, to make sure everything looked perfect, Alferris needed to wear all of Lucien's senior-rank magic items, since they could not be replicated. Lucien was a bit concerned about it.

Alferris' illusion magic could easily fool a seventh or eighth-circle sorcerer, if he or she did not use the special magic to examine carefully, not to mention Bellak. Therefore, since Donald, Morris, and Raventi could see the truth, they did not worry at all with letting "Lucien" go back with Bellak alone.

In fact, all of Bellak's magic had failed to work except the anti-magic ray, since Alferris was immune to many spells. However, Alferris managed to deceive Bellak by using illusion, and was waiting for the chance to fight back.

Since the anti-magic ray did not affect the real Lucien who was in his invisibility, Alferris' illusionary power was still working. Later, Alferris was able to get rid of the effect of the anti-magic ray faster than a senior-rank sorcerer.

"Well, call me Lucien Alferris!" said the little crystal dragon triumphantly. One of its big claws was wearing the beautiful and shining Holm Crown ring, Element.

Although Bellak was pissed, he did not panic. Bellak knew that Alferris just turned into the seventh-circle, so it would not be too hard for him to escape away under its claws. While feeling rather confused and wondering where Lucien really was, Bellak was ready to retreat.

However, before he managed to activate the magic model in his soul, Bellak suddenly sensed a great danger!

In the air above him, the real Lucien Evans showed up because the illusion magic from Alferris had been dispelled. Beside him in the air, there was a tube of colorless liquid, and Lucien was casting a long and weird spell.

In the next second, a colorless and dim ray shot out targeting at Bellak, who immediately activated the sixth-circle defensive spell—Starlight Cloak.

The light of stars joined together and became a cloak covering Bellak when the freezing-cold ray shot him in his chest.

Bellak heard the ice-cracking sound in his mind, and to his great shock, he saw that even the starlight cloak had failed to prevent the ray. The cloak was frozen, and the freezing process quickly extended to his body.

The water drops around were frozen into solid pieces; the hydrogen in the air was solidified; oxygen was solidified—the air was also frozen. There were light-blue snowflakes in the air, shining under the sunlight, and they were from the colorless liquid.

Bellak could not move. His magic ring was frozen and then broke into pieces, the blood in his body was frozen solid, and his skin was turned into a layer of crystal ice. In the last second of his life, the shock and great fear lingered in his eyes. He had never expected that Lucien, in fact, possessed such a horrifying magic!

What was it? However, Bellak would never know now.

Mimicking Bellak's manner, Lucien put his right hand on his chest and slightly bowed.

"Thank you for the vase you sent me, Mr. Bellak."

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Chapter 365: The Great Disturbance

The sun was shining and the lake rippling.

Before Bellak, who was frozen solid, started to fall, the ice and snow pieces surrounding him started to melt and evaporate, and then his body and the magic robe he was wearing were turned into the white powder, simmering in the air.

The power of Evans' Freezing Ray even surpassed Lucien's own expectation. The spell just turned a six-circle sorcerer, who had already cast his own defensive spells, into pieces of ice crystal and a handful of powder. Even the magic he just used was also frozen and broken into tiny pieces!

Although it was possibly because Bellak underestimated the power of the ray, no one could deny the fact that this seventh-circle magic had already won against the rest of the snow and ice spells, and what was even more terrifying was that, with the proper casting reagent, even a senior-rank-to-be sorcerer whose cognition world had been partly substantialized could use it.

In other words, because of the progress in arcana study, Lucien had managed to lower the requirement of casting this seventh-circle spell while retaining the power, which complied with the effort that the Congress had always been making.

The powder of the magic items that Bellak wore fell onto the small piece of land at the center of the lake. Lucien turned around and saw the shocking look on Alferris' face. Its amber-colored eyes opened wide.

Lucien, of course, wanted Alferris to keep it as a secret for him.

He put on a kind smile and asked Alferris who looked in shock, "Are you alright?"

"My rings... amulets..." Alferris' childish voice trembled as if there was deep sorrow in it. It had been eager to collect Bellak's magic items for a long time, which was always its biggest interest. As for how powerful Lucien's spell was, sorry, right now it was not in the mood to think of it at all.

That was Alferris. Lucien released a sigh of relief in his mind, "You know what? The powder and pieces are still valuable."

In fact, after Lucien's cognition world was substantialized, using Elemental Swirl would not drain him up anymore, and he could even use it twice in a row. Lucien had several ways to kill Bellak, but to be careful, he directly used his most powerful hidden weapon.

"Really?" Alferris cheered up.

"Of course," answered Lucien very calmly.

Although Lucien was not lying, as the broken pieces and power did have some value, when compared to the original rings and amulets, the value was not even close. However, Lucien was not going to tell Alferris the truth, since the dragon only collected them, and in fact, would never sell them.

Alferris dived and very quickly collected the powder and pieces.

"Are you happy now?" The smile on Lucien's face was still nice and kind.

"Yup!" Alferris counted the materials it got and answered cheerfully.

"So... It's time to give my ring back to me." Lucien continued to smile.

Alferris' body suddenly became stiff as it was just struck by an invisible bolt of lightning. And then it said in a pretended calm way, "Let me keep playing Lucien Evans."

"I don't need to leave Allyn recently," said Lucien. He adjusted the monocle he was wearing and informed his teacher, Fernando, Thompson, Morris, and Raventi respectively.

Seeing that Lucien was being very firm, Alferris became very depressed. Slowly and carefully, it took off the ring and handed it back to Lucien.

...

In Rentato, the Kingdom of Holm.

After finishing his preach to the several leading conservative nobles, the red-robed cardinal, Adrian, stepped out of the strictly-guarded manor.

The experienced coachmen gently pulled the reins and coaches stopped in front of Adrian nicely and smoothly.

The pastors and knights guarding the red-robed cardinal quickly walked forward and divided into two rows to guard the coaches, waiting for Adrian to get on one of them.

Adrian crossed in front of his chest and prayed at a low voice. Then, he slowly walked to the coach in stateliness.

Suddenly, as if he was warned by God, he sensed a great danger and immediately activated a seventh level divine spell, Chaos Teleportation.

A sacred gate covered in white light slowly opened in front of him.

However, when Adrian was about to step in, the visional gate connecting to Mountain Paradise shook fiercely and then shattered.

The ninth-circle Force Field spell, Space Lock!

Then, the temperature of the environment rose rapidly and the air became boiling hot. The ground had been turned into a orange-red lava and devoured the pastors, bishops, and knights before they could release their bitter screams.

The red-robed cardinal started to fall into pieces, and the activated divine armor and protective screen were also melting like small candles before a great flame.

The ninth-circle elemental spell, Raventi's Flame Hell!

Adrian could not move at all because of the space lock. Crying and screaming, he was burnt to ashes!

A few minutes later, the flame hell quieted down. The coachmen were more than scared seeing the big pit in front of them. The area of the pit just covered the area where the clergy was standing. However, the coaches and the coachmen who were just a few inches away from them remained completely unharmed, and the horses were even snorting in a quite relaxed way.

The remaining flame formed the words on the ground,

"Equal Revenge."

...

At noon, in a quiet church in Rentato.

There were no followers coming in and out since it had been converted into a cloister for the ascetics. All the fancy decorations had been removed, and the thistles and thorns representing all the sufferings were planted.

In the room which originally belonged to the bishop, a young man in his early twenties was tempering his will using pain. His hair was rather short, and his figure was robust.

Abraham was the most outstanding and talented ascetic among his peers, and he had directly contributed to the improvement of theology. Although Varantine disliked some of his point of

views, he had to concede that Abraham was very likely to become a red-robed cardinal in the next five years. Many grand cardinals even regarded him as the future Saint!

Ever since the main focus of the Church started to change after facing the continuous provocation from the Congress, Abraham was among the first team of clergy who volunteered to come to Holm. Abraham once said, "Only dangers and obstacles can purify one's piety. Without death and the sufferings, no honor of devotion can be proved."

In the darkness, Abraham walked on the thistles and thorns with his bare feet, however, he did not release a single groan. Suddenly, his eyes opened wide, as the dark room was somehow lit up.

Outside of the cloister, four flaming meteorites fell from the sky and directly hit the building.

The ninth-circle spell, Meteor Swarm.

It was a magic belonging to both the school of Element and Astrology.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The cloister was completely flattened after the series of explosions.

Abraham's body was now in chunks and pieces, and his eyes were still open wide. In the last second of his life, he still had no idea what just happened.

In the air, Morris opened the gate of Precise Transfer in the sky and left before the defense magic circles in Rentato were activated.

...

Not far away from Radiance Church, in the station of the Knights of Grail.

The level-six radiant knight Sigma was leading his team, doing the regular patrolling as usual, and the sounds of the pure-white armor pieces clacking were short and crisp.

All of a sudden, he jumped forward very swiftly, but the lightning from the sky was even faster.

The lightning hit Sigma's back along with the sacred wings he had. The lightning did not numb Sigma like the common ones, but it vibrated at a high speed. Like a table-knife cutting a piece of cheese, the lightning blade easily cut open Sigma's armor and his body. The cut was burned black.

That was Fernando's Lightning Smelter!

The power of this fifth-circle spell, when cast by an eighth-circle sorcerer, was no inferior to that of an eighth-circle spell!

After leaving the words "Equal Revenge", Thompson quickly left.

...

On the thirty-third floor of the headquarter of the Congress of Magic in Allyn.

"The red-robed cardinals, ascetics, and radiant knights, ten in total, have been eliminated. We have shown the Church our resolution on taking revenge. In the future, if they dare to do anything like this again, we will make them pay tenfold," reported Thompson to the Lord of Storm.

Fernando nodded slightly, "So they are all supporters of the Pope, right?"

"That's correct. The red-robed cardinals and ascetics supported the theology reform, and the knights were even more loyal," said Thompson in an assuring way, and then he added concernedly, "We shall be prepared for the war now, sir. Seeing what we did, the Church will for sure fight back."

"Gather the sorcerers to get prepared. Also, inform the nobles. They were the ones who were pursuing the balance between the Congress and the Church, and thus they should be ready to bear the consequences," said Fernando a bit sarcastically. "We'll see if they want to support one side, keep the weak balance... or... they are going to wait until we are both weakened from the war to benefit from it. However, if there is going to be a war, the war will for sure take place in Holm. There's no way that the nobles can just look on with folded arms. The best way for the nobles to act is to threaten the Church to stay calm, and thus the delicate balance can be kept. "

After listening to Fernando's analysis, Thompson left the office to inform the Affair Committee of the will of the Highest Council.

After a while, Fernando saw that Lucien walked in, followed by Alferris.

"You were being quite careful this time..." Fernando was still the same tightfisted when it came to giving any praises, "So... why are you here?"

"Sir, I have finished another paper." Lucien smiled.

Fernando did not take the paper instantly but carefully looked Lucien up and down with his red eyes.

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Chapter 366: The Annoyed Nobles

"Did you first go over it?" After a while, Fernando finally asked.

Lucien, of course, understood what Fernando meant. He grinned and said, "Sir, it's not a subversive paper... not at all. It's just a following-up paper about the discovery of electron. Sir, you must know that I found the curse in the vase because of the induction of stream of electrons, so I verified the special material of the vase using the method of studying cathode ray."

Fernando took the paper and complained casually, "I was always the one handling all the troubles you made after reading your papers. Can't you just write some normal papers?"

For Fernando, he was in fact quite happy to see some okay-subversive papers because he was always looking forward to the progress in the world of arcana. However, coping with the aftermath of an extremely overturning theory such as the discontinuity of the form of energy was a totally different story. Being quite bad-tempered and impatient, Fernando hoped that he could just wait and then read the summaries of Lucien's papers just like Douglas, however, as Lucien's teacher, he was always the one in the front to handle all the huge cognition shifts.

However, Lucien was more than happy to have his very powerful and influential teacher handle all the troubles for him and to prevent more sorcerers from having their head exploded.

So Lucien just smiled but did not say anything when hearing Fernando's complaint.

Turning the pages, the look on Fernando's face became more serious. After a while, he finally made the comment, shaking his head, "Morris will for sure hate himself because he did not help Bellak."

The title of the paper was A New Element that can Radiate Electrons Stream and Another Two Types of Rays. In Fernando's eyes, the greatest finding in Lucien's new paper was not so much the discovery of the new element called Uranium but it had proved the fact that the electrons indeed were from the corresponding atoms, and therefore, the inner structure of atom indeed existed. This accomplishment was worth another Holm Crown prize.

"It's not the major focus of the paper, sir." Lucien reminded Fernando in a low voice.

Fernando looked up with his sharp red eyes.

"Somehow the special material also emits a new element..." Lucien tried to make his language vague and ambiguous in case too much information would be released.

"What do you mean by emitting 'a new element'?" Fernando doubted his own ears.

Fernando went back to the paper and read the specific part carefully. As he was reading, his tone became more serious, "Have you ever analyzed the special material? Is this new element part of the material itself?"

"I did. I extracted some of the special elements using the Collecting Spell and the magic circles, however, the new element—I called it helium—still existed. Although there can be some undiscovered elements in the material extracted, I am sure that no helium or its alchemical form was in it," Lucien said to Fernando, pointing at the last several pages of the article.

"What is behind the elemental changes? Can elements change into each other?" Fernando could not help asking himself. After a few more minutes, he calmed down and said to Lucien as usually, "You're indeed blessed by the Goddess of Luck, Lucien. You can even get a special material from the assassination against you. I believe that, at the end of our exploration, we'll understand the secret behind the birth of substances."

Following the tradition of the ancient magic empire, the Congress liked to use the title of the goddesses to refer to different things: the nature and essence of magic were called the Goddess of Magic, the more threatening coldness was called the Goddess of Ice and Snow... However, they meant totally different things from what the churches believed.

"Sir, I don't want to submit the paper right away. I want it to be sealed for a few years just like how we did with Miracle Experiment," said Lucien.

"Why?" Fernando was very confused, as this was not a subversive paper and thus it would no further piss off the Church and other sorcerers. It would be great if more arcanists could read this paper and thus had the guidance to explore the micro-world.

Fernando turned the pages and saw the new magic spells created by Lucien at the end of the paper: Evans' Freezing Ray and Snow Goddess' Whip.

"Just for this?" Fernando asked although he knew how powerful the two spells were as the founder of the field of Thermodynamics, "Your two spells have lowered the limit of ultra-low temperature by more than ten degrees, and as soon as you publish it, you can win and Ice & Snow Medal right away... You still don't want to turn the paper in?"

Hearing that, Alferris' stared at the paper very enthusiastically. It wished that the name, Alferris, could be added on the paper.

"Knowing the existence of helium, one can easily come up with the two spells. I want to keep them as my secret weapon." Lucien explained.

Fernando grinned but shook his head, "You can't keep them to yourself for long, Lucien. Don't forget that Atlant has also taken away part of the material, and Punishment Department also has it. Take a guess, when can they figure this out?"

"In three or four years," answered Lucien.

Fernando grinned, "The upcoming five to six years should be the key stage for you to become a senior-rank, and I don't think it'll be wise if you leave Allyn too often. So you don't really need a secret weapon. Even if you have become a sixth or seventh-circle sorcerer, the two spells can still help you as they are indeed very powerful. You killed Bellak with the freezing ray, right? So your cognition world has been substantialized primarily?"

"Yup... when I confirmed that electron is part of atom's inner structure." Lucien dared not to say that the substantialization, in fact, happened when he put forward the assumption that the form of power was discontinuous.

Lucien thanked Bellak and the cursed vase again in his mind, as the finding that electron was part of atom's inner structure was also shocking enough to substantialize one's cognition world, or Lucien would not have any proper excuse.

The Lord of Storm did not doubt Lucien's words but nodded slightly, "I see. You're likely to become a senior-rank in three to four years. If you need any materials, go to my demiplane warehouse to see if you can find any. As you wish, the paper can be sealed for two years, but I'll inform Atlant about it, I just don't want him to waste his time. It can be a good thing that you postpone the submission. If you turn the paper in right away, Morris, the money pincher, is going to find his excuse that this was just a following-up finding and refuse to give you a separate ring. But, I've heard that Timothy and Ulysses are both working on the constitution of gas, and they've made some progress, so your paper probably can't be kept as a secret for too long."

When hearing that Lucien could have the access to Fernando's demiplane warehouse, Alferris' eyes immediately lit up and it stared at Lucien as if it was trying to incite him to take away every single item from the warehouse.

Lucien pretended that he did not see Alferris. Although he himself was pretty much a money pincher as well, he knew that he should not be greedy here, especially when right now he was not having a very tight budget.

"Anyway, in the next years, focus on improving your magic power first," Fernando said to Lucien.

...

In Rentato, in Nekso Palace.

"We have to stop this! The Church and the Congress can't launch the war!" James, the bareheaded duke said aloud.

The major nobles of the Kingdom of Holm who were right now in Rentato were gathered by King Feltis and Prince Patrick for the emergency that broke out today.

The leader of the noble parliament, Flenburg Duke Rakers, looked at James in a cold way, "Stop them? We've tried so hard to maintain the balance so the damned sorcerers can make their own living, but you see how they paid us back? It's going to be a horrible mistake if we keep supporting them!"

Rakers was wearing the red wig and his face was carefully shaved. The deep wrinkles at the corner of his eyes shaped the contrast to his blue eyes. His eyes were shaped as those an imposing griffin, which complied with his title, King's Griffin.

"No matter how open-minded and radical a noble is, he would not completely abandon the Church; and no matter how conservative a noble is, he is also aware of the fact that, without the Congress, we nobles would never have the power and status that we're enjoying now." Wolfburg Duke Russell did not want to waste any time but directly put the fact on the table.

Then the argument between the Conservative and the Liberal suddenly stopped. Silence presided over the palace.

Seeing the king's squinted eyes, Hackson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, hurriedly made a pretended cough and said, "Please be careful with your language, Russel. Our honor and power come from God's blessing, the generosity of our king, as well as our own effort."

Prince Patrick said seriously, "The Church first caused the conflict, and we shall not put all the blames on the Congress. Meanwhile, we can't let this rich and beautiful land suffer from war, so the mediation work is our responsibility."

Mentioning their own benefits, power, and status, the nobles gradually came to an agreement. Only several old nobles who were extreme conservatives furiously left the meeting halfway.

After assigning all the tasks to the nobles, only the king and the prince were left in the palace except the servants.

The old king cast Prince Patrick a meaningful look and slightly shook his head. As he turned around, the king murmured to himself:

"What's the future of kingdom... What's the future of the family..."

All of them knew that the balance was too delicate to last forever. However, right now, they could only turn a blind eye to that fact because there was simply no better choice.

...

In the coach, Flenburg Duke suddenly sighed.

Another noble who was sitting opposite to him in the coach asked, "Sir?"

"The Congress of Magic is way too powerful. If we keep spoiling them like this and let them grow, we'll pay for sure. James and those people are too myopic," said Rakers.

"Then why did you support mediation?" asked the noble, "Let the Church and the Congress fight."

Rakers shook his head, "Launching the all-out war right now isn't good for us. We have to find the proper chance to defeat the Congress with one strike together with the Church, and then, again, we support the remaining power of the Congress so the Church would not take all the power. We keep repeating it this way, and thus hopefully the balance can be kept."

...

"How long can we keep this balance?" asked the bareheaded duke James in Russel's coach.

Russel answered in a deep voice, "One day, we finally need to make a choice—whether we should weaken the Congress, or completely remove the South Church like the countries under the control of the North Church. Before the Saint Truth dies out, the Congress will not become a threat to us. Also, the balance in the overall situation is easier to maintain than the smaller balance in an individual country. Without being careful, this precious thing can be broken."

"If so... we won't be able to ascend to Mountain Paradise." Hackson sighed.

"Mountain Paradise? Haha.." James repeated with a laugh.

...

Several days later, Allyn still remained safe and sound. No war was launched by the Saint Truth.

Lucien got the message from Florencia:

"This weekend, your Holm Crown prize will be granted to you in Allyn."

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 367: Lucien's Plan

Lucien did not expect that the ring from the Holm Crown prize would be given to him so fast, after all, the ring-maker, Morris, was very unwilling to give him the ring. It was only two days away from the weekend.

Unlike Aalto, in Allyn, weekend always referred to Sunday.

Florescia's voice in the electromagnetic message magic sounded amused, "You were taken away in the Will of Elements's headquarters, and my teacher, Morris, feels very embarrassed. That's why."

After pausing a bit, Florescia then sounded more serious, "At least, with the three Holm Crown rings and the magic robe from the Immortal Throne, you will be able to survive when facing a senior-rank sorcerer."

"Really?" Lucien was quite surprised. As the leaders of the Will of Elements had no idea of the fact that his cognition world had been primarily substantialized, how could they be sure that the rings could help him so much?

Florescia giggled, "This time, the magic spells enchanted in the rings are precious. My teacher's being generous and the two spells match each other very well. Of course, he regretted immediately after the rings were made. And he even tried to cancel the banquet on the ceremony to save some tiny money."

Lucien asked curiously, "May I know what the two seventh-circle spells are?"

"Umm... It's a secret. You'll see." Florescia laughed. "Keep your curiosity, so you can stay young."

Then, the electromagnetic signal was cut off. Lucien could not help his curiosity and so he started to leaf through Astrology and Magic Elements and Senior-rank Magic Book, guessing what two enchanted magic effects would be given to him.

At the other end of the office, Alferris was lying on the couch, counting its salary for this month.

...

In a retreat room in Radiance Church.

Rakers, the leader of the noble parliament, King's Griffin, was having a meeting with the grand cardinal Philibell, the leader of the Inquisition Vaharall, and some other leaders from the Church.

"Rakers, I know what you mean, and I do agree with you. I'll report this to the Holy City." The usual anger on Philibell's face had disappeared, but only tiredness was left.

In the Kingdom of Holm and the rest of the three countries, the Church's power was inferior to that of the Congress of Magic. After all, most of the Congress' legendary archmages were in Allyn, while the Church's powerful leaders were mostly spread out, and gathering them together was not an easy thing, as there were still other threats that the Church had to take into consideration.

Although the leader of the Knights of Grail, Stone, had always been a supporter for launching the war, right now he was rather calm, "We're more assured now, knowing the nobles' attitude. We hope that once the opportunity is available, you can be prepared. We'll handle the rest of the things."

Stone was not a fool. When the Congress was fully prepared, launching a war against it was obviously not an ideal thing for the Church to do.

Although Vaharall and Varantine were definitely not happy with the result, the changing attitude of the nobles was still a comfort to them.

"But according to what I know, some of the major nobles such as James and Russel are still more on the Congress' side. Do you have any suggestions, Rakers?" asked Philibell about the inner division among the nobles.

Rakers nodded seriously, "The so-called Liberal nobles are in fact not too big of a threat. They don't have many people on their side... only about ten percent. Their power is not even half of the power of the nobles who support the Church. As for the rest of the nobles, although they claim themselves to be neutral, I'm sure that they don't reject the Church. They can join us if the offer is generous."

As a knight, Stone knew the nobles better, "Rakers, you've forgotten the fact that most of the nobles are still on the same side of their lords. You're neither the king of Holm nor the successor."

If the offer was not generous enough to make the nobles crazy, they were still going to support their lord. Without the lord, sooner or later they were going to fall apart. And once they had to rely on the Church, it would be almost impossible for them to gain independence again.

Rakers remained silent for a while and his voice became deeper, "I'll convince the king."

"King Feltis is old now, and his knight level isn't high. In a few years, maybe he will receive the call from God. Can you find the opportunity in the next few years?" Philibell shook his head. As the grand cardinal who was responsible for providing medical care to the king, he knew the king's health condition very well.

Looking gloomy, Rakers did not deny.

Philibell looked at the rest of them and said in a plain tone, "But the prince is too partial to the Congress."

"...The prince is too partial to the Congress..." repeated Rakers in low voice.

...

At eight o'clock on Sunday night, the division of the Will of Elements in Allyn was brilliantly illuminated. The grand hall was filled with the sound of glasses clinking against each other.

"Lucien, Morris isn't in a good mood recently, and I don't think he'll recover in a short period of time. If there's nothing special, you'd better stay away from him." Holding the glass, Gaston joked.

On the other side of the hall, Morris forced a smile on his face and was being busy with greeting other senior-rank sorcerers.

The members of Review Board naturally gathered together, and they were surrounded by their students and friends.

Right now Lucien was standing with Larry, Ulysses, K, Lazar, and the other sorcerers from Atom Institution.

Lucien shook his head and grinned, "Now the gate of the micro-world has been opened, and more great findings are following. Mr. Morris has to be prepared."

"Is that right?"

It was Morris' voice, light as a ghost's. There was definitely hatred in his voice.

After greeting the important sorcerers, Morris walked back and he happened to hear what Lucien just said. He felt that there was a sharp arrow in his heart.

"Of course, this is a brand new field, a field that involves the deeper secrets of the substances." As if Lucien just completely ignored the hatred in Morris' voice, he said to the rest of the board members honestly, "I think Holm Crown prize should be given out every year."

"Impossible!" Morris raised his tone and looked very serious.

Florencia grinned and looked at Lucien, although she did not understand why Lucien wanted to piss Morris off. The rest of the senior members of the Will of Elements also looked at this direction, feeling quite amused.

Lucien did not care, "If no one's qualified, the position should remain vacant. If there is more than one qualified sorcerer, the prize should still only be granted to one sorcerer for only one achievement. And the time for granting the prize should be settled in each year, so we can look forward to it."

"That's a very good suggestion!" Morris hurriedly agreed.

"The problem is... this can just postpone the time, but it can't help saving the warehouse's loss." Florencia reminded her teacher. She wondered what Lucien was thinking.

She would not believe that Lucien was just talking without any specific purposes.

Lucien slightly swirled the wine and smiled, "Neither the materials nor wealth can grow themselves in the warehouse, but doing investment is different. If the time of giving the prize can be deferred by one year, the investment payback should be very considerable. The prize is always going to be someone else's, but the profit can always stay."

"What do you mean?" asked Morris. He was not a fool.

Lucien grinned, "I've talked to Mr. Arthur Doyle, and he is very interested in generating electricity using water current. He also mentioned to me that the process of making a magic crystal light can be simplified and thus be popularized among the nobles, and we can lower the requirement for using the Electromagnetic Message spell by turning the magic for keeping one's voice into a manufacturable alchemical product, and meanwhile building more magic towers for transferring signals."

The sorcerers knew that Lucien made quite a fortune with his strange-named product, Jinkela, so they all nodded and believed that it was a good idea.

Lucien smiled and continued, "What was more important was that once the nobles and the common people are used to the usage of magic in their daily life, they will not follow the Church this closely anymore. Indeed, we sorcerers don't usually associate with the common folks, but as the Church has been preaching to them all the time, we must take away the things they need from them. And when the foundation of the Church is shaken, the end of the Church can be seen. Anything in the way of the development of magic will be crashed into pieces."

"We shall talk about this later." Morris was definitely persuaded. He turned around and said to the other leaders of the Will of Elements.

Lucien cheered in his mind. The Church would for sure take the revenge when Lucien's alchemical product was spread everywhere. If Lucien took all the profit and was not willing to let the other sorcerers take a share, when he was in trouble, no one would help him out.

However, the Will of Elements would get on board now.

A person could be greedy but also had to be smart.

Morris was in a better mood now and he said to all the guests:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the development of arcana and magic is like a speeding steam train, and the changes brought by it are unprecedented. Today, we present Holm Crown prize to the two distinguished arcanists for their outstanding contributions to the field of Element and Alchemy. Let's welcome Mr. Lucien Evans from the Will of Elements first."

When Lucien walked on the stage, Morris started to read the award speech, "He found the new particle. He has opened the gate of the micro-world. His contribution to the school of Element is ground-breaking and significant. He has led us to a brand new era!"

Morris took out a specially designed ring of two crossed silver circles, at the center of which there was a crystal-blue, brilliant precious stone.

"To honor his outstanding contribution, the No. 30 Holm Crown ring, Electron, is given to Mr. Lucien Evans."

The No. 28 ring was Origin, and No. 29 was Ionization. Therefore, Lucien first got the Electron ring. Origin would be given to him later.

In the warm applause, Lucien accepted the ring. In the inner side of the ring, it wrote: "Year 819, Holm Crown, to Lucien Evans' contribution."

Lucien immediately left his spiritual mark in the ring and got the information in it:

"Holm Crown ring, Electron, level seven perfect rank magic item (one layer of seal). A sorcerer whose spiritual power reached the senior rank could unseal the ring and the full power could be released.

The unique ring is very powerful because of the enchanted seventh-circle spell, Anti-magic Ray!"

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 368: The Powerful Ring

"The ring can help the caster to stay calmer and more focused, so the casting process is less likely to be interrupted. The effect was equivalent to the fifth-circle magic spell, Focus. The pure ring contains a great magic power which enables the caster to use the fifth-circle spell Lightning Ball two times a day, and the seventh-circle spell Anti-magic Ray two times a day. When sealed, the wearer, before reaching level six, can still forcibly cast the seventh-circle magic once at the cost of completely draining up his spiritual power and damaging his life force.

"The discovery of electron has opened the gate of the micro-world, and it has changed our understanding of the material base of the world. This ring is given to Mr. Lucien Evans, the outstanding arcanist, for his great contribution to the school of Element.

"The discovery brought by the ray is going to be more powerful because of the ray!

"From: Morris Hoffenberg."

Lucien was shocked after getting the detailed information of the ring, Electron. He believed that Morris' achievement in alchemy was only inferior to the two legendary alchemists, Davey and Klaus.

Although compared to the last Holm Crown ring, less permanently enchanted magic effects were given, this time the enchanted seventh-circle spell was Anti-magic Ray. The special feature of this magic spell made it hard to be compatible with the others. The fact that Morris could still add another enchanted magic effect and a fifth-circle spell already impressed Lucien a lot. If used properly, even if Lucien's cognition world had not been substantialized, indeed there was a good chance that he could survive when facing a senior-rank sorcerer.

Seeing that Lucien put the ring on the middle finger of his left hand, Morris almost burst into tears. The ring was a memorable masterpiece for him in his alchemist career.

Calming down a bit, Morris took out another ring. The hollowed-out white ring was inlaid with a big, transparent diamond. Under the light, the diamond was dazzling.

Morris forced himself to read the award speech:

"Since we human beings got rid of savagery, we have been exploring the secret of life. We crave to know where we come from and what life is. Many great sorcerers spent their whole life on finding the truth, but unfortunately, they never managed to get one step closer. Lucien Evans, however, designed the genius experiment, Miracle Experiment, using his extraordinary way of thinking. Miracle Experiment has revealed us one possibility of the origin of life. At that moment, his radiance could rival that of any gods.

"This is the first step that we human beings take into this forbidden area, and more steps will be taken. The Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy honor Lucien Evans with the ring for his outstanding contribution to this field. This is the No. 28 Holm Crown ring and its name is Origin."

The applause became even warmer. Although the discovery of the new particle was a great surprise, nothing could be compared to the shock which was brought by Miracle Experiment designed by Lucien. Every human being would stand in great awe before life!

Lucien had brought the apprentices in with him for the free dinner. Right now, the apprentices were staring at their teacher on the stage as if Lucien was shining. The dazzling rings almost made them feel a bit dizzy. The youngsters were also longing for the great honor, even including the most introverted apprentice, Annick.

Katrina's eyes were shining when Lucien accepted the ring, Origin. As a lady and an arcanist, she burst out, "I really want a ring like this!"

"I really want a ring like this..." Another childish voice came from the side. Drooling, Alferris was holding the largest plate, fork, and knife, but its eyes were only focusing on the rings Lucien was wearing.

"Mr. Evans' so charming!" Heidi and Layria had a different focus, although they longed for the ring as well.

In fact, even for a senior-rank sorcerer in the school of Elements or Alchemy, a Holm Crown ring was still a great goal not because of the value of the ring itself, but for the honor it represented.

Seeing his teacher on the stage, Sprint held his fists tight and his body slightly trembled out of excitement. He kept telling himself that one day he would be on the stage accepting the great honor just like his teacher.

"I'm a bit regretful. Why did I choose to be a battle mage," said Florencia in mixed feelings. "I designed so many rings, but I don't own any of them."

"You've still got one. We've got nothing," said another senior member of the Will of Element, Caroline, who was also a battle mage, said in a half joking and half disappointed tone.

There was indeed a Holm Crown ring on Florencia's right hand, but that was not hers. It was her husband Oliver's ring, named Cornerstone.

Timothy and Ulysses exchanged a look and they saw the bitterness in each other's eyes. In the past, Larry, Felipe, Timothy, and Ulysses were peers and they were at the same level. However, now both Felipe and Larry had won the prize, and the late-comer, Lucien, had even won three rings. Sometimes, Timothy and Ulysses had to admit that geniuses did exist, and thus they had to work even harder.

They understood what was in each other's eyes. Raising the glass, Timothy and Ulysses toasted.

Lucien accepted the ring and gently stroke its inner side.

"Year 817, Holm Crown, for Mr. Lucien Evans' great contribution. (In Year 819)"

"Holm Crown ring, Origin, level seven perfect-rank magic item (one layer of seal). A sorcerer whose spiritual power reached the senior rank could unseal the ring and the full power could be released.

"Three magic effects are permanently enchanted on this dazzling ring: It can affect the target senior-rank sorcerer's ability to see the future and thus a senior-rank sorcerer's prophecy can be incorrect; It can accustom the wearer to the extreme environments such as hell and abyss; It could store the wearer's spiritual power and give it back to the wearer when his spiritual power is drained up (the amount of stored spiritual power should be able to support the wearer to cast another three fifth-circle common spells).

"The ring enables the wearer to cast Chaos Teleportation twice a day because of its chaotic and furious magic power. Chaos Teleportation—a level seven magic spell. When sealed, the wearer, before reaching level six, can still forcibly cast the seventh-circle spell once at the cost of completely draining up his spiritual power and damaging his life force.

"Miracle Experiment has revealed us one possibility of the origin of life, enlightening us with its breathtaking design and shocking result. We give this ring to Mr. Lucien Evans, the chosen one by the Goddess of Life, for his great contribution. He has connected the existence of non-life substances in the world to the birth of life and expanded the range of the School of Element. When it comes to the history of elemental magic, his name is for sure going to be mentioned!

"The origin of life may start in the chaotic and dangerous primitive environment; Chaotic Teleportation sometimes can also contribute to the continuation of life. Of course, this requires the blessing of the Goddess of Probability, the favor from destiny, and the mercy of the Goddess of Luck.

From: Morris Hoffenberg."

Chaos Teleportation was a spell shared by both the divine and magic power. Requiring no spatial orientation, it could send the caster to another place dozens of kilometers away from the place where the caster was originally at in half a second. However, no one knew what kind of place the caster would be sent to: maybe at a crater facing the burning lava; maybe in the crack of a demiplane; maybe to the place where the caster's most reliable friends were; maybe right in front of another enemy's face...

Lucien knew that making this ring was also extremely difficult.

The most precious thing about this ring was its capability of storing Lucien's spiritual power. Using the three Holm Crown rings properly, Lucien could forcibly use the powerful spells in the two rings and escape using Chaos Teleportation after getting the replenishment. But, as the storage volume was still limited, if Lucien dared to overdraw his spiritual power twice, the consequence would be severe.

Of course, Lucien, as his cognition world had been substantialized, was not in a rush to use the spiritual power he would store in the ring, as his spiritual power was already enough for him to cast four seventh-circle spells consecutively. When facing a senior-rank spell, Lucien was not that vulnerable anymore.

Tampering with his hair, Morris did not want to see Lucien putting on the ring. He then said to the guests:

"Let's welcome Mr. Evans to give us a short speech."

Florencia and the rest of the sorcerers and arcanists applauded warmly, as they were very curious about what Lucien would say after only two to three years when he gave the last award-winning speech, which was classic.

Lucien took a step forward, smiling, "I remember that when I won the prize last time, I said that there were greater secrets hiding behind the periodicity among the elements, and our exploration of it would lead the elemental magic to the very nature of the world. Now it has been three years... I found electron because I studied the periodicity, and thus the veil covering the micro-world has been revealed. Meanwhile, Her Excellency, Hathaway, and my teacher, Fernando, have separated out the equivalent elements. After figuring out what these equivalent elements are different, another Holm Crown prize shall be granted."

Hearing that, Morris' face paled.

"So, the exploration in this field is going to lead more sorcerers to reach the greatest honor. And the brand new understanding of the world shall commence."

Morris' face became even paler. He did not get Lucien's main point—the brand new understanding of the world.

Raising his hands wearing the Holm Crown rings, Lucien slightly bowed, and said meaningfully:

"All phenomena can be explained. The most unexpected accidents can also contain inevitability."

Lucien thought to himself that, maybe in the future, one would have to be more careful with using the word "inevitable".

The sorcerers present started applauding warmly. In their eyes, Lucien Evans was the role model of staying curious about everything and always asking why.

...

At the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness, in Heidler.

The ghosts, Adol and Angwoods, were floating in the air, flickering in the shadow.

Staring at the gray clouds, Adol grinned, "We shall keep a close eye on the sorcerer who was going to come here to receive the Immortal Throne award."

"Why, may I ask?" asked Angwoods. It seemed to have a lower status.

Adol's cold voice was indifferent:

"On him, I smell Maskelyne..."

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 369: Urgency

"You... smell Maskelyne?" Angwoods didn't quite understand Adol's words, but his tone became rather serious and grim when he mentioned the name.

Under the pale sunlight, Adol's delicate but lifeless skin was covered by a faint black air, and under his hood two red light spots were dancing like flames. He snorted, "The amulet he wears is made by Maskelyne... I can recognize it. Maskelyne can sense me using the amulet, and I can also recognize the amulet he made..."

"So, the last time when you leaked the secret information to Sousa was not because of Felipe, nor for triggering the internal strife in the Hand of Paleness?" Angwoods reached out his hand and caught a piece of rotten flesh falling from his body, and rubbed it back in his face.

"Those human beings are stupid and greedy. Their mind can't see. So we can play them between our hands." Adol sneered.

Angwoods's voice became deadly, "Maskelyne knew too much about our secrets, and he was a powerful prophet and an astrologer. There must be a reason why he left this magic item. Since the sorcerer named Lucien Evans in coming to Heidler for receiving the award anyway, shall we just..."

He made the gesture of grabbing someone's neck tight.

"Idiot, have you ever thought about the consequences of killing Lucien Evans in Heidler? Are you trying to let the secret of the World of Souls out, or trying to directly show the Congress the secret of the World of Souls? We may be able to do so if facing a grand arcanist or a legendary archmage, but we are now facing seven grand arcanists and eleven legendary archmages! You've got any secret weapons? Don't forget, the Congress is not our only enemy!" scolded Adol severely.

"So are we just going to let him keep his own life although he is going to give out our most important secret at any time?" Angwoods replied angrily. Although Adol's rank was higher than his, Angwoods was still a senior-rank specter. Adol should not rebuke him like this.

Adol turned around and the two red light spots flashed a bit under his hood, "If he was going to say, he would have already done so. When knowing this kind of information, it is always safer to him to keep it as a secret, since the powerful ones who know about the World of Souls are going to make his mouth shut up forever. Since there is no sign showing that the Congress is taking any actions, it shows that Lucien Evans does have a brain. Even if he is going to leak the information, Lucien Evans will wait until he becomes a legendary archmage so he is able to protect himself. We still have plenty of time. Sooner or later, he is going to leave Allyn for his exploration, and the grand arcanists cannot follow him everywhere."

Angwoods tried to say something but finally closed his mouth.

Adol warned him, "Our most important task right now is to draw the power to get ready for the return of Lord. You'd better watch your behavior, Angwoods. If you interrupt the plan, you will be thrown into Souls Furnace."

"I hear you, Adol." Angwoods put on his hood and answered in a low voice.

...

In the brach of the Will of Elements, on the first floor of the magic tower.

After Lucien bowed to the audience and left the stage, Morris calmed down a bit and introduced the next award-winner:

"Now, let's welcome Mr. Larry Clark!"

Larry, wearing a magic robe embroidered with the element symbols, walked out of the crowd. On his way to the stage, Larry walked to Lucien.

"Congratulations, Mr. Larry." Lucien smiled and nodded to him.

"Thanks, Evans..." Larry touched his yellowish-brown beard a bit awkwardly, "The weather is not bad today."

Lucien was amused. Maybe Larry was too nervous.

"Congratulations. The Will of Elements is proud of you. You're the first one who has won Holm Crown prize for three times." Florencia raised the glass and smiled to Lucien.

Lucien showed Florencia the rings and slightly bowed, "Thank you very much for the great design, lady."

Listening to Morris's introduction of Larry's great contribution to the field of magic potion making and the school of Alchemy, Florencia swirled the wine in her glass and said to Lucien, "We have got the investigation result. Bellak applied for the shift himself using the excuse that he wished to take a long break later."

"So, that being said... Was Bellak the only plotter?" Lucien slightly frowned.

As soon as Lucien went back to Allyn, the investigation on Bellak had started, as Lucien believed that this was not only a coincidence, but someone else was helping Bellak, or how would Bellak know when Lucien could notice the cursed vase?

However, according to the investigation result, Bellak just chose the time that Lucien was most likely to notice the difference of the vase. If Lucien did not notice the difference at the first a few days, Bellak would have plentiful time to get prepared and the vase would gradually damage his health. However, Lucien did see it through, and Bellak thus had to be the one taking action directly.

After all, no assassination was guaranteed to be successful.

Florencia nodded slightly and her blond hair hung down gently, "So far we haven't found any senior members suspicious. But we did make some other progress: we found Lorban in Bellak's magic tower, and from the remaining materials and Lorban's memory, we have caught a dozen low and middle-rank mages who have surrendered to the Church. Some did so because they could not make any further achievement in magic, and some because of money and materials for better development."

"We cannot fully get rid of religion when there is still death, pain, and desperation, but we cannot surrender to the Church. All the religions must be in our control." Lucien sighed.

Florencia was quite surprised by Lucien's words, but a second later, she started to laugh. She was laughing so hard that her body was shaking, "Lucien, no... I should call you Mr. Evans, you are acting like a board member! You sound exactly the same as the president Douglas and Mr. Fernando!"

Lucien smiled, feeling a bit embarrassed. He switched the topic by joking, "Really? I'm thinking of establishing a board called Sorcerers' Development and Mental Health."

"Hahaha... Sounds awesome!" Florencia laughed really hard.

On the stage, Larry was giving a short speech.

After taking a sip at her dry throat from laughing too much, Florencia said to Lucien through the electromagnetic message, "You asked me to look into where the special material came from, and I've got some clues here. Although it was the Church who provided Bellak with the special material, as it is very special, we have traced it back to the desert in the south part of Gusta."

"It's really a good news," said Lucien sincerely. In the future, he was going to need the special material made from the unique mineral.

Florencia's green eyes stared at Lucien and asked through the secret messaging, "Although the special material consists of the new element, why is it so important to you?"

Lucien did not keep the first part of his paper as a secret—the part discovering the new element, Uranium, and he got thirty arcana credits from it. Facing Florencia's question, Lucien just smiled but did not give her an answer.

Florencia was always very curious, but she knew how to restrain herself. Seeing that Lucien did not want to say, she joked, "Oh, my poor teacher, Mr. Morris..."

Their conversation ended there, and they turned to look at Larry on the stage giving his speech.

Larry was calmer now, and his speech was more and more fluent:

"Just as what Evans mentioned, the most unexpected accidents can also contain inevitability. So I am thinking: why when a substance dissolves, it will be broken down into ions carrying different charges? Why do we have valence states? Why do the states show periodicity? Does it have anything to do with the internal structure of atoms? Does it have anything to do with Evans's newly discovered electron? In the world of arcana, if there is a result, there must be a reason. Any phenomenon is strictly determined by the law, so we cannot be satisfied with simply getting the result, but we need to explore further."

Florencia looked at Lucien and joked, "Mr. Douglas is really acting like a role model. More and more people resemble the president, and you are the No. 1, Lucien."

"My great honor." Lucien smiled.

...

In the wilderness of death, where tombstones were everywhere.

Lucien, Alferris, and a skull-headed lich wearing a dark brown robe showed up at the edge of the wilderness.

"So this is the Land of Long Sleep?" Lucien looked around curiously at the demiplane belonging to Thanatos.

"Yes," replied the skull-headed lich whose eyes were the two spots white flame, "His Excellency Thanatos created the place. We should move on now, Evans."

"Sure, sir Morus." Lucien grabbed Alferris since it was trying to rob the tombs, and walked to the teleportation circle after the lich.

The Hand of Paleness was very unwilling to give Lucien the award, and thus it was not going to spoil Lucien like how the Will of Elements did by holding the ceremony in Allyn. However, at the same time, as the organizer, the Hand of Paleness also had the responsibility to protect Lucien. Therefore, Morus, the vice president, a level eight arcanist, ninth-circle necromancy archmage, was given the task to welcome and protect Lucien.

Time and space changed. After the familiar feeling of dizziness, Lucien arrived at the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness.

Morus led Lucien to the lounge and said to him:

"Evans, you take a rest here. Two hours later, I'll take you to the banquet hall. By the way, many of our researches are not very pleasant to be observed and many necromancers don't like you, so you might not want to walk around. If anything happens, it would be a trouble to every one of us."

After Morus left, Lucien stood beside the window and stared at the quiet streets down there and the gray sky.

Heidler was different from other cities. Although there were a few human-shaped creatures wandering on the streets, they rarely talked to each other. Most of them were ghosts, zombies, ghouls, skeletons, and the low intelligence undead creatures developed by the Hand of Paleness such as the Skinless, whose eyes were shining with red light, and zombie dogs.

Looking into the distance, Lucien saw an invisible gap connecting to the World of Souls surrounded by the magic tower. An idea came to him—did the Hand of Paleness find the existence of the World of Souls?

When Lucien was thinking, he felt that one spot in his neck was burning. He was surprised that Mr. Rhine was now reaching to him. When being close to the gap, the power of Rhine's casting could be intensified.

"Alferris, I need to take some rest. You have fun," Lucien said to the little dragon and lay in the bed.

Lucien hypnotized himself in the bed and soon fell asleep. Seeing that Lucien had fallen asleep, Alferris jumped toward the bed and sat beside it like a little puppy, staring at the three Holm Crown rings while drooling.

Suddenly, Alferris snuffled a bit confusedly and its big amber-colored eyes blinked, as if it felt something, however, it did not find anything. Soon, its attention was drawn to the rings again.

In Lucien's dream, Rhine showed up again. He said to Lucien directly, "Something big happened to the World of Souls. Soon, the world is going to change."

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 370: Rhine's Plan

Although Lucien was quite used to hearing bad news, he was still a bit nervous, "What happened, Mr. Rhine?"

The World of Souls contained the genuine secret of immortality, and thus even a slight change could be vital. Lucien was even more nervous seeing that Rhine was this serious.

Was it going to be a catastrophe?

"I don't know for sure. You know, I am trapped here, and I can only feel that something very horrible is slowly waking up. Its power is strong enough to overthrow the entire world. Maybe in a year or two, the horrible change will start. And it's most likely to go in the worst direction," said Rhine, dressing very formally like he was attending a fancy dinner. Although he was talking in a very serious manner, Rhine did not panic.

Lucien frowned, "So... I should inform the Highest Council of the existence of the World of Souls."

Even though the Lord of Storm was Lucien's teacher, Lucien was still unable to feel a hundred percent at ease with telling Fernando the big secret. No one could say for sure that Fernando would not kill Lucien because of greed. After all, Lucien had not had much time to get to know the Lord of Storm well enough. Therefore, when the situation really became very serious, Lucien would inform the entire Highest Council because the grand arcanists and legendary archmages would restrain each other, so Lucien would be much safer.

"We're not there yet. I told you that I had some planning before I entered the World of Souls, and I asked you to help me get out of this place after you become a senior-rank sorcerer..." said Rhine very seriously, which was rare. "I know you are still working on it, but I still wish that you would get close to senior-rank in the next half a year, and then you can spend another half year activating my plannings. At that time, I will give you a spell. Hopefully, Zie can suppress what was going on deep in the World of Souls. If my plan does not work, you should tell this to the Congress."

Neither of them, Rhine or Lucien, was an idiot. If they were helpless, they would not keep the secret and just let the worst happen.

"Zie?" Lucien repeated confusedly.

Rhine nodded seriously, "The ancestor of we vampires, the closest existence to God, the true incarnation of the deathless silver moon."

"Alterna?" Lucien had seen this name many times in the books stored in the Congress. It was said that, like the Pope, Zie was the closest to the realm of God.

However, because Zie was only a legend, the Cleansing List did not include Zie's name.

The corner of Rhine's mouth twitched a bit, "You can call Zie Alterna, but unlike what is said in the books, the primitive existence does not belong to any gender. The Congress follows the bad

tradition left by the magic empire and likes to describe all the gods and the nature of the world as female... However, the Pope is always a male..."

"I see... Maybe Zie can really save the world." Lucien nodded, and he was also thinking that, if he could have the honor to meet Zie, he wished to be granted a piece of Zie's flesh, a drop of blood, or even a hair for his study.

Lucien had already become a crazy arcanist.

Rhine grinned, and the handsome smile was back again, "I can't believe we're both being busy saving the world now."

Lucien thought to himself that, in fact, Mr. Fernando had always been busy with preventing his student, Lucien, from destroying the world.

"So... where should I go to activate the magic circles?" asked Lucien.

"First, go to my castle located in the Dark Mountain Range to get the Transformation Mask, the three items for activating the magic circles, and your reward. Then you go to Kuo-toa's altar in the polluted area of the Boundless Ocean, the Manticore Tomb in the southern desert in Gusta, and the Sun King Thanos' underground palace in the capital Antiffler of Holy Heilz Empire. You activate the magic circles there using the spell and gesture. Finally, you come back to my castle. You light up all the candles and lights in my castle when the silver moon is the brightest. Under the moonlight, you enchant the spell again." Rhine's projection started to shake. His power was fading.

The polluted area, the southern desert, and the Sun King... It was not Lucien's first time hearing the words. Not to mention the Sun King, Lucien learned about the polluted ocean area when he came to Holm by ship as a stowaway, and he even earned an arcana credit from selling the

information. Lucien heard about the south desert from Florencia the other day: it was the source area of uranium, and this area was under the ruling of another magic empire named Meshkate.

There had been three paralleled ancient magic empires - Sylvanas, Meshkate, and Asso. Meshkate studied deeper in Necromancy, Illusion, and Summoning, and it ruled the southern desert of the Empire of Gusta, the oasis, and the Dragon Moor; Asso was famous for its navigation techniques and the buildings underwater, whose territory extended from today's Duchy of Calais, the Kingdom of Brianna, and the many islands including the Pearl Islands in the Boundless Ocean; and the rest of the land was governed by the most powerful magic empire, Sylvanas.

Rhine grinned, "I don't have the power to set up all the great magic circles, so I borrowed the power of the altar, the tomb, and the underground palace. Don't worry... When you get close to becoming a senior-rank mage, if you can use the mask and the magic items in my palace properly, you are not going to take too big of a risk. The only problem is that you might not be able to do all of these within half a year... You can't fly as fast as a senior-rank mage..."

"Umm..." Lucien had to confess, "I think I should be able to set off in a few days. To some degree, I am already very close to becoming a senior-rank."

To become a senior-rank, the substantialization of the cognition world was the most challenging stage, followed by the process of performing the magic rite. After these two steps, one still had to finish analyzing a sixth-circle spell and thus, finally, be able to interfere with the reality using his or her spiritual power and soul. Lucien had finished substantializing his cognition world, and he was about to finish analyzing the sixth-circle spell very soon.

Rhine knew about magic relatively well. Hearing Lucien's words, he took a deep breath and looked around in the dream. He felt a bit amused as he said, "I thought you just went back to Allyn a few months ago... Am I having a problem with my sense of time from being trapped here?"

When Lucien was in Allyn, Rhine could not project himself in Lucien's dream because the grand arcanists and legendary archmages could easily notice it.

"I'm... how to say... quite different," Lucien said in an ambiguous way.

"You're getting boring. When you become a legendary archmage, you'll be really boring." Rhine sighed, "Then, please take action as soon as possible."

The dream was gone. Lucien opened his eyes. The conversation that Rhine just had with him repeated in his mind.

Lucien knew that it was very likely Rhine that was still hiding some things from him. Rhine knew about the World of Souls way more than Lucien could expect. However, Lucien was also aware of the fact that sometimes knowing too much was not a good thing.

Lucien sat up suddenly, and Alferris was startled. Its tail swung and almost whipped a chair into pieces.

"I didn't do anything!" Alferris raised its tone.

Lucien wished that he could take Alferris with him, but except for guarding the great secret, Lucien could also imagine how Alferris would rob Rhine's warehouse.

The biggest problem Lucien was facing now was that he needed to find an excuse to leave Allyn as the Lord of Storm would not easily approve his departure.

...

In Heidler, in the banquet hall of a magic tower, the white candles dimly lit up the hall.

Standing in the hall, Lucien felt that he was attending a funeral. Holding the white, sticky drink, Lucien was hesitant with tasting it, while Alferris was quite enjoying itself, and right now it was holding the big plate indulging itself in all kinds of strange food such as the fried meat strings like fat maggots, the skull-shaped bread, and the organ platter...

Looking at the food, Lucien shook his head a bit, and then he saw Felipe wearing his black long jacket walking toward him.

Stopping in front of Lucien, Felipe put on a light smile, "I thought you dared not to come to Heidler, as your magic rank is still low... You do have the reason to worry."

"I thought you would not have enough courage to come here today, to watch me winning the award." Lucien fought back, "I'm a member of the Review Board. Why should I worry about visiting the place under the rule of the Congress?"

"Shall I give you the first-hand material of my study on cell memory?" Felipe did not retreat, "So, even if you are killed, there is still hope for you to come back to life."

Lucien shook his head, "I don't really trust the research outcome of low or middle-rank arcanists."

That was how they greeted each other. At this time, an elder man wearing a fancy Meshkate robe came to them. Holding the red wine in his glass and staring at Lucien with his red pupils, he said to Lucien in a cold tone, "Thank you for your Miracle Experiment."

Then, he directly walked away.

"Who is this?" Lucien asked Felipe.

Felipe's face, which always looked very sick, put on a smile and answered, "Mr. Sousa, a level six arcanist, seventh-circle necromancer, one of the senior members of our group. He once almost got exploded. So I'd say that the hope is rather dim for him to become an eighth-circle sorcerer."

Talking about this, Felipe was in quite a good mood. He was never a nice and generous person.

"There are many things in the world that we cannot control." Lucien swirled the wine in his glass.

There were not many people at the banquet, as many necromancers were very unwilling to watch an elemental sorcerer winning the Immortal Throne award. Only the invited guests came to greet Lucien, for the sake that he was a member of the Review Board.

One of the two presidents of the Hand of Paleness, a very powerful lich and ninth-circle necromancer, Schokola, walked onto the stage wearing a heavy black magic robe. Then, he invited Lucien to go onto the stage as well.

Behind him stood a mummy holding a crystal tray, on which there was a neatly folded, dark gray magic robe. Under the light, there was the flow of glory on it.

"Mr. Lucien Evans' Miracle Experiment has shown us another possibility of the origin of life, which is the secret that all the necromancers have been pursuing," said Schokola briefly. "He is definitely qualified to be the one on the Immortal Throne."

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Chapter 371: The Good News

After the short speech, Schokola put the dark gray magic robe on Lucien and said, "The exploration of the secret of life shall bring us the real immortality."

As told, Lucien left his spirit mark in the magic robe and got its information:

"Fountain of Life, level seven perfect-rank magic item (one layer of seal). A sorcerer whose spiritual power has reached the senior rank can unseal it and the magic robe's full power could be released.

"When wearing the magic robe, the wearer can awaken all the dead bodies within two kilometers (except those above senior rank) and make them fight for the wearer. When wearing the magic robe, the wearer can have the ability of transformation. Without the careful check, even senior-rank sorcerers and archmages will not be able to notice the difference. When wearing the magic robe, if the wearer dies, his soul will be protected by the magic robe, and once someone else tried

to possess the magic robe by controlling its core, the magic robe will exchange the two souls between, and thus the wearer can take over the new body.

"The magic robe also offers the wearer the magic resistance power of a fifth-circle sorcerer and the defense of a level three grand knight. The great power of death enables the wearer to cast Soul Cage, the fifth-circle spell, three times a day, Ghost Transformation three times a day, and Weakening Ray, the seventh-circle spell, three times a day. When sealed, the wearer, before reaching level six, can still force to cast the seventh-circle spell once at the cost of completely draining up his spiritual power and damaging his life force.

"October, Year 819, for Mr. Lucien Evans' great contribution to the origin of life.

"The origin of life contains the secret of immortality!

"From: Gauci Cromwell."

Putting on the magic robe, Lucien was a bit amused by the stinginess of the Hand of Paleness: The enchanted magic effect on the robe was transformation, and the two fifth-circle spells were almost useless. Soul Cage could draw one's soul out of the person's body when the person was still alive and put the person's soul into a magic item, which was used mainly for getting information, and it did not work on a dead person whose soul had not dismissed. Ghost Transformation could turn the common undead creatures and the caster into the form of a ghost.

Lucien was definitely hoping for something better, such as replenishing his life force or regrowing limbs, so he would be able to use his rings with no fear. However, there was no way that the Hand of Paleness would be that considerate.

Fortunately, Lucien still quite liked the seventh-circle spell and the other enchanted magic effect. Weakening Ray, like Dark Sword, could ignore the target's defense level and lower the target's

power by one level. If no action was taken, the target's power level would be further lowered twelve seconds later. However, unlike Dark Sword which required one to conduct the special rite to recover the power, Weakening Ray's effect could only last five minutes, and it could be counteracted by other spells.

Although Lucien felt that it was quite dirty hiding oneself in the magic robe and stealing another person's body, Lucien had to concede that it was a perfect way to save one's life and the only left hope, which complied with the style of the Hand of Paleness.

"Mr. Lucien Evans, would you like to share with us your feeling right now and your insight into Necromancy?" asked Schokola with no facial expression as he only had the skull.

"My insight... in Necromancy?" Lucien murmured to himself. He took a step forward and saw the cold face of Felipe and Sousa's eyes shining with red light.

Lucien remained rather calm and said, "The immortality of life is the ultimate pursuit of the School of Necromancy, and this is also the terrain we hold the most respect toward. There are so many things we want to explore: why can the bloodline be passed on? Why can blood powers be combined? Why do people age? When aging, what happens to the cells? However, our ways of investigation are restraining us from going further, and thus we need the other schools of magic to work together. There is no such a thing as an isolated school of magic!"

Hearing Lucien's words, Felipe frowned a bit. He wondered what kind of progress Lucien had made. Was Lucien facing the same difficulty as he was?

Lucien finished his short speech, and Felipe saw him walking off the stage directly toward him, with a gentle but suspicious smile. So he asked confusedly, "What?"

"I remember... we once had a promise." Lucien grinned. He almost forgot the promise, but when he saw Felipe's face on the stage, Lucien was reminded of it.

Felipe's facial expression changed, "What do you want? Prolong your life-span? Strengthen your soul?"

Felipe was reminded by Lucien. He remembered that after escaping the assassination from Traquair, he was being rather short-tempered to take his revenge, so he instigated and also threatened Lucien to publish his paper on the synthesized carbamide. Felipe promised Lucien that he would run a rite for him.

"Strengthen my soul. My soul potential has just got developed, so the common magic rites won't work," said Lucien with a meaningful smile on his face.

Felipe squinted a bit, "The Hand of Paleness does have some special rites."

However, those rites were very expensive! Still, a promise was a promise. Proud as Felipe was, he would not fail his own words. No matter how expensive the rite was, he had to pay for it. He indeed earned some decent money from improving Life Hiding, but now the money would be soon gone.

He had to say that he did feel a bit regretful.

"Thank you very much. I hope that you can kindly run the rite for me as soon as possible. Well... in Allyn, under the watch of my teacher, Mr. Fernando." Lucien grinned and slightly bowed to Felipe.

Felipe's hands clenched into fists in the pockets and he wished that he could directly punch Lucien's smiling face. And he said the words one by one from his teeth, "You have to give me five days to get prepared."

"No problem. I'll be waiting for you, Mr. Felipe." Lucien was in a very good mood. He did not care about Felipe's attitude.

Seeing that Lucien just turned around and was about to leave, it suddenly occurred to Felipe and he hurriedly asked, "Your cognition world has been substantialized?"

Was that why that Lucien was in a rush to strengthen his soul power?

Felipe was clearly aware of the fact that, for the geniuses like Lucien and him, under the special attention from all the directions focused on them, getting the important magic potions was not a big deal for them, and their speed of improving the soul power and spiritual power mostly depended on themselves and their teachers' suggestion—who usually would not rush their students to advance, as the foundation might not be firm—, therefore, the two biggest challenges for them to become a senior-rank were to substantialize their cognition world and to analyze the sixth-circle magic spell.

Facing the two challenges, no one could help them, but they could only rely on their own effort. Felipe himself substantialized his cognition world after he successfully synthesized grease, and then his spiritual power and soul soon met the requirements of the further advancement. With the help of the magic rite, he managed to become a senior-rank with relatively less effort. However, Lucien's advancing process was too fast, and unlike Felipe, his spiritual power level was not ready yet, and solely relying on the magic potions could not help him.

When Felipe was still a middle-rank mage, he got the guidance and help from Congus, the Demigod-lich, and thus he soon became Congus' student after reaching the senior rank.

Lucien turned around and thought for a second, "Well... I'll let you guess..."

There was no way that Lucien would directly tell this to his enemy! Felipe was quite pissed off, but Lucien's reaction affirmed his guess.

Did he substantialize his cognition world because of the assumption of the discontinuous form of energy, or the discovery of electron?

Many thoughts flashed through Felipe's mind.

...

On the thirty-third floor of the magic tower in Allyn, Lucien was standing in front of Fernando nervously.

"Are you sure you want to use the rite from the Hand of Paleness?" asked Fernando seriously, "Your soul's potential has just got developed. Rushing to use the rite will leave you an unstable foundation, and you'll have a harder time improving your power in the future. If you take the steps one by one, after becoming a senior-rank mage, in the recent fifteen to twenty years, there is a possibility that you can become an archmage. But if you insist to do so, it is going to take you thirty years, sixty years, a hundred years, or even longer. I did once consider whether I should help you with running a similar rite for you, but I decided to let you grow by yourself. Why are you in such a rush?"

After thinking about it for a second, Lucien said to Fernando directly, "Sir, I have some personal stuff to deal with, and it is an emergency. I have to leave Allyn. For my own safety, I have to do so."

"Personal stuff? What is it? Do you know how big a risk you are taking? Did someone cast any spells on you?" asked Fernando. His red eyes shone with many tiny bolts of lightning to make sure that Lucien was not mentally deluded by anyone.

"Sir, can you keep it as a secret?" Lucien was anxious. He did not know how to persuade Fernando other than telling him the truth.

Fernando's red rigorous eyes stared at Lucien for a long time, but he did not say anything.

Lucien was almost sweating. Finally, Fernando closed his eyes and slightly nodded, "It's your own choice. Don't regret it."

Lucien released a long sigh seeing that Fernando did not insist on asking. When Lucien was about to leave, he heard Fernando's voice:

"Wait."

"Yes, sir?" Lucien became nervous again.

Knocking at the desk with his knuckle gently, Fernando said, "The special soul rite from the Hand of Paleness is indeed much better than the similar rites that I know. Still, maybe it is not going to affect you that much."

"Yes, sir." Lucien did not get Fernando's point.

Fernando paused a bit and then slowly took out a scroll from under his magic robe, "You used it before... the teleportation scroll. Take it with you. Don't get killed, my flathead student."

"Sir..." Lucien was touched.

Fernando suddenly grinned, "When I was young, I did many ridiculous things as well. When I look back, some of them are very funny. So I more or less understand how you young people think. And this is probably the price you have to pay to grow. Well... the scroll is made of the skin of ninth-level creature called Karachi. I only have two pieces. So you don't have another chance to be stupid... Also, I don't think you have had enough money to buy all the materials you need for reaching the senior-rank. Go to my demiplane warehouse to take a look, but you should leave me your following three years' annual earnings as a pledge."

"Yes, sir..." Lucien's voice trembled slightly.

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After accepting the scroll, Lucien calmed down a bit and asked curiously, "Sir, you mentioned that you did many ridiculous things when you were young. What are these things?"

Fernando immediately threw a furious stare at Lucien and roared, "That's not what you should pry into! Go back and study Spell Trigger! Don't think you can easily become a senior-rank just because of the rite!"

Lucien was startled by Fernando's roaring and he hurriedly jumped out of his teacher's office. After closing the door, Lucien murmured to himself, feeling a bit amused but also perplexed:

"So Mr. Fernando indeed did some really ridiculous things..."

...

Five days later, in the empty hall on the thirty-third floor of the headquarter of the Congress.

On the floor, a creepy magic circle in the shape of a human body was drawn using Banshee's blood and some other precious materials. The head, left chest, hands, and feet of the human body shape were drawn with the many magic lines forming into the many beating dark-red hearts.

"Lie down in the magic circle," said Felipe.

After setting up the basic magic circle, Felipe finally let Lucien and the Lord of Storm come in the hall, leaving them out until that moment to prevent them from learning the special soul rite, called Banshee's Blessing.

After taking off all of the magic items he was wearing, the Holm Crown rings, Ice Revenger, Ogre Glove, Sun's Corona, Fire Weaver bracelet, and the magic and arcana badges, Lucien also took off the Immortal Throne magic robe and the Sidestep boots. Then, he handed all of these items to Alferis to safeguard them, who was longing so badly for them on the side.

A soul rite like this should not be disturbed by any magic items.

Alferris was not focusing on the rite at all. Staring at the items, its big amber-colored eyes were shining, and from time to time, it would lick the amulet and rings with a great sense of satisfaction.

Wearing a white shirt and slim pants, Lucien lay down as told by Felipe. The necromancer took out six huge bone nails made from senior-rank Banshee's fangs.

"Don't scream," said Felipe in a very cold tone.

As soon as he finished his words, Felipe picked up one of the nails carved with the complicated patterns and directly knocked it in Lucien's right hand.

The nail was even sharper than Lucien expected. Lucien was a level two knight, but it still directly went through Lucien's body and nailed him to the ground. Lucien grimaced in pain although he was mentally prepared. However, he had experienced something even worse, so he did not scream.

Lucien's drops of blood shining with the dim moonlight dyed the Banshee's bone nail in crimson. However, soon the color faded very fast and finally disappeared. Lucien's blood was sucked in by the bone nail and the blood slowly went into the lines of the magic circle.

After nailing Lucien's left hand, right ankle, and left ankle to the ground, Felipe gently stuck the remaining two bone nails into the skin of Lucien's forehead and his left chest respectively. Although the two nails did not go in deep, they were immediately connected to the magic circle

that Lucien was lying on, and thus they stood still in Lucien's skin, although it seemed that the two bone nails were directly knocked in Lucien's head and heart.

After finishing all of these processes, Felipe took a few steps backward and started to cast the spell. The lines of the magic circle lit up one by one.

Felipe's casting was like singing, and the hypnosis power overwhelmed Lucien through the bone nails and the magic circle. Lucien began to have a difficult time keeping his eyes open when his mind was wandering. Lucien remembered that the analysis of the spell, Spell Trigger, had been done over half... and in the next second, Lucien started to wonder what Arthur and Florencia thought of his effort on improving the structure and the material used for the magic crystal lights.

"The wind from the Land of Death, please embrace the helpless soul, and always embrace it." Felipe lifted up his black magic staff inlaid with many colorful gems. The language he used was the special language of necromancers created by the ancient Empire of Meshkate. He walked around the magic circle about one-third of the distance.

A big white gem lit up, and Felipe's long coat flapped in the air like the wings of a bat. The wind smelled a bit decayed.

Lucien fell into a deeper trance.

"The fire from Skeleton Land, please warm the helpless soul. Please bless the soul forever." After walking around the magic circle about one-third of the distance, Felipe cast the spell again.

The clusters of faint white flame grew out of the magic circle. Instead of doing any harm to Lucien's body, they warmed Lucien and made his soul even purer.

Fernando was standing on the side, observing what was going on with his eyes half open. In the white flame, Fernando saw the indistinct figure of a monster wearing a long black robe and holding a sickle, behind which was the background of the wasteland, where countless ghosts were loitering.

"The coldness from the silent hell, please surround the helpless soul. Give him the eternal peace." Felipe finished the last part of the walk and a silver-colored gem lit up.

The endless silence and coldness surrounded Lucien's soul and further substantialized it.

After all of these, Felipe raised his left hand and screamed silently.

The six bone nails were engorged with Lucien's blood, and now they were distorting like real snakes, and their shadows suddenly rose into the air.

The shadows turned out to be the phantoms of some beautiful females. The fair-skinned women were half-naked, but their faces were written with great pain. However, as Felipe's silent scream continued, they opened their mouth and started to sing.

The singing was beautiful, but it could only be heard by one's soul. Vaguely, Lucien saw his own soul ripple in the singing and it slowly absorbed all the flowing liquid in the magic circle.

Two minutes later, Felipe's forehead was beaded with sweat. Putting down his left hand, Felipe took out a strange black mirror inlaid with small gems in the shape of leaves and some pale eyeballs. The back of the mirror was covered with the facial skin of a horrible Banshee.

Felipe tossed the mirror into the air and the mirror floated above Lucien. The black mirror floated right above him.

Felipe started to cast the creepy necromancy spell again. At this time, all the gems on his magic staff lit up together, which even managed to draw Alferris' attention.

The mirror slightly trembled. The six Banshees' song was turned into a bitter scream. The black mirror then cracked, and a white eye was revealed! In the pupil, the creepy and distorted figures were dancing in a weird manner.

The eye looked at Lucien, and Lucien's soul suddenly rose high. Higher above the clouds, high above the sky... His soul went straight upward and finally met his Host Star of Destiny. Lucien could feel that, in the far end, in the place where Lucien could not reach, something had already been connected to his soul.

It was overlooking Lucien, with a condescending attitude!

The lines of the magic circle started to tremble as if they were alive. Then, Lucien's body was entangled by the lines. The lines went into his body and fiercely pulled his soul back. After shivering for seven times, Lucien finally sobered up.

"I have done what I promised," Felipe wiped his forehead with his white handkerchief. "I don't owe you anything now."

Felipe turned around and directly left. Lucien still felt a bit dizzy, for he was not yet used to the power of his soul. After a few minutes, he casually exerted his spiritual power and turned the bone nails into powder.

"My spiritual power and soul can interfere with the reality now..." Lucien murmured to himself with mixed feelings. He must be the one in the Congress of Magic who made the fastest advancement but at the cost of his future progress.

Lucien stood up, and his body was completely unhurt. The magic circle on the floor had disappeared completely.

"What was that eye?" murmured Fernando, feeling a bit perplexed.

A grand arcanist like him always saw the nature of the things through the fancy form of the rites. He could understand most part of the rite, but Fernando could not figure out what the last step was.

Recalling the last step, Lucien asked a bit concernedly, "Sir... I feel my soul was connected to something very far from us at the end of the rite. Is it normal?"

Before this rite, Lucien didn't dare to ask Fernando things like this because he was afraid of revealing the secret of the spirit library. However, since Fernando also did not fully understand the rite, Lucien could use the rite as a perfect excuse for almost everything strange about him.

"That is what I said..." Fernando sighed. "Your foundation is not solid. There is still a large portion of the knowledge about becoming a senior-rank that you do not know. This is more than normal. It is believed that it is because of the interaction between the cognition and the real world and the illusion produced by the nature of the real world."

Hearing that, Lucien was more relieved.

Fernando took a glance at Alferris and asked it to return all the items back to Lucien. Then he said, "Take a rest for a week to get used to the power. Don't rush to hold the rite for your senior-rank advancement."

"Yes, sir." Lucien nodded seriously.

...

In the advanced warehouse section on the twenty-eighth floor of the Congress.

"Red Dragon scales...

"Scarlet Tree sap...

"The green Soul-eater Flower...

"Six sunstones...

"The brain of Ghast...

"The tear of Ghost..."

...

"Mr. Evans, these are the materials you need," The warehouse guard, a fifth-circle sorcerer, Smith, handed Lucien the materials. He could not help but ask, "So, Mr. Evans... You're reaching the senior rank?"

Many of the materials used for this magic rite were precious and expensive. So all of the fifth-circle sorcerers who were in need could report it to Sorcerer Administrative Department to get the materials from the Congress at half price. Holding the documents, Lucien came to the warehouse. However, he had only gathered one-third of the things he needed after almost spending all of his arcana credits and Thales.

It seemed that Lucien had to give Fernando his following three years' annual earnings to collect all the things he needed. Thinking that he still had to pay Alferris in advance with his subsidy from the Congress and the Will of Elements to make Alferris transform into himself during his absence, Lucien's heart twitched.

Then, he grinned, "I am just preparing in advance."

Smith did not believe what Lucien said. He had never heard anyone buying the materials in advance. The warehouse never moved!

Smith was deeply shocked by Lucien's pace of advancing.

...

Seven days later, Lucien came to the hall again where his previous rite was held. He was a bit nervous as the rite for pushing him forward to become a senior-rank was very likely to fail. Three to four out of ten fifth-circle sorcerers would not get the results they wanted. And for Lucien, this would be even more difficult as his power just came from Banshee's Blessing rite.

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Chapter 373: The Untraceable Destiny

There was a complex magic circle drawn with a silver-colored liquid on the floor. The big array consisted of thirteen circles, and at the center of each, different creepy patterns were drawn. The twelve smaller circles surrounded the biggest one, which was decorated with the many symbols representing the earth and the six hexagrams.

Between the circles, there were many silver-gray lines connecting them together, forming the mysterious stellar map. In the smaller circles, there were also many constellation signs and symbols of elements.

There was more than one magic rite for one to improve to senior-rank, as sorcerers majored in different schools and their cognition words also varied. If a rite was more on the necromantic, force field, or illusion side, it would not be appropriate to be applied to a sorcerer who studied elements and electromagnetism. Therefore, there were more than dozens of magic rites.

After checking carefully and making sure that the magic circle was set up correctly, Lucien took a short break to be fully prepared for the rite.

Fernando, the Lord of Storm, stood beside, and he had no plan to help Lucien with the magic circle. In his eyes, that was something that Lucien should be able to do on his own, and if he made any mistakes, Fernando was definitely going to yell at him furiously.

Thompson was in a great shock when he heard that Lucien was about to become a senior-rank mage, and now he was also here observing the rite. He was well aware of the fact that Lucien had just become a fifth-circle sorcerer six months ago, and although he could use the potions and the rites to help him meet the requirement of the spiritual power level and soul power, there was no shortcut for him to achieve the substantialization of his cognition world. Lucien either had to greatly improve his knowledge of the true world and thus get close to the real nature of the world, or he had to boost his spiritual and soul power to the level that was almost crazy, like the ancient sorcerers did, and then use the rites to help him with the substantialization of his cognition world.

However, even if that were the case, Lucien's advancement was still inconceivably fast. It did not make sense to Thompson.

When seeking for advancement, most arcanists nowadays often combined the two methods together: they first explored the world and studied arcana to improve their cognition and to push their cognition world toward the edge of being substantialized, and then they would turn to the magic rites. Therefore, hopefully, they could reach senior-rank in about twenty years.

For those who managed to become a senior-rank before thirty years old, they all had substantialized their cognition world simply from their exploration of the world.

Thompson shook his head to get rid of his slight feeling of envy toward Lucien. He wondered if one's understanding of the micro-world really mattered that much and if the micro-world was the

truth of the world. It took Thompson sharp twenty-six years to reach the sixth-circle, and by that time he was already close to his fifties.

However, his attitude toward Lucien's rushed advancement was different than Fernando's. Thompson agreed with what Lucien was doing. After all, Lucien was always surrounded by danger, and thus, when it was possible, he should make his advancement as soon as possible, or when he encountered a real danger, it would be too late for him to do anything.

In Thompson's eyes, reaching a higher circle was still very necessary as long as the cost was not too great even if Lucien had not been a troublemaker. When one's arcana knowledge had not been transferred into his or her magic power, the sorcerer was always in a certain kind of danger. It happened before that a few great arcana geniuses died before they managed to improve their magic power.

Alferris held no opinion toward what Lucien was doing. It only had a vague understanding of time. When Alferris reached senior-rank, it did not use any rites. It only relied on its arcana and magic knowledge to improve its soul's power and used the power to stimulate its body, just like how the mature and fully-grown dragons did. Therefore, right now, Alferris was having a sweet time playing with Lucien's many magic items, wearing the Holm Crown rings on its claws to show off.

Although the Immortal Throne magic robe did not have any precious stones on it, Alferris knew that it was still worth a lot and could be traded for crystals and precious stones.

When Lucien was ready, he took out the twelve crystal balls out of his magic pouch.

They were made of the different crystals with Sun Stones, Wave Stones, Scarlet Tree sap, and some other materials respectively, each shining in different colors. Some were like stars, some were shining like a sun, and some were mysterious like the ocean. The twelve crystal balls symbolized twelve constellations and twelve elements.

Lucien placed the twelve crystal balls at the center of the twelve smaller circles, one at each respectively. The crystal balls were instantly connected to the power of the magic circle and burst out with dazzling lights. The invisible power of the magic circle raised them up.

Then, Lucien stepped in the biggest circle in the middle and stood on the symbol representing the earth. Lucien took out another six dim crystal balls and put them at the center of each of the hexagram symbols.

Throwing the pouch out of the magic circle, Lucien started to activate the core part of the magic circle.

The six hexagrams burst out silver light and rose into the air, like six altars. The six crystal balls representing the other six kinds of the element were also on the altars.

Bright red, dark blue, black, light cyan, jade green, and pure white, the six colors of light burst out of the crystal balls like six small suns.

Lucien cast the spell in a low voice, and then his volume gradually increased, like a song of praise for the starry sky and the universe. Along with the enchanting, the silver lines of the magic circle lit up one by one, and there were also the same lines connecting the crystal balls together.

Slowly, the crystal balls started to move around Lucien. There were twelve crystal balls on the outer ring and six inside. Although they followed different traces, they did not hinder each other's movement at all.

The light covering the magic circle made the rite look like a dream. The moving crystal balls were just like the mysterious stars in the sky.

Driven by the power of the magic circle, Lucien fell into the half-virtual cognition world. The starry sky was still up there, hanging the invisible gravity strings. Lucien's Host Star of Destiny was above there in the sky at the center of the world, connected with its reflection in Lucien's soul, suggesting the unpredictability of one's fate.

The furious fire, the free wind, and the gentle water consisted of the foundation of the world. The form of energy came no more in flows but in portions.

The many light spots representing the many elements further laid the foundation of Lucien's cognition world. The electrons were moving around, and from time to time, radiant light shot out.

Drops of liquid then brought the world ice and snow, glittering.

The crystal balls went through the boundary between the reality and the visionary world, stirring this cognition world, and then they went back to the real material world where the magic circle lay, like dazzling meteors.

Between the real and the illusionary, Lucien was not sure where he was right now.

Forcing himself to focus, Lucien started to manipulate the reflection of his Host Star of Destiny in his soul. Instantly, the shining star line lit up and connected to the host star in the sky.

The line trembled suddenly, dragging both ends!

The reflection of the star caused the vibration of Lucien's spiritual power, following which Lucien's soul also started changing. The Host Star of Destiny moved along with the cognition world, and the power from both ends interacted with each other!

This could only be achieved after the substantialization of one's cognition world. In the past, when Lucien was doing meditation, he could only control his soul but not his cognition world.

One crystal ball spun into the cognition world as expected and it directly hit the star line. The violent vibration was caused and the star was broken into shining pieces, which then went into Lucien's soul, his Host Star of Destiny and the elemental light spots.

A dazzling spiritual power ray shot out of Lucien's soul and became the first line forming the structure of the spell, Spell Trigger.

There were more and more lines gathering, and the vibration of Lucien's cognition world became more and more violent. The hiding power was going to burst out as if something was trying to jump out of the illusionary world into the real world and to become part of Lucien's soul.

More crystal balls hit the illusionary world and a very complex magic structure was gradually built. Like facing a catastrophe, Lucien's cognition world started to boil. The Host Star of Destiny started to swell. Bigger and bigger, the star occupied most of the starry sky.

Because of the power of the crystal balls, the elemental light spots also enlarged. Lucien was like an electron looking up at the huge nuclei.

However, the nuclei were hiding in the wind, fire, and water. They were prevented from approaching the stars seemingly because of an invisible force wall.

The elemental world and the astrology world were very different just like the micro-world and the macro-world.

When the last crystal ball hit the star string, the final stage of the rite was triggered.

In silence, the Host Star of Destiny shone like a burst, illuminating the entire cognition world. The starry sky expanded rapidly, swallowing up the environment of wind, fire, and water, as well as the elements, atoms, and electrons.

Using the power, Lucien's consciousness remained very stable, and he managed to finish the final touch of the magic structure.

There followed a low bang. All the light went into Lucien's soul and joined the magic model.

However, at this time, Lucien found his own soul was unable to control the explosive power of his Host Star of Destiny and the expansion of the starry sky. His cognition world was probably going to explode in any second!

Fernando took a step forward and raised both his hands. Between his palms, there were bolts of bright lightning, and there was a powerful storm in his red eyes!

If this was out of Lucien's control, he would break off the rite even if Lucien would be severely hurt by it, which was always better than being exploded!

Thompson's right hand, using which he was planning to adjust his glasses, was right now suspending in the air. He knew something was wrong with the final step.

Even Alferris forgot the shining rings and amulets. Although it did not really understand what was going on in the magic circle, Alferris was also worried.

Lucien's consciousness, as a bystander, quickly came up with all the knowledge he had learned. His soul was only able to control part of his Host Star of Destiny. With the expansion and swell of the star, it already looked like clusters of light.

Lucien had got only one way to go!

He controlled part of the star and let it burn furiously and grow bigger at an even higher speed!

Was he out of his mind?!

The part of the Host Star of Destiny became brighter and brighter, however, after reaching the limit, it suddenly went dim. Lucien did not stop it but kept pushing it to explode, which shaped a sharp contrast to the other part.

The expanding of the star had reached the final stage, and the part of the star under Lucien's control suddenly collapsed. Lucien felt the sharp pain in his soul.

Bang!

The collapsed part of the star formed a black swirl, devouring everything around it, even the light!

Using this power, Lucien managed to stop the further expansion of the remaining part of the star. The established magic model's reflection was now in his cognition world in the form of a dazzling star.

The rest of the magic models were also cast to the sky, forming the smaller stars. Surrounding the model of Magic Trigger, a galaxy was formed, and it was close to Lucien's entire cognition world.

At the center of the starry sky, the Host Star of Destiny was much brighter now. However, when it spun, no one could see what was behind it. There was endless darkness behind it, like a swirl that could devour everything around it, and even the tracks of the light close to it were distorted.

The dark swirl and the bright star were like twins.

Their reflection in Lucien's soul was also like this. Lucien had no idea whether it was good or bad.

Anyway, he had finally become a senior-rank mage!

When Lucien opened his eyes, the eighteen crystal balls fell onto the ground at the same time and collapsed into clusters of dim power.

...

When the back swirl appeared, a bolt of lightning flashed through his red eyes.

"The Untraceable Destiny?"

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 374: The Secretive

The dream-like magic light disappeared. The silver lines on the floor had all turned into burned black as if they were drawn using charcoal.

Lucien had never felt more powerful, as the bond between his soul and his cognition world had been further strengthened. He felt that one day he might be able to cast his soul and cognition world into the real material world to turn the virtual into the reality. However, Lucien was aware of the fact that this would at least require the power of a legendary level archmage. For example, he knew that when his teacher, Fernando, was suffering from the great shift of his cognition world, the entire Allyn was covered with the dark clouds, shivering with the flashes of lightning.

Lucien finally felt what it was like to be a senior-rank mage. Raising his hands, he looked at them, feeling very encouraged. Although his hands looked still the same, Lucien could feel the power in them from his soul, spiritual power and his cognition world.

"Sir, what did you say?" Thompson asked, "Untraceable... Destiny?"

Lucien heard the question. He had no idea what Thompson was saying. What was Untraceable Destiny? What happened during the rite? Did it have anything to do with his Host Star of Destiny?

Lucien had so many questions in his mind.

Thompson felt the horrible power in the magic rite and the words Fernando burst out. As an eighth-circle sorcerer and a member of the Affairs Committee, he had never heard about something like this. What happened to Lucien?

Fernando did not answer his question right away, but gently rubbed the head of Alferris, who also felt rather confused. Then, he asked Lucien:

"Are you a senior-rank now?"

"Yes, sir... I managed to stop the expansion," answered Lucien honestly. "Sir, what did you just say? What is this Untraceable Destiny? When I was trying to control the power, I felt something changing in my Host Star of Destiny."

"You're such a troublemaker," said Fernando with a gloomy look. "Couldn't you just wait for another three or four years to make the advancement? But you just had to do it right now."

However, after pausing a bit, Fernando continued, "I should not comment too much on those things related to your cognition world since it is your own business. But, if you want to know, I'll tell you something... The Untraceable Destiny refers to the special group of sorcerers who are free from the constraint of destiny. When they connected to the Host Star of Destiny and got their own reflection, because of some unknown reasons, their reflection collapsed and the host star lost its radiance, and thus the trace can never be observed again. In other words, they are the sorcerers who cannot be prophesied."

"What?!" Thompson was very surprised, and then he turned to look at Lucien in great shock.

Any sorcerers who studied astrology would hold destiny in awe. It was Thompson's first time hearing that there was a group of people who were not affected by destiny!

"So what... They still died anyway." Fernando sneered.

"They died... Sir, who were they?" asked Lucien curiously.

Fernando grinned, "I know five of them. The most famous one should be the archon of the Sylvanas Magic Empire, the Sun King, Thanos. The other four sorcerers were also legendary archmages but all of them died."

"Thanos was an Untraceable? Then how did he become the Sun King? There is no historical record for this..." Thompson was very surprised. After all, the Sun King was one of the legendary classes of the school of ancient Astrology, and it was said that to become a Sun King, one had to turn his or her Host Star of Destiny into a sun to make further advances. If his Host Star of Destiny had collapsed, how did he make the further progress?

Lucien was just as confused.

Fernando shook his head and smiled, "Only the members of the Highest Council can have the access to the secret record. Well, maybe some really old ancient sorcerers have also heard something about it. Thanos reached the legendary level with an artificial small sun made of a great number of sunstones and the body of an ancient evil creature called Chirchira. At that time, almost every single legendary sorcerer believed that a sorcerer using this kind of method to reach the legendary level would not be able to proceed any further, however, in the end, Thanos became the one standing on the summit."

"So, the Untraceable always create miracles... Are they the sons of Destiny?" As Thompson was saying, he looked at Lucien.

Fernando looked at Thompson seriously and said, "Don't exaggerate... They are only immune to the prophecy magic, nothing else special. As for why all of the Untraceable were legendary archmages... you should think the opposite way. Those ones who did not manage to become a legendary archmage would not be remembered. I believe that there are many Untraceable, even among the many ordinary people."

"This is already very awesome..." Lucien hoped that he was an Untraceable.

"I don't believe in such a thing... the so-called Untraceable," Fernando sneered. "To be more specific, their destiny just cannot be observed. They are still under the control of destiny. With the development of the more advanced methods in the school of Astrology put forward by arcana, we will be able to see the invisible traces!"

Fernando was rather confident, and his tone was rather firm. As a grand arcanist who had experienced the rapid development of arcana, Fernando was always confident.

"So... Is Lucien an Untraceable?" Thompson could not help asking. Alferris was also very curious.

Fernando took a glance at Lucien and shook his head. He sounded a bit confused, "I thought he was, and I was wondering why did his talent only show up after reaching the senior-rank, but now I think that he is not an Untraceable, as his Host Star of Destiny can still be observed." Fernando turned to Lucien and asked, "What happened in your cognition world?"

"I was trying my best to control the star to stop the expansion, but it did not work well. When I reached my limit, somehow the Host Star of Destiny split into half. One half suddenly collapsed after the sudden expansion and formed a swirl that seemingly could devour everything. The other half stopped the burning of the Host Star of Destiny, and thus I seized the chance."

Lucien did not tell Fernando the entire truth. He did not explain the reason why the Host Star of Destiny was split in two, as no one could explain why the Untraceable existed.

Fernando folded his arms, "Why did the star split? How is your cognition world formed? If you don't want to say, you don't have to."

"There is nothing I cannot say." Lucien grinned. He described his cognition world but hid the parts about the constitution of fire, wind, and water and the ice and snow world, as Fernando, Thompson, and Alferris all knew that it was Lucien who put forward the assumption that the form of energy was discontinuous, and they also knew that Lucien regarded electron as part of the inner structure of an atom. What Lucien could not let Fernando know was the fact that his belief in the discontinuity of the form of energy had led to the substantialization of his cognition world.

Fernando guessed that part of Lucien's cognition world had ice and snow, but he did not say it directly. Fernando looked a bit confused, "I don't see the connection... Where were you born?"

One's date of birth and some other factors could intervene in the choice of the Host Star of Destiny.

Instantly, Lucien was inspired. He wondered if the split of the star had anything to do with his reincarnation.

Lucien answered Fernando's question, and Fernando did not doubt his words. Fernando took out a crystal ball to see if astrology still worked for Lucien.

Lucien was also very curious. He wished that his teacher could help him with figure out what the division of his Host Star of Destiny meant.

There were stars following the traces in the crystal balls.

Lucien could feel nothing different facing the fortunetelling power of a grand arcanist, which meant that he could not get prepared if a grand arcanist was trying to pry into his destiny. Behind his Host Star of Destiny, the black swirl was still sucking in the light.

Fernando looked more serious. He kept working on it and finally stopped after a few minutes.

"What is it, sir?" asked Lucien eagerly.

Fernando gently stroke the crystal ball and said in low voice, "I am this close to you. The astrology should be able to locate you perfectly and give me more information about you. However... the crystal ball told me that you are two meters away from me on the left."

Lucien checked where he was standing: He was indeed standing in front of Fernando on his left, but was only about a meter away!

"So... All the prophecies about me are going to stray away from the correct track. The deviation degree depends on the difference between my level and the prophet's level, but the deviation will always exist!"

Fernando nodded seriously, "Maybe we should call you... Secretive Destiny."

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 375: The Medal

"Secretive Destiny?" Lucien repeated the title in a low voice and found himself quite happy with it. After all, a slight deviation in a prophecy could easily lead to a great difference.

Lucien did not know who was qualified to become a Secretive. Did he become one because of his knowledge in black holes, or his reincarnation?

Lucien knew that right now he was not able to find the answer. However, what he did know was that if he could apply the knowledge about black holes to the related astrology prophecies, very likely he would be able to observe part of the destiny trace of the Secretives! And, if the theory of gravitational lens was applied, the deviation in the prophecies about him could be more or less fixed.

The related knowledge all came from general relativity, and the corresponding books, in Lucien's spirit library, were still sealed. Lucien had no idea how long it would take him to figure these things out on his own without the assistance of the books.

Fernando took a glance at Lucien and said, "Although as a senior-rank you're much safer now, you still have to be careful all the time. You hear me?"

"Yes, sir. I will." Lucien smiled and nodded. He could feel Fernando's care in his stern tone.

Fernando twitched the corner of his lips and then took out a badge, "This is yours."

"This is... Ice & Snow Medal?" Lucien was very surprised seeing this very beautiful badge.

The hexagram-shaped medal was made of silver-white metal, inlaid with many ice crystals. It just looked like a bigger crystal snowflake. Between the gaps of the hollowed-out snowflake medal, there was a small word Helium written with even finer ice crystals, and beside it, there was a number: 1.

Alferris was drooling at the mouth. Its brain was unable to think clearly for a moment.

Fernando cast a look at Thompson to ask him to temporarily leave the room. After Thompson left and closed the door, Fernando explained briefly, "Following your paper, Hellen increased the pressure and managed to turn liquid helium into solid, and thus, for the first time, we have reached the range one degree Celsius above the absolute zero, which is a great progress in the magic of ice and snow. There is no doubt that you can win the medal."

"But... but sir, I thought the paper was sealed for now." Lucien was confused.

Fernando scolded, "Stupid. You are leaving Allyn and you have no idea what you are going to face. What is the point of keeping the paper as a secret? Even if the public can get access to the paper right now, how is that going to affect you? You are leaving Allyn very soon, anyway. And in that case, getting a good magic item is way more useful to you than keeping a secret for nothing."

Lucien was a bit embarrassed. He rubbed his hands together. He knew that what Fernando just said was correct.

After that, Fernando softened his tone a bit and said, "Hellen is the only person to whom I gave the paper. She agreed that the paper can for sure win you a medal, and so she made the medal in advance. When you reveal the paper to the public, the awarding ceremony would be given to you later. Now you have won the highest award in three different fields, which is worthy of a record in the history of the Congress. Including you, there are only five sorcerers who have made this achievement. If Moonson League did not choose to turn a blind eye to the discovery of the electron, you'd be the only one who was qualified for the highest award in the four different fields before reaching senior-rank... Of course, nevertheless, you are not even close to me."

It was Fernando's habit to be cheap with giving his students good comments.

"So, how many awards did you win before reaching senior-rank, sir?" asked Lucien curiously. Lucien was touched by the fact that Fernando took the initiative and talked to Hellen Paris to get him one more magic item.

"Not a single one!" Fernando's eyes rounded. "Before I reached the legendary level, there was no such award at all, or at least I would be able to win four of them! But the Congress has compensated me with Holm Crown prize, Ice & Snow Medal, Silver Moon Medal, Arcana Scepter, and Sorcerer Laurel. As for the number, I rank the first place among all the grand arcanists and legendary archmages. You want to beat me? You have to win all of them."

Fernando was very proud of himself as he was good at the many different fields. Even when it came to the field of Illusion, Fernando's power was only a bit inferior to that of the legendary-level masters in Illusion such as Nightmare King and the Eye of Curse.

Before Lucien could respond, Fernando threw the medal at him, "I don't want to spoil my students with giving them a lot of powerful magic items when they are out of Allyn on their adventure, as it is not going to help them with their mastery and use of magic. However, you deserve the medal. Take it. It took Hellen nine days to produce the medal and it is way more powerful than what a young guy like Morris can make, so I did not bother talking to Morris about your fourth Holm Crown ring. Also, because Hathaway and Davy are out of Allyn right now, the application will not be approved."

Lucien swiftly caught the medal in the air.

Fernando turned around and shook his head, "Stay here for a few more days until you have mastered Advanced Fly spell."

Advanced Fly and Fly shared the same basic structure. Therefore, the analysis was not going to be too difficult.

After watching Fernando leave, Lucien infused his spiritual power into the Ice & Snow Medal and he instantly felt the harsh strike of coldness, which was so powerful that could hurt one's soul!

Shivering, Lucien carefully left his spiritual imprint in the medal to become its owner. The coldness, instead of freezing Lucien's consciousness, started to bring him the great feeling of refreshment.

"Ice & Snow Medal, Helium, a level seven perfect-rank magic item. Coldness alerts and sobers people. It can prevent people from being deceived by their desire. When wearing the honored medal, the wearer's resistance to illusionary spells and spells that work on the wearer's soul will be improved to that of a seventh-circle Ice & Snow Witch.

"As honor is the halo above the head, Ice and Snow Realm represents the halo of power. When activated, the wearer will bring a world of ice and snow with a radius of five hundred meters. For any creatures of middle-rank and under, if not immune to coldness, they will be frozen to death immediately; any creatures of senior-rank will be severely hurt by the ice and snow, and their movement will be slowed down to a great extent; any creature above senior rank, without the protection of the corresponding spells or blood power, will be hurt as every second proceeds, and their movement will be slowed down to a small extent – the slow-down effect will accumulate as time goes on.

"Ice and Snow Realm, also called Ice Halo, a seventh-circle spell, can last three minutes when the full range is activated; When casting in a smaller range, it can last up to fifteen minutes. The wearer can use it three times a day.

"The unearthly coldness from the Hell of Silence can freeze one's soul, and so can the seventh-circle spell, Silence Coffin, which derives from the coldness. The freezing ray that is able to damage one's soul can be cast by the wearer three times a day. But remember, since the temperature of the ray is not extremely low, the damage it can do to one's body is limited, and when a radiant knight is prepared, the ray will not be able to penetrate the radiant knight's body and freeze his or her soul. At the same time, due to its special properties, the effect of most defensive spells will be ignored.

"To approach the absolute zero is the lifetime pursuit for every sorcerer who specializes in Ice and Snow magic. Although several legendary spells have already shown us the great power when the

temperature approaches the absolute zero, we are not able to figure out the theories behind them, and this is preventing us from moving forward.

"Many thanks to Mr. Lucien Evans for his discovery of Helium and the new Ice and Snow magic that he invented. We are now able to reach the range where we are only one degree Celsius from the absolute zero, which is a great breakthrough in Ice and Snow magic. Mr. Lucien Evans has brought us into a new era in the history of Ice and Snow magic!

"Year 819, Month of Gold, to acknowledge Mr. Lucien Evans' great contribution to the school of Thermodynamics in the field of Ice and Snow magic.

"The greatest dream among all the ice and snow mages—the absolute zero.

"From Hellen Paris."

"It is much better than the Holm Crown ring..." Lucien swallowed hard out of great excitement. Although the medal only had one enchanted magic effect, the enchanted seventh-circle was already alluring enough.

Without any doubt, the value of the medal was above the ring's, not to mention the Immortal Throne magic robe. Only the Sun's Corona that Lucien was wearing, whose the third layer of the seal was going to be released, could match the value of the medal.

At this time, Lucien heard the swallowing again. At first, Lucien thought that it was from himself, but when he turned around, he saw Alferris' big eyes staring at him, twinkling.

"Alferris, you know what you need to do now," Lucien grinned.

Alferris, carrying Lucien's magic robe and the many magic items, instantly took a few steps back from Lucien and shook its head in grief. After a great inner struggle, Alferris finally gave them back to Lucien.

When Lucien was wearing the magic items, a good idea suddenly stroke him. Lucien turned around with a big smile and asked, "Would you like to have a ring, Alferris?"

As he was saying, Lucien took out a ring, the Ice Revenger.

"Yes, yes!" Alferris nodded hard. Although it knew that the ring was not very valuable, the beautiful shape and the shining precious stone was still very tempting.

Lucien felt that he was lying to a little kid, grinning like a wolf grandmother, "Give me two tubes of your blood. And I will give the ring to you."

Alferris was good at casting illusion spells. So if Lucien could have its blood as casting reagent, the effect was going to be great.

"Blood?" Alferris was a bit surprised and it looked around and then said, "My blood is expensive!"

"Alright, then," Lucien was about to put back the ring.

"Wait, wait, deal!" Aferris hurriedly stopped Lucien before he made any further movement. It quickly took out two magic tubes and drew its blood into them. Losing this small amount of blood would not affect a dragon at all.

...

In the early morning after a week, Lucien had mastered Advanced Fly.

After checking carefully, Lucien cast Disguise on himself and left for the magic train station.

In the air of Allyn, Angwoods was watching Lucien's every single movement with a creepy smile. As a senior-rank specter, it could see through most of the disguises, and also invisibility.

As the creature summoned by Felipe, from the materials Felipe got for the rite for Lucien, Angwoods knew that Lucien was rushing into becoming a senior-rank. Angwoods had expected that Lucien was going to leave Allyn. So when Felipe completely devoted himself to his experiment, Angwoods would come here to watch Lucien.

However, afraid of being detected by Sun's Corona, Angwoods could only follow Lucien a long distance away from him.

Lucien spent half a day on the magic steam train and arrived at the big city in the south of the Kingdom of Holm. Then, he flew to the remote mountains and found a hidden cave in there. Lucien entered the cave.

Landing outside of the cave, Angwoods was a bit hesitant. If it was going to follow Lucien in the cave, very likely he was going to lose the target, as it could not approach Lucien.

Angwoods thought for a moment and decided to follow Lucien into the cave. It would stay out of the detection range of Sun's Corona and use prophecy magic to locate him.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 376: The Resent

The cave was dark and small, just like the common caves. There were piles of faeces of wild animals in the corners. When Lucien entered the deeper part of the cave following a narrow path, there were more and more forks in the road as if he was facing a spider web.

Taking the crystal ball out of the magic pouch, Lucien gently stroked its surface and, with the information provided by Rhine, he cast a simple prophecy spell to figure out which path to choose.

Following the fork path downwards, Lucien made his way a few dozen meters and saw a new fork. He recognized the pile of oddly-shaped, dark coal ash as Rhine described.

The pale coal ash looked like the palm of a person's hand, like a road sign.

Lucien had to visit the Dark Mountain Range, the polluted area in the Boundless Ocean, the desert in the south part of the Gusta Empire, and the capital city of Holy Heilz Empire named Antiffler. These places extended from the south to north, west to east, covering the entire continent. Although Lucien had mastered Advanced Fly, it was still very difficult for him to visit all the places with great caution. Therefore, Rhine offered Lucien a dimension under the control of the vampires to help him jump through the space and save a lot of time.

Although most common sorcerers would imagine that the formation of the other dimensions and the main material world was just like the many small bubbles attaching to a big bubble, the reality was totally different. The form of the existence of space had exceeded their imagination and what they knew from their experience. Their existence could only be proved by the formulas.

The dimensions were connected to the main material world by many space joints. Although these dimensions were way smaller than the main world, despite the different coordinate that two dimensions had, say, one in the Dark Mountain Range and one in Allyn, the distance between the two dimensions was probably way shorter. Therefore, using the Dimension Gates on the space joints was a great way to travel far.

However, an unknown dimension could be very dangerous, like a maze. Due to the barrier between the different planes, one would not be able to connect to the main world when in another dimension. Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, when she once explored a dimension called Elks Maze, it took her ten years wandering in this dimension trying to find the exit. In the end, she had to use her own connection as a legendary archmage to her demiplane and forced her way by using Space Drifting to come back, which took her another five years.

Therefore, Lucien was very cautious and careful when it came to the existence of the World of Souls. It was like a chaotic reflection of the main world without any space joints. However, it was, at the same time, connected to the many space cracks and gaps like a spider web.

Lucien held the World of Souls in awe because of its dark features. Knowing that those very powerful archmages, such as Maskelyne, had been trapped in there, and that there were many

souls, zombies, and specters wandering around, he was worried that one day the World of Soul might destroy the main material world.

This was why Lucien decided to help Rhine. It was partly because he once promised Rhine, but more because he believed that the task was still achievable to him. If it turned out that he was still incapable of finishing all the work, Lucien would go back without hesitation and take the risk to report it to the Highest Council.

When seeing the first inconspicuous road sign, Lucien followed the path downward faster and faster. He did not need the help of prophecy anymore.

However, Lucien did not put back the crystal ball but let it float in the air in front of him. He gently stroked the crystal ball five times.

The crystal ball became brighter and brighter, and more and more crystal clear. Suddenly, it went dim and a weird "thing" was spat out.

The thing was only of the size of a thumb. It was all black, with deep creases.

Lucien pointed at the thing with his finger and it rose in the air. The thing opened a crack in the middle, that quickly grew bigger, and then a pupil was revealed.

It was an eye!

The creepy eye became vague and then divided into nine equal-sized eyes. After becoming invisible, the nine eyes spread out toward the different directions.

The crystal ball became clear again. The scene in the ball was divided into nine parts, provided by the nine eyes.

This was the fifth-circle astrology spell, Spy Eye.

Meanwhile, Lucien also cast a fourth-circle astrology spell, Detect Danger, on himself, which could remind him of any possible dangers and spies in the range of fifty meters.

Looking at the crystal ball while being very careful with the surroundings, Lucien moved further toward the underground. According to what Rhine told him, there could be some monsters and creatures hiding in this ancient dwarf relic close to the space joint, such as the Underground Hunters, the specter of the dwarves, the distorted Hive Mother and the many evil creatures she produced. Although they would not be a big threat to Lucien, he still wanted to be very careful.

...

The many forks dizzied Angwoods. In this dark, moist, and suffocating cave, it had lost all trace of Lucien, including his smell.

After all, on erasing his trace, Lucien was well taught by Natasha, a radiant knight.

Angwoods remained rather calm and the two spots of red flame on its rotten face flickered. He cast the spell silently. It started to use prophecy to locate Lucien.

Although there were many forks, Angwoods was sure that the distance between them was no more than one kilometer, and therefore it was very confident that the prophecy spell would work very well.

Angwoods did get the astrology coordinate of Lucien, (159,260), and he knew that Lucien was only four hundred meters away from him. With the information, Angwoods carefully picked the forks in the road. As soon as it met a dead end, Angwoods went directly through the wall.

There was no such a standard in using astrology coordinate, and there was a prominent difference between how the senior-rank specters and the Congress of Magic used the coordinates. For the specters, their magic power came from their inherent talent, and they automatically gained new spells when they reached a higher rank.

After going through the walls more than ten times, Angwoods could feel that Lucien was already very close. Angwoods reminded itself that it could not step in the range within thirty meters of Lucien, or it would be detected by Lucien's divine item. Once Angwoods figured out Lucien's destination, it would be waiting there and launching an ambush at him.

...

With the assistance of the nine eyes, Lucien was very prepared when the degenerate creatures jumped out. Using the simplest and the fastest-cast spell, Magic Missile, he killed them easily one by one.

Some of the degenerate creatures were of the size of a human being, and some looked like dwarves. All of them had crooked horns and the sticky liquid on them had solidified into their black armor.

The white bones in their right hand were revealed. Some of them were holding heavy axes and some long swords, and in their left hand, a black shield was carried.

They rushed to Lucien in groups, and their roaring sounded very evil, making Lucien feel a bit dizzy.

After killing four of them, Lucien took a glance at the disgusting liquid produced from their body. Because his magic pouch was already rather full, Lucien decided to give up collecting it.

As he was walking, he suddenly felt the burning from the amulet, Sun's Corona. Three layers of its seal had been revealed, and thus it was more sensitive now!

Lucien knew that the powerful specter was only about less than twenty-five meters from him, and he could feel that it was still following him. He wondered if Rhine's plan had been found out by someone else.

Rubbing the ring, Lucien was prepared.

...

Angwoods could feel that now it was only sixty meters away from Lucien, and it became more and more alert. Because of the many powerful magic items Lucien had, if Lucien was prepared, Angwoods would definitely be in trouble.

Hiding into the Wold of Souls and going through another gray stone wall, Angwoods popped out of the wall on another fork in the road. However, when it was about to relocate Lucien again, Angwoods was shocked to find that Lucien was standing in the corner, smiling at it. The sorcerer shot a dim ray shot directly at Angwoods, as if he was expecting this for a long time.

"It's impossible! How come I'm this close to him?!" Angwoods thought to itself in great shock.

Before it could take any action, the anti-magic ray directly hit it. All the magic effects on Angwoods had disappeared!

Lucien was also a bit confused when seeing the ray just hit the specter so easily. What was it doing there? The situation was a bit embarrassing. Lucien did all he could to get prepared for the ambush, but this senior-rank specter behaved in the way like it was just passing by.

However, soon Lucien noticed the familiar white patterns and the creepy black robe. He saw them before on the senior-rank specter when he was in the World of Souls. After the ray hit the specter, Lucien immediately cast Dimensional Cage. The spell was specifically used for binding specters.

Hit by the anti-magic ray, Angwoods temporarily lost the ability to go back and forth between the World of Souls and the main material world, as well as the ability to cast spells.

Angwoods, as a specter, was not able to fight hand-to-hand like a Death Knight. Right now, Angwoods rushed toward the stone wall to win a few seconds for itself.

It only needed a few seconds to recover!

However, as soon as Angwoods touched the stone wall, it failed to go through the wall as it expected but immediately bounced back.

Although Angwoods just hesitated for a few seconds, he had lost its precious chance.

At this time, the air surrounding Lucien started to become solemn and sacred, and a halo spread out.

The sixth-level divine spell, Exorcist Halo!

Dimensional Cage was just a third-circle magic, so Lucien did not have to spend much time on buffering.

When covered by the halo, like the melting snow under the sunlight, the entity of Angwoods started to thaw. Its bitter scream lingered in the narrow cave everywhere. Without any defense spells, Angwoods could not protect itself at all.

Angwoods did not understand why it never even had a chance to use its power, and why the prophecy magic showed such a terrible difference to the actual situation.

Before Angwoods was annihilated, an invisible pair of shackles trapped it and dragged it to Lucien.

The spell was from the Immortal Throne robe, Soul Cage!

Lucien definitely would not let the chance slip out of his hand. He was going to get what he wanted to know out of the specter. He started to read the specter's most important memory.

Lucien first felt the bitterness, then anger, and confusion.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 377: The Lost Civilization

The cave was very dark. The only dim light Lucien could see was from the noctilucent moss. However, with his Moonlight blood power, which the Church called Blessing, Lucien could see very well in the darkness.

In Lucien's dark pupil, there was the vague figure of Angwoods, flickering and shivering like a candle which had come to its end. Finally, it went out.

"The Lord... shall be back?" Lucien repeated in low voice. This was what he found in Angwoods's deepest memory except for its boundless anger and hatred.

When Lucien found this piece of information in Angwoods's memory, he could feel Angwoods's great respect and excitement.

Lucien wondered if something horrible was really going on in the World of Souls, if the real immortal would wake up and come back.

Of course, the Lord that Angwoods referred to was by no means the God of Truth followed by the Church. Zie should be the God believed in by the senior-rank specters in the World of Souls. However, Lucien had no idea whether this was a true god or just some kind of abstract representative, or if it was like the ancestor of the vampires—Alterna.

Lucien's power at reading one's memory was nowhere close to that of Thanatos, and therefore, this ambiguous piece of information was all that he could get. The only thing that he got to know from it was that he had to take some immediate actions, or something very horrible would definitely happen to the main world.

Meanwhile, because of the information that Lucien got from Angwoods, he was more reassured with Rhine's words. Yet, Lucien was not going to force himself to complete all the tasks to save the world. After all, he was just a senior-rank mage, and this was something that should at least require the power of a group of legendaries. When it was necessary, Lucien definitely would report this to the Highest Council.

Lucien also got to know that it was Felipe who summoned this senior-rank specter, and right now Felipe had not noticed the existence of the World of Souls and where the summoned specters came from. In Angwoods's deepest memory, there was its contempt for Felipe's arrogance and its wish that another senior-rank named Adol would end up being tortured and killed by a legendary archmage.

According to the general information he got, Lucien guessed that the Hand of Paleness was indeed aware of the existence of the World of Souls, but they chose to keep the information to themselves in order to explore it on their own, however, it was used by the senior-rank archmages only.

A bright cluster of flame grew out of Lucien's palm and completely burnt out the remains of Angwoods. Then, very carefully, Lucien erased all the traces of fighting in this cave, in case some other senior-rank specters would discover what happened there.

Finishing the work, with the assistance of Spy Eye, Lucien proceeded further toward the underground.

In the darkness sprinkled with the dim light spots, Lucien walked in this underground maze for more than ten minutes. Gradually, Lucien felt that the air had become a bit warmer, and then he heard the sound of a river flowing.

Lucien knew that he was already very close to the underground ancient city of the dwarves. He became even more cautious.

Turning around a corner very carefully, what Lucien saw surprised him.

What was in front of him was a huge passage, seven or eight meters high, and twenty or thirty meters wide, and the ground and the walls on either side were built by large gray stone blocks, with black pillars in the middle, supporting the ceiling. From the pillars, the passage was divided into three paths. At a glance, the great sense of grandeur seized Lucien's mind. As the underground passage was already this magnificent, he wondered what would the dwarves' city look like?

According to the historical records, the dwarves of ancient times did not have magic, nor great blood powers!

The noctilucent patches of mosses growing wantonly on both sides of the walls cast a dim light on the passage. Under the dim light, everything looked very blurry and dream-like. In this kind of environment where silence and gloom resided, Lucien felt that, at any moment, a corpse would crawl out, or maybe a ghost would float out.

After checking around using the eyes, Lucien stepped on the passage. Although he tried to be very gentle, his footsteps still echoed and lingered in the empty space while he was walking on the stone passage.

Lucien activated his blood power and accelerated his movement speed. Now his footsteps could not be heard, and Lucien was moving very fast but, at the same time, he made sure that he was still in the detection range of the nine eyes.

Both sides of the passage were lined with a pair of black metal tracks, which appeared to be the track for some special vehicles to transport goods. Lucien sped along them, and soon he saw the exit of the passage.

Lucien slowed down his pace, and from the pictures sent back by the eyes, he could see that in front of him lay a vast, abandoned architectural complex.

The cave was naturally divided into more than a dozen blocks by the rock walls and pillars supporting the roof. The half-collapsed tall stone houses, overgrown with weeds, looked down on streets that had not been occupied for thousands of years.

What made Lucien a bit nervous was that the stone houses were joined by a series of metal pipes, which protruded from any parts of the houses and then connected to the huge metal pipes at the top of the cave. Growing into the cave roof, no one knew where they were going.

Walking through the cold dreadful streets, Lucien could see at times the familiar metal parts such as bearings, springs, pistons, and gears on the ground, as if he had returned to earth and entered a factory.

The corner of his eye saw something glittering in the grass. Lucien bent forward and picked it up. It was a huge steam rifle as thick as a bazooka. The gears were all rusty and corroded, but Lucien could still tell their sophistication. Also, the steam rifle was attached to a high-pressure steam backpack made of steel, with half the size of a human one.

Gently stroking the rusty rifle, Lucien released a sigh, since it represented the loss of an ancient civilization.

Before the development of human beings, the dwarves who were good at all kinds of crafts, had invented many steam engines and built a splendid Steam Civilization.

Although the dwarves were rather short, the huge airships which could cover the sky, the steamboat which could voyage in the Storm Strait and Boundless Ocean, the cannons that could hold several people inside, the powerful steam rifles, and the steel factories and engineering works that released black smoke day and night were just gigantic as if they were designed for dragons.

Dwarves did not have much theoretical guidance. Relying on their talent and experience, they magically developed the steam, and summarized the mechanical design knowledge in many fields. Even the legendary alchemist, Klaus, had to learn from the dwarves to improve the steam train based on the airships. Klaus' inventions were more like the improvements based on the original creations of the dwarves, but he managed to use magic or divine power to fuel the vehicles and lower the cost by shrinking their size.

Unfortunately, that civilization had been lost. Lucien got to know about it from the senior-rank Arcana and Magic Library. Even a profound sorcerer like Lazar who grew up in the Congress would have no idea that it was the dwarves who first invented the steam train and used them to transport goods. For him, Klaus was the one who invented the magic steam train.

In the later stage of the dwarves' Steam Civilization, the pace they had when making that progress started to slow down. The periodic invasion of the dark creatures from the Dark Mountain Range made the dwarves pay hard. The power of the horrible senior-rank creatures was completely out of

the dwarves' expectation, and the steam rifles and cannons failed to work when facing the evil creatures. Within short twenty years, the splendid civilization had retreated to the underground.

However, down there under the ground, Steam Civilization had no space to grow. The civilization finally died out under the attack of many evil creatures and hunters after witnessing the development of the Dragon era, the Nature Elf era, the heyday of Werewolves. At that time, the ancient magic empire first started to gain its power. Only the small proportion of dwarves who chose to stay on the ground, in the end, managed to gain the blood power and spiritual power because of the experiments conducted by the crazy sorcerers. Slowly, those dwarves living on the ground built up their own countries again.

Although today's dwarves were still good at the alchemy techniques, their civilization was a different one now.

Without the power to safeguard a civilization, one could only see the civilization dying out as time went on. Those ones who were remembered were the profound sorcerers, long-living vampires, and dragons. The rest would eventually be forgotten.

Lucien had some mixed feelings in his mind. He wondered how many splendid civilizations and great figures had been forgotten by history.

He put down the huge steam rifle and moved on. From time to time, he would bent down to pick up some other random stuff, including a silver coin forged with the pattern of a strange hammer and a set of gear, books such as Elementary Mechanical Forging, Steam Rifle Producing, the Illustration of the Steam Engines, the Illustration of Airboats and so on, and the many mechanical articles of various unique styles.

Fortunately, the dwarf language was relatively well preserved and was not very different from the language that the dwarves were using today. Lucien leafed through a few books and copied them in his spirit library.

After a few more minutes of walking in the lost civilization, Lucien saw a huge metal golem half lying on the ground and half leaning against a tall factory building. He stopped to take a closer look at its exposed interior mechanical structure.

Golems—the last piece of straw that the dwarves could grip to safeguard the falling civilization.

The dwarves tried to beat the horrible magical creatures by using this powerful weapon, but the golems that moved very slow failed to fulfill what they hoped. However, it had inspired the sorcerers later and thus they managed to invent the more powerful golems.

Suddenly, a sharp voice was delivered into Lucien's soul. One part of the crystal ball in his palm suddenly dimmed.

A magic eye was gone!

There came the sound of mournful cries, followed by the sound of busy footsteps that really got on Lucien's nerves.

Lucien looked up and saw in the distance large pale tentacles popping out of a factory building, and then a huge and disgusting monster got out.

The monster had the upper body of a plump old woman, fat and ugly, and its small eyes were basically just two tiny gaps flickering with fierce and ferocious light. The monster's huge naked breasts were covered with many black and white eyes, and its lower body was like a white octopus which had many tentacles with suckers.

Hive mother!

A hive mother could produce hundreds of thousands of evil creatures. Without enough food, the evil creatures would eat each other or try to get to the surface.

Following the hive mother, the many evil creatures came to Lucien like the waves of a tide coming from all directions. The number of them was hard to calculate, and among them were even many shooters and warlocks.

Lucien raised his right hand and stroked the badge on his chest. Suddenly, a halo of glittering light spread outwards and quickly covered the range of about five hundred meters.

A powerful storm started to blow, and the many degenerate evil creatures were instantly frozen into pieces and blown away by the strong wind.

As soon as the stone arrows came within the range, they directly fell to the ground since they were frozen with a thick layer ice. The same thing happened to the missiles, spider webs, and magic rays.

Lucien moved forward very quickly, and the halo moved following him. The tall buildings were frozen with the ice and frost. None of the evil creatures could stop him.

The hive mother noticed what was going on. Reaching out its tentacles, it started to climb and jump. The many black and white eyes shot out acid, spider webs, and toxic gas.

However, once they came in the halo of ice and snow, the liquid and gas were frozen solid and then broken into piles of powder.

A few seconds later, Lucien caught up with the hive mother and trapped it in the halo. The movement of the hive mother started to slow down, as its tentacles were frozen solid and thus became very heavy.

At the same time, under the power of the storm, the hive mother's body started to crack because of the extremely low temperature. As soon as the black fluid came out, it was turned into black ice.

Bang! Thirty seconds later, the hive mother died from cracking into pieces.

By the time Lucien stopped running and the halo disappeared, the entire dwarf city was covered with ice and frost. Some were black and some white. The city became empty and silent again.

The magic spell definitely worked very well, but it was also very likely to hurt Lucien's own teammates.

...

After more than ten minutes, Lucien finally found a space joint in the underground city. It was a distorted space gap, surrounded by the dwarves' altars, which were designed in a rather simple way.

It seemed that, at the final stage of the Steam Civilization, the dwarves also started to learn from the magic creatures, but obviously, it did not work very well. As a profound arcanist, Lucien was deeply touched by seeing how the great civilization finally fell.

Lucien took a glance at the poor magic altar, took out the materials and started to worry about his own safety. He wondered if he would get lost when entering another dimension using an altar like that.

After all, close to the space joints under the control of the Congress of Magic, the Congress had set up many space gates using the ninth-circle magic, Gate.

After carefully checking the space gap out and making sure that the gap was relatively stable, Lucien took out the materials and rearranged the space joint teleportation circle. He was glad that the poor quality of the teleportation circle was within his expectation.

It took Lucien three days to reset the teleportation circle. He stood up and did some exercise to warm up and then cast many layers of defense spells on himself. He had no idea what was there on the other end. After all, the last time Rhine used this space joint was several hundred years ago.

Then, Lucien stepped into the dimension which the vampires took away from the dwarves, Night Highland!

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 378: The Night Highland

A grim and dark-looking castle stood by the lake covered with black duckweed. Its pinnacles on the top resembled the javelins in the style of the ancient magic empire.

Harold Hammer, carrying a heavy bag of ore on his back, was walking slowly toward the castle's warehouse. As an underage dwarf, he was not as strong as the muscular fully-grown dwarves who could easily wield a huge heavy hammer like a toy. The bag of ore was really heavy for him.

However, Harold had no complaints about hard labor since at least he could still survive. Those strong dwarves were selected out to become the food of the vampire masters.

This castle belonged to the Great Kindred Count whose name was Vlad Cecil. The surrounding more than a hundred dwarf villages were under his control. The vampires chose "the pure blood and flesh" from among them for food, and drove the rest of the dwarves as their slaves to do the hard labor in the mines and castle. Day and night, the slave dwarves had to mine the special metal called needham gold from the plateau as well as caramo iron and mythril for the vampire master.

It seemed that the dwarves' destiny was doomed as soon as they were born. They either ended up as food for the vampires or died early from the intense laboring. The only sweet moment was when they found their beloved partner and had their offspring.

Though Harold had never left this village under the control of the castle, he heard that the dwarves living in the north were also suffering just like them. All the dwarves on the highland were in great pain, living like domestic animals.

Harold looked up at the night sky and the bright constellations over the highland. He was at a loss and depressed, wondering if his life was just going to be like this without any hope and if the past glory of dwarves could never come back again.

A sharp pain came from Harold's face as the thick whip left a deep and bloody wound on its left side. The wound stretched across the dwarves' distinctive big nose to the right.

"Move!"

There came the evil voice, and the shadow of the whip was in front of Harold.

Yes, some dwarves still had a third choice. They could choose to turn their backs on their ancestors and act like a well-trained dog to the vampires to become their blood servants, who were responsible for torturing their own brothers and sisters.

The elegant, privileged vampire counts would not watch the miners working in the dirty mines themselves, and thus they needed some servants. Every embrace would cost them the original blood power and the weaker vampires would be drained off if giving embrace for too many times. Therefore, even the powerful vampires were not willing to have many children.

That was why the number of vampires was never big. Most of their servants were just the blood servants whose blood was drained up by the vampires but did not die. They were simply puppets of the vampires.

The servants were as strong as knights, but their power could not be further improved any more. Their life-span was only of one-tenth of their master's lifetime, and they could never, and would never launch a rebellion.

Harold glanced at the dwarf dressing in fine clothes and holding the whip, and then he looked down and responded in low voice, "Yes, Butler Wells."

Countless dwarves died because of this abominable traitor. Although Wells was only a supervisor, he preferred to be called a butler. When the real vampire butler, Galata, showed up, Wells would kneel on the ground to kiss Galata's shoe.

The red-haired Wells had removed all of his beard because his master, Vlad, hated it very much, and thus his bumpy skin was revealed. Seeing Harold's good-looking dark brown beard, Wells was quite pissed. Lifting his right hand, he whipped Harold again.

"What were you thinking? Dwarves don't need to think! You hear me? You filthy dirty bastard!"

It seemed that Wells had forgotten the fact that he was also a dwarf, instead, he regarded himself as a decent servant for the noble kindred.

"Yes, Butler Wells." Harold gripped the bag loaded with the ores even tighter.

"Get out of my sight. Move!" Wells scolded.

After taking a few steps, Harold heard that Wells's voice had become disgustingly sweet, "Good afternoon, Madam Tess, Sir Galata! This way, please... It's dirty over there. Those filthy dwarves should not be seen..."

Without looking back, Harold could easily imagine Wells' flattering manner, and how well-dressed the tall vampire butler Galata was. Galata always dressed in a fancy black suit decorated with a neat bow tie.

Madam Tess must be the same charming and beautiful. She had the shining blond hair and proportioned figure. Her jade-colored eyes never changed after she was turned into a vampire by the embrace from Count Vlad.

Harold's heart twitched when thinking of Madam Tess. She was the most beautiful female dwarf who was famous in the surrounding many villages, and she was also once the dream girl for Harold. However, she was picked by the count and then became his vampire bride.

The cool wind from the highland reminded Harold what he should do. Harold lowered his head and moved forward slowly bearing the ore bag. He heard the commands from behind.

"Hurry up with the smelting. Be careful. Some dwarves who have managed to escape have formed a rebellion force."

...

When the evening arrived, Harold finally finished the hard labor and could take a rest. After getting the food—two black bread sticks, Harold was ready to go back to his place in the nearby village.

As he walked, he looked around and suddenly behaved very cautiously. When making sure it was safe, Harold became excited and quickly took a quiet path in the darkness.

After more than ten minutes, Harold had gone through a few thin groves. A common-looking huge stone appeared in front of Harold. Carefully checking around again, Harold cautiously walked to the other side of the huge stone and gently knocked at it.

"Steam above," whispered Harold in very low voice using the dwarf language. Although it sounded like a spell, there was no spiritual power involved.

The huge stone suddenly split like an opening gate. A dwarf popped out. After looking around, he hurriedly said, "Come in, Harold."

Harold went into the gap swiftly. After the dwarf locked the stone gate from inside, Harold gave him a breadstick and said, "Uncle Warren, I should go down there now."

"Go, my child. The Elder is waiting for you," said Warren.

Warren took a bit bite at the bread and swallowed it down with water as if he had starved for a long time.

Harold knew that the lack of food was always a big problem for the rebellion force. He chewed the black bread and gulped the water that he carried with him when walking downward. He was deeply impressed by the underground palace built by the dwarf ancestors.

He wondered why their powerful ancestors were defeated by the vampires. Had all the gods decided to abandon them?

The wall paintings along either side of the passage were magnificent: There were airboats in the sky, steamboats in the ocean, powerful cannons aiming at the dragons, and running steam trains on the plain... Although it was not Harold's first time seeing the paintings, he was just as excited as before. He loved listening to the glorious stories told by the Elder, Augustus Heartbroken. When he

thought of the honor and glory that once belonged to their ancestor's civilization, Harold's heart was filled with hope.

At the end of the passage, there was a big hall, accompanied by two rows of small rooms on both sides. The roar of steam kept coming out, and a sturdy dwarf was driving the steam hammer to forge weapons.

"Hey, Harold." A dwarf with long white beard nodded slightly. When the dwarf saw what Harold was looking at, he sighed, "Our civilization has been lost. We cannot duplicate the complex steam engines, cannons, and rifles anymore. We can only try our best to make the sharper swords and axes. Although they are enough for killing the blood servants, the swords and axes cannot hurt the vampires."

The way the elder dwarf talked was rather gloomy and dismal.

The several dwarves dressing simply tried to cut in when the elder dwarf was speaking. They were of a higher rank in the rebellion force and did not want this desperation to spread out.

Augustus put on a peaceful smile and said, "Myrna, Aquinas... We have to let them know what we are facing. Yes, there is no hope. But shall we have our knees on the ground for the rest of our life, or shall we fight and bleed to safeguard our ancestors' glory and die like real dwarves... This is our own choice."

"Steam above!" The dwarves in the small rooms burst out the roaring. They were going to die anyway, and they wished to die as a warrior.

Sharing the food, Augustus asked Harold what was going on in the castle. The reason why they decided to hide on Count Vlad's territory was that they heard Count Vlad was injured when he was on the battlefield and thus he needed to sleep from time to time to heal himself.

"Madam Tess has sent out the blood servants to find you..." said Harold. As a worker, he did not know much. Then Harold looked at Augustus, and his eyes were shining with hope, "Can I know more about the ancient steam civilization?"

The good-looking, young female dwarf whose name was Myrna was also looking forward to the stories. The stories were like the warm sunlight that could give hope to everyone in the rebellion force.

"... We dwarves... once ruled the boundless land. We had magnificent cities at the ports of the boundless ocean and along the Nigreen River... At that time, the erected iron chimneys were like tall forests, and the smoke coming out from them could cover the sky..."

"There were steam trains traveling between the cities. From here to the north, it would only take you a few hours. Every one of the dwarves could get enough food and have access to all kinds of mechanic inventions. We had the steam elevators that could directly lift one to the top floor of the building, and we always had hot water because of the steam boilers..."

"... The brave dwarf warriors were expanding our territory equipped with high-pressure steam bags, mechanic arms, and steam rifles. Our steamboats were sailing in the oceans. Our great cannons made the enemies bend their back..."

Although the dwarves did not even know what sunlight was, they were still listening to the stories with great interest. The stories could show them paradise. They listened to the stories while staring at the frescos. They could see the cities flourishing with the steam civilization.

Harold tightened his fists. He swore in his mind that one day he would rebuild the dwarf cities.

When telling the stories, Augustus' face was written with pride and hope.

"Alright... This is all for today. It's time for us to worship the God of Steam, the master of life and death." Augustus stood up and walked to the center of the hall, where there was a strange-looking altar.

"Does it work?" The young dwarf, Myrna, asked a bit confusedly.

Augustus cast her a stern look and said, "When we found this place, we found the rite left by our ancestors. They were that powerful and smart, and I am sure that they would not waste their time on things that were useless. Maybe our ancestors were abandoned because they were not showing enough respect to the God of Steam. We should be very pious, so we can win the mercy of the God of Steam again."

The dwarves all nodded. In this desperate situation, they were not going to let go of any hope.

Therefore, all the dwarves gathered at the front of the altar. Following the Elder, they started to dance in a strange way.

"The almighty God of Steam! Your devout followers and servants are praying."

Chapter 379: The God of Steam's Arrival

Chapter 379: The God of Steam's Arrival

"You rule everything. You decide life and death. You are the god of gods, the king of kings."

The movement of the Elder was quite distorted in a weird way, and he moved around in a quite disorganized manner. However, if one observed carefully, one could tell that Augustus' movement was still following some mysterious patterns.

The rest of the dwarves were having a hard time following his movement, and at the same time, they repeated the Elder's words, "You give us life; you give us food; you give us the courage when facing the difficulties, as well as goodness, integrity, and perseverance."

At the entry of the palace, four transparent figures were staring at the dwarves' praying.

"It looks like the manner from the ancient magic empire..." said the vampire bride, Tess, using the kindred's talent called Short-distance Mind Communication to the butler Galata, Wells, and the maid Edith. Tess was feeling both amused and confused.

They had found the place where the rebellion force hid!

Both Wells and Edith were blood servants, and they grew up on Night Highland. The farthest place Wells and Edith went to was the castle of another vampire count. They had no idea what the ancient magic empire was, and thus when hearing Tess' words, both of them lowered their heads but did not know what to say. Of course, they did not have access to the study in the castle, and Wells did not even know how to read!

"The old dwarf is acting quite differently. His movement is very complex and distorted," responded the vampire butler, Galata, respectfully, "To me, it resembles the ritual dance from the Saint Truth."

"The ritual dance from the Saint Truth came from the simple magic rites," said Tess in a low voice. "Galata, don't you see that the old dwarf is playing the six different roles? The dance should be carried out by six sorcerers in six different directions, using different movements... But he is now dancing all by himself."

Both Wells and Edith lowered their head even further. They dared not to interrupt the conversation, as they knew that Count Vlad was severely hurt by the divine power of the Saint Truth at the end of a war called the War of Dawn. Count Vlad never completely recovered from it, and thus in the recent several hundred years, the count had been sleeping for most of the time and never left Night Highland again. Therefore, no one was allowed to talk about the Saint Truth except for the noble kindred.

"Madam, you are right," Galata agreed after a closer observation, "but their praying song is for sure not a spell, so the rite won't work. I can't tell what the rite is, though."

"It doesn't matter. It is not going to work anyway. When we catch the filthy dwarves, we will know," Tess sneered. "I hate those pastors and preachers. Because of them, my dear Vlad cannot always be with me!"

"We can never know where the rebellion force is without your sharp perception, madam," flattered Wells. He was worried that Madam Tess' emotion would get out of control.

Tess smiled, "He is different. Laboring in the mine for three years, he is still energetic and his eyes are still filled with hope. That is not right. I did not expect that he was connected to the rebellion force, though."

"As you said, madam," Edith flattered, "dwarves do not deserve having any hopes. They are animals."

Seeing that the rite had almost come to the end, Tess raised her hand and commanded, "Kill them all. Let the bodies dry on the wall."

"Yes, madam," answered Galata, Wells, and Edith together.

Harold kneeled on the ground in an extremely respectful manner following the Elder, and they prayed in low voice, "The great master of life and death! You have mercy on us and you have the great power in your hand. We shall make everyone respect your name. May we get out of the pain and sufferings under your blessing and glory!"

"May your sacred name, Steam, ascend to the top again!"

Harold added in his mind, "May we rebuild the splendid steam civilization under your blessing!"

Then, he heard a bitter scream!

Harold quickly got up and hurriedly looked at the direction where the scream came from.

Four figures slowly appeared. They were Madam Tess, butler Galata, Wells, and Edith.

Galata's two white fangs pierced through the neck of a dwarf. Wells just cut the throat of another dwarf, and the blood spread everywhere.

A blood servant did not deserve enjoying the blood.

"Why... How did you find this place?" Harold burst out because of the great fear. He could not help trembling.

The beautiful dwarf vampire took out a fine handkerchief made of Black Nightingale from the Kingdom of Holm. She gently wiped the corner of her lips and said, "It was you who led us here."

All of the dwarves looked back at Harold. They were all shocked, and their eyes were filled with bitterness and hatred.

"Harold... why?" Aquinas picked up the heavy ax.

"I trusted you!" Myrna's voice trembled.

"I didn't... I... Elder, I didn't!" Harold hurriedly explained, "Please trust me! I never did this!"

Tess giggled. She signaled to tell Galata not to kill the dwarves right away. She liked watching this.

"I trust you, Harold," said the Elder. "If you did betray us, they would have directly broken in."

Harold almost burst into tears.

Augustus sadly shook his head and then said to the rest of the dwarves aloud, "You want to fight? Or you want to kneel down?!"

"Steam above!" cried out the dwarves holding their weapons.

Tess covered her mouth and said in a disappointed way, "Boring... Galata, do it."

Galata adjusted his bow tie slightly and then bowed, "As your command, madam."

Facing the dwarves holding the axes coming to him, Galata was still very relaxed.

When the ax almost hacked in his back, Galata turned into a streak of shadow like a ghost and then showed up behind the dwarf holding the ax.

Galata's left hand was now a sharp claw. He instantly tore the dwarf's body into half. The dwarf let out a bitter scream but his voice was immediately choked by the gurgling of blood from his cut-open throat.

Then the shadow swiftly went into the crowd of the dwarves. The screams were everywhere.

When the many dwarves finally encircled Galata, countless small bats covered the vampire butler. Then, the vampire showed up on the other side of the hall, following the bats.

The rest of the dwarves were fighting against Wells and Edith. There was no big difference between their power. The heavy axes was a big threat to the two blood servants.

Seeing that there was little hope to beat Galata, Augustus commanded, "Go to the gate! Get out!"

The seven or eight dwarves exchanged a look. They burst out a harsh roar and together charged at the vampire butler. They were going to use their life to win time for the rest of the dwarves.

However, they died one by one. The time they could win for their people was not long.

The rest of the dwarves rushed toward the gate, with tears in their eyes. Wells and Edith lost the gate, and the dwarves almost reached the passage!

"Useless..." said Tess coldly. Two white fangs grew out of her beautiful and delicate lips. She raised her right hand and a cluster of black smoke covered the few leading dwarves.

Ahhhh!

When the black smoke disappeared, the several dwarves fell onto the ground and their blood had been drained up.

The rest of the dwarves were scared. They ran around out of panic but all stayed at least a meter away from Tess.

"Why... Why is she so powerful?" The dwarves in the back, including the Elder, murmured out of shock.

Although the Elder was rather calm, and he knew that the rebellion force could not fight against the senior-rank vampires, he had never expected that the common and middle-rank vampires were also this powerful. They were slaughtering the dwarves like killing domestic animals!

The Elder kneeled down facing the altar. He raised his hands and cried, "Why all our efforts... means nothing... We sacrificed, we died... for nothing?!"

Tess took out the fancy handkerchief and wiped her hands, "Why don't you understand? The only reason why you are still alive is that we are too bored. We are just playing a game with you."

"Is that right..." There were tears in the Elder's eyes, and he hit the floor using his head, "So we dwarves died for nothing...?"

Augustus turned around and cried to the altar, "The God of Steam! The Almighty God! The master of life and death! Please... please save us!"

More dwarves were dying behind him.

"Wake up, dwarf. No one is going to help you," Tess teased. "You dwarves have been so innocent for thousands of years."

The Elder did not listen to her. Praying, repeating the name of the God, the Elder hit his head against the stages of the altar. His blood dyed the altar surface red.

"Idiots..." Wells mocked at him.

The rest of the dwarves all kneeled down desperately. Was that the end? Just like that? Harold could not bear the great pain.

However, light suddenly burst out from the altar. The entire altar was covered with a pure light!

Ecstasy rose in Harold's mind. He kneeled on the ground on all fours, crying.

"The great master of life and death. Have mercy on us; you hold the ultimate power. We shall make everyone respect your name."

The Elder, Myrna, and Aquinas were all shocked. With tears, they prayed facing the altar, "May we get out of the pain and sufferings under your blessing and glory!"

"May your sacred name, Steam, ascend to the top again!"

A figure wearing a black suit slowly appeared.

"My Lord, your arrival brings us all the blessings!"

"The master of life and death, your glory can purify everything!"

The Elder, Harold, and the rest of the dwarves were very excited.

Was it the God of Steam?! Did Zie come to save them?

Tess, Galata, and the two blood servants stared at the altar in great shock.

What was going on!?

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 380: The God of Steam

The light became brighter, and the figure also became clearer, but the light rippled in the air and covered the face and the upper body of the figure.

At this time, the figure suddenly disappeared. Only the white pure light still lit up the whole hall.

The Elder, Harold, Aquinas and the rest of the dwarves did not see that since they were still prostrating on the ground, but Tess, Galata, Wells, and Edith saw it.

"Haha, their god has disappeared! Their god has just abandoned them again!" Wells released a long sigh and said with wild joy.

When the altar lit up, Wells freaked out. For a moment, he thought that the dwarf's god did come to save them. Wells could not read, and because of all the stories he had heard, he believed in the existence of God. Although he was a blood servant of his noble kindred master, facing the unimaginable power of God, as a traitor, Wells' heart was still filled with fear.

Edith laughed very hard, "See... haha, your god is not going to bless you anymore. The kindred is the chosen one!"

When the altar lit up, Edith was just as nervous.

The dwarves hurriedly looked up and saw the empty altar.

"Did the God of Steam abandon us?"

"What did we do...?"

Desperation spread out among the dwarves who were still alive. For a moment, they thought they were saved.

"Senior-rank Invisibility! He is a sorcerer!" The profound butler suddenly realized what was going on, "That is a teleportation circle! A space joint!"

"Galata, kill him! I am going to inform the count!" Tess got nervous, and the black bat wings stretched out behind her. She hurriedly turned around and left the underground hall immediately.

The space joint was like the gate for a castle. Therefore, controlling as many space joints as possible was very important to safeguard one's territory. Usually, a space joint would change hands many times between the different powers.

Both Tess and Galata knew how important it was to control the space joint!

At the same time, since they did not know how powerful the sorcerer was, Tess had decided to go back to seek the help of the count. Galata should be able to win some time for them.

Although Vlad had been tortured by the divine power for a long time, as a senior-rank vampire, he was the most powerful kindred in the area.

Usually, the power of a vampire was directly linked to his or her title. A baron vampire's power was about the level of a level one knight or a dark mage; a viscount vampire had the power of a middle-rank mage; a vampire count or marquis was as powerful as a senior-rank mage; a duke's power could be compared to that of an archmage or a gold knight; a vampire prince was of the same level as a legendary archmage.

However, the titles did not work all the time. Many vampires had been living in the human society or living alone for a very long time, and even though they had become more powerful, they would not bother reporting this to the Vampire High Council. As for Rhine, who had been living for more than thousands of years, he simply preferred the count title. In fact, he was well-qualified for the title of a vampire prince.

Galata hesitated for a moment, but in the next second, he jumped on the altar with great determination. He was totally loyal to the count, and of course, he would obey Ms. Tess' command.

A vampire was very sensitive to life force. Galata was sure that the sorcerer was still on the altar.

As soon as Lucien was sent here, he saw the dwarves prostrating on the ground, praying and crying around him. He was so confused for a moment that he thought he just jumped into another world again!

However, Lucien still immediately cast on himself the fourth-circle spell, Invisibility (Advanced), to hide.

When Lucien realized that he could still use magic, he was certain that he was still in the same world.

After becoming invisible, he started to calm down. As an expert in language, it was not difficult for him to tell the fact that the dwarves were using the ancient language, which shared the same origin with the modern dwarf language.

Lucien wondered what the dwarves were doing. However, before he figured out the answer for all of his questions, he heard the vampires saying the words "space joint".

When he saw the vampires, Lucien became certain that he had indeed arrived at Night Highland. In the next second, he saw a male vampire coming directly at him.

Lucien's eyes slightly squinted. He raised his hand to point at the vampire. He could not let others know the existence of the space joint!

He still needed the space joint on Night Highland to make some more jumps between the dimensions. If this was discovered by the vampire princes, Lucien would be in great trouble.

Rhine did not tell him which vampire was trustworthy, and that meant he could trust nobody.

Harold stared at the empty altar and the pure light that was slowly disappearing. He started to accept the fact that they had been completely abandoned by their god.

Was it because they were not devout enough?

Was it because the cruel vampires had won the favor of gods?

Was their fate doomed already?

Biting hard, his lips started to bleed. He felt extremely desperate, confused, and lost. Harold wished to die right away.

Only death could end the great pain!

Only death could bring him the forever peace!

Harold was not alone here. All the dwarves felt the same way, even including the Elder, who had lost all of his fate.

A shadow suddenly swept over them toward the altar.

They knew it was Galata, but that was also the only thing that they could come up with.

All of a sudden, a dazzling light lit up the Elder's turbid pupils! Galata was covered in a colorful light!

Red, black, and green... The light spots burst out. Some turned into gas very quickly; some smelled like sulfur; some changed colors very fast and fell on the ground flat.

Within a second, Galata disappeared completely. Only the light spots were left.

"What is that?!" Tess was totally shocked. Galata had been killed even before she had the chance to fully stretch out her wings. How was that possible?!

She had never seen magic like that before!

Was that a legendary archmage? She once heard the legend that Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, had the power to break someone down into countless elements!

A great fear seized her mind. She knew that she must run, right now!

A cluster of black smoke suddenly rose, and countless small bats flew out in all directions.

It happened so quickly that Wells and Edith did not even have any time to take actions.

Seeing that their god decomposed Galata so easily, Harold's heart was filled with joy and surprise.

Their god was still with them!

The God of Steam still remembered them!

He burst into tears. A gentle, warm stream flowed in his body, and it felt like the nice pat that he received from his parents when he was young.

"Is this the power of God?" Harold murmured.

He could not think clearly, but he heard a bitter scream. He turned around hurriedly and saw that the white smoke rose out of Wells' body, and his rotten pieces of flesh were falling on the ground. Soon, there was only his skeleton left on the ground, and the same thing happened to the maid named Edith as well.

Close to the passage, all the small bats had also fallen on the ground, cramping and twitching. Then, the bats quickly disappeared in the holy light.

Exorcist Halo!

A few seconds later, Harold heard the scream from Tess.

"Tess and Galata... died?" The dwarves could not believe it was real.

They were vampires, the nightmare that had been torturing them for so many years!

Was this the power of God? They did not know.

Aquinas was very close to the altar, and the remaining pieces of Galata were right in front of them. He carefully picked up one of the black pieces.

His eyes suddenly opened wide, and his hands were trembling. "This is iron! And coal! The real God of Steam has come to us!"

He hurriedly threw the pieces in his hands away and prostrated himself on the ground, praying aloud, "The great master of life and death, have mercy on us, just like you have the ultimate power."

"We will get out of the pain and sufferings under your blessing and glory!"

The dwarves looked around and became certain that their god had arrived here for them!

"The mortal eyes cannot see the true god; the ordinary painting brush cannot portray the ultimate power; the real master never appears in front of the mortal!" The Elder came up with the reason why they could not see their god, and exclaimed aloud.

"You rule everything, from life to death. You are the king of kings, the god of gods."

The rest of the dwarves also hit their head against the ground with ecstasy toward the altar following the Elder. Lucien still did not understand fully what was going on here.

"Our glory, our life, and our power, all go to you! The almighty God of Steam!"

The dwarves exclaimed aloud together in a very devout manner.

God was as gracious as the sea and as mighty as the mountains!

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 381: A Dream City

Lucien finally realized what was going on there. The dwarves thought that he was their God of Steam, the master of life and death, and they were worshipping him.

This was Night Highland, once under the control of the dwarves, but later they were conquered by the vampires.

They should be from the last group of dwarves left from the Civilization of Steam, and they were raised by the vampires as labors.

These dwarves managed to escape from the vampire and found the relic left by their ancestors. They thought that the teleportation circle was an altar, and they misunderstood the material left by their ancestors when they tried to learn magic as the instruction for reaching their God. In this case, he was sent here when the dwarves were carrying out their rite.

It seemed that the vampires killed by him were here to kill the dwarves, and thus the dwarves, after witnessing his power, firmly believed that he was the God of Steam.

Lucien's brain worked very fast. It did not take him long to figure out the story.

Then, Lucien's first thought was that he should use magic to erase the dwarves' memory. However, when Lucien saw the cast-iron stoves in the rooms around and the steam hammer, an idea suddenly struck him. The dwarves had mastered the basic knowledge of the Steam Civilization and should be able to carry out some relatively complex smelting procedures.

To simplify the alchemical products and items, Lucien first needed the skilled workers who were able to make the gears.

Since the skills of making alchemical items and products were mostly owned by the sorcerers, and the Congress would not waste the apprentices' time doing the harsh labor work, very rarely could an ordinary person join an alchemy work. This problem had been bothering Lucien for a long time, preventing him from spreading the usage of alchemical items and products, which would not only bring Lucien a great amount of wealth but also shake the ordinary people's belief in the Church.

Lucien thought that this would take a very long time, at least a few generations. However, he saw new hope in the dwarves from the Civilization of Steam.

"The almighty God of Steam, may your name spread throughout the world!"

The dwarves' praying inspired Lucien. He quickly got a plan: he could make the dwarves work for the Congress of Magic using the name of their God, so the dwarves would be completely loyal to them, and it would also be much easier to make them sign the magic compact.

Facing the fact that Lucien had saved their life and could provide the dwarves with a bright future to work as the new workers for the Congress, the dwarves would definitely accept the offer instead of being the slaves for those vampires. However, Lucien still wanted to make sure that the dwarves would be sincerely willing to work for them.

Lucien still had his mission to complete. Furthermore, the teleportation circle set up beside the space joint was not able to send many dwarves out, but using the teleportation circle too frequently in a short period of time would draw the vampires' attention. Lucien decided to let the dwarves hide here on Night Highland for a bit longer, and in that case, they could also have some time to grow bigger by enrolling more dwarves. Once his mission was completed, to avoid the great conflict, Lucien would ask the Congress to set up another gate to take away all the dwarves.

If a war broke out between the Congress of Magic and the vampires, the Church would be the biggest beneficiary.

Although Lucien was moved with compassion seeing how the dwarves were suffering, currently he could not come up with a better solution.

The fourth circle magic spell, Invisibility (Advanced), would still last for a while. Lucien took out a tube of liquid and gently uncorked it. The liquid instantly turned a colorless and odorless gas, which soon filled in the entire hall.

...

The dwarves were still praying, praying to their almighty God, praying for their beautiful future full of hope.

Suddenly, Harold felt that the temperature started increasing. When he opened his eyes, to his great surprise, Harold saw that the floor made of grey stone bricks had turned into yellow hot sand.

"Go. Go deep into the desert to find my Kingdom.

"Go. Go there so you could find everything you want."

The sacred and solemn voice came from the sky. The dwarves again deeply lowered their heads and put their faces against the hot sand. "Your name is respected. Your will is fulfilled. Master, you dominate everything in the world."

The voice then disappeared. After a long time, the elder slowly looked up and saw that they were now in the boundless desert. Close to the horizon line, he saw something green that he believed was an oasis.

It was the first time that they witnessed the unimaginable power of God.

The hot wind burnt their faces. The dwarves remained where they were, totally shocked. It was even the first time that they saw the sun! Night Highland would never be lit up.

Harold moved his lips and murmured, "Sun... Daylight..."

His words awakened the elder and the rest of the dwarves. Myrna asked as if she was in a dream, "Where shall we go...?"

"...Where?" The Elder hesitated for a moment but very quickly cheered up, and his voice was full of hope and passion, "We go deep into the desert! We find our master's Kingdom!"

Harold felt that he was almost going crazy from the excitement, "So we can get back our lost civilization, right? We can build a steam city!"

Very excited, Aquinas also quivered, "Me, too. I want to see those black chimneys, the grand airboats, the great cannons again!"

Rebuilding a steam city was the ultimate dream for the dwarves from the rebellion force. A steam city represented their supreme honor!

The Elder looked around at the dwarves' sweaty red faces. He raised his arm and cried out, "The master of life and death told us that we can find everything we want deep in the desert! So we go deep into the desert!"

"Steam above! We go deep into the desert!" repeated the rest of the dwarves aloud together.

...

Although they did not have a clear guidance, the dwarves could feel that something was calling them in the front.

Walking in the desert was hard. The sunlight was dazzling, and the wind was drying them up. The dwarves came to know how horrible a desert could be. They were thirsty. They felt dizzy.

"Myrna, are you alright?" Harold quickly grabbed Myrna's arm when she was about to fall over.

Myrna shook her head and bit her lips, "I'm okay. This is the trial given by the Master. To get to his Kingdom, I won't give up."

The dwarves were encouraged by Myrna's words. What she said was true. If they could not bear the pain, they did not deserve the blessing.

Suddenly, they heard the cheerful voice of the elder, "Look! It's there!"

The dwarves looked at the same direction together and saw the huge city in the oasis.

The city was there! Their Master's kingdom!

The dwarves had completely forgotten the exhaustion. They ran toward the huge city as fast as they could.

When they were closer to the city, a sudden loud buzzing sound came from the sky.

The dwarves all looked up and saw a huge weird bird coming from the other side of the sky toward the city. When the weird bird was right above them, the dwarves finally recognized what it was. It was not a bird, but a giant machine covered with a silvery white metal!

The bird was so huge that the dwarves felt that they were just a group of ants.

The machine bird lowered its speed and slowly landed in the city somewhere they could not see.

"Is this... an airboat?" Harold was shocked, but the machine bird looked different from what he saw on the frescos.

The elder slowly shook his head, "No... That is not an airboat. An airboat is not that fast. But it is definitely man-made!"

What was it then? All the dwarves asked themselves.

"We will figure that out when we reach the city," said the elder with great determination.

The dwarves set off again, and silence covered them. They did not know what they would see next on their way approaching the city.

After more than ten minutes, the dwarves reached the edge of the oasis and finally saw the city.

Many of them took a deep breath since they were deeply shocked by the view. This city was totally out of their imagination!

On the one side of the city, they saw the very tall and straight chimneys and the many factories and plants. The dwarves were more familiar with the scenery since they had seen it many times in their dreams. However, on the other side of the city, there were buildings even taller than those chimneys. Even the most exaggerated legends had failed to describe that resplendence and imposing manner!

The tall buildings were close to each other, tiled in different colors including black, gray, silver white, and brown. The well-aligned windows reflected the sunlight.

Between the tall buildings and factories, there were wide roads and even land bridges, on which ran the strange but also good-looking vehicles very fast.

The shadowy figures guarding the city were holding metal objects like steam rifles in their hands, but smaller and lighter.

Little did Harold ever realize how sharp his eyes could be. He could even see the slow-moving elevators in the building, and the many shadowy figures using the strange devices talking to each other even when they were in the different buildings.

Myrna also saw the shadowy figures holding some strange metal tablets. All kinds of pictures showed up just with a gentle tap.

Night fell very soon, and the city was lit up by the many lights, turning it into a place where all the stars gathered on the ground.

The dwarves were speechless for a long time at the incredible splendor of the city.

Suddenly, a gap opened in the ground at the edge of the city, and a huge "metal arrow" shot out with a bright flame into the distance.

"What is that?!" The dwarves were totally shocked.

Then, the metal arrow fell to the ground on the horizon, followed by a deafening bang!

The ground was shaking, and the dwarves' ears buzzing. There was a new sun at the edge of the desert, burning and glowing, with enough power to destroy the entire world. The bright sun soon disappeared. Heavy smoke in the shape of a huge mushroom was left there at the horizon as if there was another horrible hell in the distance.

Seeing that, Harold swallowed hard. The metal arrow could definitely destroy the entire Night Highland.

The look on the face of the elder and the rest of the dwarves were very serious. They held the power in awe. When they looked back at the dream-like city, the beautiful lights blurred their eyes.

"Where is this place?" Harold blurted out, feeling afraid but also excited, "This place is even greater than the steam city described in the elder's stories!"

"This is..." Myrna murmured, quivering.

The solemn and sacred arrived again,

"This is Atlantis. My kingdom."

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 382: Count Vlad

The dwarves had never seen anything like that before. The scene had exceeded their ultimate imagination.

The tall buildings made them feel so small, and the star-light lights made the city look even bigger and more splendid. The civilization that the city belonged to was way more advanced than Steam Civilization.

The dwarves felt that they were facing the boundless starry sky. They were deeply shocked by how insignificant and tiny they were.

This was the power of civilization.

After a while, the elder finally sobered up and kneeled down on the ground, prostrating, although the sand was still very hot.

"Our almighty God of Steam! Your kingdom is the domain where all the gods live. Your kingdom shows the ultimate power of steam!"

Hearing the elder's prayer, the dwarves also kneeled down in an extremely devout manner, facing the city,

"Your blessing is as vast as the ocean; your stateliness is as solemn as the great mountain."

The solemn voice arrived again, "My name shall not be revealed to the heretics."

It took the elder a second to comprehend the words and then he quickly repeated leading the rest of the dwarves, "The name of Master shall not be revealed to the heretics."

The solemn voice continued, "Traitors will all be devoured by steam."

The dwarves followed, "Anyone who betrays us will be devoured by steam."

The voice became ethereal, "Be my people. Be my willing servants. No more slavery."

The dwarves answered together, "Your glory above!"

The voice slowly disappeared in the air. At this time, Harold saw the city swelling in front of them and then turned into bubbles and pieces of shadow.

In the bubbles and pieces of shadow, the strange vehicles became bigger and the inner complex structure was completely revealed, including the pistons and bearings, as well as the mysterious patterns, which were totally different from that of Steam Civilization. In the bubbles and pieces of shadow, the strange metal bird also went transparent, and its structure, wires, and gears were also revealed.

In the bubbles and pieces of shadow, the structures of the tall buildings, factories, chimneys, and the land bridges were all shown to the dwarves.

...

Feeling extremely dizzy, the dwarves felt that their head was going to explode since what they were looking at had gone way beyond their comprehension.

The bubbles and pieces of shadow surrounded them, and the entire world started to ripple and fall into parts.

"I have shown you what you want, and for the rest of it, you have to find it yourself using persistence, courage, and bravery." This was the last message left by the solemn voice.

The elder still remembered to pray despite the great dizziness, "Respected be your name. Follow your path. We shall build up your kingdom on the ground!"

The desert had completely disappeared. The space started swirling, and the dwarves passed out. After a long time, when they slowly woke up, they found themselves lying on the ground of the familiar underground cave.

"What happened?" Facing the altar, the elder felt that he was still in a dream.

Looking at the thick book in his head, Harold was confused. He had just learned how to read after the elder for two years, and therefore, it took him some time to recognize the words on the surface of the book - Elementary Mechanical Forging.

"It was real! God of Steam saved us!" Harold blurted out excitedly.

The rest of the dwarves also noticed the book. They started to cry since they finally saw hope for the first time.

At this time, all the memory came back to them:

The dwarf rebellion force found the secret cave where the Civilization of Steam used to pray to God by chance, and thus they settled down to hide here. Also, they carried on the tradition to pray to God. Today, they were attacked by the vampires and many died in the bitter fight.

When the great desperation seized them, the dwarves' God saved them from the vampires and led them to an underground palace where the dwarves' frescos were everywhere. When they pushed open the gate of the palace, they saw the miracle city—Atlantis, their God's kingdom!

The Elder sighed when his memory was still in a chaos, "So the underground palace, frescos, desert, oasis, and Atlantis... They are not real. The God of Steam made our soul see them..."

In the chaos, most of the people who more or less knew about magic would guess that their memory had been modified, but the dwarves were different. They believed that what happened was a miracle revealed by their God, and therefore, they saw nothing wrong with it.

Sometimes, how powerful an illusion spell was really depended on how the caster used it.

Atlant, the Eye of Curse, once put it in his paper, "By finding one's weakness, one can easily put fake memories into a person's brain, even without using illusion."

"I don't think so... your grace!" disputed Aquinas, the leader of the rebellion force. "It exists in the Steam Paradise! One day, the will of God shall be done on earth!"

Harold still remembered what the dream city looked like, and he murmured, "I... I thought the steam city was the ultimate miracle, the most exciting place in the world, but Atlantis... Atlantis is... incredible..."

Harold did not know how to put a proper comment on it.

Another dwarf cut in, "All of the machines there are so amazing. I guess that's how Steam Civilization will be like when it peaks... No, no... Atlantis has way surpassed the power of Steam Civilization!"

The rest of the dwarves all agreed because they had seen it with their own eyes!

A dream city!

Harold looked very excited, with his hands clenching into fists, "Atlantis... Atlantis! My dream is to build an Atlantis on the ground, even if it is only one-third of a miracle compared to the real one!"

"I can never forget the river of stars..." Myrna murmured like she was still in the beautiful dream, "What a pity... We did not see the structure of the huge metal arrow."

"That's right..." The dwarves were quite disappointed. After all, the destructive weapon created by their God was so powerful that it was capable of completely destroying the entire world!

"Also... we did not see the other inner structures clearly," said Harold, feeling upset. But he soon cheered up and said, "First, we should have a solid foundation!"

Harold raised the book in his hand and found that there was a piece of parchment in the book.

It was a compact, a compact with their God.

Finishing reading the compact, the elder excitedly announced, "The Almighty God of Steam asks us to sign the compact with the City of Atlantis, as we have peeped into its secrets."

Of course, the dwarves signed the compact without any hesitation. The compact represented the future hope that the dwarves had to get rid of their destiny as the vampires' slaves.

Light burst out of the parchment pact. Lucien, a distance away from the dwarves, slightly nodded and then left.

It took him a lot of work to move the dwarves to the secret underground cave that he found using magic. He reordered the dwarves' memory and then interwove some fake ones into it.

Once the dwarves had accepted the memory, it was hard for them to tell the fake from the true.

Lucien used Alferris' blood and constructed the desert and the city called Atlantis using the fifth-circle illusion spell, Fantasy. Lucien borrowed the basic design of a metropolis on the Earth and mixed it with a number of magic symbols.

After leaving the underground cave, he looked very serious. He knew that, since the vampire bride and butler had been killed by him, the count would not easily let this go. Sooner or later, the count would find the underground palace and the space joint.

Lucien had to take care of this.

Thus, he headed for the count's castle.

...

On the next day, in the early morning, the dwarf slaves were already working under the threat of the thick whips. The constellations were still above them.

The supervisors were not worried about the fact that Madam Tess and the butler had not come back at all because they were informed that a group of rebellion force was identified. It was more than normal that Madam Tess and the butler had to spend a few days taking care of that.

In the dark basement of the castle, in the middle of many dark magic circles, there was a bloody coffin, from which black smoke kept coming out from time to time. This was the core of the castle, the place where Count Vlad slept and cured himself.

Every time when Vlad was about to go sleep, he would fully turn on all the magic circles and traps around him to protect himself.

According to Vlad himself, the construction and design of the castle took him more than a thousand years. It was impossible to break in without activating the magic circles, even for a vampire marquis or duke. The castle was like a masterpiece in defense.

Therefore, the castle showed a relatively lower power when it came to attacking its enemies.

Madam Tess, butler Galata, and another two vampire brides knew how to reach Count Vlad.

Therefore, the best way for Lucien to kill the count would be using the two vampire brides to get Vlad out of the core basement.

Count Vlad survived in the War of Dawn. He was not an idiot. Once Lucien made a mistake and missed the best chance to kill the vampire, that would be the end of him.

Lucien could not bear even a single mistake.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 383: The Other Way Around

The hand-shaped silver candlesticks lit up the corridor in the dark and gloomy castle. The red candles flickered to provide a dim light, showing a sense of creepy beauty.

Wearing a black robe with a hood, Lucien stood outside of the basement quietly, studying the defensive magic circles placed by Count Vlad.

The gate of the castle usually opened for the slaves to go in and out, as well as for the transportation of ores and metals. The several detecting magic circles were not a big deal for Lucien. As a senior-rank mage, Lucien entered the castle rather easily.

Lucien could tell that these defense magic circles were rather powerful. As a vampire who had survived for a few thousand years, Vlad did collect some good magic circles. The twenty-seven dark magic circles had formed a strong protection reliable enough to resist a level eight divine spell. Fortunately, the castle did not have an alchemical life in it, or there was no chance that Lucien could sneak into this place.

On the corridor, the female blood servants walked past Lucien as if he did not exist. They were once human beings, elves, or dwarves, but now they had become the servants in the castle.

Lucien had not learned the sixth-circle spell, Suggestion (group), and thus it took him quite a long time to cast the suggestion spell on every single living thing in the castle one by one. Although he was already a senior-rank mage, his spirit had been drained up from doing so, and he waited for a long time to have it recovered.

Standing in front of the basement, Lucien rubbed his chin thoughtfully and did his analysis: It would take him at least two months to crack this defense system, and the biggest trouble was the fact that Count Vlad could notice it at any time. Once Vlad woke up, that would be the end for himself.

Although Vlad had been sleeping for a long time, his power and knowledge were pretty up-to-date, as he cast spells using his blood power, not his cognitive world.

Lucien had to find a way to get Vlad out.

Many thoughts flashed through his mind, such as to inform Vlad that there was an affair between Tess and Galata... However, neither of them worked.

Lucien decided to take another perspective.

After a while, he nodded thoughtfully and started to work on analyzing the structure of the magic circles and how the power in them flowed.

...

More than ten days later, the castle still operated normally as usual. The brides, butlers, blood servants, and slaves were all busy minding their own business.

Somehow they all turned a blind eye toward the strange young man wearing a black robe. He was busy too. He was busy with placing all the precious materials around following some kind of pattern.

Finally, the magic circle was done. Clapping his hands, Lucien stood up straight slowly.

When Lucien cast the spell, his spiritual power spread out and the magic circle in front of the basement was activated. The light streams lit up one by one and the power lines flowed in all the directions.

Except for inside the power room in the basement and the controlling core, different magic circles lit up in all the important sectors and parts in the castle, including the constraint rooms, summoning rooms, magic garden, power wells.

Soon, the magic circles joined together and the whole castle was covered in a dream-like shield made of dazzling starlight!

The magic dome suddenly shrank and attached tight against the walls of the basement. The light disappeared as if it had joined the dark magic circles.

Then, everything quieted down.

The vampires and dwarves were still doing their own work as if nothing had ever happened. In the basement, Count Vlad was still sleeping. He did not notice any difference.

That was because Lucien had never tried to crack the count's dark magic circles.

The function of the powerful magic circle that Lucien just placed was very simple. Lucien added another layer of defense on top of what the count already had. Lucien wanted him to sleep more safe and sound.

Therefore, the defense was also not easy to be cracked, either from inside or outside. It would even take Lucien himself almost ten months to remove the protection. Also, the power from the magic wells and garden would constantly infuse into the magic circle. When the count woke up, part of the power from the power rooms would be constrained. Even with the help of the controlling core,

Vlad would have to spend five to six years to get out, and before that he could not even send a message out.

Five or six years later, Lucien believed that he would not have to worry about the exposure of the space joint anymore.

That was what Lucien meant by taking another perspective. When the defense was powerful, instead of destroying it, Lucien would make it even more unbreakable.

There was a naughty smile on Lucien's face. However, at the same time, constructing those magic circles also cost him a lot. Although most of the materials came from the count's warehouse, Lucien also spent some of his own materials on it. Count Vlad's most important treasury vault was in the basement, so Lucien did not get anything too valuable other than the lots of mythril and precious metals.

After checking the magic circle again, Lucien placed another secret magic circle beside the entry of the basement, in which Vlad's voice was mimicked and saved.

If anyone tried to wake him up, the voice would refuse politely.

After all these things were done, Lucien walked out of the castle at a leisure pace. A few steps away from the gate, Lucien turned around with his right hand on his chest and bowed.

"Have a sweet dream, Count Vlad."

...

In the underground cave, the dwarves who had signed the compact had found the steam hammers, smelting pots, food, paper, and the other items following their "memory".

"We need to do three things," said the elder, Augustus, in high spirit, holding three books in his hands, Transforming Electromagnetic Waves and Basic Application, Religion Theory, and Protracted War. "First of all, we have to develop our doctrine as soon as possible to enroll more of our people; Second, we shall start farming by looking for the farmable soil on Night Highland to end famine; Third, we shall avoid the head-on confrontation with the vampires as much as possible until we grow much bigger and with better weapons."

The three books left gave Augustus a lot of encouragement.

"Yes, Your Honor! Steam Above!" The dwarves raised their arm and shouted. The knowledge from the books had shocked them, and now they longed for knowledge more than they had ever before.

They once thought that they had inherited part of the culture and wisdom of the Steam Civilization, but now they had realized that they were not even close to it, not to mention to the ultimate civilization like Atlantis!

The dwarves were full of hope and motivated. When they started working on their own staff, the elder knelt down again in front of the altar. After praying, the elder took out the paper and quill and wrote:

"Machine Revelation: Zie has arrived to tell people that when there is gain, there is loss, and when there is the loss, there is gain. All the sufferings have meanings, and by going through the sufferings, one can obtain wisdom and a strong soul. There is an equal exchange. With this belief, one could stay away from falling into hell."

...

After watching these dwarves for a while, Lucien was relieved and started to head north.

In the north, there were a few very powerful vampire princes. It was said that one of them, the most powerful one, when sleeping, could turn his dream into reality on Night Highland.

However, at that moment it had nothing to do with Lucien. When arriving in the north, Lucien soon changed his direction and headed for a castle enveloped in darkness.

The outline of the castle looked rather vague as if it was just a projection of a great castle from the main material world. The castle was called the Observer's Castle, and it belonged to Count Silver Eye, Rhine.

Rhine was as powerful as a vampire prince, and he was watching one of the space joints connecting to the Dark Mountain Range. Using the magic circle near the space joint, Lucien could directly arrive at the outside of the castle in the Dark Mountain Range.

In the fog, Lucien walked in this shadow castle and dispelled the magic traps one by one following the instructions left by Rhine.

Soon, Lucien saw a magic circle on the ground. Stepping on it, he cast a spell. The light devoured him, and he disappeared.

...

On Night Highland, in a luxurious castle of Syracuse style.

Holding a glass in his hand, a good-looking man said to his butler, who was standing beside him, "Rhine has been missing for a long time, and the old guy is ready to take some actions..."

His red eyes slightly squinted, and his attitude toward what he was talking about was rather ambiguous.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 384: Transformation Mask

After the familiar dizziness left Lucien, he saw many creepy red flowers in front of him. The sea of flowers in red was boundless.

Sensing the smell of a living thing, the flowers gradually bloomed, petal by petal, and the inner blood and flesh were revealed. The flesh was moving! Like a heart, the center of the flowers could beat!

Seeing the flowers, Lucien's heart missed a beat. He knew how dangerous these flowers were! However, soon he calmed himself down since he was standing in Rhine's garden, after all. Lucien started to cast a creepy and mysterious spell.

Once the spell was cast, the beautiful but ominous flowers gently swung back and forth as if they were welcoming Lucien, and then the flowers quickly turned into countless tiny red bugs and retreated like the fall of the tide, leaving the black land in the middle.

Lucien was curious, wondering how to define those creatures. Were they flowers, or bugs? He had never read anything like this in any books. As an arcanist who was crazy with all kinds of arcana studies, Lucien almost tried to catch a few of the bugs for future experiment...

However, he had a job to do. He walked out of the magic circle and through the gate of the hall following the black path revealed. After Lucien left, the tiny blood-colored bugs quickly gathered again and returned to the form of the eerie beautiful flowers. The flowers smelled incredibly sweet, making one feel very dizzy and soggy in his limbs.

Lucien immediately cast a filtering bubble to keep away the unpleasant sweet smell.

However, the red ocean suddenly boiled and leaned toward Lucien aggressively, like countless ghosts and zombies trying to grab him with their rotten pale arms.

Lucien did not expect that the flowers, or bugs, were this sensitive to magic waves! He tried his best to stop himself from casting more spells to protect himself, and instead just simply let the petals gently sweep on his face. Lucien felt a bit itchy and numb.

Although no further magic waves could be detected, the furious red ocean was not going to calm itself down. Surrounding Lucien, the ocean was roaring.

With the help of his Holm Crown ring, Lucien stayed very calm and completely ignored the dangerous and horrible scene.

Although he had no idea how powerful these flowers or bugs were, he had decided to be very careful with everything in this castle.

In a pretended calm manner, Lucien walked out of the red ocean and stepped on the path connecting to the gate of the castle.

Two rows of tall trees were planted beside the road, and pieces of semi-withered yellow leaves were swirling to the ground. The beautiful scenery in front of this dark, gloomy castle was like what Lucien was used to seeing in Gesu District in Aalto.

When Lucien was walking toward the gate, suddenly, the rows of eyes on the trunk of the trees opened, revealing a sharp contrast of black and white. Lucien's figure was reflected in every single pupil, but some of the eyes looked confused, some were calm and peaceful, some angry, and some cold...

The eyes were all staring at Lucien. Sweat formed on his forehead, and he knew that this time the trees were the real scarlet trees. The last time Lucien saw these trees was in his dream. As what he saw in his dream was based on his imagination, the trees in the dream were quite different from the real ones.

Not many of these magic trees could manage to grow mature, but once they grew up, the trees were of the power of a senior-rank mage, and like the Beholders, the trees could shoot out many rays. Also, the scarlet trees could drain one's blood and produce illusions.

Although wearing many great magic items, Lucien was confident that he could deal with one or two scarlet trees and turn them into some good magic materials. However, there were two rows of them!

Under the gaze of the trees, Lucien walked step by step and finally reached the gate of the castle.

When Lucien's feet touched the smooth and hard floor, he released a sigh of relief. It was such a torture walking through the crowd of horrible creatures, although Rhine had told him the spell to protect himself.

Before Lucien raised his right hand, a deep voice came from the inside of the castle.

"I feel master's mark on you."

"Yes, Mr. Rhine sent me here to pick up a few items," said Lucien, short and brief. Once he was recognized by the alchemical life in the castle, the rest of the mission should be of no risk.

The deep voice responded, "I'm Castle Mikhalik. Password, please."

"Kilahkim," answered Lucien. He realized that the password was simply the retrography of the name of the alchemical life. Lucien had to say that this was not creative at all.

"Distinguished guest, please," the gate of the castle slowly opened, and the elegant and well-decorated main hall was revealed. "Except for the controlling core, energy room, and the base of the treasury vault, you can go anywhere you wish."

...

In the study loaded with all the different kinds of books, Lucien cast the spell Rhine taught him and, at the same time, he formed the spiritual power in the shape of a sharp spine and fiercely stabbed it at the quill pot.

The quill pot lit up with a layer of dim light and started to make a cracking sound. When the pot retreated, a black hole was revealed.

After carefully checking around, Lucien took several items using Mage's Hand out from the hole. There was a mini-statue of a Sphinx, a filthy bloody ball, a Broom Brooch, and a clown mask with a ridiculous smile on it.

"Transformation Mask, a level nine middle-rank magic item. The wearer can transform oneself into any creatures of the same gender, but cannot carry on the creatures' talents. With the corresponding blood sample, the wearer can become another person completely."

Lucien studied the mask using his spiritual power and found that so far the mask had recorded seven thousand eight hundred and ninety-five kinds of blood, and it was up to the wearer which one to pick.

"The power of transformation came from the blood, therefore, even a legendary archmage can be deceived without carefulness. The wearer's spiritual power or willpower has to be close to senior-rank, or the wear would go crazy.

"Very often, identity works better than magic! From: A mind-split, anonymous sorcerer."

Lucien got to know the complete information about the mask with the spell, Identification. And for the rest of the three items, he could only tell that they contained some kind of mysterious and ambiguous supernatural power, and each of them was different from the other. They were the items for activating the three magic circles.

Putting the mask and the three items into the pouch, Lucien recorded some of the books in the study in his spirit library. Rhine always called himself the Observer of History, and Lucien was certain that there were some interesting books here.

It took Lucien a while to record the books, as he did not want Mikhalik to notice his special ability. Lucien recorded fifty of the books after six hours.

...

The shining gems, gold coins of different time periods, brand-new knight armors, many magic robes, weapons, and magic items dazzled Lucien's eyes. Rhine's collection consisted of all the more precious items!

Among the many extraordinary items, most of them were of senior-rank, but the level nine, ten and legendary items were obviously stored in the basement of the treasury.

After careful selection, and after making a lot of difficult decisions, Lucien finally picked out a scroll and a belt.

The eighth-circle magic scroll, Night Travel.

Health Belt, the level eight high-rank magic item. The wearer would be immune to disease, poison, negative energy, and magic spells that could sicken the target.

"Health is the key to life. From: White Philosophy."

The scroll could make Space Lock invalid, thus it would be very useful for escaping. Since Time Travel was the talent magic of vampires, arcanists had not figured out a way to copy it. Lucien was planning on studying the scroll and using it at the most crucial moment.

Furthermore, the belt was also very powerful.

After leaving his spiritual mark in the belt, Lucien looked at the shelf where all the magic staffs were stored. He was about to pick a good one for himself. The one he had right now was still a level two magic staff, which did not really match his rank.

When Lucien was having a hard time making up his mind, he saw a very ordinary-looking sword on the shelf beside it. The sword looked so plain with its wood cross guard.

Lucien was curious why Rhine would keep such an ordinary sword in his collection. Thus, he quickly cast Identification on the sword. When he received the message, Lucien was shocked:

"Pale Justice, level eight, perfect rank, extraordinary sword. When facing evil creatures, including evil spirits, demons and devils, the sword can become a rank one legendary weapon. The person who wields this sword is immune to fear, charm, ferocity, and helplessness, and each hacking and attacking can hit the target as guided by justice. The person has to at least have the power of a level six radiant knight to pick up the sword of justice."

"Justice can be pale, especially when compared to other kinds of radiant powers, but justice is everywhere, and it applies to everyone and everything. Be it on the battlefields or in the farming fields, justice is everywhere."

Lucien heard of this famous sword before!

Throne of Magical Arcana

The dazzling stars were like shining pure diamonds on the black velvet.

The astonishing scenery of the dream-like night sky above the highland was eternal.

In the darkness slightly lit by the starlight, Lucien left the projection of the Castle of Observer.

In the shadow of the trees, he put on the transformation mask. He grew taller, his skin became finer and pale, the color of his eyes turned into that of the silver moon, and his hair also became silver.

Within a few seconds, Lucien had turned himself into Rhine, wearing his typical red shirt and black suit.

Adjusting his bow a bit, Lucien headed for another vampire castle in the distance with an elegant pace.

In that castle lived Marquis Lasare, a five-thousand-year-old powerful vampire, who was responsible for safeguarding the space joint connecting Night Highland to the desert in the south part of Gusta.

When Lucien was in the treasury room, he finally picked the sword named Pale Justice, not because it was immune to all the negative effects, but because it was a rank-one legendary magic item when facing evil creatures!

Right now Lucien needed to deal with these powerful vampires, thus he needed to pick the weapon that was the most useful for him right now.

As for the limit that only a level six radiant knight could use the sword, Lucien had his own way to deal with it. With Ogre Glove, Lucien could have the power of a level five grand knight, and plus a few middle or low rank spells for strengthening power, for example, the fourth-circle spell, Brute Force, and the second circle spell, Ox Force, Lucien could meet the minimum requirement for picking up the sword.

Although this could only last for a few minutes, that was enough for Lucien! After all, during a few minutes, the sword would always hit its target.

And even among the sixth-circle spells that Lucien had not learned, there was a magic spell called Baler's Transformation that could enable sorcerers to turn themselves into knights of the corresponding levels.

In fact, there was more planning in Lucien's mind: this powerful knight sword could be a gift.

From time to time, Lucien would still long for the beautiful future.

...

To the left of the strange-shaped castle, there was a grand palace with thick stone pillars and smooth floor.

In Lucien's eyes, it resembled the temples of ancient Greece on the Earth.

The crisp sound of leather shoes stepping on the floor came from a distance, and a tall and strong vampire stopped in front of Lucien.

"Why are you here?" asked the vampire in an arrogant manner.

Lucien, who was now Rhine, smiled, "I'm here to use the space joint circle."

"Did Sir Marquis agree?" the vampire asked.

Lucien pretended to be calm, "According to the Vampire High Council, we all can use most of the space joints on Night Highland. Is this one an exception?"

He did not want to stay here for too long, as Lucien knew that Rhine was a member of the High Council, and once other vampire princes came, it would be very risky for him.

The vampire knew that was true, but he still answered coldly, "We have identified some traitors, and maybe you are one as well. Without the permission of Sir Marquis, I have to check carefully."

When the vampire was saying, his right hand slightly moved to make a sign, as if he was asking for something.

Lucien knew what the vampire was trying to do, but the role he was playing now was an elegant and proud vampire, thus there was no way that Lucien would bribe him.

Once Marquis Lasare got to know this, Lasare would be able to tell immediately that he was not the real vampire prince, Rhine.

Lucien's silver eyes slightly squinted, and when he was about to tell the vampire to leave him alone, he heard an old voice, "It's been a while since we saw each other last time, Sir Observer."

He should be Marquis Lasare! Lucien tried his best to prevent his heart from beating too fast. Right now he only wished that Lasare did not know Rhine well, or Lasare would probably tell that he was a fake one!

"Sir... Observer?" The vampire who was trying to extort money was shocked, and his body trembled. He did not know that the vampire in front of him was, in fact, a vampire prince. When the legendary-level vampire squinted, that was almost the end of him!

Lucien still pretended to be rather casual and calm, "Lasare, I'm heading for the South Desert." He just wanted to keep everything short and brief. And Rhine told him to call the marquis' name directly.

"Sir Observer, Prince Dracula has been looking for you," said Lasare with a mysterious smile. He was an old but elegant vampire, who was always holding his exquisite cane.

"What does he want?" Lucien turned around, wearing the typical smile of Rhine.

Lasare thought that Rhine was playing silly on purpose. Prince Dracula had always been envious of Rhine's talent in being able to borrow the power of the Originals.

"Prince Dracula wants to see you in the next High Council meeting, over the inner conflict of the Dark Council." Lasare offered an excuse which was not really the case.

It was said that Rhine, Count Silver Eye, was absent for a long time because he was severely injured by a legendary, and right now he was hiding to recover. Therefore, Prince Dracula was eager to take some actions, since his talent was to devour and take other vampires' talent.

Prince Dracula had always been upset with the fact that, obviously, Silver Moon Alterna was showing more grace on Rhine, not him. But it was he who was the most powerful vampire prince, born before anyone else.

The casual smile was still on Rhine's face, and he said to the level eight vampire, "I've always been absent. So I guess missing the meeting one more time still doesn't matter."

It was really hard talking in Rhine's manner. Lucien believed that playing Fernando, his teacher, would be way easier because all he needed to do was to roar.

"Sir Observer, I'm sure that Prince Dracula has awoken because he learned that you're back," said Lasare in neither humble nor pushy way, "and he would like to meet you to talk about the future of the Kindred."

"Sorry, I'm in a rush." Lucien felt that he was getting more and more nervous.

When Lucien was about to walk to the space joint magic circle, Lasare stopped Lucien hurriedly, "Please wait a moment, Sir Observer."

"Lasare..." Lucien turned around and stared at Lasare with a mild smile, but he called the Marquis' name.

Lasare immediately sensed the great threat hidden under the smile. He took a few steps back and could not say anything else.

Lucien slightly nodded and continued to walk toward the space joint.

Lasare tried to say something, but he did not know what to say. He could only look at the gate of the place nervously, wondering if Prince Dracula had awoken.

Although Lucien was walking in a rather calm pace, he felt that he was about to pass out at any time because of his great tension. Finally, he stepped onto the magic circle and activated it.

Lasare released a sigh after seeing Rhine disappear in the magic circle. If given a few more minutes, Lasare would be able to send the message to Prince Dracula.

He was not able to stop a vampire prince. He regretted that he did not buy some of the useful telecommunication magic items invented by the Congress of Magic.

...

Beside the huge tomb in the shape of a pyramid, Lucien dragged a sphinx to the corner. After a few days' observation, Lucien was certain that this sphinx was the tomb guard on duty tonight.

Taking out a drop of blood from it, Lucien dropped it on the mask. The clown's face grinned in a funny smile, and its look kept changing. When the mask stopped changing, Lucien put it on. His body suddenly grew bigger and four lion legs and a tail came out.

After hiding the sphinx properly, Lucien, who was at that moment a sphinx, picked up the dart and raced towards the campsite. The level nine high priest was there!

Lucien left the space circle and directly went deep into the desert.

On the campsite, the sphinxes were dancing in a weird way surrounding the bonfire, and later they started mating.

When Lucien was watching, a strong sphinx came to him and said, "Fil, stop drooling. It's your shift now. Go!"

Lucien was a bit speechless as he was not drooling at all. However, he still turned around and ran toward the tomb.

"Fil, why are you going that way?" asked the sphinx confusedly.

Lucien suddenly stopped. He did not know what was wrong.

Throne of Magical Arcana

The grandeur of the sun setting on the horizon was breathtaking.

However, on the sphinx campsite, Lucien felt the cold sweat on his back.

Before Lucien figured out the answer, the sphinx scolded, "Filthy Scorpion, you have your head between your legs? Use your brain! Go and shower yourself in Sun Water! You wanna become one of those undead creatures?"

The desert environment was very harsh, thus the nobles in the Empire of Gusta were reluctant to expand southward. Therefore, most of the sphinxes' bad languages were about scorpions, because they were the sphinxes' biggest enemy.

Sun Water? The sphinx's words reminded Lucien that this sphinx that he was playing, whose name was Fil, would always spend a little while in the stone house on which the midday sunlight directly shone, and then it would go to safeguard the tomb with the other sphinxes.

Lucien took it for granted that the stone house was an agreed place where the sphinxes would gather, so when he got Fil's memory using mesmerization, he did not cover this part.

"I'm terribly sorry... I'm going right now." Lucien hurriedly nodded and left. A few seconds earlier, Lucien was deciding whether he should use Implication, Charm, or Necrotic Control to make sure that this sphinx would not bring him any further trouble.

In the stone house, there was a pool in the shape of a golden sun, in which there was gold-colored liquid.

Beside the pool, a rough and robust-looking female sphinx was scooping the liquid with a strange big gold spoon and sprinkled the liquid on the sphinxes waiting in line.

Although the male sphinxes all looked very barbarous and ill-mannered, they showed great admiration toward the female. Lucien wondered if she was a real beauty as a female sphinx.

However, in Lucien's eyes, she was barely a standing female lion. Lucien could see zero beauty in her.

He walked forward and let the golden liquid sprinkle on him. The liquid felt very warm like sunshine, but Lucien did not get wet at all from it.

"Fil, you're acting a bit strange today," said the female sphinx, Sana, in a low voice. "You've lost your courage? You are not looking at me today."

Lucien got nervous again.

"Yeah... maybe..." Lucien decided not to contradict this proud female.

Sana laughed, "I'm curious. What made you lose your courage? You are even not keen on pursuing your mate!"

When Lucien was in this dilemma and did not know what to do, another male sphinx jumped out and "saved" him. "Fil, don't waste our time! Don't act weird to catch Sana's attention! Don't even try! Last night you were still staring at Sana secretly!"

Lucien pretended that he had been seen through and looked at Sana in a way full of both hope and fear.

Sana realized what Fil's strategy was and purposefully turned her back against him.

When Lucien left the stone house, he felt really tired, as if he just went through a good fight.

...

"Follow me into the tome. Don't disturb His Majesty's sleep." A big muscular sphinx holding a long spear said to the tomb guards sternly.

"Yes, Sir Helges," answered the sphinxes together.

Lucien lowered his head and opened his mouth, pretending that he was answering. In this way, he figured out the name of their leader. It seemed that Helges had the power of a grand knight, and five or six of the guards were of the level of knights. The rest of them, including Fil, were about the level of knight squires.

The guards here were all selected. It was a great honor for a sphinx to become a tomb guard.

Under the guidance of Helges, Lucien stepped on the brownstone bricks and entered the tomb.

Instantly, the heat in the desert disappeared and the cold air became dominant as if they had come to the world of death.

The bricks and stone beams were in very good condition, and the gems, pearls, and crystals were shining the cold light.

The tomb was even grander than any villas, manors, or magic towers that Lucien had ever seen. The rooms and corridors were spacious enough for giants to enjoy themselves there.

Influenced by the Empire of Meshkate, it was believed that sphinxes controlled the secret of life and death and that death was not the end, but the beginning of the real immortality. Pyramids

were the magic building for the powerful sphinxes to ascend to the immortal heaven, and therefore, the pyramids were all beyond magnificent.

Meanwhile, many sphinxes believed that their greatest king, the king who was during his eternal sleep, would finally wake up in the pyramid and lead the sphinx to rule the entire world.

And Lucien was in the greatest king's tomb right now.

Holding the spear, Lucien patrolled around following Helges. He saw rotten dead bodies hanging on the wall in many halls. Some of them were scorpions, some were human beings or other races. They were all sacrifices.

Ascending a few floors, the tomb guards entered a hall drawn with countless weird symbols. The most eye-catching fresco was the scene of a powerful sphinx killing members of other races.

At the center of the hall, there were black stone coffins. When passing by, Lucien could sense the evil and cold power in the coffins! He wondered if they were sphinx sacrifices which had been converted into mummy guards.

Since he was in a tomb right now, Lucien temporarily deactivated Sun's Corona so he would not be that sensitive toward the power of death.

Leaving the creepy hall, Helges and the other tomb guards continued to patrol around. Along the winding corridors, they came in front of a huge stone gate. On the gate, one side was drawn with the sun, and the other had a silver moon, symbolizing life and death respectively.

Even without spreading out his spiritual power, Lucien could still feel the horrible power of death behind the stone gate!

Behind the stone gate, Rhine secretly set up a magic circle using the power of the tomb.

In front of the stone gate, two grand-knight-level guards were holding their spears tight. Their legs were much thicker compared to that of Fil.

Close to them, there was a stone chamber. A solemn-looking sphinx high priest was sitting in it, praying for the resuscitation of their greatest king.

Lucien had gained a basic understanding of the layout of the tomb, but the problem was how he could get in there. His brain worked fast, trying to figure out a solution. It was not a difficult job for Rhine, a legendary-level vampire, as he could directly go through the stone gate in the form of a gentle breeze.

Lucien was not going to force his way into this place. He knew how powerful the sphinxes could be in the tomb.

Also, right in front of the high priest, he also could not attack the gatekeepers.

"We go back," said Helges after saluting the high priest. That was the first round patrolling.

Lucien had to leave after him since right now he had no good plan. He tried to walk as slow as he could and finally fell to the end of the team. When they walked past a corner, Lucien dropped a tiny block stone on the floor silently, one by one.

When they were about to walk past the hall placed with the black stone coffins, Lucien saw two sphinx dressing in the same way as the gatekeepers coming from the opposite direction.

Lucien got an idea in his mind. He lowered his head and kept following the team. The two gatekeepers walked past him.

When they reached the creepy hall, Helges said to them in low voice, "Take a break here. The next team will come soon."

The hall was very cold, and Lucien could almost feel that the coldness was trying to get into his body like it was alive, however, it was kept away from his body by the warm feeling given by the golden liquid sprinkled on Lucien. Helges, obviously, disliked the air of death and coldness very much. He took a few steps forward and stood outside of the hall.

Seeing that, Lucien secretly moved toward the corner and sneaked into the corridor connecting to the stone gate.

"What are you doing?"

It was Helges' voice!

Lucien looked up and said in the pretended nervous way, "Sir... My, my precious stones are lost... in the corridors..."

As he was saying, Lucien showed the pocket with the hole in it to Helges.

The imploring look in Fil's eyes somehow touched Helges' heart. Helges lowered his voice, "Go and get them back. Do not disturb the high priest."

Helges did not think that a random tomb guard would bring him any big trouble.

Fil, or Lucien, was very grateful and almost burst into tears. Turning around, Lucien left the hall cautiously without any noise. With proper mental guidance and good performance, Lucien restrained the power of the spell, Indication, and thus the magic wave was greatly reduced.

...

Lucien walked fast and gradually caught up with the two gatekeepers, following them from a proper distance, until they reached a quiet corridor.

Lucien picked up the pace and walked past them, but he purposefully yanked one of the gatekeepers' arm and pretended that was an accident.

"Hey!" roared angrily the gatekeeper, Aska, in a low voice. How dare the humble tomb guard just run into him without apologizing properly?!

"Ah... Sorry. I'm sorry." Lucien lowered his head as if he just noticed the mistake he made.

Aska was pissed off seeing the sphinx's attitude, "You walk alone here, it's very suspicious! And you just say 'sorry'?! That's it?"

"I got the permission from Sir Helges, to get back my gems," answered Lucien like a simple-minded fool, "I ran into you. And I said sorry."

"You shall kneel down!" Aska was angry, "Helges is nothing to me!"

"I listen to Sir Helges! His permission is everything! And I apologized already!" Lucien's body slightly trembled, but he would not compromise.

Aska wasted a few more sentences on the sphinx, but saw that the humble tomb guard was basically asking for a good lesson to learn how to behave properly. Blood flooded Aska's mind as he was going to beat this filthy scorpion up with his big fist.

"Aska, wait. The high priest can see you through the magic circle," said the other gatekeeper, Inke, "Go that way. They cannot see you."

Aska grinned in a gloomy way and picked Lucien up from the floor, "I'll teach you a good lesson today."

"S... Sorry..." Lucien seemed to be startled.

Aska laughed as the winner. He dragged Lucien with him and turned around a corner.

When he was about to give Lucien a good punch, he felt a sharp pain in his lower abdomen. And before he could release a scream of pain, another punch given by a fist covered with dim light followed.

Aska lost his consciousness. He directly passed out.

On the other side, Inke could hear the dull sound of the punchings and he shook his head slightly. Aska was too bad-tempered, he thought to himself.

After a while, Inke saw Aska walk out with a big satisfied smile. Inke asked curiously, "Feel better now?"

"Haha, now not even that bastard's mother could recognize him!" said Aska in a good mood.

"What did you do?"

It was the voice of the high priest!

Throne of Magical Arcana

The look on Inke's face suddenly changed when he heard the voice of the high priest. He took a step sideward and looked at Aska.

Inke was suggesting that it was Aska who made the trouble, and meanwhile was trying to keep the distance between them.

Aska, or Lucien, in fact, caused the conflict on purpose. Lucien knew that the gatekeepers would avoid the magic circles and take him an isolated corner, and there Lucien would have enough time to transform himself into one of the gatekeepers.

The high priest was also a sphinx but all of his four fuzzy legs were wrapped with black shrouds. He was the very one whom Lucien saw beside the Saint's Gate. Right now, the high priest was staring at Lucien coldly with his pure black eyes.

Lucien felt that the look of the high priest was somehow amusing, but still, he lowered his head, pretending that he was nervous and afraid, "Your Holiness, I just saw a tomb guard violating the rules. He was running around. When I stopped him, he was showing no respect to me. So... so I taught him a lesson on how to behave."

The high priest took a careful glance at Lucien from tip to toe. The look was extremely cold and carried the smell of death.

Lucien controlled his muscles to pretend that he was slightly trembling. He made his heart beat a bit faster, showing that he was feeling anxious.

After carefully checking Aska, the high priest asked slowly, "You used magic?"

His tone was rather flat and emotionless.

"He tried... to fight back... It wasn't on purpose!" Lucien hurriedly answered in a pretended stammering way. In fact, Lucien did that on purpose to make the high priest notice the magic waves.

If Lucien had just simply left Aska there, within ten minutes, Helges would definitely come to find Fil, and that would be the end of everything that Lucien planned. Thus, he had to find the chance to send "Fil" back first.

Lucien used Transformation and turned Aska into Fil. When he was doing so, he used two kinds of inherent spells of the sphinxes to hide the magic waves caused by Transformation. Therefore, Inke, although he was just around the corner, failed to notice it. Lucien had successfully turned himself into the gatekeeper, Aska, who used magic out of the great anger.

Lucien knew that the magic waves would always be detected by the magic circles in the tomb, and it was part of his plan that the high priest on duty tonight would come to them.

The high priest stared at Lucien's eyes as if he could see through a lot of things. In Lucien's eyes, the high priest saw anxiety, nervousness, and the lingering pleasure from giving the tomb guard a good punch.

"Aska, you should not use magic at any time in the tomb unless there are enemies here," said the high priest in the same flat tone, which made him sound like a dead creature, "Come to me after your shift for the caning."

"Yes, Your Holiness," said Lucien depressively.

"You bring the tomb guard back to his team and leave him to the team leader to decide the punishment..." continued the high priest. "Tell the team leader to come to see me later as well."

The high priest would not let the tomb guard just lying on the floor like that. However, the high priest himself was too honorable to do things like that. Everything went as Lucien wished.

"Yes, Your Holiness," answered Lucien. His mind was full of joy.

After the high priest went back to the Saint's Gate, Lucien took an angry glance at Inke and said, "Never talk to me again, you coward scorpion."

Inke was about to make some explanation out of his guilty conscience. Lucien's words pissed him off. Inke sneered and said, "Enjoy your caning!"

Lucien had easily ruined the partnership between the two gatekeepers, so he did not need to worry that Inke might find the truth from any further conversations between them. Dragging "Fil" on the floor, Lucien walked back to the hall in a pretty good mood.

...

Outside of the creepy hall filled with many black coffins, Helges roared angrily, "What did you do to him?!"

Lucien threw "Fil" on the floor and answered casually, "This scorpion was not being polite to me. So I taught him some lesson."

"You filthy scorpion! I'm his leader, and if he needs any lessons, I should be the one to give it!" Helges was very angry. He took a step forward and looked directly into Aska's eyes. He was only about a fist's distance away from Aska.

"So what? You want to beat me?" Lucien laughed hard, "Tell you what. The high priest wants to see you after your shift. You are in trouble haha!"

Helges' anger suddenly disappeared and his voice trembled a bit, "What?"

"Haha, enjoy your caning." Lucien borrowed the words from Inke and turned around, behaving in the typical Aska's manner.

Helges was very upset, but there was nothing he could do. He could only walk back and forth.

"Shall we find a priest to cure Fil...? So he can wake up earlier?" A tomb guard came to him, trying to please Helges.

"You idiot scorpion!" Helges lifted his front leg and kicked the guard hard. Then he bitterly stamped on Fil to release his anger.

No one dared to piss off the high priest!

...

In silence, Lucien and Inke stood in front of the Saint's Gate and started their shift.

The high priest had also gone back to the stone room and continued to pray.

Time quickly passed by, and the tomb became colder and colder. The power of death was boiling and shouting behind the gate as if countless undead creatures were hitting the gate with their pale, skinny arms.

In the silence, Lucien started to consider how he could go through the gate.

Rhine had left Lucien all the information he needed, including the magic circle design of the gate and the spells. Even as a legendary vampire, Rhine could not directly go through the gate.

Lucien secretly used his spiritual power and checked the gate. After making sure that the information he got was correct, he came up with the basic plan. He was about to use the very quick power change happening at the edge of day and night to hide his magic waves.

Everything went well for Lucien, except when Helges and his team patrolled by, Helges stared at Lucien a few times with great anger.

Before the early morning, at the darkest and coldest moment, the gate suddenly became unreal and distorted, as if it had been transformed into a shadow gate connecting to the hell!

Under the strong smell of death and coldness, Lucien even could not help trembling slightly.

He was very shocked when he sensed the familiar atmosphere—the atmosphere from the World of Souls!

Although Lucien was not wearing Sun's Corona, since he had been in the World of Souls and dealt with the senior-rank specters from there a few times, Lucien was sensitive enough to tell!

Lucien had so many questions in his mind:

Did Finks, the King of Sphinx, know about the existence of the World of Souls already? Was that the reason why he chose the place close to the gap connecting to the World of Souls to build his tomb?

Did that mean that the Kuo-toans' altar and Thanos' underground palace also had the gaps nearby?

Did Thanos know about the existence of the World of Souls? Was his death related to it?

Lucien had become more cautious and nervous about the World of Souls. He knew that it was not a good time for thinking too much. He tried to stay focused and waited patiently until the daylight arrived.

On the horizon, a slight touch of orange slowly rose and its divinity and grandeur pierced through the darkness.

As soon as the sun started to rise, a ray of sunlight somehow cast on the apex of the pyramid.

In the tomb, the horrible power of death hitting the Saint's Gate suddenly retreated like snow melting under sunlight. The power retreated so fast that it caused very strong power waves.

The high priest was completely focusing on the Saint's Gate, while Inke had seen this so many times, that he was simply looking at the front.

Suddenly, Lucien's body rippled like water and a creepy transparent figure came out. Under the cover of his sphinx body, the transparent figure silently cast the spell and sneaked into the gate from underneath.

However, in front of the gate, Aska was still standing straight.

The fifth-circle illusionary spell, Persistent Image!

And the fourth-circle spell, Gaseous Form!

Throne of Magical Arcana

The black smoke quickly rose in the hall packed with the coffins and extended to every corner in the tomb, like ugly and vicious creatures fiercely seizing their territory.

Facing the apex of the pyramid, the tomb guards were all praying. Although most of the time they were all very violent and rude, now they were prostrating themselves on the ground, as docile as little lambs.

The black smoke overwhelmed everything, but the golden light covering their bodies prevented the horrible power of death from approaching them.

In the tomb, the bodies hanging on the wall started moving and roaring wrathfully.

The black coffins suddenly popped open under the invisible power, and many arms and hands wrapped with bandage reached out.

The old bandage soaked with the light yellow oil from the dead bodies looked extremely disgusting. Bitter moaning and angry shouting made the tomb a living hell.

"Lucien" and Inke lifted their spears and cut open the black smoke like dividing water waves. The black smoke went into the gate directly. Despite its ferocity, the black smoke also disappeared very quickly. After about ten seconds, it was completely gone, together with the vicious moaning and roaring.

Seeing that everything had become normal, Inke said to Aska without putting too much thought into it, "Finally, it has come to an end."

"I don't talk to a filthy scorpion," answered Aska coldly.

Inke was very angry, and the flame of anger in his eyes was burning.

However, Aska just sneered and turned around.

Although Inke was very pissed, he didn't dare to cause any troubles right in front of the high priest. He could only look forward, biting his lips. He would never talk to Aska again!

The high priest had noticed what was going on there, but it was not something important for him. He lowered his head and continued to pray to accumulate power.

The fifth-circle illusionary spell, Persistent Image, could create a substantialized copy of the caster that could speak and move, and the caster could even leave some simple messages to the copy to make some casual conversations possible.

...

Behind the Saint's Gate, the black smoke was silently boiling.

In the darkness, Lucien's figure was revealed. He had turned back to his original look and then put up the black hood to cover his face.

To him, this place did feel like the World of Souls. Looking around, Lucien saw some gray spots floating in the air in the boundless silence.

Lucien was right now in a round palace, around which the pattern of sunflowers was delicately drawn everywhere. On the floor, there were golden rays carved on the ground using unknown materials, extending all the way to the lifted altar in the middle.

There was a gold coffin at the center of the altar. On its lid, there were many different patterns of the silver moon.

Since the black smoke with the great power of death was blocking everything from the outside from peeping into this space, it was safe for Lucien to use magic now, and so he cast layers of defensive spells on himself.

However, Lucien still didn't dare to take out Sun's Corona, since it was very closely related to the World of Souls, and Lucien had not figured out the connection yet.

After making sure that the arrangement of the palace was the same as Rhine's description, Lucien started to walk to the altar in the middle following the weird route that Rhine told him.

The closer Lucien went, the colder he felt. The power of death was right above his head. Lucien could hear nothing, and gradually, all the colors also faded.

It took Lucien more than ten minutes to walk to the altar. He put one of his feet onto the gold steps.

Without Rhine's experience, there was no way that Lucien could arrive in front of the gold coffin so easily. It would have taken him days to analyze the arrangement of the magic circles there.

Without wasting any time, Lucien took out the miniature sphinx statue and clicked it into a groove in the lid of the coffin. It fit the groove perfectly, as if the miniature statue was just supposed to be there!

Lucien took a step back and cast a spell. Streams of blood came out of the sphinx statue, and it looked extremely creepy and weird.

The blood went into the coffin, and the black smoke suddenly twitched like it was alive. The silver moon patterns on the lid burst out dim light for a second and went out very quickly.

Although he was prepared, Lucien was still very surprised that everything was just that simple.

He would like to study the magic circles there, but also didn't dare to waste any time. After all, the high priests could find him at any time.

Turning around, he had just taken a few steps when he suddenly felt a horrible and threatening pressure in the space, as if the entire world would come to an end because of it!

A powerful vampire? Prince Dracula? That was Lucien's first thought. He had the blood power, Moonlight, and thus he was very sensitive to the power of a vampire. Clearly, the power was not trying to hide at all.

Facing that great power, even the black smoke had retreated like a scared puppy.

Outside of the tomb, the light at the end of the sky had now disappeared. The sun had disappeared.

Lucien felt that someone had just taken a glance at him, from left to right. He was sweating under the great pressure. His forehead was covered with tiny beads of sweat.

He could feel that the eyes stopped on his Ice & Snow Medal and his Holm Crown Ring for a second and then kept moving forward.

And then, outside of the tomb, the orange sun appeared on the horizon again.

Lucien wondered in fear if that was the power of Prince Dracula. Although his teacher, the Lord of Storm, was as powerful as Prince Dracula, Lucien had never experienced a legendary level's power over himself like this!

Before the darkness disappeared completely, the lid of the coffin squeaked open!

"Who... has... interrupted... my sleep?" The voice was husky, and the tone was completely flat and emotionless.

Lucien suddenly realized that a very vicious power was slowly waking up!

"I've... been... sleeping... for ten thousand years... I've been... trapped. You shall... bear my anger..."

The voice started to become emotional.

Did the Sphinx, who had died ten thousand years ago, come back to life from the World of Souls because of the power of Prince Dracula?

Throne of Magical Arcana

Finks, the legendary-level leader who opened the golden age for sphinxes, was also the first leader ever in history to make all the tribes kneel down in front of it.

Although at that time many figures were still much more powerful than Finks, its power was beyond Lucien's imagination. There was no way that Lucien could fight against it. Also, Lucien had no idea what changes had happened to Finks before it came back to life ten thousand years later.

Run! That was the first thought flashing past Lucien's mind.

And it was his only thought when facing a legendary-level enemy!

However, after running backward for just a few steps, Lucien calmed himself down and prevented himself from blindly running for his life.

Run? To where?

If Lucien direct went out through the gate, the level-nine high priest would kill him very easily.

Should Lucien sneak out? He had no idea if he had enough time.

Should Lucien hide in the gap of the World of Souls? No, inside the gap there was the projection of the mausoleum. Something unknown inside of the World of Souls had made Finks come back to life, thus it was the most dangerous place right now!

Lucien still had the space jumping scroll given by the Lord of Storm, and this was probably the only way out for him now. He took out the scroll and was ready to activate it.

"I have been... sleeping... for ten thousand years here... I am... trapped here. How... dare you!"

The voice of Finks sounded rather cold and dry as if it was a piece of wood cracking.

Wait! Lucien noticed the word "trapped"!

Finks was trapped there?! So it had no control over its own death and resurrection?

Then Lucien might still have a slight hope!

Lucien was born to be an adventurer, and his heart gradually started to beat at a regular pace. Holding the scroll tight in his hand, he could feel the rising of the great vicious power on the other side.

The recovery of the power was very slow. Although the power grew rather steadily, it was very slow! To recover its power after ten thousand years, Finks still needed time!

Lucien estimated that Finks still needed at least thirty seconds to fully recover its power. As if he was just like a bystander, Lucien took every factor into consideration.

He quickly cast Strength and Bull's Strength on himself, and in case, he also finished a tube of the magic potion called Molten Giant's Fists.

Since Lucien had expected the great danger that he would encounter during the adventure when he was still in Allyn, he had spent all of the arcana points that he got from Fernando using his annual profit to buy the materials. However, he had used a great amount of them to trap Count Vlad.

Lucien had to admit that every fight was basically burning money. Fortunately, he got some good supplement from Rhine's treasury.

Lucien's blood boiled in his veins after taking the potion. Bulks of muscles grew out on Lucien's arms, and he could feel the power of fire in his body.

There were about twenty-one seconds left... Lucien's body became very heavy and clumsy, but he could not take any more potions for improving his agility. He cast the second-circle spell *Elegant Cat* on himself to improve his speed a bit.

"Nineteen seconds... eighteen..." counted Lucien in his mind.

Lucien held the scroll with his mouth and took out the ordinary-looking sword from his magic pouch, holding the handle of the sword very tight.

The warm stream of power infused into Lucien's hands and drove the fear and anxiety away in his mind. What was left was Lucien's willpower that was further strengthened.

"Live... or dead... You shall be my... slave... forever..."

The fury in Finks' voice was more and more obvious, together with the pleasure of gaining its great power again.

However, it was still in the gold coffin, just like what Lucien expected. Its power was not ready yet!

"Fifteen seconds... fourteen..." Lucien had to leave the last five seconds to activate the scroll in case his great gambling would go wrong.

Lucien counted the seconds in his mind, feeling that the great power was slowly accumulating. He walked toward the gold coffin.

"I... have been... awakened... I shall... return..."

The voice of Finks became louder and louder, and the black smoke started to approach the Saint's gate.

"Twelve... eleven..." Lucien was still counting the seconds.

The lid of the gold coffin moved and the dense black smoke quickly covered Finks' body. Lifting Pale Justice, Lucien hacked at the cluster of black smoke using all of his strength.

There was no bright light, nor the overwhelming momentum. The ordinary-looking sword just hacked right in the black smoke. A warm light flashed past, and the black smoke quickly retreated like snow melting in direct sunlight. Finks' body was revealed.

Finks was two to three times bigger than most of the sphinxes. It was wearing a gold crown inlaid with many sunstones and moonstones. Its face and body were wrapped with white bandages, and only its long and narrow eyes could be seen. There was cold and vicious light shining in its eyes.

"I am... back... from... death..."

Finks' mouth did not move, but the voice continued. However, before the words were finished, Lucien's sword hacked right in its face.

Suddenly the sword burst out its great power, determined, fair, and brave!

Finks let out a bitter scream. The strips of bandage broke into pieces and the rotten and pale skin and flesh were exposed. Its golden-brown, fuzzy hair had turned into the clusters of black, filthy hair.

A strong stench came out when the flesh was cut open and the light yellow fluid went down. Facing the power of the sword, the fluid quickly evaporated.

In Finks' bitter scream, countless tiny black bugs crawled out of its body like dark clouds and prevented the blade from cutting deeper.

The power fiercely pushed Lucien backward. Lucien realized that Finks' body was even more resistant and strong than the hardest alloy from the Congress!

The black bugs fell down like it was raining. White and gray light covered Finks' body, and the light filled the gold coffin.

Under the unknown power, the gold lid was drawn back and the coffin was sealed again.

Everything calmed down, leaving the black smoke slowly rolling over and over in the air.

The power of Pale Justice, when facing demons, devils and the dead creatures, equaled that of a legendary level weapon!

Lucien used the sword to support the weight of his body, as the single one hacking had cost all of his strength. Fortunately, he had stopped Finks from coming back to this world.

Lucien never planned to directly fight against Finks, a legendary level creature. The reason why Lucien could hurt it was that Finks was still trapped in the gold coffin.

Therefore, seeing that the coffin stopped moving, Lucien took a few steps backward.

There were many questions in his mind - Who trapped Finks? Why? Why it could come back to life?

It was not a good time to time into all the questions. Lucien had to leave this place as soon as possible.

When he was about to leave, he recalled what Finks just said. He suddenly felt like playing a joke, so he slightly bowed in front of the coffin.

"Please go back to sleep."

...

Trembling, all the priests prostrated themselves on the ground under the great pressure from the stare of Prince Dracula, although the vampire prince had calmed down.

When the high priest felt a bit more relieved from the pressure, it felt something different happening behind the gate. The black smoke was stirring, as if it was embracing something, or celebrating.

The high priest knew that something was going on behind the gate. When he looked at the corridor, he saw a skinny sphinx wearing the gold crown decorated with many black feathers coming to him in a hurry.

"Your Holiness Hrotos." The high priest hurriedly lowered its head.

The skinny sphinx was the level nine holy priest, whose name was Hrotos.

The look on Hrotos' face was very serious, "A legendary level leader with a horrible power just passed here. I'm concerned that the long sleep of our king might have been affected."

Suddenly, Hrotos' eyes opened wide when seeing the gatekeeper, Aska, who was still standing straight in front of the gate, while Inke was sitting on the floor out of fear.

"It's a copy! Someone has sneaked into the gate!" As a level nine holy priest, Hrotos could easily tell.

The high priest was shocked. After casting a spell to check on Aska, the high priest finally realized what had happened.

"Someone's in the gate!" blurted out the high priest.

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The holy priest burst out an angry roar and pointed its gold scepter toward the Saint's Gate. Shining lines quickly lit up on the gray stone gate, outlining the strange shape of a beetle.

Suddenly, the Saint's Gate burst out strong light like a small sun. The light was so bright that the high priest had tears in its eyes. For a second, it could not see anything.

In the bright light, the gate slowly opened. The boiling black smoke was suppressed.

...

Lucien suddenly became very alert when he heard the gate opening. He had no idea what had happened, but he was certain that the sphinxes had somehow figured out that there was someone in there.

Should he activate the level nine scroll? Lucien was still holding Pale Justice in his one hand and in the other hand the scroll from Fernando. When his brain was working very hard to come up with

the possible solutions, Lucien looked around in the palace. When he saw the gold coffin in the middle, he got an idea.

At that specific moment, it was still not necessary for him to waste this precious scroll.

The gate slowly opened, and bright light cast in.

Lucien used his left hand, the one holding the scroll, and took out another item from his magic pouch. In the middle, there was a cross, surrounded by sunlight rays. It was Maskelyne's Sun's Corona!

Since Finks had gone back to sleep, hiding in the gap of the World of Souls was less dangerous now!

The warm and soft feeling from the divine power soothed Lucien, although the space gap connecting to the World of Souls was just above the gold coffin.

The black winding gap was hanging above the coffin as if there was a sharp sword hanging over Finks.

Holding Pale Justice, Sun's Corona, and the scroll, Lucien jumped in the gap dragging his heavy body.

When the holy priest walked in and scanned the entire palace with its spiritual power, it found nothing there!

"Filthy desecrator!" Hrotos roared angrily, and all the sphinxes outside lay prostrate on the floor again.

Although the holy priest found nothing there, it did sense the smell of a stranger. Hrotos thought that the intruder had escaped.

Raising the gold scepter, Hrotos released a creepy roaring. One of its eyes turned as shiny as the sun, and the other was as bright as the silver moon.

In his creepy eyes, the scenes repeated. The holy priest saw the mysterious man wearing the black hood sneaking into the palace, hacking at the gold coffin, and when he jumped forward, the space twisted.

The ninth-circle spell, Retrospective Sight.

Although Hrotos could not see the details, it could tell that what the man did there.

The intruder had prevented Finks, their greatest king, from coming back to life!

"Your Holiness Hrotos, where is the intruder now?" asked the high priest using a lot of courage.

"He has escaped," said the holy priest coldly, whose voice sounded from hell, "He tried to ruin the body of our king to prevent him from coming back to life."

"Then..." said the high priest in panic.

"The greatest king's power is beyond that tiny bug's imagination," said Hrotos, staring at the gold coffin, "I can still feel that our king is watching us. I can still feel his overwhelming power."

Then Hrotos raised the scepter and tried to find more clues.

The light of sun shone, but it went dim suddenly. Hrotos was shocked, "He's not in this world?!"

No... that was not accurate. Hrotos could feel the man's existence, but it could not find him!

At least, the mysterious man was not in any dimensions that Hrotos knew.

...

After jumping through the heavy curtains at the entry of the World of Souls, Lucien felt the familiar deathly stillness. There was only black, white, and gray in this world.

However, he was still in the same palace, and the only difference was that it had been deprived of all the colors.

No, it was not all the colors. Lucien was shocked when he saw the dim red lines covering the gray-colored gold coffin. Those lines extended to all the magic circles in the palace.

Although the brownish-red color was rather dim, it still easily stood out in the black-and-white world, and there was no way that Lucien could ignore it. Above the gray coffin, there was also a bloody, dark-red light ball. It was beating like a heart in that very creepy world.

Closing his eyes, Lucien noticed that he could not feel this light ball at all with his spiritual power, however, when he opened his eyes, the light ball was just over there!

And there were many more things changing inside of the light ball.

Lucien wondered what that light ball was, and, in his eyes, these lines were drawing Finks' power. He tried his best not to spend some time there for any investigation, including collecting one of the lines, or taking a closer look at the light ball, after all, a senior-rank specter could be there at any time!

Putting back the sword, Lucien dispelled the spells for strengthening his power and cast a series of new defensive spells on himself. Then, he pushed open the Saint's Gate from inside.

There were no level eight or nine undead creatures since all of the holy priests and the highest priests could build their own tombs.

Beside the gate stood two sphinxes as well. They were the underworld guards wrapped in bandages.

The two guards released silent scream and attacked Lucien in a rigid way, like two cold statues.

Lucien calmly touched the corona that he was wearing in front of his chest, and a holy halo rippled out.

Affected by the warm light, the two guards suddenly became very stiff and they were trapped still. Then they were turned into two piles of ashes as if they had been weathered for thousands of years.

The six-level divine spell, Exorcist Halo!

Lucien quickly ran downwards along the corridor, and the halo was still around him.

The tomb behind the gate sensed the incompatible brightness and a great stir suddenly happened. In the world of black and white, the many underworld guards holding the spears came back to life and chased after Lucien with innumerable black little bugs like flood waves.

The entire tomb slightly trembled when the halo touched the edge of the insect waves and further spread out. The black bugs burned in smoke, and the gray and white guards were instantly demolished into ashes.

The corridor had been cleared out. Lucien ran fast through the corridors and he was already very close to the entrance of the tomb.

Suddenly, a tall and big guard whose eyes were shining with white light jumped out. Surrounded by a death halo and holding a giant sword, it directly rushed at Lucien from the corner.

Lucien did not try to avoid the attack, instead, he activated Sun's Corona before the layers of protection on him were cut open.

A thick light pillar shot down from the ceiling and directly hit the underground guard. The guard was instantly decomposed into many black light spots and they evaporated very quickly.

When the light pillar was gone, there was only a deep hole left on the floor. The black pieces were the remains of the guard.

The level eight divine spell, Sunburst!

Seizing the chance, Lucien ran out of the tomb and saw the gray sky of the World of Souls and the faded desert.

However, what Lucien just saw in the palace, including the dark-red lines, the hidden magic circles, and the dim light ball, still lingered in his brain. It seemed that they were all drawing Finks' power, and probably Rhine was stealing the power as well.

Lucien wondered who set up everything at the very beginning. He had some guesses, but the rust-colored light ball was still a great mystery to him.

However, he dared not to waste too much time there. Lucien activated the transformation mask and turned himself into one of the most common undead creatures in the World of Souls to find another exit.

...

In Viscount Nour's castle in Province Marimburg, Gusta Empire.

The viscount closed the door tight and activated all the magic traps, then walked into the secret chamber in his study. In the chamber, there were rows of beautiful females at different ages lying there, with their faces flushing like roses. It looked as if they were just sleeping.

The way that the viscount looked at them was sick and crazy. As if he was appreciating a piece of delicate artifact, Nour reached out his right hand and gently stroke one of the little girls' faces, who was just about thirteen or fourteen. He felt the coldness from her skin.

"They never understand... Bodies are the best in this world. Women with intelligence, they betray, they lie, they cause troubles... Only bodies are perfect! The coldness you feel when you touch them, and the soft muscles... This is art!" murmured the viscount crazily.

After being transformed into a vampire by a countess, Nour had developed necrophilia. Other vampires disdained him strongly, thus he needed to hide in human society to enjoy.

Suddenly, he sensed a certain stir in the air, and to his great shock, Nour discovered that he could not move anymore. In the mirror at the other end of the room, he saw a mysterious man wearing a black robe standing there.

"What... do... you... want?" Even his throat became very stiff.

Nour was very afraid. He knew that the man must be a senior-rank sorcerer as the third-circle necromantic trapping magic was very powerful.

"I was about to borrow a bit of your blood from you, and let you sleep for a while," said Lucien disgustedly, "but now... I have to say that I'll take your head."

After leaving the World of Souls through another gap, Lucien tried to find the vampires hiding in human beings society. Since Prince Dracula was still chasing after Rhine, turning himself into another vampire and returning to Night Highland was Lucien's best way out.

"No!" shouted Nour bitterly, but the sound he made sounded somehow ridiculous.

The bright light overwhelmed Nour and the beautiful bodies behind him.

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Antiffler, Holy Heilz Empire, the grandest city in the world.

Standing in the corner and staring at the magnificent city wall built to prevent the invasion of the giants, Beaulac Von Anjou, the immediate member of the Gorse family, looked rather gloomy.

"Young Master, we shall go now." A thin man in a black jacket walked to him.

Beaulac turned around and slightly nodded, "I hear you, Giz. Hopefully, we can get something this time."

"Master Beaulac, the duke is still going to last for a while." Giz looked at the young man who was quite anxious, smiling.

As one of the most famous and long-living families in Holy Heilz Empire, the Gorse family today still had two gold knights and was in charge of its own order of chivalry - The Order of the Gorse. Since the eldest son of the old duke passed away many years ago, Beaulac had become one of the most promising contenders for the title because of his pure blood. However, for some reason, he had not awakened his Blessing yet, thus right now his competitor, Arthen, a level three grand knight, was having a great edge over him.

Thinking of how arrogant Arthen was and all the noble pleasers around him, Beaulac felt very humiliated.

He had sworn in his mind that one day he would make all the people who had once abandoned him feel extremely regretful!

Realizing that the magic potion from his family would not be helpful to him, after experiencing the great inner struggle, Beaulac finally made up his mind and came to the black market to seek for an amazing magic item that could do the job.

Led by Giz, Beaulac walked into an ordinary-looking villa. Under the villa, in a basement way more spacious than it would seem, hid the biggest black market in Antiffler.

Picking up magic items one by one and then dropping them down, Beaulac looked very disappointed.

At this time, a white-haired old man walked to him.

"Young man, I've seen your destiny in the crystal ball. Do you want to know it?" The mysterious old man smiled.

Beaulac's eyes suddenly opened wide, and he looked at the crystal ball in the old man's hand. How dare the sorcerer just show up like this in the black market?

"I don't believe in fate. Everything is a blessing from God." Obviously, Beaulac would not easily trust a stranger.

The old man wearing the black robe did not mind it, "It's fine. One's destiny is always changing. If you are desperate, come to me."

And then the old man left.

Shaking his head, Beaulac continued to look for the magic item he wanted. It was already the ninth time that he came there. As a quite stubborn person, he believed in the power of number nine. Beaulac was convinced that it was most likely for him to find the thing he wanted this time, and if he failed, the hope would become slim to none.

Right now, he was becoming more and more disappointed.

Maybe... maybe he could never defeat Arthen. Beaulac was beyond depressed.

"Young master... maybe we can try... I mean, the divination..." Giz suggested.

After a long silence, Beaulac nodded.

They went to the old man's booth and sat down, "Please."

The old man grinned as he gently stroke the crystal ball. It quickly became turbid inside.

Spots of light shone in the crystal ball and soon disappeared. The old man looked up and said, "You're expecting a great shift in your destiny."

"What is that?!" burst out Beaulac nervously.

The old man said slowly, "What I can see is that it will happen in the remote villa left by your father when the darkness arrives."

Beaulac was shocked that the old man had seen the remote villa belonging to his father. His father's mistress once lived there, and most of the family members did not know.

After paying the old man two Thales, Beaulac left the booth. Somehow, when he looked back, the old man had disappeared together with his tiny booth!

In the entire black market, they never found the black-robed old man again.

"Where did he go?" Beaulac and Giz exchanged a look filled with shock.

...

When night arrived, in the remote villa, Beaulac had dismissed all the servants. He tried to find something special in the house as indicated by the old man, but found nothing.

Beaulac became even more confused as he murmured to himself in the study. It was already midnight, and the silver moon was hanging high in the sky .

When he was totally desperate, he saw that a beam of moonlight fell on his father's portrait. Under the moonlight, Beaulac saw the index finger of his father's right hand slightly distorted, pointing inward.

Inward?

Inside!

Beaulac jumped up from the couch and took out the portrait from the frame. After checking the portrait carefully, he discovered a piece of parchment behind it.

The parchment reminded him of his father's words that he was told a long time ago, "When you feel beyond desperate, come and see the portrait to find your power."

Beaulac's memory was rather vague. He hurriedly unfolded the parchment excitedly.

A piece of white paper fell out from the parchment roll, and he saw the familiar handwriting from his father.

"Beaulac, when you have lost all of your hope, you may want to borrow power from the compact. However, you cannot sell your soul to the demon, nor can you rely on it."

His breath became very heavy. The parchment was written in the ancient language of Sylvanas:

"The rule of demon: you pay when you want to get! Are you willing to accept it?"

Beaulac bit his lips tight and he gripped the parchment in his hand. After a while, he nodded heavily.

A line of words appeared on the parchment. Although Beaulac did not know the language, somehow he could understand it,

"You, who wants to sign the compact, shall follow the steps to summon the most powerful demon: when the clock strikes twelve, light a white candle in front of a mirror. With your hair disheveled, peel an apple. If the peeling goes all the way from the beginning until the end, and the candle does not go out, you will summon the demon!"

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Staring at the parchment in hand, Beaulac felt that it was just a joke. The so-called magic rite was too simple and ridiculous. It seemed that this magic rite just came from a piece of folktale.

How could anyone manage to summon the most powerful demon like that?

Although Beaulac never learned magic, he had some basic understanding of magic rites. As one of the most flourishing families with a long history in Holy Heilz Empire, the Gorse family had gathered a lot of precious documents related to magic, so the family members could be profound enough for their adventures outside of the empire. There were rumors saying that the Gorse family was the descendant of Thanos, the Sun King, from the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire.

However, although at the first glance, the magic rite looked rather ridiculous, it was surely creepy. Maybe something powerful and mysterious was hiding behind it.

After around ten minutes, Beaulac started talking to himself as if he was puffing himself with the courage, "It wouldn't do any harm if I just tried it... Maybe it's just a joke, but maybe... I'm ready for signing the compact anyway."

He clenched his fists and the look on his face was quite distorted. His eyes were filled with enthusiasm and cruelty.

Looking up at the clock, Beaulac realized that it was already close to eleven thirty at night. He hurriedly set off to find the candle, mirror, apple, and knife.

However, the faster he rushed, the harder it was for him to collect all the materials. After more than ten minutes, he finally found a mirror and a knife, but the white candle and the apple were still nowhere to be found.

He was very regretful that he had dismissed all the servants and gave them one day off. He never had to rummage around himself!

His forehead was covered with sweat, and he even wanted to slap himself in the face, for he was going to miss that great opportunity tonight! It was almost twelve at midnight!

However, eventually, he managed to find a white candle and an apple in the kitchen.

He had never felt luckier before. Holding the candle and the apple in his hands, he felt the sincere joy.

Hurriedly running back to the study, Beaulac blew out the rest of the candles and only left one to provide light. Then, he placed all the items on the desk.

It was only two minutes to midnight. Beaulac made his blond hair a great mess and now he looked like a vicious wizard in the folktales.

After finishing all the work, he sat behind the desk and waited. Suddenly, a thought worried him greatly. He wondered if the clock was accurate.

Taking out his fancy pocket watch, Beaulac double-checked the time, but then he started to doubt if his pocket watch was still working properly.

Although Beaulac knew that it probably did not need to be this accurate, he was still very nervous. He felt that this was his last gleam of hope.

Tick-tack... Tick-tack... The sound of the clock sounded rather loud. Beaulac's heart beat fiercely as if it was going to jump out of his chest. His blood was flowing faster and faster.

Dang... The clock struck twelve. Beaulac's back suddenly straightened. He hurriedly blew out the candle and lit up the white one. Under such a great sense of pressure, he almost broke the candle.

The dim candlelight looked rather mysterious and dreamlike in the mirror, as if countless demons were hiding in the shadow.

In the dark closed room, Beaulac shivered from the atmosphere. He started believing in this magic rite now.

With his trembling hands, he picked up the knife and the green apple and started peeling it. Although he never peeled an apple himself, with his power equivalent to a high-level squire, Beaulac was quite good at controlling his hands. A few times, he almost failed, but still successfully got the job done.

When he looked in the mirror, he saw his face covered by his messy hair. The candlelight lit up part of his face.

He never looked at himself in this way, and Beaulac even dared not to recognize himself in the mirror, as if he had already fallen in the hell. The long and thin apple peel fell on the desk. Beaulac hurriedly looked up, hoping that the summoning had worked.

However, all he could see in the mirror was still himself.

Beaulac was very upset. He had no idea which step was wrong.

Suddenly, a cool draft rose in the closed study, making the candlelight flicker. Beaulac hurriedly looked in the mirror again and saw that there was a creepy smile on his face.

The 'Beaulac' in the mirror, with that vicious smile, started pulling the skin off from his face, and the bloody flesh underneath was revealed.

Beaulac wanted to scream but found himself unable to. He wanted to stay away from the mirror but discovered that he had been trapped on the seat.

The blood and flesh started wriggling and finally turned into a white-faced demon with a long red tongue hanging.

"You have summoned me, from the deepest places in hell. Now, you may say your request."

The extremely cold voice made Beaulac shiver, but at the same time he finally realized what was going on—he had indeed summoned the demon! The rite worked!

"I want to... I want to become a knight! A grand knight! No... I want to be the Gorse Duke!" burst out Beaulac, feeling extremely thrilled. At this time, in his eyes, the ugly and horrible demon was his last hope!

"You get; you pay. That's the rule of demons. Are you ready to pay?" With its long tongue hanging down, the demon put on a cold smile.

When Beaulac was just about to nod, a thought flashed through his mind and he stopped himself. Instead, he asked, "The costs are different, aren't they? For different things."

"Of course. I'm one of the seven most powerful demons from hell, and my name is Greed. Your pay must satisfy me," said the demon.

The demon's words reminded Beaulac of the most ancient story told in his family. In that ancient story, there were seven mysterious demons from ancient times, for example, Greed and Wrath.

Thus, Beaulac had completely believed in the compact and asked respectfully, "Your Excellency, Greed, what would cost me to be the duke, and what would it be to be a grand knight? What about just becoming a knight?"

When trading with a demon, one had to be extremely careful. Beaulac remembered the note left by his father.

Greed responded, "If you want to become the duke, you have to give me your soul when you die. No worries. Your soul will still be able to enjoy the endless happiness in my realm. If you choose to become a grand knight, you have to give me the rest of your life after reaching fifty. No matter who you are and how powerful you become, you can only live up to fifty years. If you just want to become a knight, you shall give me ten years of your life."

Beaulac took a deep breath and became hesitant. Of course, he did not want to sell his soul to the demon. What was the point of he becoming the duke if he had to die at fifty?

However, the demon, Greed, seemed to be quite different. It was not lying about anything, and it was very clear about all the consequences.

After a long time, Beaulac asked in the low voice, "After I make the choice this time, if somehow I fail to hit my final target, can I summon you and make another choice again?"

"No problem. But that will be another trade," said Greed.

"Then..." Beaulac took a deep breath, "I choose to become a knight who still has the potential to become a grand knight."

"As you wish. However, to do so, I have to slightly change your destiny track. So, you have to tell me in details whatever happened to you. The more detailed your description is, the more likely I can make sure that you can still become a grand knight in the future," said the demon in a very well-mannered way.

Beaulac could not wait to become a knight and did not doubt the demon's words. He was told that the more a prophet knew about a person, the more accurate the fortunetelling result would be.

"... My first time... happened when I was seduced by my father's mistress. She's getting old now, and I'm pulling away from her..." Beaulac confessed his life experience in great details, including his personality and many habits.

Outside of the study, the secret guard was just staring at the other end of the corridor. According to the tradition of the family, the guards could not interfere with inheritors' doing. As long as the inheritors had not sold their souls and betrayed the family, they could do whatever they had to become the duke, even including seeking the power from demons.

The motto of the family was: power and means form the foundation of everything.

Therefore, the guard did not stop Beaulac in the black market but simply protected the young master and later he was about to report this to the old duke. When he knew that the young master was looking for some white candles and apples, the guard wondered why the magic rite was so strange.

Soon after the rite started, the guard felt dizzy and then lost his consciousness.

...

In another room of the villa, wearing a black hood, smiling, Lucien was quietly looking at the mirror in front of them and listening to Beaulac's life story.

The best way to get someone's detailed information was to let the person talk himself!

Sometimes, even without using magic, one could steal another person's memory as long as the biggest weakness of the mind was found!

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When he was telling everything to the demon, Beaulac had a sense of relief, as he was letting out all the emotions that had been hidden for so long.

In the end, Beaulac felt that his mind was cleaner as if he had found the power to move forward.

The night was very quiet. Beaulac felt that his soul was drifting in the air and then slowly became part of the darkness. In the darkness, he felt very sleepy.

"You have signed the compact. When you wake up, you will find yourself a real knight," Greed's voice made Beaulac feel even more drowsy.

Beaulac was very excited and finally felt very relaxed. Then, he fell into the boundless darkness.

...

The secret guard outside of the study shivered because of the cold breeze in November, and then he heard a vague voice in the study, "You have signed the compact. You will give me ten years of your life as the payment, and you will become a knight, still with the potential to become a grand knight."

Frederick, the secret guard, who was a level-five grand knight, slightly nodded when hearing that Beaulac did not choose to sell his soul or betray the family. However, he had no idea why, for a short while, he felt very dizzy and lost his mind.

As there was no clock in the corridor, and Frederick also forgot to check his own pocket watch. He thought that his dizziness only lasted for around ten seconds, thus in his mind, everything was fine.

When Frederick extended his willpower into the room, he felt the strong heartbeat from Beaulac. He could tell that the heartbeat belonged to a knight.

It seemed that Beaulac, who had just become a knight, was not yet able to control the state of his body, thus Frederick was able to detect the difference.

Frederick could not believe that the ridiculous magic rite indeed worked, but it was true. Driven by greed, he felt like trying the magic rite as well, since he had been trying to become a radiant knight for almost thirty years!

...

In the study, Lucien looked at himself in the mirror in the dim candlelight. In the mirror, he had turned himself into a good-looking, blond young man with blue eyes.

It was known that the members from the Gorse family were all very good-looking. The blond Lucien smiled and combed his shoulder-length hair with his hand casually.

The gloomy and depressed Beaulac was gone, and he was now looking energetic and confident just the way he was five years before.

Among the many widely-told stories and poems about the Gorse family, although there were countless made-up or exaggerated ones, there was one thing true: the family was indeed the descendant of Thanos, the Sun King. Underneath one of their old villas in Antiffler lay the palace of Thanos, guarded by a gold knight all the time.

Lucien had to go to the palace, but there was no way that he could force his way into it.

The good news to Lucien was that there was an old and important tradition in this family: when time was proper, more than ten candidate successors would be sent to the secret underground palace, and they would fight against or cooperate with each other to explore the palace. The one who first completed the mission would be the first successor.

In the palace, the powerful knights in the family would not interrupt the competition. Only those who were dying would be sent out by magic circles. Therefore, the game was rather cruel: some chose to fight face to face; some chose to use the dirty methods; some lied; and others betrayed, and since the palace itself was rather mysterious and dangerous, the winner of each generation was either very powerful or resourceful. In other words, it was blood which made the family stay strong for hundreds of years.

However, in the recent several decades, the relatively remote nobles from the Gorse family also started to send their children to the palace to challenge the young nobles. In the game, they could also become closer to the possible future successor. Some young nobles from other big families might also join the game, as they simply wanted some excitement in their boring life.

In this game, social skills were very important.

Since only the Gorse family's blood could open the inner chamber where Thanos' Quadrant was kept. Based on Lucien's observation, he picked Beaulac, a young successor with many strong desires in his mind, which made his mind very vulnerable.

Because the spell for opening the chamber was very complicated, Lucien could not charm Beaulac to do the job for him. Lucien had to go himself.

In front of the mirror, Lucien made sure that the way he behaved was typical of Beaulac. Then, he looked at Beaulac, who was sleeping in the secret chamber which Lucien just spent two days building. He put on a smile and said to Beaulac, "When I have some spare time, I'll change your blood power."

If one still wished to grow into a grand knight after becoming a knight with external help, there was one way: a senior-rank vampire could change a person's blood power using another form of Embrace. And right now, Lucien was a senior vampire who was able to do so.

At the very beginning, it was vampires' Embrace that inspired the sorcerers when they were studying how to change blood powers.

At that time, they discovered that a vampire's Embrace could give the target the power of a knight, and the target was still able to increase the power further. Although the process would be much slower, this was definitely an easy way to obtain power.

The sorcerers thought that they had found the best way of acquiring power, and they used the method on some human beings. However, it turned out later that without a very strong willpower, one could never become a grand knight merely with external help. Even if magic could push a human being's body to the limit of a radiant knight or even a gold knight, the person would still die from the power collapsing, and his body would explode.

As for what would happen to Beaulac after he got the blood power from a vampire, Lucien did not care. Sometimes, Lucien could be as cunning as a demon.

And if Beaulac could be very careful, it was very unlikely that the family would notice, unless someone caught Beaulac sucking blood right on the spot and carefully checked. The power of the family came from Thanos, the Sun King, and thus any blood powers, or Blessings as the Church called it, that were related to the stars in the sky could be awakened, including the top ones such as Sun, Silver Moon, and Stars, and the relatively inferior ones including Thanos and the ones named after the other constellations. Therefore, the blood power of Silver Moon was very similar to the power of vampires.

Blowing out the candle, Lucien walked to the bedroom in the darkness, with his eyes dimly shining with a light akin to moonlight.

In the darkness, Fredrick slightly nodded. He had recognized the power—Silver Moon.

After the transformation, Lucien was still able to use his blood power, and his, Moonlight, worked especially great with the power of the Gorse family.

Lucien's plan worked very well. At the very beginning, Lucien had planned everything. Beaulac's choice would not affect the plan at all.

...

In Fredrick's eyes, the young master only spent a few days getting used to the power before becoming active again.

A fancy coach drawn with delicate pattern of gorses under the sunlight was speeding along a wide street.

The profound citizens living in this capital along both sides of the street were guessing who was in the coach. Was it Arthen who was getting all the attention? Or was it the poor Beaulac?

They knew from the shape and design of the coach that the person sitting in it was not a duke, marquis, or count. In Holy Heilz Empire, where the traditions were highly respected, any arrogation of the ranks was strictly forbidden.

"Obviously, it's Beaulac, the poor guy," said a citizen with great confidence, as if he was a member of the Gorse family. "Baron Arthen is a grand knight. He has his own seal. Beaulac never managed to awaken his blood power. He's not even close to my neighbor, Liddell."

Another man shook his head, "Baron Arthen is very confident with winning the dukedom, thus he never uses his own seal. He's been waiting for the day after the competition next month when he can use the gold-eye seal of the family."

Like the title, the Violet Countess, for the Violet family, the Gorse family's leader's title was the Tillis Count, and the core of the seal was a gold eye.

The residents in the capital were indeed quite knowledgeable. They even knew that the family competition would be carried out a month later.

Sitting in the fancy coach, Lucien, wearing the brand-new white shirt, was heading for a party held by the son of a count.

"Look, look... Aren't you Beaulac? I thought you went missing."

Lucien heard the sarcastic tone from the left side of the coach. He lifted the curtain and saw a dark-red coach moving parallel with his. From the window, the eyes on a pale face were looking at Beaulac with excitement and provocation.

"I'm terribly sorry, Duda. I never went missing, to your great disappointment," answered Lucien calmly. Recalling Beaulac's narrative, Lucien recognized the pale face. He was the son of Count Porti and used to hang out with Beaulac a lot, but now he was a loyal supporter of Arthen.

Seeing the confident smile on Beaulac's face, Duda recalled the time when Beaulac was gaining the greatest momentum several years ago. What happened to Beaulac? Duda could not help wondering.

"No kidding... You're coming over to Deniz's party?! Don't you know that Arthen will show up with Jocelyn tonight?" Duda hated seeing today's Beaulac, and he kept trying to embarrass his friend from the past.

"So? Arthen is not yet the Gold-eye Count," responded Lucien in a plain tone.

Beaulac loved Jocelyn before, who was the daughter of a marquis. He had spent a lot of time on pursuing her, but when they were about to engage, Arthen took Jocelyn away from him.

Seeing that Beaulac remained so indifferent, Duda tightened his right fist. He had no idea what had happened to Beaulac, but what Duda did know for sure was that Beaulac was even more confident and calm than he was before, as if everything was under his control!

Putting down the curtain, Lucien closed his eyes. His coach continued moving forward toward the garden villa where Deniz was holding the party.

Duda sat in the coach with a gloomy face. He knew that he must tell Arthen about this.

November was the Month of Winter. The city in the north, Antiffler, was ready to become the world of ice and snow at any time under the freezing wind.

The light blue and clear river named Donati went through the city, and Count Mecklen's garden villa was located on the piece of highland near the river. Behind the villa, there was a very steep hill called Saxony, carved with countless fine relief sculptures.

This was a classic pillar-structured villa, which accorded with the conservative building style of Holy Heilz Empire. However, when Lucien went through the garden blooming with the light-purple flowers called Crystal Elf and stepped into the hall, he discovered that the design of the place was definitely inspired by the passion from the Kingdom of Syracuse based on its luxurious decoration, the featured curved lines on the walls, and the unique layout of the place.

The walls around and the ceiling above were drawn with many beautiful half-naked young women. Together with the well-built male statues placed in the space, a bold and unrestrained atmosphere was created.

Lucien had some understanding of art and psychology. When he was appreciating the stunning design of the place, he was also trying to figure out what the young nobles of the empire were thinking. It seemed that the younger generation of the nobles in Holy Heilz Empire had been fed up by the extremely conservative traditions and rules, and they were leaning toward the luxurious style from the Kingdom of Syracuse not far away from them.

This was for sure a piece of good news for the Congress of Magic and the Kingdom of Holm.

While many places like Allyn, the Kingdom of Holm, and the Duchy of Calais were all developing at a fast pace with great energy, and the popularization of the alchemical items were also bringing many big changes to the social structures and people's way of thinking, the younger generations in Holy Heilz Empire and the Kingdom of Syracuse were still blindly enjoying their wealth and extravagant way of living.

When the young fell, the nation fell. Those people who worried could survive, and those who saw no dangers would die.

Wearing a polite smile on his face, Lucien walked to the host of tonight's party, Deniz Mecklen.

"My dear Beaulac, I thought you wouldn't come!" said Deniz, who was a delicate and pretty young man with long blond hair. There were many exquisite designs on his dark-red suit, including the mysterious ruby brooch and the fine silver chains.

In Lucien's eyes, Deniz was like a postmodernism artist, which complied with the description of Beaulac: Deniz was passionate about painting and sketch, and he also designed jewelry and clothes himself. At the same time, he regarded himself as a fine and perfect female, and thus Deniz liked men.

Lucien knew that he could never underestimate Deniz, who was the first one among the younger generation of the nobles in Antiffler to become a grand knight. At that moment, Deniz was only around twenty-seven, but he was already a level-five grand knight, and his blood power, Thunder, was very powerful.

After gently hugging Deniz, Lucien grinned, "Why wouldn't I?"

Deniz covered his mouth and giggled, "That was just my instinct. Men are always rude but fragile. I was afraid that you and Arthen might give each other some hard time over the party, and I know that Arthen has been waiting for this opportunity for so long, so he could rule you out from the underground palace competition. Then, it would be way easier for him to win the game. The rest of the monkeys will bend their knees in front of him."

Lucien had some uncomfortable feeling in his stomach, but he tried to maintain the loving smile on his face, "Monkeys are just monkeys."

Lucien's response surprised Deniz, and he looked at Lucien with his light-brown eyes, "What happened to you, Beaulac? You're different now. I can feel your confidence."

Playing to be mysterious, Lucien just smiled but did not say anything.

Deniz giggled again, "This is getting very interesting now. I'm wondering if I should go down there as well. Please me, Beaulac. Maybe I am willing to help you beat Arthen."

The fact that maybe Beaulac could win the important help from Deniz was the very reason why Beaulac accepted the invitation to the party.

Lucien purposefully put on a quite encouraged look, but he also said, "Maybe Arthen will have some helpers as well."

Deniz laughed, "Don't get all excited. This is not a decision yet. The old one in my family carries a lot of hope in Arthen after all."

Clearly, Deniz was waiting for Beaulac to ask again and use all the means he could to please him, but Lucien did not really need his help. So, he decided to look up at the ceiling.

"Isn't this my beloved cousin Beaulac?"

The deep and feigned voice came from the gate.

Lucien believed that he had heard the voice earlier when he was walking around. Turning around, Lucien saw a tall blond man walking toward them holding the arm of a beautiful young woman.

The young man was wearing a fancy and formal uniform from the military. On his right chest, there was a fine ribbon, and on the other side, there was a row of medals. Beside him, the young lady was very elegant dressing in a light-blue evening dress. She was definitely attracting most of the men's attention at the party.

Lucien looked at the blond man and grinned, "Arthen, you might want to behave in a more mature way, as a member of our Gorse family. The other guests here might think we're rude when you are yelling."

"Beaulac, you..." The look in Arthen's eyes changed. What Duda told him was correct. Something had happened to Beaulac, and right now he was showing a completely different attitude to him!

Arthen did not show his thoughts on his face, instead, he still put on a smile, "My dear cousin, nobility comes from our blood. A noble who cannot awaken his blood power is not qualified. Also, you know nothing about art. You don't know painting, music, piano, or poem. You tell me how you differentiate yourself from those ordinary citizens. After all, many of them at least know how to play a musical instrument!"

When Beaulac was the most promising inheritor of the title, he was busying with reaching out to the other nobles and attending all the parties, so he hardly had any time studying art. And when he lost his edge, he devoted all his time to knight training, but he obtained nothing in the end. Thus, many nobles called Beaulac a savage behind his back.

Lucien was not interested in winning the quarrel. He simply lifted his eyebrow a bit and responded, "He who laughs last laughs best."

"Oh, really? I've heard that you've been to the black market very often recently, my dear cousin. I'm sure that you've discovered some good stuff there. But I would like to advise you to think about how far you can go with this external help." Arthen was indicating that he was constantly watching Beaulac.

As he was saying it, Arthen held the young lady's hand tight in his own, "And the really wise lady, like Jocelyn, always chooses someone like me."

Jocelyn lowered her flushed face. However, to Lucien, a real wise lady should always rely on herself and her power.

When Lucien was considering how he should respond to this in accordance with Beaulac's personality, the hall suddenly quieted down. A blond girl dressing in an exquisite white evening dress showed up at the gate. Decorated with sweet laces, the girl was like an elf. She was not very tall, but there was energy in her elegance. Behind her, there was an old lady wearing a black dress.

"It's my great pleasure to have you here, Princess Sophia." Deniz walked to her and kissed her hand respectfully.

Somehow, Lucien could always encounter princesses.

Sophia grinned, "Deniz, I'll only recognize your hospitality if you play for me."

Deniz giggled with his pinkie up, "Come on, I'm not good at it. There're so many guests here. We should have a gentleman playing for us."

Lucien had some uncomfortable feeling in his stomach. When he looked up, he saw that the old lady was looking at him.

The old lady's eyes slightly squinted. It seemed that she could tell Lucien's knight power.

"I'd like to play for you, Your Highness." All of a sudden, Arthen stood out.

The look on Jocelyn's face became quite gloomy.

As known to all, Princess Sophia was a big piano fan. However, because she was not a knight and she did not have much talent in music, she was not good at playing the piano at all. At the same time, she was the second-in-line inheritor of the empire and a level five alchemist, thus Princess Sophia also had many pursuers.

Arthen's proposal surprised Deniz, after all, he was just joking. On the other hand, Sophia just smiled and her green eyes looked at Arthen, "I am looking forward to it, then."

Feeling encouraged, Arthen walked to the piano in the center of the hall and started playing.

Hearing the song, Lucien could not help rubbing his forehead, as what Arthen was playing was For Silvia.

Soon, Arthen finished his playing. All the nobles started applauding. Although Arthen was not good at music, as a grand knight, it was not hard for him to play a music piece after proper training.

Seeing the beautiful smile on the princess' face, Arthen stood up wearing a triumphant look. He cast a glance at Beaulac suggesting it again that he was nothing more than a savage.

Lucien spent a few seconds considering how Beaulac would respond to this, and then he also stood out, "Your Highness, can I do an improvisation for you?"

"What?" Both Deniz and Arthen were very surprised.

The surprised look on Sophia's face only lasted for a second, and then her elegant smile returned, "This is really out of my expectation, Beaulac. I did not expect that you would stand out. But if you can play a beautiful piano piece for me tonight, I would see hope again in my own playing. Are you going to give me some confidence?"

Her voice was soft and gentle. The scent of her body was very charming.

"I will." Lucien had already fallen in love with someone else, so he was not much influenced by the charismatic princess.

Lucien sat down in front of the piano and put his hands on the keyboard. Then, he pressed down the first key gently.

The impromptu was very beautiful. Deniz opened his mouth big as he could not believe that a savage could play such a beautiful song. Arthen looked very upset. He now believed that Beaulac had found some really useful magic items from the black market.

Lucien soon finished his playing. Sophia smiled and applauded, "Thank you, Beaulac, for giving me the confidence. I never knew that you were this talented in music."

After bowing slightly, Lucien walked to the princess, "About this, I've got a secret to share with you, Your Highness."

"Oh really? What is that?" Sophia blinked out of curiosity.

"Of course," said Lucien like a gentleman, "I can only share it with you, Your Highness."

All of the nobles could tell that Beaulac was trying to stay closer to the princess, but there was nothing they could do to stop him.

Lucien whispered in the princess' ear, "If you only play the black keys, in other people's eyes, you will look like an expert as well."

Sophia burst out laughing. When she laughed, she was as beautiful as a blooming flower. The nobles, including Arthen, were rather jealous.

The black keys could form the pentatonic scale, thus even an improvisation could produce a piece of classic melody.

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Although Princess Sophia was quite outgoing, as a well-educated princess, it was very unusual for her to burst out laughing like that. Seeing that Sophia was so amused by the trick, the rest of the nobles were very jealous. They wondered what Beaulac had told the princess and why it made the princess so happy.

It took Sophia a few seconds to calm down, and then her beautiful green eyes blinked. "Beaulac, you're very interesting. More interesting than I thought."

When the princess first became active in those social events, Beaulac was frustrated with the fact that he was not getting any attention. Facing the elegant and noble princess, as a hopeless inheritor, Beaulac never dared to take one step forward, although he knew that marrying the princess could for sure consolidate his position.

Therefore, the impression Beaulac left Sophia with was not good at all: gloomy, silent, and there was no hope for him at all to become the next Gorse Duke.

Lucien bowed deep to the princess, "Thank you so much for your sweet comment, Your Highness."

At this time, Lucien sensed that the mouth of the old lady standing behind Sophia slightly opened. And then the princess smiled again. Sophia held the corner of her dress in her hands and leaned forward. She whispered in Lucien's ear right in front of the public, and Lucien could feel her sweet scent from the breath.

"You're much better than these nobles who only know how to fight against each other and how to enjoy their extravagant life. They are so boring. I hope you won't become one of them."

Lucien was very surprised that, all of a sudden, the princess just became so close to him. He tended to be very suspicious by nature, thus Lucien did not believe that the princess was simply in love with him.

There was something unusual behind it, but what was it?

Did the old lady just tell the princess that Beaulac was already a knight? Maybe the princess wanted to get involved in the selection of the Gorse family's next duke to keep the family in better control of the royal family?

Although Lucien had many thoughts in his mind, he pretended to be shy and also excited. He nodded hard and said in a low voice beside the princess' ear, "I'll stick to who I am, Your Highness, and I won't let you down."

Lucien's response was so reasonable that he would even regard himself as a good actor. When he was talking, he made his breath hot and deep. The breath touched the princess' earlobe, and the princess' ear and neck began to redden.

As a very experienced actor, Lucien was sure that the princess was not in love with Beaulac.

However, what Lucien was thinking did not matter. Many of the nobles were now staring at Lucien very aggressively.

Sophia dropped down the corner of her dress and tried to put on a sincere but casual smile, "I'm glad that now I know you better, Beaulac."

Before Lucien could respond, she looked at Deniz and hurriedly said, "I've got something to ask you, Deniz."

"Let's go to the dressing room, then." Deniz held the princess by her arm and led her out of the hall. He was also curious what Beaulac had told Sophia.

With his eyes slightly squinted, when Lucien was looking at the princess from behind, he sensed a burning feeling on his face. Turning around, he noticed that the old lady wearing a black dress was staring at him coldly.

He nodded to the old lady, but only received an even colder look. The nobles spread out in small groups after the princess left, and Lucien was now all alone by himself.

Some tried to talk to Beaulac, but they were just doing some casual greetings. Lucien was definitely excluded, especially when compared to Arthen who was having a heated conversation in his group.

Picking up a glass of Gold Rum, which was Beaulac's favorite, Lucien tried to make himself look more decent.

"Beaulac, you've changed a lot."

When Lucien was taking his first sip, a soft female voice came to him.

It was Jocelyn.

Lucien saw that Arthen was surrounded by a bunch of young nobles, laughing and making small talk. He turned around and smiled to Jocelyn. "When one is desperate, one seeks for changes. Only changes can bring new hope. I have nothing to lose, so I'm not afraid of changes."

Lucien was quite satisfied with his ambiguous response.

"If... I mean if you had been like this last year, I wouldn't have..." Jocelyn sighed, but she did not finish her sentence. Turning around, Jocelyn's figure looked rather lonely.

Swirling the golden liquid in the glass, Lucien thought to himself that if the real Beaulac was there, he would probably show mercy on Jocelyn because of what she just said, but Lucien would not. When they were in the underground palace, Lucien would still do what he should do.

Holding the glass, he casually walked around in the hall. He saw a blond beauty dressing in black walking toward him. The blond beauty had deep blue eyes and looked a bit like Beaulac.

"Dear cousin, I am glad to see you like this." The beautiful lady gently clinked her glass against Beaulac's.

"I thought you'd be glad that one of your competitors was gone, Claire," said Lucien casually.

Claire von Anjou was Beaulac's cousin, a female knight, and also a competitive inheritor of the title. In most countries, since both men and women could become a knight, women also had the heirship to the title.

"No, without you, Beaulac, I would become Arthen's target. I know I am not able to handle him." Claire smiled. "He is too flamboyant and aggressive, and if he is the winner, it's a piece of bad news for all of us. He is for sure going to give us a very hard time. So, comparatively speaking, I would rather have you to be the Gold-eye Count."

"So, what are you trying to say?" Lucien put on a confident smile as if everything was under his control.

Claire grinned, "We cooperate with each other and teach Arthen a good lesson in the underground palace. After we solve the biggest trouble, we can have a fair competition. What do you think?"

"My pleasure," Lucien answered simply, without mentioning anything that would take place after beating Arthen.

Seeing that Beaulac did not care about the following competition at all, in her mind, Claire was quite concerned. She had no idea why Beaulac seemed so confident. Before turning around and leaving, Claire reached out her left hand and held Lucien's, and her fingers gently scratched Lucien's palm. Her voice became deep and arousing, "No matter who wins in the end, we can still enjoy a wonderful night together."

"Claire..." Lucien was quite shocked.

She put on a sophisticated smile, "Don't pretend, Beaulac. You even sleep with your father's mistress, and I am just your cousin. If you can awaken the blood power, Sun, we can even get married."

The blood power called Sun required the pure blood, therefore, in many empires, it was very common that close relatives got married, such as the Rafati family from the Duchy of Violet, and the Gorse family was no exception.

Standing with her back to Lucien, the smile on Claire's face disappeared, and it was replaced with a sarcastic sneer.

Lucien slightly shook his head. Although he had no idea what she wanted from him, he was clearly aware of the fact that what he wanted was different from all of theirs. After a while, when Lucien walked close to the balcony, a blond man suddenly approached him and invited him to the balcony to have a conversation.

"Yes, Relph?" asked Lucien a bit impatiently.

Relph was another possible inheritor from the family. He was quite good-looking, but he had not awakened his blood power yet.

In the cold wind, Relph looked rather serious but also excited, "Beaulac, I wish to work with you to beat Arthen. He is too powerful. If we don't unite, there would be no chance for us to win."

"That's good." Lucien's attitude remained uncertain.

"I know who your father is. He's the youngest brother of the duke. And I know you must have got a lot of extraordinary magic items or magic potions from him. You can't see my worth, right?" Seeing Lucien's attitude, Relph was a bit irritated. "Look, I've awakened my blood power, Sun!"

"What? Sun?" Lucien was quite surprised.

Relph first looked back and then he turned around, "This is my biggest weapon, and I'm now telling you this to show my sincerity."

When he was saying it, a ray of sunlight appeared in his hand, which showed that he could use magic.

"I'm glad to have you on my side," said Lucien using Claire's words. "Our biggest competitor is Arthen. We first beat him, and then we see who is the winner."

"Good. You're seeing this very clearly. I gotta go now, or Arthen would see us..." said Relph. "By the way, be careful with Claire. It seems that she has been involved with the royal family."

"Understood." Nodded Beaulac seriously.

As soon as Relph left, the look on Lucien's face relaxed. As a senior-rank arcanist, sorcerer, and a member of the Review Board, Lucien knew that the power that Relph used to cast the sunlight ray was not his blood power! Obviously, Relph had his own plans as well.

However, Lucien did not care. He knew that none of the nobles could become his concern.

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In the study of the Gorse family's manor, the old duke was reading a report carefully. Part of his hair had turned gray.

"Greed... Demon Greed..." There was a sophisticated smile on the old duke's face. Fredrick, one of the men protecting Beaulac, was right now standing in front of the old duke.

Fredrick nodded seriously, "I've read the piece of parchment and I heard it myself, Your Highness."

"Good. This time you will go down into the underground palace as well. As the invisible power for protection, you need to keep things under control," said the duke seriously.

"Yes, my lord," said Fredrick very respectfully.

After Fredrick left, a figure covered with a long black robe sneaked out of the shadow in the corner, "Why do you want to send him there? He's going to help Beaulac. Have you changed your mind and now you want Beaulac to win?"

The only duke only sneered. His eyes focused on the word "Greed" in the report.

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In the following month, Lucien spent most of his time getting used to and improving his blood power, like what the real Beaulac would do. In the rest of the time, he attended many parties held by different nobles, where he further achieved a few preliminary agreements with them for the cooperation in the underground palace. He also remembered to go back to the remote villa to reinforce the power of Fake Death and Sleep (Strong) that he cast on the real Beaulac and gave Beaulac the nutrition to survive. So far, Lucien had not found the time to conduct the magic experiment on Beaulac to awaken his blood power.

Today, the sky was rather gloomy, and the wind was freezing. It seemed that the first storm of the year was coming.

The smell of old rotten wood was everywhere in the Gorse family's villa built in the time period of the ancient magic empire. Lucien was wearing a black knight armor and walked down to the bottom floor of the basement with great confidence.

Seeing Lucien's manner, the leaders of the Gorse family, no matter if they liked Beaulac or not, slightly nodded. In their eyes, the spirit that Beaulac was carrying right now matched the great honor of the family, and only a young noble like this was qualified for chasing after the dukedom.

"It's been only a month... Beaulac looks pretty good. Wait... has he awakened his blood power?" exclaimed Nuremburk von Anjou, the Aldenburg Count, who almost forgot to put back his thick cigar back to his mouth out of his surprise.

Nuremburk von Anjou was the third most powerful member of the family. He was a level eight radiant knight, respected as Dim Starlight. It was very easy for Nuremburk to tell the power of Beaulac since Lucien was not hiding it at all.

Ulrich, the Gorse Duke, a level-seven radiant knight respected as the Moon of Order, nodded. "The heritage that he got from his father definitely helped him with to awaken his power."

"Beckman had much of uncle's affection. He must have some good stuff." Nuremburk looked at the duke with a meaningful smile on his face. Both Ulrich and Nuremburk had the same blond hair and blue eyes, but some of the duke's hair had gone gray.

The uncle that Nuremburk mentioned was the father of Ulrich and Beckman, the previous duke. It was said that the previous duke had considered Beckman to be his inheritor, but in the underground palace, Ulrich all of a sudden revealed his power as a level-five grand knight, thus he finally beat Beckman, who had a lot of magic and divine items. In the end, Ulrich became the inheritor of the dukedom.

The marquises and counts from the family were all looking at the old duke with a strange look on their face. In their mind, they shared the thought that Beckman died young because of the old duke.

When Beaulac had no blood power, he was not a big deal to the old duke at all. However, Beaulac was totally different now. Such a confident and calm young man surely would get the special attention from the old duke.

As the duke, Ulrich said in a cold tone, "I don't like those who win because of the powerful items, but a winner is a winner. A winner will not be condemned and will have everything promised."

Obviously, the old duke was holding a contemptuous attitude toward Beaulac, but he also promised that he would make this competition fair.

"Very good," said Nuremburk meaningfully. In his mind, he doubted any grandiose speech from the noble family, especially the duke who had been controlling the family for almost forty years.

Within the Holy Heilz Empire, there were many other noble families that longed for the Gorse family's power with envy, not to mention the mysterious and ambitious emperor. Thus, Ulrich must be very capable as the leader of the Gorse family.

The Emperor, Rudolf II, was the only one who managed to ascend to the legendary level after inheriting the throne after the first few ancestors in the blessed family. His power was horrific, and he gave himself a strange title, the New Law and the First Born.

When the leaders of the family in front of the weird stone gate were talking, Lucien joined the other family members who were already there.

Claire and Relph pretended to regard Beaulac as their enemies, so they did not even greet him. The atmosphere was a bit embarrassing.

After a few seconds, Arthen, who was still wearing his fancy military suit, walked in with his noble friends, including Jocelyn and Duda. With great confidence, he nodded to the other family members, including Lucien.

"Are you going as well?" Seeing that Jocelyn, Duda and the rest of the young nobles were fully-equipped, Nuremburk asked.

Duda's voice came from underneath the sallet and it sounded hollow, "Yes, Your Excellency. I'm only one step away from becoming a real knight. My father sees the competition as a great opportunity. If anything happens, I believe that the magic circles built by the Gorse family can send us out in time. We won't die in there."

Obviously, Duda was more or less afraid.

"I can assure you. Aside for the magic circles, the Glorious Crown, Sir Metatron, will also go down into the palace to keep things under control," said Nuremburk assuringly. He and Duda's father, Count Porti, were friends. And of course, he did not mention the hidden power. The Gorse family wanted no one from the other noble families to die in the palace as they did not welcome any unnecessary trouble.

Hearing Nuremburk's words, Lucien closed his eyes to hide his concern. The fact that Metatron would also be in the underground palace was not a piece of good news for him.

The Glorious Crown, Metatron, was one of the two gold knights in the Gorse family. He was almost three hundred years old, much senior to the current leaders of the family. Thus, he was very respected.

"There is no need for us to worry at all knowing that Sir Metatron will also be there." Duda nodded, feeling more relieved.

Although most of the young nobles had awakened their blood power on their own, they still lacked real fighting experiences when compared to the nobles from the Duchy of Violet and some other countries. The greatest challenge that they ever faced was fighting against the goblins and cynocephalus. In other words, they were like flowers living in a greenhouse.

Therefore, when facing a real cruel fight, the young nobles were still very nervous.

Seeing that Nuremburk was looking at them, Jocelyn put on an elegant smile, "Sir, I am already a knight, and I want to be on my fiance's side."

The rose-colored chain mail revealed her beautiful figure. Many of the young nobles standing behind Arthen were stealing a glance at Jocelyn from time to time.

Hearing Jocelyn's words, a big smile appeared on Arthen's face. At the same time, the rest of the nobles turned to stare at Beaulac, waiting for the embarrassed look on Beaulac's face.

However, Lucien was just smiling, as if he was watching a boring opera.

Lucien's response greatly disappointed Duda and Arthen, and a young noble named Andris could not help being sarcastic, "Beaulac, are you a lady?!"

In his eyes, Beaulac was just a coward!

Lucien cast a glance at Andris and then said, "I hope you won't kneel down in front of me later."

"We'll see. Are you going to fight with the many items left by your father?" Andris saw the pouch tied to Lucien's belt around his waist.

"I can promise you that you will never want to see them in person," said Lucien using a threatening tone. Lucien had put his rings, amulet and all of the other divine and magic items in the pouch.

When Andris was totally pissed off by Lucien's attitude, a bunch of people walked in from the gate of the basement, and Deniz was the one leading the group.

"Hi, dear Beaulac, we're here to help you," greeted Deniz right in front of the nobles. However, no one was paying attention to him, since the blond-haired and green-eyed young lady was Princess Sophia, the only daughter of Rudolf II.

"Sophia, you are here for the competition as well?" Ulrich, the Gorse duke, slightly frowned.

There was a very sweet and adorable smile on Sophia's face, "That's right, uncle Ulrich. I want to join the competition to see what will happen down there. It's also a test for myself. I'm a level five alchemist. Even without the protection of Ms. Marnina, I am still the most powerful one among all of us."

"But..." All the leaders of the Gorse family were rather hesitant. If anything ever happened to the princess, the family would be in great trouble.

"Let me in please, uncle Ulrich! I can protect myself!" Sophia blinked and secretly pointed at her chest, indicating that she still had another way to guarantee her own security, "Some other royal family members also went down before, and I've been given my father's permission."

The last royal family member who joined the competition was the emperor himself, and at that time, he was still a prince.

Since the emperor had agreed, Ulrich nodded with a gloomy face, "Do be careful."

"Yeah!" Sophia celebrated happily. Then she walked to Lucien with Deniz. Today she was wearing an armored, milk-white dress, and she greeted, "Good to see you again, Mr. Beaulac."

The princess was as beautiful and sweet as a blooming tulip surrounded by many butterflies and bees, and Lucien found it was hard to remove his eyes from her.

"I will try my best to protect you, Your Highness, even at the cost of my life," Lucien answered using the opera tone. However, his heart was filled with questions. Why did Sophia want to join the competition? What was her plan? Was she just helping Beaulac become the next inheritor of the Gorse family?

Lucien hoped that his plan could still be carried out as he expected.

The rest of the nobles looked rather pissed. They had no idea why the princess would show affection to this useless Beaulac. The princess was a level five alchemist with an awakened blood power!

Meanwhile, many young nobles started considering if they should join Beaulac's group. In their eyes, with the support of the princess and Deniz, Beaulac was very likely to win!

All of a sudden, the situation had changed!

Suddenly, a deep voice came from the gate, "Uncle Ulrich, I am in as well."

All of them were very surprised. A tall and blond man walked in. His face was very featured, showing his manhood. Obviously, he was a tough man.

Seeing that the man looked a bit like the princess, Lucien was even more confused. Why was everyone interested in the competition of the Gorse family?

"The prince?!" They could not believe his eyes.

The young man who was wearing the simple silver armor was the first successor in order of Holy Heilz Empire - Beyer, the Prince of Steinburg!

He was a genius close to becoming a radiant knight!

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Beyer looked at Arthen confirmedly and smiled, "This is a great opportunity for me to face a real fight, and as a knight, this is always what I have been pursuing. I am here as a knight, not a prince."

Then, he turned to the duke, "Uncle Ulrich, since you have let Sophia in, I believe that you won't turn me down, right? I have won my father's permission as well."

The old duke sighed, "You young people... Alright..."

His lowered his gaze, and all his emotions were hidden in his blue eyes.

Nuremburk laughed, "Good for you, Beyer. A knight shall face the real fight. If I had not gone to the north and joined the battle against Schachran Empire, probably I would've never had the chance of becoming a radiant knight. The blood and fights taught me how to become a radiant knight."

"You've always been my role model, uncle Nuremburk." Beyer grinned. Then, he turned around and walked to Arthen. Very casually, he said, "My friend, I hope we can fight together."

Arthen suddenly looked very excited. He went down on one knee and said respectfully, "This is my great honor, my prince. I am your knight forever."

All the nobles on Arthen's side became excited as well. Gaining the power of the prince had given them the faith again that they would win!

This was why Arthen was so excited. The presence of the prince had brought him great hope again!

Lucien was a bit concerned. Seeing the look on Beaulac's face, Sophia smiled, "This is getting more interesting. Without my brother, the game would be unfair for them."

Right now, Arthen was only a level-three grand knight.

"Unfair..." Lucien was a bit amused by Sophia's words. He looked over Sophia's nose and observed the look on Claire's and Relph's faces.

Claire was biting her lips unconsciously, and her eyes had lost their focus. Relph's right hand was holding tight in a fist against his mouth. Both of them looked a bit disappointed. Obviously, the prince's presence greatly discouraged them.

At this time, a young man, around seventeen or eighteen, among the rest of the nobles stood out, "Sir, I wish to resign."

Ulrich looked at him seriously.

The young noble said in a very depressed way, "They are too powerful. There is no way that I can win."

"Very smart," said Duda in a triumphant tone.

Ulrich did not comment on it. Sometimes quitting did not suggest one's cowardice, but intelligence.

Following him, the rest of the candidates except for Arthen, Beaulac, Claire, and Relph had all decided to quit.

"Your momentum is overwhelming, Your Highness," said Andris in a very pleasing manner. "You're the most talented knight among the younger generation."

The blessed family owned the blood power called Seraph, but each of the family members had different powers. Some were better at close combat, some specialized in casting, and some were good at both. The blood power of Rudolf II was quite balanced, called the Angel King. Sophia's blood power called the Angel of Wind had turned her into an alchemist specializing in casting, and Beyer's blood power named the Angel of Justice made him very competitive in close combat.

Beyer shook his head and said, "Although I am quite confident, I have to say that I am not the most talented knight in our generation. Princess Natasha in the Duchy of Violet became a radiant knight at the age of twenty-six. This is even very rare in history. She possesses the two top blood powers at the same time, and with that willpower, she is totally capable of becoming a gold knight. I admire her very much, but I know right now I am still not good enough for her. I hope that I can become a radiant knight as soon as possible, so I can go to Aalto to see her one day... I wonder if the legends about her are true..."

Beyer said so very straightforwardly. Obviously, Natasha was a role model and dream lady to him.

"Maybe Natasha will be the future queen of our empire," said Andris.

Lucien rubbed his chin and watched them meaningfully.

"My brother's dream will never come true. The church will never let the Duchy of Violet go back to our empire again. You gotta know that Princess Natasha is already the Countess of Violet," said Sophia in low voice, smiling.

Deniz combed the hair on his forehead with his hand, "It's hard to say. Love can turn people into idiots. If both the empire and the duchy show the same firm attitude, the church cannot make the decision."

"Then it's all up to Beyer now." Sophia giggled.

Lucien thought to himself that Sophia's bother would be rather hopeless in front of Natasha. He would say that Sophia would have a greater chance.

It was close to the time. Ulrich, the Gorse duke declared,

"The competition has started. The first candidate among you four who can enter the secret chamber hanged with the paintings of our family's ancestors is the winner. If no one can reach the chamber, the one who can make it until the end wins. Remember, the underground palace is always changing. No matter how much money you spent buying the maps, they are useless. Also, once you enter the palace, you will be sent to different locations. Don't stay where you are. It's a waste of time."

No rules. Basically, there were no rules in the underground palace. However, in the competition, no one could bring his or her attendant, and their blood power had to be examined in case someone had hired a radiant knight to play his or her role through transformation.

The weird stone gate behind Ulrich slowly turned black, like the open mouth of a monster. Arthen was the first one standing in front of it.

Count Nuremburk took out a Gorse pin and stabbed it in the back of Arthen's hand.

Lucien knew that it was for testing his blood power. He was a bit concerned as he wondered if the transformation mask was capable of hiding him from it.

A drop of blood hung at the pinpoint and was quickly absorbed.

Nuremburk slightly nodded, "You can go in now, Arthen."

Arthen walked to the gate. Before entering the palace, he looked back at Beaulac in a provoking manner and swung his fist. Before Lucien responded, Arthen had disappeared in the darkness.

Then it was Lucien's turn.

Lucien reached out his left hand calmly, trying his best to control his heartbeat and muscle. Lucien felt a slight electric shock when the pin stuck into his skin.

Once the pin left his hand, Lucien suddenly became very alert. If he was identified, he would seize the best chance holding Sophia as his hostage to leave that place.

The drop of blood looked like a mini silver moon, and the moonlight was gentle and soft. It trembled slightly at the pinpoint, and Lucien's heart missed a beat.

A second later, the drop of blood was absorbed.

"You may go in now, Beaulac," said the count, "but where are your weapon and armor?"

Lucien pointed at his pouch and answered respectfully, "They are all here."

Nuremburk nodded and did not ask further. At the same time, Relph and Claire who were standing behind Lucien looked a bit surprised.

They could tell that Beaulac had awakened the blood power called Silver Moon.

Without looking back, Lucien walked into the darkness very calmly.

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It felt that he had gone through a thick and cold layer of mist. Lucien now found himself in a spacious servant room placed with rows of wood beds and several old wardrobes.

Lucien put on Fire Weaver's Bracelet, Sidestep Boots, Transformation Robe, and Ogre Glove. Then, he turned his magic robe into a silver armor. Holding the sword named Frost in his hand, Lucien left the room and stepped into the corridor. Using the information given by Rhine, he started looking for the secret chamber.

Lucien was told that once there was an alchemical life in this underground palace, but somehow it had disappeared. Thus this palace was under the constant change following its own instinct, and the order resembled Thanos' horoscope.

Lucien walked slowly in the underground palace, observing the flow of energy.

Since he had no idea if the duke and the rest of the nobles could see what was going on down there, Lucien was being very cautious. He never extended his spiritual power.

Turning around the corner, Lucien ran right into Andris and Jocelyn in the open room in front of him.

"Haha, you useless waste! Where is your princess? Where are your helpers?" Andris laughed hard, wearing his black armor. "It seems that God has abandoned you!"

Andris held his heavy sword high and rushed directly at Beaulac.

Jocelyn and the helpers felt quite lucky. Running into Beaulac when he was alone was a great opportunity for them. Once he found the princess and Deniz, Beaulac would be big trouble to them.

At the same time, Jocelyn also showed mercy in her eyes. After all, Beaulac had loved her for so long.

Maybe Beaulac was held still by the fear, as he did not move at all. Andris jumped up high and launched a fierce hack at Beaulac.

"Go to hell!" yelled Andris.

Suddenly, a pair of silver hands stopped his heavy sword.

The hands were rather cold, but they were powerful enough to stop Andris' momentum, who was right now hanging in the air like a helpless frog.

Jocelyn and the rest of the nobles were totally shocked, having no idea what to do.

Andris looked into Beaulac's blue eyes, and somehow a great fear seized him.

The light of a sword flashed, and Andris felt a chill. His armor cracked open right in the middle, including the inner shirt. When his armor and clothes fell on the ground in halves, Andris became totally naked.

If the power went in an inch further... Andris dared not to think. Losing all the strength in his legs, he kneeled down on the ground.

"I said... Don't beg for my mercy in front of me." Lucien shook his head.

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Under the light of the everlasting torches in the underground palace, Beaulac's shining armor looked rather cold. In Andris's eyes, Beaulac was the most horrible demon. He had no idea what just happened. He had no idea why his armor all of a sudden became as vulnerable as an eggshell.

Jocelyn and the nobles refused to believe what they just saw as if they were watching an opera of a very vicious theme. They could not figure out how Beaulac could have become so powerful within just a single month.

With the level-four chainmail named Rose and the pair of level-three daggers given by her father, and together with all of her magic and divine items, Jocelyn was clearly aware of the fact that she still would not have been able to stop Andris' heavy sword. However, Beaulac held the edge of the sword like it was just a kid's toy.

Therefore she was certain that Beaulac had at least one extraordinary item that could improve his power to level five, and the sword Beaulac was carrying was at least a level-three weapon. Also, obviously, Beaulac had awakened his blood power, maybe a long ago. Jocelyn felt humiliated and angry knowing that Beaulac had lied to her.

Meanwhile, she also could not help feeling jealous. Beaulac's father, Beckman, was the most loved kid of the previous old duke. Thus, the items that Beaulac had were way better than hers.

Jocelyn came from a very distinguished family, and her father was one of the most glorious nobles of the empire. In her father's hands, there was vast land and great treasure. Through the years, they had collected quite a few middle-rank extraordinary items. However, since her family did not have any casters, the family could not produce any weapons or items on their own. Therefore, Jocelyn did not have many choices when picking her weapons and equipment from the family's treasury.

On the other hand, the Gorse family had produced many blood-power casters, and they had also secretly collected some magic books and alchemy manuals. Only the royal family's treasury could compete with theirs in regard to the collection of low and middle-rank extraordinary items.

However, what Jocelyn did not know was that, in fact, Beaulac's father's extraordinary items had all somehow gone missing after his death, or Beaulac would not have been so frustrated for such a long time.

"He's a demon..."

"Is he a knight...?"

"Run!"

Jocelyn was pulled out from her own thoughts by the noise and shouts. All of their helpers had run away rather awkwardly. No one dared to get one step closer to Lucien, not to mention saving Adris from him.

Watching them hurriedly fleeing away like wild dogs and hens, Jocelyn felt very disgusted.

Feeling relatively confident that Beaulac would not harm her, Jocelyn crossed her daggers in front of her chest and started retreating. As she expected, Beaulac did not chase after her.

After retreating to the other corridor, Jocelyn started to blame herself that she was still thinking of the Gorse family's treasury in that situation. If her enemy had been someone else, she would have been in great trouble now. Obviously, she lacked real fighting experience.

Meanwhile, Jocelyn had to concede that Beaulac's power made him very charming in her eyes again.

Watching them fleeing away, Lucien stood there still. Andris was right now kneeling on the floor, his body shaking out of fear.

"Who is there!" Lucien suddenly lifted his sword and looked at the corner alertly.

The figure in the shadow around the corner started to applaud and a female voice came, "The princess who needs the protection of the knight."

It was Sophia, who was holding a jade-green magic staff in her hand. She smiled, "I've seen your blood power. You're a real knight, Beaulac. Can you protect me, a vulnerable princess? The way you held the heavy sword was very impressive!"

Although she was saying so, her tone was quite calm.

"I've always been the princess' knight," responded Lucien meaningfully.

Nodded with satisfaction, Sophia cast a look at the naked noble on the floor curiously and shyly. Hurriedly, Sophia covered her eyes with her left hand, but Lucien could tell that she was still peeping through the gap of her fingers.

Seeing that the princess was there, Andris felt his face burning like fire. He just wanted to kill himself right there!

"Let's go, Your Highness. We shall not waste our time," said Lucien. When the princess and the prince showed up, Lucien had some weird hunch. Therefore, he believed that Sophia knew some secrets of this place. It was better to stay close to her.

Sophia looked back and walked to Lucien, "No problem. I'll figure out how the palace is changing. And you, my dear knight, you protect me."

After Lucien and Sophia left, Andris finally raised his head again, and his face was totally flushed. He felt very humiliated that Beaulac did not even want to have a fight with him.

"Haha, Andris, what are you doing here, with your naked butt?"

The voice was rather familiar.

Andris suddenly jumped up with his hands covering his lower parts. Turning around, he saw that the several nobles who just fled away had come back.

"Don't let Jocelyn see this, haha!" Another young noble burst out laughing so hard.

"You were always saying that among all the high-level squires, you're the most powerful one. But why you couldn't even handle Beaulac's one single hack? Look at yourself..." The young noble who disliked Andris seized the chance to humiliate him even further.

"Why Beaulac did not hurt you and send you out of the palace? Well, did you...? Hahaha..." said another noble in a dirty tone.

The words were like arrows stabbing right into Andris' heart. Holding his fists tight against the floor, Andris could feel the blood rushing to his brain. Shame, hatred, and the lingering fear were burning his guts. He felt extremely dizzy, and his eyes had gone red.

"Are you alright, Andris?"

It was Jocelyn's voice.

Andris could not help bursting into tears, but crying did not really help.

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Proceeding along the several corridors, Lucien suddenly looked back. They had gone through three gates.

"Beulac, what is it?" asked Sophia, who was studying the layout of the palace.

Lucien slightly shook his head, frowned, "Nothing big. I felt someone was watching us from behind."

"But my warning spell did not go on," said Sophia.

"Maybe I am wrong," responded Lucien. Of course, he would not tell Sophia that he had felt some strange changes in this underground palace. He sensed something familiar, but they also disappeared all of a sudden. And only a senior-rank sorcerer who had a deep understanding of magic circles could notice.

Lucien held the sword in his hand tight, feeling the power changing in the palace.

Sophia did not ask further. Holding her magic staff, she walked beside Lucien and gave him directions from time to time.

Lucien was surprised that the direction given by Sophia was completely correct. When they were proceeding, Sophia was in a pretty good mood and she kept playing jokes.

"Wait!" Lucien lifted his left hand and stopped Sophia.

"What is it?" Sophia bit her lips and became serious.

"I smell... blood," said Lucien, frowning his eyebrows.

Sophia got excited, "It's time to let them see my fireballs!"

"Watch out." Lucien held the sword with both hands, and very carefully, he pushed open the gate in front of them.

The metal gate slowly opened, and the strong smell of blood was overwhelming. Lucien saw a black figure kneeling down on the floor, and there was a man wearing black armor lying in front of the figure. The man's throat was cut open, and blood gushed out from the cut.

Hearing their footsteps, the black figure hurriedly turned around. It was Duda!

Looking down, Lucien saw the big cut in the man's throat more clear. The cut was so deep that the man's vertebra was revealed. Obviously, the man had already died.

Lucien recognized the dead man. He was Relph's helper, one of Relph's noble friends.

"I... I didn't mean it!" Duda's face was as pale as death.

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"Did... Did you kill him?" Sophia asked with her voice trembling. It was her first time seeing someone that she knew die right in front of her. The bloody scene and the disgusting smell were poking at her nerves. In her expectation, as this was just a competition, no one should be killed in this underground palace.

Lucien was already used to this. Pretending that he did not want to see the body, Lucien looked up at the ceiling of the underground palace. He wondered if the teleportation magic circles were still working after the strange change happened to this place. Having no idea whether the change was normal or someone did something to the palace on purpose, Lucien decided to be more cautious.

However, on the other hand, if the magic field covering the palace had changed, probably now the duke and the counts on the outside were not able to observe them anymore.

If that was true, it would be a piece of good news for Lucien. When no one was watching, Lucien could completely reveal his power. Then it would be much easier for him to find the secret chamber to carry out the magic rite.

However, what concerned him was the fact that he still had no idea where the gold knight and Metatron were. Before figuring this out, Lucien still had to be very cautious and stay with Sophia.

Duda kneeled down with his hands on the ground, murmuring in great fear, "I... I didn't mean to kill... kill him. He was... standing there still, doing nothing! He just wouldn't go! I don't know why! This wasn't my fault! Not my fault!"

Duda went hysterical, shouting and yelling.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, that was the term that rose in Lucien's mind. It was Duda's first time killing a person without any mental preparation, a person that actually he knew in person.

"Calm down, Duda. Calm down. This isn't your fault. The magic circles in this palace have gone wrong," Lucien tried to comfort Duda in a quite professional manner. Lucien had been reading some psychology books to cope with the possible mental side effects left by using Transformation Mask

His deep and soft voice also calmed Sophia down. She was quite surprised that Beaulac could remain so calm when facing death and such unknown changes directly.

"He's right. It's not your fault," agreed Sophia, "...It was the magic circles..."

Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, Duda hurriedly nodded, "That's right! That's right! Something went wrong with the magic circles."

Seeing that Duda had calmed down a bit, Lucien took out his pocket watch and said to him, "Can you tell us what just happened?"

Eager to get rid of the horrible feeling of guilt, Duda told the complete story to them.

After entering the underground palace, when Duda was trying to find Arthen and his helpers, he went right into another young noble. The two enthusiastic young men immediately started their fight.

For the first time, the fight was not a performance, not a test. It was real. And there were no mentors watching them. Duda got more and more excited, and the hiding beast in his heart came out. After several rounds of combat, Duda knocked off the young noble's sword. And seizing the great opportunity, Duda used all of his power to hack at his enemy's neck. It was an all-out hack, as Duda knew that before a participant was severely hurt in this underground palace, the person would be sent out to receive immediate medical treatment through the magic circles.

However, the warm blood that burst out from the young man's neck greatly shocked Duda. Duda could never forget the desperate look on that person's face. And when the young noble's body collapsed to the ground, the look remained unchanged.

Based on Duda's account, Lucien confirmed the time. The moment when Lucien sensed the difference in this underground palace was the time when the magic circle failed to work.

"At that time, you told me that someone was watching us," said Sophia in a low voice, in case Duda heard their conversation.

Lucien nodded, "My blood power enables me to sense some upcoming dangers. Maybe because the power is related to astrology."

Sophia did not see any problems in Beaulac's explanation, and she said using the tone of a delicate and charming little girl, "I did not expect this at all... Beaulac, who did this? What's that person's plan?"

Sophia's green eyes and her petal-like lips would easily arouse the tenderness in most men's heart. They would totally forget the fact that Sophia herself was a level-five blood power alchemist and tried their very best to protect her in their arms.

However, in Lucien's mind, his response was rather cold. To him, although Sophia was right beside him when the change happened, he still could not rule out the possibility that it was the princess who did all of this.

"No worries, Your Highness. I'll protect you with my life." Lucien pretended that he had completely fallen in love with Sophia. With a bit hesitation, he reached out his left hand and gently patted on Sophia's shoulder.

Sophia slightly nodded and her arms climbed onto Lucien's left arm. With her body leaning against Lucien's, Sophia said, "I am a caster. Only with the protection of a brave knight can I fully exert my power. If we support each other, we can destroy all the conspiracy. I can help you become the next duke. At that time, we..."

"I will destroy all the conspiracy! For you!" Like all men who were carried away by their passion and love towards a woman, Beaulac promised the princess very confidently, as if all of a sudden, he had become unstoppable.

Meanwhile, Beaulac's right hand which was holding the sword lowered to his waist.

After a short while, Sophia suddenly took a few steps back with her flushed face as if she felt too shy to stay this close to Beaulac. On the other hand, Beaulac also grabbed the sword tight again, but he had taken out the Holm Crown Ring, Electron, and put it on already.

"Only two people can do this: my brother, or Arthen. While my brother is the future emperor, Arthen is the one who is most likely to become the future duke. They have the power to make Sir Metatron, the Glorious Crown, work with them. After all, Sir Metatron is no longer young, and thus he had to consider his family's future," Sophia stopped acting like a little girl and analyzed seriously, "and with no doubt, their targets are you and me. My father loves me, and the empire had queens before. It also happened before that the first successor in order died before ascending to the throne. My brother won't feel safe when I am still alive! No wonder he wants to be part of the competition as well."

"Sir Metatron is also helping them? What shall we do?" Lucien pretended that he was deeply shocked, "They are not afraid of the investigation? His Majesty will be enraged if you die."

The look on Sophia's face was rather gloomy, "They have taken actions, and they must have been prepared for what is coming to them. Maybe even uncle Ulrich is their ally as well! Once we die, they can say anything they want! But there's still hope for us..."

"Hope?" Beaulac was very confused.

Sophia nodded and said in low voice, "Although Sir Metatron is very powerful, like I said, he's old, and his power is receding. If we can find the secret chamber first, through a hidden passage, we can go into the inner structure of the palace. There we can find a powerful scroll which is used to control the powerful magic circles. My father told me this when he was in this competition, and I am sure he only told the secret to me."

When she finished her words, Sophia looked up and said to the young man both solemnly and helplessly, "Beaulac, are you going to fight for me? Are you going to pursue the hope with me?"

"I am forever your knight, Your Highness. I shall never retreat." Beaulac nodded affectionately.

There were tears in the princess's eyes. "Then, we should set off to find the secret chamber right now! We can only rely on each other!"

Sophia was rather satisfied seeing that Beaulac had become totally carried away by her provocative words. Turning around, she asked Duda to find a safe place to hide and wait until the end of the game.

The moment when she turned around, the excited look on Beaulac's face twitched a bit.

Lucien knew that he was right. The princess indeed knew the existence of the inner structure of the palace.

But what did the princess want? Her personality just changed so fast.

And why would she needed Beaulac to help her?

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In the underground palace, Lucien was running fast along the corridor like a shadow, and Sophia, after casting Speed on herself, was following close behind him. However, they could not move at their full speed since they had to stop and figure out the direction from time to time.

"Watch out. The door up ahead is dangerous. There's a magic circle behind it," Sophia said after closely studying the magic patterns around and comparing them to those on the map.

Lucien, who had been aware of the danger behind the door long before the warning, pretended to be lost and said while frowning, "What shall we do, then? Cracking the magic circle would be a waste of time."

Sophia was amused by Lucien's words, and it seemed that her fear had gone completely, "We're not cracking it. We are going around it. This is not a test from the Congress of Magic. Except for me, barely do anyone knows about magic. The rest of the candidates will either go around or wait until the magic circles become invalid."

"So which takes longer? Waiting, or going around?" asked Lucien. He felt that he was like a professor, trying his best to give the clues to the student.

Sophia answered without hesitation, "We go around. Take this way to the room. It is connected to the other corridor."

As she was saying it, she was pointing at the room with the rosewood door. As a caster, her face was lit up with pride.

Like a teacher, Lucien nodded in his mind. Then, he took a few steps forward before Sophia and pushed open the door.

In the underground palace, sensing failed to work. Lucien was also unable to spread out his spiritual power as Sophia was right beside him.

The rosewood door was even heavier than Lucien's expectation as if it was made of the most precious metal, not wood. When the door slowly opened, the stench that came out was overwhelming.

"Be careful!" Sophia hurriedly reminded him.

At the same time, Beaulac made a sudden dodge aside as if he was well-prepared.

Sophia quickly lifted her jade-colored staff and a strong wind was brought to the space.

"Toxic gas?" asked Lucien, although he had known the answer.

Sophia nodded seriously, "Maybe someone just passed here and activated the magic circle. Do be careful."

Lucien nodded and grabbed his blue sword tight. He walked into the room using the knight pace ready for fighting.

In the room, the wardrobe, couch, and the desk had all been severely damaged, and the pieces were scattered all around the floor. Clearly, a fierce combat had just taken place there.

On the ground on the other side, there were two young nobles. Their faces had turned black and their hands showed contractures, like chicken feet. At the corners of their mouths, there were stains of vomit.

"They have been poisoned... to death?" Lucien recognized that they were the two nobles helping Arthen, and one of them had even awakened his blood power.

A short cry came from the back when Sophia saw the two bodies. Her face turned gloomy again, "They are Deniz's cousin, but they died here. No matter how the competition ends at this time, your family is going to face big trouble. The noble families will unite together. It will cost a lot for the Gorse family to pacify their wrath."

"The damned plotters! The bloody traitors in our family!" cursed Lucien, just like what Beaulac would do. Then, he slowly moved to the two bodies and carefully checked the wounds.

To Lucien's surprise, he saw a big dent in the chest of one body. A human being was very unlikely to be able to launch such a horrible attack on the body!

As soon as the thought struck Lucien's mind, he instantly made a sideways roll. The next moment, the rosewood door broke into pieces, and a strong wind blew in.

"Steel golem!" cried Sophia to remind Lucien.

Lucien pressed his elbow against the ground and turned around. He saw a big steel golem about four meters tall. Two red spots, which were the golem's eyes, were shining coldly. The golem lifted its huge hammer high, which swooped down right upon Lucien.

Lucien knew that he could not use magic right now, so he made a swift dodge and then hacked at the side of the huge hammer with the sword, Frost.

Bang!

In the sharp sound of the metal collision, the heavy hammer was hacked sideways. Under the great power, Lucien's hands felt very numb, and right now they were trembling slightly.

The power of the steel golem had greatly exceeded that of a grand knight. Although Lucien was wearing the Ogre glove, it was still hard for him to take the pain.

The steel monster, however, was not much influenced. After swinging the hammer in a semicircle in the air, the weapon was swung right toward Lucien again!

Both of Lucien's hands shone with a layer of silver-colored light. He pulled back the sword and blocked the fierce attack.

Suddenly, wind blew fiercely. It turned into countless blades targeting the golem. However, the many blades only managed to leave some scratches on its steel body.

Lacking experience in a real battlefield, at the very beginning, Sophia had picked the wrong magic!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Without being affected, the golem wielded its heavy hammer continuously, and facing the great power, Lucien was busy with defending, which was the only thing he could do at that moment.

Lucien still remembered what Natasha and John had taught him to fight like a knight. However, the room was not spacious enough for him to move freely. Step by step, Lucien could only retreat to reduce the great pressure on his sword.

The power of the golem was around that of a level-five grand knight. Lucien started to feel tired. However, he did not panic. Although his hands were shaking, he still held the sword very tight.

A blue light started to shine, and the golem and its hammer were gradually covered with a layer of ice and frost. Although the golem was not hurt, it started to act slower and slower.

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Seizing the chance, Lucien took a step forward and avoided the attack of the heavy hammer. With all his strength, Lucien managed to hack the knee of the golem.

Bang! This was Lucien's first time attacking the golem. A layer of ice climbed onto the golem's knee. Although the thin layer broke into the fine pieces as soon as the steel golem moved, it slowed the monster down for one second. Very decisively, Lucien attacked the other knee joint of the golem.

A strong wind blew, which turned into many ropes. The neck, knees, elbows, wrists of the golem were all constrained, and now it was moving even slower.

Lucien's fighting had inspired Sophia. Now she knew what to do to help him!

It was time for Lucien to launch his full attack. Like raindrops in a fierce storm, Lucien's sword fell on the body of the steel golem without stop.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The smile on Lucien's face was confident. He felt that his blood was burning because of the fight!

The golem's red-light eyes shone. Its iron jaw opened, and from it, a greenish-yellow gas came out.

When Lucien was about to dodge, the gas was pushed backward by the strong wind.

Dissipate Smoke. Sophia chose the proper magic again!

With his feet pressing against the ground, Lucien rushed forward again. His swift movement made the heavy hammer miss its target again. With another successful hack, the steel golem moved very slowly like it was already rusty.

However, Lucien's level-four sword could only leave some shallow cuts in the golem. With so many cuts, its knee joints were still able to move. For a few times, Lucien was almost hit by the dangerous, big hammer.

Still, at this time, Lucien felt a strong pulling force from the opposite direction, attracting the sword in his hand. Meanwhile, the golem was even not able to move forward an inch at all!

After around ten seconds, the low sound of metal cracking came from inside of the golem. The two red light spots dimmed. Then, the steel monster collapsed like a falling small hill.

It seemed that Sophia had finally come up with the idea that the spells creating a strong magnetic field worked best for beating the steel monster. So she cast her talent magic spell - the level-five spell, Magnetic Field Shock.

Lucien was glad that right now he was not in his teacher's palace, the Lord of Storm, since most advanced steel golems produced by the Congress of Magic were still able to fight in a strong magnetic field for a few minutes, and during those few minutes, a steel golem was able to kill most middle-rank sorcerers and grand knights.

Gasping hard, Lucien felt very exhausted, yet he also felt very good after the great workout. Ever since he became a sorcerer, he hardly ever fought physically anymore. For a few times, he almost used magic.

From the fight, Lucien realized the importance of exercise again.

As usual, his brain was filled with many strange thoughts.

Seeing that Beaulac was gasping hard, Sophia approached him with her flushed face, "Sorry... I was too nervous. All the knowledge that I learned... did not come to me until later. Are you alright?"

"I'm okay. It's your first time facing a real monster, and you did very well, Your Highness," said Lucien, who felt that his power was recovering very fast when his blood was running fast. At the same time, he was wondering if the power of wind was equal to electromagnetic force in this world. This was because he was told that Princess Sophia had the blood power called the Angel of Wind, but her talent still allowed her to cast the spells that created strong magnetic fields.

According to what Lucien knew, the Congress of Magic had redefined the four elements. Many arcanists had agreed on the statement that the element of wind represented electromagnetic force, and the element of earth was created by gravity. However, there was no agreement on how the element of fire and water were related to the other fundamental forces.

"This was a cruel fight. It is so nice having you as my knight," said Sophia gently.

"My pleasure." Lucien pretended to be very excited.

Sophia nodded, "We take a short break and then move on."

When she was casting the spells to check the corridors ahead, Lucien looked down and slightly shook his head. He believed that Sophia was testing him during the fight.

Unless she was scared out of her mind, or no one had taught Sophia how to stay focused, there was no way that the interval time between two of her spells was this long! Within a minute, Sophia had only used four spells. Even taking into consideration the time she needed for thinking, it was still too slow.

After a while, Lucien and Sophia set off again.

To avoid all the rooms filled with dangerous magic circles, they somehow arrived at another hall directly from the original one they were in.

In this hall, more than ten nobles were already gathering!

Relph and Claire were standing in two separate corners in the hall, and each of them had two to three young nobles on their side. In the opposite corner of the hall, Arthen and his helpers were ready for the fight.

In the middle of the hall, a few bodies were on the ground, with blood and flesh everywhere.

Their faces were written with fear. They were scared by the real death right in front of them.

From their numbers, Lucien guessed that probably most of the nobles had not found the correct way, or they had been scared out of their mind and were now trying to find a safe place to hide, like Duda. For those nobles who were there, they had already proved their competence. If they were still alive when they got out of this place, they would probably become the leaders of their generation.

"You! You changed the magic circles! Beaulac!" Seeing Lucien and Sophia, Arthen cried out loud, with his sword in his right hand and shield in left hand, and his voice was filled with strong hatred, "You want us all to die here!"

"Among us, only the princess is a caster, and she is able to change the magic circles. And she supports you!" shouted another young noble.

"Claire, Relph! We should kill Beaulac together first!" Another noble also yelled.

All of the young nobles were more than furious.

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Lucien was not much influenced by their denouncement, as this was totally within his expectation. Also, he knew that he was much more powerful than all of them.

With his great confidence, Lucien remained rather calm.

However, Sophia was so angry that her face had turned pale, "That's nonsense! When the magic circle first started changing, Beaulac and I were finding the correct path! We had no time for that!"

"There is no witness. Only Your Highness and Beaulac!" Arthen put on a cold sneer. The rest of the nobles including Relph and Claire also fixed them with a distrustful glare.

Seeing the situation, Sophia got even more irritated and her whole body was shaking, "This is a legendary sorcerer's underground palace. There's no way that I could change the magic circles here!"

"Is that right? I remember that His Majesty once took this test as well, thus he knew the layout of this place very well. Now His Majesty has already reached the legendary level, and he's capable enough of interfering with the magic circles here. Maybe...maybe somehow you got to the method by accident, Your Highness, and you believed that you could control the test and trap Sir Metatron. You have picked Beaulac, this useless piece of trash, to be your tool, so you can control the Gorse family! Or why a spoiled princess would want to come down here?!" Arthen's words resonated in the hall.

Hearing what Arthen just said, now the nobles were staring at Sophia as if she was a beautiful but dangerous succubus. The way they looked at Sophia was full of alert and hatred, and they could rush forward together and kill the princess at any time!

To be honest, after hearing Arthen's words, Lucien also became suspicious of Sophia's purpose of coming down there. Although Arthen did not have any evidence, his explanation did make sense. Lucien also had many questions in his mind.

However, since when Arthen became this articulate? According to what Lucien got to know from Beaulac, giving speech was never Arthen's strength. Was Arthen playing the role of a muscular but simple-minded knight all the time?

Also, Sophia never left Lucien's side since they met in the underground palace, and thus she hardly had any chance to interfere with the magic circles. If she had set up all the tricks in advance, how did Sophia know where to find Beaulac in time? Also, there was no need for Sophia to hide her purpose from Beaulac, as there were so many excuses that she could find. If Beaulac had known that the princess was willing to spend this much effort supporting him, he would definitely pledge his allegiance to the princess and protect her safety with his own life. However, right now, once Beaulac heard the accusation from the others, it was very likely that he would feel suspicious.

Sophia stamped her feet out of frustration, and she turned to Lucien with tears in her eyes, "Do you trust me?"

"I trust you with my heart." Lucien looked at Sophia to comfort her, but meanwhile, he was estimating how far the secret chamber was from the hall.

There was a charming smile on Sophia's face, like a blooming tulip. "As long as you trust me, I am not afraid of their accusation at all."

Seeing how close the princess and Beaulac were, many of the young nobles who had a secret crush on the princess were very pissed. Out of their great rage, they wanted to put them on the burning gallows right away.

Arthen knew that all of the young nobles had reached the climax of their irritation, thus he lifted the sword in his right hand and cried out loud, "Relph, Claire, do you want to die here? If you don't, we shall stay together and kill them first!"

The look on Relph's face was complicated, but finally, he answered aloud, "Arthen, I'll follow you!"

He had trusted Arthen's words.

"Good, what about you, Claire?" said Arthen. At the same time, he lifted the black shield covered with a layer of magic symbols, in case Sophia would cast magic at any time.

Maybe Sophia was too shocked by the situation, but there was no sign that she would launch her attack first before the other nobles gathering together, while Lucien had decided to wait and see how things would change. In the meantime, he was still working on figuring out where the secret chamber would be.

Claire was also wearing a tight chain mail like Jocelyn, which showed her curved figure perfectly. But Claire's chain mail was black.

"Me?" Claire squinted her eyes slightly, and she smiled, "I'll fight with Her Highness and Beaulac."

"What?!"

The rest of the nobles could not believe their ears.

Arthen said calmly, "Are you one of them, Claire?"

"Stop your nonsense, Arthen," Claire lifted her blond eyebrow. "I'm doing so because I think you are the one who did all of these! Facing this situation, we should stop fighting against each other and wait for uncle Ulrich to send the rescue in. Only the murderer would want to provoke such a big conflict so he could kill all the people he wished before others arrived! Arthen, confess! What do you want?!"

As she was questioning Arthen, Claire and the nobles who supported her were moving toward Sophia.

Sophia was very surprised, "Thank you, Claire! You deserve the name, 'the Wisdom Gorse!'" At this time, she noticed that Beaulac was looking at the other direction, "What are you looking at, Beaulac?"

Lucien had remembered the layout of this place. He turned around and the corner of his mouth twitched, "I'm... Uh... I'm looking for a little boy named Conan, Edogawa Conan."

The murder, the secret chamber, dead bodies... These were all the key elements in the Japanese cartoon Detective Conan.

"What... Conan? Never heard this weird name before. A little boy? How can he come down here? How do you know him?" Sophia was very confused.

"Sorry, I was just joking. He's... uh... He's just a little boy that I know. Every time I see him, bad things happen. I was... joking, really." Lucien was a bit embarrassed. He had no idea where and why his sense of humor just came out in this situation.

Surprisingly, Sophia understood Lucien's strange response and nodded to him. Then, she turned back to Claire and said sincerely, "I have to say that I did not like you much before, Claire, but now I must apologize because I did not discover your wisdom and beauty earlier. Please forgive me, Claire."

"No worries, Your Highness," Claire smiled. "Under your radiance, I'm not that eye-catching."

When Claire turned around to face Arthen, she blinked at Lucien to remind him that their agreement still worked.

Arthen's face was rather gloomy, "Claire, if we don't unite, Beaulac and the princess will leave us no chance. Compromise and yielding will bring us no safety!"

"That's right!" agreed Relph and the rest of nobles loud.

Lucien had also observed the reaction of the nobles, and with the psychology knowledge he learned, he saw their immediate consensus rather suspicious.

"Fight! Only fight brings safety! Only fight can get us out alive!" Arthen patted on his shield with his sword and shouted. As if Arthen's vigor and posture had affected the nobles following him, the morale was extremely high.

Arthen's body was covered with a layer of dazzling light and he took the lead rushing toward Lucien, Sophia, and Claire. The entire hall was slightly shaking from his heavy steps.

As the knight, Lucien held the sword Frost tight with both of his hands and ran toward Arthen. Claire followed him close.

In Arthen's team, a black tornado was summoned. Several nobles were scooped up high by the wind force and in the next second thrown to the ground fiercely. They directly passed out.

No one could resist the power of a level-five blood power caster without the strength of a grand knight or the same level extraordinary magic or divine items. However, Sophia was clearly restraining herself as she had no plan on killing them, or it would bring her big troubles when she got out.

In the tornado, however, Arthen was as steady as a big rock. In a few seconds, he had come in front of Lucien and launched his attack!

Lucien also wielded his sword from the bottom to the top, and Frost directly hit Arthen's level-five magic sword.

Bang!

To Lucien's great surprise, he felt no strength in Arthen's sword.

With a single hack, Arthen was blown backward as if there was some fierce wind, and as soon as he hit the ground, he kept moving back.

At this time, Lucien heard an exclamation from behind. In the next second, the soft female body ran straight into him. Then with several strong magic waves, four transparent walls had surrounded them!

"Claire... What are you doing!?" Sophia angrily asked Claire, who was standing outside of the walls. It was Sophia who ran into Lucien, and her shield of wind already had many cracks.

Claire smiled coldly, "Your Highness, I have always been on Arthen's side."

"Claire, you...!" Sophia was so pissed that she was speechless.

Lucien noticed that Relph was also in the wall trap when Relph questioned Claire furiously, "You are with the royal family, aren't you? Why are you helping Arthen?"

Slightly frowning, Lucien stared at the transparent wall in front of them. To him, the way the power was flowing in the walls and how the magic symbols were changing were strange.

At this time, except for Arthen, Claire, and the several nobles who had passed out on the ground, the rest of them were all trapped.

They finally realized the truth. A young noble yelled, "You were the one who changed the magic circles. It was you!"

"Hahahaha..." laughed Arthen loud, "I'll have nothing to worry when you all die! There is no way that Claire will want to fight against me because of the dukedom! Soon she will marry the prince!"

"Is that you, my brother?" Sophia finally understood everything, and she turned to look at the other direction with a smile.

"Sophia, you're never my target. I was just wondering how our father managed to make the breakthrough and reach the legendary level. However, it is also not bad if I can take advantage of this and kill you, my sister. I know what you are doing, Sophia." From the other entrance of the hall, prince Beyer walked in calmly.

Claire hurriedly walked to the prince, with an admiring look on her radiant face. Obviously, she had fallen in love.

Arthen said to the prince respectfully, "Your Highness, Sir Metatron only promised to give us five minutes. We have to do this now."

"Turn on the anti-magic circles and let out the toxic gas and golems. Sophia is the only one you have to be careful with. Then, find Deniz and finish him," said Beyer as if he was just dealing with something very unimportant.

Arthen took out a colorful stamper of the size of a fist and walked to Beyer. He was ready to end the nobles' lives.

All of a sudden, a bright light flashed.

The look on Arthen's face froze. In the next second, he was rolling back and forth on the ground. A pool of blood came out from underneath Arthen's body.

All of them in the transparent wall trap saw the prince coldly pulling out his sword from Arthen's chest.

"Why... Why?" Arthen did not die right away because of his power as a grand knight. However, if he did not receive treatment as soon as possible, his death was just a matter of time.

Beyer put on a triumphant smile. "It would be even better if my love was also the Duchess of the Gorse family."

There was also a big smile on Claire's face. She was looking at Beyer as if he was her idol.

Beyer took a step forward. He was about to behead Arthen to end his life.

Suddenly, a thick bolt of lightning dropped from the ceiling, and it hit the sword right before it hacked at Arthen's neck!

"Deniz!" Claire was shocked. She had no idea how long Deniz had been hiding, and why he did not take action earlier.

The look on Beyer's face suddenly changed when green wind ropes bound his wrists and ankles tight.

Smiling while holding her staff, Sophia walked out of the transparent walls without any effort.

Meanwhile, the light of a spell, Curing Wind, gently fell onto Arthen's chest.

Some of Relph's people were now keeping Lucien in control; some had surrounded Claire, and others were helping Deniz.

"You...?!" With all the constraints, as the man who was close to becoming a radiant knight, Beyer was still able to block Deniz's attacks in succession.

Arthen coughed, "Your Highness, all of us are the knights of the princess."

White wings spread out behind Sophia, covered with many green light spots as if the wind elves were flying around her.

...

Duda, hiding in the corner, was gasping hard with his lowered head. Suddenly, he saw a pair of brand new boots walking toward him.