

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 61: Questioning

There was a knock at the door. Othello raised his head and asked, "Who is that?"

"It's me, Victor." Victor's voice sounded softer now.

"Well, come in then, Victor." Othello seemed to be in quite a good mood.

Othello had failed to awaken the Blessing. In order to secure his title and fortune, he worked hard to please the Grand Duke and also Princess Natasha, who had already inherited the title of Violet Countess.

It seemed like Othello had a pretty good conversation with Her Highness.

Victor slowly opened the door and entered the room, along with Lucien.

Othello raised his head with a bit of a smile on his face, which was very rarely to see. His black suit was still clean and tidy, without any stain from the heavy rain.

"Victor!" Sitting behind the red desk, Othello talked to Victor with excitement, "Her Highness is looking forward to your new concertos this year and the new music instrument, the piano! Do work hard, Victor. You don't want to let Her Highness down. Well, and this is..." Othello noticed the finely dressed young man following Victor, but he already forgot that he had actually met Lucien once before.

"I don't, and I won't, Mr. Othello," answered Victor. Then he slightly pushed Lucien forward and introduced him to Othello, "This is my student, Lucien... Lucien Evans. He just wrote his first piece of music and I am hoping that you can have a look at it. After all, it is known to all that you are such an authority in serious-style music."

Victor wanted Othello to take a careful look at Lucien's work without any prejudice, so he did not tell Othello his actual intention directly.

"When did you have this new student? I never heard that before." Othello was still in his pretty good mood.

When Othello took over the paper file and started reading the sheet music, very soon a serious look appeared on his face.

Othello was very impressed by the beginning part. He could surely say that, in the past couple of decades, he never met a music work like this. After reading the first several bars, Othello could already tell that the following movements were going to be very intense and passionate.

He was clearly aware of the fact that he was old. And he devoted pretty much all his life to religious music. Facing the new music trend in Aalto where many young musicians were trying to express their own feelings through music, he felt quite reluctant and disagreeable since he believed that music should be much more sacred than this.

However, his heart was beating so fiercely when he was reading the sheets of music. After reading the first movement, Othello found the palms of his hands covered in a film of sweat as if he just had a fierce fight.

He did not like this kind of music. He wanted to tear these sheets up to prevent this work from influencing more people. In his mind, authentic music should be way more calm, sacred and serious.

At the same time, he couldn't deny the value of this young man's work. He knew that Music Criticism and Symphony News were holding an open attitude towards the new music style, and so was Princess Natasha.

He also did not want to lose his manner in front of the younger generations, as a renowned, experienced noble musician.

When the silence in the office started becoming more and more torturing, Othello finally dropped the sheets and talked to them, "You're very gifted, Lucien. I'm glad to see that we're having a promising young musician. However, Lucien, what I want to remind you is that music is a sacred tool for us to praise the Lord. Music is something powerful and serious and we're supposed to serve the Lord with music. I hope you can put more thoughts and work into the authentic theme of music."

"I see. Thank you, Director Othello." Lucien was not really paying attention to his comment. In his mind, picturing a magic apprentice like him praising the Lord was a pretty funny joke.

Victor was already satisfied with Othello's reaction. At least Othello did not say Lucien's work was not good. So he decided to take his plan a step forward.

"Sir, I really appreciate Lucien's work, and I believe you can also see the value of it. Therefore, I want to present Lucien's work to everyone in my concert."

"No!" Without even thinking, Othello rejected Victor's proposal directly.

"Why? Mr. Othello?" Victor took a tough stance.

Although Othello was a bit surprised with Victor's attitude, soon enough he believed that he understood Victor's intention. Othello thought that Victor wanted to use his student's work to increase his own fame and reputation.

"I showed Princess Natasha the list already. If we just change the list casually, Her Highness would think the association is not serious, not reliable. You want to do harm to the reputation of our association for your own benefit, Victor?"

"I'm afraid it's just the reverse, Mr. Othello." Victor was very motivated, "If we have a better option, but choose not to present the best work to the Grand Duke and Princess Natasha, that will definitely harm the reputation of our association. And, Mr. Othello, if you insist..." Victor paused a bit, "if you insist, I will bring the music sheets to Ms. Silvia and ask her to take them to Princess Natasha. I will not give up."

"Victor!" Feeling challenged, Othello stood up from his armchair and stared at Victor angrily.

"Mr. Othello," Victor tried to be a bit more gentle, "Grand Duke and Princess Natasha hold no prejudice toward this kind of music style... Actually, they prefer this style. Sir, please think about what their reaction would be after hearing Lucien's work. I believe it's beneficial for you as well."

Othello clearly knew that without the support from many nobles, this new music trend would not have gained its momentum so quickly.

He was old, and none of his offspring had awakened the Blessing. Othello knew that he must prepare a good future for them to make sure the glory of his family could last. Besides, Victor rarely looked so serious and firm before. Even if he insisted on not allowing them to replace that part of the list, Othello believed that they would find another way out.

Taking many factors into consideration, finally, Othello made his compromise, "All right. Two days before the concert, I'll be watching the rehearsal to make sure everything's going on well."

"Of course, Mr. Othello." Victor slightly shook his right fist excitedly.

"Well... I have to say that you have a very talented student." Othello glanced at Lucien, "I wonder why I never heard his name before..."

"He just became my music student three months ago," answered Victor honestly.

"Three months? What do you mean?" Othello was confused.

"Yes. He first started learning music three months ago." Victor was kind of expecting Othello's reaction.

"..." With his mouth half open, Othello was shocked.

After a while, he suddenly stood up again and started yelling at Victor, "Are you kidding?! Are you sure this is his work?!"

"Yes, I'm sure, sir," Victor nodded and said, "My other students witnessed his gradual improvement and Lucien had a dozen of the manuscripts from his past work. Joseph has proved his work as well."

Othello sat back down, panting and murmuring weakly, as if he lost all his strength.

Maybe he was mourning for his past glory in his music achievement.

It took him a while to calm down. Othello waved his hand and motioned them to leave.

When Victor and Lucien left the office, Lucien noticed a very familiar person. When he got closer, Lucien recognized that it was Corella, the high-rank knight squire who fought against the red-eyed mice together with him in the sewers.

Corella was still wearing the silver chain mail and his face looked serious. Following Elena, Corella came straight to Lucien.

Before Lucien said anything to him, Corella asked Lucien directly, "Lucien, tell me why you didn't come to the library this morning."

Both Victor and Elena were surprised. They never thought that the church would care about some random guy being absent from work for a single morning.

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Chapter 62: Trouble Solved

Lucien did not panic. Instead, a series of thoughts came to his mind:

“Did the church find out it was me?”

“...No, it can’t be. If the church had found this out, they wouldn’t have waited until now. I was involved in the witch’s trouble before... I must be on their list of suspects, but not on the top.”

Lucien paused a bit and answered, “I stood up late to complete the last part of my music work, then I felt very sick in the morning, so I asked for a leave. Now I’m feeling much better. That’s it.”

“Did you see a doctor? What was wrong with you? Can anyone prove it?” Corella questioned closely.

“No one. I was not sick... I was just really tired,” Lucien answered calmly.

“I can prove for him, sir.” Victor took a step forward, “Every time when I finished composing, I felt the same tiredness.”

“You are...?” Corella glanced at him.

“Mr. Victor is Lucien’s music teacher, a musician.” Elena introduced, feeling very surprised that Lucien could somehow compose a piece of music so quickly.

Corella took out his quill and quickly wrote something down on his notebook, “I’m sorry, Mr. Victor. You’re Lucien’s teacher, so your testimony cannot be fully trusted. I wonder if there is anyone else who can prove for him, or I have to take him back to the church to do a physical examination, just in case.”

Lucien’s face did not show any different, but his mind was being busy with finding possible excuses. For a few seconds, he did not say anything.

“I can also prove for this young man. I’m the director of the association, Baron, Othello.” Hearing the noise, Othello came out of his office, “Lucien just finished his first music work. It was great. He must have devoted all his soul and strength to it.”

Although Othello disliked this young man’s music style, he still admitted Lucien’s talent and effort. Besides, the upcoming concert, and also the association, needed Lucien.

Corella nodded, and wrote a line of words on the notebook again.

“With your words, Mr. Baron, I believe it’s time for me to leave now.”

Actually, Corella himself did not believe that Lucien would be the the one under the wanted-notice either. According to the information from the inquisition, they were looking for a sorcerer at least of the third circle. There was no way that an ordinary young man who was a nobody three months before could turn into an evil and powerful sorcerer so quickly.

The cardinals of the inquisition did not put Lucien’s name on the list in the first round either.

Now there was a Baron speaking for Lucien. Pissing off a noble was the last thing he wanted to do before he became a real knight.

Watching Corella leaving, Lucien breathed a sigh of relief.

“Don’t let this bother you two. I’m gonna be very demanding.” Othello nodded to them and went back in his office.

“Oh my god, Lucien, Mr. Othello said you composed your own musical work? Holy...” Elena looked Lucien up and down as if he suddenly became a stranger.

Lucien just nodded with a smile.

“What is going on here? Why are you here, Victor?” It was Wolf, who was walking downstairs.

“Nothing.” Victor shook his head, “I just talked to Mr. Othello about a change in one of the pieces of symphony on the list.”

Victor knew that Wolf would know this sooner or later anyway, so he did not really care.

Wolf’s face suddenly darkened, “You got a new piece of work? It’s impossible. You were that desperate several hours before...Wait, how could Mr. Othello allow you to change the list? Did he allow you to?”

With a series of questions, Wolf couldn’t wait to figure out what was going on there.

“Since we met Mr. Othello’s expectation.” Victor shrugged his shoulder pleasantly.

“What requirement? Within several hours, you suddenly can meet Mr. Othello’s requirement? It’s ridiculous...!”

“Well...” Victor blinked, “If the fact pisses you off, that’s too bad. By the way, it was not my work, but my student’s work. You said a pauper cannot become a musician. Lucien proved that you’re wrong.”

Pointing at Lucien, who was standing aside, Wolf laughed as if he heard a rather funny joke, “Are you kidding me, Victor? This poor guy just started to learn music three months ago, and now you’re saying that he composed a piece of music work that is qualified to be played in the Psalm Hall? If it’s true, I’ll fulfill my promise... I will never compose again but only do music criticism. But if it’s not, you really have to apologize to me for lying.”

“If I were you, I wouldn’t say this too soon, Wolf.” Victor looked very serious, “You can laugh. But you will see on the concert. And then you will see Lucien’s work in the library.”

Wolf stopped laughing. He took a glance at Lucien and cursed, “You guys are just lunatic. I’ll wait and see how you’re going to shame yourself. We’ll see if you can make my words come true.” Before he left, Wolf glared at Lucien and added fiercely.

Watching Wolf leaving, Victor commented, “Arrogance brings prejudice, and prejudice makes a person an idiot. Lucien, take a rest today and let’s get started tomorrow. I’ll talk to Mr. Hank and tell him I have to borrow you from him for a while.” Victor smiled.

Still feeling tired, Lucien nodded and said his farewell to Mr. Victor.

After grabbing his umbrella, Lucien walked toward the gate together with Elena.

“Why are you looking at me like that, Elena?” Lucien was feeling a bit bothered with Elena’s continuous gaze.

“Honestly, I feel like you’re not the Lucien I knew before... I always knew that you’re talented, but I still can’t believe you can compose such a great music work on your own which is appreciated by both Mr. Victor and Mr. Othello.”

Lucien slightly waved his hands, “I guess I just got inspired somehow. Maybe my inspiration came from my past experiences.”

Elena had no idea of how long it often took a musician to compose a piece of music. She slightly tilted her head and smiled, “Maybe you’re really a genius. I always trusted you, Lucien. Don’t forget me as a friend when you become a really great musician.”

“Of course I won’t.” Lucien also smiled to her and then left the association.

Watching Lucien leave, Elena stood there for a long time and murmured to herself, “Why he’s so talented...?”

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Seeing Lucien’s nice suit, Joel joked with Lucien a bit over dinner for suddenly turning into a gentleman. Then, Lucien went back to his place and fell asleep directly. He did not wake up until nine in the night.

When Lucien woke up, he felt much better. Although he really wanted to start making Revenant Dust right now, Lucien knew he should not act too hastily, or it would be too risky.

Taking another tube of Storm, Lucien felt more energized. Tonight he decided to refine his spiritual power using the power of the star. Hopefully he could become a real magic apprentice tonight.

After becoming a junior apprentice, Lucien would be able to cast one more apprentice spell. The recovery speed of Lucien's spiritual power would be increased by a bit, and the ability to withstand Mind Magic would also be improved.

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Chapter 63: The Psalm Hall

The starry sky was deep and dark. Again, Lucien was using the power of the star to refine his spiritual power in the meditation world.

Among all the stars, Lucien's Host Star was the brightest one, and also the easiest one for him to control.

The light of the star slowly covered Lucien's soul. Lucien could feel his soul was being nurtured by the star and his spiritual power was improving.

With the help of Storm, Lucien was more energetic than ever, so his progress was rapid. Soon, he felt his soul was filled with power. It seemed like the power was outstretching his soul to reach the stars. For the first time, Lucien realized that his soul could be solidified with power.

Finishing the meditation, the illusion of the starry sky also disappeared. Lucien's mind was more sober and clearer than ever, and he knew he had become a junior apprentice. Although the change

in his soul was too tiny to be observed by other people, Lucien's soul could now better withstand Mind Magic, recover from common injuries twice faster than before, and be more alert to the surroundings.

However, the damage to his body from taking Storm and achieving the breakthrough was also obvious. Soon Lucien felt exhausted again. Lucien knew that he had to become a real sorcerer to employ certain spells prolonging his lifespan, or he would probably die in his early sixties.

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In the following several days, with Lucien's help, Victor successfully refined Fate and rewrote it into a piece of symphony work. After countless times of practicing, and also with the support of Rhine, finally their playing impressed Mr. Othello.

Mr. Othello's applause lasted for a while in the music hall, "It's an awesome piece of work. It's gonna make a stir in the audience. Victor, you really have a good student."

"And you, Lucien," Othello turned around, "you're indeed talented. But remember, becoming famous at such young age can be risky."

Othello slightly shook his head, still feeling disappointed that Lucien would not devote himself to religious music, and then he left.

"I think what Othello said was right, Lucien." Victor seemed to be a bit concerned, "You'll be facing lots of pressure, mostly because of me."

"Please do not worry, Mr. Victor." Lucien comforted him, "I'll be driven by pressure and you know I can handle it pretty well."

Lucien had his own plan: If he could really become famous, he would be able to meet more people from higher status. It would be very beneficial for him to get some precious magic materials such as Moonlight Rose Dust and to earn more Thales to support himself.

"I do believe in you," Victor nodded, "and after the concert, your top priority will be practicing piano, which will definitely be your most important skill as a good musician. I'll try my best to help you stay focused."

Then Victor switched the topic, "If you want, Lucien, you can invite some of your families or friends to the concert."

"Really?! But I heard that one ticket for a Psalm Hall Concert is worth at least a Thale... it's like a whole-year saving for a common family." Lucien felt it was too good to be true.

"Yes, it is, but you've made a great contribution to the concert, so you deserve this." Victor smiled, "The leading musician, the conductor and the chief instrumentalist of a Psalm Hall Concert always have some extra tickets for their families and friends. It's pretty nice, isn't it?"

"It's awesome, Mr. Victor! Thanks a lot!" Lucien was very excited, as he still remembered uncle Joel's music dream. "Can I bring five people there?" Lucien was thinking about uncle Joel, auntie Alisa, John, Iven and Elena.

"Well... It seems like you relate pretty well to people, Lucien." Victor grinned, "I got this covered. No worries."

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"Seriously, the Psalm Hall? The one in Aalto?" Alisa could not believe her ears.

"Yes, it is. Will you go there?" Lucien asked the family again with a smile on his face.

"For sure we will, Lucien." Joel was feeling very excited but also confused, "But we are... we are not qualified for going there, are we? I thought only families and friends of the musicians of the concert were invited."

"Come on, dad! Lucien is Mr. Victor's student!" Iven's eyes were gleaming with excitement, "Oh my god... I'm gonna be the envy of all the kids in Aderon!"

"Actually... I helped Mr. Victor with a piece of music work for the concert, so I can invite some of my families and friends." Lucien was a bit shy to admit.

"What?" Joel's fork dropped on the table, "You did?" As a bard, he seriously understood how hard composing was.

Lucien did not explain directly, "I know it's pretty unexpected, uncle Joel, but you will see."

"Now our little Evans got his own secret!" Joel laughed, "All right, we'll wait and see. And before that, we need to rent some decent clothes."

"Sure. We'll tell John as well." Alisa's face was glowing with pride, "I really hope he'll be able to come."

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Saturday. Eight o'clock in the evening. The Psalm Hall.

Decent coaches with assorted family insignias gathered in front of the hall. Some of them were luxury and some of them were simple but tasteful, but all were pulled by the strong and fine horses called Dragon Scale.

Finely dressed ladies and gentlemen came out of the coaches, took over the music list for tonight and started greeting each other.

"It's such a pleasure to see you here, sir. I wish you had a pleasant trip coming back to Aalto from your manor." A middle-aged man slight bowed to the earl with red hair. The other nobles around him were also being very respectful, since the earl was the head of one of the most dominant families in Aalto, the Hayne family, and was also Felicia's uncle.

"Mr. Victor is my niece's music teacher. For sure I should attend the concert." Earl Hayne smiled, "Besides, there are many different issues going on in Aalto recently. It is my duty to come back and serve the Grand Duke."

Earl Hayne was in his fifties, but as a level three grand knight with the Blessing of Fire, no one could really tell his age based on his appearance. And his son, Harrington, was an outstanding young man, who just became a level six radiant knight in his early thirties and consolidated the family status.

Other nobles around were all nodding with compliments.

Taking over the music list and quickly glancing over it, Hayne noticed the name on the list, "Lucien Evans? Since when did Victor have such a student who can already compose?"

"Although I haven't seen Felicia for a while," a noble lady named Yvette wondered, "she never mentioned a student whose name's Lucien several months ago when we were on vacation."

"Well, let's wait and see then." Lord Hayne started walking to the hallway. He unbuckled his sword and handed it to the guard, letting them check his other personal belongings.

Since the Grand Duke would be here tonight as well, the security check must be strict.

At the same time, the church laid a very large magic-blocking circle covering the whole Psalm Hall, in which almost all the supernatural magic spells, except legendary spells, were completely blocked. The blocking circle has been the church's greatest work in more than a hundred years.

After Earl Hayne entered the hallway, two fine, dark purple coaches came, followed by two lines of guards in red uniforms with golden stripes.

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Chapter 64: The Nobles

The shade of purple on the coaches was elegant and gentle. Both coaches were emblazoned with the same coat of arms—a strong armored arm grabbing a silver shield, surrounded by many bright purple violets together with fortress-like patterns.

It was the coat of arms of Orvarit Family, which was called the Family of Violet and also the Shield of Truth.

The two coaches stopped in front of the long red carpet. Nobles who had already entered the hall left their seats and came outside again, following Count Hayne and Count Rafati, to welcome the grand duke, while the musicians were standing in the distance to show their respect.

A tall young lady with bright purple hair got off the coach first in her elegant black evening dress.

Her deep eyes were purple like a dream, her eyebrows were heavier and longer than common ladies, and her nose was high and straight, which matched perfectly with her pink, bloom-like lips. The young lady was gorgeous, and her beauty was unique: her beauty was of vitality, confidence, and heroic spirit. If it was appropriate to compare Ms. Silvia to the lily, who was gentle and elegant, the young lady would be a flourishing violet, lively and passionate.

This young lady was the well-known Violet Countess, Natasha.

And the middle-aged woman that Lucien saw last time was standing by Natasha's side.

As a level five grand knight, Natasha was half-head taller than most men. She quickly walked to the other coach and supported her father, the grand duke, with his hand, to get off.

Orvarit also had purple hair, but much lighter than his daughter's. In his early sixties, the grand duke looked weaker than his peers. When he was younger, Orvarit was not as gifted as Natasha, therefore, he had to rely on the many secret potions provided by the church and the family in order to awaken his Blessing, and then he became a level two knight. His health had been damaged by the potions in the early years, and the loss of his wife and the eldest son in the following years were also devastating to him.

Even with all the sufferings, Orvarit was still very handsome and attractive. His love towards his late wife was well-known and touching. Many years before, Orvarit fell in love with the only princess of the Kingdom of Holm across Storm Strait when he was staying there as an ambassador. They overcame countless difficulties together and finally got married. In the following years, he gave all his love to his wife and never had any affair. The love story was still being sung by many bards until today.

Supported by Natasha, the grand duke got off the coach and walked towards the red carpet. In his eyes, the sacred Psalm Hall never changed in his memory, and then he started thinking about his whole life. After so many years, Natasha was now his only concern. Indeed, he was very proud of his daughter, but also felt worried, since Natasha had an even stronger personality than many men.

In front of the splendid and magnificent hall, the nobles were saluting the grand duke and the princess, showing their great respect. Orvarit was smiling to the nobles in his grave and dignified bearing, while Natasha was slightly nodding to them. Even Lucien could tell from a distance that although the princess was more than used to all of these noble manners, she was not much interested in them. However, when she later found Silvia standing among the nobles, a big and lovely smile appeared on her face.

Lucien saw Natasha was slightly bowing to Silvia with her right hand on her chest, which was a typical male greeting.

"That's weird... Um... If I'm not mistaken, there is definitely something between Princess Natasha and Ms. Silvia..." Lucien did not want to gossip about it, but still felt a bit sorry for the noble gentlemen present. After all, both Silvia and Natasha were both very attractive and charming.

"I suggest we go inside and get seated first, your majesty." Count Hayne grinned after saluting the grand duke respectfully, "Let's leave some free space to the young people."

His son Viscount Harrington was talking to Princess Natasha. Harrington was a nice-looking and enthusiastic young man. The concert for tonight was important, and so was the socializing part.

Orvarit only took a quick glance at the young man without too much hope, "We should wait a bit. I believe Cardinal Sard will be here tonight as well."

Hearing the name, many nobles standing close by stopped talking, looking rather surprised.

Sard, the Saint Cardinal, the presider of the church in the Duchy of Orvarit, member of the Episcopal Conference, was known for almost living in seclusion. It was very unexpected that he was attending the concert tonight, which reminded many of the nobles present of the evil ritual previously conducted in Baron Laurent's house.

At this time, a simple coach with the Saint Truth Badge on it stopped in front of the hall. Everyone there could guess it was Sard's coach.

Being helped by a young knight, an old man in his white robe got off the coach. He looked very kind with his totally white hair, just like a loving grandpa. Walking with firm and steady steps, Sard was still in pretty good health. No one could really tell he was actually already over two-hundred years old.

As the old cardinal walked closer, Lucien suddenly felt a warm air gently breezing in his spirit, like his soul was basking in the holy light.

Lucien was very surprised with how powerful the old man's spiritual power was. When his spiritual power got totally blocked by the magic circle laid by the church, the power of the old man's soul was still this influential. He had actually heard Sard's name before, since he was like a legend in this world. In that moment, Lucien finally saw the legend with his own eyes.

It was said that, among all the cardinals in the Saint Truth Church, only about ten of them were Saint Cardinals. According to Lucien's knowledge, taking those people, including the greatest knight commanders, leaders of the inquisition and the monks into consideration, there could be no more than thirty people in this world who had this kind of power like Sard did.

Standing close to Lucien, Rhine narrowed his eyes and wrinkled his brows in concentration as if something was too burning bright for him.

Lucien noticed Rhine's difference and turned to look at him, and his eyes just met Rhine's in that moment. The corner of Rhine's mouth quirked up, putting a casual smile on his face.

It was not the first time that Lucien noticed Rhine was behaving in a weird way. However, Lucien knew that tonight was not a proper time for solving the many questions about Rhine in his mind.

When Cardinal Sard entered the hallway, following the knight manner, Orvarit kissed Sard's right hand respectfully with his knees slightly bent.

"Only truth lives forever," said the grand duke.

It looked like religious authority was still above imperial power in Aalto.

"It's very nice to see you, Your Majesty. I'm glad to see that you're still doing this great, and I'm glad to see our lovely little Natasha is an outstanding knight now." Sard held Orvarit's arm and smiled lovingly.

The grand duke and the cardinal walked into the concert hall hand in hand, with Natasha holding Sard's arm on the other side slightly behind them. They were followed by the nobles walking in the strict rank rules.

"Well... It's time to get prepared in the backstage." Victor smiled, "Lucien, you may want to wait here for your friends and lead them to their seats later."

Lucien nodded and watched Victor and Rhine leaving. Soon Felicia, Lott and Herodotus went into the hall as well, and they would be sitting in the good seats assigned for their families.

Close to the hallway, only Athy and Lucien were still waiting there. Athy was waiting for Victor's relatives and Lucien was waiting for his friends.

A moment later, a plain and fully-loaded coach came. Iven was the first one getting off the coach, followed by his elder brother, John. Iven looked very adorable in his little suit, while John was the same, tall and handsome, whose blonde hair was shining in the light.

Joel and Alisa got off the coach as well. Lucien felt auntie Alisa's dress was pretty tight for her, but her happy smile made her look much younger than usual. Seeing the whole family, Lucien smiled without knowing.

"I thought you wouldn't come." Lucien playfully hit John on his shoulder. The two buddies had not seen each other for a while.

"Come on...!" John also hit Lucien back cheerily, "Your first music work will be played in the Psalm Hall. As your best friend, how can I miss it! By the way, Lucien, I have a good news too." John hugged Lucien and patted him on the back, "I'm a high-rank knight squire now!"

"Wow! That's awesome, John! Good for you!" Lucien grinned.

At this time, Elena also arrived. In her long, light yellow dress, Elena looked like a lovely angel tonight.

"Good for you too, Lucien." Joel took a glance at Elena and nudged Lucien slightly, "She's adorable."

"No... no... we're just friends." Lucien was a bit shy and embarrassed.

Then Lucien led them to the west stand. It was much smaller than the other stands, and could only seat twenty people.

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The best seats belonged to the distinguished counts and above. After taking his seat, Orvarit slightly leaned forward and asked the cardinal, "Your Eminence, is there any progress in investigating Baron Laurent's case?"

Although the city guards and the intelligence division of the Duchy were also looking into this thing, they could never compete with the great pastors from the inquisition who claimed that they could hear from the God of Truth.

"Well... some." Cardinal Sard was watching the orchestra being prepared on the stage in the front, with a casual smile on his face, "We believe that it has something to do with the duke in the hell. His predecessor was sealed somewhere under the Dark Mountain Range by the ancient magic empire, and he's always been trying to find his predecessor and absorb the power."

"I thought he could have been more careful," Natasha joined their conversation, "and we heard that some sorcerers were involved in it as well."

"That's true." Sard nodded, "God revealed to me that they do have other plans, so we're still gathering more information, especially looking up the ancient documents from Sylvanas Magic Empire. As for the sorcerers, they are just several apprentices with a sorcerer coming from the headquarter of the Congress of Magic. He calls himself 'professor' but he's only a third or fourth circle sorcerer, so we don't have to worry too much about them."

"The headquarter of the Congress of Magic?" the grand duke and the princess asked at the same time with wonder.

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Chapter 65: The Concert (1)

Sard seemed to be a bit slow and his eyes were dull, however, his smile was still very gentle and nice. He did not respond to Orvarit and Natasha's question immediately, but followed his own pace to tell the story.

"Several months ago, some of our night watchers successfully targeted a sorcerer from the congress, which is very rare, since most of them who came to Aalto before never stayed here long, not to mention trying to contact the many hiding sorcerers in Aalto. After all, their shared goal was to find the remains of the ancient magic empire in the Dark Mountain Range."

"Well..." Orvarit rubbed his chin thoughtfully, "maybe they were also trying to have more sorcerers and sorceresses in Aalto to know and join their congress in order to grow and expand. As far as I know, that's something that the congress has been working on for more than two hundred years." As a pious believer, the grand duke definitely knew much more about sorcerers than most other people did.

Several nobles sitting behind were paying close attention to what Sard, the grand duke and the princess were talking about. Their faces looked odd, as if there was something on their mind, but all of them decided to remain silent.

"You're right, Your Highness." Sard adjusted his sitting position a bit and continued, "Unfortunately, the night watchers failed to catch him alive, and the sorcerer destroyed himself."

Then he took a glance at the tall and strong saint knight standing beside him, letting the knight continue with the rest of the explanation.

Only the church knights can be called saint knights.

The knight's face was fully covered by his protection mask, through which his dull voice came, "We think the sorcerer who called himself 'professor' came here for the same reason, and maybe also to investigate what happened to the last sorcerer."

Sitting in and leaning against her seat, Natasha looked pretty relaxed. Now she was looking in another direction with a hint of a smile on her face, "It seems like you know a lot about what the sorcerers are doing in Aalto, don't you?"

She was not being disrespectful, actually, her piousness was acknowledged before by Sard himself, and her teacher was the chief commander of Sword Brothers serving the church. However, except when she was praying in front of the God of Truth, Natasha was always quite casual about almost everything.

"Your Highness, the church has been tracking them for years, and the sorcerers never hid themselves in front of the church perfectly," the knight lowered his head, "so did the so-called 'Professor'. Some clues are showing that he follows the contemporary magic system, and that's why we speculate that Professor is from the congress. It seems like he does not really trust the sorcerers in Aalto. He was being very careful, so although we have two people spying on them, what we know about Professor is still relatively limited. The church decided to be more cautious."

In the hundreds of years in Aalto, a few sorcerers betraying their belief and turning to work for the church was not something new. Knowing that the sorcerer groups in Aalto were too small to cause them much trouble, instead of destroying them all at once, the church decided to leave them in Aalto in order to play a long game with the Congress of Magic.

“Well... at this point, the mysterious Professor is not a big deal yet, as far as I’m concerned. What makes me feel worried is Argent Horn. I wonder what they are planning in Aalto.” Orvarit cupped his chin in his hand.

“As you wish, your majesty, ” the knight slightly bowed, “We will leave the junior night watchers to trace the case of Professor, and the main force of the church keeps investigating the heresy.”

“Still haven’t found Rosan Aaron?” Twirling her long purple hair with her finger breezily, Natasha asked.

“Not yet. We’re trying our best,” answered the saint knight.

The orchestra was ready.

At this time, a young, purple-haired man entered the balcony. His facial features were a bit similar to that of Natasha, but he was even taller than her. His suit was emblazoned with the coat of arms of the Violet family.

The young man nodded to the nobles in the balcony, smiling. Then he walked toward the first row of seats in the front, saluting the grand duke and the cardinal respectfully in the knight manner.

“My dear cousin, you’re late.” Natasha waved to him.

This young man was the nephew of the grand duke, the chief commander of Aalto’s city guard, Count Verdi.

“Sorry.” He sat down relatively close to Natasha, “Just got some news about Argent Horn, but it turned out to be quite useless... Lucien Evans... the composer of Fate? I never heard this name before.”

Count Verdi, at the same time, was also quite famous in the music field.

“Interesting... I don’t know this name either,” said the grand duke. Hearing Verdi’s comment, both Orvarit and Sard picked up the lists.

“The name of the symphony is ‘Fate’. I bet this Lucien is a pretty brave and creative composer,” Sard responded kindly, “I don’t really have a preference between the two music trends.”

Natasha grinned. “I happen to know something about this Lucien. Yesterday, Baron Othello came to me and asked for the permission to replace the third piece of music on the list with a new symphony. And here it is, from this Victor’s new student, Lucien Evans, who just started to learn music three months ago.”

“Three months ago? That’s insane.” Verdi slightly frowned. Pursuing to be perfect, Verdi was strict with himself and knowing the fact that there was someone even more talented than him was definitely not pleasant.

“Well... Unfortunately, it looks like this guy is pretty talented, even more than you are, although you started to learn music at eight and at nine you were already able to compose. But seriously, don’t worry Verdi. He cannot compete with you. I met the guy the other day, and he looked like a woman! I’m quite curious to see what he can do.”

“Well, some people are just geniuses, which is not fair per se, but it is the intention of God.” Sard commented.

And that reminded Natasha of the story of Sard.

Sard was not a genius, ever. Since the first day he entered Aalto Monastery, he was never able to compete with his smart peers. However, in the end, it was Sard who became the Saint Cardinal, although it took him more than a hundred years.

So he often told the followers, “The faith in God has nothing to do with talent.”

“Well, we’ll wait and see.” Orvarit laughed, “What Natasha said makes me feel curious now, too.”

At this time, Victor walked on the stage with a baton in his hand.

Firstly, he bowed in the direction of the grand duke’s balcony in a solemn manner, then he bowed to the other nobles and musicians. Finally, he turned around and lowered his head, staring at the baton in his hand.

The playing started. Orvarit closed his eyes and smiled, “This is the best one among Victor’s previous work. It’s just beautiful.”

Everyone stopped talking and immersed themselves in the music.

Looking into each other's eyes, Lucien, Lott and Felicia smiled together behind the backstage. They could tell Victor was in a very good form. Now they had become real classmates, if not yet friends.

The first symphony lasted for about forty minutes, and it went very well. During the break, some of the audiences expressed their concern that if the first symphony was already the best one among Victor's previous work, the rest of them might not be that good.

But Victor proved that they were wrong. The second piece of symphony was actually even better. It was lively, vivid and full of life, like a cool summer breeze, like an autumn field. At the end of it, Orvarit applauded for a long time with satisfaction.

"Victor never stops making progress. He's awesome," commented the grand duke.

"That's true. It's soothing and beautiful," echoed Verdi, although in his mind, he did not really appreciate this kind of country style symphony.

"Well, it's good, but I think Victor is capable of doing an even better job. I didn't feel his passion in it. There's still space for improvement," said Natasha.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 66: The Concert (2)

“My little niece mentioned before that the composition of the second symphony took Victor around two to three years. After knowing that he would be holding a concert in the Psalm Hall, he spent another three months in my younger brother’s manor for improvement. And it indeed reminded me of the boundless ripe wheat field in my hometown.” Smiling, Earl Hayne introduced the story behind the symphony to the grand duke and the princess, feeling slightly grateful to his niece, Felicia, who he never had fondness for in the past.

Since the eldest son of the previous earl died in a fight against the heretics, a contest started between the second and the youngest son of the Hayne family. At that time, because the second son, who is also the current Earl Hayne, had not awakened his Blessing yet, and Felicia’s father was much better-favored by their father, the present earl was in a great anxiety almost all the time.

Then a favorable turn came to the second son, who awoke his Blessing. Furthermore, his son Harrington grew into a very talented young man who wasn’t even inferior to Princess Natasha and Earl Verdi. The second son successfully inherited the title and all the land the Hayne family had.

“I feel the same way.” Orvarit nodded, “This piece of symphony reminded me of the beautiful country life. Maybe you’re right, Natasha, but the concert is already very impressive. Let’s wait and see the following two pieces of work.”

“The last symphony is from his student, though. I can’t believe a new learner who just started learning music three months ago can compose a symphony, and I don’t have much expectation on the young lad’s so-called talent.” Earl Rafati also joined their conversation, a very handsome man seemingly to be in his early thirties.

“Uncle Hart, I believe you’re the last person who should claim that talent doesn’t mean anything.” Natasha laughed in a very non-noble-lady way, “You awoke the Blessing of Sun when you were ten, and became an 8th circle senior-rank holy magus in your sixties. No one is more promising than you are for finally becoming a legendary holy magus.”

The seemingly young Earl Rafati was actually way elder than he looked like, and he was a very powerful holy magus. Holy magi were people who awoke their Blessing and therefore were granted with magic power. To differentiate the blessed spellcasters from the notorious sorcerers, people called them magi.

There was also a reason for the great power of the Rafati family. While other noble families were relating to each other by intermarriage, the Rafati family insisted on royal incest to make sure the great family power and the purest blood could be inherited by their younger generations. Although many deformed babies were thus born, the family also had many genius members such as the present earl.

Verdi commented seriously, “Uncle Hart’s talent is a gift from God. It’s different.”

“So is musical talent, I heard.” Natasha smiled, “Seriously, I’m quite looking forward to Lucien’s work. No matter if it’s good or bad, it’s gonna be interesting.”

“The fourth piece of symphony should be the most impressive and outstanding one for tonight’s concert. I hope Victor knows what he’s doing.” Rafati slightly shook his head.

“Aside Lucien’s work, I’m also quite excited about the new musical instrument, the piano.” Natasha switched the topic to the following piano concerto.

“I wonder how piano performs compared with harpsichord.” Sitting on the chair, Verdi’s back was straightened in a serious manner.

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Now Victor was more relaxed, knowing that his first two pieces of symphonies were acknowledged by the grand duke. During the break, he was chatting with his students casually, while Rhine appeared to be more silent than usual.

Soon it was time for Victor to go back to the stage. This time Rhine would be his designated conductor to direct the orchestra, and Victor would be the one who played the new musical instrument, the piano.

The sound of the piano was rich and resounding. The first note of the piano concerto instantly caught the whole audience's attention. This was a piece of concerto with religious profundity.

"Impressive," Verdi commented with satisfaction and then closed his eyes to listen carefully.

The high sound quality of piano fitted perfectly well with the solemnity and sacredness of the religious music. Several higher pitches were also handled very well by the piano. The whole Psalm Hall was immersed in the majestic melody.

When the concerto came to its end, Cardinal Sard crossed himself and said, "This is an eulogy for God. The success of this concerto is accomplished by this brand new musical instrument."

"It is awesome. It is the best keyboard instrument ever!" Natasha gasped with admiration, "Compared with piano, harpsichord and clavichord are just like toys for girls!"

"You are a girl as well, Natasha." Orvarit's brows were slightly frowned. The grand duke was about to applause when he heard his daughter's improper comment.

Regarding her father with reverence, Natasha mumbled, “Even so, I’m still the most special girl among them all, no inferior to any man.”

Hearing Natasha’s murmuring, a meaningful smile appeared on Verdi’s face, but he did not say anything.

“I saw you, Verdi!” Natasha straightened her back instantly and stared at him seriously, “You don’t think so, do you? Or you want a fight outside?”

“Well... I don’t want any trouble.” Verdi was still smiling.

“All right, Natasha. Symphony of Fate is coming.” The grand duke was trying to change the topic between the two.

Taking a glance at the stage, Natasha squinted at Verdi, “My dear cousin, I believe Lucien’s work will be better than all of yours.”

“Well, at least I have my music works to be compared. While you, my dear Natasha, you’re not good at composing at all. With regard to the talent of composing, I believe I’m way more gifted than you are.” Verdi instantly fought back.

“That’s really true, isn’t it? Well... well... then how strange it is that none of your brilliant work has ever been played in the Psalm Hall, while a random guy who just started learning music three months ago somehow managed to do it?” Natasha put on a rather surprised look.

“I just don’t want to...” Verdi gnashed his teeth, feeling sort of speechless, “The guy named Lucien... his work can never be better than mine.”

“Aha! I heard what you said!” Natasha laughed, “Let’s see what will happen if his work indeed is better than yours.”

The grand duke also nodded, feeling very expectant like the other nobles, except Wolf. Wolf’s face was almost twisted together. Although the success of Victor’s concert would not do any harm to him, in Wolf’s mind, it was Victor who took away the success he deserved. So Wolf was going to pay very close attention to every single note of the following symphony, finding the tiniest flaws and putting all of them on Music Criticism.

On the small west balcony, Alisa and Joel’s hands were grabbing together tightly. Even John was feeling sort of nervous. All of them were waiting for Symphony of Fate, the last piece of work tonight.

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Standing in front of the orchestra, with the baton in his hand again, Victor’s mind churned. He thought back to the failure of his first concert, the great success of the second concert, the many memorable moments between Winnie and him, Winnie’s affectionate gaze toward the end of her life, as well as the encouragement from Lucien, Rhine and the rest of his students...

“Winnie, can you hear me?” Victor knew he was ready, and he slowly lifted the baton.

The moment when Victor waved his baton, the beginning of the symphony shocked every audience present. The first few bars of the symphony were like the loud knocks at the door that instantly woke everyone up. Orvarit, Natasha and Verdi opened their eyes at the same time with great surprise.

It was fate that was knocking the door, in an irresistible and fierce manner.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 67: The Innovator

The rhythm, the tone and the accents falling on the beats gripped everyone's heart. No one could hide from the trials of life. The theme of the symphony was revealed directly, without any foreshadowing or implication.

The horns took place before a second theme was introduced, symbolizing the fierce struggling between fate and will. As the first and the second theme interweaved with each other, the audience experienced great tension and pressure, as if they were personally on the battlefield, although they were only sitting in their seats.

The reactions of the audience varied. Grabbing the armrests, the nobles such as the grand duke and Wolf who had never experienced the cruelty of war in person almost couldn't stand the fear in their hearts, while Knight Venn became very engulfed by the memories of the deep fear and horror that he suffered back in the days when he was fighting against the evil creatures and the heretics.

Sard remained relatively calm, but his eyes were open. This time his eyes were no longer dull, instead, they were bright and sharp. He was associating the music work with his own stories back in the day.

Facing the tension and the great pressure coming from the symphony, younger nobles, such as Verdi and Natasha, showed their rising fighting will. Clenching his right fist, Verdi tightened every muscle in his body to be ready for fronting the blows of fate, showing the spirit of the Violet family as the Shield of Truth. Natasha's body was leaning forward, and her face looked serious but also excited. She wanted a good fight to beat the darkness and the so-called fate.

Victor devoted his heart and soul to the conducting. Compared with Lucien's original work, now the symphony was much better developed and even more thrilling. The combination of viola, cello and woodwind in the second movement gave the audience a short break from the intensity, and soon the third movement again threw them back to the front, encountering the overwhelming fear of darkness.

Pain, hope, fear, anger and so many other feelings mixed together. When the light finally beat the darkness, when the final movement of great victory was played in the Psalm Hall, many of the audience spontaneously stood up and cheered with thunderous applause.

The grand duke gave a long sigh of relief and raised his hand to wave, as if he was cheering for his brave knights and soldiers returning home in triumph. With great excitement as well as satisfaction, Natasha left her seat and walked close to the handrail, staring at the orchestra as if she was still immersed in her own world of music.

Leaning comfortably against the back of the seat, Silvia and the other musicians spontaneously exchanged a look. They could tell the great surprise and admiration in each other's eyes.

"This young man... He's probably another genius after Gesu and Twal," Silvia murmured to herself.

Joel's family and Elena were cheering and applauding. Although they did not know a lot about music, they felt from the bottom of their hearts that Lucien's work was truly shocking and touching. They had tears in their eyes.

Joel was tingling with excitement, feeling that his dream was accomplished by Lucien. He was more than proud, regarding Lucien's success and honor as his own.

Grabbing his father's shoulder, John's face flushed with gratification, "Dad, Lucien is such a genius, isn't he?!"

"From now on, we can call him 'Mr. Lucien'..." Elena couldn't believe what just happened in the hall. After all, when she first met Lucien several months ago, this young man was carrying bags of garbage.

Wolf's face turned deathly pale, knowing that he could never deny the greatness of this symphony. And now he finally realized why Victor was willing to have such a pauper as his music student—this poor guy was indeed a genius.

Turning his head restlessly in the tumultuous applause, Wolf relied his last bit of hope on the picky nobles and musicians, wishing that at least a couple of them who always preferred religious music would show their dislike toward the theme of the symphony.

The grand duke joined his daughter, walking toward the front of the balcony to applaud warmly. Being led by the grand duke and the princess, the second round of wild applause with the tumultuous ovation burst out, reverberating through the Psalm Hall.

Without any doubt, the concert was a great success!

After saluting the grand duke and the rest of the audience, Victor trotted back and pulled Lucien out from the backstage. Lucien was prepared, so he calmly followed Victor and came to stand in front of all the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please let me introduce you my student, Lucien Evans. It is Lucien Evans who composed this great piece of symphony," said Victor loudly to all of the balconies.

"What a talent!" The applause from the nobles and the musicians became even louder, showing their great recognition toward this young musician.

"Great music. Great young man." Earl Hayne nodded, "Even a person who knows nothing about music can feel the greatness of his work."

The grand duke commented in a loud voice, "Unparalleled! This young man will grow into a great musician!"

Natasha's mind was full of emotional thoughts, "I was almost speechless. I felt something... very unique. I know it's something that I've been always looking for. Lucien, you're the innovator in the history of music!"

Even Verdi couldn't say anything to refute her at this point.

"You got the soul that never yields. God bless you, young man." Slowly, Sard stood up. He looked at Lucien with a loving smile on his face.

Among all the people, Wolf was the only one who remained slouching in his seat. He felt too weak to even talk.

"Thanks God. This is the gift of God." Lucien saluted the balconies in a gentleman manner, playing his role as a believer with great piety. The great success of the concert would bring him lots of benefits, and one of them would be a higher social status which was very helpful for him to hide his identity. The guards from the church and the sheriffs of the city would not dare to casually arrest or investigate a musician who had received the recognition from the grand duke, the cardinal and the princess.

The cardinal nodded and said to the grand duke, "I'm very glad that I attended the concert tonight. All of the music works tonight are great, and Symphony of Fate is especially the most impressive one. Light conquers darkness. The God of Truth empowers us to fight against difficulties. God bless us all."

"God bless us all." Orvarit lowered his head, putting his palm on his chest.

On the stage, Victor's eyes were wet with tears. How he wished that Winnie could see all of this in heaven.

"How do you feel now, my cousin?" Natasha looked at Verdi and asked pleasantly.

"This piece of work belongs to Lucien, not you, Natasha. And unfortunately, his talent can never be yours as well." Verdi did not answer directly.

"Well... actually the unique theme of his work inspired me a lot. Maybe I should have him to be my music consultant to produce my own music work," said Natasha, tilting her head on one side.

"His success comes from both of his talent and his life experience. And the accumulation of inspiration and good ideas takes time. I don't think it will work, Natasha." Verdi shrugged his shoulders disapprovingly.

"Still worth a shot." Lifting her brows, Natasha chuckled.

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When the nobles were leaving the Psalm Hall in order, Victor and Lucien came to the backstage. The orchestra members there were still feeling excited.

"Mr. Victor, Mr. Evans, this is the best concert we've ever attended!"

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 68: The Celebration

Some of the members in the orchestra were also relatively well-known musicians in Aalto. Although when practicing, they already had a pretty high expectation on this concert, especially on

Symphony of Fate, the heated response from the noble audiences and the many famous musicians tonight was still a great surprise for them.

Victor was also very excited. He walked toward Rhine, his most intimate comrade in these days, and gave him a big hug, “Thank you so much, Mr. Rhine. You helped me with improving the harpsichord. You supported me all the time during the countless times of rehearsal. Without you, this concert could never be this perfect.”

Although Rhine remained quite silent all the evening, he was also very gratified by the success of the concert, “Thank you, Victor. It is my honor to work with you, Mr. Victor, and with Lucien as well.” He smiled.

“Mr. Evans!” Thomas, the cellist of the orchestra, hugged Lucien with great enthusiasm, “You’ll become the most well-known musician in Aalto, no... on the whole continent!”

Lucien felt a bit awkward when people, especially the orchestra members, called his surname with respect.

Lucien’s promising future in music was already widely expected by many of the orchestra members when they first started to rehearse the fourth piece of symphony composed by the young music student of Mr. Victor. Now Lucien’s talent was acknowledged by the distinguished nobles in the public. Since the grand duke used the word “unparalleled” to comment on Lucien’s music work, and the princess Natasha directly called Lucien “the innovator of the music history”, Lucien would definitely become the brightest new star in the field of music very soon.

Everyone in the orchestra knew that as long as Lucien could compose another piece of symphony of the same high quality within the following two years, his status in the field of music would be completely fastened. If this new trend of music could be popularized in the future, then Lucien would undoubtedly be a high authority. Thus, the orchestra members showed great respect toward Lucien.

Lucien hugged the members one by one. Although the status and the income of a musician was way higher than the common players in an orchestra, Lucien was clearly aware of the fact that the full cooperation of the players was also one of the key factors in determining the outcome of a concert.

“Lucien,” Rhine also gave Lucien a big hug, “I can imagine that, in the near future, more and more pieces of music work will be composed to express human being’s feelings and emotions, instead of merely praising God. I shall call you Mr. Evans as well, since you are absolutely the pioneer of the new trend.”

Although Lucien was not used to that intimate way of celebrating, he also did not mind it. Lucien also hugged Rhine, “Thank you, Mr. Rhine. Unfortunately, I’m still far away from being a pioneer, after all, even playing piano is still challenging for me. And by the way, your violin playing was awesome, Mr. Rhine, but just lacked some passion.”

In Lucien’s eyes, Rhine was sometimes a bit weird. Taking this chance, Lucien was trying to test Rhine.

“You’re right. Maybe I am too calm most of the time.” Rhine released his arms and explained casually. Although Rhine looked pretty lean, Lucien could feel the strength in his arms and his body from the short hug.

Lucien was also supposed to hug his classmates.

“Great work, Lucien.” When hugging Lucien, Felicia’s face flushed. Lucien’s success would bring her lots of benefits as well. She could already picture the scene of she being surrounded by many noble ladies and madams, asking about her talented classmate.

“I’m proud of having you as my classmate, Lucien.” Lott offered Lucien a big hug and congratulated him, while Herodotus remained silent when he was hugging Lucien. A while later, Herodotus said to Lucien in a low voice, “You’re something.”

Victor saved his warmest and biggest hug for Lucien, “I don’t know how to express to you my thankfulness, Lucien. You’re a gift for me from God. Having you as my student is my great blessing.”

“Being your student is my greatest honor, Mr. Victor,” said Lucien sincerely.

“Oh, there’s one thing...” Victor said to Lucien, “You’ll get half of the money tonight. Don’t say no, Lucien. With the money, you don’t have to live in Aderon anymore. Aderon is not safe.”

As far as Lucien knew, ticket for the concerts held in the Psalm Hall was always in high demand. The ticket revenue tonight was three hundred and sixty-five Thales, which was quite a lot. Three hundred and sixty-five Thales was four times the number of Victor’s annual income, while the annual income of a noble knight was only about three to five hundred Thale.

According to the regulation of the association, forty percent of the ticket income would be contributed to the church, and thirty percent would be used for the maintenance of the association and the Psalm Hall, as well as paying the whole orchestra. For the remaining thirty percent, about a hundred and ten Thales would be Victor’s. In other words, Lucien would earn around thirty to thirty-five Thales.

Thirty to thirty-five Thales equalled several decades of saving for a common person, even a life long effort. With the money, Lucien could move to a decent three-storey house in Purple Lily district, or a relatively old two-storey house with a small garden in Gesu district.

“I can’t say no. Thank you very much, Mr. Victor,” Lucien answered sincerely, as if he could already see the gold coins shining in front of his eyes. With the money, the dust of Moonlight Rose would not be a dream for Lucien anymore. The only problem was that it was not easy to find Moonlight Rose dust.

A decent place in a decent area was also what Lucien needed, not only because he wanted a better living condition, but also because of the need to stay away from Aderon where he got involved with the other sorcerers using the identity “Professor”. With a bigger house, Lucien could also build a bigger and safer magic lab underground.

After the celebration, when Felicia was about to invite everyone present to visit her family’s manor tomorrow, the middle-aged lady who always stood by Princess Natasha’s side came to the backstage.

“Lady Camil.” Felicia, Lott and Herodotus heard her story before. They hurriedly saluted her.

Victor, Lucien and the other people present also followed the manner.

“Mr. Evans,” said Lady Camil seriously, “Princess Natasha wants you to be her personal music consultant. About an hour each time, twice a week, in Ratacia Palace. The pay is very decent, two Thale a month.”

Her words instantly turned Lucien into the envy of the people present, even including Victor. Only Rhine’s eyes dimmed for a moment.

“I... I can’t. I’m sorry.” Lucien turned down the offer subconsciously, “I just started learning music three months ago. I’m afraid I’m not qualified for this position, and the success this time might just be a random explosion of my accumulated inspiration.”

Lucien had another reason that he could not speak out. He was afraid that entering the palace would be too risky and his sorcerer identity might be revealed by the princess, who was a level five grand knight herself, or this lady Camil, a radiant knight.

However, the job was also very alluring. From another perspective, serving Princess Natasha could be his perfect disguise as well.

“The princess doesn’t mind. What Her Royal Highness values is the unique skills you employed in your composition and your understanding toward the new theme of music.” said Camil emotionlessly, “Would you like to accept the job, Mr. Evans?”

The other people in the room were looking at Lucien with expectation. Finally, Lucien nodded his head.

“It would be my pleasure to serve the princess.”

“Thank you, Mr. Evans.” Lady Camil said and then left the backstage.

The pay was truly very good. At least before becoming a 1st circle sorcerer, Lucien wouldn’t have to worry with the expenses of buying most of the materials.

Also, the job offered Lucien a high social status.

“We really envy you, Lucien.” Felicia and Lott congratulated him in a very direct way.

Victor also cast his eyes to Lucien with delight and satisfaction.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 69: Revenant Dust

It was already eleven in the late night when Lucien left the Psalm Hall. Only few lights were still twinkling along the dark and empty street.

Although the daytime in the Month of Harvest was hot, the rain-swept night was very cool and pleasant. Lucien’s mind was refreshed by the cool air. He gradually woke up from the ecstasy and started to plan his next step. If everything went well, Lucien would be leaving Aderon very soon, thus he had to clean the underground lab up as soon as possible in case some random tramps would inadvertently enter the shack when there was no one there. Before that, Lucien decided to collect some Revenant Dust tonight when the lab was still fully equipped, and then he could turn his attention to the search of Moonlight Rose tomorrow.

Moonlight Rose was always in high demand and very expensive, since it was the main ingredient of the magic potion which could help a knight squire awaken Blessing, and thus become a real knight. As most squires couldn’t afford the Moonlight Rose, some knights would occasionally select their best squires and award them with the dust of the rose.

In addition to that, the market of Moonlight Rose was controlled by the church, the Violet family and a few other big families, which was also one of the strategies how the big families consolidated their status in the Duchy of Orvarit.

Lucien was hoping that probably Felicia could help him, since she was a member of the Hayne family. Felicia was qualified enough to buy some Moonlight Roses within her family.

What Lucien did not know was that, actually, Felicia had already bought the roses three times before, hoping that she could awaken her Blessing. However, her hope finally failed, and since then she started to pay her full attention to learning music.

Lucien currently had no idea how to ask Felicia to do him a favor without being suspected, which sort of bothered him. If Felicia was not willing to help, then Lucien would have no other choice but to find the black market in Aalto or join another secret sorcerer meeting again, which was the last thing Lucien wanted to do for now.

Two simple wagons were waiting in front of the Psalm Hall in the corner. Uncle Joel and his family as well as Elena were waiting for Lucien beside the wagons.

Seeing Lucien coming in their direction, Joel waved to him with both of his hands. He came toward Lucien and gave Lucien a big warm hug.

“Tonight’s like a dream.” Joel patted Lucien’s back with great joy, “You invited me to the concert and fulfilled my dream. We... and your dad... we are all so proud of you, Lucien.”

Following Joel, John also hugged Lucien. His arms were shaking a bit, and his voice was trembling, “I knew it! I knew you’re something! But your growth is still way beyond my expectation, after all, I thought at least I would become a knight first, haha. Now I gotta work even harder or I’ll fall behind.”

Lucien was inspired—maybe he could use John as an excuse for buying Moonlight Rose. After all, Lucien could now afford to buy Moonlight Rose for his close friend John, who was a knight squire, which definitely made sense.

And it was part of Lucien's original plan as well. Some of his roses would be a gift for John. Lucien already regarded Joel's family as his own family and John as his most important friend. The support Joel's family offered Lucien meant a lot to him.

Now the only problem was how Lucien could persuade Felicia to do him the favor.

"My career in music has just started. There's still a long way to go." Lucien smiled, "I'm sure soon you will awake your Blessing and become a real knight."

"Well... I'm not sure about that yet, Lucien." John shook his head and released his arms, "The first try to awake the Blessing is the most likely to succeed. I have to be more prepared for that."

"Congratulations, Mr. Evans!" Elena hugged Lucien. Her big eyes were blinking with joy.

"I'm really flattered, Elena." Lucien grinned, "We are friends. Please, don't call me a mister."

.....

After sending Elena and Joel's family home, Lucien went back to his shack and lay in bed.

About one o'clock in the early morning, suddenly Lucien got up. Making sure that it was safe around, Lucien quietly entered his magic lab.

It took Lucien an hour to set up some magic traps just in case. Then Lucien took out a tube of blood from a box. At the same time, the magic notebook was open in his spirit library, ready for taking notes at any time. Lucien was hoping that during the process of collecting the revenant dust, he could also gain a better understanding toward the undead creatures.

As soon as Lucien opened the tube inscribed with runes, a strong smell of sulphur came into his nose. As if it was alive, the dark blood kept bubbling like lava.

Murmuring the awkward-sounding and obscure spell, Lucien connected his spirit with another space dimension. Suddenly, he grabbed the tube and spilled the blood forward.

Weirdly, instead of dropping on the ground, the blood suspended in the air and divided into many small drops.

The drops of blood moved quickly, and a magic circle took shape in front of Lucien. The whole space of the lab was instantly filled with the stinky smell of blood.

Blood fog diffused around the lab. Suddenly, a transparent human figure appeared in the air, of which its face and limbs remained very blurry, but its resentment was so strong that it almost became visible.

Although Lucien still did not understand how different space dimensions were connected by spiritual power, the structure of this apprentice summoning spell itself was not complicated.

A hole, probably its mouth, appeared on the figure's face, and the vicious revenant started screaming and suddenly leaped at Lucien's throat.

Lucien stayed very calm and activated the magic traps around him. The air flows restricted the revenant like ropes and shackled it in the air.

Wraith Shackle, an apprentice level spell.

At the same time, transparent walls appeared in the air and surrounded the revenant inside. The surface of the walls was rippling like water as the sound waves of the scream kept hitting the walls.

Silence Wall, also an apprentice spell.

Although the scream of the revenant was blocked, Lucien still felt a sudden surge of nausea and he heard someone was screaming in his brain.

Quickly Lucien took down the notes in his spirit library.

"The scream of revenant transmits in the form of infrasonic waves. High penetrating power. Causes illusion."

Lucien hoped that he could know the rough vibration frequency of the waves, but with limited lab equipment, Lucien's note couldn't be more detailed and accurate.

Being trapped, the revenant's scream became even crazier, but the scream couldn't bother Lucien anymore. Calmly, Lucien activated the magic circle drawn on the table, from which many golden rays of light immediately scattered.

"Weight, 21.26g. Heavier than expected. Power... remain unknown." The information was stored.

Then Lucien started to cast different spells on the revenant to see the effects.

"Immune to Mage Hand."

"Immune to Acid Splash."

"Immune to Freezing Rays."

"Small damage caused by Homan's Oscillation. Might be because of the intervention of waves, or magnetic interference."

"Minor damaged caused by Marius' Small Flame. Reason unknown."

.....

As the experiment went on, the revenant in the air became weaker and weaker, and even more transparent. As if it was afraid of Lucien, the revenant huddled in the corner of the surrounding magic walls.

“Some instinct remained.” Lucien kept recording.

Then Lucien cast the spell Illumination. In the light, the revenant became irritated again, but had nowhere to escape. Its resentment gradually disappeared in the light, but rather slowly.

“Afraid of strong light.” Another line of words appeared on the notebook.

.....

The experiment finally came to the end. Looking at the very weak revenant huddling in the corner, Lucien shook his head.

The summoned revenant was now badly damaged and soon it disappeared completely. Shiny fine dust slowly fell into the magic circle.

“21.25g. The reason of the weight difference remains unknown. Maybe the consciousness of the revenant also has weight.”

Lucien collected the dust of the revenant in a glass tube, and then slowly tidied up the lab, since it should also be the last time he used it before Lucien moved out.

.....

In the morning, Lucien got up early and headed for the Association for two reasons. Firstly, Lucien had become Princess Natasha’s personal music consultant, so he should quit the librarian job and leave it to someone who really needed it. Secondly, Lucien was too excited to wait another day to get his lovely and shiny Thales.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 70: The Newspapers

When Lucien arrived at the Musicians’ Association, only two guards were standing in front of the five-storey building, since most of the believers following the God of Truth usually spent their Sunday morning in the church.

“Good morning, Mr. Evans.” The two guards smiled and greeted Lucien.

“Morning.” Lucien nodded, feeling a bit surprised. Since the concert finished late last night, it was quite surprising that the guards were already showing respect to him in this following Sunday morning. Lucien wondered if maybe it was Elena who told the guards, because she was the only one among all the concert audience who needed to work on Sunday.

Before Lucien entered the building, he heard they were whispering, “Three months ago, Mr. Evans was still carrying garbage for our association. He asked me to do him a favor looking after his trolley. Now look at him, a musician!”

“I know... The last time I saw him he was still a music student. Never expected he was such a genius!”

.....

Elena and Cathy were tidying up the documents behind the counter when Lucien came into the lobby. Both of them greeted Lucien with respect, “Good morning, Mr. Evans.”

Elena winked at Lucien with a sweet smile on her face, and Cathy seemed to be a bit nervous.

“Good morning, Elena. Morning, Cathy.” Lucien asked with curiosity, “What keeps you girls this busy this morning?”

“I’m glad you asked.” Elena answered in excitement, “Lucien, you know what? Your name is on both the latest Music Criticism and Symphony News.”

“What? I thought the next issue for both of them would be released at the end of the month...” Now Lucien was really surprised.

“That’s because your music work is so amazing!” Elena was very proud of Lucien, “Many musicians were deeply touched by your Symphony of Fate, and they worked overnight on their reviews! The association thus decided to issue both of the newspapers in advance this month. Now we have the first copies!”

“Mr. Evans, do you want one?” asked Cathy with respect and curiosity.

“Well... I think I should.” Lucien smiled and poured out twenty Fells from his moneybag. From hard saving, Lucien’s small moneybag finally bulged a bit.

“What did they say, Lucien?” Elena still couldn’t read very well, “Cathy and I are really curious.”

Picking up the latest Music Criticism, Lucien saw a painting of the Psalm Hall and two lines of black bold words,

“Ladies and gentlemen, hats off to the real genius!

— Othello”

Lucien read Mr. Othello’s comment to Elena and Cathy, and the girls’ eyes were filled with reverence.

Turning the page, the first review article titled Music with Soul—Salute to Symphony of Fate:

“As a gift from God, music encourages us to continuously progress toward a better future. However, in the past three hundred years, the main role that the solemn and sacred religious music was playing was never challenged on the stage of music, since other music themes were always hiding behind the scenes and paled in comparison with it.

.....

“Until we met Symphony of Fate, a great piece of music composed by Lucien Evans and first played on Mr. Victor’s concert held in the Psalm Hall last night, I finally realized what is the most indispensable quality of a masterpiece!

“Music is emotion. Music is feelings. Without emotion and feelings, without soul, music can never be deeply moving to people. And the young musician Lucien Evans knows clearly about this: The four movements of Symphony of Fate are connected by a consistent faith all along—hope and persistence can conquer any difficulty. It is the most exciting, encouraging and touching symphony I have ever appreciated.

.....

“Lucien Evans, without any doubt, is a genius. His music talent shocked Aalto, and I believe he will shock the whole continent in the future.

.....

“As soul is to life, so is emotion to music!”

The review article was pretty long, which was more about expressing feelings instead of professional analyzing. The reason this article ranked the first was that it was written by the grand duke, Orvarit.

“Wow... The grand duke really likes your symphony!” exclaimed Elena in surprise and joy.

“I heard Princess Natasha also contributed,” said Cathy politely, “Mr. Evans, can you please read her article to us? I know the princess’s very good at reviewing music works.”

“Sure,” answered Lucien, feeling a bit nervous to read the princess’s comment.

Natasha’s article ranked second place in Music Criticism following her father’s work, which titled A Future Trend—The Music Revolution Led by Symphony of Fate:

“A great piece of symphony with magnificent theme and touching emotion running through.

“The talented musician, Lucien Evans, creatively used the four stress accents to form the first bar as the beginning of Symphony of Fate. Each of the four movements of the symphony was relatively independent but yet connected to each other, highlighting the shared theme: Light would conquer darkness and courage would overcome difficulty. The flexible and skilled utilization of assorted music instruments enriched the symphony’s emotion world and grabbed every audience’s heart last night.

.....

“Call it heroism. Call it persistence. Call it knight spirit. I was deeply touched by the great work. The short bar which is composed of the four stress accents is still striking my heart, as if it synchronizes with my heart beat.

“This young, unfettered music genius, Mr. Evans, revealed a brand new music world in front of us, where new music skills should be explored, and new music themes should be developed.

“Great innovator! Great pioneer!”

.....

Lucien’s face blushed when he was reading the article. Flipping through this Music Criticism, Lucien found that twenty-nine out of the forty articles here were music reviews about Symphony of Fate. Some of them analyzed its theme and some of them skills. The other several articles were about Victor’s piano concerto and the concert in general.

Urged by Elena and Cathy, Lucien briefly glanced through the latest Symphony News and found the same situation—all of the articles were about either Victor or himself.

“Wait...I know this name.” Elena pointed her finger at a name under the first review article on Symphony News, “Christopher... Gionis.”

Christopher Gionis was the president of the Musicians' Association, and also the most well-known musician in Aalto who composed more than a hundred great music works. Gionis was respected as a "living music legend".

Here was Gionis's comment:

"If you haven't heard Symphony of Fate, you heard no music in your life."

"Wow..." Except exclaiming, Elena and Cathy had no idea how to express their admiration to Lucien.

A while later, Elena said to Lucien, "I'm sure few months later, you'll become one of the most renowned young musicians throughout the continent."

Without saying anything, Lucien smiled and slightly shook his head. Then he left for Mr. Hank's office on the third floor.

"Congratulations, Evans." Hank rose from his seat behind the desk, walked toward Lucien and gave him a hug.

"Thank you, Mr. Hank." Lucien smiled, "I'm here to quit my librarian's job."

“Of course, I expected so.” Hank agreed without hesitation, and then he took out a money bag, “According to Mr. Victor, this is yours.”

The money bag was not big but quite heavy, in which thirty-three gold coins were fascinatingly shining.

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Chapter 71: The White Letter

Weighing the moneybag, although most of the time Lucien was able to stay quite calm, now he was a bit thrilled.

"Well... I can be quite a moneygrubber sometimes." Lucien mocked himself a bit in mind. Lucien was aware that there was supposed to be thirty-four gold coins in the bag, but he did not say anything about it, and of course Hank would not mention anything as well. It was an unspoken rule, Lucien knew that.

After leaving Hank's office, Lucien decided to visit Pierre in the library. After all, they worked together for more than two months. Lucien should at least say goodbye to him as friends.

...

Staring blankly, Pierre was sitting behind the counter, which was blanketed by two outspread newspapers.

"Good morning, Pierre." Lucien greeted.

As if he was suddenly awakened from a dream, Pierre gazed at the person standing in front of him for a moment in puzzlement, then he slowly answered, "Lucien..." As soon as he called the name, his face darkened, "My fault... I shall call you Mr. Evans now."

Pierre's attitude surprised Lucien quite a bit. Lucien thought he knew Pierre's personality relatively well from working together with him in the past two months. In his mind, Pierre was never a silly or an arrogant jerk.

"Pierre... Why...?" Lucien was confused.

"You guys ruined harpsichord! You guys know nothing about harpsichord!" Pierre's dark brown eyes were filled with anger.

Lowering his head, Lucien saw the newspapers on the counter, of which the two articles on the current pages were both about Victor's piano concerto.

Lucien remembered the details of the two articles, since the content was already stored in his spirit library just now when he was flipping through the newspapers.

One of the article praised the improvement that Victor made with traditional harpsichord and applauded for the impressive features of the new music instrument—the piano, while the other criticized the playing skills Victor used during his playing, accusing Victor's new fingering with piano a betrayal of classical fingerings and the great tradition of music.

"You may hold different opinions, and I understand, Pierre." Lucien tried to mediate, "But we don't have to argue over this. Just leave the discussion to the musicians and critics."

"Answer me. Do you think you really understand harpsichord?" Pierre directly ignored Lucien's words and questioned him again.

Lucien came up with the book that Pierre once recommended him to read, which was titled The Art of Harpsichord Performance. Locating it in his spirit library, Lucien noticed the name of the author was Antonio Sandor.

"Your father is... Antonio Sandor, the author of The Art of Harpsichord Performance?" asked Lucien.

Pierre paused a moment. Then he squared his shoulders and answered proudly, "Yes, I am the son of Antonio Sandor, a great harpsichord musician."

"That's why you're so angry?" Lucien stared up at Pierre and asked calmly.

"The great achievement made by my father can never been ruined by you guys!" answered Pierre with excitement.

"What is talking to me now is your prejudice, Pierre, not you." Lucien did not want to argue with him, "Anyway, I just wanted to say goodbye to you. From today on I won't be working in this library anymore."

"I was wrong about you, Lucien," said Pierre with strong dislike, "I thought you honored music a lot, but in fact you're too arrogant to show your respect. You'll definitely regret in the future if you don't stick to traditional fingerings. Watch out, you genius!"

Lucien opened his mouth and tried to say something, but finally gave up. He directly turned around and left the library.

He thought Pierre and he would become friends. Lucien sighed in his mind. After all, a friend was easier lost than found.

...

Since the concert was a great success, everyone was taking a weekend off for the first time in a long while. Lucien did not find Felicia in their practicing room on the fourth floor.

"Maybe Felicia will be at home in the afternoon," wondered Lucien. He still had no idea how to persuade Felicia to help him.

Thinking about this, Lucien went back to the lobby and asked Elena if she knew about any house for rent in Gesu area. Since most of the musicians and players in Aalto lived in Gesu, the Musicians' Association was also responsible for providing house information and helping its musicians to find ideal places to live close to each other.

Among the many choices, Lucien liked the two-storey house located at no. 116 in Gesu the most. The house was owned by a not very famous musician, who was now far away in the Kingdom of Syracuse serving a viscount as his music consultant. The location of the house was a bit remote in the area, but the rent was also cheaper—one Thale per year.

It was almost ten in the morning. Lucien planned to take a look at the house this afternoon, after visiting Felicia. He wanted to move out as soon as possible. Now Lucien had to go back home and clean some of his stuff.

"Take care, Mr. Evans." Elena smiled to Lucien, and Cathy slightly bowed to him respectfully.

...

When Lucien came back to Aderon, he saw many of the neighbors were standing in front of auntie Alisa's place like the last time when John became a knight squire.

Every week, these poor people in Aderon could luckily take a short break on Sunday, since they also went to the church in the morning.

With the improvement of his spiritual power, Lucien's hearing was also now better than that of common people. He captured some of the words from the neighbors' conversation and an ominous feeling came over him.

"Hi, Roy. Why there're so many people gathering here?" asked Lucien.

"Hey, Lucien! It's been a while since the last time I saw you!" With too much labor work, Roy, in his early thirties, looked much older than his age, and he did not know that Lucien had become the princess's music consultant yet, "You know what? Every dog has its day! And Joel's lucky day finally comes! A noble lord invited Joel to be his family musician this morning."

"What? Where is uncle Joel now?" Lucien was surprised.

"Joel left in a hurry, and he took Alisa and his son together as well. I bet the pay must be very good." Roy grinned.

"Lucien, you did not know about it?" asked a middle-aged woman named Lizz with curiosity, "People say you're a famous musician now and it is because of your reputation that Joel has been invited. Is it true, Lucien? Are you famous now?"

"Something's wrong..." Lucien murmured, and he hurriedly asked them, "Who invited Joel?"

Uncle Joel would never leave in such a hurry without even telling him first. Besides, even if there was a noble who admired Lucien's music and thus wanted uncle Joel to be his musician, Lucien should be informed first.

"How dare we ask a lord's name!" Lizz and some other neighbors shook their heads, "We saw the lord dressed very decently. And he had many squires and servants."

It was not right... Lucien's heart was torn with anxiety, but Lucien knew that he must stay calm.

"Auntie Lizz, do you remember what the lord looked like?" Lucien frowned his brows, "Did uncle Joel leave me any message?"

"How dare we look at a lord's face!" answered Roy, "I only remember the lord was a very decent gentleman. His hair was all white. Black suit... and a walking stick. The squires were so strong... all in their early twenties..."

Although Roy tried his best to recall it, the information he provided was not really helpful.

"Joel did leave a message to you," said Lizz, "but nothing really special... He asked me to tell you that do not worry about him, and he will ask someone to send you a message when he reaches there."

"That's it?" asked Lucien, putting up with the great anxiety in his mind.

"That's it." The neighbors knew nothing else.

"Anything wrong, Lucien?" some of the neighbors asked.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien calmed himself a bit.

"Not really," Lucien answered. He decided to look for clues first and then inform John. There must be a purpose that they took uncle Joel's family.

Lucien had a spare key for the door. As soon as he entered the place, Lucien's spiritual power and his soul told him something was indeed not right. Lucien sensed a smell of a stranger in the room, and fortunately, this person did not erase the invisible smell and trail he or she left.

And there was a white letter on the table.

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Chapter 72: Conversation Over the Letter

In order to stay calm, Lucien firstly closed the door. Then he reached his left hand into the pocket and grabbed Ice Revenger. Carefully, he controlled the aura of the ring surrounding his own body, since Lucien speculated that the person leaving the letter should not know that he was a sorcerer, instead of a common young man.

The ice coldness from the ring cooled Lucien down. With great caution, Lucien opened the letter using his right hand.

This piece of paper was of no special material. It looked like the letter was printed instead of written, since every single letter on the paper was almost too neat.

"Dear Mr. Evans,

It is our great honor to have Mr. Joel and his family with us. As long as you are willing to do us a little favor, we will take good care of them here. When we get what we want, Mr. Joel and his family will be back safe and sound, and with a decent amount of money. It is a fair trade."

"Kidnap, I knew it!" Lucien lowered his voice and said to himself, "But what do they want from me?"

Soon after Lucien asked this question, the lines on the paper quickly faded and new black words appeared.

"Mr. Evans, as a music genius, your calmness is also impressive. Please let me repeat what I said just now—it is a fair deal, not a kidnap. Of course, when we talk about being fair, that means if you betray our agreement, you will never be able to see Joel and his family again."

"It is a supernatural power..." Lucien's brain was working very fast. In order to have a bigger chance to save uncle Joel and his family, Lucien couldn't let these people know the fact that he was a sorcerer as well. This was definitely not a trade, and kidnappers' promises were never trustworthy. Therefore, Lucien made an immediate decision: instead of passively following the kidnappers' orders, he should have a careful plan and save uncle Joel and his family himself.

At the same time, buying time for planning was also very important. Taking a deep breath, Lucien talked to the piece of paper in a low voice, "What do you want me to do? How can I know they're still alive?"

Several new lines appeared on the paper again:

"What we are asking is very simple, Mr. Evans. Use your talent and write more great music works to become Princess Natasha's long-term music consultant. And we believe that this is also your goal, Mr. Evans. Aren't we being really considerate? As for Joel and his family, as long as you are willing to work with us, we have no reason to kill them."

Many thoughts quickly passed through Lucien's mind:

"Were they targeting Princess Natasha, or other secrets in Ratacia Palace? I was just invited to be the princess' temporary music consultant last night, and today these people kidnapped uncle Joel and his family, which was almost impossible, unless... unless one of them, or even all of them, were among the audience in the concert last night!"

"If I cannot make sure uncle Joel and his family are safe, I will not work with you. You can kill me," said Lucien decisively.

"Mr. Evans, I just want to clarify one thing. You are one of our plans, but not the only one. Unfortunately, you are not as important as you think."

Lucien sneered, "Then kill them, and kill me."

It looked like Lucien's reaction surprised the kidnappers. After the last message disappeared from the paper, nothing new appeared for quite a while.

Lucien was extremely nervous. He was not sure if his answer would put uncle Joel and his family to death, but he had no other choice. Lucien must make sure they were still alive. Now it was time to be patient.

Finally, several lines emerged on the paper again:

"Every once in a while, we will send you a picture of Joel and his family. Starting from tomorrow. However, since you pissed us off, we decided to send you one of Joel's fingers tomorrow as well, to relieve your concern, Mr. Evans."

"Bastards!" Grinding his teeth with hatred, Lucien said to the kidnappers, "Every time, the picture you send must contain completely date and time information, or I won't be able to know if these are fake pictures that you make with your evil power." Lucien was hoping that he might be able to find some clues from the pictures.

"It won't be a problem. Deal?" replied the kidnappers.

"Not until I see the picture tomorrow. " Lucien was pretending that he knew nothing about magic power, "But when I see uncle Joel and his family, I'll keep my word. I swear."

"Your word means nothing." The lines showed up again, "We can see. And if you dare report to the princess, we will send Joel and his family to hell in a second."

Lucien had no idea how the kidnappers could observe him secretly in the palace. He wanted to know more, since purpose often revealed motive, and motive was the key clue to find the enemies hiding behind this.

"What specifically do you want me to do? It can't be just staying close to the princess," asked Lucien.

The writing became a bit hasty, "We're more than happy to know the schedule of the princess and the grand duke, as well as other interesting things going on in Ratacia Palace. You just need to write what you know down on this piece of paper with a quill."

The kidnappers were very crafty, and their real motives remained blurry.

"I see," answered Lucien slowly.

"If you have any need, you're welcome to ask us for help, Mr. Lucien. Hope we have a nice cooperation." The new lines were more illegible compared with the previous ones.

All the lines disappeared, and the letter returned to a piece of white paper.

Lucien removed his left hand from Ice Revenger and instantly felt the supernatural power disappear. Staring at the closed window with an expressionless face, Lucien slowly folded the piece of paper back and put it into the envelope. His heart was full of anger and hatred, and he already figured out who did this.

They were the heretics of Argent Horn.

With the help of Ice Revenger, when Lucien was opening the envelope, he sensed a tiny amount of supernatural power remained on the paper. When he was communicating with the kidnappers, Lucien was also doing his analysis of the power by comparing it with the different kinds of power he met before. Every time the letters appeared and disappeared, Lucien got one step closer to his conclusion: Firstly, the power was not magic; Secondly, the supernatural power was very similar to the power that Lucien felt from Cardinal Sard and pastor Benjamin. Although Lucien could not tell the specific differences between the magic power he followed and the powers empowered by either God or demons, he was quite sure that what he was facing now was the latter.

If Lucien's observation and speculation were correct, Argent Horn was the most likely, or say, the only possible answer for now.

"It looks like there's a bond between me and these bastards..." Lucien needed to control himself hard from tearing the paper to shreds with anger.

"The piece of white paper should be a magic item of apprentice level. Someone's eavesdropping on me right now and the person needs to stay relatively close to me... probably, within a radius of a hundred meters... Still hard to find, though." Lucien thought to himself, "According to the time it took the kidnapper to reply, the person should be a bit above senior apprentice level."

Lucien was a bit encouraged, carrying the hope that he could save Joel and his family. He did not really trust the church, the princess, and the grand duke, since they would only focus on exterminating the heresy, instead of making sure the hostages were safe first. At the same time, Lucien never even considered for a second obeying the heretics' order. He would never surrender to those untrustworthy bastards.

He knew what he was doing here.

Walking out of the door, Lucien headed for the noble district.

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Chapter 73: Unexpected Information

Footsteps hasty, eyebrows frowning, Lucien was acting like an ordinary person who encountered kidnapping for the first time. Meanwhile, he was also much calmer than most of the ordinary people. He knew where to go and what to do right now.

Lucien tried to stay focused when he was walking on the street, separating his spiritual power from his body and making the power float in the air, as if his soul was overlooking his body. Lucien wanted to test if there was anyone among the crowd who was following him.

However, since Sunday noon was often the busiest time in Aderon, and the kidnapper was currently more powerful than Lucien, he did not find anything special.

The gate between Aderon district and the noble district was open, however, this area was not busy at all. Only a few poor people from Aderon who were doing the most menial work in the nobles' places were going through the gate after going to the church.

Two guards were standing there, lazily leaning against the wall and looking at the poor people walking in hurry with some feeling of superiority. The guards were hopeless for becoming real knights, and since they joined the city guard and got spoiled by the prosperity of Aalto, they soon forgot the many fighting skills that they learned from their previous training.

All of a sudden, the guards noticed a young good-looking man in decent white shirt and black suite coming toward the gate, which was quite unusual. They stopped Lucien instantly and asked,

“Sir, what is your purpose entering the noble district?”

Lucien's heart was being burned by the great anxiety, thus his attitude was not very nice.

"Are you questioning me here? Since when do I have to be questioned first to pass through the gate?"

Rander, one of the guards, immediately regretted as soon as he stopped the young man in front of him. Without knowing a visitor's background, stopping the person randomly may put them in trouble since they never knew whether the person was actually a noble or someone important.

Lucien's tough attitude made him even more nervous. He hurriedly apologized, "Sorry, sir. We're having a hard time searching for the demon followers and tend to overreact sometimes. I'm sorry, sir."

Lucien slightly nodded and was about to pass through the gate when he changed his mind. He turned to the guard and asked in a low voice, "May I ask where does the chief clerk of the town hall, Mr. Urbain Hayne, live? I'm his daughter Felicia Hayne's classmate."

Happening to know where the chief clerk lived, Rander answered, "Mr. Hayne lives at no.158 Noble Street, one of the Hayne family's houses."

"Thanks." Lucien replied shortly and walked through the gate.

In the noble district, where many knights and even grand knights lived, Lucien expected that the kidnapper from Argent Horn would not be able to follow too close. Therefore, by asking the guard, Lucien purposefully let the kidnapper know where he was going. If the kidnapper still could not follow up, that meant he or she was not at all capable of tailing Lucien for a long time, and then Lucien could find a proper chance to get rid of the kidnapper and conduct his own plan.

Staring at Lucien from behind, Rander complained to the other guard, “Although the guy dressed like a gentleman, he even didn’t know where the chief clerk lives. Probably there’s something between this effeminate guy and lady Hayne... who knows...”

.....

It was the second time Lucien came to the noble district. Compared with the stormy night when Baron Laurent died, the noble district looked much more appealing today. Green trees lined up on both sides and flowers flourished. Among the trees stood the big and luxury houses. Many of them were of different architectural styles—some were similar to baroque style, others of religious style, while some were emulating the gloomy and extravagant architectural design of the ancient magic empire. And often there was only one house on each fork of the road.

Lucien appeared to be rather weird on the street since he dressed decent but was walking on foot. A few noble ladies and gentlemen passing by in their coaches threw Lucien a surprised glance, certain that Lucien was by no chance a noble.

All of a sudden, a coach stopped beside Lucien. The window on the coach opened and inside of the coach sat an elegant young lady of full figure and fine presence, with a black crape bonnet veiling half of her face. She laughed and asked, “Is this Mr. Evans? The concert last night was awesome.”

Despite being anxious, Lucien maintained his gentleman manner, “Thank you, my lady. Can I have the honor of knowing your name?”

“I’m Yvette Hill, Felicia’s friend.” Yvette glanced at Lucien with great interest, “Are you looking for Felicia, Mr. Evans?”

Excluding the family of Violet, the Hill family, together with the Hayne and the Rafati family, were the three most influential noble families in the Duchy of Orvarit. Each of the three families had a whole shire as their domain.

Lucien just recognized the coat of arms on the coach consisting of spears and grizzly. He answered with respect, "Yes, my lady."

"Well... then you might have to wait a bit, Mr. Evans." Yvette's smile was very charming, "Since the concert was a great success, Felicia is still praying in Golden Cathedral to thank the blessing of God. And, by the way, just call me Yvette. I'm a fan of your music, Mr. Evans."

"Then miss Yvette, you just call me Lucien." Lucien worked at a smile, "I can just wait for Felicia to come back outside of her house."

"If you don't mind, Lucien, I can give you a lift." Yvette took off her crape bonnet and her beautiful face was completely revealed, "You're two years younger than me. What a genius you are."

Her maid opened the coach door and invited Lucien to come in. It seemed like Yvette did not worry at all that this might damage her reputation as a noble lady.

Lucien did not refuse. As a member of the Hill family, Yvette was also able to get Moonlight Rose. If Felicia rejected Lucien's request, becoming a friend with lady Yvette would be Lucien's second possible chance.

Entering the carriage, a sweet, alluring scent snuck into Lucien's nose.

“Very nice... A genius is indeed different,” said Yvette with satisfaction, “Most of the men that I invited before were just hypocritical. They wanted to come in, but they didn’t dare.”

Leaning forward, her plump and fair chest was half revealed in front of Lucien.

However, Lucien was really not in the mood. Slightly turning his eyes away, Lucien forced a smile, “Stick to your own path, and let the irrelevant people say whatever they want to say. It doesn’t matter.”

“Interesting. I like it.” Yvette’s eyes lit up for a moment, “You’re more interesting than I thought, Lucien.”

The coach went slowly. Inside of the coach, Yvette was casually talking to Lucien about music, and purposefully made tiny physical contact with Lucien. Unfortunately Lucien’s mind was completely occupied by the kidnapping, and he completely ignored this noble lady’s elaborate seducing. Yvette was quite disappointed.

Half an hour later, Yvette’s coach finally stopped in front of a luxurious three-storey house. At the same time, Felicia’s carriage arrived as well.

“Lucien? Why you’re with Yvette?” Felicia looked at her classmate quizzically.

Getting off the coach, Lucien answered, “I was looking for you when I met lady Yvette. She kindly offered me a ride.”

“What did you do, Yvette?” Felicia looked a bit angry.

“What can I do?” Yvette grinned in her coach, “No worries, Felicia. I prefer mysterious sorcerers compared with musicians.”

“What do you mean? Since when you changed your preference?” asked Felicia with surprise.

“Since last night,” replied Yvette full of yearning, “Last night during the concert, I heard Cardinal Sard and the grand duke were talking about a mysterious sorcerer called ‘Professor’. I’m very curious... after all I haven’t tried any sorcerer yet. I wonder... these gloomy guys who always hide their faces in their hoods... what do they look like when they are naked in bed, and how they react when they see a beautiful woman...”

As the youngest daughter of Earl Hill, she was qualified to sit in the same balcony with the grand duke.

“Yvette...” Felicia was speechless. Although Yvette and Felicia were pretty good friends, Felicia never understood Yvette’s openness with men. As a very maverick noble lady in Aalto, Yvette was even much more open than the noble madams and ladies in the palace of Tria.

Lucien was very surprised, not because of Yvette’s openness, but the fact that the church and the grand duke had already found out his pseudonym, “Professor”.

Was anyone caught that night? Or were there moles among the sorcerers... Lucien wondered, with his back being covered by a thin layer of cold sweat. Lucien was just about to buy some magic potions that increased his power from the other sorcerers to save Joel and his family. Luckily, he heard the conversation between the noble ladies. What a valuable piece of information!

“I have to go now. Bye.” Yvette was happy to see the surprised look on both Felicia and Lucien’s faces. Turning around, Yvette’s coach left.

Noticing that Lucien was still staring at the coach in a trance, Felicia sneered at him,

“You want to be part of Yvette’s collection, don’t you?”

And then she paused a bit and asked, “Why you came to me today, Lucien?”

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Chapter 74: Felicia’s Request

Looking around, Lucien made sure there was no one near them. Then Felicia and Lucien walked through the garden in front of the house.

“Can I ask you to do me a favor, Felicia?” Lucien looked serious.

“A favor?” Felicia slightly frowned her beautiful eyebrows, “My father’s just a chief clerk, and my uncle never liked us. I’m not sure if I can help.”

If Lucien asked before the concert, Felicia would directly reject him. However, now that Felicia had seen Lucien's talent, she knew that having a good relationship with Lucien would definitely benefit her a lot. What the noble life taught Felicia in the past years was not only how to enjoy the luxury lifestyle, but also how to weigh the advantages and disadvantages.

Lucien spoke to Felicia with a bit hesitation, "I have a good friend, John. He's currently Lord Venn's high level knight squire. John's family offered me lots of help when I was sick and poor. Since last night the concert was a great success, I believe it's time for me to pay them back. And the best way is to help John become a real knight."

"I think I know what you want now." Felicia guessed, "You want to buy Moonlight Rose from me to help your friend awaken his Blessing?"

"Yes, I believe it's the best I can do." Lucien was sort of relieved that Felicia did not doubt his motive.

"You're a good person, Lucien." Felicia appreciated his character, "It's pleasant to have a friend like you. But Lucien, Moonlight Rose is expensive, and it's never a guarantee for awakening Blessing. Many nobles tried and failed..."

Felicia's heart slightly sank when she was speaking, since she was one of the nobles she just mentioned.

"I did some research about it." Lucien was trying to make his request as reasonable as possible, "John's a promising young man. Lord Venn might soon award John with some of the dust of the rose, but it probably won't be enough. The more dust of Moonlight Rose John has, the better the chance he would have to successfully awaken his Blessing. I want to help John with it."

A beautiful smile appeared on Felicia's face. She slightly nodded, "Well... you're really something, Lucien. How much do you want, then?"

"Fifty grams." Lucien needed to make sure that he would have enough of the ingredients to make the potion named Crying Soul, including the possible failures during the process.

"What? That's too much!" Felicia was very surprised, "Based on my status in the family, I can only buy up to ten grams."

Although Felicia's father and the current Earl Hayne were brothers, they had a poor relationship with each other due to the many years of contending for power. Thanks to the generous legacy left by the previous Earl, Felicia's grandfather, Felicia's family could still maintain a decent noble lifestyle.

"Felicia, can you figure out a way to get more? As much as possible..." Lucien came up with another reason, "I heard people say that the dust of Moonlight Rose can also improve one's coordination. I might need some as well to improve my piano playing skill. I'll never forget your help, Felicia."

Crossing her hands together, many thoughts flashed through Felicia's mind. As friends, she could help Lucien with ten grams of the rose. However, now Lucien was asking way more than that, then Felicia needed to see how she could benefit from it.

Lucien did not urge Felicia, leaving her some time to consider. A while later Felicia said to Lucien seriously, "Ten grams from my father. Yvette and Melissa, ten grams each. Lucien, forty grams is my limit, and I won't do this for free."

Although Felicia did not have any title, and her family status was not very superordinate, as a noble, Felicia's social circle was still of great value.

"Forty grams... Well, let's do forty grams. Thank you so much, Felicia, and what you want me to do?" asked Lucien.

"My request is simple and easy." Felicia smiled, "Firstly, you gotta pay me in advance. Secondly, my birthday party will be held next month, and I want you to be there on my birthday and play several songs in front of the guests. And thirdly, I want you to teach me how to play piano, how to compose, and offer me your help as much as possible in music field, such as introducing my future music work to the princess."

Felicia heard that Princess Natasha appreciated piano very much. Among her three requests, without doubt, the most important one was the last. Every time a new piece of musical instrument was invented, many musicians were thus inspired and became famous with their new music works. Felicia did not want to miss this precious chance.

Since she held little hope in becoming Mr. Victor's honor student, learning from her talented classmate who was now the personal music consultant of the princess was not bad.

"You have my word, Felicia." Lucien agreed, and he said silently in his mind, "...as long as I'm still in Aalto at that time. Even if I were to leave, I'd do something else to compensate for it."

Felicia trusted Lucien's good character. She nodded and said, "Forty Thales. Give me two days."

"Two days is fine. But Felicia..." said Lucien with embarrassment, "I only have thirty Thales for now. The rest of it, ten Thales... Can I pay you back in five months? You know I'm currently working for the princess. The salary should not be a problem."

“Well... all right,” agreed Felicia. “Pay me back as soon as possible. The ten Thales will come from my savings. Don’t let me go broke, Lucien.”

“Thank you so much, Felicia!” Lucien was excited, although his bellying moneybag instantly shriveled.

After all, buying Moonlight Rose was Lucien’s top priority for now. Lucien was very grateful that he had the chance to enter the music circle in Aalto and thus got to know the nobles like Felicia, or he would have no choice but to go to the black market or join another sorcerer group to find the rose, which would be way more risky.

Leaving Felicia’s place, Lucien bought some good-quality bread and beef on his way home.

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By cooking and eating, Lucien calmed himself down. Closing the door and the windows, he took out the envelope from the crate and opened the letter again.

Within his expectations, there were a few lines on the paper, “Why did you go to the noble district and met your classmate? You stayed in the garden with her for more than twenty minutes, and we saw it. Don’t act like an idiot, Mr. Evans.”

Lucien sneered in his mind. It looked like the bastards used other ways to trail Lucien instead of marking him with their fiend power, in case Lucien would be detected by the many divine power circles placed in Ratacia Palace.

Since Lucien also understood about supernatural power, he was quite sure about it.

Lucien answered honestly, “I went to buy Moonlight Rose from Felicia to help John. You kidnapped Joel and his families, and I’m not sure if they can come back safe and sound. John is the only one in the family I can take care of for now.”

A few sentences appeared, “Taking care of John? We know what you want to do. Please stop daydreaming, Mr. Evans. It’s not easy at all to awaken the Blessing, or there would be way more knights in the world. Since your stupidity and recklessness is very impressive, we decided to give you a bonus—a finger from Alisa.”

“God damn it!” Lucien swore in his mind, which was filled with hatred.

At the same time, Lucien took out a quill and started transcribing the sentences on the back of a piece of used paper. The great hatred was burning Lucien’s guts like fire, while his brain was as cool as a piece of ice. The strange mixture of fire and ice shaped Lucien’s character.

Lucien was transcribing the sentences to figure out if the kidnappers could see what he was doing now!

He would not start making Crying Soul until he knew more about these bastards.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 75: The Mosquito

When Lucien was transcribing the sentences, a scarlet line of words suddenly emerged on the white paper, as if blood was leaking out.

“Stop what you’re doing now! Or you’ll receive a body!”

The quill dropped on the ground. Lucien pretended that he was scared, “I was just... just trying to make some notes... in case I might forget some of your requests...”

“We don’t see any necessity to take this ridiculous notes. This is your last chance, Mr. Evans. Keep taking similar actions if you’re looking forward to a dead body. Let me remind you... Thanks to what you did, one more finger for you tomorrow.” replied the kidnappers.

Of course, the fact that uncle Joel and auntie Alisa were hurt was very painful to Lucien, however, he couldn’t let the feeling of guiltiness and pain affect his judgement too much. From the moment Lucien decided not to cooperate with the kidnappers, he knew that there must be a cost. What he could do was minimise the cost as much as possible.

“I’ll behave.” Lucien tore the used paper up.

“The kidnappers can see me. That’s for sure.” Lucien silently thought in his mind, “But how? Are they observing me through the letter, or with something else? I shall figure this out next, but not in a hurry, in case they will find out what I’m trying to do.”

Putting the letter back in the crate, Lucien lay in his bed, pretending he was totally out, while trying to cover the whole shack with his spiritual power to sense if there was any supernatural power around. At this time, using spells to help with the detection might put him in big trouble, since Lucien knew that his current biggest advantage was that the heretics did not know he was actually a sorcerer.

Except for the letter in the crate, nothing supernatural was detected in the shack.

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In the afternoon, Lucien came to Gesu district and found the house at no. 116, that Elena introduced to him.

The location was even better than Lucien thought. Located beside the city wall, the house was far away from the gate, and thus the place was very quiet and isolated. Only a few two-storey small houses were sitting a distance away from no. 116, almost fully shaded by the many tall trees named Rava.

Earlier, Lucien had made an appointment with the agent. Knocking at the gate, he waited in front of the iron fence.

Soon a middle-aged man walked out from no. 116 and opened the gate. His beard was well-trimmed and his brown suit was neatly ironed. The agent looked pretty shrewd.

“You must be Mr. Evans,” The man greeted Lucien, “I’m Brian. It’s very nice to meet you. Everyone in the Association is talking about you.”

Lucien nodded and extended his right hand to shook hands with Brian. Brian took a step forward and held Lucien's right hand with his both hands, to show his respect. Facing such a promising young musician whose talent was already recognized by the grand duke and the princess, Brian, of course, would show his greatest esteem for Lucien.

"Please let me lead you into the house and take a look around, Mr. Evans." Brian slightly bowed.

Under Brian's guidance, Lucien walked throughout the house and found that although the size of the garden and the lawn were not big, inside the house the decoration style was very elegant and unique. Compared with the present luxurious "Tria Palace" trend in decoration, this house looked neat in a very tasteful way.

The only disadvantage of the house was that the tall trees and the city wall shaded most of the sunlight, and thus the place looked a bit gloomy especially with the vines covering the outside of the house.

"It's a very, very quiet place, with no bright sunlight disturbing your music creation work." Brian tried to persuade Lucien to see this as an advantage instead of something not ideal, although poor lighting was the only reason that they were having a hard time renting the house out.

Lucien did not mind the poor lighting at all, since this could provide him with a safer environment to conduct his magic experiments. So he nodded, "Do you have the lease agreement with you?"

Brian was very happy, trying hard to prevent his crafty smile from showing on his face. He took out a pile of papers and handed them to Lucien.

Taking a rough look at the lease agreement, Lucien signed his name on it and took out a Thale from his moneybag. Luckily, as a rather promising musician, Lucien did not have to pay any security deposit.

Brian quickly wrote the receipt and took care of the agreement, and then handed a copy back to Lucien.

“This is a house with a decent size, Mr. Evans. You’ll need at least... a steward, four servants, a cook, a gardener, a coach and a coachman. I can find these people for you from other associations,” offered Brian fawningly.

“I’m pretty busy recently, and I won’t be moving in very soon. You can bring them here next Monday and let me have a look.” Lucien agreed but postponed it for a week, since he did not want anything to disturb him from saving Joel and his family. This week would be the key time for him to save the hostages.

Brian handed the keys to Lucien and left briskly. Lucien was by himself standing in the living room, staring at the stairs to the second floor.

There were four bedrooms, a study, a music practicing room and a decent-sized patio on the second floor. On the ground floor, there was a living room, a dining room, four servant rooms, a storage room, and there was also a basement. The kitchen was isolated, connected with the house by a door on the left. And the sewers were well-built, linked to the whole sewer system of Aalto.

If the kidnapping had not happened, Lucien would feel very excited and proud that he finally moved into such a nice place. However, now the only thing Lucien felt was anger and anxiety.

After a while, Lucien went back to his shack. He brought some clothes with him and took them back to the new house.

He left his clothes in the master bedroom and walked into the practicing room, which was built with a special kind of stone to prevent the sound from disturbing other people, and at the same time, to create a nice reverberation effect.

He closed the door and the curtain. The whole room was very quiet. Except for his own footsteps, Lucien could hear nothing else.

Sitting in the rocking chair, Lucien rocked himself back and forth in the darkness. Spreading his spiritual power within the room, he was carefully sensing the surroundings.

He wondered how the heretics would observe him without the letter.

For quite a while, Lucien found nothing. His awareness gradually reached out to every corner of the room.

At that moment, Lucien finally sensed what he was looking for—a tiny disturbance wave caused by a supernatural power, and he heard something buzzing lightly.

He didn't open his eyes and pretended to be asleep while thinking to himself, "Aalto Tigorid Mosquito? Did they mark the mosquito with their fiend power or was it directly Transfiguration?"

Lucien's purpose was already achieved. Now he was sure that the heretics were using the letter for both communicating and monitoring. However, when Lucien was away from the letter, they needed to use other ways to trail him.

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The letter did not mention anything special in the evening, but only reminded Lucien to bring the letter with him if he was moving out.

Staring at the the shades of the night, Lucien kept repeating the process of making Crying Soul in his mind, to get familiar with it. However, it was not the proper time to make the potion yet. Lucien still had to take care of several things first.

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In the morning of the second day, when Lucien was about to go outside, he noticed that there was a ball of paper beneath the door.

His heart suddenly sank. Lucien knew what was in it.

Slowly opening the paper ball, Lucien saw three fingers—two were long but with heavy callus, and one was stubby. The fractured white bones were slightly reflecting the sunlight.

Lucien closed his eyes to hold back his tears and to hide the anger and hatred. When he opened his eyes again, he also noticed a small black ball wrapped in the paper, with a scarlet line of words beside.

“That’s what you wanted, Mr. Evans.”