

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 701: Lucien's Plan

In the Seething Ocean.

Gonheim's mind had instantly made it take actions. The darkness contracted and an invisible net of dark and ice started forming on the outside to protect itself.

During the process, the Ice and Snow Lady was fighting against the darkness at full attack to prevent it from retreating back into the darkness.

The falling snowflakes had frozen the boiling lava and everything they had touched. The Ice and Snow Lady had used the power from its demon core, as this was a perfect chance for her to kill her biggest enemy and ascend to the throne of prince of demons! Now she had totally been controlled by the desire of devouring and killing!

Such great effort from the Ice and Snow Lady prevented Gonheim's power from contracting further, while the voice of casting the top legendary spells was already sounding in the air above the Seething Ocean.

Gonheim was furious, but it still managed to make the correct choice. The real Gonheim in Frozen Fortress suddenly looked half-transparent as most of its power had been infused into its projection which was facing the great danger in the Seething Ocean. Gonheim did so because both the

legendary sorcerers and Natasha were able to kill his real self in the fortress by tracing the projection back!

In the sky, the right hand with dark nails suddenly turned totally black. The black was like from the deepest, horrifying night. The super low temperature it brought to the battlefield even had instantly frozen Ice and Snow Lady in the air and turned her into a crystal statue!

Gonheim could have severely hurt the Ice and Snow Lady at this time, but it had to defend itself! Gonheim had to make its choice!

The entire freezing world started cracking because of the spell, and meanwhile, the universe could keep growing back.

Luxury Cracking managed to penetrate the dark and ice net by several layers, but not all of them. Gonheim remained safe under the net, together with its many legendary extraordinary items!

It was one of the rare occasions that Luxury Cracking failed to sweep over the entire battlefield. In the abyss, Gonheim had very strong resistance to magic and it could even be partially immune to Luxury Cracking!

The roaring storm drew the black right hand in and then bolts of lightning lit up within. Stars rose up into the air and they had turned the sky above the Seething Ocean into a magnificent starry sky!

The dazzling stars then shot at the right hand of Demogorgon of Darkness with great momentum, and they hit the black right hand almost at the same time!

Boom!

The storm exploded. Flame and sparks were everywhere. It looked like the black huge hand was “bleeding”, but it wasn’t blood coming out. Instead, it was the intimidating black drops of liquid which were of extremely low temperature. Anything that the black drops touched could be turned into solid ice.

Under the joint attack launched by the three top legendaries, and with the distraction by the other two demon lords, the layers of defense of Demogorgon of Darkness had finally been broken. Gonheim was injured!

If it had not managed to pull back most of the power from its true self, the demogorgon would have been much more severely injured, or even have fallen!

In the pale sky above Frozen Fortress, the Lord of Spectres wielded its Sickle of Death. The power in the sickle could wither everything in space. And with this endless power of death, the sickle hacked all the way into the fortress!

It did not take an illusionary form, so now Apsis, which was a few hundred meters tall, was even bigger than the fortress! Frozen Fortress appeared like a small miniature in comparison to the huge Sickle of Death which was even bigger than Apsis!

This one single hack filled with desperation, agony, struggling and cursing had directly gone through the outside defense of the fortress. Because Gonheim had just taken the power away, this one single layer of defense was now all the fortress was left!

The huge left hand with dark nails had to reach out from the fortress to block the blade!

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

When the sickle cut the left hand, the bitter and furious crying burst out from within the fortress. There was now a deep cut in the palm, and the dark blue blood gushed out. Wherever the blue blood was, everything was covered by a layer of ice.

Losing most of its power, although Frozen Fortress was its home, Demogorgon of Darkness was still extremely weak. It was already a very bitter fight for it to keep the Lord of Death out.

Apsis had no facial expression. However, a cluster of white flames appeared in each of its eye sockets. Its demon nature had been triggered, and thus the following rounds of attack were getting more and more violent.

Lucien's left eye was as pure and red as a ruby. A ray shot out from his left eye and hit Gonheim's right hand which just reached out from the darkness at unrivalled speed.

The darkness could not stop or freeze the ray. The red ray went through the darkness directly through the hand!

The crisp penetrating sound was very clear in the space. In Gonheim's right hand, there was a deep hole. The heat of the ray had burned the skin and flesh black!

When Gonheim's defense had been completely removed, Lucien's Vengeful Gaze plus Hand of Uncertainties worked very well!

This wasn't the end. The paralysis in the right hand did not slow it down from blocking Natasha's hacking. The tiny fine electric currents together with the extremely cold ice prevented the blade of Sword of Truth from cutting deeper!

Then another round of attacks had been launched by the Ice and Snow Lady and the Lord of Spectres on both sides.

In this situation, even Gonheim started feeling a bit disadvantaged.

Gonheim knew that it should not let the situation get any worse. Even at some cost, it had to return to Frozen Fortress. As the most cunning demon ever, Gonheim had made its decision. The joint effort of Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway, Natasha Violet, Lucien Evans, and Ice and Snow Lady could rival a demigod in its away battlefield!

However, at this time, to its great shock, Gonheim saw the starry sky disappearing, the lightning storm dying, and the gorgeous figure fading away.

Were those all fake?

No... That was the power from top legendary...

Were those summoned demiplanes? But why did the summoning take such a short time?

There were so many thoughts flashing through Gonheim's mind. But it knew one thing for certain – It had been fooled by Lucien Evans!

This one-second distraction had a cost. Apsis had cut in the left palm further and the right hand had been trapped by Ice and Snow Lady.

Gonheim saw Lucien and Natasha smiling at itself, as they gradually looked more and more transparent. Lucien took off his top hat and put it on his chest to show his appreciation, while Natasha had a big smile on her face and saluted in the manner of knight.

The two figures then disappeared. When they appeared again, they had directly entered Chaotic Cosmos!

“Damn it!” Gonheim's was outraged by Lucien's slyness, but was prevented from chasing them by Ice and Snow Lady and the Lord of Death. It would not be able to get rid of them within thirty seconds, but thirty seconds were already enough for the two legends to find the core of one of the demiplanes!

Also, its entire plan would be in danger when Lucien was free in Chaotic Cosmos!

The presence of Demogorgon of Darkness was the reason why Lucien had prepared so long before entering Chaotic Cosmos.

Although the presence of Chaotic Cosmos was a big secret to sorcerers and saint cardinals, a few demon lords in the abyss knew it, not to mention the second leader of the abyss, the prince of demons.

The previous prince of demons was too obsessed with slaughtering to pay much attention to some legendary material like Time Plate, therefore, Lucien believed that the plate would always be there when it was under the control of the previous prince. However, the new demon prince was Gonheim, “Demogorgon of Darkness”, the most demonized demon ever. Even if it did not need the plate, Lucien believed that it would take the plate away for trading and exchange of interests. Gonheim would not leave such a good thing idle.

Therefore, after making sure that the plate was still in Chaotic Cosmos using astrology, Lucien assumed that Demogorgon of Darkness had come up with such a plan. Then Lucien contacted his “allies” and prepared the summoning rites for legendary demiplanes, which was the research result from his student, Heidi.

While most sorcerers could only use a small part of the summoned demiplane’s power, since Lucien had told Douglas, Fernando, and Hathaway his plan, all of them had agreed to lend him the top legendary power through the summoning rites.

Of course, the summoned demiplanes could only afford launching one single round of attacks. After that, they would all disappear. But that was all Lucien asked for – to hold Gonheim back so that he and Natasha could have enough time to get Time Plate and then leave.

Lucien did not mind using the borrowed power to kill Gonheim, however, the last thing he wanted to do was to piss off the Will of Abyss. In the abyss, if he had asked the three legendaries to come here and kill the prince, the Will of Abyss would probably have arrived!

Also, if Lucien had wanted to have the three legendaries here in person, he would have to use other methods instead of the summoning rite, and then very likely Gonheim, the extremely cunning top legendary, would have noticed it!

Therefore, after weighing the situation, Lucien had made this decision, although he personally did prefer to kill the prince to save future troubles.

As for if the Lord of Spectres and Ice and Snow Lady could achieve their targets, Lucien did not care. He had helped them kill the firelord and severely hurt Demogorgon of Darkness, so he had kept his promise.

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Chapter 702: An Unavoidable Confrontation

In the boundless night sky, the stars were shining dazzlingly. However, their orbits were totally contradictory to the arcana theories. As if some unknown power was pulling them away and thus they had been placed in sheer chaos. Some stars would suddenly deviate and then desperately ran into another. Explosions with enormous power would happen, and the energy storms that were caused would be able to kill anything under legendary level.

Therefore, Chaotic Cosmos was deserted and lonely. No demon could survive here. This was the very reason why this place could produce the Time Plate but not a single demon lord. The Will of Abyss was an exception, as it was born as the ultimate will. The rest of the demons had to kill and devour each other from the bottom to finally ascend to the higher levels.

As soon as they stepped into Chaotic Cosmos, another dark universe appeared behind Lucien's back. It was the same boundless and mysterious universe, but the only difference was that the stars in Lucien's universe were colorful and they represented different elements. That was Lucien's legendary demiplane – Atomic Universe!

The Atomic Universe quickly spread out and overlapped with Chaotic Cosmos. And then every single element planet started shaking as if they were those microscopic particles.

The shaking made the entire atomic universe thrilled, which also rippled Chaotic Cosmos. This was a normal phenomenon when two demiplanes overlapped.

Lucien was the center of the ripples, and the ripples spread out very fast all the way to the farthest end of the starry sky.

Natasha watched Lucien doing all these things and she looked at this chaotic starry sky with great interest. She knew that the small planets did not have their own light but were just reflecting light, as they were not fixed stars, just like those stars in Lucien's Atomic Universe.

She had learned basic astrology under the guidance of Lucien, and her use of words was from the terms used on the earth. She often practiced in the Atomic Universe, and thus her analysis was basically correct.

The abyss was similar to a demiplane, and therefore the starry sky here was not a "real" one. By contrast, a starry sky in an alternate dimension was different, which better resembled the night sky of the main material world. Stars in the sky in an alternate dimension also followed the basic laws in cosmology.

Lucien got the feedback he wanted from the fierce shaking. He opened his eyes, where there was still shining starlight, and looked to his left, "Time Plate is over there. The coordinate is..."

The core of this place shook in a different scope, and this was how Lucien figured out the coordinates of the plate. It was risky to do so because his demiplane could possibly be contaminated by the air of the abyss. Although Lucien could always clean it up, it was still a problem.

“Wow... It was less than five seconds...” Natasha was very impressed, her purple eyes shining in admiration. In front of Lucien, she never hid her feelings.

Besides the Will of Abyss and the prince of demons, only a legendary sorcerer could do so. Other legendaries would take much longer.

Lucien’s demiplane slightly disappeared to avoid the contamination from the abyss. Before that, Lucien grabbed Natasha’s arm and did a space jump using the demiplane as a transfer station.

Chaotic Cosmos was only one of the levels in the abyss. It only took them a couple of seconds to come to this creepy space.

It looked similar to Chaotic Cosmos, but with closer observation Lucien had noticed the hiding black swirls in the space. The entire place was like a dangerous ocean filled with unpredictable fatal whirlpools.

Lucien was not afraid of any oceans, but this place was different.

The swirls were naturally from the power of the plate, which had changed the time and space in this place, preventing Natasha and Lucien from reaching the plate easily.

However, this had also confirmed that Lucien was correct. Time Plate was right here!

“Careful.” Lucien reminded.

He started casting defense spells on both of them and then summoned his Space Staff.

Natasha also lifted the Shield of Truth in her left hand. Although their movement would lower the defense of the shield, its power was still enough for them to pass through this space.

With great caution, they walked into the space. Guided by Mirror of Fate, Lucien led Natasha and they marched forward at fast speed.

Although this space looked boundless, it was just an illusion. After all, the plate was just a piece of material of legendary level, and the power emitted from it could only be of level-two legendary.

Therefore, within ten seconds, Lucien and Natasha had found their target. It looked like a strange small planet made of diamond. The small planet looked very pure and beautiful as it was covered in the dazzling gloss.

The dazzling gloss came from a black plate within its core. The plate had shining light on its surface like ripples. Lucien could see the many mysterious patterns on its surface, which resembled that of Moon Timer. The power it had made him feel in awe of the elapse of time.

This was Time Plate, the legendary material! Lucien came all the way here just for this!

However, there was a man in his early thirties standing beside the plate. He was tall and had light blond short hair. The features of his face resembled men in the Schachran Empire. Although he

looked quite unruly and careless, somehow looking at him would make one feel rather peaceful and calm.

However, his chin slightly stuck out, which gave him a more serious and resolute look.

Clement! Lucien and Natasha recognized him at the same time.

He was the saint from the North Church. His look and the air of his power had all been recorded in the intelligence report of the congress and kingdom!

But neither of them could figure out why Clement was also here.

Meanwhile, when seeing Lucien and Natasha, Clement, the level-three saint cardinal, was even more shocked. In fact, his feeling of nervousness was much stronger.

Earlier he had known that Lucien had not yet obtained the plate, and Clement believed that he was a step ahead. Thus he thought that things would get much easier. With the help of the prince of demons, Clement thought that he could take away the plate before Lucien got here. After all, passing through the Seething Ocean and fighting with the firelord would cost Lucien Evans lots of time.

He even thought that Lucien was still preparing himself in Allyn!

However, things turned out to be that they were now standing face to face. Clement never prepared to have a do-or-die fight against Lucien. So he had a moment of panic.

He was hesitant. The plate was just by his side, but Lucien and Natasha had come within the range of attack. He wondered if he should grab the plate first or cast on himself several layers of defense power.

But soon he had made his decision. It took him so much planning and preparation to come all the way here, and for sure he would not give the plate up at this moment!

Unfortunately, Lucien never planned on giving him the chance to decide!

Clement heard the clear ticking sound.

There was a fine silver pocket watch in Lucien's right hand. The gem constellations on the surface were symbols of time.

Like the monocle Lucien was wearing, the pocket watch had the same pure light in reflection. Then Lucien pressed the button.

Click.

All the colors that Clement could see had all gone, only grey, white and black were left.

Then Lucien started enchanting, singing the strange spell,

“Luxury Cracking!”

“Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness!”

Luxury Cracking was a very difficult legendary spell, and Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness was a top legendary ice and snow spell, so the casting time required was quite long. Within the given time, Lucien also added Hand of Uncertainties and Magic Delay.

Then the colors resumed.

Lucien was certain that such a combination could for sure kill a level-three legendary, as long as he or she was not immune to the spells!

The shocked look was still on Clement’s face, and light burst out from within his body. The extreme cold, crystal clear pillar of light waited a little bit for Luxury Cracking to come into force first!

That was the end!

That was just too many unbelievable spells that Lucien Evans knew!

When Clement was in total desperation, holy light covered him and pulled it to the left by a few hundred meters, which made him barely miss the spell of Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness.

With his own eyes, he saw the power of the spell turned a small planet into ice dust within half a second!

At this time, the wonderful sound of singing arrived. Small light spots danced like little angels in the air, and amid them, a blond haired figure emerged.

The eighteen pairs of holy wings gradually extended out, and the divine air he had had driven away the filthy air of the abyss.

“The Angel King!”

“Mecantron...!”

Natasha and Lucien blurted out.

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Chapter 703: Mecantron’s Arrogance

Although the Angel King had just landed, he lifted his right hand as if he was already well-prepared.

The eighteen pairs of angel wings bloomed in the holy glory and the illusionary image of the magnificent Mountain Paradise was behind his wings. As he lifted his hand, all the divine spirits and angels were singing and praising because of the upcoming sentence of justice.

Unlike the light of judgment cast by other saint cardinals and seraphims, or the light of judgment cast using the divine book, there was a small scale in front of Mekantron's chest. The left side of the scale was white and the right side black. It measured whether the person being sentenced should be sent to Mountain Paradise, to hell, or just be permanently destroyed.

The scale of sentence had also brought great order to the chaotic cosmos, turning the entire space into a "real" one!

The Scale of Justice was Mekantron's other legendary divine spell apart from God's Guard. The divine scale in the Holy Heilz Empire was a replica of it. The royal family of Holy Heilz Empire was very close to the Saint Truth, and the family members all had the blood power of seraphim.

The small scale weighed something invisible and made a deep, hollow sound. The scale had made the judgement: Natasha and Lucien were sinful!

Then the light of judgment directly shot out from the projection of the paradise!

The darkness had been driven away. Anything that was incompatible with this holy light had been driven away. This was the ultimate sentence of life and death!

Lucien was on full alert.

“Abrupt Magic Reverse!” He instantly cast.

A mirror drawn with countless complex and sophisticated patterns formed between them and the Angel King. It seemed that the mirror was connected to a different world!

The light of judgment hit the mirror and left a deep crack, and then it was reflected back.

This one single strike had almost completely defeated Lucien’s mirror. That was the difference between a level-three legendary and a top legendary!

But that was already to Lucien’s surprise. He expected that the Angel King’s power was in the top ranks even among the top legendaries, so he was quite encouraged to see that his mirror could not only take this one strike but also reflect the power back!

Lucien wondered why this happened. Maybe it was because the power of the abyss had influenced him, or the landing was in a hurry so that he could not take all the power with him.

However, at this time, Clement had seized the chance and cracked the small diamond-like planet into pieces using Saint Cross. Now the Time Plate had been completely revealed in front of them!

The Angel King was here. Clement was going to take the plate away!

Suddenly, a streak of silver-grey sword light had reached in front of him through the time and space swirls. The formidable power of destruction had prevented him from grabbing the plate as Clement had subconsciously used Blessed Realm. It was no joke to be hacked at by the Sword of Truth!

There were ferocious blades hiding in the sword light, and they silently cracked the realm. Clement had no choice but to blink away from the plate and almost got devoured by a swirl.

The sword light was from Natasha. Lucien had sent the mirror closer to the Angel King and blocked the second light pillar. Meanwhile, his left eye shot a scorching red ray, which forced Mecantron to fold his bright wings, and thus Natasha's sword light could reach Clement without any barriers.

However, now the mirror had completely cracked.

Although the spell was very powerful, and within the same level, the mirror could reflect a spell five times, it also had some disadvantages. One of them was that the cool-down time for casting was too long. Although Lucien was wearing the robe of Grand Arcanists, he would not be able to cast the spell a second time within a couple of rounds.

Clement was encouraged, knowing that Lucien had fallen into a disadvantageous position. He would have enough time to take away the plate.

Natasha knew what he was thinking. She had instantly blinked to Clement.

Clement was a level three legendary. He believed that Natasha would not be his true rival by simply relying on two level three legendary items.

“Light of Judgment!”

Although the divine spells he knew were diverse, they were never as mysterious and unpredictable as magic spells. Therefore, using Light of Judgment was in most cases the best option for saint cardinals as it suited most occasions.

A light pillar shot at Natasha from the projection of Mountain Paradise.

Natasha stayed where she was and lifted the Shield of Truth. The ripples in the air covered her and put her into a separate dimension for protection.

After hitting the shield, the light of judgment burst out dazzling glory. However, it could not go through the shield.

Only some fine cracks appeared on the very surface of the black shield.

Seizing the chance, Natasha slashed at Clement with the long sword in her hand. The blade of the sword was covered in cold light.

Clement was torn into pieces by the sword light, but his face showed no pain or suffering at all.

It was just a fake replica of him! The real Clement had blinked to the plate to take away the plate using his divine power.

Clement knew that to use the most of the power of the shield, Natasha had to stay where she was. He was not such a fool to slowly consume the power of the shield.

Seeing that, Natasha frowned. Then without any hesitation, she jumped out of the protection at Clement to stop him.

That was exactly what Clement had expected. He cast Light of Judgment again, forcing Natasha to stop and defend herself with the shield.

In this way, Clement had come close enough to the plate. If it had been something ordinary, Clement would have been able to take it away from a great distance. However, since Time Plate was of legendary level and it had the power to resist to some degree, Clement had to get close enough to it.

Seeing that the plate was almost there, Clement was quite complacent about it. Relying on legendary items did not always work, obviously.

Natasha was very pissed and frustrated. But this had also triggered her fighting spirit. Her cold purple eyes were now filled with determination.

Natasha was frustrated at the situation and at the fact that she did not have enough power to fully use the power of the shield. If she had reached level-three legendary, she would have been able to extend the protection range much wider so that Lucien would have been able to get the plate.

Was she going to see Clement taking away the plate right in front of her? Natasha would not let that happen!

She started reflecting on how she had been fighting.

Her blood power was the Sword of Truth, and her knight faith was to charge, charge, and charge. She believed in defeating her enemies head-on, which contradicted the strategy of using the Shield of Truth.

Natasha asked herself why she would use something that she was not good at to fight? Was it because that was safer? Or because she was a coward?

The Sword of Truth was also a level-three legendary item!

If the Shield of Truth was pulling her back, then she'd better just leave it!

Natasha realized that owning the two legendary items was in fact a burden to her. She had been trying to combine them together, but now she had decided to drop one.

To get one must first be willing to give! That was what Lucien once said.

The best defense was a good offense!

The best shield was the good sword!

Her purple eyes were now filled with fighting spirit!

When Clement was feeling excited that he was finally getting the plate, he suddenly felt the formidable pressure.

He felt the sword light that was powerful enough to cut one's soul into pieces!

Clement never planned to die for the Angel King, so, of course, he would protect himself first. Using the legendary divine spell, he blinked to the other side.

He felt the cold sword light, but that was it. There was nothing else.

Clement sneered, for Natasha had put aside her shield.

“Light of Judgment!”

The sword light went head-on against the divine light and they crashed.

The light of judgment was shattered into fine pieces and then Natasha's figure flew out from it. Her face looked a bit pale.

Without hesitation, she launched an array of attacks with her Sword of Truth!

Clement was thus forced to keep running from the blade with no time to fight back.

"Are you crazy? It can't last long! I'll just wait a bit more before I kill you!" Clement yelled.

The silver sword light kept flashing around and that had become the only thing that Clement could see in the cosmos.

On the other side, Lucien was now slightly advantageous facing Mecantron. However, it seemed that Mecantron was not interested in a protracted war, who had directly cast Blessed Realm.

The projection of the seven-floored Mountain Paradise had become very clear, together with the figures of the six seraphim. Holy pillars of light hung down to him and provided him the wide protection of which the range was close to a hundred kilometers.

In the beautiful hymn, the milky light had lit up the entire cosmos and turned it into a "paradise". Lucien was thus prevented from getting close to the plate, while Mecantron had almost come close enough to get it.

Small light spots had gathered around the plate like little angels and lifted it. Together they were bringing it to Mecantron.

Time Plate's power thus contracted and the swirls in space were rapidly disappearing.

Mecantron believed that he was more powerful than Lucien. So he had given up the chance for defense to take away the plate. This meant that he had been ready to take Lucien's attack head-on.

Lucien was a bit confused. He wondered if Mecantron had ever watched his fight and seen his legendary spell, Snow Goddess's Forgiveness. The power of the spell would even severely hurt a top legendary, not to mention that Mecantron was now only using part of his power. Lucien was also wondering why Mecantron needed the plate.

However, Lucien still reached out his right hand. His monocle flashed the cold light,

"Snow Goddess's Forgiveness!"

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Chapter 704: Chaotic Serpent

"Snow Goddess's Forgiveness!"

The thin and dense streams of electricity and lasers gathered on Lucien's right hand unpredictably, enshrouding it in dancing snowflakes and ice, before they were entangled with each other in unique and mysterious ways and eventually triggered a transparent pillar of light that seemed to have been launched out of the deepest part of the dark, cold cosmos!

The power in this 'Snow Goddess's Forgiveness' was so compressed that none of it leaked out, but if one were to perceive it carefully, they would sense the coldness from the bottom of their heart, as if they had witnessed the lifeless end of the universe.

Shock appeared on Mecantron's face. He had never anticipated that Lucien could perform a legendary spell that was so close to Gonheim's 'Doomsday Cold'.

Since he was sustaining 'Blessed Realm' and holding 'Time Plate' with his extraordinary power, he was hit by Snow Goddess's Forgiveness without being able to react.

The Chaotic Cosmos was frozen, the holy light of order was frozen, the starry light of angels was frozen, and so were the beautiful hymns.

The ivory color of the Blessed Realm soon faded into blackness which was absorbing all rays and heat. Such a feeling quickly spread out into the Blessed Realm!

The legendary divine power was also frozen lifelessly under the terrifying coldness. An eternal silence where nothing was alive seemed to have been created.

In such a state, the realm was so vulnerable that it could not stop the low temperature caused by electricity and laser from slowing down the vibration of the microscopic particles nearby, which was the nature of 'temperature' in the microscopic scale!

The Angel King had never thought that his Blessed Realm would be fundamentally frozen. Therefore, when the dark coldness surged at him unstoppably, he was more or less panicked. Crossing his arms, he unfolded his thirty-six holy wings that were enshrouded in brilliance.

The seven-floored projection of 'Mountain Paradise' was even clearer. The most horrifying waves spread out of the highest floor.

"Whoever prays in your name shall not be harmed."

In front of the unparalleled coldness, Mecantron forgot the outside world and recited the scripture of the Cannon devoutly.

Ha!

All the angels and holy spirits on Mountain Paradise sang the hymn that was similar to this sound, distantly and sacredly. The infinite light on the seventh floor was even brighter, spraying the purest and most flawless brilliance.

Praying inside the brilliance, Mecantron was quickly blurred. The colors and waves which did not belong to this world spread out, turning the space around into a different universe.

The coldness created by Snow Goddess's Forgiveness could not affect another world. Any spell had its own range of application. No magic could finish enemies in all scenarios, unless it was purely the infinite amalgamation of violence!

Witnessing that, Clement, who was temporarily suppressed by Natasha's crazy attacks, was covered in cold sweat. Lucien Evans' creepy spells were each tougher than the last. If the Angel King hadn't arrived, he wouldn't even know how he was killed!

The Snow Goddess's Forgiveness which hit a passing asteroid did not leave a deep impression on him, because plenty of legendary spells could've caused a similar effect. However, the terrible coldness created by Snow Goddess's Forgiveness against the Angel King, a top legend, scared him, who began to consider Lucien as dangerous as a top legend.

"Thankfully, I have the Angel King who has God's Guard!" He sincerely felt lucky.

However, Lucien was given an opportunity. Mecantron who had performed God's Guard was as immobile as Natasha when she used the Shield of Truth! God's Guard even forbade the receiver from launching any attack!

It was a genetic deficiency of such ultimate defense. How could they attack the enemy if the enemy was in a different universe? From that point of view, the Shield of Truth was truly not as good as God of Truth in terms of defense.

Therefore, the moment Lucien saw that the Angel King used God's Guard, he immediately activated Precise Transfer and reached the Time Plate!

Since Mecantron had curbed the power of the Time Plate by holding it previously, the space-time abnormalities were already gone. That's why Lucien could blink to it instead of reaching it by flight.

“I have to thank Mecantron for paving the path to the Time Plate for me...” Such an idea somehow occurred to Lucien.

Mage’s Hand was condensed and snatched the Time Plate. Mecantron, who was still resisting Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness, however, put on a smile, as if he was hoping that Lucien would take the Time Plate!

The frigidity that did not belong to the normal world was rejected. As the magic power that sustained it was gone, the cold and dark ‘ocean’ soon vanished, and God’s Guard remained unaffected.

At this moment, Lucien’s Mage’s Hand already picked up the Time Plate, when a streak of mysterious darkness protruded inside the Time Plate like the most vicious serpent!

With the unimaginable power of curse, it spread towards Lucien’s body along Mage’s Hand faster than any creature could possibly react. Since Lucien was right next to it, it lunged on his body easily.

Spell Trigger, Magic Order, Elemental Skin and the other innate spells were activated, but none of them could stop the snake of curse. As if it were invisible, it crawled into Lucien’s body!

“It worked...” Mecantron canceled God’s Guard and prayed. Glowing light was gathered into a holy, intimidating book.

As the book was turned, godly runes flew out and constituted a web that seemed to be from Mountain Paradise, attempting to capture Lucien.

It was Seal of Judgment!

That was the legendary divine power in the Saint Truth which could seal the enemy's power. Once it worked on the enemy, the enemy's strength would halt or even decline. Also, it was a permanent effect and could hardly be expelled.

The curse of the snake previously, on the other hand, was from Gonheim. It was the reward from abyss, named 'Chaotic Serpent', when he became the Prince of Demons, and it had a similar effect to Seal of Judgment.

After the two effects were combined, the Congress of Magic's method to lift the curses would be nullified. Lucien could only find a solution on his own. His strength would halt in the next decades even if he had the help of demigods!

For Mecantron and Gonheim, they were glad to see Lucien Evans' research in the microscopic domain, which would provide theoretical foundations for the way to become demigods. Then, they would be able to make advancements and see the dawn of true gods. They wouldn't agree to kill Lucien Evans at all.

However, Lucien's growth also terrified them. They feared that Lucien would have already become a demigod or a true god before they picked up his theory. After all, the sorcerers sometimes had the feedback of the real world when they created groundbreaking theories. Would he allow them to become demigods or true gods? Of course not! He would certainly try to eliminate them!

Both eager and scared, they had made such a plan. Seizing the opportunity that Lucien needed space-time materials, they would curse and seal him so that his strength would halt, and it wouldn't hinder his arcana studies at all!

In this plan, the elvish queen was merely a pawn who did not know anything. She merely informed Lucien of the locations of the space-time materials that she knew according to the terms of cooperation. She didn't even know that the Angel King was behind the curtain. Also, in her eyes, nothing was strange about that. Lucien wouldn't necessarily choose the Time Plate after all.

Then, according to Lucien's style and personality that the Demogorgon of Darkness knew, they reached the conclusion that Lucien would come to the Chaotic Cosmos. As to when it would be exactly, they could only learn it after he approached the abyss.

When he approached the abyss, Gonheim would immediately inform the Angel King and asked him to send his subordinates to steal the Time Plate.

That was because there was still a critical problem. With Lucien Evans' cautiousness, he definitely wouldn't pick up the Time Plate without examining it carefully first. In such a case, the power of the Chaotic Snake would be clearly revealed, and they couldn't achieve their purpose at all.

Therefore, they had to create an environment where Lucien had to grab the Time Plate immediately and flee, so that he wouldn't have the time or the opportunity to examine it. For that, they needed a competitor who fought for the Time Plate, as well as the pressure from the Demogorgon of Darkness from the back.

Seeing that nothing happened to Clement when he held the Time Plate, and since the Demogorgon of Darkness was coming 'furiously', Lucien Evans certainly wouldn't check it carefully again if he had a chance to flee with the Time Plate.

Therefore, the plan required a strict order of events, or Lucien Evans' wariness couldn't be erased. Also, they needed to consider the possibility that Lucien Evans stalled the enemy and Natasha Violet went to take it.

As it turned out, Lucien's capabilities were far beyond their expectation, and his preparations were terrifying. Even the firelord and the Demogorgon of Darkness combined didn't stop him for long, and Natasha and he reached the Chaotic Cosmos before Clement confirmed the 'safety' of the Time Plate. Therefore, the Angel King had to expose himself in advance and arrived at the abyss!

Although Clement was too useless to even deal with Natasha, his involvement had completely eased Lucien's wariness after all! Mecantron thought as such while he watched the web of seal made of the divine runes fell upon Lucien's head.

"Despite the twists and turns, we have achieved our purpose successfully after all..."

The moment such an idea occurred to Mecantron, Lucien, who was suffering from 'Chaotic Serpent' and 'Seal of Judgment' suddenly glowed with a green light and was reduced into a bright green puppet that was painted with weird patterns.

It looked at Mecantron with its hollow eyes, and a creepy smile on its face.

"A substitution puppet!"

A substitution puppet created by McLeod, the legendary alchemy master!

"Not good!" Mecantron was immediately shocked after seeing the puppet that was enshrouded in dark air and holy light. The Time Plate, in the meantime, had fallen into the hands of a shadow that was slowly surfacing. He wore a double-breasted suit and had a handsome face where the pupils were deep and dark and the monocle was glimmering. It was exactly Lucien Evans!

“The Chaotic Cosmos is still a cosmos. There’s no need to create a vacuum...” Lucien thought to himself and raised his left hand, aiming at Mecantron who had just cast ‘Seal of Judgment’. Looking at the guy’s shocked face, he chanted the weird and profound voice that sounded from the vibration of particles:

“Positron Cannon!”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 705: Terrifying Obliteration

“Positron Cannon?”

Mecantron was slightly shocked. Although he had been paying attention to the Congress of Magic’s studies in the microscopic domain, his main focus lay in the domain of astrology and quantum superposition. He only had a basic understanding about antimatter and positrons. Therefore, he had no idea what the magic was about.

More importantly, since the quantum field theory hadn’t been developed and the notion of ‘vacuum fluctuation’ had been proposed, nobody had thought of the collision of positive and negative electrons. Even the vision of the vacuum ocean of negative energy hadn’t been described by any arcanist. Therefore, the arcanists other than Lucien only knew that antimatter could barely exist in the main material world because it would offset the ordinary matter. They were unaware of the terrible obliteration that antimatter might cause. They did not know that the energy release efficiency of the reaction was higher than fusion, or that they could destroy a whole world when a tiny amount was gathered!

Since even the arcanists other than Lucien hadn't figured out much about positrons, how could Mecantron know it?

In the dangerous moment, he knew that he had been tricked by the substitution puppet, and that he had only one chance to react. Therefore, he opened his arms without any hesitation, and his pure bright wings embraced the ivory holy light from the projection of the seven-floored Mountain Paradise!

"Blessed Realm!"

If he were to use God's Guard, he wouldn't be able to move for a while. Then, having already obtained the Time Plate, Lucien Evans could leave the abyss at ease with Natasha now that the Demogorgon of Darkness still hadn't got rid of the Lady of Snow and the Lord of Death. That useless guy Clement was still being suppressed by Natasha and couldn't stop them from leaving at all!

Therefore, he chose to perform 'Blessed Realm' to maintain his attack abilities in order to stall and suppress Lucien until Gonheim defeated the two Demon Lords and joined him. Twenty seconds had already passed, and Gonheim should be able to turn things around soon.

Ivory light descended and stood around Mecantron like the pillars of a temple. The light blossomed, transforming the cosmos around into an ocean of light. Together with the distant, delightful hymns from the projection of Mountain Paradise, Mecantron seemed to be inside the Paradise on Earth.

"Positron Cannon!"

Outside of Lucien's left hand, a dark magnetic field was appearing and twisting under restraint, which resulted in the uncanny waves in the space.

Countless indescribable things were gathered. They were no longer silver electric currents but those which looked like fire. Entangling each other, they turned into a long electric snake enveloped in fire, which darted out like a thick laser light.

If the Angel King hadn't arrived so weirdly, and if his preparations hadn't prevented the Demogorgon of Darkness and the firelord from stalling him for long, he might have not sensed any danger in the hasty situation just now when two top legends were intentionally covering it, and he might have not used a substitution puppet to take it at all.

Therefore, in the vacuum, Lucien used 'Positron Cannon' without any hesitation!

The gigantic pillar of light where illusionary fire was surging out bombarded Mecantron overwhelmingly. Under the restraint of the magnetic field, it did not raise any change in the Chaotic Cosmos, as if it were just a regular blast of fire.

At this moment, Mecantron's 'Blessed Realm' was just constructed. He was sheltered by the 'temple' perfectly!

The angelic wings on his back were closed, and the spots of holy light floated and gathered into a delicate horn before him. He was going to perform the real 'Light of Paradise' as the deputy of paradise. Now that his plan didn't work out, he would still achieve his purpose with his own strength!

The flashing and flowing pillar of electricity, with the glow of fire, hit the Blessed Realm brutally.

Then, disbelief beamed out of Mecantron's gold eyes. In the point of impact, the brilliance as dazzling as a rising sun burst out. Not only did the Blessed Realm fail to offer any defense, but it also exploded itself as the light glittered.

Boom!

The terrible explosion couldn't be heard in the vacuum, but after only one brief moment, everything around was enshrouded in the world-destroying obliteration. Mecantron did not have any time to react before the energy storm raised by the Blessed Realm consumed him.

"What's this spell?"

"Why is the effect so weird and terrifying?"

"It seems unstoppable!"

At this moment, Mecantron suddenly sensed that the world would be destroyed, and that if the spell was further improved, it would be even more powerful than 'God's Arrival' for destructive purposes!

However, the sudden epiphany couldn't extricate him from the ocean of energy that surrounded him. Little time was left for him to perform 'God's Guard', too!

“NOOOOOOOO!”

Roaring from the bottom of his heart, Mecantron felt that he was being destroyed irreversibly from the inside out and from outside in. His gold eyes were filled with intense disbelief and fear, and terrible explosions broke out in both his body and his soul, creating an unimaginable energy storm!

The face that was beautiful as a girl and the thirty-six pure wings were obliterated at the same time!

Clement gradually stabilized himself against Natasha’s crazy attacks. When he was ready to counterattack, he suddenly felt that the pressure was gone. Natasha had fled away without bothering anymore. Cutting the cosmos with the Sword of Truth, she appeared in a different direction very quickly!

“Why is she running?”

“Is she scared?”

“She’s not stopping me from taking the Time Plate anymore?”

The subconscious idea had only just occurred to him, when he ‘heard’ the weird and overwhelming spell that Lucien cast from Lucien’s vibrating and leaking spiritual power.

“Positron Cannon!”

Then, he saw the pillar of fiery electric light that was different from regular electric currents hit the Blessed Realm, sensed the outburst of the sun before his eyes, and felt the pure destruction!

“Why?”

“How did it happen?”

“Even the Blessed Realm joined the explosion reaction?”

“The defense itself added to the power of the spell!”

“This spell is too unbelievable!”

Similar ideas had just popped up in Clement’s heart, when he was grasped by unprecedented desperation!

Because he was too close to the ‘paradise’ created by the Blessed Realm, and nothing was in between to block the attack, the energy storm swept over at him, not giving him a chance to escape with divine power at all!

“No wonder Natasha Violet escaped like a bunny that has been shot by an arrow...”

He finally understood why Natasha suddenly abandoned the attack and ran away without caring about anything!

It was a pity that his understanding came too late!

Lucien had informed Natasha through the telepathic bond when he got the Time Plate and was ready to perform 'Positron Cannon'. Having heard the effect of the magic from Lucien previously, she naturally fled as early and far away as possible. Although the space-time defense provided by the Shield of Truth could protect her from the obliteration when matter and antimatter collided, the Shield of Truth might be broken in the energy storm that was more powerful than 'Eternal Blaze' after the obliteration appeared.

Watching the scorching light and the pure energy storm, Clement was somewhat in a trance. There was no way that the defense he cast upon himself could resist them, could it?

Right when he was desperate, the void behind him was suddenly opened, and a hand with green scales, with black thorns that emitted coldness from the knuckles, reached in.

With the air of transcendence and condescension, the hand 'grabbed' Clement and pulled him into the space gap!

The terrifying energy storm swept over but could not cross the boundary of spaces!

"The Lord of Hell?" Lucien felt that the hand was particularly familiar. It was exactly from his old friend Maltimus, the Lord of Hell. It never occurred to Lucien that he had been paying attention to this thing all the time! It was truly as expected of the Lord of Hell!

After Clement ‘dodged’ the attack, there was nothing but vacuum left, and the obliteration reaction came to an end.

At this moment, the Chaotic Cosmos suddenly shook. The boundless darkness became even darker, and angry roars echoed from all directions:

“Goddamn devils! Go to hell!”

“The Will of Abyss?” Lucien and Natasha were no strangers to the voice, either.

Demons and devils always despised each other. The former thought that the latter were brainless, and the latter felt that the former were too weak and couldn’t achieve anything without tricks and ploys. Also, since the abyss and the hell were connected on one level, wars often burst out between them. The bloody feud had been accumulated for hundreds of thousands of years.

That was why the Will of Abyss was so angry when the Lord of Hell arrived at the abyss and attacked despite his wounds!

Before the two parties collided, Lucien blinked to Natasha. The projection of the deep, fascinating Atomic Universe appeared behind them, illuminating a corner of the space with the colorful starlight.

Then, as the projection of the Atomic Universe was gone, Lucien and Natasha disappeared from the Chaotic Cosmos, too.

Now that they got the Time Plate, why would they stay here for the Will of Abyss to vent his fury on them? Also, the Demogorgon of Darkness might arrive at any point. Unless his magic caught the enemy unprepared, his overall abilities were still far away from the top legendary.

After all, 'Positron Cannon' could be both resisted by space-time defense and deviated by magnetic extraordinary powers because it carried electricity. Therefore, to deal with the enemy who had already learnt the features of 'Positron Cannon', Lucien had to create an opportunity where they could not resist 'Positron Cannon' with appropriate methods with other spells, and such spells were exactly the gap between Lucien and top legends!

Lucien had always known himself very well!

.....

In the royal palace of the Holy Heilz Empire...

Rudolf II, who had been leaning against the chair, suddenly stood straight and vomited a mouthful of gold blood. He muttered somewhat in fear, "Thank god that I was behind him, otherwise..."

he was too prudent to finish the sentence. Closing his eyes again, he perceived the sacred seven-floored 'Mountain Paradise'. Then, a part of the boundless light on the seventh floor was separated and landed at the edge, turning into an angel who held a book. The thirty-six wings on his back were slowly closed, but the angel was so blurry that nobody could tell how long it would take before he was condensed.

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Chapter 706: Calcate City

Inside the Atomic Universe, the various-colored stars in the boundless space constituted a unique and colorful view.

Lucien and Natasha gradually appeared, cutting the space-time connection with the abyss.

“We got it in the end after all, or we would have to search for the special Silent Hell.” Natasha was rather amazed by the beautiful, complicated patterns on the dark plate in Lucien’s hands. They were protruding and glittering in turns like a ticking second hand. Also, every pattern was spreading the vague, dreamy sense of ripples. Not just ladies, even Lucien as a male felt that the Time Plate was a piece of delicate artwork.

“If the Demogorgon of Darkness and the Angel King hadn’t conspired to kill me, this Time Plate would’ve become Gonheim’s collection after he became the Prince of Demons. It would’ve been millions of times more difficult to get it.” Touching the Time Plate with his right hand, Lucien sensed the flow of time in it.

In the Desperate World after the Frozen Fortress and the Abyssal Stomach were melted, Gonheim was close to a demigod. If he had left most of his power in the place, Lucien could’ve only suppressed him even if he had asked Douglas, Fernando and Hathaway to attack with him. In that case, Lucien would rather look for help to go to the Silent Hell.

Natasha also extended her right hand and touched the surface of the Time Plate curiously, enjoying the unique feeling. Then, she became more or less solemn. “You’ve really been targeted by the top legendary, and two of them, no less...”

She had always believed that even though Lucien did not compete for anything or walk on Viken’s path, his arcana studies and his soaring magic abilities would still invite hostility and schemes. Now, her ‘prophecy’ had come true!

However, she did not look scared but only concerned. She was filled with intense determination and desire for battle. It was partly because she was very confident in Lucien and partly because she felt that it was a test for her who regarded protection as her knightly principle.

Lucien curled his finger and knocked the Time Plate, but there was no sound but only dull, spreading ripples. “In such an age, any expert who wants to rise higher cannot avoid the vortex of conflicts, unless they hide in the depths of the Boundless Ocean or a secretive alternate dimension to be abandoned by the age. However, as a result, it’s possible that other legends would think of him first when they intend to transform their status. It’s certainly most easy to deal with lone individuals.”

“As long as the Congress continues the momentum of development, I believe that the final victory will definitely be ours.”

“As for me, I’m ready to embrace the challenges and maliciousness.”

Lucien spoke casually but determinedly.

Natasha chuckled. “You would’ve become a distinguished knight if you hadn’t chosen to be a sorcerer. Right, has the Angel King completely perished? Your ‘Positron Cannon’ is truly a world-blighting spell!”

Having spent a long time together with Lucien, she had become rather creative in words, too.

“After the other antimatters are studied and manufactured, it wouldn’t be a dream for a level-three legendary sorcerer to destroy the world individually. All they need is a boom.” Lucien said half-jokingly. The power of the Positron Cannon could be further improved, depending on his own magic strength and the materials he prepared in advance. Such preparations, on the other hand, were much more terrifying than what was needed for ‘Eternal Blaze’. Only a tiny amount of antimatter was enough to annihilate a star. But of course, antimatter couldn’t be synthesized in the laboratory yet.

While talking, Lucien took out the crystal ball and chanted a spell:

“Mirror of Fate!”

In the dark universe, illusionary spots of light appeared. They were like butterflies, or the stars in the night sky. That was the cosmos of fate!

Those spots of light were gathered into a hazy, mysterious mirror. After the glittering crystal ball on Lucien’s left hand flew in, the mirror began to shake violently, like a peaceful pond to which a stone had been thrown into. Ripples were spreading out.

Ripples died down, and the haze was gone. A crouching angel with thirty-six wings on the back appeared. Suddenly, infinite light glowed from the mirror and surged out like a torrent.

Natasha, who was observing nearby, realized it first. She dragged Lucien who was slightly stunned by the power and reached another corner of the Atomic Universe after a blink. Then, they saw that

the Mirror of Fate was consumed by a cluster of pure, clean brilliance. The space around was also devoured, leaving a lifeless void. It was not until the 'universe' shook and the power nearby flowed over that the void gradually disappeared.

"That's the power of the God of Truth..." Natasha muttered with mixed feelings. Was it the true god that she used to worship? Also, even though faith had backed to the spiritual domain for her, that was still 'God of Truth'. So, she still felt complicated when she was faced with the 'god' who had lost rationality and had only power and rules left.

Recovering from the blast after the Mirror of Fate was destroyed by the power of the God of Truth, Lucien scratched his chin. "If you grasp the rules of Mountain Paradise and the God of Truth, would we be able to use his power at the critical moment? Also, why is the power so high? Is it a qualitative advancement or a quantitative accumulation?"

Natasha's lips curled as she watched Lucien to think. Her indifferent eyes became gentle, and she said with a smile, "Grand Arcanist, you are a real researcher."

"Ha. It's just my occupational disease..." Lucien replied humorously after he was back to himself. "It seems that Mecantron did not completely perish. There's no telling whether it was because he did not project all his power, or because he was connected to the God of Truth with a special bond. Is it possible that he will never really die as long as the God of Truth exists, and that he will surely be resurrected on the seventh floor of Mountain Paradise when he dies?"

Lucien speculated the reasons why Mecantron did not completely perish. While 'Positron Cannon' could not track the original body like the Sword of Truth, it contained the purest destruction. Lucien believed that if Mecantron had arrived with his full strength, he would've been obliterated whatever resurrection methods he had!

"I think it's the latter possibility. To deal with a grand arcanist who possesses a handful of top legendary spells in the abyss where the power of Mountain Paradise is greatly weakened, the Angel King would barely have any chance of success if he hadn't arrived with all his strength. I don't think he would underestimate his enemy." Scratching her chin, Natasha offered her opinion.

Under normal circumstances, Mecantron was among the top-tier experts and was as strong as a demigod near Mountain Paradise. However, in the abyss, even if he arrived in person, he would only be as strong as the weakest top legend under the affection of the abyss. If he did not try his best, he would only be in level three of legendary and on par with Lucien.

In that regard, sorcerers, with their unpredictable, miscellaneous spells, were much stronger. They were almost adapted to all battle environments and wouldn't be greatly weakened.

“That makes sense. His ‘God’s Guard’ was as powerful as his performance in Rentato.” However, even though he is the body of resurrection prepared by Thanos and an incarnation of the ‘God of Truth’, he is only a new-born angel right now. It will take at least five years before he resumes legendary strength.”

Although the Mirror of Fate could determine if Mecantron was still alive, it could not state his status clearly. Therefore, Lucien could only make a vague prediction based on the signs.

Hearing Lucien’s speculation, Natasha suddenly chuckled. She pointed at the planet of iron not far away and said, “I think we should discuss it after we are back home. Do you not feel that the cold and dark universe is not as comfortable as a warm, cozy room? There is also tea and music, and we are not far away from the door...”

Lucien replied, “Of course. I need to be prepared for the improvement of the Moon Timer, too.”

.....

Inside the Frozen Fortress, Gonheim, the Demogorgon of Darkness, returned to the dark throne. Wounds deep to the bone appeared on his right hand that was tapping the gems, but no blood was flowing out at all.

Blue, cold light emitted from the wounds, freezing everything inside. Even Gonheim's terrifying ability of recovery could not eliminate them any time soon.

There was also a scratch that carried the air of death on Gonheim's face. Although it was shallow, his face still cramped now and then.

Touching his face with his left hand, Gonheim mumbled to himself, his eyes whose colors changed all the time turning chaotic and cold, "Lucien Evans, Apsis, ice statue..."

As a cunning Prince of Demons, he had other preparations, so he beat the Lady of Snow and the Lord of Death after paying a certain prince. However, Lucien was even faster. He had already left with the Time Plate.

.....

In the Month of Harvest (September), most places were still warm and full of the delight of harvest and festivals, but freezing wind was already blowing in the northern province of the Schachran Empire, making people feel that winter had come.

A team of mercenaries walked on the desolate plain, guarding a few business convoys. The Schachran Empire was most famous for its vast territory, abundant resources and copious magic creatures.

Amidst the mercenaries, Katrina had tied her gold long hair. She touched the bald figurine of a dwarf in her bock and thought absentmindedly, “Why did my teacher ask me to put this statue out in front of the temple in Dumute? Why is this statue unfinished?”

She was very curious about that.

“We’re arriving at Calcate City!” The scout up ahead shouted. At the border of the plain and a forest, right next to a river, a magnificent but somewhat old city appeared before their eyes.

It was Calcate, the third largest city in the province, only second to Nanoki, the capital, and Kirf, where Marquis Furtado was at.

Katrina was back to herself. She moved her left hand out of the pocket and thought to herself. “The most important thing right now is the mandatory mission. I can work on my teacher’s request later.”

This place was the destination of her mandatory mission as well as her hometown.

Looking at the familiar architectural style and the unique view, she was somewhat fascinated.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 707: The Student of a Legendary Knight

A glistening wide river ran in the middle of the desolate plain and mountains. Glamorous ships that were fully loaded with cargo were sailing towards Calcate City. Whenever they reached the places where the waves were too turbulent for them to sail against the current, many stevedores would gather and pull the rope together, hauling the ships over the obstacles.

Despite the wind that would chill any normal person, those workers were all half naked, with vague steam rising from their skin.

“If I hadn’t left home to be a mercenary, it’s possible that I may have become one of them, a worker on the Niegening River...” Katrina was listening to the familiar work song, when she suddenly heard a coarse male voice.

The river was the ‘main artery’ for the Schachran Empire, which had bred many prosperous cities as their mother river. It originated from the snowy mountains that were controlled by the Vladimir family in the northwest province, flowing past the northern province, and meandering all the way to the southeast, until it entered the Schachran Empire at the border of the Schachran Empire and the northland.

Katrina turned around and looked at the young male next to her with a smile. “Everybody has a chance to change their fate. It depends on themselves whether or not they can seize it. It’s obvious that you are an expert who defeated your weakness. If you hadn’t made up your mind to press forward with waves, Yakov, you would never live beyond 35 like most of the workers.”

Yakov was a mercenary with yellow, short hair. He wasn’t thirty yet, but his beard made him look old. Tall and brawny, he was nicknamed by his fellows as ‘Brown Bear’.

“Was it also your motivation to become a mercenary?” His eyes moving away, Yakov asked back.

Because the Schachran Empire was unpopulated and frequented by magic creatures and bandits, long trips could be dangerous, particularly in the north. Therefore, it was quite eye-catching for a beautiful girl to be on a trip by herself. By the same logic, she would receive a lot of attention if she joined a business team without any partner.

In order not to be suspected by the clerics of the North Church and the nobles, Katrina prudently chose to pretend to be a mercenary. With fake certificates, she joined a team that was to protect some businessmen on their way to Calcate City. Yakov was the leader of the team, a knight who had triggered the blood power of frost giants by himself.

Katrina was about to reply, when a pleasant female voice interjected, “Let me guess. Are you trying to run away from your marriage? A girl as gorgeous as you must be from a noble family. Has a powerful scoundrel got his eyes on you and forced you to marry him, and you had to flee as a mercenary?”

“Anna, you’ve heard too many tales from the bards...” Amused, Katrina looked at the female archer next to her who was wearing leather armor.

Anna was a mercenary no more than twenty. She had blond hair, green eyes and a pretty face. She was as convivial as Heidi, so Katrina made friends with her easily after they met. She was also very curious about Katrina who was tall and elegant. Having grown up in the tales of the bards, she instinctively believed that Katrina must have a complicated past.

Little did she know that it was also the speculation of most mercenaries in the team. Although Katrina was good at swords, and some female mercenaries were as beautiful as her, she was very graceful and emanated the obscure air of knowledge when she considered questions. That was rare for mercenaries.

Yakov had once worked with an official sorcerer best known for his insights, but he did not feel such a vibe from the guy.

Anna chuckled. Looking at Calcate City that was getting close, she asked expectantly, “Sister Katrina, we will settle in this place with Boss Yakov. What about you, are you going to leave?”

Yakov had activated his blood power in an adventure earlier. He had returned to be knighted. After that, he would be given a manor and a fief on the desolate plain. Those in his team who were willing to stay would become his squires or butlers.

For most mercenaries, such an opportunity was not easy to come by. Naturally, they agreed to stay without any hesitation. With the support of a noble, it would be easier for them to activate their blood power.

Yakov and the few mercenaries pricked their ears as they waited for Katrina’s answer.

Katrina smiled and rubbed Anna’s gold hair. “I’ve come to Calcate City for fortune. Maybe, I will get what I want in a few months. After that, I will return to the place I belong to, where my family and my friends live. I will always cherish the memory of my adventure with you.”

Many resources and magic creatures were hidden in the forest and the desert near Calcate City. That’s why so many business teams and mercenaries were active here.

Many adventurers had come in search of gold mines or other undiscovered treasures to be rich overnight. Most of them left in disappointment or lay forever in the depths of the forest, but there

were still lucky dogs who returned with trophies. They motivated more and more adventurers to come.

Many local specialties were important for sorcerers' studies and alchemy. That's why the official sorcerer came to explore. However, he was involved in a demon worship case and killed in Calcate City. If he hadn't come with partners, the Congress wouldn't have known that such a sorcerer went missing at all, much less sending investigators.

"Family... friends..." Anna muttered gloomily, "Sister Katrina, you must come to see me often while you are still in Calcate City."

Yakov said in a low voice, "Katrina, whenever you need help, don't hesitate to find me. We're partners."

Katrina nodded. Seeing that the atmosphere was turning heavy, she hurried to change the topic by asking Anna about Calcate City. She was only ten when she left this place and only had a vague memory about it.

In the middle of discussion, the business convoy reached the city gate. At this moment, a team of cavalymen rode out of the city fast and neatly. They had obviously been trained for a long time.

Those cavalymen were in black, full armor, their faces covered by the masks of their helmets. They looked as cold and cruel as if they were from a bloodstained battlefield.

Their left arm had a blood red emblem, in which a red bear was holding a head with its left paw.

“Count Vladimir’s Blood Bear Legion...” In an extremely low voice, Yakov introduced them to Katrina.

Katrina was actually no stranger to them. Although the Vladimir’s family was based in the northwest province, they had certain influence on the neighboring north province, too. For example, Calcate City was the hereditary dominion of the Vladimir family, whose liege was known as ‘Count Calcate’. The emblem of blood bear that represented strength and honor was their unique sigil.

Anna said enviously, “The Blood Bear Legion? They must be going to welcome Viscount Andree!”

“Viscount Andree?” Katrina did not know what the name represented, although he did sound like the next Count Calcate.

“Yes, Viscount Andree became an official knight at twenty, a grand knight at twenty-five, and a top grand knight two months ago. He was recruited by the legendary knight ‘Nicolle’ as his student! He will certainly become a radiant knight and the strongest Count Calcate!” Anna spoke as if he were the prince charming for her.

Nicolle, the Storm of Death? Katrina was more or less surprised. This level-one legendary knight was the current leader of the Furtado family and the de facto governor of the north province. However, wasn’t the Furtado family in disagreement with the Vladimir family and dissatisfied with them meddling in the affairs of the north province?

If Andree Vladimir did need a legendary knight as his teacher, Vladimir had their own. Thom Vladimir, the Ice Age, was already old, but he was still alive and he was a legendary knight who had the hope to reach level three of legendary!

Are there any secrets? Is the information important for the Congress? Thought Katrina in confusion.

Seeing her apparent shock, Anna appeared even more envious. "It's very fortuitous to be the student of a legendary knight even for radiant knights, not to mention the grand knights. Viscount Andree must have something special about him!"

"Not just legendary knights, I would be satisfied if a radiant knight agrees to be my teacher, but it will never happen without the grace of the Lord." Yakov sighed bitterly and hopefully.

The other mercenaries said in self-mockery. "We would like to go to Mountain Paradise in advance if we can be given a grand knight, or an official knight, as our teacher."

In their conversation, they entered the city with the business convoy and checked in at a hotel.

While Yakov went to register in the city hall, Katrina went to a tavern nearby with Anna.

The moment she stepped in, Katrina was immediately 'welcomed' by the mercenaries and adventures with whistles, who made dirty jokes nonstop.

Anna glared at them and drew her dagger. Without being shy, Katrina also raised her longsword and glanced around indifferently.

On such occasions, the weaker they behaved, the more they would be bullied.

As expected, their toughness intimidated the drunkards, and they managed to reach the bar.

“Hi, young Anna, welcome come. Who is this beautiful lady?” The owner of the tavern was a lecherous-looking middle-aged man.

Anna chuckled. “Uncle Gulf, do you plan to enjoy the thugs of brown bears? Right, has anything important happened in the past few months?”

“You certainly know the most important thing. Viscount Andree became the student of His Excellency the Storm of Death. As for the lesser incidents, a demon worship case happened in the district of nobles, and dozens were killed uncannily.” Gulf’s smile was gone.

“A demon worship case?” Asked Anna curiously.

Katrina was more or less relieved. It was indeed easier to investigate with a local mercenary as a partner, and it would not raise any suspicion. Otherwise, somebody would’ve noticed her if she had asked about the case recklessly as a ‘foreigner’.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 708: A Weird Case

“A demon worship case?” Anna was very curious when she asked the question. Other than killers and perverts who craved blood all the time, only the real lunatics would worship the chaotic demons!

If they had any wish, they might as well worship the Demon Dukes, who were at least much more ‘trustworthy’. Therefore, while it was not strange that several individuals might worship demons, it was rather creepy that so many people died in the incident at the same time.

Katrina had the same opinion. The Congress of Magic issued the mandatory mission exactly because of ‘demon worship’, too. If the victims had died in an accident during their ritual to worship devils, the Congress wouldn’t have paid as much attention to the case.

Few powerful demons had ever attempted to develop religions that worshiped themselves. They might have considered it, but they soon dropped the ideas because of their natural chaos and lust for slaughter and blood. Therefore, such a massive demon worship case was itself weird and inexplicable.

Gulf, the boss of the tavern, wiped the cups before him carefully with a piece of clean cloth, not leaving any dirt out. He smiled, “It’s indeed a demon worship case, or it’s at least what the Church says after thorough investigation.”

“But the Church might’ve covered the truth to avoid panic. It happened before, didn’t it?” Anna was rather dissatisfied with Gulf’s answer. It had been a couple years since she became a mercenary, and she had seen and been through a lot. She knew better than to accept the conclusion of the Church’s investigation without any suspicion.

As a ten-year mercenary and eight-year tavern manager, Gulf was willing to believe the conclusion only because his own secret sources could confirm it.

Seeing that the two girls were looking at him with their eyes that were as green as lake water, Gulf knocked the table softly. “This piece of intelligence has a price, but...”

He paused and looked at the mercenaries who were flooding in his tavern. “But you two ladies seem to have boosted the business of my tavern. So, this is on the house.”

Anna looked back and smiled. “You have to thank Sister Katrina. I’ve been a regular customer at your place, but I never saw so many ‘wild wolves’.”

“So, your name is Katrina. That’s a common female name in Calcate City. Are you also a local?” Asked Gulf with a smile.

Before Katrina replied, Anna said in advance, “No, she is not. Sister Katrina is from a noble family in another province.”

“From a noble family? That explains your rare elegance among mercenaries.” Gulf was in deep thought. “As a matter of fact, I do feel that you look familiar, Katrina. I think I saw you somewhere before...”

Katrina looked more or less gloomy. Her family had been passed on for three hundred years. As their bloodline, she must’ve inherited part of the looks of her ancestors. She thought to herself, “After the Congress controls the Schachran Empire, and when remote communication and discuss are easier, I will establish my magic tower in this place...”

“Uncle Gulf, every beautiful lady is familiar to you. Tell me the intelligence!” Anna pointed out the truth straightforwardly.

Gulf put down the cloth and rubbed his forehead, before he said in a low voice. “The incident was first discovered by one Ivan, who was the servant of the villa. He saw a hall of blood and bodies when he went for cleaning. There were nobles, knights, ordinary people, artists, and even... a sorcerer...”

In honor of Saint Ivan, the most common name in the Schachran Empire was Ivan.

“A sorcerer?” Anna exclaimed. Official sorcerers were hard to come by in the Schachran Empire.

Katrina moved her eyes back and focused her attention.

“Yes. According to Ivan, the sorcerer was wearing a level-one arcana badge and a second-circle magic badge. I’ve asked other people about him with his appearance. It hadn’t been long since he came to Calcate City, and he had been searching for and purchasing the materials that sorcerers needed.” Gulf described the look of the sorcerer, mentioning that he had a black mole next to his left eye.

Katrina nodded in her heart. It was indeed the sorcerer who died.

Gulf continued. “It’s already weird enough that dozens of people of different identities died in the same hall, but what was even more weird was that there was an altar at the center of the hall. Although nothing was left on the altar, the vibe of slaughter and destruction could be sensed.”

“How did those people die? Was it suicide or homicide?” Katrina carefully asked a question that befitted her current identity, one which a curious and experienced female mercenary should ask. She could tell that Anna meant to ask the question, too.

In an even lower voice, Gulf said, “That’s the third weird part. Those people brutalized each other to death. Also, it was not a one-versus-one battle but a chaotic gang slaughter. Many victims had fatal wounds on every side of their body.”

“A sorcerer was killed by ordinary people and artists?” Even Anna found it unacceptable. “Did you mention knights?”

“There was a knight, but he was also killed.” Gulf was apparently scared when he described it. “There was no sign that the knight used his blood power, or residue of any magic. It suggests... It suggests that they held a ‘festival of killing’ as ordinary people, and... and based on the position of bodies, none of them attempted to escape.”

That was much more detailed than the information the Congress of Magic gave to Katrina. Considering for a moment, she asked, “Could they have been affected by illusion? I’m told that the altars of certain cults may influence the mind and make the believers do the most unbelievable things.”

“You are truly a noble lady. You know cults rather well.” Gulf’s fear was gone and said with a smile, “That’s a possibility, which is why the case is described as demon worship. At least, devils wouldn’t let their believers attack each other. Even though they were to gather the pure power of faith through slaughter, they wouldn’t have chosen their followers as the targets. Of course, I don’t know how the Church ascertained that the victims were all demon believers. Perhaps, they were just ‘ordinary people’...”

“It sounds really weird and much more terrible than the bards’ stories.” Anna patted her chest. “Uncle Gulf, is there anything else that is strange?”

“Strange?” Gulf recalled carefully. “The victims all looked peaceful after their death, as if they were freed but not killed by each other. Right, Ivan felt cold when he entered the hall, but it was still warm in May.”

Anna’s curiosity was fully activated. She kept asking for more details, but that was as much as Gulf knew. He couldn’t help but sigh, “There may have been anomalies, but Ivan was too horrified to notice them. After the Church’s investigation, the villa was cleansed by holy light for fear that the demonic air would affect Calcate City. So, we’ll never know the anomalies even if there were any.”

“The Church cleansed the villa with holy light...” Katrina repeated it. That was a major setback for her investigation. It meant that few valuable traces could be found on the spot.

Then, pretending to be curious, she asked, “Did Ivan remember anything else later? It’s been several months.”

“That’s right. Did he?” Anna nodded. She was upset by the ‘broken’ story.

Gulf tried to put on a smile, but the smile only gave away his panic and fear. “Ivan had nightmares every day from witnessing the bloody scene. Also, the Church gave him a huge reward. So, he came to my place to drink every day, and he could only go to sleep when he was too drunk to remember anything. However, one week after the case, he accidentally fell into the river when he was drunk, and he drowned.”

“Well...” Anna felt coldness surging into her heart, and she did not dare ask any further.

Katrina felt more or less the same, but she was more wary and frustrated than scared. Although the mission would be considered accomplished if she brought back the files she collected so far now that all the leads were gone, she still wanted to investigate more as an excellent arcanist who

had intense curiosity and desire of exploration. “Do I need to sneak into the inquisition in Calcate City and peep at their files of investigation?”

She was not very confident about that, because such a major city must’ve been under the watch of a red robe.

Having been scared by the demon worship case, Anna had a few cups of wine to suppress her shock, before she returned to the hotel with Katrina. At this moment, Yakov, who reported the activation of his blood power to the city hall, had come back.

He was sharing the news that he would be officially knighted one week later with other mercenaries in ecstasy, when he saw that Anna and Katrina walked in pale. His smile was gone, and he asked concernedly, “What’s wrong?”

Seeing no strangers around, Anna told him the intelligence they obtained from the tavern.

“An official sorcerer... What did he look like?” After hearing her introduction attentively, Yakov asked after a brief hesitation.

Anna pointed at her eye. “He had a black mole next to his left eye.”

“A black mole...” Yakov repeated and did not say anything more.

Katrina looked at him and went back to her room, claiming that she was tired.

When the night was dark and quiet, a shadow flashed out of Katrina's room like a cold window and snuck towards the district of nobles.

Before her journey, she had exchanged for a bottle of potion that could activate her blood power, considering that it might be inconvenient to perform magic in the Schachran Empire. After the long-time modifications of the Congress of Magic, the power triggered by the potion was already as good as the power triggered by oneself. However, its effect was still limited, and the receiver could not reach the level of grand knights.

In the hustling wind, Katrina, who had activated the blood power of 'Snowstorm', seemed to have been melted into the environment. Although the Church had cleansed the villa with holy light, she was still going to investigate it in person. This was similar to experiments. One could only believe it after they confirmed it personally. Furthermore, it was highly unreasonable that an official sorcerer would worship a demon soon after he came to Calcate City.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 709: Unexpected Encounter

In a corner of the district of nobles, the blowing wind swept the evergreens.

Under the cover of the trees was a two-floored villa with a round dome. It had the characteristic style of the Schachran Empire, but the villa looked particularly creepy in the darkness for some reason, as if a monster was looming in the place.

Observing the villa from far away, Katrina could not tell whether it was a real premonition of her Host Star of Destiny, or it was merely her psychological effect. Her figure that seemed to have melted into the wind grew more and more vague until it completely disappeared.

Although a few months had passed and the defense should've been canceled after the villa was cleansed with holy light, Katrina dared not be careless. She still used spells such as 'Advanced Stealth' to sneak in instead using only the blood power. She trusted and loved magic more than blood power!

The silver moon, not covered by the clouds, illuminated the ground with watery light, leaving long shadows that looked like twisted monsters behind the trees. At such a bright night, Katrina approached the villa without a sound. The effect of 'Advanced Stealth' prevented her from leaving any trace behind. Even though a wagon rode past her, nobody sensed that a lady was walking right next to them.

Katrina walked into the villa easily. Then, she vaporized her form to get into the hall, before she performed a thorough examination on the 'crime scene'.

The hall had a floor of stone bricks which had smooth surfaces. They were enormous and consistent with the Schachran Empire's style. One of them was as huge as five of the same bricks in Allyn.

Looking at the reflection of the ceiling on the bricks, Katrina had a feeling that mirrors had been embedded on the floor. She thought to herself, "Even the floor in Count Calcate's residence wouldn't be so smooth. This serves no purpose other than tripping over the guests and making it easy to see what is inside the ladies' skirts. Did the owner of the villa design it for that? Or was it for something else?"

The nobles of the Schachran Empire were always more extravagant than their ‘peers’ in the south. Katrina would not rule out such a possibility just yet.

Under Advanced Stealth, her body was revealed every time she cast a spell, but she was invisible again after it was done. Therefore, Katrina’s appearance that had been changed blinked on the floor all the time. Her long blond hair and her green eyes were all clear.

“It’s been a few months since this place was cleansed by holy light. Even the most weird magical spell seems useless...” Katrina performed all the investigation magic she could think of but to little avail.

Of course, her efforts were not entirely in vain. At least, she could tell from the marks on the floor that nobody performed any extraordinary power back then, or the marks wouldn’t have been as shallow.

“No usage of extraordinary power suggests only two possibilities: the official sorcerer was completely controlled by demons, or his power was sealed in advance. If the former is true, he would have used the most destructive magic when he was grasped by the desire of slaughter. Therefore, his power must’ve been sealed whether or not he worshiped demons.” Katrina reached a conclusion.

If the sorcerer joined the killing festival for his own purpose and prevented himself from using magic, any purpose wouldn’t have been more important than his life at the critical moment. He would’ve used magic subconsciously.

“That is to say, I can understand how the sorcerer’s magic was sealed from his body...” Katrina thought of a clue but waved her hand regretfully. “However, the Church has blamed the demon worship on him and burnt his body. Bloody Church.”

She cursed despite her usual manners. The North Church certainly needed a scapegoat to appease the nobles and the people, and nobody suited it better than a wicked sorcerer who died on the spot.

The hall was empty because the furniture and altar had been cleansed. Katrina paced for a while and thought of something else. “Gulf mentioned that a knight was also killed there. His blood power was obviously sealed, too. While his body couldn’t be placed in his family graveyard, it should be in an advanced public graveyard. After all, nobles must not be disgraced...”

She was refreshed after seizing the clue. Examining the upper floor and the basement, she found nothing of value. When she was about to leave, she sensed that her alarm spell was triggered, so she looked at the window in the garden.

Then, Katrina noticed that the will of a familiar knight spread in through the window gap, investigating the situation inside coldly and carefully.

When the will reached Katrina, her ‘Advanced Stealth’ produced ripples and feigned her nonexistence perfectly.

Crack, crack, crack. The window was slowly opened by a piece of thin ice, and the ‘criminal’ who opened the window disappeared.

A shadow crawled in. He was tall and brawny, with snowflake patterns appearing on his hands.

“Yakov, he’s really here...” Standing at the center of the hall, Katrina watched the stranger walk around and check. It was easy for her to tell who he was from the familiar air.

However, she was not surprised at Yakov's arrival. His reaction was weird when Anna mentioned the dead sorcerer.

Yakov was relieved after confirming that there were no items or suspicious traces, but he never noticed Katrina who stood behind him all the time so openly.

"I was considering how to interrogate him. Now that we've met, I should seize the opportunity..." Katrina made a decision.

Yakov stood straight and was going to check the upstairs, when he suddenly sensed uneasiness. Without any delay, his body began huge and was covered in frost, while he thought to himself, "Am I being ambushed?"

Hardly had the idea occurred to him when his head hummed and everything became blurry.

"I have a question for you." Then, he heard an unpredictable, genderless voice.

Although the voice sounded weird, Yakov felt that the voice was so familiar and soft that it sounded both from the Lord he worshiped and the girl he secretly loved. Therefore, without any resistance, he replied in adulation, "What question?"

"What's your relationship with the sorcerer who died here? Why did you investigate this place?" The voice came again.

Yakov subconsciously wanted to refuse to answer, but the uncanny state of submission and admiration made him admit frankly, “In may, I happened upon an official sorcerer and cooperated with him for a while.”

“I provided intelligence for him and led him to search for resources, and he offered me files about blood power in return. Thanks to those files, I corrected my mistakes and found the way to become a knight. Then, I went to the frozen land on another mission. When I returned, I was told that the sorcerer was involved in demon worship.”

“Fearing that I might be involved, and since this is a critical moment of my knighthood, I came here to search, hoping to destroy all the clues that may still exist.”

Katrina was stunned. “Why would you be involved? Was he alone when he worked with you?”

The sorcerer was already dead, and he certainly did not have Yakov’s items, or Yakov would be interrogated the moment he was back. What was he concerned about?

“Yes, he was alone.” Yakov replied honestly as if she were his liege whom he pledged loyalty to.

Alone? He came to Calcate City with a few partners, but he left them and worked with Yakov... Katrina crossed her arms and asked, “What about the other question?”

“Because... Because our cooperation was facilitated by Duke Duda. Before I went to the frozen land, that sorcerer gladly told me that Duke Duda invited him for a private party, and that it was a great chance for him to join their circle.” After a brief hesitation, Yakov admitted honestly, “I don’t know what circle it is exactly, but Duke Duda has always been strong and mysterious as the master of Calcate City’s underworld. I fear that the sorcerer’s death was related to him...”

“If the Church found out about him, the mercenaries who were in touch with the sorcerer like me would certainly be killed. I happen to know that the sorcerer had the habit of leaving secret marks. So, I came and planned to destroy the marks.”

Pondering for a moment, Katrina asked, “Is Duke Duda still alive?”

“Yes, as alive as ever. I saw him in the city hall this morning.” Yakov said, his body trembling, as if he was very scared of this Duke Duda.

Katrina inquired again but didn’t get any other valuable information. Therefore, she asked Yakov to tell her the secret marks of the sorcerer. Then, she vaporized her body and left the hall, returning to the hotel.

In the hall, Yakov ‘accepted’ Katrina’s order and stood there in a daze, until a chilly wind from the wind shivered him and woke him up. He felt that he just had a dream in which he told someone else his deepest secrets.

“This... This is terrifying... Was it the fifth-circle spell, ‘Dominate Humans’?” Yakov speculated what happened to him. “Has the Congress of Magic sent investigators?”

“Thankfully, the powerful sorcerer only needed clues and did not want to kill anyone. Otherwise...” Yakov thought in fear. His life could’ve been taken away easily.

“I thought that I was finally an expert after I activated my blood power and became a knight. I didn’t know until right now that knighthood is just the beginning. There are too many dangerous

people above me. The fifth-circle sorcerer just now was already way stronger than me, not to mention those sorcerers and radiant knights...”

Calming himself time, Yakov hurried to leave. Under the freezing wind, he realized that his clothes had been wet by the cold sweat on his back.

.....

On the second day, Yakov, pretending to be normal, went to the guild of adventurers for his business, and Katrina asked about the dead knight and the place where he was buried with Anna.

When the night fell, Katrina entered the clean but creepy graveyard according to her intelligence and found the tomb of the dead knight.

Right when she was about to open the tomb with magic, a magnetic male laughed from the crown of the tree on her back. “An investigator from the Congress of Magic?”

“Who is it?” Katrina turned around warily. She didn’t notice anything wrong when she checked the surroundings just now, which suggested that the man was better at hiding than she was.

A gold-haired handsome man, wearing a black shirt and a red coat, stood on the top of the tree. Holding a cup of wine that did not quite agree with the atmosphere, he greeted, “Good evening, beautiful lady. You may call me Viscount Carendia.”

“Viscount Carendia? You’re Mr. Rhine’s grandson?” Katrina associated the male before him with the vampire viscount that her teacher described before.

“Huh?” Viscount Carendia rubbed his face and appeared rather surprised. “Am I a celebrity now? Who’s your teacher?”

“My teacher is Mr. Atom Controller.” Katrina was more or less relieved since it was someone she knew.

“That monster... No, I mean...” Viscount Carendia blurted out. Chuckling to cover himself, he said, “Your teacher is a real genius that I admire very much. Right, I’m here to investigate the unusual death of my descendants. I believe that we share the same purpose.”

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Chapter 710: Stalkers

“One of your descendants died in the demon worship case, too? Why didn’t the Church say anything about it?” Asked Katrina in surprise.

Vampires were as ‘evil’ as sorcerers. The Church could’ve totally blamed the whole thing on them, too.

Viscount Carendia shook the wine cup in his hands. “He was a descendant that I had from one of my trips to the Schachran Empire before. He was a distinguished noble. Therefore, after his identity as a vampire was confirmed with his body, the nobles pressured the Church to hide it in case the image of nobles was tarnished. After all, there were ‘evil’ sorcerers who could take the blame.”

“That explains a lot. Then, have you found any leads, Mr. Viscount?” Katrina nodded and asked expectantly, hoping that the vampire viscount who had also located the graveyard could provide more clues.

Leaning against the tree lazily, Viscount Carendia did not seem to care as much about his personal image as other vampires would. “Although I can sense the death of a descendant remotely, I cannot confirm who it is exactly. So, by the time I came here with enough intelligence, most of the valuable clues were already gone. Chances are that I don’t even know as much as you do.”

“Have you checked the knight’s body? What sealed his blood power?” Asking, Katrina opened the tomb with magic, not entirely letting go of her wariness. Just because the guy was an ‘old acquaintance’ didn’t mean that he was not dangerous.

“It’s true that I’m good at identifying the marks on bodies.” Viscount Carendia hinted that Katrina had asked the right person, but then he shook his head. “But you’ve got to have a body that I can examine.”

Katrina was stunned. “Are you suggesting that there are no bodies in the tomb?”

The coffin was pulled out by magic after the tomb was opened. Then, when the cover was moved away, the coffin revealed nothing but clothes and an urn.

“If we know that something must be wrong with the body, how could the people who organized the demon worship party have neglected it? According to what I learnt, the nobles dare not be careless about this vampire plus demon worshiper, so they cleansed the body with fire before they buried him.” Viscount Carendia looked rather gloomy under the silver moonlight.

Vampire plus demon worshiper? It seems that this knight is Viscount Carendia’s descendant... Katrina thought to herself.

“I investigated his family and found nothing suspicious. His close friends are also in the circle of nobles. It’s not easy for us to investigate each and every one of them. We might as well sneak into the inquisition for the Church files.” Said Viscount Carendia with a bitter plan.

It’s very similar to my ‘plan’, Katrina thought to herself. “I can apply to the Congress for the aid of senior-rank sorcerers.”

And you can ask your father to come to help. They should be powerful vampires in the level of duke or count.

“He was my descendant. Until real danger emerges, I have to find out the criminal myself as his ‘parent’.” Viscount Carendia said with unusual solemnity.

Parent... Looking at Viscount Carendia’s handsome face and charming gold hair, Katrina suddenly had a feeling of absurdity. Such a long-life species could see the grandsons of the grandsons of the grandsons of their grandsons if nothing went wrong, which was impossible for her to imagine.

“I’ve investigated the sorcerer who died and looked for the people he was in touch with, but nobody ever saw him except during the deals. They do not know whom he acted with. He must’ve changed his appearance. Do you have any leads about that?” Viscount Carendia revealed his purpose.

Katrina thought for a moment. She was alone in this place. There were plenty of experts in Carendia City, which was the third largest city in the north province. It would be safer for her if she had someone to help her. Therefore, she informed Viscount Carendia of the intelligence she obtained from Yakov.

“Duke Duda was one of my descendants close associates. It seems that he is truly a suspect.” Viscount Carendia said that with the rhythm of a poem. The laziness on his face was gone, and his gold eyes were glittering.

Most importantly, this Duke Duda was rather mysterious, and Viscount Carendia suspected him in the first place.

“Most of the leads are broken right now, but the existing ones all point at Duke Duda. Perhaps, we should ‘visit’ him sometime. Katrina, would you like to come with me?” Viscount Carendia called Katrina by her name as if they were close friends.

With a vague smile, Katrina said, “I was going to invite you, Mr. Viscount. However, Duke Duda lives in the district nobles right now. I fear that we have to wait for other opportunities.”

“He has to go out of the city at some point.” Viscount Carendia drank up his wine and unfolded the black cape on his back. “I’ll come to you when the day comes.”

He seemed to have been melted into the darkness, leaving a chuckle and a humorous remark, “He thinks that some big shot is backing him up, but do we not have one as well? Perhaps, ours is even bigger and more monstrous...”

“More monstrous...” Katrina subconsciously repeated. Then, she looked around and patted her chest. “I almost described my teacher as a monster just like him. Thank god my teacher is not here...”

Time flew. Both worried and expectant, Yakov was knighted and given a manor out of the city. So, he packed up his stuff and led his subordinates to his fief.

“Sister Katrina, are you really not coming with us?” Anna seemed to be sobbing, unwilling to be separated from her sister-like friend. Her mother had died when she was little, and she always yearned for the caring of older females.

Yakov coughed and stammered, “As a matter of fact, you always need a place to live in, and hotels are costly.”

Katrina shook her head with a smile. “I’ve found a few partners to go to the desert with me, so I’ll act with them. I appreciate your kindness. I’ll visit you after the adventure is over.”

Then, it was the official farewell.

“Sister Katrina, you’ve found new partners? How come I didn’t know?” Asked Anna in confusion.

“You’ve been as busy as a bee recently. How could you know?” Katrina and Layria were both patient and meticulous. That was why they distinguished themselves in material studies.

“Actually, with your conditions, Sister Katrina, you don’t have to make a fortune through adventures; plenty of people are willing to offer it to you.” Said Anna half-jokingly.

Katrina rubbed her gold hair with a smile, “That is an easy way but not the way I want. Only the things that you truly grasp belong to you. They are more steady and can help you walk further.”

She subtly rejected the hint in Anna’s words with the attitude of arcana studies.

“Sister Katrina, you sound so philosophical...” Anna sniffed.

You don’t know the first thing about philosophy... Katrina had mixed feelings when she recalled the Evans field equation and the unknown features of the microscopic particles. Even her teacher said that he was often puzzled. Whoever was not confused by the microscopic domain and quantum mechanics hadn’t really studied them at all.

Thinking about that, she suddenly sensed a deep chasm between her and her friends. She cannot join their life, and they cannot understand anything she worked on.

Seeing Yakov, Anna and the rest of them off, Katrina packed up and checked out, melting into the crowd on the street.

As she walked on, Katrina suddenly combed her hair and zigzagged in the alleys of Calcate in a hurry.

When she attempted to pass an empty alley, a crazy-looking man suddenly appeared before her and cackled, "You are very keen, but it is not enough to get rid of us!"

His nose sniffed, and he said lasciviously, "Your perfume betrayed you."

At this moment, another brawny man approached Katrina from behind, blocking her way of escape. "My lady, are you luring us by choosing this empty alley?"

"Why did you stalk me?" Asked Katrina, her voice 'shivering'.

"Because you hung around with them..." The man before her suddenly stopped and laughed. "Do it. We have plenty of time to get to know this beautiful lady."

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when he saw Katrina raising her head. Her blue eyes were ripping and captivating, like the clearest lake in a forest.

The man behind her grabbed Katrina's neck, but suddenly, his face hurt and his teeth flew out as he was entirely blown back into the wall.

Looking at his partner who attacked him, he asked in shock, "What are you doing?"

A green light glittered, and his eyes also lost vigor. He stood there in a daze.

Clap, clap, clap. Somebody applauded. A gold-haired male appeared at the corner of the alley and smiled, “Sometimes, magic is truly a time-saver.”

“Mr. Viscount, I didn’t expect to run into you here.” Katrina bowed courteously.

“No, I came specifically to meet you, because Duke Duda left the city for his manor.” Viscount Carendia went to Katrina.

When he passed the brawny men, his nose suddenly twitched, and he said in disgust, “What a filthy smell. They are savage werewolves. Damn it. They are involved in this, too?”

“Werewolves?” Looking at the two brawny men who had grey hair, Katrina identified them with magic.

...

The night was dark.

Yakov suddenly woke up from a nightmare, only to discover that his body did not have the slightest strength. He looked around in shock and saw Anna and the other mercenaries who were also kept in the prison.

“This is...” It was not until then that he remembered that the previous battle was not a nightmare but what happened in reality. It was impossible for him to resist the grand knight, so he was knocked out.

“Boss...” Anna’s tearful voice echoed. She did not understand why they were ambushed in the manor by a bunch of enemies that they could not resist when they had already got rid of the dangerous mercenary life! She was chilled and horrified just thinking about it.

Would they be killed this time?

Taking a deep breath, Yakov held back his fear with his knightly willpower. He pacified his partners, “Don’t worry. Since they didn’t directly kill us, it means that we are still useful. There’s still a chance.”

“Hehe. You were not killed only because the ritual demands living creatures.” A creepy voice came from out of the prison cell.

Yakov’s pupils constricted. “Duke Duda!”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 711: Demon Worship Ritual

The voice which sounded like cold wind chuckled. “Is there any point in recognizing me? You will eventually die here. I was going to kill you to eliminate all the leads, but you went to the frozen land on a mission and could not be localized. That’s why it has been postponed to this moment.”

Before Yakov replied, he burst into laughter. “You should hate your Boss Yakov instead of me. If he hadn’t got involved in this, you would be enjoying your life, but right now, even if you don’t know anything, I will not let you go. Cry, tremble, and be devastated while you enjoy the last episode of your life!”

After the cocky laughter, the prison cell fell into utter silence again. Yakov’s curses, mockery and begging had no replies at all.

“...I will escape out of this place. I will tear your heads off and feed them to bears!” Yakov did not stutter at all at this moment, but gradually, his was the only voice in the whole prison cell. The mercenaries who cursed with him became quiet.

Under their weird eyes, Yakov stopped ‘taunting’ and looked around at the mercenaries, only to see their indifferent if not hateful faces.

Chilled, his voice became low. “Do you hate me for involving you in Duke Duda’s matter?”

“We didn’t do anything, but we’ve been caught and may be killed any moment. Boss Yakov, do you not think we should be angry? You should at least let us know what it’s about?” Hack, Yakov’s right-hand man, asked bitterly.

“Why didn’t you mention that you pissed off Duke Duda? I wouldn’t have stayed if you said that!”

“Ass*ole, you should answer for what you did alone!”

“Enough! That’s enough!” Anna suddenly shrieked in fury. “What did you say when Boss Yakov became knight? Boss Yakov never wanted to get us involved. It’s only because Duda is too vicious a villain!”

In tears of anger, she could not accept that the peaceful and happy team became this!

“Is Sister Katrina right that one’s real personalities will never be revealed until the most dangerous and desperate moment?” She somehow recalled something that Katrina said to her earlier.

Anna’s shriek and accusation silenced the prison cell. Then, Yakov’s dull voice echoed again. “It’s alright if you resent me, but are you going to abandon the hope of survival by fighting amongst ourselves?”

“But there’s a grand knight...”

“Duke Duda hasn’t taken action yet. He must be even more horrifying!”

“It’s hopeless!”

Yakov said calmly but firmly, “Only after you try will you know if there’s a chance of escape. Duke Duda said that obviously to stoke discord. As far as I know, he revels in the pain and desperation of other people. So, I wouldn’t let him get what he wants even if I die. What about you? Are you going to die being mocked?”

“Well said!” Somebody applauded outside. Duke Duda said with a smile, “Yakov, I remember that there was a very beautiful lady in your team. She was more gorgeous than most noble ladies, and you seem to like her very much, don’t you?”

“What do you want?” Yakov clutched the bars.

Anna shouted in anger and fear, “It has nothing to do with Sister Katrina! She joined us halfway and doesn’t know anything!”

“I love destroying what people like bit by bit in front of them while I enjoy their countenance and reactions. That reason is good enough.” Duda laughed even more crazily. “Two adult werewolves have been sent to capture her. They are both very strong. Maybe, she wouldn’t be able to bear them. Hahaha.”

“Ass*ole!” Yakov shook the iron cage hard, his eyes bloodshot.

Anna shook her head in horror. “You are a demon! A real demon!”

In tales, demons loved slaughter and destruction most.

“That’s the greatest compliment for me.” Duda was not infuriated at all but laughed in satisfaction. “Right, I’m in a good mood, but I’ve decided to advance your time of death to right now. In such a way, you will never have the chance to escape.”

Hearing that, the mercenaries all lost their momentum. The morale that was just boosted by Yakov turned into desperation.

...

Thanks to the sparse population of the Schachran Empire, the manors here were much larger than Rentato’s, and the quiet manor before them was even more so.

“This is Duke Duda’s manor.” On an evergreen, Viscount Carendia stood on the end of a branch as if he were weightless, his black cape shivering with the twigs.

Katrina floated next to him without saying a word. She summoned her spiritual power, and a black-and-white eye appeared before her. It looked mysterious and creepy.

She followed the sorcerers’ code of conduct and tried to avoid unprepared battles.

“Secret Eye?” Viscount raised his head and looked at it. A few illusionary bats flew out of his body and snuck into the manor with the Secret Eye.

A moment later, most of the view in the manor was unfolded in their ‘eyes’. The open and secret sentries, the traps, the number of enemies, their distribution, and their average ability were all manifested.

“Several places are protected by mysterious powers. We have to approach them for reconnaissance.” Katrina had always been concise in battles. Then, her body turned transparent, and she disappeared into the night sky.

“The patrols and guards outside cannot discover us at all...” Viscount Carendia said lazily and casually, his body melting into the darkness. “Right, take care of the savage werewolves’ senses.”

The defenders and traps in the manor were knights and reverends at most, nothing worth mentioning for the two experts. It was actually the few wandering werewolves that called for wariness.

They soon entered the manor. As if they were walking among a bunch of puppets, they reached the main hall of the manor!

Feeble waves flashed, and Katrina performed the Secret Eye again, letting it enter the main house through the gap.

...

An altar made of unknown materials appeared before the mercenaries, while swords, daggers and other weapons were placed randomly on the ground.

The altar was completely black, engraved with hideous faces in all directions. They had horns on their head and twisted faces. From their protruding teeth, red blood was dripping nonstop.

After the blood reached the complicated runes at the bottom of the altar, a vague bloody mist was raised, spreading a stinky but sweet smile.

At the center of the altar, a fuzzy human-shaped statue was placed, but it had two pointy demon horns on the forehead.

Its crimson eyes were extremely creepy in the darkness. One glimpse at it was enough to fill a person with the desire to destroy everything in disgust.

Yakov, Anna and the other mercenaries were shoved to the empty ground before the altar. They were more or less agitated after seeing the statue and smelling the scent.

Duda, who appeared gloomy and arrogant even with his beard, put on a cruel smile. "Those are your weapons, and your partners are your foes. Whoever survives in the end will be set free."

"Who will believe you? You are a demon-worshipping lunatic!" Anna sniffed, but she did step on a short sword. After all, they needed weapons to escape.

Duda patted his hands, and werewolves and knights walked out of the corner.

He chuckled. “You are free to not believe me, but as a result, your opponents will be them, twelve knight-level experts. Right, one of them is a grand knight. Do you think it is more hopeful to beat them?”

Looking at the strong man who had a giant sword in both hands, Yakov felt that his heart was heavy. That was the grand knight who captured him alive. They both had the blood power of frost giants, but he was completely overpowered.

Was it possible to defeat them? Now that even Yakov and Anna were somewhat desperate, the other mercenaries were even worse. Somebody shouted, “Duke Duda, Yakov is a knight. We can’t defeat him even if we are combined!”

“Hank!” Anna stared at the deputy of the mercenary team angrily.

Yakov looked pale. Was one of his brothers going to kill him for a chance of survival?

“Rest assured. Yakov’s blood power has been confined.” Duda smiled.

The vague mist became more and more intense, and many mercenaries’ eyes were bloodshot. Yes, Yakov was the one who got them into this. They would be freed as soon as he was killed!

“Yakov, this is all your fault. If you feel guilty, don’t resist, and give the hope of survival to us.” Breathing heavily, Hank took up a long sword.

with clinks, the other mercenaries picked up their weapons.

“No!” Anna shrieked desperately at their ugliness.

Looking at the mercenaries who stood on their opposite side, Yakov fell into awkward silence.

“Yakov, don’t try to be a good guy. If you are killed, I’ll give your Ms. Katrina to my werewolf friends. They like pretty girls best.” Said Duda.

His noise making obscure noises, Yakov struggled to pick up a longsword.

Duda smiled in satisfaction, and the statue on the altar seemed clearer.

...

“As a matter of fact, I don’t think the brainless werewolves really appreciate beauty. For them, females are the same.” Viscount Carendia refuted Duda’s words casually.

Katrina cast Mechanized Mind upon herself to hold back her fury. Indifferently, she said, “It seems that Duda is the host of the demon worship ritual. We’ll have leads after we capture him.”

“Yes. There are no other experts around except two grand knights.” Viscount Carendia sorted his bow tie as if he were going to a dinner.

...

In tears of pain of desperation, Anna held her short sword and intended to fight until death.

Her head was dizzy because of the stink of blood, and she seemed unable to control her hate. She hoped to kill all the hideous fellows.

Duda stepped back and stopped before a gate that had weird patterns. Then, he raised his hands and announced, “Let the feast of slaughter and betrayal begin!”

Bloody light arose, and the mercenaries’ lost strength was back.

Raising her short sword, Anna slashed it at Hank painfully.

No. We cannot brutalize each other!

Kill him! He is a wicked traitor!

No, no!

While she struggled in desperation, she heard a deafening explosion and sensed the scorching heat. The gate of the hall was broken by an enormous fireball!

“Lucien’s Fireball?” Everyone’s eyes were frozen.

Due to the explosion, the mercenaries stopped the battle that hadn’t started yet. They saw a handsome man walking into the hall from the dark night outside, followed by a gorgeous lady who had blond hair and green eyes. They roamed so casually as if they were joining a ball.

“Sister Katrina?” Thought Anna in her dizziness.

Yakov and the other mercenaries could not believe their eyes, either.

At this moment, dark shadows of wolves charged at the two intruders. The werewolves were the first to be back to themselves and performed ‘Unholy Blight’, because they smelled the disgusting scent of vampires!

The ‘Unholy Blight’ hit Viscount Carendia and Katrina, but they broke like mirrors.

“Hehe.” A chuckle echoed, and the broken shadows turned into illusionary black bats that carried the intense air of sleep!

“Crap!”

“It’s a trap!”

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Their eyelids turning heavy, the werewolves collapsed one after another.

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Chapter 712: Dazzling Magic

The illusions were broken, and countless black bats spluttered out, filling the whole hall. All the knights and werewolves felt so tired that they simply wanted to lie down and have a good sleep. Those illusionary bats were mostly gathered around the grand knight with the blood power of frost giants and Duda Duda.

Right when Katrina broke the gate with ‘Lucien’s Fireball’, Duda’s body started to change. His brawny body that was almost 1.9 meters tall was further stretched, and his muscles bulged out

with black scales. His eyes turned entirely bloodshot, as if he had lost all his sanity and had the purest dire of slaughter and destruction left.

“Demon bloodline!” Enshrouded in the intense bloody mist from the altar, Yakov, Anna and the other mercenaries saw the scene in their dizziness. Alarmed, they were more or less refreshed.

The bloody air around Duda blocked the illusionary bats. Two wounds that reached the bones appeared on his back, from which a pair of black wings grew out. As the wings flapped, he ascended from the ground and looked down at the hall and the altar.

That was exactly the advantages of the demon and devil bloodlines. They could fly and claim the commanding heights even though they were mere grand knights!

Suddenly, a crazy wind was blown at the intense bloody mist and soon cleared it up. The mercenaries felt that their heads were clear, as if they were never woken up from the nightmare until right now. They couldn't have been more afraid by the feelings of slaughter and hate they had just now. If it had continued, they would've turned into demons who killed their partners!

“Sister Katrina!” Anna exclaimed in shock, because it was exactly Katrina who was confronting Duda in the hall. She stood in midair on nothing, and her long gold hair danced crazily in the wind. She was also holding a staff with translucent gems in her right hand, from which a vague fog was spreading out.

The fog quickly spread out, unaffected by the wind.

After seeing the incredible scene, Anna felt that she was still in a dream, which had been visited by the powerful sorcerers in the bards' tales. They could fly with nothing, they could control the weather, and they could create fire and ice. They were the mysterious and horrifying sorcerers!

As the fog spread out, except for where the mercenaries were, the hall was soon drowned in the haze.

The werewolves and knights who lunged at Katrina were stunned. Their eyes lost color, and they let out meaningless syllables, while they drooled beyond their control.

They seemed to have been deprived of the ability to think, and they only had a shell left.

The horrifying werewolves and knights in her eyes had been reduced into idiots by nothing but the fog. Anna raised her head and looked at the ceiling in shock, “Sister Katrina is a sorcerer? And a very powerful one?”

Katrina’s current appearance fit her imagination of sorcerers, except that she was not as cunning and vicious.

“Mind Mist? A middle-rank sorcerer... Katrina was the terrifying sorcerer I met the other night...” As an experienced mercenary, Yakov had learnt many things about magic through various channels. After he became an official knight, he also received more files from Count Calcate, which gave him a new, more detailed understanding about sorcery. Furthermore, he had collaborated with an official sorcerer before, so he was able to tell what the magic was based on its performance. But of course, his knowledge was limited to the common spells.

Looking at Katrina’s gold hair in midair, the transparent magic runes that surrounded and protected her, and the black fireballs launched by Duke Duda to be absorbed by the runes instead of causing explosions, Yakov felt that his head was completely blank. He was both shocked and frustrated, and he could barely sense anything.

Hooooooooo!

The grand knight who had the blood power of frost giants expanded. Surrounded by snowflakes, a frigid halo spread out and exiled the 'Mind Mist' around. However, a shadow emerged behind his back, who had a pair of fair and long hands as well as coldly-glittering fingernails. Then, as if he were playing the heptachord, the shadow extended the hand and cut the throat of the 'frost giant'.

Vague black air flashed, and the thick ice at the throat of the 'frost giant' melted without a sound.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!”

The 'frost giant' screamed in pain, and blood poured out of his throat. He waved his giant swords back, only to break an illusion. Viscount Carendia had appeared in another direction. He licked his right hand and said, “The blood tastes not bad at all, and it is not toxic.”

Such perverted behavior was performed so gracefully and naturally as if he were really tasting the cuisines that the host treated him with.

The frost giants had terrifying strength and were good at ice spells, but those were only useful if they could hit the enemy. Faced with Viscount Carendia whose speed and agility far exceeded level-five grand knights, he was like a helpless kid who got scratched now and then. Viscount Carendia even had the time to take down the werewolves who had been stunned, because he truly detested their smiles.

Looking at the handsome, strong man below and Katrina who was casting the most brilliant spells up above, Anna thought to herself, her fear and concerns gone, “Sorcerers and vampires truly deserve to be the eternal combination of villains in the bards' tales. They are so awesome!”

“Thank god Sister Katrina is here, otherwise...”

She patted her chest, feeling lucky. She also admired Katrina’s performance.

While Duda was a level-five grand knight and had demon blood power, he was unable to carry out his strength at all in front of a well-prepared sorcerer. He was affected by the spells and closer and closer to failure. His every attack was either deviated by illusions or blocked by Douglas’s Absorbing Wall and Stone Skin, achieving no results.

“This cannot go on...” Because he only had the demon blood power, Duda managed to keep the ability of thought in the battle. Seeing that the frost giant was about to be taken down by the vampire, he began to consider ways to get out of the situation.

Anna, who was slightly relieved, Yakov, who had complicated feelings, and the other mercenaries, who did not know what was going on, observed the battle. Suddenly, they saw that Duda snatched his left arm with his right hand, tearing it off and roaring astoundingly.

“What’s he doing?”

“Demons’ special ability?”

In their shock, they saw that Duda’s left arm exploded into splashing flesh and blood, which neutralized the vague mist and dispersed them.

The Mind Mist was gone, and the remaining werewolves and knights were back to normal. Some of them attacked Katrina with bows or semi-spells, and some charged at the mercenaries with swords, hammers and sticks, hoping to distract Katrina and Viscount Carendia.

The mercenaries were horrified by the ferocious werewolves and knights. They could barely hold their weapons tightly.

While Duda had no time to bother with him, Yakov managed to recover part of his knightly strength. He stood before everyone, holding his longsword, while he calmed the other mercenaries who were panicked. “Don’t be nervous. I’ll block them. As long as we can persist for one minute, Katrina will finish the battle.”

“Boss, I’ll help you.” Said Anna, even though her legs were shaking.

Right then, a photon of light appeared before her eyes. It seemed to be made of freezing ice, and the werewolves and knights in its range were all transformed into ice sculptures.

“How powerful...” Anna complimented in a low voice.

Yakov felt similarly, but his abundant experience stopped him from standing still. Instead, he jumped out and hit the ice sculptures.

Crack, crack, crack. The few knights and werewolves were broken into glittering pieces that looked like diamonds on the ground!

“Be careful!” Anna suddenly saw that a werewolf approached Katrina stealthily and leaped, trying to catch Katrina’s ankle. She reminded her anxiously.

Her voice was still echoing when the werewolf’s shadow moved. It suddenly hugged the werewolf and dragged the werewolf into a dark well that appeared out of nowhere. Then, the werewolf was nowhere to be seen.

“What a marvelous spell...” Anna was so fascinated by the view that she almost began to worship magic.

Duda who was in midair took the chance to flap his wings and flew downwards. His target was the door which had weird patterns.

The door was right next to him, when he suddenly felt that his guts were rolling and his blood was surging into his head. From dizziness, he hit the ground.

“Professor’s Infrasound Resonance?” He thought in panic.

Then, before he realized what was going on, the scales and armor that covered his body, after Katrina pointed her finger, turned into red, white, black and gold items, some solid, some gaseous and some yeti!

“Elemental Order?”

“Why can she cast spells so quickly? Does she not need to cool down at all?”

In disbelief, Duda watched his armor and his natural scales vanish into thin air. He knew that it was a unique spell of Lucien ‘Atom Controller’ Evans, and it was not strange that his student was capable of it. What was strange was that there was no cooldown between the two spells at all. There was no way that he could’ve avoided it!

What escaped his attention was that the beautiful and cold badge of silver moon on Katrina’s left chest flashed as if it were electric.

Having no time to think any further, he crashed the gate behind him, his body shivering.

In Anna’s eyes, Katrina’s hair stopped moving after the wind died down. She extended her right hand, and a fireball that was much larger and hotter than usual flew out, hitting Duda in his back.

BOOM!

Duda was almost blown into pieces, but he did manage to open the gate. On the other side, Viscount Carendia wiped his hands with a white handkerchief. The frost giant had collapsed before him, with the eyes still widened.

After the gate was opened, an identical altar appeared, except that the statue in the new altar was clearer. It was a human-shaped handsome demon with dark skin.

Right below the demon stood a young man who appeared rather flabbergasted. He had all the distinctive features of the Vladimir family.

“Viscount Andree?” Anna blurted out, sensing strong horror.

Andree shook his head, as if he were devastated. “You shouldn’t have come in. You forced me to do this. You forced me...”

“We’ve caught the culprit behind the curtain so quickly?” Viscount Carendia tossed the dirtied handkerchief to the ground and said to Katrina in amusement.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 713: The Old After The Young

“Viscount Andree...” Anna repeated the name in a low voice, with uncontrollable fear in her voice.

The young man standing before the altar was exactly Viscount Andree, their future liege. He had a chiseled face, which looked tough and gloomy. Just like the other members of the Vladimir family, he had gold hair, blue eyes and a unique strongman style. It’s a pity that his eyes were brimming with indescribable panic at this moment. There was no telling whether it was because Duda and the knight failed so easily, or it was because he was caught on the spot of demon worship.

However, Anna did not notice Viscount Andree's face. Her mind was full of the intelligence, tales and legends of the guy: a talented knight, the future Count Calcate, a member of the Vladimir family, a grand knight at such a young age, and a student of a legendary knight...

Any one of those feats would've scared a common mercenary like Anna. After they were combined, even though Viscount Andree hadn't attacked yet, and even though a powerful sorcerer and a vampire were floating next to her, she felt that her heart was trembling.

"There must be something unique about him. He's certainly one of the most distinguished level-five grand knights, or he wouldn't have been picked by a legendary knight..."

"He's the future Count Calcate. If our battle is discovered, the radiant knights to come will certainly kill us to keep our mouths shut..."

"Also... Also, he is a legendary knight's student. There's no telling if Nicolle, the Storm of Death, has given him any senior-rank items and special abilities... Would Sister Katrina be hunted by legendary knights if she kills him?"

Too many ideas occurred to Anna. Putting the question whether or not Sister Katrina and the handsome vampire could beat Viscount Andree, his identity was enough to stop them from trying their best. Nicolle would feel that somebody slapped him in the face if Andree was killed two months after becoming his student. Who could escape from the hunting of a legendary knight?

The same fear spread among the mercenaries, and Yakov was no exception. But he soon calmed down. This was Viscount Andree trying to kill them. If they did not resist, they would die now; if they resisted, they might survive. After all, for a legendary knight and Count Calcate, they were just ants. If they ran away, it was possible that those people would be too lazy to chase them.

So, it was not difficult to choose!

“You shouldn’t have come in. You forced me to do this. You forced me...” Before the altar, Andree simply repeated his words, and the bloody mist spreading from the altar got more and more intense.

“What’s wrong with him?” Viscount Carendia always considered himself knowledgeable, but he could not understand Andree’s current status, so he asked through the telepathic bond.

Katrina looked at the abnormal Viscount Andree indifferently and concluded, “He was probably corrupted by the power of demons and is in temporary derangement because we disrupted the ritual. Let’s seize the chance to take him down.”

While she talked, pure, brilliant colors glowed on her body, releasing dazzling light like fireworks towards the mist, the statue and the altar.

When she performed ‘Arcana Light’, she seemed to be wearing a feathered cloak of light and looked fabulous and sacred. For Anna and Yakov, she was like an angel walking on the earth. Such spells had been created by the Congress of Magic referring to divine power. They looked very similar except for the lack of special waves of the divine power.

As the light hit the bloody mist, dazzling brilliance burst out. However, the bloody mist around this altar was apparently more powerful. It was only less heavy after being hit by Arcana Light.

Katrina’s ‘Arcana Light’, on the other hand, woke up Viscount Andree. The fear in his eyes gone, he said gloomily, “Like I said, you forced me to do this!”

With his words and his gesture, dark lines glittered on the floor. They spread over from all directions and crawled into the altar, forming a cubic magic circle. Dark fog surged out of the altar, turning the statue hazy and cold.

“Hurry up! The ritual is almost finished!” Katrina attacked the altar and Viscount Andree with ‘Lucien’s Fireball’ and other spells while she urged Viscount Carendia to attack.

She sensed great danger when the ritual was activated. This ritual had almost been completed and was only waiting for the last trigger!

Viscount Carendia sniffed. “And I thought that things were going well...”

The cape behind him flapped and turned into the deepest darkness, enshrouding both himself and the altar and corroding the magic patterns.

Protected by the magic circle, Viscount Andree watched the collapse of the bloody mist and shook his head brutally, “You forced me to do this!”

He took out a dark dagger from his storage bag. It was ivory but carried the intense air of death.

“This is ‘Nicolle’s Invitation’, a senior-rank dagger that my teacher gave me. Now, I’m going to use it as the sacrifice for the ritual. It will turn into the purest and most complete death storm that will consume all of you!” Andree laughed crazily and threw ‘Nicolle’s Invitation’ into the altar.

“You are the master of darkness and the embodiment of desperation. You will freeze the world in the doomsday...” Andree chanted more like a cultist priest than a knight.

“It’s Gonheim that they worship!” Having heard a lot about the Demogorgon of Darkness, Katrina was no stranger to him. She reminded Viscount Carendia.

Darkness surged out of the altar and froze the environment in frost. Suddenly, there was an earthquake, a deep, devastating air mass popped up. Anna felt that she was on the verge of death again the moment she saw it.

All the mercenaries including Yakov were attracted by the air mass. They felt that their souls were fighting their fight beyond their control.

After a collision, the darkness out of the altar was raised by the air mass. Many black bats were blown into the wall and died.

“Death storm...” Viscount Carendia reached Katrina, paler than before. He grimaced, “I hate the battles where senior-rank items are involved most...”

As he talked, he took out a frame from his pocket. Inside the frame was a painting of the silver-haired and silver-eyed Rhine. He looked more formal in the painting than he actually was.

Sensing the near-death feeling, Anna thought in desperation and fear, “Is this the power of legends? A senior-rank item that only contains a slice of the air of a legendary knight is already so powerful?”

She struggled to turn to Katrina, trying to ask her to flee. However, under the deterrence of death, she couldn't make a sound after she opened her mouth!

"Huh. What's Sister Katrina doing..." When her head was almost black, Anna saw Katrina pressing a silver badge on which there were all kinds of mysterious symbols with her left hand.

"Haha. You will taste the death storm very soon." Not caring about the shivering mist and magic circle, Andree laughed crazily.

Anna closed her eyes in pain. The pressure of death was so insufferable. However, she heard the high and distant voice of Katrina that was different from the way she usually talked.

"The roars from space summons the Atomic Universe..."

In shock, Anna saw a boundless cosmos surfacing behind Katrina. It was deep and dark, and the stars were releasing various colors.

"Space arrival?"

"Cosmos arrival?"

All the mercenaries had similar questions.

Then, they sensed the profundity of the cosmos and the subtlety of stars, as if endless mysteries were contained inside.

The feeling of boundlessness immediately eased their mind that was pressured by death. They could no longer sense any desperation or pain.

“What... What is this power?”

“Is it the legend level, too?”

In their widened eyes, a gaseous form changed into the all-freezing blue, and Katrina tossed out of a tube of colorless liquids.

Enhanced by ‘Atomic Universe’, the tube was broken without any spell, and the liquids hit the collapsing magic circle after being condensed into a weird ray.

The steam was frozen, the mist was frozen, the air was frozen, and so was the bursting black storm of death, which was turned into black snowflakes.

Amidst them, Viscount Andree was frozen, too. His items were broken, and his blood became solid. His shock was frozen on his face.

Then, the coldness was gone, and everything began to melt, turning into drops of water.

Looking at the incredible scene, Anna and the other mercenaries felt that they were still in a dream.

“Had I known that you prepared the ritual, I wouldn’t have brought out the frame...” Viscount Carendia put Rhine’s painting back. “Evans’ Freezing Ray?”

“Yes.” Katrina looked rather pale. “It seems that Andree held the ritual to worship ‘Demogorgon of Darkness’ to increase his strength and potential.”

“That’s probably right. It explains why he became the student of ‘Storm of Death’ soon after the ritual. Also, the Demogorgon of Darkness is the most devil-like Demon Lord. It’s perfectly normal for him to develop believers.” Said Viscount Carendia, deep in thought.

...

Inside a castle, a mirror-like screen manifested everything that happened in Duda’s manor.

“Master, you could’ve killed them easily.” A beautiful and sexy woman was kneeling next to a young man and feeding wine to him with her own mouth. She had a pair of cute horns on her forehead.

The young man touched the woman’s hair and moved his eyes away from the screen. He had the exact face of Viscount Andree’s!

“Hehe. Even if I did, so what? One of them is a grand arcanist’s student, and the other is a vampire prince’s close descendant. Do you think that things will stop?” ‘Andree’ smiled. “If it were other sorcerers and vampires, I could’ve killed them and blamed it on somebody else. The Congress of Magic and the vampires wouldn’t pay much attention to it. However, since they were the ones who came, I could only give them an ‘answer’. After all, our plan has worked out, and the identity of Andree is no longer useful.”

The sexy woman nodded. “Yes. If the Congress of Magic and the vampires keep investigating, our future operations will be a lot more troublesome. However, how did you know that the Congress of Magic would send Katrina, the Atom Controller’s student? Otherwise, Duda would’ve killed Yakov and the other mercenaries while they were on their way.”

“Andree’ smiled but did not give a straight answer. “All in all, this is the end of everything. I do not want anything to happen to them, or Lucien Evans and Rhine might come in person. I hate the old who settle scores for the young after the young are defeated...”

Most importantly of all, he was unable to defeat the old yet...

He stood up. His facial muscles twisted, and his height reduced. He turned into an indifferent-looking, black-haired, middle-aged man.

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Chapter 714: Farewell

In the north province close to the frozen land, the weather in the Month of Harvest was already turning cold, but today was unusually cozy and comfortable.

A team of cavalrymen rushed on the desert. The sunlight illuminated their black armor and dyed the emblem of bloody bear gold.

They seemed to be searching for something, but they turned a blind eye to the mercenaries not far away from them as if the mercenaries were transparent.

“As I recall, Collective Stealth is a seventh-circle spell, isn’t it?” There was a mister among the mercenaries who did not look like a mercenary at all. He leaned against the horse lazily in a red tuxedo with a cup of wine in his hands, as if he feared that other people did not know that he was a debonair ‘noble’.

Katrina replied to Viscount Carendia’s question proudly. “The study of light has been going on throughout the history of the Congress. Therefore, we have a profound understanding about stealth. Individual stealth and collective stealth are essentially the same.”

“It is not very difficult to create a fifth-circle spell that boasts a partly collective stealth effect. As a matter of fact, you’ve never seen this spell because it can only trick the common knights, Mr. Viscount.”

“Sometimes I envy arcanists. You seem enthusiastic in exploration all the time, and you are never bored, unlike us who spend most of time rotting in gloomy castles. I sometimes feel that life is monotonous and nothing is interesting, and that living is no different from death.” Viscount Carendia sipped the wine, pretending that he was a melancholy artist.

Katrina smiled. “Mr. Vampire, are vampires not spirits? Why are you under the illusion that you are still alive?”

“It does make sense...” Viscount Carendia was suddenly lost for words faced with the lady who grew up under ‘Arcana Voice’ and Lucien’s education.

Anna looked at them with a smile. She delightedly discovered that the mysterious, powerful sorcerer, Sister Katrina, and the indescribably handsome vampire, Viscount Carendia, still had their normal side. They were not as arrogant and condescending as she feared that they would be.

After the cavalrymen were away, Katrina turned around to Anna and Yakov. “Have you decided where to go?”

Since Viscount Andree was Count Calcate’s only heir, the mercenaries feared possible retaliations even though the man should be executed as the culprit for the demon worship case. It was impossible for the Church to protect unimportant people like them all the time.

Therefore, after the incident was over, they seized the time to find their family. Pretending that they had been killed in the feast of slaughter, they left Calcate City with Katrina and Viscount Carendia.

“Sister Katrina, you left the symbol of the investigators of the Congress of Magic in the manor. I don’t think Count Calcate would pay much attention to us. Things will be the same as long as we don’t stay in the north province. So, we’ll choose a place we’re familiar with.” After surviving the crisis, Anna was less apprehensive about the lesser dangers. “What about you? Are you returning to the Congress of Magic?”

Having grown up in the Schachran Empire, they were far away from the knowledge of the world. Except for Yakov who worked temporarily with official sorcerers, the mercenaries never heard of

the Congress of Magic or Allyn before. They only knew Holm, which was famous for clothing, unique jewelry and mines, and they often needed to protect the merchants who smuggled such goods.

Although Katrina had turned into a high and mighty sorcerer, the mercenaries couldn't help but look at her after hearing Anna's question, hoping to spend some more time with her.

"Other missions are still awaiting me. I won't return to Allyn any time soon. Actually, you can go to Holm. It's freer there and there are plenty of opportunities for practice. You will reach East Haven if you go north to the frozen land and then turn east. From there, it will be easy to go to Holm, especially when you are a knight, Yakov." Suggested Katrina sincerely.

Anna's eyes glittered in excitement, but she soon turned gloomy. "Sister Katrina, I actually thought of that before, but... but I've been born and raised on this land, and I love it from the bottom of my heart. The food, the architecture, the poems, the stories, the customs, and the way people live with each other are already etched to my heart. I don't want to leave this place unless I have to. Perhaps, we will go to the few provinces in the east. There are plenty of resources and opportunities, too."

"I'm thinking the same. Rest assured, I'm a knight. No noble will reject the allegiance of a knight. This is not one of those countries in the south which haven't fought any war for centuries." After a brief silence, Yakov said firmly. Maybe he would go to Allyn some day, but that would be when he was already a level-five grand knight, so that he could look at Katrina equally.

Without saying anything else, Katrina simply reminded Anna and Yakov in secret. "You'd better split with the mercenaries like Hank who betrayed you and not let them know your real destination, or they might betray you again in exchange for Count Calcate's reward."

Although she was not vicious enough to kill them, she did have the prudence of arcanists.

“...Alright.” Yakov and Anna were reluctant to accept the suggestion, but they finally nodded ruthlessly after recalling what happened in the prison. As experienced mercenaries, they had been used to death and slaughter, and they were certainly not emotional.

Assisted by magic, the team soon reached the frozen land in the north. Anna held Katrina’s hand affectionately, her eyes rippling with mist. “Sister Katrina, I’ll visit you in Holm sometime if there’s a chance.”

“You are welcome to come anytime. If possible, I may return to the empire again. When that day comes, you will be able to return to your hometown without concerns.” Katrina’s voice became gentle. In the Schachran Empire where there were no electromagnetism messaging, telegrams, wired phones, postal service and mailmen, since Yakov and Anna hadn’t decided which city to settle in, they probably would never get in touch again after their farewell.

Thinking about that, Katrina better recognized the significance of her teacher’s popularization of alchemical items.

Anna suddenly remembered something else. She asked in a low voice, “Sister Katrina, was the cosmos you summoned a legendary power? Was it from your teacher, your father, or...”

“It’s the ‘Atomic Universe’, the demiplane of my teacher ‘Atom Controller’. He’s a grand arcanist and a legendary sorcerer.” Katrina admitted frankly. Her teacher was certainly not an embarrassment for her. On the contrary, she felt proud to be her teacher’s student.

“Legendary sorcerer! Just like I thought! Is he as strong as the seraphs?” Anna appeared both shocked and curious. She did not know what a grand arcanist or Atom Controller was, but nobody dared underestimate a legendary sorcerer. The former governor of the north province was a female legendary sorcerer named Fitia, ‘Empress of Snow’. Therefore, marvelous stories about her had been left here. They were so unbelievable that people might think legendary sorcerers were only slightly weaker than real gods.

Katrina was good at snow spells partly because of her teacher and partly because of the horror stories of this sorcerer that she grew up with. She was naturally no stranger to the ruler. This 'Empress of snow', on the other hand, disappeared after the Magic Empire was destroyed. Nobody knew whether or not she was still alive.

"Seraphs..." Katrina smiled but did not reply. For her, her teacher was certainly stronger than common seraphs and very close to the Angel King.

After Anna, Yakov and the rest of the mercenaries embarked on their journey on the frozen land, Viscount Carendia finally said with a smile, "Evans is still not famous enough in the Schachran Empire. I believe they would've been more shocked if you compared him to 'Observer', 'Silver-eyed Count' or 'Rhine Carendia'."

That was because Rhine was on the execution list of the North Church, too. Lucien, having grown too fast and barely dealt with the North Church, on the other hand, was not wanted. The North Church understood its abilities very well and did not list all the leadership of the enemy forces. They'd only chosen the enemies who 'committed crimes' in their jurisdiction.

"The execution list of the North Church is not authoritative enough; the Cleansing List is much more-acknowledged..." Katrina talked as if it were arcanist study. For a sorcerer, to be included in the Cleansing List was an honor.

After a little chit chat, Viscount Carendia became solemn. "I still feel that there are a lot of enigmas in the demon worship case. The truth might not be what we guessed. Perhaps, Viscount Andree was also merely a chess piece..."

His suspicion came from the coincidences in the event. He did not have any proof or speculation so far.

“Yes. That’s why I simply listed the incidents we’d been through in the report that I submitted through the artificial planet. I didn’t draw any conclusion so that the misters of the Affair Committee wouldn’t be influenced. Perhaps, they have intelligence that we are unaware of...” Katrina nodded approvingly.

With the artificial planet, she submitted the mission report easily that night. Sometimes, the world seemed small to her, because there was absolutely no problem in communication when Allyn was so far away. It was not until when she saw Anna off just now that she realized that the world was still big, so big that two people might never see each other again after they said goodbye to each other.

“I’ve found my father’s traces around, so I need to hunt him. I have to step away from your next mission.” Viscount Carendia said with a smile, but his eyes were cold.

Father? Hunt? Are you not going to take care of that, Mr. Rhine? Katrina was very curious, but she was rational enough to not pursue any further. She left for Dumute on her own.

.....

In Allyn, inside the Atom Institution...

Having just upgraded the Moon Timer, Lucien saw Heidi walking towards him with a journal in her hand the moment he entered the library. His student said passionately, “Master, this paper on ‘Elements’ has constructed a possible model for your speculation on negative energy and antiparticles.”

“A possible model?” Lucien had guessed what it was about based on the current studies. He asked back with a smile.

“Yes, the negative energy is the ocean in the vacuum. Perhaps, that is the source of our magic? Vacuums are not necessarily empty.” Heidi was quite interested in that. Annick and Sprint, also interested in the article, joined them.

Lucien smiled thoughtfully, “Yes. Vacuums are not empty.”

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Chapter 715: Ocean of Negative Energy

As they spoke, Lucien picked up this issue of ‘Elements’ and glanced at the title, only to discover that the author was one Telaviv that he did not know. He was a level-four arcanist and fifth-circle sorcerer.

“He’s perhaps a newly-promoted sorcerer. Only such young people could’ve proposed the model without being burdened by experience...” Lucien thought to himself.

It was not because Douglas, Brook, Fernando and Hathaway would not consider the possibility of negative-energy state and antiparticles, and in what form they should coexist with the regular matter if they did belong to this world. However, even if they had such speculations, they wouldn’t propose it recklessly but would wait until antiparticles were proved.

If they ever proposed a similar model, the only reason would be that the model would contribute to the discovery and confirmation of antiparticles and negative energy; it's obvious that 'vacuum ocean of negative energy' would not.

In his paper, Telaviv, the strange arcanist, proposed a ubiquitous, all-pervasive 'ocean of negative energy' based on the properties of the microscopic particles.

According to Fernando, electrons would always fill the 'orbit' whose energy level was the lowest. Since negative energy was lower than all existing energy levels, it was obvious that electrons would leap towards that direction. It's like a building's foundation would always be built first, and then it was the basement, the first floor, the second floor, etc.

Not only would the energy caused by such massive transitions destroy the whole universe, but all the observed phenomena so far had convincingly disapproved of the possibility. That was why Dieppe, Larry and other people who concluded negative energy at the beginning thought that their result was mistaken due to their inconsiderations.

After Lucien proposed his quantum equation and foretold the existence of antiparticles, many arcanists began to consider why electrons did not have such changes if negative energy did exist. Therefore, Telaviv reached the bold conclusion that electrons did not 'advance' towards the negative level according to their 'natural instincts' because the negative energy level had been occupied by the other electrons and they could not press any further.

Also, he inferred based on such a distribution of electrons that negative electrons could not be observed by the arcanists, at least not so far. Therefore, in his model, every place in the whole world was filled with negative electrons. They were so dense that humans were essentially living in an 'ocean of negative energy'. Even the vacuum was the same. There were no real vacuums!

Therefore, it was a 'negative ocean' that 'drowned' the universe and boasted 'infinite energy'.

However, negative electrons could be activated. After they transitioned into observable, regular electrons after absorbing energy, a hollow would be left inside the 'negative ocean'. This hollow had the opposite electric charges and the same mass of the negative electrons, and the hollow would be the positive electrons (aka antielectrons and positrons).

After reaching that part, Telaviv continued his guess with the imagination of sorcerers, which was beyond the 'Dirac sea' from Earth. He believed that the ubiquitous ocean of negative energy was the reason why extraordinary powers such as magic could exist. Spiritual power, willpower and magic patterns were essentially communicating with this ocean of energy in special ways, thereby acquiring unimaginable power that could change the world. Therefore, it was the origin of magic and other supernatural powers and provided an explanation of the conservation of energy in magic.

Hellen, the Witch of Iceland, had tested the conservation of energy between spiritual power and magic a long time ago. The spiritual power consumed equaled the energy that a spell contained at the beginning. The reason why certain spells were much more destructive than the spiritual power consumed was that the spells interacted with the environment and triggered a chain reaction. The most typical example would be 'Eternal Blaze'. However, the question remained, how was the spiritual power refilled after it was consumed?

Replenishing spiritual power with magic potions was normal. Nobody questioned the source of the energy. However, the natural increase of spiritual power was rather strange. Neither the slow recovery in daily life nor the rapid recovery in meditation had a convincing energy source. It was not like the spiritual power was recovered based on nothing, right? When something was increased, something else should be decreased, but no decrease had been observed so far.

There were two mainstream explanations regarding the question before. The first one believed that the recovery of spiritual power boiled down to the reactions within the soul. To put it simply, the soul was like a controllable fusion reactor that provided steady energy for oneself. However, this explanation was faced with the same problem: even reactors needed raw materials; what did the soul consume to generate energy?

In response to that, the most 'romantic' grand arcanist, Oliver, proposed a model that looked legitimate: what the soul consumed was 'itself'. When 'itself' was entirely consumed, it would be the end of one's life. That was why the increase of magic abilities could extend the longevity after the soul was fortified. Longevity could be expanded through rituals also because they filled up the attrition of the soul.

However, this model had its own flaws, and even Oliver did not entirely agree with it. According to his theory, if one were to use less or even no magic, their longevity would be significantly improved, but in reality, the life gap between the arcanists who used magic less often and those who used magic frequently was not distinctive.

The other explanation on the recovery of spiritual power was that the energy came from the 'truth of the world', and 'meditation' was a way to connect the soul to the 'truth of the world'. It could be confirmed by the fact that sorcerers could receive feedback from the truth of the world while the other classes couldn't.

As to where the truth of the world was and how the energy was transmitted, it would be a different problem.

However, it could not explain why knights and magic creatures could also recover on their own, unless they were also connected to the 'truth of the world' but somehow could not receive the feedback of the 'truth of the world'.

Because little progress had been made on what the soul and the 'truth of the world' were, the two mainstream explanations were mere hypotheses that were not supported by any theory or formula.

Telaviv's model of negative energy, on the other hand, described a ubiquitous ocean of energy and explained the recovery of spiritual particles in the most straightforward way based on the Lucien equation as well as the verifiable negative energy and antiparticles.

‘Meditation’ was the communication between the soul and the ocean of negative energy. Because it was ubiquitous and boasted almost infinite energy, the soul could absorb energy from it to recover the spiritual power. The feedback of the ‘truth of the world’ would cause certain changes in the cognitive world that intensified the communication with the ocean of negative energy.

By the same logic, the model of negative ocean explained why certain polymorph spells required enormous energy to sustain but little energy to be triggered at the beginning. After Lucien proposed the mass-energy formula, the studies on those spells resulted in suspicion of the conservation of energy. However, Hellen devised a spectacular experiment that the non-conservation of energy in the general sense did not exist.

The model was so significant that Telaviv appreciated the Congress of Magic, Mr. Atom Controller, Lucien equation and the hypothesis of antiparticles emotionally after finishing the main part of the paper. He also nicknamed his model of negative energy as ‘spring of magic’ and ‘supernatural ocean’.

“This is a paper of great significance. It marks that we have a whole new direction to study the nature of magic...” Lucien browsed through the paper and remarked unbiasedly.

Under the magic lamp, Heidi asked, her eyes glittering like crystals. “Master, do you acknowledge the model?”

“Acknowledge? How can I acknowledge a paper that does not have experiments and phenomena? His ideas are very innovative and have given us a new path that may explain the nature of magic, but it remains to be seen whether or not it is a wrong path. Everything has to be based on math and experiments.” Said Lucien with a smile.

Although he knew that the model had been abandoned on Earth, he was not in a hurry to disapprove it.

On one hand, Lucien was exploring in the mist himself. The more he studied the microscopic domain, the more he realized that it must be the fundamental reason for the differences between the two worlds. As for which specific part caused the differences, it still required future explorations. Therefore, he could not disapprove it just because the theory was proven wrong on Earth but had to do so with his own experiments and deductions.

On the other hand, Lucien also hoped that the model could inspire the arcanists to consider more about the essence of magic. For a long time, the studies on the essence of magic had been mired in difficulties. Most arcanists had lost their interest in that. Instead of considering why there was magic, they simply devoted themselves to the creation of new spells and the modification of existing spells, hoping that the reason would reveal itself as they went deeper on their respective path. After Lucien proposed the observer effect in the microscopic domain, their methodology seemed correct.

“Our teacher is right. It’s only a possible model, but with the model, the quantum state, the quantum superposition and the observer effect do not seem necessary to explain the essence of magic.” Deep in thought, Layria said in a daze, which made Heidi chuckle. Was she implying that their teacher’s ‘observer effect’ was wrong right in his face? Well, Annick and Sprint must be happy about it. Their appreciation of the paper was all over their faces.

Lucien smiled. “This can only explain the recovery of spiritual power. It cannot explain why the ocean of negative energy is communicable or why there are a myriad of different spells. That’s probably the category of the observer effect, the quantum state and the quantum superposition.

Annick and Sprint did not have any theory to explain those questions. Therefore, even though Lucien could tell that they did not agree with him, they did not propose any argument.

“Are there any other papers?” Asked Lucien casually while he kept browsing the journal.

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Chapter 716: The Casual Walk Before Dinner

Layria pulled two of them out from the pile of journals. “Basics of Mathematics has been a heated discussion topic this month, and the barber paradox has been drawing the most attention. People call it the big crisis in mathematics.”

Although Layria was also good at mathematics, she was still an arcanist who was more into element and alchemy studies, and her interest in mathematics was more for its application. Therefore, she was not at all as anxious as those arcanists from Tower. Instead, she was quite excited.

Taking over Arcana and Nature, Lucien saw the papers written by the president, his teacher, and Hathaway on Basics of Mathematics. On the one hand, they had confirmed the significance of Basics of Mathematics as it helped promote the many studies in mathematics; on the other hand, they also believed that the solution to the barber paradox had to rely on the further development of set theory and its more strict definition.

Before the Basics of Mathematics was born, there was no solid concept of set theory in the Congress. Many mathematician arcanists had realized that set theory could help build the entire palace of mathematics, and thus, it was the foundation of all mathematical findings. Therefore, all the grand arcanists and other arcanists from Tower hoped that they could make the most of the value of set theory while strictly avoiding the possible paradoxes.

However, they did have different beliefs even though they agreed upon the significance of set theory. Some arcanists, for example, Douglas and Hathaway, believed that mathematics should also follow logic, while others, for example, Fernando and Lucien’s concept of the axiomatization of math, believed that mathematics consisted of pure symbols and carried no substantial content, and as long as two mathematical theories were not contradictory to each other, studies on both of them could always proceed. Meanwhile, there were still some other trends.

Of course, it was very hard to tell which was correct and which was wrong. All of them could facilitate the development of math, although to different degrees.

“It seems that we haven’t been frightened by the paradox. Arcanists are full of passion to solve the problem.” Lucien grinned.

His students were a bit speechless. The way their teacher was talking was like he wasn’t the one putting forward the paradox.

Lucien leafed through the journal and saw Bergner’s paper on “Goldbach’s conjecture”. Bergner admitted that the conjecture could not be proved at the moment, but it could be approached step by step. That could be done first by proving that even numbers could be written in the sum of the product of M prime numbers and the product of N prime numbers. In other words, they had to prove “ $M+N$ ” first, and when they could reduce M and N to one, the problem would be solved.

“Sir, they’ve given your conjecture an interesting name, ‘ $1+1$ ’. But Mr. Bergner is still on his way to prove ‘ $9+9$ ’.” Heidi grinned. “But sir, you haven’t solved it, have you? Did you throw the conjecture at us on purpose?”

“I have not...” Lucien shook his head, feeling amused. He expected that Nature would publish many papers on proving “ $M+N$ ” in the following years, and he hoped that a few decades later, someone could reach “ $1+2$ ”.

After their discussion on the latest journals was done, when Lucien was about to go back to his own office, Heidi asked, “Sir, I heard that the kingdom is going to hold a Rentato Music Festival, and your opera The Valkyrie will be on the opening ceremony?”

“It should be, if everything goes well,” Lucien admitted.

These students’ eyes lit up as they looked forward to this opera. In the past years, Lucien had put much of his effort on studying magic and arcana, so he only produced some short piano pieces and light music pieces, which quite disappointed his fans. It was said that the opera was from Lucien’s years of effort, and thus, it must be perfect and would become a classic.

Sprint was not one of them. He curled his lip as he did not understand their passion. He did not have a specific preference for music.

Later, Lucien walked back to his own office and started staring at the parchment roll in front of him.

After a while, he finally picked up his quill-pen and dipped it into the ink bottle. He then wrote down a title—“Determinism, Free Will, and the Source of Magic”.

Although the title resembled Mr. Schrödinger’s famous paper named Indeterminism and Free Will, the contents were only similar to a very limited extent. After analyzing the inherent contradictoriness of determinism, Lucien introduced self-awareness and led the discussion to the relationship between the effect of the observer and the origin of magic. Like the model of the ocean in the vacuum, there was no theoretical evidence for this.

“Since awareness has its influence on microscopic particles, the material basis in our world seems to be less firm, so things around us change when we add spiritual power or corresponding magic patterns to them, and magic spells are thus produced. For example, some of our transformation spells work in the way that they reform our bodies on the microscopic particle level. Most magic spells that are not cast with permanent effects have limited lifespans. In the past, we believed that this was because magic effects were ‘rejected’ by nature, but now, I prefer to use the effect of an observer to explain it. Once the ‘observer’ appeared, the magic effect would collapse...

“The change in blood powers might come from the instability on the micro-level, for example, the transition of quanta...

“... Some magics require large quantities of energy, which exceeds our spiritual power. But the question is, where does the energy come from?

“... In some transformation spells, materials can be added or removed. As for reduction, we can understand it in the way that the reduced part of the material is temporarily stored in the time and space created by the magic and will resume after the spell's time is up. While this reduction process is understandable, what about the addition of materials? Do those additional materials grow out of nothing? Even if they are formed in this way, according to the law of conservation of mass and energy, the energy required is great. Then where does the energy come from?

“So my assumption is that when casting a transformation spell, what we get from the surroundings is not energy, but basic substances. But where do these basic substances come from?

“...Maybe the existence of the ‘real world’ can solve our problem, but how does the ‘real world’ exist? Does it exist in every corner of the universe, which means that real vacuums never exist? What is the nature of the ‘real world’? Why can it provide basic substances?

“...Can meditation be described as a process of increasing self-awareness? In other words, the growth of a sorcerer is the process of a weaker observer to a stronger one...”

Lucien wrote the paper all the way to the end without a stop. Finally, Lucien picked it up and released a sigh of relief. He had to make sure that the paper was logically-sufficient, and thus, he had to make others believe that he was inspired by the model of the ocean in the vacuum.

Lucien then put down the paper and turned to ask himself, “Then how should I explain transformation spells... How do they actually work?”

In the afternoon, after submitting the paper to the Sorcerer Administrative Department, Lucien returned to the Atomic Universe and saw Natasha sitting on the couch, absent-minded.

Lucien wondered why both of them were in such an absentminded state today. He walked to Natasha and waved his hand in front of her eyes.

“What is it?”

Natasha, in her long, purple dress, was woken up from her thinking with a start.

She smiled. “It’s close to Rentato Music Festival now, so I think I’m missing Aalto.”

“I see. I sometimes do, too.” Lucien smiled and pulled Natasha up from the couch. “If you want to, let’s go and take a walk in Aalto right now.”

“What?” Natasha was a bit surprised. Since when did Lucien start taking actions without any plans?

But she still grinned and said, “Alright. We’ll enjoy dinner in Aalto.”

There was no need to plan for a casual walk!

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Chapter 717: A Day in Aalto

Aalto in October was like a piece of fruit on top of a cake, sweet but slightly cold. The broad countryside was covered with golden crop fields that formed a sharp contrast to the yellow Laval trees in the city. Together, they formed a picturesque view. Music, which was produced by diverse musical instruments, could be heard from some distance, which added the beautiful background music to the picture. Aalto deserved its title, the City of Music.

“Melzer Black Forest always looks this dark...” said Natasha. She was standing by the Belem River and staring at the trees on the other side of the water. Autumn wind brushed her long, purple hair in the air.

The black forest was full of memories of her earlier years. There was hard work, pain, and joy in the forest. And she would never forget what once happened to her in it.

“Black fir trees, unique to the area surrounding the Dark Mountain Range. Their color can come from the contamination of a specific alternate dimension...” said Lucien in the tone of a professor.

Natasha was amused. “I don’t care why they’re black. What really matters to me is that I was once chased by cynocephaluses, suffered bad pain from eating wrong fruits, banged my head to the ground from paralysis due to poison, got stabbed in my lower abdomen and then someone had to put me on his back to run for our lives...”

She knew that Lucien wanted her to cheer up.

“You got chased by cynocephaluses? I thought they’ve never been a problem to you.” Lucien was quite interested. In his eyes, Natasha must have been a little Valkyrie since she was a little girl.

Natasha curled her lips. “Less than ten of them, yes, I could nail it. But the problem was that there were hundreds of them, and one of them could even cast spells!”

“What on earth did you do to make several tribes of cynocephaluses chase after you?” Lucien laughed.

Natasha hesitated a bit and waved her arm in the air. “Can’t remember!”

“But you’ve been saying that you never forget anything...”

“Not all the time. I just can’t remember!”

Chatting cheerfully, they walked along the river and enjoyed the soft breeze.

At this time, Natasha stopped and pointed at the riverside where lots of garbage piled up. “Is this the place you dug your first bucket of money?”

“Yeah... Many thanks to the princess who dropped the Nightingale veil that helped me take the first step out of the slum.” Lucien saw the garbage piles and got a bit emotional.

On the garbage piles, a couple of poor folks were enduring the stink to look for anything that might still worth something. On the river bank stood a stocky man who was supervising them with his arms folded. Even in October, he was only wearing a thin, brown coat.

Natasha sighed, “This place is still under the control of the gangsters.”

“New gangsters after Aaron Gang.” Lucien was not surprised. The birth of a new gang was no surprise in Aalto. It was just a matter of time.

The stocky man noticed Lucien and Natasha. He was about to warn them and make them walk away, but he turned to look away after seeing the fancy clothes they were wearing. In his eyes, they could be nobles, so he had to be careful.

To his great relief, the couple did nothing but kept walking toward the gate of the market zone.

It was time for high-tea, and the guards standing by the gate were feeling very fatigued. After taking a glance at Lucien and Natasha, who had slightly changed their looks, one of the guards waved his hand and let them in because both of them looked quite decent.

The market zone was still the same kind of busy, and the common tongue in Aalto accent and how people dressed instantly pulled them back to their early memories.

“It feels like we have never left here...” said Natasha. She had many times ridden through the gate and come to the market wearing a veil to find interesting gadgets, so she was very familiar with this place.

Lucien nodded and then took a deep breath. The air mixed with the smell of barbecue, assorted spices, dyes, tobacco, liquor, and stinks pulled him back to the very beginning when he had to bend his back to feed himself.

“I was once a laborer here,” Lucien pointed at one of the shops and said, “but I wasn’t strong enough. A single sandbag could make me fall to the ground.”

Natasha smiled and listened. From time to time, she pointed at a store and said, “This grocery store is like fifty years old. When I first visited it, it was the grandpa who was running the place, but now, it looks like the grandson has taken over...”

“...The owner of that place recognized me when I was buying a heptachord there, and he almost passed out...”

Lucien also shared his experience. “... On this street, John and I taught the gangsters a good lesson...”

That was the first step for Lucien to start accepting the world.

The passersby noticed the couple dressing in fancy clothes walking through the market, but Lucien and Natasha did not care.

Lucien and Natasha walked out of the market and entered the administrative district. The street started getting quieter. Only some street musicians and bards were playing wonderful and soothing music.

Serenade for strings in G major, Moonlight, the second movement of New Country Symphony, Pathetique, For Silvia...

As Natasha listened to the music pieces, they triggered lots of her memories. She said to Lucien, "You left Aalto a long time ago, but your music works are still remembered by people. They're classic."

"Listen, your march is also being played," said Lucien.

Natasha was quite proud, but she also said, "If we compare it to a few years ago, I have to say that your music pieces are less popular now. There are many new pieces coming out."

Both of them paid close attention to the development of music in Aalto, so they were familiar with the new music works.

"It's good. Things are always under development and progressing. If there are no new pieces coming out, Aalto's music will have been dead. Fortunately, it's not." Lucien did not mind it.

Natasha and Lucien came to a restaurant where in front of the door there was a street musician playing Pathetique. It was very challenging to most musicians, but he was very good at playing it. Many people were gathering because they could appreciate his skills and talent.

The first part of the music was played very well, as the depression, pain, and tragedy in it were all fully presented, and the last movement was even better. The exquisite skills had fully gripped the listeners' hearts.

Loud applause followed.

The young piano player was a bit surprised by the applause. He was just sitting behind the piano, looking a bit lost.

He was from a small town and came to Aalto a few months ago. He was talented, and he had been practicing very hard since he was a kid. However, the things that he experienced in the past several months had started to make him doubt himself, and the poverty he suffered from had forced him to take such a job playing in front of the restaurant. The warm round of applause was totally out of his expectation.

“Good. There are true feelings in it, not just showing skills and playing.” Natasha also applauded and took out a coin.

Smiling, Lucien stopped her. “Are you gonna give him a queen coin?”

After driving away the South Church, the Kingdom of Holm was also minting new coins. A queen coin was equal to a Thale, but there was the queen portrait on it.

Natasha was a bit embarrassed. “Didn’t notice. You’ve got a Thale?”

Lucien took over the coin and gave it a gentle stroke. The queen coin instantly turned into a Thale.

The young players started bowing to the listeners to show his gratefulness. At this moment, he saw a shining coin falling in front of him.

A Thale? He was shocked. That was too generous.

A soft voice spoke, “You played very well, and there were your feelings in it. Your feelings turned this music piece into your own version. That’s very good. But your understanding of the music piece and some skills are still a bit problematic...”

The young player was very surprised, but the gentleman’s analysis was right. He had been feeling bothered by some problems in his playing but could not find a way to solve them, and the words from the gentleman had taught him a great lesson.

After a while, when he realized what just happened, he found that the gentleman and his wife had left. He could only see them walking away from behind.

He wanted to chase after them to say thank you, but the owner of the restaurant was still watching him.

“Thank you!” he said out aloud from behind.

Such a profound and well-mannered gentleman must be a musician!

Lucien did not look back, but he raised his hand.

“You like being a teacher.” Natasha smiled.

Lucien said, “It’s not really about being a teacher. It was out of appreciation. If it had not been Mr. Victor and his instruction, I wouldn’t have had such accomplishment now. So when I see someone who needs help, if I can, I’ll give them some help. Perhaps some help is the last thing they need to be successful. I’m giving back to society.”

“Giving back to society... Ummm...” Natasha was a bit amused.

Now they had walked to the Musicians’ Association in Aalto and saw the unique-shaped building, which was known for its unbalanced beauty.

In their eyes, the building looked the same to them, as if they just saw it yesterday. But shortly after, Natasha shook her head and looked around. “I’m not sure if it’s a good thing though, that Aalto isn’t changing at all. By contrast, Rentato is under constant change.”

Rentato was during its most rapid development period, just like how Lucien had expected. The entire city was going through great changes.

“If we don’t consider ordinary people’s life, maybe Aalto is more suitable for the current music style...” said Lucien objectively.

“You’re right. I don’t think Rentato’s atmosphere really fits the symphony. I think it should be something else.” Natasha nodded seriously.

“Different cultures and different ages give birth to different kinds of music,” said Lucien honestly. He believed that one day, Rentato would even produce rock music.

Natasha was about to say something, but a surprised look appeared on her face. “Mr. Victor...”

Mr. Victor was walking out of the association building. Surrounded by many musicians, he got on the coach and headed for the Psalm Hall.

Lucien watched Mr. Victor getting on the coach, but he did not do anything.

“Don’t you want to meet him?” asked Natasha.

Lucien shook his head and said in a low voice, “It’s not necessary...”

Showing up in front of him would disturb his peaceful life. It wasn’t easy for Lucien to make the Church forget about Victor.

Natasha grinned and changed the topic. “Then let’s go to the Psalm Hall. I wonder who’s playing there.”

“Sure,” Lucien agreed. The anti-magic circle was of no use to a legendary.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 718: The Wrong Person

Years later, the Psalm Hall looked the same luxury and magnificent. The architecture style was very different from that of Rentato.

In the hall, the waiter was welcoming the nobles and musicians here for tonight’s concert. When it was getting closer to the time for the concert to begin, he was getting less busy, so he could finally feel a bit relieved.

For an ordinary citizen like him, being a waiter in the Psalm Hall was a rare opportunity. If he did a good job, he might get a better job offer from a noble or a musician. Therefore, he was very careful with every single word he said and every single movement he did tonight.

Seeing that some young popular musicians were adjusting their bow ties and walking toward the backstage, he was feeling even more relaxed now. Every week, there was a concert in the Psalm Hall, and rarely were there spare seats left. However, the crazy, grand occasions that he once saw seven or eight years ago never happened again.

Seven or eight years ago, he was only a teenage boy, but he could never forget how the young musician's music works made the entire city crazy.

He wondered if people in other countries were as crazy about music. His elder brother kept telling him that people in Aalto loved music because they had nothing else to do.

The waiter thought to himself, *But for ordinary people, what else could they do for entertainment?*

Suddenly, he heard the bell ringing. A pumpkin coach arrived in front of the gate.

The waiter was surprised to see a pumpkin coach, but somehow, he felt that it was okay for a pumpkin coach to be here.

Before he could think much, a gentleman in a black tuxedo got off the coach. He then helped a lady in a long, purple dress to get off.

"Madam and sir, are you here for Mr. Francisco's concert?" asked the waiter respectfully.

"Yes, please. We need two seats," said Lucien calmly.

The waiter turned around and led them into the hall. He felt that he had forgotten something important. For example, did they have tickets? For example, why could they just ask for two seats in front of the concert hall?

“Why pumpkin coach?” Natasha was amused by how Lucien took her here.

Lucien rubbed his chin. “Don’t you feel it’s like a fairy tale?”

Then he turned to look at the Psalm Hall and sighed. “In fact, I’m more familiar with the stage than the audience seats.”

“... I never performed here.” Natasha also felt a bit regretful. As a princess, she could not.

The waiter found two armchairs and put them in the last row. The musicians sitting in the last row did not care.

As soon as Lucien and Natasha sat down, the concert started. The musician tonight was Mr. Francisco. He was wearing a fine black tuxedo tonight. He first bowed to the VIP seats, and after that, the rest of the audience.

He had straight nose and thin lips, and his cheekbones were a bit high. He had the very typical look of people from the Holy Heilz Empire. And he was still quite young.

“I was always there. See, that’s Mr. Victor, Mr. Othello, Franz...” said Natasha.

Lucien also recognized Elena, Grace, and Felicia. He smiled and said, “They could never imagine that I would be here in the same hall with them for the same concert.”

Again, Lucien had no plan to meet them.

Francisco picked up his baton. Lucien and Natasha instantly stopped chatting and started enjoying the music. According to the list, this was a piece of symphony called Growth.

Starting from the music scores that were full of suspicion and questions, the melody slowly turned more and more cheerful, which presented the audience a picture of youth and love.

In the melody, every listener revisited their childhood, adolescence, and first love, and then the music scores and musical instruments started getting sharper and more intense. As the pitch rose, the music was like a storm that dragged every single listener back into their most depressing and painful memories.

However, after the storm, the sky had become more clear and blue, and the sun had become even brighter. It was telling the audience that the pain and sufferings would finally go away, and one’s life could only become richer with these sufferings and pain.

When the peaceful life reached its limit, the playing of flute was replaced by the confident march, indicating the upcoming challenge.

“Very good, but different from a traditional symphony,” Natasha applauded and commented.

Lucien smiled. Such a branch in the symphony in Aalto had finally come into being.

“Single movement symphony. It’s more like a poem. While traditional symphony values structure, it is free and focuses on its central idea...”

The musician sitting in front of them heard their conversation and turned around. “You don’t know the symphonic poem? Mr. Francisco created it! Did you two just come from somewhere else? This is the most heated music topic in Aalto recently.”

Lucien and Natasha exchanged a look between each other, and both of them shook their heads. Lucien was always busy with studying arcana and magic, and Natasha kept focusing on the kingdom stuff and improving herself as a knight. Even though they followed the development of music in Aalto, they did not always know the most up-to-date information.

The musician continued, “But even though you don’t know much about symphonic poems, sir, your comment was very accurate. It’s obvious that you have a good understanding of music. May I ask if you’re a musician from another country?”

“I’m not a member of any Musicians’ Associations. I just... love music,” said Lucien rather ambiguously.

A dead person would not be a member of the Musicians’ Association of Aalto.

The musician did not insist on asking. The musician explained the symphonic poem and Mr. Francisco to them during the break time. “He’s a musician from the Holy Heilz Empire, and he was a student of Mr. Christopher for two years. Recently, he is known for his passionate piano playing

and bold innovation. The symphony you just heard is named Growth, and it's one of his most famous pieces."

It seemed that Mr. Christopher had another student after Silvia's death, which was a piece of good news to both Lucien and Natasha.

"He's very talented, for sure. You've heard him play. It's a masterpiece! After Mr. Evans passed away, people in other countries said that music in Aalto would gradually die, but now, they should realize they're wrong! Aalto's music is in its blood. In the atmosphere of the entire city, with all the legacies left by all the masters, great new musicians will always come out. Mr. Francisco is an example!"

The musician was a bit excited. His eyes were shining as he looked at Lucien and Natasha, waiting for their support.

Lucien smiled. He said in a solemn and casual tone, "That's right."

"Yes." Natasha nodded, feeling encouraged.

After the concert, when the musician turned around again to talk to the noble couple, he realized that they were gone. Only two empty armchairs were left.

Since when did the Psalm Hall accept adding seats? Somehow, he started feeling a bit creepy.

And somehow, he realized that the noble couple looked a bit familiar to him. He started thinking hard.

.....

In Ratacia Palace, Paradise Corridor.

Standing behind the arch window, Lucien and Natasha enjoyed the sunset glow together as the garden was dyed in red. The twenty-four huge mirrors reflected the view like a dream.

Natasha told Lucien the stories that once happened to her here. She was known for her physical strength when she was young, and she once almost destroyed this place.

“We already enjoyed the dinner. It’s sunset. It’s time to go back now. Such a nice walk,” said Natasha while stretching her arms.

Lucien nodded, and he looked at the other end of the palace. “I don’t even know who’s the current grand duke. Isn’t he being rather low-key in the family?”

“It never occurred to him that he could ascend to the throne, but I believe that this is just temporary. Our children, grandchildren, and their offsprings will finally come back to the throne,” said Natasha confidently.

After leaving Ratacia Palace, Lucien and Natasha headed for the city wall. At this time, a person in a red robe walked out of the nearby noble manor. It was their acquaintance, Gossett.

Since they were ready to leave, Lucien and Natasha only slightly changed their looks and did not hide their air.

Gossett saw them, and his eyes suddenly opened big!

“Lucien Evans... Natasha Violet?!” Gossett felt his body totally numb, and he could not breathe. He wanted to run away, but he was unable to; he wanted to cast divine spells, but he was unable to.

His legs were shaking uncontrollably.

Suddenly, he saw Lucien turning around and looking at him, smiling. His black pupils were as deep as a lake. Cold sweat covered his forehead.

After a long time, when Lucien and Natasha walked out of his sight, he could finally breathe again. Gossett hurriedly contacted Philibell, the Grand Cardinal.

“Your Excellency, I just ran into Lucien Evans and Natasha Violet! We can still catch them if we turn on the defense circles!”

It wasn't until he started speaking again that he realized that his voice had completely become dry and hoarse, as if he had not talked for a hundred years.

Philibell was astonished, and he soon found Lucien and Natasha using the divine circle. They were slowly walking toward the city wall. In front of them, there was a boundless universe.

Then Philibell's eyes squinted slightly, and he said to Gossett seriously, "You got the wrong person!"

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 719: Model

The weather was cool and refreshing, and the sky was high with vast clouds. That was exactly the sight of the Month of Gold in Allyn.

"That's why I love October in Allyn the most..." Thompson, a member of the Affair Committee, stood next to the window with his teacup in his hands while appreciating the scenery outside.

While remarking, he turned around and pushed the gold-edged glasses on his nose, before he asked Conden, his student, "You walked in without asking for my permission after only one door knock. Is there anything urgent?"

Thompson had been amiable to his friends, students, and subordinates and cared little about protocols. Therefore, he did not blame Conden too much for barging in.

As they spoke, he closed the mission report on the desk. That was a rule of the Affair Committee. Those who should not see it must not see it even if they were his students.

This mission report was exactly the one submitted by Katrina. Because she had investigated the demon worship case clearly, the report did not receive much attention in the Task Zone. The senior-rank sorcerer who was supervising the Task Zone browsed through it and believed that the case was already evident. He determined that Katrina's mission had been accomplished. Naturally, her report went to the file room.

Thompson, however, paid much more attention to the demon worship case, because it had something similar to the several cases in Rentato, Cocus, and the northland where primeval devils were summoned or worshiped, and yet it was fundamentally different.

Therefore, after finishing his work, he retrieved the report and prepared to analyze it carefully, seeing if any Demon Lords had also started to develop the power of faith. More importantly, he wanted to figure out whether the incident was independent, or if it was part of the series of cases that took place within the jurisdiction of the Congress of Magic so that he could find the Bird of Death behind the curtain.

It was a pity that he saw nothing but the fact that a grand knight increased his strength by worshiping demons from the report.

"However, some of the details are too coincidental. The people involved are already dead, and a long time has passed. It's barely possible to continue the investigation. It's not like I can go to the abyss to ask the Demogorgon of Darkness whether or not Viscount Andree worshiped him, or capture Nicolle, the Storm of Death, to let him confess why he recruited Viscount Andree as his student, right?" Putting his right hand on the report, Thompson tapped it softly.

Conden, who stood on his opposite side, was a slim and tall young man. His cheeks were hollowed, and his skin had been "burnt" into redness as if he had taken too much sunbath. There was also a fashionable monocle on his right eye. He apologized quickly, "I'm sorry, Master. After I knocked, the door was opened with a gap. I thought that it was a hint that you were asking me to come in..."

Thompson knew his student's impatience and honesty very well. He asked in confusion, "The door opened on its own? I forgot to shut it?"

"I don't know. Well, I ran into Alferris in the hallway. He seemed satisfied..." Conden suddenly remembered something else.

Thompson grimaced regretfully. "Leave him alone... Can I help you with anything?"

A while back, he made a bet with Alferris, thinking that it was impossible for him to be tricked by Alferris' illusion since he was close to the ninth circle, particularly in the Allyn magic tower. Therefore, if Alferris could take away any items from his office without anybody's help, he would open the treasury and allow the dragon to pick a lot of gems. It seemed that he had already failed the bet. However, it did not seem entirely bad. At the very least, he didn't have to be on alert all the time anymore.

"Master, Mr. Evans has submitted a paper entitled 'Determinism, Free Will, and the Source of Magic', in which he constructed a model regarding the essence of magic. Although many questions remain unanswered, such as why magic patterns could help us communicate with the truth of the world and what the mechanism behind them is, the paper has indeed opened a new gate for our studies on magic and supernatural powers... After somebody discovered the paper in the library by accident today, it immediately became a hit..."

Conden seemed excited. Plus his impatient character, he talked as fast as a storm, and Thompson could barely understand what he was saying. "Wait, wait, wait. Give me the paper first!"

For a senior-rank arcanist, reading a paper was much easier than listening to the excited narration.

Taking over the paper that Conden borrowed, Thompson glanced at the date. He said both in surprise and in relief, "It was submitted three days ago? No wonder it was not published on Arcana or Magic..."

Generally speaking, no journals would refuse the paper of a grand arcanist as long as it was of some value. They would even compete for such papers. However, Lucien's works were almost exclusively published on Arcana, Nature, and Elements, although he sometimes wrote for the "Monthly Journal for General Arcanists" when asked to. There was no way that Arcana would have let go of such an important paper, and since it was about the essence of magic, Magic wouldn't allow other people to publish it easily, either.

He kept reading, and he frowned at the part at the beginning of the paper. It seemed that determinism was truly in peril!

However, as Lucien's narration went on, his eyebrows relaxed again. He pushed his glasses now and then and remarked in a low voice, "The observer effect is not entirely absurd... The 'unsteadiness' of the material foundation... That's new, but if it's true, everything behaves so normally when magic and supernatural powers are not involved. Should it be attributed to the mysterious transition between the microscopic scale and the macroscopic scale? Huh, Lucien had also thought about that... Weak observers and strong observers..."

His attention was completely on the paper. Even though the paper hadn't been confirmed by any experiment or phenomena, and the observer effect was rejected by the mainstream of the Congress, it was logically self-consistent and seemed legitimate.

Conden was not surprised by his teacher's reaction. He picked up a quill and wrote his teacher's questions and opinions on a piece of paper.

"... The energy that replenishes the spiritual power comes from the truth of the world? The additional matter caused by magic comes from the truth of the world? Huh..." In his suspicion, Thompson remembered something. He hurried to turn around and drag an issue of "Elements" out

of his bookshelf. Then, holding his glasses, he said in shock, “Is it a problem that the ocean of negative-energy state can solve?”

“Yes. The arcanists who read the paper were all reminded of the ocean of a negative-energy state. It happens to have resolved a few critical questions in Mr. Evans’ paper on the essence of magic!”

Conden’s ears were keen enough to capture his teacher’s murmur.

He said excitedly, “The two of them are connected. One is focused on the source of magic energy, and the other offers a hypothesis on the essence of magic. Together, they’ve established a complete magic system!”

When he said a “magic system”, he did not mean a system of spells.

“I’m afraid that this is the first legitimate model on the essence of magic, no, of all supernatural powers, that has theoretical support.” Thompson also grew excited.

In the history of magic, the earliest sorcerers had already asked what magic was essentially and proposed their own answers, such as the system of four elements, namely earth, fire, wind, and water. The ancient sorcerers established a piece of speculation on the foundation of the world, where they believed that there were energy planes made of purely the same elements. Such planes had been named “Country of Fire”, “Ocean of Water”, etc. Their answers also included the root system, which believed that magic had a root, which was part of the truth of the world.

Such vision on magic had been affecting generations of sorcerers even to this day, as could be confirmed by the term such as fire element. However, due to the lack of exploration by the ancient sorcerers, their visions of magic were purely imaginary and did not have any theoretical reference. It was more like a fantasy than a model defined with arcana.

During the heyday of the Magic Empire, the sorcerers paid more attention to regular research and application. No one bothered to consider the essence of magic. All they needed to know was that spiritual power was the prerequisite to cast spells. Therefore, even someone as great as the Sun King, Thanos, did not come up with a model on the essence of magic.

After the Congress of Magic, studies on the essence of magic were continued. However, due to the insufficiency of other theories, little progress had been made. Therefore, Douglas and the other grand arcanists did not propose their model of magic essence recklessly, in case their whimsical ideas affected other arcanists.

It was not until today that Thompson finally saw a model that described magic from the essence and the origin, and it was also based on the cutting-edge research in the microscopic domain!

Whether or not the model was correct, it was definitely historically significant... Thompson was somewhat in a trance. He had witnessed history again, which happened a lot in the past ten years.

Conden said excitedly, "Somebody described the result of the two papers as 'Evans-Telaviv Model'. It's the first model on the essence of magic!"

After a while of discussion, Conden bid him farewell, claiming that he needed to read it more carefully after he was back.

Thompson was somewhat amused seeing his student folding the scribbled paper and putting it inside the magic pouch carefully. Then, his student walked to the door.

Suddenly, Thompson realized something and shouted, "Stop!"

However, Conden had already stepped into the corridor at this moment!

He turned around abruptly, with a mist surging around him. After the mist died away, he turned into a little crystal dragon with beautiful scales.

He dragged a huge ice cream from his underbelly and licked it with great satisfaction. He then said with a childish and gloating voice, “Thompson, you’ve lost!”

The dragon had come when he was considering questions, distracted him by saying that the door was not closed and “Alferris” passed by, gave him a paper to captivate him, behaved exactly like Conden, and only took away the scribbled paper where their discussion was recorded... Recalling those things, Thompson had to admit that Alferris had new breakthroughs in illusion, but he was the one who suffered losses!

Seeing Alferris off with an awful face, Thompson couldn’t help but continue studying Lucien’s paper. “Weak observers... Strong observers...”

He was suddenly stunned. Thinking of the recent investigation, he thought, somewhat in fear, “The accumulation of the power of faith seems to be the gathering of special electromagnetic waves, but it is actually the gathering of weak observers to evolve into a strong observer?”

“Well...”

How would the experts who were good at playing with the power of faith view the paper?

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 720: Brook's Expectations

In the Thunder Hell, Fernando's magic tower...

As long as he was in Allyn and not occupied by other things, Lucien would communicate with his teacher on arcana and magic once a week. When he walked into his teacher's library today, he discovered, to his surprise, the old-school gentleman Brook who was wearing his white wig.

Didn't they "dislike" communicating with teachers face to face and prefer letters? Lucien secretly thought to himself.

Before Lucien greeted him, Brook had already raised his glasses and smiled. "Your paper on the source of magic has been a hit in Allyn in the past few days. I've gotten a lot of inspiration from it too. Congratulations on proposing the first official model on the essence of magic."

Fernando complained not far away, "The observer effect is not a good thing. It will make the world unreal..."

Lucien smiled. His teacher's persistence in the objectiveness of the world could barely make his teacher think highly of the observer effect, particularly since the explanation did not have any

convincing proof or meticulous deduction yet. It was nothing more than a scary “prophecy” that a grand arcanist randomly proposed.

“Thank you. To be honest, I’m just getting started about that. There are many parts in the paper that still need discussing, and so does the ocean of negative-energy state,” said Lucien sincerely. He believed that his teacher and Mr. Brook could tell that, too. Then, he intentionally changed the subject. “Master, Mr. Brook, what were you discussing?”

He would rather not face his teacher’s roar if he could avoid it.

“I was inspired by your quantization of the electromagnetic field when you studied spontaneous radiations. Also, Annick and Sprint’s similar works on electrons have shown remarkable value too. Therefore, I’m hoping to introduce the quantum theory into the classic electromagnetic theory to establish a quantum field theory so that electrons and photons can be better studied and the essence of the electromagnetic force may be figured out.”

When he mentioned the essence of the electromagnetic force, Brook’s old, slim face seemed to be glowing. That was his cognitive world subconsciously influencing the reality.

On the other hand, when he mentioned the studies in the microscopic domain, he cautiously used photons instead of electromagnetic waves. It was obvious that he found the wave-particle duality of light much more acceptable now. He did not reject the theory that made his cognitive world broken and solidified at the beginning at all. Instead, he was full of momentum to study it.

Fernando, whose hair seemed to be always messy, added in a bad mood, “Then, he dragged me into his studies to solve his problems, completely ignoring that I was busy studying the reason why the reactor lost control and the theories on the weak interaction...”

“Weak interaction” had been named by Fernando with reference to “strong interaction”, the nuclear force that Lucien and Hathaway proposed.

He looked reluctant and unwilling, but his red eyes were glittering. Lucien secretly chuckled about it. If his teacher was unwilling to, nobody could or dare force him to study the quantum field theory. It seemed that he had fun in it and was passionate and motivated to establish such a system.

But of course, Lucien knew very well that the establishment of the quantum field theory would go through a long and difficult process from “second quantization” because of the unavoidable problems that loomed in calculation right now, such as the infinite greatness caused by divergence, which had to be resolved through new mathematical approaches. Also, it was only one of the obvious problems.

“After recent studies, we have basically established a general quantum field theory, but it is so flawed that we plan to publish it in advance so that more arcanists could discuss it.” Brook’s delighted and thoughtful reply was within Lucien’s expectation. “It’s great that you’ve come. There are some questions that I would like to discuss with you.”

He sent an invitation straightforwardly.

Fernando’s expression slightly collapsed. He cursed in a low voice, “Goddamn infinity!”

Lucien did not refuse it. He was always happy to join such arcana discussions, which could help him transform the knowledge inside his spirit library into the knowledge that he grasped himself.

Taking over their manuscript, Lucien browsed through it quickly and asked, “Is it not a relativistic quantum field theory?”

“That’s the future plan. Now, we are focused on solving the general problems. If you are interested, we can discuss more often.” Brook did not keep it a secret. The discussion he said was clearly one that entailed paternity right.

It seemed that his teacher did not invite Mr. President to join the discussion. Perhaps because he was worried about the relationship between Mr. Brook and him? Lucien concluded. However, Mr. Brook was not wrong that research should be conducted one step at a time.

“Douglas is too busy preparing for his super-remote space jumps and working on his own projects to pay attention to any more fields. Otherwise, he would be happy to join our work. But right now, discovering a planet may be more important than living for him...” Fernando said, as if he knew what was on Lucien’s mind, not caring that Brook was right next to them at all.

Lucien had studied the problems before. Therefore, he successfully joined Fernando and Brook’s discussion and proposed many insightful ideas.

Fernando and Brook were not surprised at it. They would never believe that Lucien, who proposed the quantization of the electromagnetic field first, had never done any research in that respect.

Time flew fast while they were discussing. In the end, Brook stood in satisfaction and picked up his staff. “While the most critical problem still stands before us like the Saint Truth, we have finally made some progress. Fernando, let’s publish the paper by the end of the month and let more arcanists see it. Hopefully, they can come up with more creative and useful ideas.”

After the previous communication, he understood that Lucien did not have solutions to the few primary problems either. Of course, he was already prepared that such difficult conundrums might not be resolved in years. He had been through a lot of similar cases.

“I don’t think there are more than a hundred arcanists in the Congress who can understand and are interested in the quantum field theory...” Fernando had always been famous for his vicious tongue. “Perhaps they prefer the ocean of negative-energy state and the source of magic caused by the weird features of microscopic particles. That fits all their fantasies.”

“Ocean of negative-energy state. That’s truly a bit unrealistic. It’s hard for me to imagine that I am living inside an ocean of negative-energy particles but cannot sense it at all, but it’s not entirely impossible. Hehe. Maybe vacuums are truly not empty,” he remarked. “Lucien, what’s your opinion on the ocean of negative-energy state? It resolves the energy and matter in your magic design.”

“As a matter of fact, I believe otherwise,” replied Lucien cautiously.

Brook was clearly interested. “You have other ideas? It’s not about the truth of the world that we cannot study just yet, right?”

“My ideas are based on the uncertainty principle. Mr. Brook, do you remember the short enormous rise and fall of energy that I described in my paper?” Lucien admitted his direction of studies honestly, which couldn’t be kept a secret from his teacher.

“Vacuum fluctuation?” As he expected, Fernando simply asked back.

After a brief pause, Brook remembered what it was about. “Because time and energy are a pair of values that fit the uncertainty principle, the more certain time is, the more uncertain energy will be... In a very short time range, because of the uncertainty principle, enormous energy will flow out and suddenly disappear even in the vacuum. On average, it still agrees with the law of conservation and can barely be perceived...”

It was even more unrealistic than the ocean of negative-energy state. Tides of energy were rising and ebbing around people all the time, but none of them sensed anything or got affected!

“It can be described as an unsteady ocean of energy.” Lucien compared it to the ocean of negative-energy state so that it could be understood easier.

Fernando never objected to the uncertainty principle. What he objected to was Lucien’s proposition on the intrinsic qualities of matter that it entailed. Therefore, instead of roaring at the “rising and ebbing ocean of energy”, he said carefully, “It can also explain the source of energy. Also, it has something to do with the field theory that we are working on. I think if we work on it, we will come up with a new model that contains antiparticles.”

“In our studies, the intensity of the electric field and the intensity of the magnetic field are a pair of values that fit the uncertainty principle, which means that they cannot be zero at the same time. So, electromagnetic fluctuations happen around us all the time too?” Brook recalled their recent studies.

Lucien nodded his head. “Theoretically, yes.”

Brook said both solemnly and excitedly, “Perhaps we can devise an experiment to observe such electromagnetic fluctuations... If it’s true, vacuums will be truly marvelous!”

After he left in excitement, Fernando finally said to Lucien, “I don’t think you said everything you wanted to say in the previous discussion, did you?”

You’ve seen through me again? Lucien smiled. “It’s mainly about the definition of matter. Since we regarded the electromagnetic field as a matter a long time ago, why can’t we take one more step? Perhaps the field is a fundamental form of matter...”

“Let me think about it.” Fernando pinched his forehead.

Seeing that his teacher was tired, Lucien said goodbye to him. At this moment, Fernando said rigorously, “The observer effect is not a decent theory. You’d better not get addicted to it.”

Then, after a brief silence, he said, “However, your speculations on the ‘unsteadiness’ of the material foundation, on the source of energy and matter, and on the fluctuating ocean of energy in the vacuum are all significant areas of research.”

Lucien was immediately amused. *Master, you could’ve been more straightforward if you wanted to praise me.*

1...

“Weak observers... The ocean of negative-energy state...” Inside the Holy City, Benedict III remarked in a low voice while looking at the sunset out of the window.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 721: Live Stream

In Samara, a small city in Paphos of Holm...

At the end of the Month of Gold, nightfall had been advanced. The time when sunset dyed everything red was now dim and dark. However, since Paphos was one of the top three prosperous cities of Holm, road lamps and poles were raised everywhere on the streets of Samara. Connected by the electric wires, the magic lamps began to glow with warm and brilliant light, driving the darkness away from their range.

The citizens of the town walked on the street toward the Baron Bechig Square, the only square in town. The magic radio of the city hall had been installed there. Every day, when the night fell, it would deliver the programs such as “Arcana Voice” to everyone aloud.

Since there were more and more channels, the citizens now had trouble choosing. While “Arcana Voice” was excellent and was their primary choice, no program could fit everyone’s appetite. There was always a program in “Arcana Voice” that some citizens disliked. It was a pity that the magic radio was not their property, and they could not switch channels in such cases.

“I have to work harder and save money to buy a magic radio from ‘Gift from Elements’!” Banus, a young man wearing a shirt, clenched his fists and declared.

His friend next to him said jealously and hopefully, “I’m told that in the major cities such as Rentato, whoever subscribes newspaper for a whole year will be given a magic radio for free!”

“Really? That’s much cheaper, isn’t it? Do the newspaper sellers not fear that they’ll be bankrupted?” asked Banus in disbelief. He had never heard such a good thing before.

His friend was a freckled big boy, who combed his hair and said, “I’m told that those newspapers are all issued by the radio stations for the purpose of increasing the coverage of magic radios. Her Majesty even signed and released the ‘Broadcast Encouragement Act’ that the Congress submitted. For every magic radio that the radio stations give away, they will receive certain subsidies and tax reductions. Furthermore...”

He lowered his voice and said mysteriously, “I was told that the Congress of Magic is boosting it, too. They give enormous subsidies to the radio stations by way of advertisements. Therefore, the radio stations barely suffer any losses...”

“Sorcerers?” Banus grew excited. Then, he suddenly realized it. “Right, magic radios were developed by them in the first place. The more it is sold, the more they will earn!”

“Of course, you think that the sorcerers who study the nature of the world are fools? They’re much smarter than you!” the big boy mocked him.

As for the magic radio’s political significance, they did not understand it at all.

Banus suddenly snorted. “Ali, how did you learn it? That’s not something that ‘Arcana Voice’ said!”

He only just began to feel strange. How did his friend, who grew up with him in the same place, become a savant overnight?

The big boy Ali curled his finger and said in a low but proud voice, “Somebody else told me. It’s a noble lady from Rentato!”

“A noble lady from Rentato? How did you make acquaintance with a noble lady from Rentato?” Banus was shocked. For the people who dwelt in small cities like them, even though “Arcana Voice” had broadened their horizon, they still revered the nobles of their city from the bottom of their hearts. They thought that those nobles lived a luxury and enjoyable life that was entirely different from the way they lived.

However, the nobles in their city were not worth mentioning compared to the nobles in Rentato, the capital! If the nobles in Rentato were swans, the nobles in the capital of Paphos would be geese, and the nobles in their town would be ugly ducklings at most—ugly duckling being a term from “Arcana Voice”. The greatest hobby of their nobles was to follow the fashion in Rentato and mimic the nobles of the capital in how they dressed and entertained themselves.

Their nobles were already humble enough, and the civilians like Banus were even more so. They subconsciously believed that they were truly “bumpkins”.

Ali chuckled. “A pen pal. She’s my pen pal!”

“Pen pal? What’s that?” Banus’ long face was full of confusion.

“I asked you to learn words, but you never listened to me. After the postal department was established, activities were introduced by several newspapers to allow people in different cities to become friends by writing letters to each other. Because the communication is entirely based on words, it’s called pen pal.”

Ali explained it to Banus in a great passion. “Think about it. Maybe we cannot get out of this town our entire life, but we can still have sincere friends in Rentato, Paphos, and other major cities; friends who are both strange and familiar and who we can talk to without meeting them in person. What a beautiful thing it is...”

He was obviously fascinated by friend-making through letters.

“It sounds great!” Banus opened his mouth. He was also attracted to it.

It was not until then that he learned the importance of literacy. The greatest difference between him and Ali was that Ali’s father used to be the servant of a certain secretary and learned how to read by the way before he taught it to his son. Banus, on the other hand, had only picked up a few words thanks to Ali’s occasional lectures. He could not read a newspaper at all!

“Such communication does not involve conflicts, lust, faces, or identities. It’s the sincerest way for people to talk to each other.” Ali acted as if he were the host of a psychological program in “Arcana Voice”. “I learned everything I said from my pen pal. She’s a noble from Rentato and has her own magic radio, which allows her to listen to other channels. She can also learn from other nobles. She certainly wouldn’t lie about that.”

“Good boy, you’ve hooked up with a noble lady!” Banus bashed Ali in the back.

Ali protested, “What do you mean by hooked up? We are pure pen pals!”

“Dare you say that you never fantasize about her? What kind of noble lady is she?” Banus glimpsed at Ali. He knew his friend too well.

Ali became gentle. “Her tone in the letter is always soft. She must be a well-educated girl. Also, she did not hold any bias after learning my identity. She answered my every question and shared the funny incidents in her life. Her words are slim and beautiful, just like herself...”

Looking at Ali's face and hearing his description, Banus couldn't help but suggest, "Ali, you must remember that she is a noble and you're just a common civilian."

"I know. We're pure pen pals!" Ali waved his hands, hinting that he understood it. Then, he changed the subject and talked about the view of Rentato that his "pen pal" told him, further exaggerating the changes that were already unbelievable by themselves.

"Big cities are really great. There are such kindhearted noble ladies and such astonishing, life-changing stories..." Banus was shocked. Although "Arcana Voice" mentioned similar changes, it was not nearly as detailed as what Ali described. "Also, only the city dwellers will be given a magic radio if they subscribe to newspapers for a year!"

"Yes, I have to visit Rentato someday!" Ali looked fascinated.

Thinking quickly, Banus suddenly proposed in excitement, "Let's go and subscribe to newspapers in big cities! The train tickets and the annual subscription of newspapers will only cost half as much as a magic radio does! A lot of our money can be saved!"

"It's impossible. Similar things happened before. So, only people with the citizenship of the big cities enjoy the free-radio privilege." Ali sighed bitterly.

"This... this is discrimination!" Banus completely forgot his compliment and expectancy for the big cities just now and blurted out, "F*ck the big cities!"

They walked forth as they discussed. Soon, they reached the Baron Bechig Square.

“It’s the opening ceremony of the Rentato Music Festival today. Will there be any special program on ‘Arcana Voice’?” asked Ali hopefully.

Banus nodded. He was about to speak when his eyes suddenly widened. “S-Sorcerers!”

Above the square, a young sorcerer wearing a black long tuxedo was floating. Silver light spread out from his hands and was connected to the weird “curtain” at the center of the square. Around the curtain, there was another couple who were taking out items and finishing the arrangement. They were obviously also sorcerers!

“They... They’re really sorcerers!” Ali stuttered in surprise.

Then, the two of them grew excited. It was rare to see the performance of sorcerers so closely other than street magic. Therefore, they squeezed through the crowd and tried to approach the center of the square. Alas, they could barely move one inch further. Every citizen who had come to the square thought exactly the same as they did!

“What happened? Why are there sorcerers here?” Seeing that it was impossible to cram in, Ali hurried to ask the citizens before him.

One of the citizens, who was nosy and liked to brag, replied loudly, “It’s said that the opening opera of the Rentato Music Festival will be live-streamed!”

“Live... Live-streamed?” Banus and Ali opened their mouths in shock. They had heard the term “live stream” from Arcana Voice before, but they never thought that they could experience it in their little town!

A screen and the magic circles around gradually took shape. The sorcerer who floated in midair began to connect the “artificial planet” on the orbit for the final debugging.

“Sir, is everything alright?” a sorcerer down below asked.

The middle-rank sorcerer nodded and replied, “You’ve done a great job. This is the best opportunity to demonstrate the new image of sorcerers.”

“Hehe. The Aalto Music Festival can only be seen in the town square of Aalto. That’s too petty!”

The goal of the Congress of Magic was to allow every city that had a local branch of Congress to be able to view the live stream through satellites!

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 722: Transition From Listeners to Viewers

Thanks to the broadcast of “Arcana Voice” a few days ago, Banus and Ali were both aware that the “Rentato Music Festival” was scheduled on the last Saturday of the Month of Gold every three years for a duration of three days. They had come to the Baron Bechig Square today to learn the splendor of the Rentato Music Festival from “Arcana Voice” as soon as possible and to indirectly listen to the most touching and classic melody of Mr. Evans’ “Valkyrie” from interviews and other problems.

They did not foresee this at all. Looking at the floating sorcerer in midair and the dark “screen” that was taking shape with the combination of complicated silver patterns, they weren’t back to themselves for a long time.

It was not until the silver lines glittered one after another, letting out a gentle but warm light, that Banus and Ali were finally woken up from their shock. They craned their heads and looked ahead excitedly and confusedly.

“Live stream? Is the teletorium of ‘Arcana Voice’ set in the Rentato Royal Grand Theater today?” Although Ali had learned about “live stream” from “Arcana Voice”, he did not really know what it was about.

“Teletorium”, on the other hand, was learned from his pen pal’s letter. “Allyn Impression”, the weekly newspaper, had a special issue that introduced radio stations and interviewed famous anchors. As a gossip newspaper that came late but was most famous of all, Allyn Impression was not only loved by the arcanists but also pursued by the citizens of Rentato who were curious about the daily life of sorcerers and the affairs of the big shots. The circulation of the newspaper had already surpassed “Arcana” and “Magic”, making it an unusual case of getting rich for the sorcerers.

Banus did not quite understand what “teletorium” was about, but he was astonished by the Rentato Royal Grand Theater. He asked in excitement, “Can we hear the entirety of ‘Valkyrie’ today?”

Holm was a country where plays, oratorios, and operas were popular. Even though the average music level was not as good as Aalto’s, it was still rather distinguished in those aspects.

In Stuart, the Pearl on the Ocean on the opposite side of the Storm Strait, the citizens generally believed that the operas from Holm were much better than those from other countries in terms of plot, content, and meaningfulness. To put it more frankly, Rentato’s operas were indeed better than Aalto’s. After all, pure music was so brilliant in Aalto that the other fields were all eclipsed. Its playwrights and singers were not as good as Rentato’s.

Therefore, even though he was a common civilian, Banus had an unusual interest in operas. He had been longing for the Rentato Royal Grand Theater, known as a holy land of operas, for a long time. Of course, due to his economic status, he and Ali could only watch plays in most cases. They mostly listened to operas on special occasions.

“If ‘live stream’ has the same meaning as what ‘Arcana Voice’ said, we will definitely hear ‘Valkyrie’ today!” Ali was very excited.

With the duration of “Arcana Voice”, it could only play parts of the classic operas, but never the whole piece, and the opera singers that the baron of the town could invite were only mediocre. Therefore, even though they could not see the performers whom they had adored for a long time, it was still a most gratifying experience to appreciate a state-of-the-art opera at the earliest chance.

The best musician, the best singers and opera performers, and the best theater. It never occurred to them that they could enjoy the “luxury” of the nobles as civilians!

Banus rubbed his hands in excitement. “Hehe. We’re also lords this time! However, what’s that curtain about? They could’ve simply broadcast it. It’s all about listening after all.”

“It should be a wall, right? Huh, it’s probably meant to enhance the effect. Ms. Nightingale mentioned in Arcana Voice that some listeners might hear noises due to signal problems...” Ali tried to find a reasonable explanation.

Banus waved his hands hard. “I forgot that. Ali, you do have a great brain!”

Ali raised his chin proudly. *I told you that I’m smarter than you!*

After the silver lines all glowed, illusionary and delicate patterns appeared around the “curtain”. They combined in an amazing structure that dazzled Banus, Ali, and the other citizens into silence.

The middle-rank sorcerer who floated in midair finished the final debugging. As weird aria-like sounds came out of his mouth, a star in the sky glowed and sprayed a cluster of brilliance.

“Well...” Banus opened his mouth again. Could sorcerers command the stars in the sky? Wasn’t it the power of the gods?

In the dreamy and astonishing scene, the black “curtain” was enshrouded in pure, flawless light that resonated with the stars in the sky, building the most beautiful painting with the flying fireflies.

The star in the sky was less dazzling and became normal and steady, and the black “curtain” seemed to be turning transparent. A silver moon slowly rose inside, driving the darkness away.

A slow and peaceful melody floated out, so beautiful that it sounded like a clear lake that was rippling under the moonlight. It pacified everybody’s heart, bringing them vague sweetness, peace, and sorrow. They felt both somewhat gloomy and at ease.

Both Banus and Ali were intoxicated by the light of the silver moon that was gradually spreading out and the dreamy melody. The whole square fell quiet.

They were no strangers to “Moonlight”, the most beautiful piano song. Not only would the elegant restaurants hire musicians to play it, but Arcana Voice also often used “Moonlight” as the background music for the program. However, this performance of “Moonlight” was still better than

any time they heard before, thus allowing them to appreciate the most wondrous side of the music. How could they not be fascinated?

The cold moon grew brighter, and a white piano appeared in the darkness behind the “curtain”. Next to the piano, a woman whose long hair reached her waist was seated, with one side facing the audience. She was wearing a black evening dress, revealing half of her fair shoulders. Her face was delicate and peaceful.

The moonlight seemed to have donned her in a silver gauze. Her long and agile hands bounced and danced in the brightness, creating the most beautiful notes.

“How beautiful...”

“How touching...”

Banus and Ali were so enthralled by the performance that they could think of nothing else.

In such an atmosphere, even a mediocre face would have been 100% mind-blowing.

In the quietness, the first movement of Moonlight came to the end. The lady turned around, showing everybody her beautiful and tranquil face.

“Welcome to ‘Arcana Voice’. I’m your old friend, Nightingale.” A sweet and familiar voice came out of the lady’s mouth.

“Ms. Nightingale?” Banus stammered.

“It’s... It’s a real person?” Ali’s eyes were almost popping out. How did the curtain, no, the wall, just turn into a living person who could play “Moonlight”?

Everybody who witnessed the act in the square was similarly stunned, including the middle-rank sorcerer who floated in midair. He almost forgot that he was still in midair. Although he knew and got involved in the Congress’ “stream plan”, such an opening was still a major shock for him.

“As a matter of fact, I am as surprised as you that the image signal transmission through the artificial planets can achieve such a result. This should be the most ‘real-time stream’ in history. Friends who are listening to ‘Arcana Voice’ at home, if you feel that I’m talking strangely, go to the nearest square and check it out. In fact, I already announced it last night...” Louise’s sweet voice came over, solving the question of the “viewers”.

“A real-time stream?”

“We can see Ms. Nightingale in Allyn from Samara?”

“Magic is too... marvelous!”

“Incredible! Incredible!”

Noises burst out in the square. The excited audience began to talk to each other about how they felt, even if they did not know those standing next to them.

Louise smiled. “‘Valkyrie’ is about to begin in the Rentato Royal Grand Theater. I’ll stop wasting your time. Now, the sorcerers in the theater will take over.”

The moonlight dimmed, like spreading ripples that blurred everything. By the time it was clear again, Louise was already gone from the “curtain”, replaced by a splendidly-decorated theater that was full of gentlemen who wore tailcoats or long tuxedos and ladies in gorgeous dresses that dazzled the audience in the square.

“The Rentato Royal Grand Theater!” said Ali in amazement.

Banus was both happy and sad. “But I still want to watch Ms. Nightingale play the piano...”

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Inside the teletorium of the Sky Radio Station in Allyn...

Seeing that the signal had been switched to the Royal Grand Theater, Louise finally patted her chest, greatly relieved. “I was so anxious just now.”

“Louise, weren’t you a musician before? You’ve already held concerts. Why were you anxious about a solo performance in a teletorium that nobody watched?” Samantha, who was supervising the program nearby, said half in comfort and half in confusion.

Louise shook her head. “Nobody watched? There must’ve been more than a hundred thousand people who watched the live stream. I felt anxious when I thought I was performing before so many people. Also, in concerts, people mostly listen to music, and they can barely see the musician on the stage. Such a live stream is the opposite. Everybody can see my every movement clearly. If it weren’t for your encouragement, I would’ve tried to record it in advance as Mr. Evans suggested...”

“Understandable. Everybody will be nervous in their first ‘real-time stream’. Mr. Evans only proposed the idea. We planned and carried out the details on our own. However, well played, Louise.” Samantha nodded in approval.

Louise gradually relaxed. She complained, “Mr. Evans should’ve guided us more on such an important issue.”

If he could hear her, Lucien could only open his hands and suggest that he had zero experience in that. Holding a satellite stream before TV was invented was not a case that had ever happened on Earth. It could’ve only been achieved in a world of magic.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 723: Panic of the Night Watchers

In Kasvig, the capital of the city union of the coastal Northland.

In Rose Square, the most famous landmark of the city, the roses of snow that blossomed in the coldness were as dazzling as burning fire.

However, the night seemed gone tonight, and nobody appreciated their beauty. In the square, on the street, and in the houses nearby, any places that could see the gigantic black “curtain” at the center had been jam-packed with people, who craned their heads while they watched the changes of the “curtain” with almost the same shock and listened to the poignant melody of “Moonlight”.

It was not until “Nightingale” Louise talked that they were back to themselves and exclaimed in amazement. Were there living people inside the “curtain”? Or was it something more magical than the magic radio, something that could deliver both voice and picture?

Ms. Nightingale answered their confusion, only to raise a greater tide of excitement. They had never seen such a thing before, nor had their ancestors. Was it a facet of the “magic civilization” that “Arcana Voice” had always talked about?

In the crowd, a man in a leather hat looked at Louise in fear and shook his head in disbelief. Had the Congress of Magic made progress again in broadcasting, and anybody anywhere could watch “Valkyrie” that was played in Rentato Royal Grand Theater?

Other people might not know what it meant, but as an elite night watcher, he couldn’t understand it better!

Since the magic radio was invented by Lucien Evans and “Arcana Voice” was established, people in many prosperous cities on the north coastline had changed their preconceptions and their attitudes toward the Church. He was not bothered much at the beginning, but by the time he felt that the atmosphere was not right, all the details were already frightening.

After the Church's failure in the battle of Rentato, he turned from a hunter into prey that hid everywhere in a panic.

Now, not only could the magic radio deliver voice, but it could also display images. What terrible changes it could bring about!

However, after witnessing the preparations in advance, he knew that it would take years for the new magic radio to be popularized. It was doubtless that the Congress of Magic was contriving the purpose step by step. Yet, the Church had no reaction at all.

"No, I have to report it to the Executor!" He lowered his head and backed off from the crowd. It took him quite a while before he finally squeezed out.

As he stepped away from the square, it immediately became quiet. The night watcher quickly found a corner and took out a divine item that looked like a breastpin, trying to report the issue to the Church.

In his anxiety, he contacted the headquarters of the Inquisition in the Holy City. However, nothing came from his "breastpin" except for background noises.

"Damn it! The Congress of Magic's 'Arcana Voice' can be received everywhere and can even deliver images, but I can't even reach out to the Holy City. How can we deal with the sorcerers?" He became frustrated and nervous.

He knew that it was less convenient for the night watchers on this side of the Storm Strait to contact each other after Kasvig was controlled by the Congress of Magic and the grand church was

occupied, and it was just his subconscious movement. However, the sorcerers of the Congress could still communicate with Allyn through “artificial planet” in the territory that the Church controlled!

Such a gap was the real reason why he was frustrated!

The artificial planets, which were merely invented to challenge the authority of the gods, were now releasing more and more unbelievable brightness. It was definitely one of the most influential alchemical items!

He took out a local cigarette and picked it up with his mouth before he rubbed his right hand and created a fire.

Igniting the cigarette, he took a deep breath and calmed himself down. Then, he reactivated his breastpin, reaching out to his superior who was also staying in Kasvig.

The night watcher gritted his teeth and made up his mind to propose to the Church to develop their own artificial planets!

However, he too knew that such cutting-edge products could barely be duplicated by the Church. Therefore, they might as well capture one of the Congress of Magic’s artificial planets if they had a chance!

The intelligence regarding “satellite stream” was sent to the Holy City one level after another and one section after another. Perhaps Benedict III wouldn’t even receive it even when “Valkyrie” was done playing.

...

The splendid gold was the main color of the Rentato Royal Grand Theater. The magic lamps hanging on the ceiling or the wall sprayed pure brightness that added to the magnificence of the place.

Sitting inside their box, Lucien and Natasha waited for Valkyrie to be performed.

“I’ve been looking forward to the opera for years. Tonight, my wish is fulfilled.” Oliver walked in courteously and shook Lucien’s hand with a smile.

Despite their disagreements in the microscopic domain, he was never angry about Lucien in daily life, particularly when it came to his favorite dramas and operas.

“I hope you will like it,” Lucien replied with a smile and invited Oliver to sit down.

Few legendary sorcerers came to the opening ceremony other than him. Douglas was busy in his preparations, and he did not have any particular interest in operas, so he did not come. Brook’s reasons were more or less the same. Vicente, on the other hand, didn’t come because the relationship between him and Lucien was rather tense. Hellen was even less likely to come since she would rather devote all her time to arcana and magic studies.

As for the other legendary sorcerers, some were deployed and some were busy doing their research. They were not here either.

“Operas aren’t so interesting.” Fernando, who was sitting next to Lucien, watched the stage attentively in his crimson magic robe.

Seeing that Valkyrie was about to begin, Lucien asked Natasha in the telepathic bond. “Is Granny Hathaway not coming?”

“She probably doesn’t like so many people. I remember that she’s very interested in music and opera,” Natasha speculated.

Lucien nodded and did not say anything. Russell, the Prime Minister of Holm, already began to give his speech and announced the opening of the music festival.

...

“Prime minister! This is the first time I’ve seen the prime minister!” Banus shouted in joy and surprise.

Ali pulled and hushed him. “Watch your manners, or you will be scolded by the police. If it were before, disrespecting the nobles is punishable by lashes.”

“I know, I know. But look at them. They’re just like me. If the policemen scold each and every one of us, their throat will definitely be broken.” Banus was obviously excited.

After Russell’s announcement, the final preparations were conducted behind the curtain.

During the brief moment before the opera began, the sorcerer who was responsible for the broadcast adjusted the camera so that the audience could see the full picture of the theater.

“This is spectacular. If I could listen to the best opera once in such a theater, I would die without regrets!” Banus and the other members of the audience complimented.

Soon, the attention was shifted from the building to the nobles on the picture, and they heard Louise’s sweet introduction. “This is Lord James, Duke of Paphos, and this is his wife, Lady Stephine...”

“Oh!”

Exclamations echoed on the square like a tide.

“So, that’s what a major noble is like. His wife and daughters are very beautiful too...” Ali complimented softly with obscure passion in his eyes. *She mentioned that she would come to the opening ceremony...*

His description was not exactly the reality, but it was undeniable that thanks to the succession of active blood power, the ratio of good-looking nobles was much higher than that of ordinary people.

When Ali examined the noble ladies, the picture was changed again and aimed at the box.

“Here are Her Majesty Queen Natasha, ‘Atom Controller’ Evans—” Louise’s introduction suddenly stopped, because she saw the same scene that Banus and the audience saw. Inside the box was the silver sword that cut the environment, the boundless and colorful universe, the surging thunderstorm, and the doomsday view where stars were collapsing...

“What... What is that?” It seemed that Ali could not cure his stammer today.

After a brief pause, Louise spoke again unhurriedly, “The vibe of the legendary experts can influence the world around them. Therefore, unless they repress it on purpose, this will be what the camera can record. However, things will be different if you look at them with the naked eye...”

“Marvelous. As expected of the legendary experts!”

“This is truly an incredible view...”

It left a deep impression on Banus and the other audience.

The brief preparation was soon over, and the prelude began. Gloom and intensity were hidden below the jolly and easy melody on the surface, foreshadowing the plot of the opera and making everyone emotionally prepared.

“Replacing overture with prelude is a popular way to create operas recently. It can be used before every act of the opera and directly followed by the songs...” Ali spoke of the knowledge he learned from his pen pal.

Inside the theater, nobody talked anymore. They appreciated the opera in silence.

When the prelude was about to be over, the curtain was raised, and a female voice gave a soliloquy in recitative. Then, a girl who was tall but showed no sign of strength ascended the stage.

“Is she the Valkyrie?”

The audience felt that it did not quite agree with the theme. The story was not exactly what they had in mind either. In the merry and pleasant melodies, Princess Amansa and the king, the queen, the maids, and the governess had a wonderful life.

However, the good days didn't last. The king's nephew conspired with the prime minister and the chief of guards and murdered the king and the queen in a scheme. The queen only managed to escape to a forest under her maids' help.

The gloom and intensity that were hidden under the beautiful melody burst out. The attention of the audience was immediately grasped as they worried about the princess' safety and loathed the villains.

When the first act was over, during the intermezzo, Oliver looked at Lucien in surprise. “Is this an opera? Right, I admit that it is an excellent opera, but where are the numbers? Why do I feel that it's more like a symphony?”

Until then, the operas in Rentato had been divided into numbers. A series of numbers, including solo, duo, trio, quartet, and chorus, would constitute an opera. To put it more simply, music and singing were the main points, and the plot was at their service.

Lucien's opera, in comparison, was more like a play. The music was at the service of the plot, and there were no distinctive numbers. Every act was a whole by itself, like a themed symphony.

Chapter 724 - The Most Expensive Opera Actor in History

Chapter 724: The Most Expensive Opera Actor in History

Inside the Rentato Royal Grand Theater, the nobles and sorcerers who appreciated the intermezzo whispered to each other about the opera form that was entirely different from the past.

Ever since opera became popular, the number opera had always been the unquestionable mainstream. Even though somebody had modified it, no one ever had the courage to abandon the exceptionally successful pattern. The nobles and civilians of Holm were also used to the opera. They were fond of the touching aria. As for the plot that the opera intended to represent, they generally did no more than enough for them to perceive the feelings behind the music.

As for the more detailed storyline and the specific dialogs, they often learned and picked it up by appreciating same-title plays later.

That was not a problem in the past when the plot was relatively simple. They could appreciate the music, the singing, and the basic story when they watched an opera. However, as the playwrights like Oliver created stories that were more captivating, people often had the feeling that singing was independent of the plot when they listened to opera. Music and story were separated.

However, the conflicts had not reached the tipping point for a change yet. Therefore, after listening to the first act of “Valkyrie” created by Lucien Evans, they were rather unused to it and had a heated discussion, forgetting the manners of opera appreciation.

“The whole act is just a huge number?” Stephine, Duke James’ wife, talked to Jane, her daughter next to her.

Jane’s black hair was naturally curled on her shoulder, just like the feeling that she gave. Among the nobles, she had been known as the “quiet doll”.

“It’s more like a symphony than a number for me. The theme is exactly the content in the prelude. Besides, the boundary between the recitative and the aria seems blurred...” Jane introduced it to Stephine in a low voice.

In the previous opera, she felt that the plot and the melody were so integrated that she was devoted to the atmosphere that they built despite the strangeness. She was worried about the princess, hated the brutal new king and the shrewd prime minister, and sympathized with the loyal maids. Every sentence and every melody seemed to be echoing inside her heart.

It was not until the intermezzo echoed that Jane finally recalled the opera just now. Part of the recitative had the features of singing, and the aria sounded somewhat like recitation, too...

Stephine said in amusement. “One act equals a symphony? As expected of Master Evans from Aalto.”

In Aalto, the brilliance of symphony eclipsed everything else, and they preferred to call Lucien master when they discussed music.

After a heated discussion, the nobles had their own opinions. Most of them believed that the first act of Valkyrie was above average despite the alienness.

A master was truly a master!

Inside the box, faced with Oliver's doubt, Lucien told him his idea of creation with a smile, feeling quite proud of it. Although the modification was based on Mr. Wagner's reform of opera on Earth, the plot, melody, songs, and structural design of the opera had all been created by himself independently.

Hearing Lucien's reply, Oliver was briefly stunned. He then said with a smile, "I like the idea. Music and singing should serve the plot. The musicians who adopted my plays into opera did not understand the simple reason. That's why they couldn't create an opera that everybody liked. If only I had cooperated with you sooner."

Lucien had thought that Oliver would be conservative about the reform. Not expecting him to accept it so easily, he was surprised at first but then relieved. As a playwright, Oliver certainly attached more importance to the plot.

Natasha whistled the monologue of the princess just now, and Fernando knocked the rail, as if he were looking for the next scene.

.....

In the square in the small city Samara...

The citizens were silenced by such a disruptive form. They were completely moved by the story, the characters, the melody, and the singing just now during the first act, but they somehow felt weird and thought that opera should be like that.

“This must be the new trend in opera. Mr. Atom Controller is a music master. He is certainly much more visionary than us!” a passionate symphony fan suddenly shouted.

Her voice broke the temporary silence. The citizens echoed with him.

“Yes, the master musician certainly knows better than us!”

“The opera just now truly sounded better than the past. Well, it looked much better, too!”

“So, that’s what the top singer and actor are like. Those things we listened to in the past were incomparable to them!”

“The money they earn in one performance is your wages for an entire year!”

...

Looking at the splendid theater on the “curtain”, Banus said thoughtfully, “Until today, I never thought that I could watch and listen to the best opera performance, but everything seems so easy right now. We can see an opera in the Royal Grand Theater in Samara. Magic is too marvelous!”

“Yes, I’m looking more and more forward to the ‘magic civilization’ that Arcana Voice introduced. Perhaps we will be able to see Rentato without going outdoors...” Ali was fascinated by the ever-changing images and sounds on the “curtain”. That was the power of gods that the Church preached in the past!

Thinking about the changes that happened to his life, Ali felt more or less depressed. Everything was moving fast, but what about him? Staying in the town and growing old, like his father and grandfather?

The prelude of the second act of Valkyrie echoed, giving an intense and agitating feeling that was mixed with warmth.

In this scene, Princess Amansa encountered many dangers in the forest and gradually grew into a real knight. Then, in a one-sided battle, she fell off from a cliff and almost died, but she was eventually saved by a strong knight who passed by.

The knight was a young, handsome man. He stayed out of sympathy for the princess and dealt with the king’s hounds together with her. Their hearts approached, and the sparks of love burst out. The audience seemed to have found momentum and support, and they were starting to look forward to a beautiful future.

In a love song, the second act reached the end.

Ali listened to the opera and looked at the nobles in the hall of the theater that were partly revealed in the live stream. In a smile, he wondered whether or not she was also listening to the opera and taking comfort in the love story between the princess and the knight...

He fantasized about so many things that he whispered the song just now even after the second act was over.

The third act began in a prelude that was exciting but carried a dangerous air. The princess and the knight embarked on the quest to reclaim her country. On their journey, they met new partners and found knights who were still loyal to the late king. Naturally, dangers were inevitable. During the journey, another gold-haired knight fell in love with the princess. His left arm was also broken for her.

“Love makes me lose control of myself...” The gold-haired knight confessed his love with a touching aria.

When the audience was worried that her love would turn sour, the princess replied with an aria, “You are as perfect as the sun, but you are not what I like and look forward to...”

After the test of love, the princess seemed more mature. She led her knights to attack the new king and the prime minister with her lover. Growing more and more determined, the princess crushed her enemies and sent the bad guys whom the audience had hated for three scenes to guillotines in the melody of triumph.

Right then, the hidden storm arrived. The curse before the new king died revealed the real identity of the princess’ love. He was actually the prince of her neighboring country, who was trying to occupy the country with the princess’ restoration!

However, love was uncontrollable. He fell in love with the princess. However, he chose his country in the end. In the rumbling, drumming, and the horns simulated by trumpets, they drew their weapons.

“Why is this happening...”

“Their love was so sweet...”

The audience felt the heartbreaking pain when the third act reached the end. Ali was in such a trance that he looked at the theater with a pale face. He could almost feel what the princess felt; the chasm that couldn't be crossed, and the bond that had to be cut off in person.

The prelude of the fourth act burst out intense power in the depression and gloom, as if it were foretelling the princess' relentless attack.

The music was the most classic part since Valkyrie was played. The passion and enthusiasm of the audience were raised.

“This opera can be called classic just by the music in this section...” Oliver nodded approvingly.

The battle between the princess and the prince was over. The prince collapsed and sang a miserable monologue, and the princess raised her longsword.

“Is she going to kill him?”

“She wouldn’t be so cruel, would she?”

In the whispers of discussion, Natasha, sitting inside the box, suddenly heaved a long sigh.

The sword fell, and the prince died. Under the sorrowful and loud melody, the princess sang a heartbreaking aria.

After witnessing the attack and hearing the melody, Ali was as pale as a dead man. That seemed to be the ending of the fantasy in his heart. The distance between him and her was even longer than that between the prince and the princess. The story had ended before it even began. Also, she did not even have to draw the sword herself, because he did not even have the chance to go to the battlefield...

A love tragedy was always most devastating, but the princess left a deep impression on everyone when she waved her sword in the end. At this moment, the following knights of the neighboring country had arrived. As it turned out, they had been captured by darkness and became servants of a vicious dragon. They wanted to occupy the princess’ country just to steal treasures for the dragon!

Holding back her grief, the princess led the knights to counterattack. Right when they were about to win, the wind simulated by instruments began to blow, and an enormous monster descended on the stage.

It had a lizard-like head and a strong body that was covered in transparent scales. A pair of equally beautiful wings were opened on its back. Under the light, they were all emitting the cold and dreamy brilliance.

The unimaginable intimidation from the dragon caused the legs of all the opera performers to tremble. Their singing became intermittent as if it were a real scene.

“A real... real dragon?” The nobles in the theater felt that their eyes were popping out.

Banus and Ali could barely close their eyes in their shock. Was the dragon part of the performance?

The dragon’s fingers and toes were wearing different gem rings. There were also a crown on its head and a gold cape on its back. It seemed that the dragon had just ransacked a treasury.

“Hand over your treasures!” the dragon said as if it were singing.

Inside the box, Lucien smiled. “I paid a huge fortune for Little Crystal to join the performance. He must be the most expensive opera actor in history...”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 725: Heroes’ Monument

Inside the Rose Square in Kasvig...

When Little Crystal suddenly arrived and released the dominance of a top creature, exclamations and shrieks immediately burst out of the crowd. They backed off as if they were being blown by a tide. Their panic and fear were almost concrete.

“Monster!”

“D-Dragon!”

“Screwed... We’re screwed...”

“It’s so terrifying!”

In only one moment, a large room was cleared around the “curtain”. Although they knew that it was happening inside the Rentato Royal Grand Theater, their subconscious reaction of fear came from their natural instincts. No “special effects” worked better than a real-life dragon!

In the cities of Cocus, Salyvaor, Paphos, and Samara, similar cases were happening. Somebody backed off in fear, some were stunned, and some felt that they were dreaming.

Human beings living in the non-remote areas had barely seen any dragons since the heyday of the Magic Empire, but as the eternal supervillain in stories, people’s impression of dragons did not decline with the passage of time. Also, “Human and Nature”, a program on “Arcana Voice”, had introduced the epic creature many times. It was not difficult for Banus and Ali to identify a dragon.

Holding their breath, they found their legs shivering. Despite the long distance, Banus and Ali were still horrified by the dragon on the curtain. They would've turned around and fled if they were not too stunned to move.

Suddenly, Ali was back to himself. "She's in the theater near the dragon!"

What do I do? What do I do?

Right when his fear almost drove him mad, Princess Amansa, the only standing actress on the stage, spoke in recitative that carried the characteristics of singing. "My most precious treasure is my courage and my knightly faith. Nobody can take them away. Vicious dragon, kill me, or be killed by me. There isn't a third option!"

Huh?

Everybody who did not know what was going on was puzzled. *Lady, you are an opera actress, not a real knight! Dragon-slaying is best left to the "professionals"!*

Huh, could it be... Finally, Banus and Ali sensed something.

When the princess sang, the "unaffected" orchestra was also playing. The agitating, uneasy, rapid, and poignant melody made everybody share her feeling!

The singer and actress who played the princess “glared” at the dragon before her as her heart pounded. Because they rehearsed before and the dragon intentionally curbed his deterrence, she managed to control her body and her voice and continued her performance.

Also, the subconscious fear resulted in the secretion of her adrenaline and made her feel that she had never performed better. The shivering nobles down there proved that her feeling was true.

The orchestra was not affected by the dragon either. That was why they could continue the performance.

Hearing the princess’ trilling aria, Banus and Ali shivered and recovered from the influence of the dragon.

“They’ve invited a dragon to play the greedy vicious dragon?” Banus felt that his question was inappropriate, but he was too excited to consider calmly right now due to the subconscious fear.

His worries gone, Ali began to observe Little Crystal carefully. After all, the opportunities to see a real dragon were rare. The arrival of Mr. Atom Controller on a dragon during his wedding with the queen had been sung over by the bards, who all claimed that they participated in the gala in order to increase the credibility of their stories.

“Perhaps... it’s an illusion of the sorcerers?” Looking at Little Crystal’s thick neck and half-transparent scales, he asked in great curiosity.

The audience around replied in excitement, “It can’t be an illusion. Her Majesty, Prince Evans, and the other sorcerers in the box are all legendary experts. How can they not see through an illusion? As a result, they would only see the ‘princess’ singing by herself, which would be a disrespect for them. Therefore, it has to be a real dragon...”

He too had been affected by adrenaline and could barely stop after he began talking.

“Fair enough. Oh, a real dragon...”

“The kingdom and the Congress of Magic let a dragon become an opera actor!”

In their amazement, Little Crystal responded to the princess’ challenge. He bent backward and raised his claws, bashing his chest and “roaring” in fury.

“Howl!”

Wow! The audience below the senior rank was intimidated by the “terrifying roars” of the dragon and took a step back again.

“How horrifying!” Banus announced, his fists clenched, but he sounded more thrilled than scared.

“It’s so terrifying...” Jane, Duke James’ daughter, patted her chest as if she had been scared, but her eyes were focused on the stage with unprecedented excitement that was partly mixed with fear.

In all the squares where a live stream was going on, the audience looked more or less the same. They had never known such a kind of opera before. It was so amazing and attractive!

Ali swallowed. “The ‘princess’ is really strong. She’s still standing before the dragon. Look at the people around her...”

“She’s the Valkyrie...” Banus looked at the “curtain” without blinking and fully understood what Valkyrie meant.

Inside the box, Natasha looked at Lucien in confusion. “Why is Little Crystal acting and roaring so funnily? What exactly did you think when you designed the actions?”

Fernando also glared at Lucien. How could he let Little Crystal do that and roar like that? He’s a dragon, not anything else, although the little guy was rather suitable for that...

“I designed quite a few sets of actions and roars. However, Little Crystal picked this one on his own. He believed that it presented his ‘gravitas’ most.” Lucien chuckled.

Natasha raised her eyebrows and scratched her chin. “I seem to have understood something from your laughter. The other few sets were certainly even worse than this one. After comparing them, Little Crystal felt that this was the best.”

Lucien smiled. “The result of choosing is solely dependent on the design of options. Hehe. Isn’t this good? Does it not suit Little Crystal?”

“It suits him very well!” Natasha also chuckled.

On the stage, the final battle was about to break out, and the princess' knights had recovered from their fear. They gathered around her and were about to charge with her.

The princess began to sing; her face both determined and gentle. A sweet and touching song hit everybody's mind with the music from the orchestra.

Most people would recall the beautiful things in the past when they were about to do something of critical importance, and when their lives were in danger, what they would recall were definitely the most wonderful pictures that they remembered best. It was obvious that the princess remembered the prince and their sweet and painful love.

As she sang on, most people who had similar experiences or looked forward to loving someone were captivated by the song. Ali looked at the curtain, his eyes hazy, as he pictured the girl in his heart and thought of the chasm between them. For a moment, he felt both sweet and miserable.

After one song was over, it was another piece. It was the chorus of the knights, warm and everlasting. It made the audience understand the meaning of "protection".

In the end, the princess sang loudly again and broke the warmth. There was a resolution in the breathtaking melody. They were determined to kill the dragon or to be killed by it.

A real dragon was lurking ahead, and the prince and knights fighting for their homeland were right next to them. Hearing the music from the orchestra that melted perfectly with the atmosphere, the audience shared the fury toward the common enemy. They had the sacred feeling to sacrifice for those who loved.

Such a feeling touched themselves and made Ali clench his fists. What was to be scared of if death could not scare them? Even the longest distance could be covered as long as one took the first step!

Wu!

The horn of charge echoed again, and the melody became intense and hasty, which made the nobles and the ordinary people who couldn't activate their blood powers clutch everything around them. Everybody felt that valiance and determination in a real charge.

Such music was something that they would never regret. The melody of charge echoed in their heart. In every act, they had discovered music that was more classic than the previous ones, but they finally realized that "Charge" was the most central and classical part of the opera!

An intense battle began, and in the horns of charge, one knight fell another, and fewer and fewer people were left by the princess' side.

Finally, paying one arm as the price, the princess stabbed the dragon in his heart.

Little Dragon held his stomach and writhed on the floor in "pain", making the stage scrunch.

Clinging to her longsword, the princess looked around, only to discover that all her partners had collapsed and stopped breathing.

The melody changed again—wistful and miserable.

The princess raised her head slightly, and her mouth opened. A song that sounded like it came from the depths of the soul echoed.

“Heroes never die;

“They will only wither in people’s memories.”

Banus shivered and sensed the shiver from his soul to his body. The sad but determined melody hit his soul precisely.

He couldn’t describe the feeling. He only knew that the song astounded him so much that he completely forgot everything around him and was completely devoted to the world that the song built.

...

“Bury my bones, but do not set any monument...

“... For this prosperous city is the best monument for us!”

Tears quietly dropped from the corners of most people’s eyes. The princess plucked her longsword and struggled to walk backward, leaving an unwavering and unbent back.

The curtain slowly fell.

“This is the best opera that I’ve ever heard. Nothing can be more amazing than it!” After a long time, Oliver congratulated Lucien in excitement.

Natasha blinked her eyes. “I think so too. Lucien, thank you for your gift.”

“Right, what’s the name of the last aria?” Oliver asked in haste.

Lucien replied with a smile, “Heroes’ Monument.”

It was not until then that most of the audience was finally really back to themselves. Intense and enthusiastic applause burst out in the Royal Grand Theater, in the squares of the cities large and small in Holm, and in the major cities in the other three countries on this side of the strait and on the north coastline.

Inside a library on the top floor of the Holm Royal Magic Tower, Hathaway was sitting at her desk. Before her was a water screen that displayed the scene inside the Rentato Royal Grand Theater.

Her whistle echoed in the room, but her singing sounded rather poor...

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 726: Difference Choices in the Great Age

Inside the Baron Bechig Square in Samara in Paphos County...

People were still dwelling in the song that seemed to have burst out from their souls. The whole square was quiet. Even the innocent kids were awed by the atmosphere and did not dare make any noises at all. The place seemed to have been caged in time.

They had never experienced the feelings that touched their souls before. For the operas in the past, music and plot were independent of each other and could not build up each other. Therefore, even though many classic arias had appeared in the history of opera, most of the audience found it impossible to resonate with the music when their emotion hadn't been activated. Naturally, it was impossible for them to have a wonderful feeling that their soul was touched.

"Valkyrie" this time was an exception. The plot was built one step after another, and the melody that sounded like a whole orchestra was fully rendered. The effect when they were combined was much better than either of them could've achieved independently. As a result, the audience completely melted into the story and the music, feeling the same as the characters felt.

That was why when "Charge" was played, they felt that they were following the princess as she charged into the battlefield. That was why they could personally feel the sorrow, regret, and determination when the princess sang "Heroes' Monument", to the point that their blood was freezing.

Lucien dare not say that the story of the plot was perfect and better than any playwrights' works, but he could announce proudly that its blast on the audience was unprecedented.

It was not until a long time later that low voices echoed in the square.

"Heroes never die;

"They will only wither in people's memories."

A girl couldn't prevent herself from singing the aria in the end. Although she did not have the pleasant voice of the singer who played the princess, and her imitation was hardly accurate due to the high difficulties, she sang with such devotion and such love as if she had witnessed her comrades and friends collapsing next to her.

The vague song broke the silence in the square and raised a chain reaction. Banus, Ali, and the other members of the audience all opened their mouths and whistled.

"Bury my bones, but do not set any monument...

"... For this prosperous city is the best monument for us!"

The song echoed in the Baron Bechig Square again and again, as if the heroes' souls were staring at their beloved home, reluctant to leave!

It was not until a long time later that the citizens finally got rid of the atmosphere and discussed passionately with each other about "Valkyrie", about Master Evans' changes on the opera, about the classical music pieces such as "Dawn" and "Charge", about the exceptional arias such as "Heroes' Monument", about the state-of-the-art actors and actresses and the terrifying dragon, and about the visual and acoustic feast of "live stream".

In the middle of their discussion, Ali changed his expression and suddenly turned around.

"Ali, where are you going?" Banus was sharing his feelings tonight with a stranger nearby in excitement when he noticed Ali's action. He was puzzled. Did his friend not like liveliness most? Was there any place more lively than the square at present? Did he not feel any urge to share his feelings after listening to the opera?

Solemnly and somewhat excitedly, Ali replied, "I'm going home!"

"Going home for what?" Banus abandoned the communication with the stranger and caught up with Ali, before he asked in confusion.

Ali clenched his right hand subconsciously. "I'll pack up and go to Rentato!"

"Huh? Rentato? Ali, have you lost your mind?" Banus thought that he was hallucinating. Why on earth was his friend going to Rentato? That was the capital of the kingdom, not a small rural town!

Ali shook his head. “My mind isn’t lost. I’ve given it a lot of thought. I’m going to Rentato instead of spending the rest of my life in such a small city like Samara.”

“But... But what’s bad about a small city?” Banus asked in shock.

Taking a deep breath, Ali pointed at the “curtain” in the square behind them. “Banus, do you see the alchemical item that can let us see and hear things far away? It allowed us to appreciate an opera that was performed in Rentato.”

“Yes. Why do you want to go to Rentato when we can appreciate it in our town?” Banus was even more confused.

Ali slowly sighed. “Banus, what does such an alchemical item represent? And what does the fact that a small city has such an alchemical item indicate?”

Then, he answered his own question, “It indicates that changes that have never been seen in the past hundreds of years are happening to our country and our age. New things are born and thriving every day.”

Banus nodded. He could sense it based on the changes around him even though he was in a small city.

“Such changes are unstoppable, just like a flood. The only thing we can do is adapt to it. However, I would rather not stagnate at such a great age. Banus, think about it. Aren’t such great changes full of opportunities? As long as we seize any of them, our life will be entirely different.

“I’m unwilling to live a dead life in the small city, where I will inherit my father’s position as the servant to the secretary, marry a girl of the same status as mine, have children, get busy, and grow old. I’m scared of a life that can be foreseen so clearly. Has my life been predestined? So, I’m going to Rentato to follow my dreams and find a place of mine in the great development that would change the world. I’ll do my best to move forward.”

Ali’s regret was obvious.

“But Samara is also changing. Also, getting married, having children, getting busy, and growing old... Everybody will experience these. It will happen to you even if you find your dream.” Banus tried to calm him down.

“That’s truly a process that everybody will experience, but the process can be full of wonders too. Banus, it’s true that Samara is changing, but it is too slow. Only in Rentato can you feel the powerful pulse of our age and find an opportunity to change your life.

“Therefore, I’m going to Rentato. Whether to study in a generic school or a Lanxiang, or to find a job in the newly developed industry, I think I’ll pick up things that will change my life.”

Ali’s tone became peaceful but determined. He used the “pulse of the age” that he heard from “Arcana Voice” to describe the necessity to go to Rentato.

Looking at Ali’s eyes and sensing his insistence, Banus fell quiet. He then attempted the final persuasion. “Uncle Balsa will not agree. Although there are plenty of opportunities in Rentato, they are too tantalizing for ordinary people like us. It’s possible that you will die in a shabby house, poor and cold, without anybody knowing it.”

“I know that I may fail and return to Samara without achieving anything, but it is the most hilarious and meaningless thing to admit your failure without trying. Compared to the past and the

future when the development stagnates, now is the time that the opportunities are closest to ordinary people like us. If we don't fight for them now, are we going to wait for the future when it is even more difficult?"

His correspondences with his "pen pal" had allowed Ali to learn a lot of things and had a new understanding of the world. "As for my father, I will explain it to him. Even if he doesn't support me, I will not change my mind. I'm already an adult. It's my own responsibility to feed myself. Whatever becomes of me in the end, it will be my own choice. Banus, come with me. We'll create a bright future together in Rentato!"

Banus felt that his heart was hot after hearing Ali's words. Metropolis, capital, what beautiful worlds. It had the most prosperous boulevards, the greatest changes, the most numerous opportunities, and the brightest prospects. It was possible that he might be spotted by a sorcerer on the street and became his student, which was certainly not an impossible dream but a case reported by "Arcana Voice" before.

But very soon, he thought of himself, who had absolutely no advantages except for his physical strength. He thought of the strange city, strange streets, strange citizens, and strange maliciousness. His heart was immediately chilled. Looking at everything around that he was familiar with, he shook his head and said, "Ali, I prefer Samara. I think that I'm more suitable for a small town..."

Ali tried to convince him, but Banus was still scared of the unknown dangers and reluctant to leave Samara.

A few days later.

On the platform of Samara, Ali was wearing a black gown and a top hat that his father Balsa had specifically prepared for him. He had turned from a big boy into a vigorous young gentleman.

Holding his large suitcase, he said goodbye to his parents and strode toward the door of the magic steam train. He then looked back at the platform with mixed feelings. On one hand, he couldn't bear to leave his hometown, and on the other hand, he was puzzled why Banus didn't come to see him off.

"Did I hurt his feelings the other day?"

"Or maybe, does he think that I've betrayed our friendship by not staying in the town?"

Ali felt complicated, worried that he had lost his best friend.

He looked back after every step, but Banus never showed up, so he grew more and more frustrated.

After boarding on the carriage and finding his own seat, Ali craned his head out of the window and waved his hands at his parents again. His eyes grew moist, as it was the first time that he had left his parents.

"Ali!" Banus' voice suddenly came from far away. He waved his hands fast and ran over in a hurry, with a blue-and-purple fruit in his left hand.

Banus squeezed through the crowd to below the window and said loudly, "Damn it. I remembered the time wrong! Here, this is your favorite Samara Fruit. I don't think you will get to enjoy them again after you reach Rentato."

The Samara Fruit was a local specialty of the town, which matured at the end of October and the beginning of November every year.

Ali's eyes became wet. Banus was truly as rash and careless as ever!

Wu!

He picked up the fruit. Before he was able to say anything, a deafening siren suddenly echoed.

Covering his eyes, Ali shouted, "Banus, I'll bring you to Rentato after I succeed!"

Banus waved his hands. "Alright! Don't forget Samara!"

Wu! Clang! Clang!

"I'll come back after I am successful!" Ali secretly clenched his fists. The magic steam train was activated and became faster and faster, gradually getting away from the platform.

Ali's eyes became misty, and he could barely see anything clearly. He kept waving his arms, but Banus and his parents were further and further away...

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 727: The Church's Thoughts

Inside the pope's library in the Holy City...

"The Rentato Music Festival was live streamed?" Looking at the red robe before him, Benedict III repeated the message that he reported. He was obviously puzzled why such trivia had also been delivered to him. If he had to deal with such insignificant matters in person, why would he need so many red robes?

Sensing Benedict III's apparent anger, the red robe sweated hard, regretting that he forgot the most critical remark. "Your Holiness, the live stream was not held in the town square like the case in the Aalto Music Festival, but it was held in all the four countries as well as part of the cities in the north coastline, which means that millions of people might've watched the music festival."

"Super remote image transmission... Was it conducted through the artificial planets?" Benedict III naturally knew that the live stream that the red robe mentioned was not the broadcast that only had sound. Knowing arcana rather well, he remembered artificial planets immediately. Only they could satisfy such a need right now, unless the Congress of Magic deployed sound and image transmission circles without caring about the cost like the Church did in the past.

With his head lowered, the red robe said, "Yes. According to the night watchers, the Congress of Magic did use artificial planets as transfer stations."

The middle-rank sorcerer who set up the "curtain" illuminated the "artificial planets" during the final debugging and created a rather bizarre view. It was unavoidable with their strength.

Therefore, it was easy for the night watchers to conclude that the live stream of the music festival couldn't have been conducted without "artificial planets".

Benedict III became solemn. He picked up the emergent intelligence and read it carefully.

Worrying about the development of the Church, the red robe suggested boldly, "Your Holiness, although the magic circle for the live stream is not permanent or an alchemical item, it will certainly result in the vacillation of the believers in the four countries and the northern coastline. It is bad for our future attacks."

Benedict III put down the report. His expression was as deep as an ocean. "The vacillation of the believers? The music festival was live-streamed in different cities simultaneously, with both sound and image, to both civilians and the nobles... This is of much greater significance than the pure shake of faith."

"I am too idiotic to understand the hint of the Lord." The red robe shivered in fear. He was so desperate to win the pope's appreciation that he opened his mouth when he shouldn't.

Benedict III nodded his head and continued, "Of course, for us, the greatest influence is truly the vacillation of believers. Sorcerers are corrupt people with extravagances and entertainment. The world is now full of filthy dirt. But that's all the more reason why we should save every lamb who still has kindness in his heart.

"This will be a difficult and dangerous path, and every cleric must be prepared to sacrifice. Are you ready?"

Having been approved, the red robe was so excited that he drew a cross on his chest. "Only Truth lives forever!"

“Give my order. Summon the Grand Cardinals for an emergency meeting.” Benedict III sighed.

Half an hour later, all the Grand Cardinals except for those who were on missions gathered in the Bright Hall.

Before Benedict III brought out the platinum staff, they had already learned about the meeting from the red robe.

“Your Holiness, artificial planets are highly dangerous. We have to destroy them completely,” Melmax, the captain of the Temple Knights, offered a suggestion straightforwardly. He did not know much about arcana as the Grand Cardinals did, but he could see the hazard of artificial planets even more clearly as an observer. They had given eyes and wings to the sorcerers from the sky!

After the second artificial planet was launched, the Church had tried many ways of attack and counterattack. Their achievement was that two artificial planets were destroyed. However, after Lucien proposed the general theory of relativity, the Congress of Magic had been launching artificial planets every year, so such losses were affordable.

Saint Maria was a brown-haired girl, but she was at least three hundred years old. She suggested in a soft voice, “For the Congress of Magic, creating and launching artificial planets is not very difficult. Even if we shoot down one of them, they will only launch more in a few years.

“Also, the Congress of Magic is almost on par with us except for the lack of demigod. Can we afford a total war right now? The heretics in the north and the evil creatures in the Dark Mountain Range are looking forward to our mistakes.”

Astira, the Angel of Wind, continued, “The Congress of Magic couldn’t have neglected our reaction when they decided to live stream Lucien Evans’ ‘Valkyrie’, could they? This is perhaps another trap. They’re perhaps waiting for us to destroy the planets!”

“Then, what do we do? Can you launch similar items and resist the sorcerers ‘artificial planets’ with our ‘Godly Eye’?” Beliel was dissatisfied with their complaints. They needed a viable suggestion!

Philip, the newly-promoted Grand Cardinal, said, “It’s not our strong suit to directly create a similar item. However, we can try to capture an artificial planet. With enough time, we should be able to duplicate them. By then, with the grace of the Lord, the item we create will be more creative and destructive on the orbit than artificial planets!”

The past experience had suggested that divine power was more convenient than magic, because “God” was ubiquitous, even on the orbit. The sorcerers had to use the help of magic circles to utilize the power of gravity or solar energy, which reduced the aggressiveness of artificial planets.

That was why the Congress of Magic attached such importance to fission reactors and controllable fusion. If they could be minimized, the gap between magic and divine power in that regard would be no more.

“We need a complete and safe plan. We must not fall into the trap of the Congress of Magic.” Melmax acknowledged Philip’s opinion and became less radical.

“Alright, you’ve all shown your loyalty to the Lord.” Benedict III made the final decision and asked Maria, Melmax, and Philip to draft plans.

Ines, another Grand Cardinal, added, “However, we cannot slow down the destruction of artificial planets, or the whole sky will be consumed by artificial planets one day. We’ll never see the sun!”

Although it was a hilarious vision, every Grand Cardinal still gasped hard.

.....

In San Ivansburg, Belkovsky and Romanov, the emperor of the Schachran Empire, both received the message from their spies. Then, they almost raised their heads and looked at the blue sky out of the window at the same time, as if they saw the artificial planets through the white clouds.

They did not have any doubt about the strategic significance of artificial planets, but they both sighed because they could not manufacture them. They wanted to capture one, but they feared that they would fall into a trap. They certainly could not afford a war against the Congress of Magic under the pressure of the South Church.

Therefore, they had to wait for an opportunity to capture one without causing a massive war, in which case the Congress of Magic could only swallow their anger because they also could not afford a war against them while resisting the South Church.

Inside the Dark Mountain Range, a luxury castle that was mostly made of gold stood next to a cliff.

A strange male leaned against the chair with a cigar on his mouth. Looking at his butler, he said, "What you said is very interesting. If only the live stream item of the Congress of Magic were smaller... In that case, I can have a lot of fun inside the castle. That's the best invention for a vampire who is too lazy to go out like me."

"Mr. Prince, even if you have such a thing, you would have to count on the Congress of Magic's radio station if you want to see anything," the butler replied solemnly.

“Rest assured. The Congress of Magic will certainly work on it now that they already achieved such a level. I can sponsor them if they lack resources. Isn’t Rhine very close to Lucien Evans? The old man can’t be angry at me if I sponsor through him.” The vampire prince waved his hands.

“I’m told that Mr. Observer went to the Temple of Spirits with the Primordial Ancestor,” the butler said something else.

After a brief silence, the vampire prince scoffed, “The old man will burst into fury again.”

.....

Inside the Sky Radio Station in Allyn...

After the Rentato Music Festival was over, Lucien came to thank the arcanists who were responsible for the broadcast. Heidi, who was interested in “live stream”, arrived with him.

“Mr. Evans, this is our job, and you don’t need to thank us. However, the members of the audience have been sending us letters, asking us to keep the live stream going on in the future instead of only broadcasting sound. What should we do?” said Louise, upset.

Lucien smiled. “Prime Minister Russell, Duke James, and the other nobles expressed similar wishes, but it’s not a problem that can be solved with additional radios and loudspeakers. According to the current standard, the magic circles that can display images and receive signals permanently equal to a senior-rank item. Neither the Congress of Magic nor the kingdom can afford that.

“Therefore, we need time to complete and simplify the alchemical items. You may repeat my words to the audience. In the near future, they will not only be enjoying the live stream in the square but also at their homes.”

“In the near future?” Samantha asked in confusion. She couldn’t recall any studies in that aspect.

Lucien pointed at Heidi who was standing next to him. “Part of her studies on artificial intelligence can be directly applied to this, such as electronic tubes and monitors. Therefore, whether or not similar alchemical items can be produced depends on the efforts of her research team.”

“Mine?” Heidi pointed at her nose, lost. She was too dedicated to artificial intelligence to realize that it could also be applied to other aspects.

.....

In Hamina, the capital of Dumute...

Katrina was walking on the crowded street. Most of the passersby were dwarfs who only reached her waist, but there were still plenty of merchants who came to do business. Therefore, she did not catch much attention.

“It’s not suitable at night. I should install the item that my teacher gave to me at night...” Looking at the pilgrims outside of the temple, Katrina made a judicious decision. Although she didn’t quite understand why her teacher asked her to do this, she still spared no efforts to see that it was done perfectly.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 728: Behind the Back

Clang, clang, clang.

After three consecutive bell knocks, the dwarfs outside of the temple of “God of Craftsmen” all stopped. Clenching their right hands into fists, they bashed and prayed at the same time.

“Great God of Steam, you are the master of machines. You control the arts of craft and grant us strength and courage...”

Katrina, who was about to leave, was slightly shocked. Since when had the God of Craftsmen become the God of Steam? It seemed that the Congress hadn’t paid enough attention to this country of dwarfs.

“However, this ‘God of Steam’ looks slightly different from the ‘God of Steam’ that the alchemical dwarfs in Rentato worship. The gesture and words in their prayers are apparently not the same.” Katrina had encountered the dwarfs from the Night Highland when she and her friends wandered in Rentato and visited the alchemical workshops. Their weird gesture of eye-covering during their prayer left a deep impression on her.

She looked around, only to discover that humans, werewolves, elves, and the other non-dwarf races stopped walking. Although they did not join the prayer, it was obvious that they did not want to disturb the dwarfs' ritual at noon. She thought to herself, *Judging from their reaction, it must've been a while since the God of Craftsmen turned into the God of Steam.*

The sound of prayer, which was gradually synchronized, created a strange resonance, letting the creatures who did not pray sense the magnificent sacredness, too. The air was filled with the intoxicating fragrance of alcohol.

That was the greatest feature of Dumute. The dwarfs loved not only ale but also any kind of wonderful liquor. The merchants who visited this place had mostly come to exchange their wine for minerals and the alchemical items created by dwarfs.

The dwarfs, whose bloodline had been modified by sorcerers, boasted basic spiritual powers. Together with their deftness and their talents, it was not hard for them to build apprentice-level items, but the low-rank and the middle-rank items had to be built by the dwarfs whose blood powers had been activated. The ancient sorcerers had modified them for the main purpose of crafting the lesser alchemical items to save their own time.

As for the senior-rank items, few dwarfs could forge them, and their success rate was much lower than the sorcerers'. The legendary items, on the other hand, could only be created by Heit, the God of Craftsmen, through divine power and his own talents. Even Okun, the God of Valiance, was incapable of that.

The fragrance of wine spread out from different houses. Mixed, they seemed enough to put down the passersby who could not drink much. However, Katrina had a remarkable capacity for drinks since she was born in the Schachran Empire. She was not disgusted at all. Instead, she even took a deep breath and narrowed her eyes.

After the noon prayer, Katrina returned to her hotel with the crowd. She closed the window and began to meditate, preparing herself for the operation at night. Although dwarfs had limited height, they loved beautiful and magnificent buildings from the bottom of their hearts. Therefore,

nobody would feel restrained in Dumute as long as they were not giants. The stone houses in this place had an average height of four meters.

Midnight soon came. Teams of dwarf soldiers patrolled on the street loyally and warily. Because the God of Craftsmen suddenly turned into the God of Steam and subverted the God of Valiance, Dumute was actually not as peaceful as it appeared, and emergencies caused by the “heretics” who opposed the great God of Steam happened now and then. Therefore, Hamina City was in fact under close watch.

Katrina deployed a magic circle to eliminate magic waves first. She then enhanced herself with the spells such as Advanced Stealth. Although Dumute was not biased against sorcerers, what she was going to do concerned the God of Craftsmen, their highest spiritual leader. She couldn’t be more prudent.

Landing on the ground as soft as a feather, Katrina snuck toward the temple of the God of Steam. On her way, she raised her head to observe the stars and the environment while calculating the coordinates where she should put the statue according to the formula that her teacher provided.

“Why does this formula need the specific coordinates of the few major temples as well as the types of the buildings around?” Katrina recited the many parameters she needed. She was puzzled by the patterns of the coordinate changes. What was the result of the calculation exactly, and why did it need so many weird parameters?

However, since it was her teacher’s request, she did not think much about it. Taking a long detour, she finally came up with the specific coordinates. Then, she quietly walked toward a white sculpture on the southeast side of the God of Steam.

“Is this Heit’s statue?” Katrina observed it carefully.

The dwarf was wearing an armor that was engraved with sacred patterns and holding a gigantic hammer in his hand. His long beard dangled to his chest and covered his face. Inside his eye sockets were two glittering rubies.

“The statue that my teacher gave to me is an eyesore compared to this...” Bringing out the figurine that Lucien gave her, Katrina was amused. “My teacher’s sense of beauty always fluctuates.”

Lucien’s taste in music, architecture, and his design of the Moon Timer were unquestionable. His ideas such as “Arcana Voice” had amazed many people too. However, in most cases, his thoughts and creations were of such a unique aesthetic that nobody else could accept them. Take the figurine of a dwarf made of many metal parts for example. It looked good and emitted coldness on the surface, but it had a big bald head that was full of creepy patterns, scaring everybody who saw it.

Her smile gone, Katrina focused her attention and let the figurine of the bald dwarf float at the heart of Heit, the God of Craftsmen, according to Lucien’s request, before she chanted the long and sophisticated spell.

The spell was written in the language of the ancient Magic Empire, but it carried a strange feeling of holiness. Gradually, a silver light protruded from the dwarf’s body. It spread out like a gigantic web that controlled human hearts.

“You are the master of mind, the emperor of gods, the great God of Steam... Allow me to summon your name. Supreme Yuri, please grant me the power to control everything...”

In her spell, the silver glittering lines stretched into the heart of Heit statue, and the rest of them integrated with the void, raising quakes.

In the quakes, the pure and holy light showed up like tiny angels. Singing, praising, and praying in pleasant sounds, they danced up and down around the Yuri statue.

The noises seemed to have been frozen. There was no reaction from the temple far away.

The quakes in the void suddenly grew intense, and the tiny spots of light were melted into the Yuri statue. Then, the Yuri statue was gradually blurred on the spot, until it was nowhere to be seen again!

“It has melted with time and space?” Katrina was deeply astounded by the scene, which she had never seen before. “Is this the subtlety of legendary power? But why does it carry a tiny hint of divine power?”

She shook her head and calmed herself down. Erasing the traces around carefully, she returned to the hotel.

When Katrina’s back disappeared at the end of the street, a bird that was absolutely black, with a cluster of hilarious and cold feathers on the head, swooped from the dark night.

Hovering, the bird stopped on the head of the God of Craftsmen and let out an obscure voice that nobody could hear. “Lucien Evans is truly gathering faith in secret. It seems that he is very confident about his theory... He’s bold enough to steal Heit’s power of faith...

“... And he sent a student for the mission. It would have fooled everyone if it weren’t for me...

“No, I have to find a way to remind Heit. Lucien Evans cannot be allowed to collect the power of faith smoothly, or he will step into the level of demigods faster than everybody else...”

The bird flew down from the statue and circled it while uttering weird, appalling tweets as if it were informing every living creature of their time of death.

...

On the third day after Katrina left Hamina City...

A team of dwarf soldiers discovered “cultists” who slandered the God of Steam during their patrol and were engaged in a fierce battle.

As it happened, there were senior-rank casters among the cultists. The dwarf soldiers suffered heavy losses. Thankfully, the temple of Heit was around, and a few priests soon arrived, surrounding those cultists in a square not far away.

Divine power burst out everywhere, raising the most extraordinary views in the square. One cultist fell after another, and the square was on the verge of destruction.

BOOM!

The priest and the senior-rank caster among the cultists launched Sunstrike at each other. The aftermath of their battle swept across the square, shaking and shattering the statue of Heit. The holy light and the silver lines on it flashed.

During the flash, Heit, who was deep inside the temple, opened his eyes. Two clusters of gold fire were burning in them, which reflected his furious heart.

He extended his hand, and the statue of the bald Yuri appeared in his palm.

“Who is stealing my power of faith?” In fury, Heit gnashed his teeth. “The God of Steam? Lucien Evans!”

The wind of fury swept across the whole temple, and a gold fire descended from the sky, burning the senior-rank caster into ashes.

After examining the survivors’ memories carefully, Heit was silent for a moment, before he shouted in exasperation, “You can steal my power of faith, and I can steal yours!”

His eyes were focused on the statue of Yuri in his hand. Then, he enveloped it carefully with a golden flame, so that he would not alert anyone.

...

Inside the Atomic Universe, a vague gold light appeared on the statue of “God of Steam” Yuri. Nobody would’ve discovered it if they hadn’t been watching it all the time.

Inside the magic tower, Lucien was briefly stunned. He turned around and looked out, his lips curling into a smile.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 729: “Aircraft”

The streets of Rentato were crammed with people.

“Look, what’s that?” Suddenly, someone exclaimed in the crowd. Everybody looked at where he was pointing at.

“What is that?”

“Can alchemical cars fly now?”

They burst out with equally shocked expressions when they saw that a silver object was flying at the altitude of the third floor. It looked similar to the alchemical cars on the street, in that it also had a head, a carriage, doors, wheels, and lamps, although it did seem too light to be made of regular metals. Of course, the greatest difference about the vehicle was that the weird alchemical car could fly! Wasn’t it an ability that only the sorcerers above the third circle and the radiant knights were capable of?

With their exclamations, more and more citizens looked at the sky. After a while, Rentato had a thousand statues that craned their heads at the sky.

Things were better in Rentato. If it were in any other place, the ordinary people would have escaped in a panic while shouting “monster”. Chances were that there would even be a stampede.

On the “flying car”, Viscount Leebel looked at the crowd below in satisfaction, with a cigar in his mouth. He felt that their exclamations were the best compliment for him.

“What’s to be surprised at? A bunch of bumpkins,” Viscount Leebel snorted. “This is just a perpetuated floating skill plus the engine device of the alchemical cars.”

He was the son of a certain count, and he had activated his blood power with drugs. It was impossible for him to fly on his own. Also, he felt that flying with common alchemical items was too ugly and made him feel that he was naked. Nobles should have the “etiquette” for flying. They had to be unhurried and graceful.

He had the dream for a long time, but he never had the chance to realize it until alchemical cars were invented. He finally understood what he really wanted. A real noble should fly in midair with such a vehicle so that the lowly citizens could only look up to him without seeing his real face. Of course, if this weren’t his first test, he would’ve hired a “coachman”. A noble should not drive a car in person!

Therefore, he found a few sorcerers who were highly interested in money and materials. Based on “alchemical cars”, they chose new metal materials that significantly reduced the weight as well as the safety performance. Then, the floating skill was perpetuated on that basis so that the alchemical car could float under the maneuver. That was because the flying skill could only be perpetuated by the senior rank, and the middle-rank sorcerers could only activate their flying skills several times every day at best, which could not meet Viscount Leebel’s demand.

Eventually, they modified the engine device of the alchemical car so that it could jet gas, thus allowing the controller to change the direction freely. In such a way, they enabled the alchemical car to fly without using the flying skill, and it could also drive on the ground.

Of course, such “flying cars” had its own deficiencies. Firstly, floating was not exactly flying, and the take-off and landing could be terribly slow. Secondly, it consumed a great amount of energy. Even though the floating skill had been perpetuated, it required the refill of magic gems that were unaffordable for ordinary people.

Viscount Leebel, however, was quite satisfied with that. It was his purpose to make the “flying cars” unaffordable for the bumpkins. That was the way to highlight the grace of nobles!

Looking at the alchemical cars on the ground that were driving slowly in case of collision as well as the shocked faces in them, Viscount Leebel extended his left hand and snapped the cigar ash off, before he said proudly, “What a bunch of bumpkins.”

Showing his “nobility”, he hit the accelerator in excitement, trying to pass through the air channel among a few tall buildings so that the bumpkins down below could only see the back of himself and his flying car!

Hardly had he passed the “channel” when his eyes were frozen, because an identical vehicle flew right at him on the opposite side. Inside the vehicle was a man who was at a loss in panic. He was equally fast and at the same altitude!

“Damn it. Those sorcerers sold my idea to other people!”

At this moment, of all the things he could’ve thought of, that was what popped up in his head. Then, he pulled the lever “skillfully”, hoping to ascend and avoid the possible collision.

However, the greatest problem with the floating skill was the slow rising and landing. Being a non-sorcerer, he neglected the problem.

The two equally shocked and terrified faces looked at each other in bewilderment, before the two flying cars ran into each other brutally.

“I shouldn’t have flown at such a low altitude just for other people to see me...” Viscount Leebel’s pupils constricted violently. Since his blood power was not normally activated, he did not have the willpower to remind himself of his knightly capabilities during the emergency.

Boom!

An enormous fireball burst out in midair, and the remains of the alchemical cars hit the ground like raindrops.

“Well...” All the craning citizens were utterly dumbfounded this time. What was this all about?

Bam.

An object that was burning intensely fell right before Ali who was carrying a black suitcase. He backed off in fear and almost stepped into the manhole next to the street.

“What a terrible explosion...

“It almost hit me...

“Rentato is really a dangerous place...”

Many ideas occurred to Ali. Having just arrived at the place, he had deeply recognized the “dangerousness” of Rentato. At this moment, he suddenly had the epiphany that his path would never be short of obstacles if he wanted to make a name for himself. If he was not careful enough, it was possible that he would be killed in the tiniest accident.

His uneasiness was soon suppressed by the strange experience.

“Hurry! Call the police!” The citizens were back to themselves.

They were already used to the police department of Holm.

.....

Inside the Atomic Universe...

“What are you smiling at?” Natasha flew back with her longsword. Having just finished the afternoon sword practice, she saw Lucien’s weird smile.

Instead of giving a direct reply, Lucien nodded and said, “Somebody is indeed spying on me.”

“Did you find anything with the statue of Yuri?” Natasha was keen enough to remember the incident. Lucien had asked Katrina to install the statue in Dumute for two purposes. One of them was exactly a test!

Lucien chuckled. “If ‘he’ did not do anything, I would have to figure out a way to let Heit discover it, but thankfully, he jumped out promptly.”

“Do you know who it was?” Natasha asked solemnly.

Lucien shook his head. “I made the prophecy based on the event, so I don’t know who exactly it was. I only know that such a guy exists. After all, adding unnecessary magic circles to the statue would’ve placed Katrina in danger.”

Lucien certainly did not intend to involve his student who hadn’t even reached the senior rank in such peril.

“You don’t seem worried.” Natasha was relaxed seeing how easy Lucien was. She sheathed the Sword of Truth.

“Wary, I am; worried, I am not. Why do I need to worry about a guy who attempts to become a demigod by keeping an eye on what I do all the time?” Lucien began to joke with his wife. “Look at me. I always research and explore on my own and never care about what other people do. That’s the demeanor of an expert.”

“Tsk. If you are an expert, turn into a legendary knight and have a sword exercise with me!” Natasha raised her eyebrow.

Lucien replied “fearlessly”, “Not a problem, as long as you don’t use the Sword of Truth and the Shield of Truth.”

After joking with each other for a while, they discussed the mysterious guy and the God of Craftsmen again. At this moment, Butler Leo walked in. “Madam, a maid from the Nekso Palace asked for you.”

He always addressed her as madam instead of Your Majesty.

“Me? Is there anything important?” Natasha walked to the library in confusion. There shouldn’t be any emergency that the queen had to deal with in person recently.

After a while, Natasha was back. She said to Lucien with a weird face, “The ‘car accident’ you mentioned constantly has happened, but it’s in the sky...”

“In the sky?” Having come from Earth, Lucien knew very well about the danger of car accidents. After the alchemical cars were invented, he specifically advised speed limits and other safety measures in the city. No car accidents had taken place yet because alchemical cars were still rare. He never expected that the first car accident would happen in the sky!

Natasha explained what had happened. “The dead Viscount Leebel was certainly a creative man.”

A naughty kid who liked playing and got killed because of it... Lucien secretly remarked. The nobles and sorcerers of this world were truly “practical”. They had even created “flying cars” that he had never thought of.

Natasha patted her hand. “I have to host a meeting in the Parliament of Nobles. The deaths of two nobles have prompted the conservative old men to propose a ban on flying cars. If their reason stands, wagons should’ve been thrown into the ocean a long time ago.”

As the wife of an arcanist who was good at inventing all kinds of bizarre items, she was rather interested in the idea of flying cars.

“That’s right. It’s better to regulate the things that will eventually appear than to ban them. We should establish rules on aircraft and road safety. It will be better if the police department can set up special units to enforce the rules,” Lucien suggested.

“Haha. Should we forbid sorcerers from flying in the city like Allyn? Well, the Bill of Flight Management of Sorcerers?” Natasha joked and returned to the Nekso Palace through the portal in the hall.

Lucien shook his head with a smile and walked to the Thunder Hall, ready to discuss arcana with his teacher and Mr. Brook.

He had barely entered the Thunder Hell when he heard an intense explosion. Fernando's magic tower glowed, and an energy swept out while consuming everything as if it were the end of the world. Then, everything was curbed by the magic tower.

"Damn it. Another explosion!" Fernando appeared before Lucien, with his hair in a mess.

Lucien said helplessly, "Master, you'd better be careful. If it were any other arcanists, they would've been long dead."

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 730: The Investigator

"What exactly was wrong that caused the series of explosions in the fission reactor?" Fernando paid absolutely no heed to Lucien's reminder. As long as no other top legends or third-rank sorcerers were behind it, even if he did not have the time to take any reaction, the trigger and passive magic effects on him would've been enough to ensure that he survived the fission explosions without being affected by the curses.

His hair was so messy that a huge wind seemed to have just blown it. His red magic robe was also full of wrinkles, which was an indication of the catastrophe just now, but he noticed none of it. All his attention was devoted to the possible problems of the fission reactor, and he sounded agitated and extremely puzzled. According to his studies on fission and his reverse engineering on "Atomic Fission", the legendary spell, there shouldn't be a problem at all. However, it was indeed a fission reactor that was going on when the uncontrollable explosion took place!

“How many times has it exploded?” Lucien gasped hard. Judging from his teacher’s tone, it was not the second meltdown, but the third, the fourth, the fifth, or even the sixth. No wonder he ran into the explosion by “accident”; it was no accident at all.

It was not until then that Lucien finally realized why his teacher hardly let him and the other students do experiments. The only experiments that they did were the simple ones, such as black-body radiation. As it turned out, it was very dangerous to be involved in his teacher’s experiments, and any researchers who were not legendary could be obliterated any time!

Fernando frowned. “It doesn’t matter how many times it has exploded; what matters is why. It has no contradictions whatsoever with the model and mechanism of fission.”

Thinking for a moment, Lucien said, “‘Atomic Fission’ is an uncontrollable, massively-destructive spell, and the reactor demands steadiness and controllability. That’s probably the source of the problem.”

“Do you think I am a fool who simply made arrangements according to the model of ‘Atomic Fission’?” Fernando said. It was apparent that he wasn’t in a good mood. “You saw our reactor model and the detailed arrangements yourself. You should know that we added a lot of magic circles to facilitate the utilization and control of energy.”

“However, it doesn’t mean real steadiness and controllability. I think we have to study fission better in order to solve the problem. We have to figure out the role that neutrons and the other particles play and their possible reactions under different circumstances.” Lucien had considered the reactor accidents himself and suspected that it was because the current research was too crude. The design of the reactor mostly depended on “reverse engineering”. The different roles of slow neutrons and fast neutrons hadn’t been discovered, not to mention their different effects in different fission reactions.

Fernando never ignored the helpful advice, but he never gave in verbally either. “Do you think I never considered those problems? But it will take a long time to experiment on neutrons by hitting different elements with them. Well, Hathaway and I are already on it.”

Neutrons couldn't be accelerated by a magnetic field, so the experiments were much more complicated.

"I'll also try to work on those experiments." Lucien smiled. "The sooner we develop portable fission devices, the more useful our artificial planets will be. It will be impossible for the Church and the other enemies to imitate us."

The mechanisms of the artificial planets, such as their orbits and their relay of electromagnetic waves, were not complicated and could be mimicked. But when it came to fission reactors, if they did not have a profound study on fission, the enemies would only encounter the explosion accidents that were happening to his teacher recently if they tried to duplicate the devices. If they did not understand which magic pattern functioned and how, it would be impossible for them to combine or abandon the patterns when they transformed the patterns into symbols of divine power. Any error in the procedure could lead to a serious accident.

That was exactly the difference between the cutting edge and the bleeding edge of arcana. After all, "launch" was too simple in this world.

Fernando nodded. "As long as a steady fission reactor is developed, minimization shouldn't be a problem."

In this magic world, many technical problems on Earth were no longer problems. For example, the fission reactor that Fernando and Hathaway built directly used magic circles to transform the released energy into electricity. No external components were needed at all. But of course, the cost of minimization would still be very high. Unless the Congress paid to install them on the artificial planets, only the archmages and the legendary sorcerers would be able to afford them.

Also, the Highest Council did not have a consensus on the promotion of minimized fission devices, because it might be a safety hazard. It could cause huge casualties and pollution that would take forever to be cleaned.

Seeing the confidence in his teacher, Lucien smiled. “Fission reactors and minimization is just our first step. Controllable fusion is our real goal. When the goal is achieved, we will be able to proudly declare that we are the Sun Kings.”

“Controllable fusion...” Fernando repeated hopefully but frowningly. That was significantly more difficult than fission reactors. He, Douglas, and Hathaway had absolutely no clue where to get started, and Lucien could barely offer any useful suggestions. “Let’s focus on the fission reactor for now...”

He paused and mocked habitually, “All the distinguished arcanists in the microscopic domain are bombarding particles with other particles every day right now, hoping to find the group that contains the enigmas from the infinite experimental data. They are more like hard laborers than arcanists.”

“It’s not just the distinguished arcanists. Most sorcerers know that hitting the microscopic particles is most likely to lead to new discoveries.” Lucien chuckled. “They are terrified by the uncanny feature of electrons as if it could destroy the world. Also, they know little about quantum mechanics and cannot make any theoretical or experimental contributions. So, they can only walk on the path that cannot be wrong.”

It was the same on Earth. The bombardment and collision experiments of particles were the most viable approach to discover the mysteries of the microscopic domain. The only difference was that the senior-rank sorcerers of the Congress of Magic were already capable of setting up experiment devices of their own, unlike the researchers on Earth who had to wait in line to run the experiments in order to confirm their speculations or deductions from the data.

Of course, when the phase of Large Hadron Collider came, the scenarios would be more and more familiar. For example, the middle-rank sorcerers right now could only walk on several paths if they intended to run similar magic experiments.

Firstly, they could become the students or friends of a certain senior-rank sorcerer. Secondly, they could work in places like the Atom Institution. Thirdly, they could pay for the senior-rank sorcerers to make the arrangements for them.

Fourthly, they could file an application to the Magic Research Board and join a queue while they waited for the chance to use the open massive laboratory of the Allyn magic tower for free. That was an idea that Lucien proposed in a session of the Highest Council so that the lesser sorcerers could do their research without paying.

Fernando glared at him. “Their fear and panic come exactly from the observer effect that you raised.”

Lucien hurried to change the subject. “Master, you didn’t work on the field theory today? Is Mr. Brook not here?”

“Why on earth would I work on that? My head is full of infinity, infinity, and infinity! I don’t know the point of my research at all!” Lucien asked the perfect question, which detonated Fernando like a stick of dynamite that had been ignited.

Lucien meant to comfort his teacher. Every person who worked on the field theory had millions of infinities in their room. That was unavoidable when the studies in the microscopic domain were pressed on.

For example, Mr. Dirac, who proposed the Dirac equation, as one of the founders of the quantum field theory, was one of the top ten if not the top five physicists in Lucien’s eyes. He held different

opinions on infinity. He believed that there were an inevitable reason and a deeper meaning behind infinity and that the classical theories were wrong. Therefore, he opposed reorganizing it through mathematical approaches. As a result, he was gradually left behind. Or maybe, his cognitive world was broken and solidified?

After roaring for a while, Fernando also fell quiet. “Brook will come later. However, even if infinite appears in the calculation of higher approximation, the field theory we’ve established has indeed described the interaction of charged particles, which is the essence of the electromagnetic force...”

He was rather satisfied with the joint study of himself, Brook, and Lucien, except for the goddamn infinity.

Based on the field theory they established, Fernando and Brook maintained that the electromagnetic force was realized when charged particles exchanged photons in many different processes. However, the photons were different from the photons that people usually studied. They could not be observed and were only a mathematical conclusion. The two of them had called such photons virtual photons.

After discussing the quantum field theory for a while, Fernando suddenly said, “Stanis told me that the Dark Mountain Range hadn’t been quiet lately. Those gloomy guys seem to have re-recognized us after the battle of Rentato and begin to consider whether they should cooperate with or fight against us.”

“Aren’t they a bit too slow?” Lucien said in amusement.

Fernando snorted. “Those guys are all species with extremely long lives. Our decade might only be ten days in their eyes. Plus, they are no more interested in arcana than the Church is. That is why they’ve reacted so sluggishly. Tell Natasha to pay attention to the safety of Rentato, which will probably be frequented by many dark creatures.”

“Alright.” Lucien nodded solemnly.

...

Inside the Dark Mountain Range, a young man with silver hair and gold eyes said solemnly, “Nasdell, you will sneak into Rentato and Allyn as soon as possible and take a look at the changes that the Congress of Magic has brought forth. Your observation will be the basis on which we make a decision later.”

“Yes, sir.” The werewolf before him retracted his fur and turned into a brawny man with the same silver hair.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 731: Nasdell in Rentato

Night fell rather early in this cold winter. Rentato, the city in the north, was shivering in the freezing cold wind. Every pedestrian walking on the street had pulled up their collars and accelerated their pace.

To them, the biggest difference was that the streets in Rentato now had been lined with bright magic crystal light. In the past, only the busiest streets had arched lamps. At that time, most citizens would walk back home in thick darkness, and the only light source might be the moon, stars, or a dim lantern.

Nasdell got off the last train following the stream and stepped onto the smooth floor of Hexagram Station. Rentato City still had the city gates and walls for the purpose of defense.

Therefore, magic steam trains could not drive into the city after nightfall. After the gate closed, the trains could only stop at the temporary station outside of the city.

Nasdell enjoyed his trip very much. Like the books said, magic steam trains were indeed very fast and comfortable. He exhaled and saw a cluster of white fog rising.

He was wearing a white shirt, a brown sweater, a black top hat, and a double-breasted suit. In his hand, there was also a walking stick. It was a typical Holm dressing style.

His muscles bulged the shirt. Obviously, he was a man of great strength.

Nasdell looked around at the station and felt it a pity that magic steam trains could not drive through the Dark Mountain Range. Maybe Silver Moon Wasteland could be an option.

The Dark Mountain Range was full of dangerous space gaps and magic creatures. Very likely a magic train would never come back once it entered the mountains.

Silver Moon Wasteland was a dimension under the control of werewolves. Unlike what the name suggested, it was a rich and prosperous wasteland. The werewolves insisted the name a few thousand years ago, and the original name had been long forgotten.

There was nothing else special about the station. Nasedell pulled his suit and walked out of the station.

Nasedell felt very proud that Prince Dubenal chose him to be the one who carried out this mission, which required a clear way of thinking and very strong observation skills. His pace was accelerating.

Prince Dubenal was an idol of Nasedell because of his intelligence and strategic talent. Nasedell tried to follow how the prince behaved and thought. Although other princes and vampires often laughed at Dubenal for his recklessness and simple mind, Nasedell never believed them. They did this simply out of jealousy!

As soon as he stepped out of the station, Nasedell's eyes suddenly lit up by the lamps on the street, as if they were stars shining in the city.

All the lights connected with each other—street lamps, household lamps, car lights, and coach lights. All of them looked so bright and warm. The joint lights were even brighter than the stars in the sky.

In one direction, two high towers rose up from the ground and overlooked the entire Rentato. The two towers were decorated with pure and bright crystal lamps. Nasedell was deeply impressed by the sheer beauty.

Nasedell stood there. The brightness seized his heart. His heart was thudding.

“Your first time here in Rentato? The higher one is Holm Royal Magic Tower, and the lower one is Holm Broadcasting Station and National Council of Electromagnetic Waves...” A passerby took a glance at Nasedell and explained.

A council? Wasn't that something only existed in the Congress of Magic? Were there even councils higher than the national council? What about the headquarters? Nasedell had lots of questions in his mind, but he did not ask. He felt hurt by the amused look on the passerby's face.

That was the look staring at a countryman! Nasedell had to control his anger to complete the mission. He had to know more about this city to pretend that this was not his first time here.

He had very strong self-esteem that was rare even among werewolves.

Taking the baggage, Nasedell hired a coach and headed for the busy street.

Passing by a square, Nasedell saw hundreds of people gathering. He was very surprised as it was very cold outside. How could they stand the cold wind?

Nasedell asked the coach to stop, and he got off. Standing on the margin of the square, he saw the huge speakers in the middle of the square. A sweet voice was coming out from the speakers.

“The next part is Body Secret, the part that is loved by everyone! Tonight we're lucky to have Viscount John Wellesley who is a grand knight and is very experienced in exercising. He's going to share with us how teenagers should work out when their bodies are not yet fully grown and the best way to work out.”

Nasdell's eyes lit up. He took out a pile of material and started looking for something.

He was leafing through the booklet while listening to the broadcasting carefully. Finally, a big smile appeared on his face.

That was Arcana Voice! The information was correct!

Nasdell then got very surprised by the viscount's sharing. What the viscount was saying was how a knight would exercise. Wasn't that supposed to be a secret?!

He was shocked as this never happened even in the most open-minded Aalto. One would have to become a knight squire first to access such secrets.

Nasdell wondered to himself if the nobles here ever protested this kind of broadcasting, or they were allowing this to confront the Church. But soon, he became totally obsessed with Arcana Voice. He had never experienced such a way of entertainment!

In the Dark Mountain Range, because of the harsh conditions, it was very hard to receive the signal of Arcana Voice.

Nasdell listened to the radio attentively. He was glad that he had this opportunity to listen to Arcana Voice here. Obviously, the radio program was very interesting to him.

After the crowd dispersed, Nasedell sneaked up on the big speaker but found nothing special other than some wires and simple devices.

Following the wires, Nasedell walked around the corner and came to the other side of the wall. He saw that there were over ten strange holes in the wall, three in each group, one above and two below.

Nasedell had a close look at them but could not figure out the usage of the holes. He wanted to ask someone, but he did not want to be looked down upon. So he decided to figure it out on his own.

Growing up in the Dark Mountain Range, Nasedell knew that he had to be cautious with everything he did not know well even if that thing looked very ordinary. Therefore, in great alert, he took out a steel stick from his luggage to use it as the extension of his fingers.

The holes were right in the wall without any covers or protection. Thus, Nasedell believed that they wouldn't be too dangerous.

Looking around, after making sure that there was no one around, Nasedell poked the holes with the steel stick.

Buzz!

Electric currents shot out along the needle stick and hit Nasedell right away. There was no chance for him to avoid it.

Nasdell's body was covered with electric currents and was shaking fiercely. Something smelled burned. He tried to pull the stick out, but he just could not.

After a while, Nasdell had half returned to his werewolf look. His muscles bulged, and a mist of black air surrounded him. He suddenly used his strength and finally got rid of the steel stick.

Lightning... Magic circle...

How could the nobles and sorcerers in Rentato allow such dangerous things to be here in the wall in a public square?! Nasdell could not even speak, and he felt extremely annoyed. If he had not been an adult werewolf, he would have been killed!

Just after he returned to his human look, a young man in fancy clothes walked to him. He took out something connecting to a wire from his pouch and plugged in the holes, and then he plugged the other end in a fine alchemical item in the shape of a rectangle.

Seeing that there was a man lying on the ground and looking at him in great confusion, the young man grinned and explained, "This is the latest mobile communication device. It no longer requires a permanent magic circle for electricity because it can now save the energy. The price has been greatly lowered because of it. I'm not super rich, but now I can afford it."

Then he smelled something burned in the air. He took a glance at the man on the ground again, and the man's face also looked burned black.

"My friend, you don't look very well. Did you just touch the electric current magic circles?"

“No, no...” Nasedell hurriedly denied.

The young man grinned. “Good. Arcana Voice and the council have been promoting people’s awareness of using electricity safely. Even kids in Rentato now understand how important this is, unless it’s someone who has never used electricity before.”

Even kids knew it? Nasedell was glad that he instantly denied himself earlier.

Nasedell decided to leave the square as soon as possible out of the feeling of embarrassment. Dragging his half numb body, Nasedell walked slowly to the quiet street.

As he was walking, somehow, he suddenly lost his footing and fell into a hole!

Bang!

On the square, the young man heard something. He turned around but saw nothing.

After the charging was done, he recalled something—the broadcasting had been warning citizens that they should avoid remote and quiet streets and use extra caution when walking as recently some thieves were stealing sewer lids.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 732: Misfortunes Never Come Singly

In Rentato, on a dark street.

Carrying something heavy, two small men were moving stealthily on the street. Suddenly, a couple of people jumped out and fiercely pushed them down to the ground.

Bang!

That heavy thing fell to the ground.

“Black dogs on Granlin Street!” the small man blurted out.

Then he got a crispy slap on his face because of what he just said. A man in uniform walked out of the darkness and squatted down in front of the man.

“I prefer policeman or sir.”

Since the headquarters of the Holm Police Agency was located on Granlin Street, the gangsters had been used to calling the agency Granlin Street.

The slap made the small man afraid. “Yes, sir...”

He was told that the black dogs on Granlin Street had some kind of special alchemical item that could torture them with horrible paralysis and pain. So never be reckless in front of a cop.

“Caught right on spot... stealing the lid. You’ll be sent to the court for your sentence and you will face the charge of endangering public security. If nothing else, you two will be spending the rest of your lives in the mines. Of course, if you two are willing to become some experiment subjects, you might be able to come back to Rentato after a year,” said the senior policeman while smacking the small man’s face.

The small man was totally shocked. “En... endangering public security...? Sir, we didn’t mean it! We were... We did it just for money!”

The charge sounded very serious to him.

“I’ve told you jerks multiple times to listen to the radio to know the rules and laws. You don’t know laws, you don’t know rules, you’re not even qualified to be a thief!” The senior officer stood up.

The charge of endangering public security came from the Parliament of Nobles and was suggested by Natasha. When they were discussing the regulations on aircraft and road safety, Natasha suggested that there should be a law preventing people from using aircraft or cars for murder.

“It was a lid! Only a lid!” The two thieves almost burst into tears. They could not imagine how it would be like laboring in the mines.

As for becoming a sorcerer’s experiment subject, this option would never happen! That would be even more horrible than death!

The senior officer sneered, “You stole the lid. You would make other people fall into the sewers. That’s how you two endangered public security. Repent when you’re in the mines!”

“No, please, sir! This is the last time! We wouldn’t have done it if we knew it!” they two hurriedly begged.

“Sir! I’ve got... big information. Big!” one of them cried out loud.

They would do whatever they could do to save their lives!

The senior officer nodded with satisfaction and said to the other cop, “Take them back for interrogation. Give me the confession first before submitting it.”

The two thieves were now in tears. After they left following the cop, one of his subordinates flattered him, “Sir, good for you. They were scared to death! It was so easy for you to get a big piece of information!”

“It was their fault for not listening to the radio. Honestly speaking, I wish I could make them face the charge! Damn it! Lots of people this morning saw how I was tripped over!” said the senior angrily.

No wonder the leader was hobbling earlier today...

The senior officer had given the order, “Put the lid back to where it was and lock it tight.”

And he could not help complaining, “It’s such a pain in the a*s... Why are we doing all these? We’ve got plenty of stuff to do. We shouldn’t be the one doing it!”

After the rest of the several policemen put back the sewer lid, one of them said to the others, “I wonder if anyone’s down there... The lid went missing for at least a couple of minutes...”

“Impossible! It’s already very late, and it was only a few minutes,” said his colleague lightheartedly. Then he pulled out a tube of apprentice-level alchemical potion and poured it into the edge between the lid and the ground. The potion would glue the lid tight in the cold night and gradually melt in the daytime.

Some sorcerers helped them with this potion.

The policemen then hurriedly went back to the office on Granlin Street. They needed some hot tea.

After a while, someone started knocking at the lid from below. However, the lid would not move because of the special glue.

In the dark sewer, the veins in Nasdell's head were pounding. He was furious, and he could not figure out why there was such a big hole in the middle of the street. What was wrong with this city? When he fell in the sewer, he still wasn't able to control his body very well from the paralysis. Now he was covered with blood down here, and somehow he could not even get out!

Fury, annoyance, and confusion were mixing in his guts. He wished that he could return to his werewolf form and punch the sewer lid away with a single strike!

However, he had to force himself to calm down. Once someone saw him as a werewolf, he would have great trouble in carrying out the task given by the prince.

He tried to take a deep breath, but the stink under here almost made him throw up.

"Nasdell, you gotta calm down. You shall never let the prince down. Don't act like those reckless idiots," he said to himself while hobbling along the sewers.

After a while, an angry roar burst out again from down in the sewers, "Damn it! It won't open!"

Nasdell totally had no idea why people in Rentato would do so.

After walking for a long distance, when Nasdell had reached his limit, he finally found a lid that was not glued.

He pushed open the lid and climbed out. The cold, fresh air never tasted so sweet to him in his life.

Even as an adult werewolf, Nasedell felt very exhausted after all these. So he walked to an old, abandoned house and sat down against the wall. He needed some time to heal and take a rest.

The wounds from falling into the sewers had healed, but the deep pain left in his bones by the electric shock was still there. He could do nothing else but to wait.

Nasedell murmured to himself, "There are good things about Rentato, but also very dangerous things. How could they dig such a huge hole in the middle of the street and place lightning magic circles right on the square without any protection?"

He would not admit that he did not know how to use electricity safely, as he believed that those sorcerers were too reckless.

The night was quiet. Nasedell gradually calmed down. He comforted himself that things would get better soon.

However, as soon as the thought emerged, his sharp intuition made him sense the great danger. Without a second thought, he jumped forward with all his strength.

However, his body had yet to fully recover from the electric shock, so his movement was a bit slower.

Boom!

The abandoned house suddenly exploded and then completely collapsed!

“Are you guys nuts?! You even f**king blow your own house?!” Nasdell was totally clueless about what was going on.

What just happened was totally beyond his expectation. And obviously, the explosion wasn’t coming for him. Nasdell would have sensed it way earlier if it had been.

BOOM!

The explosion blast hit Nasdell fiercely, and he was instantly buried by bricks and dust.

“Wh... Why...” murmured the werewolf.

On the other side of the street, the crowd was watching the explosion.

“Sir, the new explosive offered by the sorcerers worked very well!” said a brown-haired man excitedly. A few houses had been torn down within seconds!

“Good. This will save us lots of work and time. Soon, we’ll be able to widen the pavement so that this whole area in Rentato would become much more comfortable.” The director nodded with satisfaction.

To get the new explosive, their boss had paid a special visit to Allyn to have a specialist come over to guide the work.

One of his workers asked, “Why are we here at midnight though? People are sleeping...”

“So you mean we should block the street during the daytime? This street connects the market zone to the city gate! You know how much money would be wasted if we did so? Get those lazy workers to move. The street has to be cleaned by dawn!” said the director aloud.

The workers started their work. One of them said apprehensively, “Sir, we didn’t check before the explosion to make sure no one was in it...”

“There was no one in it! We’ve blocked the street in all directions and used magic crystal lamps as signs. We’ve been watching all the time, unless someone just popped out from the ground!” the director yelled at him.

...

In the early morning, Ali walked out of his rented place and headed for the noble district along a busy street.

He wasn’t in his best spirit since the explosions last night deprived him of his sleep.

Fortunately, the team which did the demolition had informed the residents well ahead with notifications. He could read, so he was not scared last night at all.

Beside the entrance of the noble district, there was once an abbey that had now been turned into a school. Students were reading aloud in the classrooms. Fine coaches kept driving to the school gate successively to send the noble kids here.

Mills Generic School on Kining Street in Noble district, Rentato... That was where his pen pal friend studied.

Jane from class one grade two. Ali thought to himself.

The second year after generic schools came into being, those nobles had decided to set up a noble school to make sure that only the privileged kids could study here. After seeing how those generic schools worked, the nobles had to admit that putting their kids in the school environment could better spark off the kids' passions to study and help them build up their social circles at a young age.

Ali watched the fine coaches and cars driving into the school, as well as the different aircraft including airships and aircars in the sky, and he felt that there was an invisible wall in front of him.

He sighed. Like the past few days, he turned around and left. His mind was full of all kinds of thoughts—depression, inferiority, and desires.

Now he had come back to the street where a couple of houses got torn down last night. He then heard some strange whimpering.

Ali followed the whimpering and was surprised to see that there was a big dog lying in the tall grass. Its eyes were tightly shut, and its silver fur was covered with blood and dust.

To Ali, the dog resembled a wolf very much. From the books, he knew that there was a kind of dog that looked like wolves very much.

Out of kindness, Ali walked to it and noticed that there were many wounds on the dog.

“You got lucky, pal.” Ali grinned.

He learned how to bind up wounds from working temporarily in the Congress of Magic’s hospital recently. He dragged the big dog home and wrapped it like a mummy.

After a while, he saw that the big dog had woken. Somehow, two lines of tears fell down from its dull eyes.

It was the first time that Ali saw something like this. He hurriedly comforted the big dog like he was talking to a human being, “It will get better. There’s no need to be this emotional. I just did what I should. Don’t cry. Our lives will get better in Rentato.”

Hearing the word Rentato, the big dog cried even harder.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 733: Rentato, Such a Dangerous Place!

In the early morning, the cold wind kept thudding the windows. Anyone would feel very lucky if he or she was now in their warm beds.

But Ali could not fall asleep. He had a night shift in the hospital and just came back home an hour ago. His head was full of all kinds of thoughts. How could he make his life better? What would be the best way to make achievements? Would he ever have a chance to own his own aircraft? He could not stop these thoughts.

Ali released a long sigh and sat up on his bed. Putting on his coat, he walked to the small table in his narrow room and pulled himself a couple of tasteless ale. Ali would not call the liquor good, but that was still the only enjoyment he had in life.

Holding the cup, Ali walked to the window and sat right down on the floor—the table was the only piece of furniture he had in his room except for the bed.

Watching the leaves shivering in the wind outside of the window, Ali's heart also felt cold.

His rented place faced a quiet street. Rarely was there a coach or a car passing by, and the sound of wheels grinding the road made the atmosphere even colder. There was no garden, as this place was located in the worst area in the district.

But Ali knew it well that the owners of these buildings were in fact quite wealthy, and their lives were much more leisure than most people. They had good insight into investment. So when more and more people flowed into Rentato for job opportunities in those alchemical workshops, they had altered their houses by cutting them into more rooms. Even though they were renting out the many rooms at a relatively low price, they were still making a lot.

After the alchemical workshops made lots of achievements, the textile industry finally felt the crisis and started inviting sorcerers who were good at using golems to improve their spinners. After two to three years, the productivity of the spinners had been greatly improved and more jobs were created. Meanwhile, people in Holm could finally afford more clothes as the prices of fabrics had become much lower!

Gulping down the ale, Ali pushed the window open. The freezing cold wind made him feel the chill down his spine, but he also felt better because of the refreshing wind.

The beautiful, cold moon was still in the sky. At this time, Ali saw that the big dog he saved was also attentively staring at something out of the window in the direction of the city gate. He was amused and said, "You also feel lost? Do you know which way to go in the future?"

He was talking to himself. He never expected that a dog could understand.

The dog gave him a cold glance but then kept staring at the city gate. The dog had its own plan. It would leave this dangerous city as soon as it recovered!

Ali also turned to look in the same direction. He could see the tall city wall, which appeared white under the moonlight. He released a sigh, "That wall's indeed tall, but not as tall as the wall between nobles and ordinary people. The latter was so cold and formidable. No one could climb over..."

His listener was just a dog, but he did not care.

“Why ordinary people could never step into the world of nobles? Everyone’s got eyes, nose, and brain, but they’re born to be noble and privileged. So one’s birth should determine his entire life... Is that right?” Ali murmured to himself. Despite the many thoughts, he still had to accept the truth that he belonged to the inferior social status. However, obviously, he did not want to be like this for his whole life.

The dog whimpered and took a glance at Ali. How childish he was!

The social status of nobles came from the power they mastered, like those powerful leaders among werewolves. That was a fact, and no one could change it until he or she gained enough power. At that time, those nobles would welcome the person to join their circle, and thus one would wish to retain the power forever.

“You agree with me?” Ali grinned upon seeing that the big dog had finally given him some reaction. He continued, “I do understand that to overcome this invisible wall I have to make great enough achievement, but with so many options in Rentato, I can’t make up my mind cause I’m afraid of missing the true opportunity. When I saw the fancy vehicles in front of the school, I felt that I probably could never break the wall, you know?”

He confessed to himself in front of the big dog, and his spirit had been lifted once again. He was not even twenty, so energy resumed very quickly.

“I’ve made my decision. I know how to read, but I don’t know much. Maybe I can still study in the hospital or an alchemical workshop while working. I wouldn’t be having a solid foundation for what I want to learn. So... I’m going to save money to go to a generic school!” Ali stood up and announced to the silver moon.

“I do know it’s hard, very hard, but it doesn’t mean I can’t do it. Mr. Evans was so poor that he could barely feed himself, but he’s the top arcanist now. It was all because of his own hard work! I am better off with the several queen coins given by my parents, and it wouldn’t take long for me to save enough money!” Ali clenched his fists and encouraged himself.

Lucien Evans’ story was like a legend that had been turned into a variety of stories by the bards and was popular among both nobles and common citizens.

“Although I am not as talented as Mr. Evans, and I cannot become a musician or a great sorcerer, as long as I work hard, I’ll definitely make some achievement in my own field!” Ali’s chest was full of hope.

From Jane’s letter, Ali knew that the society was looking forward to being more well-educated as there was still a very small percentage of people who could read, not to mention those who know well about a certain field. As long as one was willing to and had the chance to learn, his or her future would be bright.

If Ali could learn well, perhaps he could become a sorcerer, a knight, or enter other professions that could share the same high social status with the nobles.

In this age, knowledge would never become useless. Although the process of learning would take up lots of time, every second would be worth it!

After making the decision, Ali was now in a good mood. Staring at the silver moon, Ali said to the big dog, “If I am also to be the main character in the bards’ stories in the future, I would get a chance to study in the generic school and have my talent in magic and arcana awakened. I would know lots of friends and become a legendary sorcerer to change the world! I would also defeat devils and demons planning on destroying the world! In that case, you’d be remembered by history as well! You’d be the early friend of a great person!”

Then he took a glance at the big dog. “In most cases, in a bard’s story, you should be a magical creature. You know, a dog with a mysterious background and very powerful. The moment when we met would change both our lives...”

As he was saying, he checked the big dog enthusiastically, but in the end, he sighed. “Nop, you’re nothing special.”

At this time, he saw upset in the big dog’s eyes. But why?

The second day was Ali’s day off. He took the big dog with him and was seeking some odd jobs in the city to save more money. Somehow, the big dog’s recovery was much faster than he expected.

“A new alchemical workshop? Producing vacuum tubes?” Ali saw the notice on the wall.

Out of curiosity, as he had no idea what a vacuum tube was, he and the big dog headed for the workshop.

When they almost arrived at the workshop that was located close to the city gate, the big dog lowered its head and stayed closer to Ali.

“What is it?” Ali asked casually, “Are there too many people for you?”

Nasdell was seeking every possible chance to escape from Rentato, but his reaction came from something else.

He just saw a nasty vampire in Rentato! He looked back and believed that the filthy vampire would have himself killed in this dangerous city!

They walked further, and Nasdell's eyes suddenly lit up. The city gate was just over there!

As long as he could go through the gate, he would be safe!

Nasdell thought that he should give this young man some recompense for his help, if there was a chance.

The desire for freedom had filled up Nasdell's heart. Although he had yet to fully recover, he suddenly jumped out and started making a dash for the city gate like a fish trying to jump back to water!

Fifty meters, twenty meters, ten meters, five... Nasdell's heart was beating faster and faster as he was getting closer to the city gate.

Bang!

A car that was speeding ran right into Nasdell. When the car stopped, the owner of the car got off and asked purposefully, "Whose dog is it?! It suddenly jumped out! For what? Murder?!"

When Ali realized what happened, blood had gushed out from the big dog's mouth. After several twitches, the big dog then completely stopped moving.

Ali hurriedly went up and apologized. The car owner was, in fact, the one at fault, so he just asked Ali to pull the dog away after a short complaint.

Seeing the body of the big dog, Ali sighed. "It looks like we're not partners who can change each other's life. But thank you. Because of your company in the past two days, I've regained my confidence. I shall bury you well."

He dragged the body of the big dog to the wood outside of the city and buried it very carefully. He stayed there for a while to adjust his mood and then left.

After a while, the tomb suddenly split open, and a half-dead dog climbed out.

"Luckily I know how to play dead..." Nasdell murmured in low voice. He looked back at Rentato at a distance. It was such a dangerous place!

He was going to report these all to the prince!

...

In Lance, the Holy City, Benedict III said to Philip, “There’s no response from the Angel King?”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 734: The Pope’s Senses

“Yes, we tried to summon the Angel King through a ritual to ensure that the artificial planets of the Congress of Magic could be captured, but he gave absolutely no response, not even the symbolic light of refusal in the past. Your Holiness, did anything happen to the Angel King?” Philip told everything that had happened. He couldn’t have sounded more worried.

After the battle of Rentato, the strength of the South Church had greatly declined. As a result, the influence of the Angel King became of paramount importance for them, helping them to stabilize the panicked and suspicious clerics. Also, an expert at the peak of legendary who could command three level-three legendary seraphs of Mountain Paradise was himself a great weight that could change the balance of the situation.

Of course, for Philip, the most important question was whether or not the Angel King’s lack of response had anything to do with His Holiness. Was it because of the secret dissemination of the way to gather the power of faith? Did an accident happen when the Angel King tried it?

After hearing Philip’s reply, Benedict III did not show any emotional change. He slowly closed his eyes, and the holy light emerged behind him. The ivory light spread out, building up the sacredness and vastness.

Then, embraced by the light, a gate seemed to have been opened in midair leading to Mountain Paradise. The hollow and unpredictable hymns echoed, and infinite brilliance surged out, constituting a projection of “Mountain Paradise” that was almost concrete.

The angels and holy spirits inside the projection seemed to have sensed something. They all bowed at Benedict III solemnly with respect.

He was the Lord’s spokesperson and embodiment on earth. Until he returned to Mountain Paradise, he was even more honorable and closer to the Lord than the Angel King was!

After he returned to Mountain Paradise, he would be directly melted into the light of the Lord as part of the Lord!

After the greeting, the angels and holy spirits began to pray, praise, and sing. The projection of the seventh floor was clearer than at any time in the past.

The seventh floor of Mountain Paradise was the infinite, transcendental pure light that was devoid of impurities. It gave so much pressure that the god inside seemed truly capable of destroying the entire world!

Even Benedict III could see exactly what was inside as a demigod. He could only vaguely notice that a lofty angel with thirty-six wings on the back crouched at the periphery of the light with a vintage and divine book in his hands.

“Nothing is wrong with the Angel King. He has simply fallen asleep for some reason.” Benedict III smiled at Philip. “Although his God’s Guard is very suitable for such operations, can’t we achieve our goal without him?”

He looked peaceful, but his eyes squinted. How could Mecantron have been so weak? What terrible wounds had he suffered? What was he doing exactly? Had his ambitions sprouted yet again after the Sard incident? Who caused it?

Even though the Angel King was surrounded by the power of the God of Truth, Benedict III, as an unquestionable demigod, keenly sensed the weakness of Mecantron, since Mecantron only dared to crouch at the edge without pressing any deeper. He felt anomalies from the uncanny status.

If the Congress of Magic hadn't demonstrated the importance of artificial planets through live stream, the Church certainly wouldn't try to summon the Angel King when the situation was relatively peaceful, like the hundred years in the past. In such a case, he wouldn't have noticed the Angel King's weakness at all. In half a year at most, Mecantron would regain a part of his strength and cover his weakness. Because of his relationship with the God of Truth, it would be impossible for him to detect any problem.

"I have to thank the Congress of Magic, Lucien Evans, and Natasha Violet..." Benedict III looked rather gloomy.

After hearing the pope's question, Philip replied respectfully, "Your Holiness, summoning the Angel King is only meant to increase the odds of success and eliminate the unexpected factors. It's not true that we cannot achieve our purpose without him. If you are willing to take action in person, things will be much easier."

"Although I cannot use God's Arrival yet because it's only been several years since I was crowned, I am still the embodiment of the Lord and a demigod who stands on the top of the mortal world. Why dare I not go out of the Holy City and take action in person?" Viken, who appeared as Benedict III right now, spoke in such a casual tone as if he were discussing what would be suitable as the dinner tonight. "If the evil fake god Alterna weren't staring at the ground from the sky all the time, I could've stopped all the top legends of the Congress on my own."

It was a sublimation of life advancing from top legends to demigods. Even though it was barely possible for Benedict III to eliminate any top legend when he was unable to use “God’s Arrival”, his enemy still couldn’t defeat him no matter how many top legends they had.

Philip said in delight, “If Your Holiness takes action in person, our plan is already 90% successful.”

“However, I can only attack once. The Silver Moon, the Lord of Hell, the Will of Abyss, and the other evil fake gods must be waiting for an opportunity to heavily wound me before I could perform God’s Arrival. For that purpose, the enemies might even let go of their grudge and detestation against each other and collaborate,” said Benedict III peacefully.

He was not sure if Lucien and the other sorcerers detected the real secrets of the monster and Mountain Paradise in the Realm of Gates, but there was no doubt that they must have found something. While the story in “Arcana Voice” was exaggerated, it was still partly true. If they looked through the phenomena on the surface, they would vaguely notice the connection between him and the monster and realize that God’s Arrival could not be used frequently not only because it was too much for the physical body.

Therefore, he set up his plans on the premise that Douglas, Fernando, Lucien, the God of Silver Moon, and the Lord of Hell already knew the two big secrets.

“Once will be enough.” Philip was delighted. “As a matter of fact, we could’ve captured it through our method to destroy artificial planets in the past, but since the Congress of Magic revealed it actively, we have to be careful that they may have set up traps. Therefore, we have to revise our plan.”

A few years back, since the Church was unable to establish similar items on the orbit, their attacks had always been conducted through the legendary experts alone. The measures through which the artificial planets protected themselves, such as hiding and orbit-changing, were barely useful for the well-prepared legends. The main concern was that magic circles had been established on the artificial planets to facilitate legendary sorcerers’ reinforcement and to feed the situation back to Allyn.

Therefore, their plan had always been simple. They would confirm that the legends of the Congress of Magic were out on missions first and wait for an opportunity to outnumber the enemy. Even though the surveillance magic circles delivered the intelligence back to Allyn, and the legendary sorcerers in Allyn could reach the artificial planets to join the battle, they still wouldn't be able to stop the destruction. By the time the other legendary sorcerers of the Congress of Magic came to aid, the artificial planet would've been destroyed.

The plan seemed simple, but there were actually a lot of difficulties. First of all, they needed to make sure that the legendary sorcerers were really out. Their lives would be at risk if they gave a wrong estimation about the enemy's number and strength. When legendary sorcerers were prepared, it was difficult for the non-legendary night watchers to determine their whereabouts. That was why the Church had only destroyed two artificial planets so far.

It was also the reason why Philip was worried that they might fall into the Congress of Magic's trap in their operation. After all, it certainly wouldn't be the most pleasant experience if they reached the orbit through the preinstalled transmission circles only to discover that Douglas, Brook, Fernando, Hathaway, Lucien Evans, and other people were waiting for them. Plus, there were no divine defense circles on the orbit, and the legendary sorcerers could block the space easily to prevent the reinforcements from being teleported. Then, things would be the most dreadful.

"The legendary sorcerers who focus on the microscopic domain are less and less interested in the outside world. They are dedicated to the collision of particles..." When he heard Philip mention the plan in the past, Benedict III shook his head and sighed.

In the microscopic domain, magic experiments were more important than field explorations. Therefore, the legendary sorcerers had been going out much less frequently. Thankfully, they needed to conduct microscopic experiments in different environments and explore if there were any particles that hadn't been discovered, such as positrons, in the weird environments. That was why they did not stay in Allyn all the time, in which case they could've established a terrifying legendary squad at any moment.

Of course, the legendary sorcerers were not only focused on the microscopic domain. They also needed to watch over the alternate dimensions, the four countries on this side of the strait, and the north coastline.

“They disagree with each other so hard in the microscopic domain that they are almost fighting among themselves...” Philip mocked and continued, “To prevent the evil gods from seizing a chance to attack you, we do not need you to capture the artificial planets on the orbit directly. Instead...”

He introduced his whole plan.

Listening without showing any emotion, Benedict III replied in the same tone, “Alright.”

After Philip bid farewell, Benedict III walked to the window and looked at the blooming flowers outside that did not seem to be living in winter at all. He nodded, “We have to be more careful.”

...

On the Silver Moon Wasteland...

Nasdell, who had returned in a haste, stood before Dubenal, his head lowered, not having the courage to look at the prince in the eyes.

“So, Rentato is already such a dangerous place...” said Dubenal in a rough voice.

Nasdell immediately felt like bursting into tears. Everything that happened to him was not entirely worthless. It helped the prince to see the dangerousness of the Congress of Magic and Rentato. Those guys who laughed at him the moment they saw his wounds couldn't understand his enormous contributions at all!

"Therefore, working with the Congress of Magic is an option that is worth considering." Among the werewolves, some princes were close to the Congress of Magic, and some, including Dubenal, were hostile. Therefore, Nasdell thought that he could change the prince's attitude with his investigation.

"No," said Dubenal firmly.

Huh? Nasdell looked at his prince in surprise.

"We should attack the Congress of Magic. Since they are already so powerful and dangerous, working with them will only result in a new Saint Truth," declared Dubenal confidently and proudly.

Stunned for a moment, Nasdell said with much admiration, "Your Highness, you are truly the smartest expert among the werewolves. Your wise eyes have seen through the nature of things. I didn't realize that at all."

"Hahaha." Dubenal laughed aloud in a great mood. He had always thought highly of Nasdell because the guy was very honest and not clever enough, which made the guy a good contrast for himself.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 735: Arrival of Chaos

The north of the north coastline was a bleak land. The hardy trees and the bizarre terrains had turned the place into a paradise for werewolves and ice bears. There were even powerful magic creatures that wandered in the depths of the vast land, such as silver dragons, white dragons, or frost giants.

Therefore, although the path to the East Haven had been built bit by bit by the adventurers of many generations who avoided the most dangerous areas, the business teams and passersby who walked on the roads suffered all kinds of attacks now and then, which dyed the northland in bloody, chaotic colors. It had been known as a heaven of desperadoes.

In the Month of Ice, the area had already been covered in white. Even the evergreens had been donned in pure gauzes. One could not see any color as far as their eyes could reach. If they stared at the snow all the time, they might not be able to open their eyes again.

However, on the road where tracks had been covered by the snowflakes, devastating blood was spreading out. The randomly-thrown swords, spears, hammers, and other weapons indicated a fierce battle in this place.

Leaving the main road and heading north along with the footprints on the road, one would see a boundless old-growth forest. In the center of the forest, there was an inconspicuous gap that led to a rather spacious underground cave.

The torches on the wall of the underground cave illuminated the place. However, the fire on those torches was in the most bizarre, pale color as if it did not carry any heat at all. There was nothing but dead silence.

Pale light emanated from the torches and sprayed on the black-robed guys who were crouching inside the cave, making them look even more creepy.

Those black-robed guys stuck their foreheads to the ground. Judging from their bodies and their faces, it was obvious that they were not entirely humans. Some were werewolves with hair on their cheeks, some had the distinctive marks of beasts, and some were frost giants who occupied a large area...

They were absolutely still as if they were dead, and they were praying toward an altar that was piled with bones. One black-robed priest, in whose eyes pale fire seemed to be bouncing, stared at the mysterious patterns that were emitting the intense air of death, as well as the enormous scythe on the altar that represented life reap.

“Birth is the beginning of death, our unavoidable destiny...”

The black-robed priest suddenly raised his hands and chanted the obscure prayer. A cluster of pale fire suddenly rose on the altar in quietness.

“Birth is the beginning of death...”

The black-robed followers who were like corpses that finally moved. Their bodies were shivering under their coarse voices.

The priest up ahead couldn't have sounded more creepy. His zeal appeared as the most extreme coldness. "Compared to the eternity after death, life is too short to mean anything. Darkness, coldness, and death are the everlasting themes of life..."

"We will eventually decay. Only if our soul enters the realm of death and sleep will it never decline gradually..."

The priest's eyes became hollow. "Today, we offer sacrifices, as well as our lives, to our Lord, so that our souls will have a place to rest in for all eternity!"

"We would like to offer our lives to the Lord for a shelter of our souls..." Those black-robed guys seemed to have been hypnotized and simply replied numbly.

Hearing their reply, the priest was greatly relieved. He had delivered yet another batch of devout believers to the Lord after preaching on the true meaning of death. According to the "Soul Rite" that the Lord gave to him, he would be closer and closer to the Lord in such a way, and he would get rid of the body and soul of a mortal and grow into a real bringer of death.

By then, his life and his soul would soar. He would be as magnificent as legendary knights and sorcerers!

Thinking about that, he felt that the pale fire of death in his heart was burning even more intensely and weirdly. It seemed to be creating a vague world of death inside his brain and around, a world of extreme peace that was brimming with undead creatures.

“This is truly a sign that I’m closer to the Lord. I can already sense the great and sacred paradise of death. By the time I can sense it clearly, it will be the time for my ultimate advancement!”

At this moment, the human beings who were in a coma around the altar were back to themselves. Some of them were in fancy clothes, and some were wearing leather armor. They looked no different from any merchant team on the northland.

“What... What are you doing?” somebody accused in panic.

“Damn you, bandits. You’ll pay for your assault today!” Somebody was still enraged.

“Please, let us go. You can have all the goods and money. Killing us is useless for you.” Somebody else was shaking in fear after sensing the anomaly in the environment.

The priest raised his head. From his gloomy and dark eyes, a really pale fire jumped out. The moment they saw the fire, those human beings were paralyzed and could not utter a word anymore.

“Go to the center of the altar and off your life to the Lord,” the priest let out a dull, unemotional command.

The merchants and mercenaries looked pale and terrified, but they could not resist the priest’s order at all. They stood up as if they were possessed, and they walked to the center of the altar beyond their control.

The man who walked to the pale fire first picked up the black scythe, his hands shivering. His eyes were brimming with fear, desperation, and madness, but his hands still cut his own throat firmly with the scythe that did not seem to carry any weight.

A scary wound appeared on his throat, but not a single drop of blood spurted out. His whole body withered into a dry corpse very soon. Something transparent seemed to be floating out of his body into the pale fire.

The pale fire immediately rose higher, and a mark, which was so red that it was almost black, could be found on the edge of the black scythe.

The priest felt the delight from the bottom of his heart. It was an experience that was beyond any entertainment. Even without the improvement of his strength or the reward from the Lord, the delight alone was enough to motivate him to proceed with the ritual.

The world of death in his head and around himself was clearer.

“My sublimation is higher, and I’m closer to the Lord...” the priest moaned, but nobody noticed his lack of self-control.

The sacrificial offerings reaped their own lives one after another. The pale fire was more and more exuberant, until it was almost jumping out of the altar.

“Come on. Show your devotion. Life is short, and death is eternal!” the priest turned around and announced most sacredly.

The black-robed believers all changed their voices and shouted zealously, “We would like to offer our lives to the Lord for a shelter of our souls...”

The scythe of death seemed to have sensed the zealous atmosphere. Humming, it rose from the shelter and hovered at the ceiling of the underground cave.

“We would like to offer our lives to the Lord for a shelter of our souls!”

The black-robed believers echoed their prayer again, but it was no longer a response but a sincere request.

The gigantic scythe whose edge was in deep red absorbed all the light and reduced the whole underground cave into darkness. Only the pale fire at the center remained unaffected.

The gigantic scythe suddenly fell into the pale fire. At this moment, all the black-robed believers shook hard, their eyes losing all the colors, as if something important was absorbed from them into the fire.

The pale fire expanded and drowned the whole underground cave again. The skin of those black-robed believers began to decay, and dark red fire leaped out of their eyes. They had turned into undead creatures all of a sudden!

The priest was even more delighted. He could no longer tell the material world from the paradise of death and simply felt that his soul had been greatly purified.

“Great Lord of Death, please enjoy your sacrifices!” he shouted in a high voice. The undead creatures in the cave also raised their arms, which made the cave look like a dense forest.

The pale fire was reduced and condensed into the size of one person, but an illusionary gate appeared at the center.

The gate was opened, and a monster in black cape showed up in the fire. Behind the monster was a plain where countless specters wandered, and below its feet were the temples made of bones.

The monster seemed to be an embodiment of death that nobody could look at, because whoever saw it would immediately lose their life. Thankfully, it could not step out of the pale fire and enshroud the world with death.

The priest felt that his soul was weightless. He was even more addicted to it.

“My strength has been increased again! My soul has been further sublimed!”

The black-caped monster looked out; its hollow eyes suddenly emitting unusual waves. Then, its body split into two identical selves as if it were looking at a mirror, although the strength of the two halves were both halved.

A pale fire arose on the new self of the monster of death, which consumed it and connected it to the fire and altar around it.

Then, as the other self of the monster chanted weird spells, the fire rolled fiercely and gathered into what appeared to be a gate. Then, the gate was gradually dyed in red.

Boom!

When the gate gradually took shape, an unimaginable air of chaos and slaughter spread out. As a result, unusual winter thunders burst out in the sky, and the cave began to shake so hard that the whole northland was trembling.

The priest suddenly realized that his soul had been improved to the highest point, and the world of death around him and that in his head were fully integrated.

“Have I succeeded?”

In ecstasy, he was ready to melt himself into the world of death to acquire the legendary power. However, the world of death disappeared all of a sudden, and a meatball that was jumbled by countless eyes, heads, and limbs showed up before him.

After he saw the meatball, the priest felt that his soul had completely mutated, and his thinking ability vanished rapidly.

“NOOOOOOOO!”

He let out a scream of surprise and fear in the end, before his body was twisted, with black, thick tentacles popping up.

In Kasvig, the capital of the north coastline, the Burning Lady stood up abruptly and looked far away. She sensed the extreme foulness and chaos were surging out from there!

“Hull-Chulia, what happened?” She hurried to contact Hull-Chulia, the Monarch of Fate.

Hull-Chulia, who was floating on the top of the magic tower, said solemnly, “The Will of Abyss is attempting to arrive. We must stop him immediately. I’ve already informed the Congress of Magic.”

Such a thing could only be handled by at least one grand arcanist, and Hellen, from the Cabin of Palmeira, was now watching over Allyn. If the Will of Abyss did arrive, even though he hadn’t entirely recovered from his wounds yet, it would still be most terrifying. There was no God’s Arrival to beat him back this time! Besides, nobody could tell if he would suddenly decide to blow himself up and destroy the whole northland.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 736: Meteor Shower

In the City in the Sky, on the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower...

After receiving the report of Hull-Chulia, the Monarch of Fate, Hellen directly activated the dark red magic circle in a corner of her desk. The lines on the circle zigzagged like earthworms.

Dark red glowed out, and the usual merry and delightful voice of Prospell, the tower guard of the Allyn magic tower, became low and solemn. “Emergence Plan C has been activated. Contacting all demiplanes...”

Two seconds later, a dark red curtain of light was unfolded around Hellen into fifteen pictures. There was a land that was different from the real world, a kingdom where electricity and magnetism raged, a garden that was glowing and dimming like a human’s heart, and a vast and bright universe.

“Not counting the few Excellencies who are out on missions, fifteen demiplanes have opened and responded,” Prospell said in an equally solemn voice.

Her face in peace, Hellen said briefly, “The Will of Abyss attempts to arrive at the northland. There’s still time to stop. I suggest that at least three grand arcanists come with me.”

Such a suggestion was to avoid accidents. Even if they were trapped or could not stop the arrival of the Will of Abyss, they would still be strong enough to flee. It had to be noted that the Will of Abyss remained a demigod however wounded he was. He could kill anyone below level three of legendary instantly.

If he were in perfect condition, Hellen wouldn’t have suggested for the grand arcanists to go but simply asked the top legends to go. With unusual spells or equipment, there was still hope for level-three legends to escape from a demigod. However, it was still rather risky. Who would ever try that unless it was absolutely necessary?

Furthermore, as the legend behind the Cabin of Palmeira, Hellen Paris did not back off but announced that she was willing to handle it in person. After all, if the de facto ruler of the northland was unwilling to take the risks, the other grand arcanists would certainly have to consider if they should go.

Hellen's decisiveness prevented the possible debate of responsibility in the emergency meeting of the Highest Council. Douglas said peacefully, "Since the enemy is the Will of Abyss, we need at least two top legends. Also, I fear that there are schemes behind the abrupt incident. So, Fernando, Hathaway, Hellen, and I will go to the northland to stop him, Brook and Hathaway will replace Hellen to watch over Allyn, and the rest of you will stay where you are on alert. Keep in touch with each other."

"Alright." Lucien did not hesitate, and Fernando had already reached Hellen's library. He had always been impatient.

Because the north coastline was far away from Allyn, the transmission magic circle was faster than space jump. Therefore, Douglas, Lucien, and the other reinforcements were directly teleported to the branch of the Congress of Magic in Kasvig.

On the top of the Tower...

Bergner looked at the darkening sky and thought to himself, *Does the meteor shower tonight indicate anything?*

The meteor shower landed into the depths of the Boundless Ocean, so Bergner did not pay much attention to the horoscope at the beginning. He threw it away after interpreting the symbolic meaning behind it for a while. However, now that he recalled it again, he felt that his heart was somewhat uneasy.

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The Burning Lady had a very female name, “Elaine”. She looked as gorgeous as a rose, but after she put on the armor that seemed to be made of rose petals and picked up the fiery short swords, all her frailty and femininity were gone. She was like a bouncing fire that released the scorch that could keep anybody away. Nobody could look at him in the eyes.

“The air of chaos is still increasing. It means that the Will of Abyss hasn’t really arrived. There’s still time for us to stop him. We cannot wait for and depend on the reinforcements from Allyn. Perhaps the opportunities will be gone while we wait. I do not wish to see my hometown turning into an abyss of chaos and blood.” She and Hull-Chulia had already approached the old-growth forest.

Since the distance was not long, the space transfer and rapid travel that the legendary knights’ talents brought were as fast as the legendary sorcerers’ demiplane jumps.

She made the speech mainly to express her determination. In terms of protecting their homeland, legendary knights were much firmer than legendary sorcerers, because it was their creed.

The Monarch of Fate had a hairstyle that looked like the rolling clouds in the sky. He was slightly fat and looked rather friendly. Smiling, he said, “It’s been a long time, but he hasn’t entirely arrived yet. It seems that the Will of Abyss has chosen a not-so-brilliant way that is a major contrast to his attempt in Rentato.”

In the battle of Rentato, thanks to the blood sacrifice after Paradise on Earth was destroyed, the Will of Abyss was able to arrive completely in a very short time, not giving Benedict II any opportunity to react. His arrival this time, on the other hand, had taken almost three times longer than last time, and it seemed that he hadn’t finished half of the process yet. It was clear that he had chosen a relatively underdeveloped and unpowerful approach.

Hull-Chulia was not very suspicious about that. If the Will of Abyss knew how to weigh the pros and cons, choose the timing cautiously, and take action only after he had recovered, he would be no “Will of Abyss” but “Lord of Hell”!

Hull-Chulia did not bother to consider why he would take such an approach at all. If he could guess it, he would've suspected that he had been contaminated by the air of abyss and lost the wisdom and rationality that he had always been proud of. It was impossible for a normal person to understand the abyss.

At the center of the forest, a cluster of darkness that was as black as ink covered the land. All the trees in the range had been contaminated by the disgusting and unbelievable blackness. Red eyes were opened on the trunks, and the branches were as active as tentacles.

“A forest of monsters...” the Burning Lady remarked with her impression. Then, she noticed a bloody gate at the darkest place. On the gate was the patterns that were enough to dizzy even a legend.

Around the bloody gate, a pale and crimson fire was rising unpredictably and could not fully take shape.

“Not bad. We can avoid the tragedy if we can destroy the Portal to Alternate Realm that can allow the demigod to arrive while it hasn't been built yet.” Hardly had the Monarch of Fate's voice died down when an evil and chaotic roar burst out behind the gate.

Hooooooooo!

Crack, crack, crack.

Hull-Chulia's passive spells were triggered. Clouds with flashing lightning surrounded him and stabilized him who almost fell from the sky.

The Burning Lady dropped almost ten meters before she managed to stop. So much fire bounced out of her body that she looked like a real flame element.

Drops of fire landed from her body onto the ground, igniting the darkness and the trees. She had obviously been hurt.

Hull-Chulia and she looked at each other in shock. Was it the power of demigods? They had been wounded by a chaotic roar even though the enemy had not completely arrived? If he did arrive, would they lose their mind and become Demon Lords?

Having been through many battles, the two of them held back their fear. One of them began to cast legendary spells, and the other turned into a fire that burnt everything around them. The fire enveloped the bloody gate and made it burn in cracking noises.

A few thick black tentacles suddenly extended from the underground world and whipped at the fire. They were surrounded by the corrupt and chaotic black air.

However, Hull-Chulia's esoteric spell echoed at the best moment. A wind rose in the forest. The air masses in both high and low pressure created a tempest and resulted in glittering bolts of lightning.

Crack.

The tentacles were destroyed, and the soil was plucked, revealing the monster inside the cave. He had absolutely no sign of a human being right now. There was nothing but protruding lumps, wriggling tentacles, and countless eyes on his body.

BOOM!

The clouds were tightened, and the monster whose soul and life had been “sublimed” was obliterated in the lightning.

Hooooooooo!

The extremely chaotic and foul roar echoed like a spell behind the bloody gate. Fire immediately surged out, blowing the Burning Lady back to midair and reducing her to her original appearance. She couldn't have looked paler.

Right when she gnashed her teeth and was ready to charge forward again, she heard a gentle voice.

“Paradise of Stars!”

A weirdly-shaped celestial globe flew to the top of the bloody gate. Brilliant and pure light drifted out like the dust of stars, and a deep and dark cosmos arrived, enshrouding the whole area.

In the infinite coldness, the bright stars were joined into different magic circles according to the horoscope. The wriggling darkness stopped, and the trees full of eyes and lumps withered. The roars that came from behind the bloody gate were suppressed to the minimum.

“The Emperor of Arcana has come...” The Burning Lady was greatly relieved. She knew that Douglas and the reinforcements of the Congress of Magic had arrived. It was certainly impossible for the Will of Abyss, who hadn’t completely arrived, to fight a top legend who was closest to a demigod from a different realm. Whatever his purpose was, he was destined to fail.

When her concerns were gone, she heard another gentle voice.

“Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness!”

A transparent pillar of light brushed past her eyes. Thanks to the help of “Paradise of Stars”, it hit the bloody gate that was mired in pale and crimson flames.

Electric currents and lasers that were barely visible for the naked eye appeared, constructing a web of snow and ice whose grids were too dense to be seen. The air within the web was frozen, the trees were frozen, the burning pale and crimson fire was frozen, and so was the bloody gate. Everything was reduced to the lifeless coldness and darkness.

Witnessing the scene, the Burning Lady and the Monarch of Fate felt that their eyes were frozen, too. The extreme, unparalleled coldness made them shiver from the bottom of their hearts.

“Lucien Evans has such a terrifying snow spell?”

Hellen slowed down the casting of her spell. She looked at the area that had been caught in a frighteningly low temperature with the passion that she only had when she studied arcana and magic.

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Outside of the orbit of the planet, an ivory holy light slowly glowed, and Benedict III appeared in the dark vacuum.

He raised his platinum staff high. Looking at the enormous remnants that were running at him, he spoke mercifully and pitifully, “When the world is dirty and filthy, you will cleanse everything with your fury!”

In the airless universe, his voice spread out in weird ways.

Those meteorites came to a halt miraculously. Then, they turned their direction and left a burning, bright path in the atmosphere. Their remains collapsed toward Allyn like a torrential storm!

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 737: Punishment of the God

The burning furnace in the hall drove the freezing coldness of the Month of Ice away. Heidi and her friends leaned against their chairs lazily with different books in their hands. They read the books while they enjoyed the special sweet food.

Although magic air conditioners had been installed in their rooms, making the winter warm and the summer cool, Heidi preferred furnaces, because the fire in the furnace brought warmth to her heart. It was the symbol of a real family for her.

“Magic is truly great. I don’t worry about getting fat no matter how much sweet food I take...” Heidi patted her stomach in satisfaction. “Fat Burning” did not only work on the enemy. It was rather popular among the sorceresses when it was controlled well.

Sensing something, she blinked to the side of the window and looked at the high sky, only to discover that shooting stars were passing the sky and falling like rain. It was truly beautiful.

“Look, a meteor shower!” Heidi could never resist such a wonderful view. She exclaimed at her companions.

However, her eyes were suddenly frozen at this moment. According to her knowledge in the horoscope and force field, the landing spot of the meteor shower would be...

“Allyn!” she blurted out.

The sorcerers who observed the stars on the Tower also opened their mouths. Shouldn’t the meteor shower land in the Boundless Ocean according to the previous observation and prophecy? After that, a lot of sorcerers would go out and search for the meteorites as materials for their studies and alchemy. Why had the trajectory of the shooting stars been changed, making them attack Allyn like a storm?

“Allyn...” Brook and Hathaway, who watched over the City in the Sky in replacement of Hellen, noticed it earlier than they did.

Brook intended to fly over and shatter the meteorites while they were still in the sky, but the meteor shower was unimaginably huge. Also, since the landing point of the meteor shower had been weirdly changed, he had a terrible feeling and did not recklessly go out to block it.

“Level-one alarm. The defense of Allyn is fully activated.” Hathaway activated the corresponding magic circles calmly. “We will focus on defense and destroy any shooting stars that might hit Rentato or any populated areas nearby with rays and lasers.”

The weirdness of the matter prompted her to increase the level of alarm. Otherwise, such a natural accident only deserved a level-two alarm at most.

Brook, on the other hand, spoke to his demiplane that remained connected. “Fully activate the defense circles of the magic towers in the local branches. The supervising legends will expand the range of alarm. The other legends will return to Allyn immediately and be prepared for attack and reinforcement.”

“Try to notify the legends who are out on missions and gather all our forces...” Hathaway added.

The two of them calmly carried out the countermeasures and informed Douglas, Lucien, and the other sorcerers in the northland of the matter.

Gigantic “raindrops”, in glowing light and leaving a bright trail behind, rushed and smashed at Allyn.

At the same time, an intense fog spread throughout Allyn, making the City in the Sky appear to be in a dream instead of reality.

Glimmering stars rose from the fog and connected each other into a vast starry sky around Allyn. Each of them took up a certain spot and circulated according to specific trajectories, forming different magic circles. Those magic circles then overlapped and integrated into a greater magic circle which boasted terrifying power.

That was the ultimate form of the defense of Allyn.

The “raindrops” were brighter and brighter as the burning, gigantic meteorites hit the foggy, starry sky brutally.

The stars were even more brilliant, and ripples spread out in the fog, but the meteorite was nowhere to be found.

The raindrops of stars fell nonstop with the world-destroying air. The fog in the defense of Allyn fluctuated, and part of the stars even died out!

Faced with such a pure natural accident, Brook and Hathaway could’ve adopted another magic effect—anti-gravity and deviation. In such a way, the meteor shower wouldn’t be able to cause any harm to Allyn at all. However, such a way of processing would transfer the harm of the meteor shower to the ground, and since the populated Rentato was not far away, they decided to resist it the hard way.

At the edge of the torrential storm, the meteors flew past the defense of Allyn, falling on the villages around and Rentato!

At this moment, in the foggy starry sky around Allyn, a pillar of crimson, thick light suddenly darted out and hit one of the meteors precisely.

Without a sound, the meteor was nowhere to be seen as if it had been burnt up.

Crimson lasers and greenish rays shot out of the defense, destroying all the meteors that might hit the ground.

At this moment, the citizens in Rentato had already discovered that the defense circles of the city had been activated. They looked at the sky in astonishment, only to catch the scene where shooting stars were falling and lasers were darting at them. They were too astounded to say anything. That was ten thousand times more spectacular than the magic battles as described by the bards and the plays!

Even the greatest number of meteors could not power a long-lasting storm. After the first wave, the meteors became sparser. Right when the sorcerers in Allyn were slightly relieved, a shooting star that seemed to be burning its life passed through the atmosphere. The ivory, holy light on the shooting star illuminated more than half of the sky.

The power contained in the shooting star was greater than all the shooting stars before combined. It was like a punishment of heaven and the god!

“Benedict III!”

“Viken...”

Brook, Hathaway, Brook, and Oliver called out different names. Such a powerful attack could have only been launched by a demigod. Even the pontiff of the North Church, who was capable of God's Grace, couldn't have achieved that!

"Elemental Protection!"

"Magnetic Collapse!"

"Annihilation Ball!"

"Anti-gravity Field!"

...

Shocked as they might have been, their reactions were not slowed at all. They performed their legendary spells and activated the defensive magic circles, focusing everything available in Allyn to resist Demigod Viken's "Punishment of God"!

Suddenly, a magic circle before Brook and Hathaway was triggered and manifested a screen. Inside the screen was the scene on the planetary orbit. Points of ivory light appeared and turned into Melmax, Philip, and the other Grand Cardinals. They were flying toward Brook and Hathaway quickly!

That was the perspective of the artificial planet. Therefore, their target was not “Brook and Hathaway” but the artificial planet!

Create chaos to distract and disperse the enemy’s forces, and then attack the enemy quickly so that there would be no time for reinforcement when they realized what was going on. That was exactly Philip’s plan, simple but effective. Nobody could ignore a demigod’s attack!

Of course, the emergency of the Will of Abyss in the northland made him even more delighted and confident of his victory.

The shooting star seemed to be carrying the will of the god. It arrived unstoppably, swearing to destroy everything. Brook and Hathaway were completely occupied and could not get out of the defense at all.

Boom!

The shooting star hit Allyn, raising an enormous explosion. The colorful layer of Elemental Protection was immediately shattered, and Anti-Gravity Field vanished into thin air under the ivory holy light.

The dark, twisting magnetic field was broken; so were the brilliant stars and magic circles. Even the fog had been separated into several parts.

Although no significant damage was caused to the defense of Allyn and the two top legends, their reactions were indeed limited. Brook looked at the sky, as if he could see the pope who was standing at the periphery of the planet through the atmosphere and the darkness. The man walked slowly with the platinum staff in his hands, disappearing before the silver moon glowed.

“Inform Douglas and the legendary sorcerers who are watching over the branches...” As indifferent as before, Hathaway asked Prospell without the slightest frustration.

Inside the old-growth forest in the northland...

After Lucien cast the super-freezing ice spell and consolidated the bloody gate, the whole forest fell quiet, as if even the sturdy northland creatures had also sensed the coldness that did not belong to the normal world. They dare not act recklessly at all, fearing that the coldness might spread out.

It was difficult to maintain such an extremely low temperature. The frozen darkness gradually thawed and vaporized into a pure mist.

The mutated trees, the underground cave, and the pale and crimson fire near the bloody gate all became mist and disappeared, and the bloody gate was so narrow that it was barely visible. It was about to completely disappear, too.

At this moment, the most evil and chaotic roar echoed behind the gate again, turning the snow into a bloody mist. The bloody gate, on the other hand, was contaminated by the disgusting, wriggling blackness. It expanded quickly and exploded all of a sudden!

Boom!

As if a whole abyss collapsed in this place, the rolling chaos and blood buried the surroundings. The gate was completely obliterated, but it still created a daunting attack in the end.

“This lunatic!” Lucien and the other sorcerers cursed. The Will of Abyss was truly unreasonable. He had truly “detonated” a layer of abyss, not considering how much power it had left after crossing the realm and how much damage there was left!

“Space Staff!” Ripples of light gathered next to Lucien’s hand into ripples, placing himself and the Monarch of Fate next to him in many universes away.

Chaotic evilness devoured the place, announcing the arrival of the most dreadful silence.

.....

On the orbit, the few Grand Cardinals dispersed and stayed on alert, in case anybody blocked the space and attacked them, while Philip and Saint Melmax flew toward a silver artificial planet.

The artificial planet was fully engraved with complicated, obscure magic patterns, which seemed to have reached the central part.

“Let’s bring it away.” Delighted as Philip was, he still took out a Truth Cross prudently.

The cross did not glitter, and it looked as unattractive as if it were made of random stones. The emblem of the Saint Truth and the stars that represented angels had been carved on it.

“Elimination!” Philip raised the cross. Vague blackness glittered on it with a certain air of sacredness.

The darkness, which was entirely different from the darkness around, sprayed on the artificial planet, immediately eliminating the magic waves and putting out the silver magic circles.

It was a legendary item that corresponded with the blood power of “Elimination”! Philip feared that other traps were installed on the artificial planet and decided to get rid of them all at once.

However, as the last magic circle died out, something seemed to have been activated. Its core was not affected by “Elimination” at all and began to react on its own, resulting in an instant explosion.

Boom!

Dazzling light that felt like the sun glowed, and a storm of energy consumed the environment!

“Well...” Philip had no time to react at all when he saw Melmax blinked to his front to resist the attack.

.....

In the forest of the northland, Lucien and the sorcerers finally cleansed the chaotic power of the abyss. At this moment, something glittered in the night sky.

Looking at the unusual light, Lucien smiled at Fernando. “A nuclear reactor that loses control every time it is activated has its own usage. The only problem is that the artificial planet was not large enough...”

With his expression remaining graceful, Fernando did not offer any remark.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 738: In Vain

In San Ivansburg...

When the shooting stars passed the sky and hit Allyn like a storm, Belkovsky, the pontiff of the North Church who was inside the cathedral, sensed something although he did not see anything. Looking at the ceiling, which had beautiful embossments, he said to himself in shock, “Has Viken taken action? They’re planning to capture an artificial planet?”

He and the Grand Cardinals of the North Church had already made a plan to “claim” one of the artificial planets when the South Church was capturing them. They were even scheming to bolster the progress behind the curtain in case the South Church procrastinated and gave the artificial planets a better opportunity of performance. However, when it really happened, he remained absolutely still and did not even summon the saints and the other Grand Cardinals.

That was because the South Church took action too fast for the Congress of Magic to react. Naturally, the huge battle that they envisaged did not take place at all. If they were to jump to the orbit through the preinstalled transmission circles at this moment, they would see nothing but the back of the Grand Cardinals of the South Church who were leaving, encounter the reinforcements of the Congress of Magic who had come late, and bear the fury of the Congress of Magic instead of the South Church!

Who would ever take somebody else's blame without earning any benefits from it?

"The Congress of Magic cannot so inert, can they? However strong Viken is, he cannot stay out of Lance for long, or how can he suppress so many top legends and grand arcanists?" Belkovsky frowned as he sensed the anomaly in the matter.

Under normal circumstances, Viken should've attacked Allyn to stall a few top legends and most grand arcanists, but since he could not block all of them, the remaining arcanists would lead the other legendary sorcerers into the orbit and fight the Grand Cardinals such as Melmax. Although they could not stop the South Church from taking away the artificial planet because they had been slowed, a huge battle that the North Church looked forward to would inevitably break out. However, as it turned out, the sky was absolutely quiet at this moment! Where were the grand arcanists of the Congress of Magic?

Without the navigation of grand arcanists, it was impossible for the other legends to arrive at the orbit through projections because they were two levels away from Melmax and would be crushed. If Melmax had "Purge Cross" with him, they would probably be killed!

A prophecy divine power was performed immediately. Since the thing was happening, and nobody tried to interfere with or cover the trajectory of fate, Belkovsky immediately understood what was going on. The Will of Abyss had arrived at the northland without a sign!

"He's working with Viken?" Belkovsky felt as hilarious as if he had seen his own death notification. Not believing it at all, he knew that there was only one way to cooperate with the Will of Abyss, which was to establish a ritual that could summon him and open the barrier of planes, and if the

ritual happened to be near the enemies that needed to be dealt with, the Will of Abyss would not hesitate to kill them.

Therefore, Belkovsky would rather believe that Viken took advantage of the brainlessness of the Will of Abyss, but how exactly did he summon him? Allowing a demigod that did not belong to the main material world to arrive had a great cost. However, there was no sign before the incident, and there were no disguises such as “Paradise on Earth” on the surface...

Belkovsky considered Viken’s approach in case he was dealt with in the same way in the future. Suddenly, his heart of faith rippled again. The strange feeling prompted him to blink to the window and look at the sky.

In the gloomy afternoon of a winter day, a glittering light seemed to have flashed in the high sky.

It might’ve escaped everybody else’s attention, but Belkovsky, as the strongest top legend, certainly had no trouble distinguishing it. He squinted and said, “Has the artificial planet exploded?”

“Also, the explosion is as powerful as legendary!”

“Those heretics of the South Church did not even cast any divine power to eliminate the effects? They couldn’t have been that dumb, could they?”

He suddenly felt lucky that they did not take action just now. Otherwise, not only would their effort have been in vain, but they would have also exposed their intention and pissed off the Congress of Magic.

Although other interests would still maintain their cooperation, it was possible that the Congress of Magic would return the “favor” someday.

.....

On the empty orbit, Saint Kati, Astira, and the other people, who stayed on alert far away, sensed the anomaly of the artificial planet when they sensed the overwhelming heat coming at them. The surging energy storm swept out like a torrent.

“Damn it!”

“How could this happen?”

Their divine items were triggered as they exclaimed to themselves, before they were all drowned by the storm of energy.

Fernando and Hathaway’s fission reactor was mostly based on reverse engineering on “Atomic Fission” and their own studies on the fission reaction. They had a rough idea about the role that neutrons played, but they were still far away from utilizing it steadily. To quote Lucien, the core of their fission reactor was essentially an atomic bomb, whose energy was slowly released by magic. That was why accidents happened all the time and legendary explosions were generated.

When the Purge Cross eliminated the magic circles outside and stopped magic from blocking the reactions, the “failed reactor” inside the artificial planet began to function. At this moment, the elimination effect hadn’t reached the core and could not eliminate the reactor magic circle inside.

By the time the fission reaction began, it was already a natural course and therefore could not be eliminated. The magic circles that could be eliminated, on the other hand, were the parts that eased the release of energy so that it could be utilized. Therefore, the explosion after the loss of control was even greater and more powerful!

Dazzling light swept across everything around them with overwhelming energy. The artificial planet at the center was completely vaporized, and the area was savaged by the trickiest “curses”.

When the light died down, Melmax, Philip, and the other Grand Cardinals reappeared. Some of them were fully enshrouded in the Blessed Realm, and some had six white wings covering their back.

Melmax, who stood at the front, held the longsword, “Holy Avenger”, with both hands and nullified the invisible curses covered in light.

“Thankfully, it is not Eternal Blaze...” he said to Philip and the rest of them in a low voice. It was hard to tell how he felt. “Beware of the curse. Don’t be careless. Although they seem not too harmful, their consequences may be dire.”

Although “Atomic Fission” could reach level three of legendary if the caster and the materials were good enough, the previous explosion was only level-one legendary because the artificial planet could only accommodate limited magic circles and materials. It could not hurt Melmax, a top legendary knight, at all.

However, it did not mean that Melmax was not scared. If it were “Eternal Blaze” that happened in the explosion accident just now, he would’ve been heavily wounded again after having just recovered from the harm. It was even possible that irrecoverable diseases could be caused due to the consecutive injuries.

Behind him, Philip had messy hair and looked rather frustrated. If Melmax hadn't blocked it for him, he probably would've been heavily wounded. He said in fury and disbelief, "Why did the magic circles detonate themselves after they were eliminated by the Purge Cross?"

He could not think through it at all!

If they hadn't eliminated the effects with the Purge Cross, it would've taken a long time to suppress the peripheral magic circles of the artificial planet and haul it back, and the odds of encountering legendary sorcerers would've been higher. However, little did they foresee such an unbelievable situation after they used the Purge Cross!

"Perhaps, a legendary spell that had been cast earlier was sealed inside. After you eliminated the seal, it naturally burst out," Melmax speculated based on his experience.

"That's impossible. We're talking about a legendary spell. The artificial planet is not a legendary item. Also, under the elimination, whether or not it has started, all the legendary powers should've been removed." Philip shook his head in confusion and fear.

"Stop!" In the channel of communication that was similar to the telepathic bond, Saint Kati spoke solemnly, "Let's not bother why it happened for now. The most important thing at present is what to do next. Are you going to capture the other artificial planet nearby, or should we simply evacuate? We don't have much time. I do not want to fight the grand arcanists!"

They had chosen this artificial planet because there was another candidate not far away.

Philip calmed down. He puckered for a while before shaking his head and said, "Let's evacuate. The time that the Congress of Magic cannot react has passed, unless His Holiness is willing to continue his suppression. However, that will give the Silver Moon and the Lord of Hell an opportunity to

attack His Holiness. If His Holiness is heavily wounded because of that, we will be caught in a subtle situation since the Angle King does not respond to us now.”

It was obvious that the pope was more important than the artificial planet!

Frustration and anger consumed the Grand Cardinals, but there was little they could do. Such operations verged on failure once the abruptness and the time gap were broken, unless they were willing to turn a temporary operation into a total war.

Ivory light glittered, and the Grand Cardinals disappeared from the orbit as fast as they came but with additional helplessness.

On the other artificial planet not far away, silver lines glowed and constructed a weird magic circle, which blurred the surroundings as if it was connected to different worlds. Some of the worlds had furious storms, and some were the harmonious nature.

Through the magic circle, Douglas, Fernando, and the rest of them arrived with their projections. Then, connecting their own demiplanes, they transformed the projections into their real bodies.

“They did not come here. What a bunch of fast runners.” Seeing that the artificial planet was as quiet as before, Fernando did not hesitate to mock the enemies.

Douglas smiled. “They are not possessed by the devil of greed. How could they not have reached the conclusion that it was dangerous to come here? If they did come, at least one of them would be killed.”

“I, for one, wished that they had come. We can let them ‘loot’ the remains of the artificial planet after a huge battle,” said Lucien, not without regrets.

“Why?” It was impossible for Hellen to be devoted to her arcana and magic studies right now, so she showed an unusual interest in Lucien’s remark.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 739: The Future Is Bright

Without the blockage of air, it was even easier for a sorcerer to spread out their spiritual power. Therefore, the range of the force field of their spiritual power was dozens of times wider than on the ground. However, in such a huge range, Lucien and the other sorcerers couldn’t feel anything except for a lone artificial planet that was operating in a fixed pattern. The whole environment was bleak and gloomy. That was exactly the feeling of the real universe beyond the atmosphere.

On such an orbit, Lucien, Douglas, Fernando, and Hellen were so small compared to the artificial planets, but they were filled with such intimidating air that they looked like small suns. They were the natural land, the hell of thunder, the universe inside the atom, and the illusion built with snow.

When a legendary sorcerer fully spread out their spiritual power, their half-solidified cognitive world would interfere with the reality together with their demiplane!

In such a quiet and gloomy environment, Lucien replied to Hellen’s question with a smile, “Because I prefer the Church to imitate us, chase us, and compete with us in the domain that we are good at,

than to focus their attention on their theological studies, in which case they might find a way to fully apply 'Mountain Paradise' at some point."

Hellen nodded her head. She was deep in thought. "Therefore, you demonstrated the importance of artificial planets in order to distract the Church from their strong suit, so that they would compete with us in a domain that they know nothing at all but we are very good at?"

"That's right. Although they might be unable to unravel the mysteries of Mountain Paradise, we'd better avoid accidents as best as we can until we have overwhelming advantages." Lucien nodded.

"Are you not worried that the situation would escalate quickly after the Church grasps the secrets of artificial planets? They play an important role. As strategic weapons, they have turned the common commanding heights into a planetary-level orbit control," asked Douglas with a gentle smile.

"Commanding height" was not a difficult term for the Congress of Magic to understand. The City in the Sky was a product to command the height, except that nobody summarized it in such a way before.

Lucien said unhurriedly, "It's true that artificial planets are very important, but we have only developed part of their possible usages. Until the power problem is addressed, they can only help with signal transmission, surveillance, and prospecting. They are not the key to victory. The most important of their usages is the signal transmission.

"For the Church, since image transmission circles have been widely established, the middle-level clerics can already achieve the effect that is similar to what artificial planets can present in the territory on the opposite side of the Storm Strait. In the places that are occupied by us and the North Church, they could in the past but not now. As for the live stream and other media, how could they let ordinary people enjoy that? For them, the less the people know, the better.

“What they value is the potential value behind the signal transmission of artificial planets. However, the parts that are currently usable can help them recover to the status before the battle of Rentato at best. For us, that is not too bad a change. Also, knowing the mechanisms and details of artificial planets so well, do we not have ways to restrain the artificial planets of the Church? Can we not hack them and steal the secret communications? That is the domain that we are familiar with and good at!”

Talking about that, Lucien suddenly remembered something. He smiled and said, “To put it simply, we are dragging the enemy into the field that we are familiar with before we beat them with our abundant experience and profound studies.”

“Divine power is based on the power of Thanos and more convenient on the orbit. If they successfully duplicate artificial planets, their attack and defense will be much better than ours. Are you not afraid that they will surpass us?” Fernando had been looking awful ever since Lucien made fun of his “uncontrollable reactor”.

Lucien chuckled. “If the Church were another Congress that has its own arcana system, its own arcana credits, arcana points, etc. to encourage studies, its own hundreds of years of knowledge, its own profound studies in the macroscopic and microscopic domains, I wouldn’t have proposed the suggestion at all.”

Of course, that was not absolute. If they had similar arcana foundations, such a “planetary war” could also transform their battle into a competition of the overall economics. The bottom line was that they should compete with the enemy in whichever aspect they were better at, and not the opposite.

“As for right now, considering the foundations I said, I’m not worried at all that the Church will surpass us regarding artificial planets, not in ten years, not in a hundred years, and not in a thousand years,” Lucien added. “Unless the Church starts to build its own arcana system. But in that case, there will be no irreconcilable conflicts between them and us when they stop relying on belief entirely. We can be combined.

“Their artificial planets may be more aggressive, but until ‘Mountain Paradise’ can really play a role, those planets cannot serve as orbit cannons to bombard the ground. Our nuclear reactors, on the other hand, will probably succeed in a year or two. After they are minimized, they will be as good as the artificial planets.”

“You are talking as if the Church can do nothing but wait for its death, and our future is nothing but bright.” Douglas chuckled.

Lucien replied, “Our future is bright, but the road ahead of us is difficult. As a matter of fact, I’m sure you must have similar ideas, Mr. President, except that you have never proposed them specifically. For example, all the papers on arcana studies are publicly published, and the Church and the other countries can read them as long as they want to. As for magic, there are only principles and guidelines, and the specific structures can only be read and exchanged with enough permissions. As a result, they feel that they know arcana and can catch up with us, but they will never be able to do so.”

“I didn’t think as much at that time and simply made the system under the impression that they wouldn’t understand it at all,” Douglas admitted frankly with a self-mocking smile. “In my eyes, without their own research and exploration, and without a long-time accumulation, it was pointless to directly read the papers, so most of the clerics and experts in other countries couldn’t have obtained much from our public arcana papers. I didn’t know that the pope was Viken, and he maintained a vigorous attitude in learning.”

Hellen suddenly interjected, “Evans, you’ve set up ‘uncontrollable reactors’ on every artificial planet at enormous costs, just so that the Church cannot acquire them easily?”

“Yes. You will cherish the things that you can’t get easily. They would’ve suspected our real purpose if it were too easy. Therefore, we have to put them through difficulties and force them to pay a high price. Only in such a way will they spend more time on imitation and modification.” Lucien shook his head as if he were greatly disappointed. “I did not know that they had no spirits to fight at all. I was hoping that they would exchange the life of a saint cardinal for the secrets of artificial planets.”

Douglas also sighed. "It seems that we have to figure out a way to give such an 'opportunity' to the Church again..."

It seemed that he agreed with Lucien's idea.

"How can we ensure that the Church is willing to obtain the artificial planets despite the risks and that they will dedicate themselves to imitating and modifying it?" asked Fernando cautiously.

"If they do not capture the artificial planets and study their secrets, there will be nothing they can do when we carry out all the usages of the artificial planets and control the orbit and the planet. Then, they will be eliminated by time. However, such a process will take longer and may have unexpected changes. If they choose such an option, everything will be exactly the same as before," said Lucien solemnly.

Douglas smiled again. "Our future is indeed bright. Whatever the Church chooses, its failure is inevitable. That is the choice of our era. However..."

He suddenly sighed, and so did Lucien. They exhaled a mouthful of nonexistent air in the airless space and said almost at the same time with mixed feelings, "Demigods."

Yes. If the demigods who were in possession of the mysteries of the undead were no more, the Congress wouldn't need to plot against the Church at all. It could develop as fast as possible to eliminate the Church!

"That is why the road ahead of us is difficult. Chances are that the Congress may be destroyed by a few demigods when they collaborate. Chances are that some of us will be killed by the demigods before we can see the final victory," Lucien said gravely but without fear.

Looking at the stars, Douglas remarked, “Although it is important for us to have our own demigods, the development of the Congress of Magic has to be focused on arcana studies and magic applications, because our path of demigod must and can only be built on them.”

Agreeing with Douglas’ point of view, Fernando and Hellen nodded at the same time.

“Alright, what’s the next plan then?” Douglas looked at Lucien and asked for his opinion.

Thinking for a moment, Lucien said, “Perhaps, we can troll for the insidious problems within the Congress in our plan. Before the South Church retreated from the four countries on this side of the strait and the north coastline, there were plenty of spies of the Church in the Congress. Later, the situation was better, and a few new spies came. However, after Viken secretly released the secrets to becoming a demigod, I suspect that somebody within the Congress is working tacitly with the Church.”

Some of the phrases were “invented” by Lucien in Arcana Voice before. It was not difficult for Fernando and the other sorcerers to understand him. Furthermore, Hellen and Brook had been included in Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway, and Lucien’s studies on the path of a demigod and the secrets of immortality.

“That’s great.” Fernando hated spies more than anything else. He only hated that he could not bathe them with his storms.

Chapter 740 - The Original Meeting of the Grand Cardinals

Chapter 740: The Original Meeting of the Grand Cardinals

In Lance, the Holy City.

The whole Bright Hall was caught in awkward silence as if it had been frozen. Whether or not they were involved in the operation to capture artificial planets, all the Grand Cardinals lowered their proud heads, ready to embrace the fury of His Holiness.

The operation this time was too great a fiasco. It had been destined to be a failure since the very beginning. The risks that His Holiness took were pointless. Somebody had to be held responsible for that!

Compared to the legendary sorcerers of the Congress of Magic, the saint cardinals and divine knights of the Church enjoyed less immunity. Their positions and the powers under their control restrained the increase of their strength. The higher their position was and the greater power they had, the closer they would be to the Lord and the faster their strength would grow. The dependency was fundamental. Therefore, the punishment that they suffered was not insignificant and simply symbolic.

Also, before they grasped the mysteries of faith, the previous popes had the “divine method” to cut off the connection between the punished saint cardinals and Mountain Paradise. They could only use their own heart of faith without being able to replenish it. Very soon, they would turn into the legends who were in a high level but lacked the corresponding strength.

The legendary sorcerers, on the other hand, were purely based on their own strength. Even if they lost their identity as a member of the Highest Council, nothing would be changed. They relied on the Congress of Magic for the combination of resources and an environment of arcana and magic

studies. Therefore, they enjoyed much more impunity, and their punishment wouldn't really hurt them.

That was also one of the reasons why the Congress had been divided into many factions, and the internal conflicts could never be completely ignored. The supremacy of legends had both advantages and drawbacks.

Of all the Grand Cardinals, Philip was the most uneasy one. He was the one who came up with the plan. Benedict III gave him the greatest freedom and even personally took part in it, but he had screwed it up!

The intense explosion when the artificial planet detonated itself sounded like the mocking and malicious laughter of the Congress of Magic, which echoed on in Philip's heart, making it impossible for him to relax.

Even though he was a newly-promoted saint cardinal and a "young man" who had the potentials to be a Saint, he had to consider how he should bear the fury of the pope and avoid "losses" as much as possible.

After Pope Viken had united and stabilized the Church by introducing the ways to transform the body status via the feelings of believers and the ways to make use of the power of faith, they had all achieved a thing or two. They were able to steal the power of faith on their own, and their strength had been greatly increased. They no longer feared the disconnection from Mountain Paradise. However, it also meant that they were more dependent on the Church right now!

With the Saint Truth behind them, they were much happier than the experts who had to gather the power of feelings and disseminate faith on their own stealthily and arduously. They could openly steal the power of faith from the parish under their control according to a certain ratio without doing any extra things. If they were punished and dispatched to a remote parish, it would be a severe loss for them!

With the holy crown on his gray head and a platinum staff in his hands, Benedict III looked at the Grand Cardinals indifferently and did not say anything for five minutes.

He did not release the intimidation of a demigod, but the invisible pressure from him still froze the hall. None of the Grand Cardinals dared to speak.

Suddenly, he heaved a sigh. “The accident this time had nothing to do with you. It was not your fault. Your plan was almost perfect, and the grand arcanists were distracted and stalled. Our only mistake was that we did not foresee that the evil sorcerers were so cunning that they set up such weird self-detonation devices on the artificial planet.”

His peaceful tone and his interpretation of the matter immediately thawed the grave atmosphere. Philip heaved a long sigh of relief from the bottom of his heart in sincere gratitude. His Holiness was indeed broadminded, farsighted, and reasonable.

“Your Holiness, what are we going to do now then? Plan a similar operation?” Philip intentionally asked a question with an answer he knew in order to shift the focus of the discussion from the previous failure.

As if he did not know what was on Philip’s mind, Benedict III said with an equally peaceful voice, “Until we figure out the weirdness of the self-detonation device, no similar plans will ever work out.”

“His Holiness is right. When the magic effect is eliminated, it may result in such a powerful explosion. That’s not something to be underestimated. If we cannot figure out the reason, it’s possible that somebody will be killed next time,” Astira, the Angel of Wind, said somewhat in fear. If the power of the explosion was close to “Eternal Blaze”, they probably wouldn’t be obliterated. Since an artificial planet, which was not a legendary item, could generate an explosion on the same level of “Atomic Fission”, there was certainly a small chance that it could give an “Eternal Blaze”.

Melmax also nodded his head. “Unless the Godly Eye arrives in person and controls it with the divine power such as ‘Sacred Hourglass’, I cannot think of another way to capture it by brute force. Also, capturing them by force will take too long, and the operation will escalate into a total battle.”

“Godly Eye” Arvin, one of the six seraphs, was one of the only two experts who were capable of time-stop divine powers in the Saint Truth. The other expert was, naturally, Pope Viken.

His ability to control time and space seemed to be a gift from the God of Truth. Therefore, even the knights who inherited his blood power and Astira, who had the power of the Angel of Wind, could not create the real Time Stop. The best they could do was to slow down or accelerate time.

“We can choose ways that are more indirect and inconspicuous.” Philip looked at Benedict III. “Your Holiness, the ways to become a demigod that you released in secret must’ve shaken some of the high-level sorcerers, right? We can make use of them...”

He did not finish, but every Grand Cardinal on the spot knew what he meant. It was no different from stealing secrets and carrying out assassinations through spies as they did in the past.

In the emergency meeting at the beginning, Benedict III “informed” them of the origin of the Saint Truth. He described Thanos, the Sun King, as the holy son of the God of Truth on earth. He was a holy son who was in trinity with the God of Truth and the pope and a holy son who tried to eliminate the evil Magic Empire and save the people. Thanos’ studies on the mysteries of gods were described as an experience where his memories were awakened after being summoned by the God of Truth. The failure of his experiment in the end, his integration with Mountain Paradise, and his loss of self-awareness were described as a self-sacrifice to save the world by opening the Chamber of Immortality and awaken human beings.

Such a “story” could only half convince the Grand Cardinals, but Viken’s key point was not the story itself but to make them realize that the God of Truth was truly a real god who mastered the

supreme power although he was asleep. That was evident from the overwhelming power of Mountain Paradise that they perceived. Also, since Viken released the mysteries of demigods and faith voluntarily, they were naturally “fully convinced”.

Viken did not keep it a secret that he had been secretly disseminating the ways to become a demigod, and the Grand Cardinals were not too reluctant about that. After all, they had a huge territory of faith that was under their control, and they did not have to compete with anybody else. They could watch other people fight each other as bystanders and even intensify the competitions by aiding different forces that would be in their favor. If other people joined their hands, they still had a pope who could perform God’s Arrival on their side!

Benedict III shook his head. “I did not propose any demand when I offered the ways to become a demigod to them, and they would not do anything that is against their own interests for us. As a matter of fact, I’m more glad to see this. When they are close to success, it will be the fragrant bloom of flowers. Things will become very interesting, and we will have greater trophies. Therefore, I don’t want their ‘endeavors’ to be sensed just for artificial planets.”

“Are we going to give up just like that?” Philip was a bit disappointed.

Benedict III smiled. “It will be a different matter if they reveal the secrets on their way in exchange for other things. I know that the Bird of Death is in desperate need of some power of faith. Also, he has been hiding very well. Even if he is exposed, there will be scapegoats who will die for him. On the other hand, I need to meet another person. It’s possible that we can obtain the secrets of artificial planets directly from him...”

He paused there and announced the end of the meeting of the Grand Cardinals.

Melmax, Maria, Kati, Astira, and the other Grand Cardinals were very confused, wondering who the person that the Bird of Death and His Holiness were trying to meet was, but they had to drop all their thoughts and left the Bright Hall without a sound.

Chapter 741 - The Way to Polish the Blood Power

Chapter 741: The Way to Polish the Blood Power

A beautiful melody echoed in the restaurant. The peaceful and tranquilizing notes calmed everybody down. However, no band could be seen in the room. There was only one magic gramophone that was slowly spinning a resin disc on a table next to the wall.

After several minutes, the music was over, and the disc had reached the end. The servant nearby hurried to change a new one.

As the music echoed again, John put down his fork and said to Lucien in mixed feelings, “The common resin disc can only record several minutes of music. It can barely accommodate a complete symphony unless the pure-magic discs of higher levels are adopted, but they will be unaffordable for ordinary people in such a case.”

He did not forget his past and therefore paid much attention to the life of the ordinary people.

“The problem is that ordinary people cannot even afford the magic gramophone.” Lucien cut the foie gras while he joked. “But of course, the pure-magic discs are indeed expensive. They are almost equal to the level-two alchemical items. The small nobles can only buy one of them occasionally and use the resin discs most of the time. However, it shouldn’t be a problem in Viscount Wesley’s house.”

Because the simplification was based on magic, Lucien did not have a mature plan and could only redesign the magic circles from scratch. He had to achieve his purpose step by step.

After being nominated as a manager of the Musicians' Association in Rentato, Joel was so rejuvenated that he seemed to have stopped aging. "However, the small nobles are much greater in number. Also, since most restaurants are using them, the resin discs are the unquestionable mainstream nowadays. It is an important source of income for most musicians. Therefore, it appears to me that they are more and more inclined to create simple songs with only a duration of several minutes. It is both easy and pays well."

Unlike in Aalto, the musicians of Rentato did not have many concert opportunities. Their income mostly came from the service for the nobles in the past as the music consultants or teachers for the nobles. After the magic gramophone was invented, they got another important source of income, which was song royalties. According to the sales of the resin discs and magic discs that recorded their music, they would earn a certain ratio of money.

Thanks to the "patent fee" that was applied to magic exchange and usage earlier, and since Mr. Atom Controller was himself a great musician, the sorcerers did not quite reject the royalties. Besides separating the musicians into different levels, which were given different ratios, the Bill of Intellectual Property that the Parliament of Nobles passed and the queen signed was regularly carried out.

Although the magic gramophone was only an entertainment for nobles right now, it was quite expensive and added significantly to the musicians' revenues. So, stimulated by money and under the influence of "light music", most musicians were more and more inclined to the simple verses that lasted only several minutes. Such simple, unsophisticated "recreational music" was popular among the citizens, too. As a result, the music in Rentato was developing in quite a different direction from that of Aalto.

According to Lucien, Rentato would become a place where pop music and songs were born sooner or later.

Hearing Uncle Joel's concerns, Lucien smiled. "Sometimes, the reform of instruments, means of communication, and means of carriers will all change the course of music, just like how music was changed in the age of the heptachord, after the violin and the piano were invented. Only in such reforms can music be forever invigorated instead of getting dry. So, Uncle Joel, there's no need to worry that the capacity of the resin discs will be a bad influence on the development of music. It will show us even more different types of music that is beyond what we can imagine right now."

The most famous musician today had expressed his opinion firmly. Joel, as a bard and a street performer, had a natural fondness for short music. So, he had no more concerns and directed the topic to the food. "I didn't know that you were also talented at cooking, Evans. This sweet and sour meat is truly delicious!"

"Yes." Aunt Alisa nodded her head, her mouth occupied all the time. Instead of being talkative as usual, her attention was completely on the food.

On the table, except for foie gras and some other cuisines in the Tria style, she had never seen most of the food before. They were different from the cuisines of other countries. She found it barely possible to stop eating.

"Thank you. Natasha loves the food, too." Lucien accepted their compliment straightforwardly. There were many Chinese foods, but not all of them were attractive to the people of an alternate world. The dishes on the table were selected after Natasha tasted them as "experimental mice". Naturally, Joel, Alisa, and John enjoyed them so much that they were almost biting their own tongue.

Lucien, on the other hand, was adept at magic and identifying animals and planets, and since many bizarre items that did not exist on Earth could be found here, the range of the Chinese cuisines was further expanded, and the number had been increased by at least three times.

Now that Lucien mentioned Natasha, Joel asked, feeling it strange, “Why did Her Majesty not come tonight?”

Normally speaking, as long as Lucien was in Allyn, he would come to visit Joel at least twice every month, and Natasha came with him most of the time.

Before Lucien replied, John answered for him, “Recently, Rentato is being modified and expanded. The divine power circles and the magic circles have to be rearranged. Since the villas, manors, and other real estates of many nobles are involved, the Parliament of Nobles wrangles all the time. So, the queen is quite busy mediating in the matter.”

“Rentato is changing too fast. All the changes in my twenty years of residence in Aalto were not as many as what happened to Rentato during only a couple of months. I truly wonder what Rentato will be like in the future,” said Joel with mixed feelings.

After dinner, Lucien and John stood next to the window in the small drawing room on the second floor, each holding a cup of wine.

Looking at the lights in the district of nobles that were as brilliant as a river of stars, John suddenly sighed. “Ever since you were implicated by the witches, I have been feeling that I’m in a dream that I never woke up from. All my hopes for the future have come true, but the future is not exactly what I had in mind.”

“Me too.” Looking out of the window, Lucien’s eyes became thoughtful and deep. He spoke calmly, but he did mean it. It was not entirely impossible that his current life was a dream.

Although Lucien had basically ruled out the possibility of a dream during his exploration and research on the world, he was still short of the conclusive proof to disprove it. Even though he

already had basic speculation about this world, it was impossible for him to declare that “brain in a vat”, “virtual world”, or “experimental facility” was impossible.

John naturally could not tell what was on Lucien’s mind. After a sip of the wine, he said, “My original dream was to become a real knight so that my father, my mother, Elvin, and you could live an opulent noble life, but you realized the dream earlier than I did by turning into a musician...

“After I became a knight, I was ready to be sacrificed in the North Fortress or the Dark Mountain Range as was destined for every knight. However, you told me that you were a sorcerer, which cast me into confusion for a long time...

“When I thought that we would never meet again, and after I began to serve the duchy and the Church wholeheartedly, Her Majesty brought me to Rentato...”

As he spoke, he smiled, “When I was used to the peaceful life that was defended by many experts who prevented me from meeting real dangers, incidents of demon worship, devil worship, and abyss corruption happened in the kingdom frequently, which kept me occupied in battles again.”

He was not complaining. Instead, he was more or less excited. A peaceful, risk-free life would stagnate him and stop him from turning into a radiant knight.

“Life is full of surprises. It never goes as you planned.” Lucien clinked with John’s wine cup. “Also, it is very difficult for you to become a radiant knight with your blood power of ‘Elimination’. There are not enough files in the kingdom for you to learn.”

The bloodline nobles, after their generations of inheritance, or thanks to the tests of a certain legendary knight, had their own ways to polish their blood powers and improve their willpower. Therefore, the nobles with heritages were more likely to advance than the newly-promoted nobles even though they were all knights. They allowed the Congress of Magic to publicize the training

methods before knighthood in order to raise more talents to deal with the Church and develop more alternate dimensions because the methods to hone their blood powers were their real capital and the secrets that they had to keep.

The people of the blood power of “Elimination” were few, and they had mostly been absorbed into the Church as divine knights or night watchers. None of the nobles of Holm were of such a bloodline. Naturally, there was no corresponding method of polishing that they could offer to John.

Before this, Lucien did not think that it was a big deal since blood power was the creation of the ancient sorcerers and the files of different bloodlines had been preserved in the Congress of Magic. He believed that he would devise an appropriate way of polishing for John by studying the cases of the “Elimination” blood power. However, none of the files that the Congress of Magic collected were about the “Elimination” blood power, which made Lucien suspicious of the origin of the bloodline. He wondered if it was a product of Viken’s research.

John smiled, not thinking that it was a big deal. “All the previous methods of polishing were figured out by knights too. I am no more stupid, lazy, or cowardly as they were. Can’t I figure it out on my own? Also, didn’t you always say that we should not be restrained by our experience? It is possible that this is actually a good thing for me.”

He made a joke humorously.

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After he left Joel’s house, Lucien roamed inside Rentato City casually with his hands in his pockets and his black top hat lowered. Watching a city evolve according to his ideas filled him with a sense of achievement.

When he passed the quarters of the alchemical works, Lucien suddenly saw a dwarf walking to him. The stranger covered his eyes with his right hand and paid respect. “Steam Above.”

Then, he smiled. “Mister, would you like to join our steam church?”

Preaching in daylight? That was completely against his instruction given to the dwarfs! His eyes turned grave as Lucien asked solemnly, “Who are you?”

“Hehe.” The dwarf smiled. “Although we never really met, we sort of met before.”

He spoke in a strange way, but Lucien narrowed his eyes all of a sudden. “Viken?”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 742: Righteous Lucien

The dwarf had a thick beard, which made him look manly and barbaric, like most adult dwarfs did. However, he did not have the slightest shortage of manners. Instead, he smiled sophisticatedly like an erudite human scholar. “I’ve been meaning to meet you since a long time ago, but I couldn’t determine your traces.”

It was an indirect admittance that he was Viken. Or at least, it was Viken who dominated the body of the dwarf right now.

As he spoke in such a casual tone, Lucien felt that his heart was heavy and chilled. When did Viken have the idea of killing him in person? Was it when he proposed the general theory of relativity and became a legend? Or was it after he met with Monster Viken in the Realm of Gates?

Fortunately, he had been advancing fast in the past few years. It barely took him any time for him to reach level three of legendary from the entrance. Also, the places he went to were either the Elven Court, where he had a top legendary ally, or the abyss, where Viken's demigod nemesis resided. As for the other places, he only stayed for no more than half a day while covering his traces with the uniqueness of the Secretive. That was how he avoided the encounter with the well-acknowledged strongest demigod.

After understanding the specific restraints of God's Arrival, the Congress of Magic had a new conclusion about Viken's real capabilities. If he found a way to melt Monster Viken without any problems, he would probably be close to the level of real gods and become even more powerful than Thanos.

But of course, after he reached level three of legendary, Lucien was less worried about Viken. At the very least, he could manage to escape. The only problem was whether or not Viken had considered him to be such a great enemy that he had to eliminate Lucien with "God's Arrival" even though Monster Viken might take control.

Thinking quickly, Lucien soon restored his calmness. This was Rentato. Should anything happen, the top legends such as Hathaway would arrive in no time. Also, Viken had only arrived as a projection. It still remained to be seen whether or not he could beat Lucien. "To what do I owe the King of Calamities' visit?"

"The King of Calamities... It's been a long time since anyone called me by my legendary title." Viken seemed to be in mixed feelings. Then he smiled and said, "Don't bother me. Old guys like me

are always reminiscent. As for the reason why I am here, do you really not know, God of Steam Yuri?"

If you were an old man who dwelt in the memories of the past, I would be a pure, innocent good guy who does not know any schemes. Lucien secretly thought to himself. Viken's personalities were not hard to guess considering that he had mercilessly erased the memories of his best friends and crafted them into seraphs.

"What God of Steam? What Yuri? I have no idea what you are talking about at all?" Lucien pretended to be innocent.

Viken chuckled. "You can fool other people but certainly not me. I can sense the heart of faith inside this dwarf. I sense that his power of faith finally has a center where it can be gathered. You wouldn't think that I've arrived after selecting a random body, would you?"

Lucien's eyes froze. Viken had retained the remote projection abilities of the primeval devils after he became a demigod. As a result, even if he were not a demigod who was aware of the secrets of immortality, it would be barely possible to completely destroy him. It was indeed as expected of the best expert who overpowered the Silver Moon, the Lord of Hell, the Will of Abyss, and Monster Viken on his own.

Of course, it was also mostly because it was inconvenient for the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss to arrive and the fact that their strength would be restricted in the main material world. Also, there would be no cooperation where the Will of Abyss was involved.

Lucien's stunt could not escape the attention of Viken. He smiled peacefully. "I think you don't need me to say anything after you see this dwarf who has been personally given divine power by you. Facts speak louder than words."

Even though he could not be directly projected to the senior-rank experts who did not have too many negative feelings, his senses on emotional changes were still keen.

“It’s just a secret research program. The mysteries of gods and the nature of the power of faith have always been a focus of the legendary sorcerers. Oliver, for example, has been studying the Dark Dragon Lord.” Lucien wanted to know what exactly Viken was trying to do, so instead of playing innocent, he admitted frankly without telling any lie.

“You are very cautious. It seems that the conversation with Douglas has made you wary. You wouldn’t say anything that would strike arcana and magic studies.”

Viken seemed unconvinced of Lucien’s confession. “Right. The creator of the new alchemy and the general theory of relativity, the most authoritative arcanist in the microscopic domain, and the main founder of the current arcana and magic system has stopped the exploration on the truth of the world and focused on the dissemination of faith. It will be a major strike on the confidence of every arcanist in the Congress of Magic after it is spread out.”

“It’s simply a study, which proves my arcana attitude better than anything. For me, disseminating faith and gathering the power of faith are meaningless. My focus is their place in the current arcana system.” Lucien still admitted frankly. After all, the congregation of special electromagnetic waves was just a hypothesis.

Viken chuckled. “Alright, enough of your lofty excuses. I do not need to use your words to strike the Congress of Magic. I only want to ask you if you need the complete ways to steal and utilize the power of faith? That monster cannot tell the secrets of demigods in violation of my rules. So, I’m sure that you only know how to transform into the status of primeval devils with the power of feelings, which is not the best method that I’ve improved on.

“You should know that many critical procedures on your path to demigod are missing. You cannot reach the destination if you are one-legged. I can help you solve the problem with a minimal price that nobody will suspect you. After all, almost twenty high-level sorcerers know the complete structure of artificial planets.”

“Absurd! Why do I want the way to steal and utilize the power of faith? Can they help me unravel the nature of the power of faith at all?” Lucien refused determinedly.

His determination, however, sounded like a vacillation to Viken. Lucien did not mock at him for trying to allure a grand arcanist but stressed the uselessness of his offer. It was not hard to imagine what he thought.

Viken said unhurriedly, “Useless? Then, why did you steal the power of faith of the God of Craftsmen? Your way of stealing and utilization was well-hidden, but that is the only remarkable part about it. There’s no way for you to succeed unless Heit turns into the God of Steam himself. How can you figure out three thousand years of studies in only two years?”

He was quite confident about that.

“You...” Lucien was slightly stunned. The guy who was spying on him was indeed complicit with Viken.

From Lucien’s face and emotional fluctuations, Viken noticed his shock. Thinking that Lucien was surprised because the successful and unattractive thing had been learned by him, Viken smiled. “Don’t worry. With my teaching, you will be able to steal Heit’s power of faith from your own altar. How does it sound?”

He was not truly bothered by the disproportion of cost and return. It was already the greatest success of the Congress of Magic that could be divided.

“As I have said many times, I am not interested in stealing and utilizing the power of faith. After I figure out its essence and arcana significance, I will create a flawless method, instead of turning into a half human and half monster like you.” Lucien smiled and scorned Viken’s way, showing his “confidence” and “vision”.

Viken was briefly silent, as if he did not expect that Lucien would really refuse it. Had he made any breakthroughs in his research? Was the observer effect really the nature of the power of faith?

“Two demigods have emerged on this path, and they are the only two demigods who are not natural-born demigods. So, you will eventually return to this path at some point. If you miss the opportunity today, you will barely get the files in the future.” Viken sighed, as if he were feeling sorry for Lucien.

Lucien smiled warmly, but he still said firmly, “I believe in myself.”

That was the confidence as expected of a distinguished arcanist at such a young age. So, Viken was not surprised at all.

He smiled, and the dwarf narrowed his eyes. “I hope that you will not regret it in the future.”

The strange air was gone, and the dwarf collapsed as if he had lost all his strength.

Looking at the air before him, Lucien smiled casually. “I was speaking nothing but the truth. Why couldn’t you believe me? Do you only believe me when I tell you lies?”

Seeing that the dwarf was gradually back to himself, Lucien disappeared from Rentato after one step.

...

“Viken came to you?” In the Land of Truth, Douglas frowned at Lucien.

Lucien did not hide the matter and told it to his teacher and Mr. President quickly.

“He allured me with the way to become a demigod in exchange for the complete structure of artificial planets,” said Lucien briefly.

Thinking about what they discussed before, Douglas asked, “Did you agree?”

That was a good thing. They were planning to give the Church the intelligence in that regard in the first place so that they would compete with the Congress in the field that the Congress was best at. As it turned out, the pope had personally delivered the mysteries of demigods here for the intelligence. That was an unexpected trophy! Although Douglas, Fernando, and Lucien did not need such a path, it would serve well as a reference and research materials. After all, it was the only successful path of demigods right now.

“I turned him down.” Lucien acted as if it were not a big deal.

“It also makes sense. If you agreed with the exchange, Viken might take advantage of it whatever reasons you had. Even if we are going to make the deal, you shouldn’t take part in it in person.” Douglas immediately understood why Lucien refused it.

Lucien nodded. That was indeed one of the reasons. More importantly, it was an opportunity as he had always wanted to show Viken his attitude. Supposedly, he could only look for indirect opportunities to do so, but Viken had come to tempt him in person out of his expectation. He would’ve regretted it if he did not make use of the great chance.

“We were also planning to fish up the sorcerers that were associating with Viken. But Viken’s operation...” Douglas wondered which they should choose.

Lucien smiled. “There are twenty sorcerers who know the secrets of the artificial planets, and dozens more who can construct it on their own with the mechanism. Together with Viken’s devil projection, it is barely possible for us to decide who it is exactly. We can only narrow the range. Therefore, I have temporarily added certain special structures to the files of artificial planets. In such a way, we will be able to tell whether they reached out to each other before or later.”

“Are we not going to carry out the exchange?” asked Douglas.

Lucien pointed at the north. “What we are missing is just the part to steal and utilize the power of faith, and we don’t have to ask Viken for that. Since he has secretly released the ways to become a demigod to sorcerers, elves, demons, devils, and other races to mess up the situation and divide us, we can also make the situation even more chaotic.”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 743: Irresistible Temptation

In San Ivansburg...

Belkovsky, the pontiff of the North Church, was walking toward the room of prayer slowly. He was tall and muscular, nothing like how Benedict III was. As a matter of fact, he was indeed a level-two knight who activated his own blood power through his own work. Even though he chose the path of divine power later, he had paid special attention to the exercise and maintenance of his body. After all, performing “God’s Grace” was a heavy burden for the body too.

He extended his right hand and pressed the door of the room of prayer with his eyes focused. He did not have the habit of considering problems while walking, like what the other high-level managers did. For him, one thing had to be done with full attention when he did it. Only if he was not distracted could he expect the best result. Therefore, when it was time for dinner, he would have dinner; when it was time to walk, he would walk; and when it was time to consider, consider. He never let go of the tiniest detail.

Suddenly, his right hand that was about to open the room of prayer stopped on the bronze doorknob. His eyes squinted, and a holy light vaguely rose around him, connecting to the barrier of the divine power of the whole cathedral.

“Who’s here?” Although Belkovsky would not perceive everything in the whole Saint Ivan Church all the time, he maintained the basic alert. If a certain expert approached the cathedral without him knowing it at all, it would be too great a humiliation for the pontiff of the North Church. Also, most importantly of all, the expert just now briefly revealed himself as if he were announcing his arrival!

Belkovsky was actually more puzzled than scared about the mysterious expert. Even if Benedict III arrived in person with his “God’s Arrival” recovered, it was not entirely impossible for him to survive in the cathedral of Saint Ivan Church. “God’s Grace” plus the core of the defense that the North Church had been working on for hundreds of years was enough to offset God’s Arrival, preventing it from causing fatal wounds.

It was just like why the “previous popes” never attempted to bombard Allyn with God’s Arrival. That could’ve knocked down the City in the Sky but wouldn’t have been able to heavily wound the legends inside. Without including the attacks of other people, at least Douglas and Brook, who were at the peak of legendary, wouldn’t worry about getting killed.

The legendary wave appeared and disappeared again, at exactly the same spot as just now, which slightly confused Belkovsky who was ready to attack. He smelled something unusual. Then, the holy light on his back turned from a hollow into concrete, giving birth to an angel who had six wings on the back. Then, the angel lunged into the void and disappeared before Belkovsky.

Outside of the Saint Ivan Church was a spacious square that was in the wild and primitive style that was adored in the Schachran Empire. In an alley near the square, the darkness before dawn had completely shrouded the place, making it appallingly quiet. It was a major contrast to the magnificent cathedral nearby.

Holy light arose in the alley, and the angel whose eyes were closed showed up and turned into the appearance of Belkovsky.

“Hehe.” Creepy laughter came from the darkness in the alley. It did not sound to be from a human being at all and carried the intense air of death.

There were few experts that Belkovsky was scared of, and Douglas was the only one among them who was not a demigod. Therefore, he showed no courtesy to the stranger who was pretending to be mysterious. “If you don’t have a good reason to attract me here, you’d better think of a better one after you reach hell.”

In the laughter, a little bird that was purely black flew out. There were pale and hilarious feathers above its head, and the bird's body seemed to be made of the purest death. It had come with the worst news.

Belkovsky observed it carefully, only to discover that the mysterious bird had disguised it so well that his projection could not see through it at all. He could, if he arrived in person and examined with divine power, but in such a case, the bird would probably collapse and disappear, not leaving any clues for him.

"You may call me Bird of Death, but I brought you a piece of good news this time." The bird perched in midair as if it were on a branch.

Belkovsky snorted, not taking it seriously. "Good news? There's little good news for me nowadays."

"Is that so? Is the discounted bundle of the ways to transform into primeval devils through the power of feelings not good news for you?" The Bird of Death cackled creepily.

"What?" Belkovsky's eyes constricted as he stared at the weird little bird for the first time. Even his nonexistent breath seemed to become heavy now.

After a brief silence, he looked at the Bird of Death and asked, "Do you know the ways?"

Over the past two years, many uncanny accidents had taken place in the territory of the North Church, and the results of the investigation all pointed at the primeval devils. Together with the intelligence that Belkovsky acquired from the Dark Congress and the Boundless Ocean, he had

more or less guessed that somebody was trying to collect the power of feelings in order to transform into primeval devils.

Furthermore, the Congress of Magic made it clear in their broadcast that transformation into primeval devils was Thanos' creation, and that he had successfully become a demigod in such a way. Although Belkovsky was not entirely convinced by the open broadcast, he did have a theory after hearing it. The pontiffs and saints in the past could not find a way to be demigods and were only able to steal and make use of the power of faith because they were missing a critical procedure. Therefore, he was quite tempted by the method as described by the Bird of Death.

"Do you not know that Viken secretly announced the way to become a demigod?" said the Bird of Death in mockery.

"What?" Belkovsky exclaimed again. He was surprised more times today than he was many years before. It was not because he was not calm and focused enough but because the Bird of Death's message was too shocking!

The Bird of Death let out horrible laughter again. "The elven queen knows it, and that's why Lankshear went missing. The Demogorgon of Darkness knows it, and that's why the former Prince of Demons went missing. Legends who hardly perished except in major battles in the past have gone missing one after another. Have you sensed nothing wrong?"

"That explains a lot..." Belkovsky was not blindly believing the Bird of Death's words; he had been suspicious about those cases all the time and vaguely inferred a terrifying fact based on his secret intelligence. Today, the truth of the cases had been offered to him. "What can Viken get from doing this?"

It was what confused him most.

“What can he get? Let the enemies brutalize each other, stabilize the internal situation, and buy more time for his recovery. Do they not count? Also, those people are sort of Viken’s experiment subjects. Their experience will help Viken find the problems of his method and the ways to solve them so that he can see the gate to a real god. After all, he is a demigod, and his life can be preserved in the worst scenario. There’s still a chance for him to start all over again.” The Bird of Death chuckled. “Besides, the candidates he chose are all the legends who do not have a stable source of faith.”

“No wonder he didn’t tell us...” Belkovsky nodded softly. As the pontiff of the North Church, he had a stable source of faith and had been stealing power from it. If he had the way to become a demigod, he would make significant progress very quickly. Since the North Church and the South Church were of the same origin, it was more than easy for them to steal each other’s power of faith. Viken certainly would not reveal it to his mortal enemy unless his brain was broken.

Calming himself down, he asked straightforwardly, “What do you want?”

For a big shot like him, the decisiveness at the critical moments was indispensable. Therefore, instead of rambling on, he went to the center of the problem. Besides, he was not worried that the Bird of Death would trick him with fake information. Such a clandestine deal certainly had to be completed part after part. With his knowledge, he could easily tell if the information was true and could cancel the deal any time if he determined that it was false.

“I only have the way of status transformation, but not the way to steal and utilize the power of faith, or the secrets to combining them to break into the level of demigods. However, I know for a fact that you have acquired the way to steal and make use of the power of faith from the World of Souls, and it has been improved by many generations of pontiffs. So, let’s make an exchange,” the Bird of Death said coarsely in a low voice.

Belkovsky’s eyes turned cold. He knew the secrets of the pontiff? Who was he? Did Viken tell him?

Holding back his confusion, Belkovsky said, pretending to be disappointed, “There’s no complete information?”

“No, but this is your last chance. Other people certainly would not expose it. Nobody wants to have more competitors. If you are unwilling to accept the exchange, I’ll go and look for your saints. I don’t think they will turn it down.” The Bird of Death’s pale and hollow eyes were full of mockery.

Belkovsky was a bit angry, but the temptation was much greater. Weighing the pros and cons, he nodded. “If we are only talking about the way to steal and make use of the power of faith, that’s not a problem.”

The most important secret of the North Church was still the way to pass on strength via “godhood”.

“Right. You also need to give me the files of the bloodline of Elimination. I’m quite interested in that.” The Bird of Death mentioned it casually, as if it were just an unimportant issue.

2After the schism, the night watchers of the North Church had plenty of knights with the bloodline of Elimination. They had plenty of files.

Belkovsky thought that it was an unimportant issue as well. The files regarding the Elimination blood power were not confidential, but he still believed that it was necessary to show his attitude. “No other requirements, unless you can offer other valuable things.”

The Bird of Death chuckled. “Alright.”

The two of them quickly exchanged their files before they bid each other farewell, both in satisfaction.

Looking at the statues of the previous pontiffs and saints in the room of prayer, Belkovsky was suddenly full of ambitions. Although he did not have the last and the most critical files, he had made much more progress. Also, he had picked up a source of files. The experts who were aware of the secrets such as the Demogorgon of Darkness had to be careful later!

Inside the Atomic Universe, Lucien opened his eyes, and the black Bird of Death suddenly collapsed.

He pretended to be the Bird of Death this time partly to acquire the files and partly to set a new enemy for Viken to mess up the situation. After all, the last and the most critical method hadn't been offered to Belkovsky yet, and there was still a long way to go before he became a demigod! Lucien certainly did not want there to be more demigod enemies for the Congress in the future.

“Aren't you trying to make the situation chaotic? I'll help you make it even more so! However, the messing up of such a level is still not good enough...” Lucien put on an expression that was called by his students as the demon's smile.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 744: A Standard Villain

In the dim underground palace, the pillars of light mixed with fire fell nonstop. The deep darkness melted quickly like the snow that had met the sunlight. The peculiar worms were rigidified, and the foul shadows screamed miserably.

A glimmer flashed, and the priests floating in midair suddenly collapsed, as if somebody dragged their ankles brutally. The defense on them did not work at all. Most of the evil arts came to an abrupt halt.

Before they were able to react, the intimidating gold-haired middle-aged man before them had opened his right hand. On his every finger was a little eye, and at the center of his palm was a brownish giant eye that was stained by blood.

The five horrible little eyes were in different colors and shooting different rays, but the yellowish giant eye glistened and made everybody feel heavy. The gravity in this place seemed to have been intensified.

Rays in green, blue, and other colors hit those black-robed priests, slowing, paralyzing, or even simply reducing them into countless spots of light. The formidable enemies that the reverends, bishops, knights, and common night watchers could not take care of were immediately suppressed. Victory was near at hand.

Some of the cultists screamed in panic. They had never seen such a weird and strong enemy before!

“Where... Where is the Chief Priest?”

“Shouldn’t the Chief Priest be stopping him?”

At the critical moment, they remembered their leader, an envoy of the supreme “Heir of Chaos”. Wasn’t he fighting the intimidating middle-aged man just now?

The middle-aged man who was dressed in a white overall attacked even harder after hearing their remarks. Creepy little eyes grew out of his face and his other hand, shooting out defensive or aggressive rays of light. He sneered, “Do you think a level-seven cultist priest can stop me? I’ve killed dozens of priests who were stronger than him.”

What? After confirming the death of their Chief Priest, the remaining cultists and priests immediately collapsed. They had even forgotten the prayer for power from “Heir of Chaos” when the rays came at them. Panicked, they soon lost their combat ability, getting killed or captured by the night watchers, the reverends, and the knights. None of them escaped at all.

“Hehe. There are too many uncanny cults recently. We have to dig out their source!” The terrifying eyes on the face and hands of the middle-aged man were closed without leaving any mark.

One of the night watchers said gratefully, “Thank god you were around, my lord, or those priests of ‘Heir of Chaos’ might have escaped.”

As a matter of fact, not only would they have escaped, but they would have also killed all the night watchers. Fortunately, the dire consequences had been avoided as Winchell, “Eyes of Radiance”, who ranked the third among the night watchers, had come when he pursued another lead.

“It’s my responsibility to deal with the cultists.” Winchell nodded. “You will search for the place in groups. Do not let go of any cultist.”

“Yes, my lord,” the captain of the night watchers answered respectfully.

Winchell paced in the hall. He looked at the messy altar, which was engraved with naked men and women, and searched for clues worth investigating.

Looking at the magnificent but somewhat old underground palace, the dim environment that was full of bodies, and the ancient stone gates and rooms, Winchell suddenly had a lot of mixed feelings. He had encountered such a scene far too many times. In both his careers as an adventurer and during the operations to purge cultists where he became a night watcher, he seemed to have always been visiting and fighting in underground establishments.

“Those goddamn ancient sorcerers always like to dig holes...” Winchell cursed.

Suddenly, he sensed something. His eyes turned into rubies and shot out two rays of light, breaking one of the walls nearby and revealing the hidden door inside.

Having no time to call the other clerics, he flew into the narrow channel and chased after the enemy.

After taking a turn, Winchell found himself before a bunch of astonished cultists who were crawling into a secret chamber in turns.

Hehe. Winchell chuckled. *Are you trying to get away from me?*

The dense eyes were opened again, and the cultists fell one after another. Winchell broke into the chamber and pressed forward, chasing after the enemy in the lead. Those behind who had been immobilized would be taken care of by the following clerics.

As he pursued on, fewer and fewer cultists were before him, until he could see none. However, Winchell did not stop. His intuitions told him that a big fish was up ahead, one that was as important as the “envoy” just now.

BAM.

A stone gate that was full of patterns was broken by the rays, and Winchell entered the deepest part of the chamber. He looked around warily, but there was nothing in the place except for the statue of “Queen of Chaos” who was holding a burning torch.

Why isn't there any enemy? Winchell looked around, slightly dazed. As a gold knight, he was quite confident about his guts.

Suddenly, a cold wind passed him, and Winchell shivered even though he was a gold knight. He sensed danger for the first time.

The feeling was not too strong. Winchell did not run away immediately but cast out defensive rays, surrounding himself with an iron wall.

Looking around, Winchell saw the lifeless wall, the quiet and empty room, the ordinary and crude statue, but no source of danger at all.

However, the chilling feeling still terrified him. He couldn't help but step backward. Exactly at this moment, the fire on the torch that the Queen of Chaos held suddenly rose high and burnt fervently in evil laughter.

Instantly, Winchell sensed the indescribable danger that was hundreds if not thousands of times more intense than previous. Even though he had been wandering on the verge of precipices before as a night watcher, he still couldn't help but tremble. He understood that his previous intuition had obviously been affected, and that someone who could affect his intuition so effectively was absolutely not someone he could resist, just like the priest just now who could not resist him.

In his shiver, Winchell's magnificent willpower stabilized his mind, and his abundant experience allowed him to notice the anomaly. It was more than easy for such a strong being to kill him, but the being had spent a lot of time alluring him away from his team and tempting him to enter the chamber. It was obvious that there were other purposes.

"Who is it?" he asked tentatively, with dirty fluids flowing out of the eyes on his hand.

The fire rose into the shape of a human and said in a coarse voice, "It doesn't matter who I am; it's what I can offer that matters."

"Hehe. I am the Lord's defender in the darkness. I would rather die before I deal with demons." Winchell ruled out the possibility that the enemy was a devil from the rational speech.

In the empty chamber, the laughter of the fire echoed. "What if it will make you closer to your Lord so that you can contribute to Him more easily?"

"What do you mean?" Winchell felt absurdly hilarious, but he was also deeply puzzled.

The tone of the fire became grave. "Have you never found it odd? As the devout believers and defenders of the God of Truth, reverends, bishops, ascetics, and part of the knights are granted divine powers, but most of the night watchers who were not reverends at the beginning can only fight with your blood powers. Also, most of the knights are far weaker than reverends of the same

level in terms of divine powers. Why is that? Why does the fair and selfless God of Truth treat His defenders so partially?”

“Nonsense! There are original sins on our backs. We can only win the Lord’s blessing through selfless devotion!” Winchell’s anger was not entirely authentic.

“Is that so?” the fire mocked. “Considering your contributions to the God of Truth, your knight level should’ve been increased even though you are never given divine power, right?”

Right when Winchell was about to refute in fury again, the fire continued, “As a matter of fact, it has nothing to do with the God of Truth. His blessings to you have been intercepted by the pope and the Grand Cardinals. Since He is still asleep, He is absolutely unaware of that.”

“What?” Winchell was less angry now that the Lord was not guilty of that.

“You may take a look at this file. This is a reward from the God of Truth. You’ve earned it.” Words jumped out of the fire and constituted an article that was full of sophisticated symbols.

Winchell was rather wary that it might be a temptation of demons, but his confusion still prompted him to read the article. After all, he would never betray the Church! That was his stance!

The moment he saw it, he found it impossible to move his eyes away and was completely fascinated by it.

“This is...” He shook his head in both fear and excitement.

“As the Almighty God, why would the God of Truth demand the dissemination of faith? Is it necessary for Him? The power of faith is actually a reward for loyal defenders like you so that you can polish yourselves with it and be closer to Him. However, the pope and the Grand Cardinals have intercepted all of it without leaving any for you. Now, you understand why they are so strong, don’t you?” The fire’s voice became gentle, but Winchell was shivering under every word.

“I don’t believe it.” He shook his head hard before asking in disbelief, “You’ve shown me such an important method just like that?”

The way to “steal” and make use of the power of faith had been etched in his brain.

“Now that you have sincerely asked, I’ll give you a candid answer. I am the embodiment of justice, and I hate unfair things like this most.” The fire chuckled and went on despite the suspicion in Winchell’s eyes. “I’ll occasionally ask for some information from you. Rest assured, nobody will suspect you. I have many other sources of intelligence, including several red robes.”

Red robes? Winchell’s pupils constricted abruptly. For hundreds of years, due to the uniqueness of the heart of faith, the Church had never had spies in the level of red robes, or at the very least, no external spies, since the North Church and the South Church had sent plenty of spies of such a level to each other.

Was he from the North Church?

“Are you scared that your heart of faith will be shaken after you get this? So, don’t guess who I am. You only need to remember my codename, the Red Burier.” The fire gradually died down.

Winchell stood where he was and looked at the empty room, unable to say anything for a long time. He felt that he had the most bizarre dream. Had he obtained a most precious and useful approach by paying nothing at all?

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Inside the Land of Truth, Lucien said to Douglas with a smile, “Viken secretly released the ways to become a demigod to let the legendary experts compete with each other, and now, we are doing exactly the same thing. We’ll spread the secrets to steal and make use of the power of faith among part of the red robes, thus allowing them to steal the power of faith. In such a way, the foundation of the South Church will be messed up, too. After all, the dissemination of faith cannot be conducted alone like sorcerers’ exploration of arcana and the world. A hierarchical organization is indispensable for them. Unless he can project a seed to the mind of every cleric, this is not something that Viken can avoid.

“If it weren’t for the fear that Viken might discover it, I would’ve publicized the way to steal the power of faith through ‘Arcana Voice’.”

“If Viken knows how you are using such a valuable method, his expression will certainly be very spectacular.” Douglas chuckled. After all, who could’ve thought that somebody would spread out the method? Were they worried that they had too few competitors? Only Lucien and the other grand arcanists who never considered the approach were determined enough to do that.

Lucien opened his hands. “Perhaps he would curse that I am a lunatic.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 745: Quick Solution

Douglas patted the sofa and said, “Ever since the Congress of Magic was founded, because the heart of faith has to be constructed on the devotion to and the faith in the God of Truth, sorcerers have been secretly worshiping the God of Truth or compromised by the Church with money and materials, and the bishop-level clerics have never become the spies of the Congress before. Finally, we do not need to take the hit passively all the time in terms of intelligence. Viken would never believe that some of the red robes are secretly serving the Congress.”

He had a lot of mixed feelings. In the past hundreds of years, the Congress of Magic had been infiltrated by many spies of the Saint Truth. In many cases, the Highest Council knew that certain people were conspiring with the Church, but they did not arrest or punish them just so that those spies could deliver the wrong intelligence that would offset the influence of the undiscovered spies. Although the Lord of the Undead was an authority to invade the brain and check the memories, there were too many people in the Congress and most sorcerers had their own secrets. It was impossible to scrutinize them one by one.

Of course, the disruptive theories that challenged the Cannon and the Doctrines had also partly purged the spies who believed in the God of Truth. However, it was not until after the battle of Rentato and the exodus of the South Church that the spies within the Congress were finally no longer influential.

Correspondingly, no matter how many clerics lived a corrupt life, and no matter how they hated their “superiors” or “colleagues”, they would be betraying the God of Truth whenever they cooperated with the sorcerers. Their heart of faith would inevitably shake, and they would be swallowed by the holy light. Therefore, the Congress of Magic could only set up spies that were in the level of reverends. Those spies could not be promoted to bishops because of their impure faith. In most of the cases, they had to collect intelligence through brain infiltration and other spells.

“I was very curious before why Sard and the pontiff and saints of the North Church could cooperate with us without being affected, and why they liked to swear with the heart of faith.” Lucien had vaguely guessed it when he knew that the power of faith could be stolen, and he completely understood it after he acquired the real method. The connection between the heart of faith and Mountain Paradise was partly under their own control thanks to the help of “godhood”, which allowed them to change the rules partly. When they believed that they did not break their faith, they would not be breaking their faith!

Douglas nodded. “We have to set up certain cardinal-level spies in the North Church too.”

Pondering for a moment, he said, “Our control over them will be reduced if we offer the way to steal and make use of the power of faith to them without asking for equivalent things in return, but they certainly wouldn’t believe us if we do not do that. Only when they obtain substantial benefits from it will they be mired deeper and deeper on this path, never to return. That’s exactly what we hope.

“As for our control of them, the first method is a threat. At the very least, until they become legends, they are not qualified to steal and make use of the power of faith. Once they are exposed, they will certainly be burnt by the Grand Cardinals for corruption. Although those Grand Cardinals have the big picture in their mind, this is something that concerns their own strength. They certainly do not want more people to share the power of faith.”

For the people who had become saint cardinals or divine knights honestly step by step, the Grand Cardinals would not give them a hard time but share the methods with them. After all, they were quite alarmed about the rapid rise of the Congress of Magic, and they knew that they had to increase the strength of legends and restore their number.

As he spoke, Douglas looked at Lucien. “The second way of control is allurement. We have controlled the four countries on this side of the strait and the north coastline. A huge number of believers live in our territory. As long as they are willing to work with us, we can help them steal the power of faith of the Holmish Church and other religions. That is a safe and copious resource that will certainly tempt them. After all, when they steal from their own people, they have to be very prudent in case they are discovered by the Grand Cardinals.”

The Holmish Church was closely dependent on the Kingdom of Holm. Therefore, Douglas asked Lucien’s opinion when he proposed the suggestion without using an affirmative tone.

“That’s not a problem. The Holmish Church is only a tool for us to stabilize the believers. It will not be in our favor or the favor of Holm if it grows too strong. One or two saint cardinals and divine knights should be enough. Also, I fear that Viken has secretly told the archbishops of such branched churches the ways to become a demigod,” Lucien nodded and said. There were only two legendary knights in Holm right now. It certainly wouldn’t be a good thing if the Holmish Church outnumbered the state in terms of legends.

Douglas agreed with Lucien’s judgment. “Viken fears that the North Church will surpass him, but he is certainly not scared of the branched churches like the Holmish Church that do not even have a legend. As a matter of fact, the power of faith in your steam church can also be transformed and provided to those red robes. Hehe. Your ‘research project’ does have a lot of purposes. You didn’t plan it beforehand, did you?”

He suddenly mentioned the steam church, as if he had understood another purpose of Lucien’s research.

“I had a rough idea about that, but I could only explore on my own due to the lack of files. It was actually Viken’s operation that inspired me.” Lucien chuckled. He was not entirely so visionary. Otherwise, he would have exchanged the files with the North Church a long time ago.

Suddenly, Lucien was stunned. He brought out a green non-legendary puppet that he built, only to discover that a hue of redness had been dyed on it.

“A red robe is contacting me? Already?” Lucien was surprised.

Douglas reacted rather normally. “Perhaps it’s important intelligence.”

“Maybe. I’ll project myself over and take a look,” Lucien said to Douglas. This was his demiplane, and he had to ask for permission in order to project himself to somewhere near the Holy City.

...

A wagon moved on the broad road at the suburb of the Holy City stably and did not stop until it reached a manor at the edge of the forest.

“Bishop Myers, thank you for hosting our baptism ritual in our house.” The owner of the manor, a viscount, bowed at the red robe who was getting off the wagon with respect and apparent excitement.

His late father was very close to the red robe, but he knew that the position between him and the red robe was too huge. He did not expect that Myers would really come to baptize his little son. However, his invitation was accepted!

“Your father and I were good friends who grew up together. There’s no need to thank me. I’ll clean myself in the church first and perform the ritual tomorrow.” Myers was a gray-haired old man, gentle but fearsome.

After entering the little church, Myers kneeled before the cross and began his prayer.

Late at night, he raised his head and looked at the cross as well as the Saint Badge embedded on it with complicated feelings. Then, he brought out a delicate puppet and activated it.

The puppet suddenly glowed in redness and waved its arms as if it were alive, before it leaped forward and looked at Myers with a hilarious face. “Did you summon me?”

Myers was deeply disgusted by the puppet, which was only the size of his thumb. He took a deep breath and said, “We’ve already obtained the secrets of artificial planets. This is the file you need.”

While the duplication of artificial planets was supervised by the saint cardinals, it could not be achieved without the participation of red robes. However, they were not like the grand arcanists who equaled to a whole team of researchers and who could do everything on their own. Therefore, the targets that Lucien allured with the power of faith included Myers, who was from the Highest School of Theology.

“Okay. Job well done. I think very highly of you.” The red glow from the puppet swallowed the file that Myers presented.

Gloomily, Myers said, “I’ve fulfilled your request. You can stop bothering me in the future.”

“Is that so? Then, should I bother Philip, Astira, Maria, or Vaharall?” The puppet chuckled. The first three names were the Grand Cardinals who were responsible for theology, and the last was the giant of the Inquisition.

Myers shouted angrily, “Devil, didn’t you say that you would not threaten me?”

“And you believed everything I said? I know that you are well aware that I will never be able to threaten you if you do not use the method, but if you do, it will be your connivance that I can threaten you.” The puppet’s face was even more hilarious as it continued, “Don’t blame me for the choice you made yourself.”

“Devil, goddamn devil.” Myers gnashed his teeth, but he did not put up any resistance. After he tried the method and succeeded, he already realized the price that he was willing to pay. “I warn you, don’t propose requests that are too outrageous, or I would rather confess everything to His Holiness!”

After he became a saint cardinal, he would be able to get rid of the devil. By then, everything he did would be forgiven by the Church!

“That’s right. I like to cooperate with the people who know exactly what they want best. Rest assured. Threatening is the last thing that I would like to do. I have always been a friendly man who believes in reciprocity,” the puppet chattered on. “If the intelligence that you provide in the future satisfies me, I will consider offering you additional power of faith.”

“What?” Myers’ breath turned heavy. Then, he saw the spots of divine hair around the puppet that seemed to be different from the holy light.

“Do you need to ask me what this is?” The puppet chuckled.

Myers fell silent. He finally understood why the allurements of devils could even corrupt the angels according to the Canon!

...

“The files of artificial planets that the Church has acquired do not have the special parts that I added later, which means that the traitor exchanged the information beforehand. Of course, it is also possible that he has constructed the information on his own according to the mechanism. After all, the style of the magic circles on the artificial planet in the file is highly different from what we are used to,” Lucien said to Douglas and Fernando with the files in his hand.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 746: Lucien's Mysterious Experiment

Browsing through the files in his hands, Douglas remarked while turning the pages, "It's true that the style of the combination of different magic patterns is highly different from that of our version, but it is also possible that he modified it on purpose after exchanging for it. The sorcerers who have the qualifications and clearances to acquire the full structure of artificial planets can't be stupid."

The structure model of a spell or a magic circle was not unique. As long as it agreed with the corresponding mechanism and process, the eventual magic model or magic circle would achieve the desired effect. Therefore, the spells that different sorcerers built based on the same arcana principle often turned out to be models whose core was the same but whose details were different from their personal styles.

Sometimes, when the details in their design were perfect and close enough to the mechanism, their model would have a better effect than other models did. That was also one source of unique magic. However, a better effect was not essentially better. It was still limited by the core and could not surpass its maximum.

Therefore, most spells that were open to the public had been united as the magic models with the best result. They were known in the Magic Empire as "standard spells". That was even more obvious in the Congress of Magic where the research was open. In many cases, the improvement in spells had to depend on the deeper understanding of the mechanism.

However, during the recent hundred years, it had occurred to the arcanists of the Congress of Magic that perhaps “standard spells” did not really exist. That was to say, the magic model with the best effect was not universal. Different sorcerers had their own different models to achieve the best effect.

The weird phenomenon raised a lot of attention at that time. Further research indicated that it was because of the different cognitive worlds of different sorcerers. The magic models that best matched their cognitive worlds would achieve the best effect.

After that, many sorcerers would both analyze the standard spells and adjust the details after they exchanged for them so that the standard spells would better suit themselves. But of course, the cognitive world would only be stabilized after the middle rank. There was no need for the magic apprentices and the regular sorcerers to do that.

“Hehe. It’s good enough that the range is narrowed down. I don’t believe that he would lay low in the future. We will figure out who he is if he does a few more similar things!” Fernando drew circles on the list, loathing the traitor so much that he almost wanted to grab him and let him taste the feeling of a storm.

After the discussion on the matter, Douglas suddenly asked Fernando, Brook, and Lucien their research progress on the quantum field theory, “There’s still no solution to the problem of infinity? I think that your idea about the field theory is correct. If you walk down the path, you will figure out the essence of the electromagnetic force sooner or later. At the very least, the current explanation is much more advanced than the past. Maybe after the theory takes shape, Brook’s broken and solidified cognitive world will be restored, and he’ll find his own path to demigod.”

Judging from his tone and his choice of words, he was still rather concerned about Brook, his “insubordinate” student. However, finding the path did not mean advancement. Leaving the odds of success aside, the perfection of the details on the path would probably take many years. For example, Douglas had “seen” the path to demigod through the general theory of relativity for many years, but he was still far away from “finding” his path. He would have to wait for the feedback of the truth of the world based on planets or black holes.

“Infinity...” Fernando repeated in a low voice as if he were trying to swallow it.

Lucien replied with a smile, “We’ve decided to submit the papers recently so that more arcanists could work on them. It’s possible that their ideas will give us the inspiration to solve the problem.”

“Yes. Arcana studies are not like magic. With enough fundamental knowledge and talents, the middle-rank and senior-rank arcanists can also make enormous contributions. Over the past decade, many achievements in the new microscopic domain have been accomplished by the young arcanists whose arcana level is not very high. This is an era of the young. You are the most distinguished representative of them,” Douglas said in mixed feelings.

Lucien smiled. “A major part of the studies were completed by Mr. President and master. Mr. President, how is your preparation to search for planets going?”

“Better than I thought. Probably in one to two months, I’ll be able to conduct a super-remote space jump. I hope I can find the little guys who have been giving me a headache for hundreds of years,” Douglas replied with unusual humor.

“One to two months?” Lucien was rather surprised. Didn’t the president estimate that it would take one to two years?

Douglas chuckled. “I’ve changed my plan. I have postponed searching for the planets that are far away because it may be easier to find the sun which is closer to us, although no one has ever succeeded before.”

During the Magic Empire, the legendary sorcerers had tried searching for the sun through space jump, to no avail. Therefore, they believed that the sun was the “symbol” of a certain demigod and could not be located without his permission. Also, based on the comparison between the sun and the silver moon, it was possible that the God of Sun was not a demigod but a real one!

After all, until Douglas proposed the system of celestial body motion, the sun that illuminated the earth and radiated light and heat was generally worshiped. Great significance had been attached to it by the sorcerers, making it one of the special, influential celestial bodies in the school of astrology just like the silver moon.

Guided by such ideas, no legendary sorcerers attempted to locate the sun until Douglas became legendary, but he failed to find the sun, too. So, he acknowledged the theory that the sun was a demigod and aimed for the stars further away in his cosmic exploration later.

“Mr. President, you have to be careful. Our calculation might not have taken all the factors into consideration. It could be quite dangerous if you land on the surface of the sun after the teleportation,” Lucien reminded concernedly.

Lucien never considered the possibility of teleporting onto the sun because the terrifying heat and the enormous gravity would stop the space-time gate from being opened.

“That will be a good thing. I would die without regrets even if I’m killed on the spot,” said Douglas with a smile, as if it were really a good thing.

Fernando did not say much. It was not so easy to kill a top legendary sorcerer. He looked at Lucien with his red eyes. “What have you been busy working on in the last half of the year except for the field theory?”

“Analyzing legendary spells, improving my magic capabilities, and trying to reach the peak of level three so that I can try to advance to level four.” Lucien seemed unclear about what his teacher meant and answered “frankly”. However, he was not lying about the focus of his life recently. After “Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness” and “Elemental Protection”, thirteen legendary spells had been engraved into his soul, and the number would probably reach fifteen in a year. He would be qualified to sprint at the peak of legendary.

Fernando said in a bad mood, “I know that you are making remarkable progress. What I asked was the application you filed to the Magic Research Board. What are you planning to build inside the Atom Institution? The expensive materials you need are enough to build a level-nine magic item.”

Somebody mentioned it before he came here, and he did not know the details.

“I’ve devoted more ancillary materials to it than what I applied for.” Lucien shook his head with a smile. “The main reason is that many areas with lousy environments could only be visited by high-level sorcerers. Some places even demand archmages. Therefore, the common sorcerers with arcana gifts do not have a choice to explore and study such areas, which is a major restraint for the development of arcana. After all, many of our achievements today depend on the collision of particles, the unusual tracks during the experiments, and the screening of abundant data. It would take dozens if not hundreds of times longer if the legendary sorcerers and the archmages are doing the work alone.”

Douglas nodded. “That’s a fantastic idea. Do you have any product yet?”

“I’m close to success. After it works out, I’ll open it to all the arcanists, but they have to file an application in advance and receive thorough vetting.” Lucien briefly described his “alchemical item” and won the approval of Douglas and Fernando.

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In Atom Institution...

Heidi and the other students looked at the door of a small laboratory. It was absolutely quiet, without any sound coming out.

“You said that our teacher has often locked himself in this small laboratory during the past few months, and that magic waves spread out now and then?” Although they had been away from each other for several months, Katrina did not feel alienated from Heidi and her other friends in the Atom Institution. Instead, she had a sense of familiarity and warmth now that she had finally come home.

Heidi nodded her head fast like a little chicken. “Yes. We don’t know what our teacher is working on. He is rather mysterious and locks the laboratory tightly every single time.”

Hardly had she concluded her sentence when the door of the small laboratory was opened, and Lucien walked out in his double-breasted suit.

“Good morning, Master!” Heidi and the other students greeted him at the same time. Their eyes were rolling nonstop as they tried to see what was inside the laboratory from the gap that Lucien was blocking.

“You are very curious?” Lucien said with a smile.

“Huh? Yes! I’m very curious!” After a brief daze, Heidi hurried to nod.

Lucien looked around at them. “If you are curious, do you want to give it a shot? However, only four people can take it at one time.”

“Me! I would like to take it!” Heidi had always been a girl of curiosity, and she believed that her teacher would not harm her.

With her as the example, Sprint, Katrina, and Annick raised their hands earlier than other people did.

“Alright. Come in with me.” Lucien turned around and showed everyone what was inside the laboratory.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 747: Romance of Arcana Studies

It was not exactly a spacious laboratory. The alchemical platforms and the magic items that should’ve been here were nowhere to be found, but the room was not empty at all. On the wall, the floor, and the ceiling, silver and black magic patterns were protruding nonstop. Spreading out the light that felt like flowing water, they connected with each other and formed a three-dimensional model.

Then, they stretched toward the center and weaved into a layered illusionary web, which integrated with the complicated magic circle deployed at the center of the laboratory, constituting a deep and mysterious picture.

“A magic circle?” Heidi looked at the laboratory rather in shock. Their teacher had been busy and mysterious in the past couple of months just in order to set up the magic circle? It did not seem so complicated that a grand arcanist had to spend a few months on it.

She had thought that their teacher was setting up new experiment devices, such as the particle colliders that were better and more powerful. What she saw puzzled her.

Stunned for a moment, Annick recognized the basic purpose of the magic circle. “A space-time magic circle? A Portal to Alternate Realm?”

It made him and the other visitors even more surprised and confused. Seeing that it was not an experiment device, they had guessed that the magic circle had special usages. For example, it might be able to complete certain special experiments in the microscopic domain or help the arcanists find the mysteries of electrons and the other microscopic particles. Little did they expect it to be a teleportation circle like a Portal to Alternate Realm! Was it of any use for the Atom Institution? Could they be teleported into an atom?

Lucien, whose back was against them, did not bother with their shock and curiosity. He walked into the laboratory unhurriedly and stood at the center of the magic circle. Then, he turned around and smiled at Katrina, Sprint, Annick, and Heidi. “You’ll know what it is for after you try it.”

“Master, you are so mean. My heart is exploding with curiosity!” Heidi said in an exaggerated manner. In the meantime, she hopped into the laboratory and stood next to her teacher. Sprint and the other visitors were full of questions, but they dare not delay, fearing that other people might steal their opportunity. So, they followed her into the laboratory.

“Heidi, you must tell me everything you see and feel later!” Layria raised her voice in admiration. She had raised her hand too slowly just now.

Lazar, Rock, and Jerome stood not far away and stared at them. Although they were rather curious themselves, they felt that it would be too embarrassing if they were to compete with the students since they were Lucien's friends and sort of "uncles" for Heidi and the other students. Even though the students had caught up to them in terms of arcana level and magic level, the feeling in the heart was difficult to change, unless they became a legendary sorcerer or a grand arcanist in only ten years just like Lucien did.

Lucien snapped his right hand, and all the magic patterns around them glittered. The light, which felt like ripples of water, at the beginning became as dazzling as the sunlight at noon.

The light gathered, and a small sun seemed to be rising at the center of the magic circle. It was incandescent but not scorching.

Gradually, the cluster of pure light was stretched into a gate that was two persons tall. Magic symbols were floating inside the flowing light.

Lucien extended his right hand. As if he had put on a silver glove, he pressed the gate of light hard, and the gate was immediately opened. Infinite brightness surged in, drowning Lucien, Heidi, Annick, and Sprint.

After the light was gone, Lucien and his students had already vanished, and the gate of light seemed to have lost all its vigor. It was lifeless and lackluster, as if it were made of pale rocks.

"I wonder what Heidi and the rest of them will see..." Chelly crossed her hands subconsciously.

...

The dizziness caused by the change of time and space came just as expected. Fortunately, the students, who were fifth-circle sorcerers right now, had abundant experience and already enhanced themselves with the spells that could resist the feeling. Therefore, they felt better very soon.

Heidi looked at the front eagerly before she completely got rid of the dizziness. She was too curious!

In front of her was transparent glass. Outside of the glass was the heaviest and deepest darkness that Heidi had ever seen. Boundless and endless darkness.

In the depths of the darkness, pale spots of light were shining brightly, pure and clear without any flash, which gave Heidi an inexperienced feeling of vastness and emptiness, as if her mind had been entirely calmed down. She felt that she was so insignificant and that the world was so enormous.

“This is...” Heidi completely forgot her dizziness. Her voice was as unpredictable as dream talk.

Sprint, Annick, and Katrina also looked at the endless darkness and light spots around, lost. They vaguely guessed something, but it was impossible for them to grasp it clearly.

Standing behind them, Lucien raised his right hand and pointed at the deep darkness and the light spots as he said with a sigh, “This is space.”

“Space? The universe?” Heidi and the other students were suddenly back to themselves and hurried to look down.

It was still transparent glass under their feet. On the glass were layers of tiny magic patterns that were rippling now and then, as if they were offsetting and resisting something. Beneath the glass, on the other hand, was no longer a solid ground, an azure sky, or a blue ocean, but the darkness that was exactly the same as the surroundings. In the middle of the deepest and heaviest darkness, white and pure spots of light were embedded.

Surrounded by identical vastness and darkness in all directions, and looking at the clear, unblinking stars far away, every human being here found it impossible to hold back the loneliness and the sense of insignificance in their heart. They felt the deepest awe.

“This is the most beautiful space I have ever seen...” Heidi had been on adventures before. However, neither the night sky on the plateaus nor that on the ocean could compare to what she was seeing right now. This was an everlasting painting and the splendid cosmos that most arcanists dreamed about!

Katrina was as fascinated as Heidi. Who said that arcana studies did not tolerate romance? This was the greatest romance!

Sprint and Annick paid more attention to the significance of space. Therefore, after a brief fascination, they were back to themselves very quickly. Looking around carefully, they found that they were in a “glass room” that was the size of a regular laboratory. It was floating in the cosmos, with countless magic patterns shimmering on its surface and constructing magic circles.

What was inside the glass room was even more unbelievable. Sophisticated magic circles were everywhere. Some provided gravity, and some created air, turning the place exactly like on the ground. Of course, a fairly large proportion of magic circles had nothing to do with that at all. Instead, together with the alchemical platforms and the cyclotrons, they constituted a laboratory with full functions.

“Master, this is?” Sprint opened his mouth and asked, although he had basically guessed the purpose of the glass room.

Nodding, Lucien said with a gentle smile, “This is a cosmic observatory.”

“A cosmic observatory?” Heidi and Katrina were woken up by their dialog and captured the term precisely.

Lucien pointed out. “It is universally known that the cosmos is full of weird rays of curses and other great dangers, such as extremely low temperatures and extremely high temperatures. Therefore, only archmages and those above dare to come here, but in fact, considering the unknown dangers in space, few archmages ever explored this place, leaving the vast universe to the legends.

“Our previous study indicated that the rays of curses are particles and electromagnetic radiations of different frequencies. Then, what about the curses of the rays in space? We searched for all kinds of materials and collided the particles again and again in order to find new things, didn’t we? Cosmic rays are something we have barely studied before. It is possible that we can find something new out of it, which will help us unveil the next level of the microworld.

“In the past, the exploration and study work was mostly done by the legendary sorcerers. However, to find suitable rays in such a vast cosmos and to capture the unusual tracks during the countless experiments would take a long time and many experiments. Therefore, the legends haven’t achieved much so far in that aspect.

“With that in mind, I filed an application to the Magic Research Board to build a ‘cosmic observatory’ that can resist the cosmic rays and support teleportation, so that the common arcanists can also be involved in the studies on the cosmic rays and the vast space. We will reduce the time cost by increasing the number of participants and the frequency of experiments.”

Lucien introduced the background and guided his students to use the special experiment devices in the cosmic observatory to introduce the cosmic rays outside.

Heidi, Katrina, and the other students were all thrilled. Could they study the cosmos and roam space, too?

In the meantime, Heidi and Katrina had a weird feeling. A moment ago, they were still imagining what a great and romantic feeling it would be if they were sitting inside the cosmic observatory by themselves in the company of nobody except for the numerous stars outside of the window!

However, as their teacher introduced the cosmic observatory, as well as the magic circles and alchemical items in it, objectively with the jargon of arcana studies, the feeling of romance was immediately shattered without a sound. All they could notice was how to use this magic circle and how to process the data that they collected..

Lucien noticed that Heidi and Katrina did not look quite right, so he asked in confusion, “What’s wrong? There shouldn’t be any leak of cosmic rays in this place. Well, you must pay attention to the energy consumption of the cosmic observatory and change the magic gems in time. Solar energy cannot sustain for long...”

Heidi sniffed and interrupted Lucien, almost crying, “Master, give the romance of arcana studies back to me!”

Huh? Lucien raised an eyebrow, having absolutely no idea what was on the minds of his two female students.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 748: Rise of Space Exploration

Layria, Chelly, and the other students stood outside of the small laboratory and watched the portal as well as the magic patterns that had dimmed. They were too reluctant to leave. They felt that a cat was scratching their hearts with its paw, and they could barely contain their curiosity.

After a long time, Alfalia finally said, “There’s nothing we can do by standing here, and there’s no telling when they will be back. Let’s focus on our own business for now. After all, they will certainly tell us what they have experienced after they are back.”

Heidi had always been willing to share as long as it was not anything confidential.

“Yes. There are a lot of scheduled experiments that we need to work on, a lot of data to be analyzed, new experiments to be designed, and new spells to be analyzed...” Layria only meant to agree with Alfalia at the beginning, but the more she talked, the more “hopeless” she felt her life was.

Lazar nodded his head and clapped his hands. After everybody’s attention was attracted by him, he said with a brilliant smile, “Let’s not stick here waiting. Nobody knows where Evans and the rest of them went, and how long will it take before they come back. Go back and finish your experiments first.”

When he talked to Lucien and the friends they were familiar with, he mostly called him “Lucien” directly. However, in the Atom Institution, to show respect for the manager of the institution, he always called him “Evans” when he talked to the apprentice-level assistants.

“Yes, Mr. Lazar.” Lowi and the other assistants looked back at the small laboratory, reluctant to leave. But they managed to hold back their curiosity and went back to their respective laboratory.

“I wonder where our teacher has been teleported to,” Chelly said to Layria in confusion.

Layria thought for a moment and said, “It must be related to the studies in the microscopic domain, or our teacher wouldn’t have put it inside the institution at all instead of applying for a new magic research program.”

They talked and turned around as they enthusiastically speculated the destination of their teacher’s magic circle. Although they would certainly learn the answer after Heidi was back, wasn’t the greatest fun in such a curious thing all about guessing?

Layria and Chelly had taken only a few steps when they suddenly felt the outburst of magic waves behind them. Under the perception of their spiritual powers, the magic patterns inside the small laboratory glowed one after another, extracting energy from the Allyn magic tower and emanating silver and pure brilliance.

In the dreamy, brilliant view, the dimmed portal glowed transparently and dazzlingly again.

“They’re back?”

“Has Mr. Evans come back?”

In their exclamations of confusion and excitement, Alfalia, Lowi, and the rest of them who were slowly pacing back to their laboratories jumped back like rabbits. They reacted so agilely and quickly that they seemed to have been waiting for this moment.

The gate of light suddenly burst out, and the pure, flawless light drowned the whole laboratory.

When it was gone, the portal also disappeared, but five new figures showed up at the center of the magic circle. They were Lucien and his students.

“Heidi, where did you go?”

“Heidi, what did you see?”

Layria and Chelly blurted out, asking Heidi at the same time, as if she had been a blabbermouth all the time!

Heidi heard her friends’ questions before she recovered from the dizziness. She rubbed her head and chuckled. “You have absolutely no idea where we went. It was such a ‘romantic’ place.”

“Romantic?” Lazar couldn’t help but repeat. That was not the keyword he had in mind.

“Romantic...” Layria and Chelly found it impossible to imagine. They guessed many places, but none of them was even remotely associated with “romantic”. This was the Atom Institution!

Heidi smiled gloatingly. “Yes, it’s a very romantic place, more romantic than any romantic scene that I’ve ever seen!”

Seeing the surprise and confusion on her friends’ faces, she felt a lot better.

“Well... Did you go to space?” Alfalia asked, not very confident about her guess.

After a brief daze, Heidi asked in surprise, “How did you know?”

“Did you really go to space?” Layria asked in shock.

Seeing that everybody was looking at her, Alfalia said shyly, “I just remembered a survey on an issue of ‘Allyn Impression’. It’s about the most romantic scene for sorcerers. The one ranked top was the starry sky at night, which could make one feel the vastness of the universe, the insignificance of human beings, and the transcendence of the river of fate. That’s why I boldly guessed that you went to space...”

“It must’ve been the sorcerers of the school of astrology who took the survey!” Heidi grumbled. “Fine, Alfalia, your guess is correct. We did pay a visit to space. Our teacher has established a cosmic observatory there for us to study the cosmic rays and observe the passing-by asteroids. Layria, Chelly, you can’t possibly imagine the feeling of standing in space. That is the boundless and endless darkness, where stars are embedded like dazzling white spots. They do not flash at all, like an everlasting painting.”

The more she talked, the more excited she became. “Only after I came to space did I realize the insignificance of ourselves, the enormity of the whole universe, and the deepest awe from the

bottom of my heart. The universe is more sacred than any gods in any propaganda! It was not until then that I truly understood what Mr. President said when he refused Pope Viken's temptation. For those who have seen the sea of stars and regard the stars as their goals, how can they be impressed by a 'god' that stays on a tiny planet?"

Heidi's description made the eyes of Layria, Chelly, Alfalia, and the other female sorcerers lose their focus, as if they were also standing in space and sharing the indescribable feeling. Layria, Jerome, and the sorcerers of the school of elements were also touched.

Lucien shook his head in amusement. Was the cosmic observatory of such educational significance? It could help the sorcerers establish healthy outlooks without being deceived by the Saint Truth?

"Master, when... when can we go to the cosmic observatory?" After hearing Heidi's description, Layria looked at Lucien, her eyes sparkling. Both her face and her movement suggested that she couldn't wait anymore.

Chelly, Alfalia, and the other ladies were the same. Lazar, Rock, Lowi, and the other gentlemen did not say anything and were trying to control themselves, but their passionate eyes still "betrayed" them.

Lucien chuckled. "This is meant for you to run experiments. Also, to save the cost of commutation, you have to stay for a whole week up there every time. One or two hours in space can be quite romantic, but what if the duration is longer? The overwhelming darkness, the absolute nothingness, and the everlasting loneliness will drive you mad even if you have five partners. It is not a feeling that can be offset by romance. You can only be slowly adapted to it. Also, you have to be mentally prepared for the adventure, or I will not allow you to go up there."

"Master, rest assured, I can stay silent for a whole month." Annick showed his attitude first.

Heidi, who was usually the perky one, frowned, but she still said, “Master, while we are up there, we will devote most of our attention to the experiments. However empty, dark, and isolated the place is, it will not affect us.”

“In that case, you will draft your own research plan. I’ll choose those who have the most thorough preparations.” Lucien smiled.

Heidi said to Katrina and her friends quietly, “It’s truly the demon’s smile...”

For the romance of arcana studies, they dispersed quickly and began to work on the experiment plans to study the cosmic rays and the vast space.

“Layria, you won’t truly understand what I felt until you really come to the cosmic observatory... I have already imagined a scene. I am sitting cross-legged inside the cosmic observatory by myself, surrounded by the empty and boundless darkness as well as the pure and shining stars in all directions. There are absolutely no creatures except for me... If only we could see the planet we’re on. That feeling of looking down upon everything from above will be even more fantastic!” Heidi said to Layria without stopping. Everybody had their own description of romance.

Layria did not feel that Heidi was a chatterbox. Instead, she listened attentively and remarked with mixed feelings, “Even without the scene that you imagined, standing in space is already an experience that can make most arcanists jealous.”

“Haha, particularly those guys from the Tower and the school of astrology. They would be bumping their heads into the wall in envy. If only they also had such a great teacher!” Heidi thought of certain friends she knew and laughed even more happily.

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In the Tower...

Samantha was focused on the study of the newly-painted horoscope when she heard rapid footsteps coming near, before somebody knocked on her door.

“Rachel, why the haste?” When Samantha raised her head, the door opened and backed off on its own.

Rachel said excitedly and earnestly, “Mr. Evans has established an observatory in space for the studies of cosmic rays and horoscopes!”

“A cosmic observation?” Samantha repeated in shock.

“Yes. Heidi already went to this cosmic observatory and had a real journey in space. The experience she described was really... really...” Rachel hesitated for a long time but could not come up with an appropriate description, but the envy on her face couldn’t be disguised.

Samantha stood up abruptly and mumbled, “A journey in space?”

The boundless cosmos was the most sacred and great place for every sorcerer in the school of astrology. Roaming in space was one of the momentums for them to try to become legendary sorcerers. But right now, they had a chance to go there in advance?

“Yes! The arcanists of the Tower are all seething! Somebody proposed that we should build one of our own, and somebody has applied to the Research Board, hoping to borrow the Atom Institution’s cosmic observatory!” said Rachel in excitement. “Hurry up, let’s draft a research plan of our own!”

Although Lucien’s “cosmic observatory” was a gigantic level-nine objection that was very close to legendary and cost tremendous materials, it was not a legendary item after all. The Tower was still able to afford a couple of them.

Samantha remarked in confusion, “Have we begun the expedition toward the sea of stars already...”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 749: The More Essential, the Simpler?

In the Month of Beginning (January), Holm, being close to the north, was still cold. Snowflakes were flying, and the freezing wind was blowing like knives.

The magic tower of the Allyn branch of the Moonsong League, however, was as warm as spring, making every sorcerer who walked in feel comfortable from the bottom of their heart. Although they were protected by the magic effects, it was still not the best experience to be blown by the wind.

“Hi, Julie, Happy New Year. Has today’s ‘Arcana’ arrived?” That was the only thing that could motivate the arcanists to come to the magic tower against the cold wind at the beginning of a new year.

Julie, a female apprentice who was working as the receptionist, had a flushing face. There was no telling whether it was because of the different temperature or for other reasons. She said, “Neither ‘Arcana’ nor ‘Magic’ is here yet.”

After that, she asked with her voice lowered and her eyes glittering, “Gentlemen, did you hear anything about the cosmic observatory?”

“What cosmic observatory?” the few arcanists asked at a loss. Had they been outdated after only spending a new year holiday?

Julie said in excitement, “Words came from the Atom Institution that Mr. Evans established a cosmic observatory in space so that the arcanists who are not magically capable enough can also study the cosmic rays and the unknown mysteries in the vast space.”

“What?” One of the middle-rank arcanists failed to control himself. His voice echoed in the hall as if it had been enhanced with sound spells.

“Is it really possible to go to space for studies?” Another arcanist sounded suspicious and unconvinced.

Julie nodded her head hard. “Ms. Heidi and some other people have already been there!”

The loud arcanist believed that Julie would not lie to him about that, so he raised his head and looked at the ceiling in a daze, as if he could see the boundless cosmos through it and the magic tower.

“The cosmos...” He was almost sighing because most arcanists barely had any opportunity to visit the cosmos in their entire life even though they all craved to do so. Little did he expect that they would have such a privilege now. The grand development of arcana had indeed presented miracles one after another!

Another arcanist asked anxiously and eagerly, “Can we apply to use the cosmic observatory? Or is it only reserved for the arcanists of the Atom Institution?”

Before Julie replied, a clear and steady male voice had come from the entrance of the magic tower. “Of course you can. Mr. Evans has made it clear to the Magic Research Board in his reply that there will be two openings for arcanists who are not associated with the Atom Institution every time the cosmic observatory is opened. However, the candidates must submit their experiment plans first and be strictly vetted. The resources of the Congress of Magic are not to be wasted by arcanists who are merely going up there to experience the cosmos.”

The arcanists in the hall turned around. Some asked in excitement, “Is it true, Mr. Jurisian?” The others bowed dutifully. “Happy New Year, Mr. Jurisian.”

It was exactly Jurisian, who had reached the seventh circle, who walked into the magic tower.

“If you don’t trust me, you can ask the Magic Research Board yourself.” Jurisian smiled.

At this moment, the arcanists were already back to themselves. Someone asked concernedly, “Our experiment plans will be closely related to our own arcana studies. Will other people be inspired by those?”

He spoke very subtly, but his actual meaning was very clear. He was worried that other people would see through their studies from the experiment plans they submitted and steal their achievements by completing their experiments earlier than they did.

“Rest assured. All the experiment plans have copies like papers. They will also be reviewed by the members of the Magic Research Board. There’s no need to worry that somebody else will steal your achievements,” Jurisian replied with a smile. He was one of the senior-rank sorcerers of the Moonsong League with the most friends. That was why he had been admitted by the Affair Committee.

Phew. The few arcanists were relaxed, their worries gone. Some of them began to consider what kind of experiment plan could win the approval of the reviewers, and some others continued asking, “Mr. Jurisian, does the League have any intention to build our own ‘cosmic observatory’?”

Jurisian smiled. “I’m not very sure. Such things can never be decided so quickly. However, it is absolutely certain that some legendary sorcerers and archmages believe that ‘cosmic observatories’ are useless because they can work on the space themselves. Some others believe that it is inappropriate to build too many of them all at once, which would be a huge burden on the Congress of Magic’s stock of resources. Unless Mr. Evans’ ‘cosmic observatory’ reveals its value, it should not be blindly promoted.

“Therefore, although Mr. President, the Lord of Storm, and the Lord of Elements support the cosmic observatory, probably only another one will be built by the Tower for the time being.”

“The other Excellencies’ concerns are valid. After all, nobody knows if the cosmic observatory is useful. Recklessness is not the Congress’ style.” One of the arcanists nodded in approval.

Right when they were about to bid Jurisian farewell, something beeped on the reception desk before Julie.

“Hello?” Julie picked up the phone. “Huh, have ‘Arcana’ and ‘Magic’ been delivered?”

The arcanists who were about to leave stopped and waited for another ten minutes patiently, before they bought the journals from Julie.

“This issue of ‘Arcana’ is really thick.” one of the arcanists said to his friend in confusion.

Instead of going to his office to claim his copy, Jurisian began to read the unsold journals on the reception desk.

“Quantum field theory? A series of papers from Mr. Brook, the Lord of Storm, and Mr. Evans?” An arcanist read the table of contents and found the key phrase, “quantum field theory”.

Hearing that, the other arcanists were even more puzzled. They knew quantum, and they knew the field theory, but what did it mean when they were combined? Was it what they thought it meant?

The papers on the quantum field theory were intricate and brimming with dizzying equations. Those arcanists sensed the confusion when they encountered the general theory of relativity and matrix mechanics again. Some of them even skipped the deduction and looked for the conclusions.

“The essence of the electromagnetic force?” one of the arcanists blurted out in shock; his voice was full of intense shock. As one of the two most studied fundamental forces, the electromagnetic force had always been the foundation of the world and something closest to the “truth” for the sorcerers of the Moonsong League. How did anybody come up with an explanation about the essence of the electromagnetic force? Wasn’t it like someone who was unable to walk suddenly learned how to run?

Of the four fundamental forces, the strong interaction force had been specified but lacked further research. Even its basic features hadn't been grasped yet, much less systematic theories about it. The weak interaction force, on the other hand, was merely Fernando's speculation and had not been verified by any experiment. There was still no telling when it would be specified. Therefore, after the nature of gravity was partly explained by the general theory of relativity, the essence of the electromagnetic force became very symbolic.

For a long time, the arcanists who were adept at electromagnetism had proposed many hypotheses on the nature of the electromagnetic force, but they never had a complete theory. The series of papers on this issue of "Arcana", on the other hand, seemed to be suggesting a brain-blowing possibility!

Jurisian was reading the paper slowly. The introduction at the beginning was what he was good at, so he had no trouble understanding it. But after he heard the exclamation, he turned to the end and read the part about the nature of the electromagnetic force.

"The electromagnetic force is the interaction realized by the reactions among charged objects through the exchange of photons? Virtual photons..." The hall fell quiet until Jurisian murmured to himself a long time later. The conclusion had a thorough theoretical support and mathematical descriptions of the complicated processes. Whether or not it was correct, it would be one of the greatest breakthroughs after the electromagnetic force was discovered, second only to the Brook equation.

The other arcanists could only manage to understand the conclusion, but even so, their eyes were full of shock and delight. "Is this the electromagnetic force?"

If the electromagnetic force could be understood perfectly, the sorcerers who were adept at electromagnetism like them would receive unimaginable returns!

“Well, the three Excellencies have proposed the questions about quantum field theory. How should the infinity problem brought by divergence be addressed?” An arcanist reached the end. It seemed that the quantum field theory was not perfect and had many unresolved problems.

For some reason, he was more or less relieved after seeing that. Understanding the nature of the electromagnetic force exalted him and made him feel that he was in a dream. It was more acceptable to him right now.

All the arcanists on the spot were feeling the same. One theory that surpassed the age, like the general theory of relativity, was enough. It would be too unreal if there were many of them.

They heaved a sigh in relief and smiled. “If the problem of infinity can be resolved by anyone, he will certainly win the Evans Prize in Arcana and the Silver Moon Medal.”

They did not have much hope in that, but it was not too unusual for the middle-rank and senior-rank arcanists to solve the problems that the grand arcanists couldn't. Similar cases had happened in the past hundreds of years. After all, the grand arcanists had too much knowledge and experience, which might turn out to be shackles. The lesser arcanists were less likely to be affected.

“Huh? ‘A Hypothesis on Protons and Neutrons According to the Diffusion Experiment’, by Yaroran Hathaway Hoffenberg...” An arcanist turned to another paper.

The diffusion experiment on the title was quite familiar to them. Ever since neutrons were discovered, the diffusion experiments of protons and protons and those of neutrons and protons had been going on all the time, and a lot of data had been accumulated. A few months ago, Mr. Raventi and Morris discovered that in such experiments, the nuclear force, or the strong interaction force right now, wouldn't change at all whether charged protons or uncharged neutrons were used. The result had nothing to do with the electric charge, which was against the common understanding. Many arcanists had proposed their hypotheses to explain the phenomenon.

“Perhaps we can consider protons and neutrons as the same particle, which I’d like to call a nucleon. Just like some electrons spin leftwards and some spin rightwards, some nucleons are charged and some are not. They cannot be regarded as different particles because of the apparent disparity...” The same arcanist read a sentence of the paper and felt deeply shocked.

In her paper, Hathaway introduced a new quantum number to indicate the state.

“What? Protons and neutrons are the same particle?” Including Jurisian, all the arcanists and magic apprentices on the spot were shocked.

It was not because they found it incomprehensible. It was because they were overwhelmed with disbelief and awed by the nature of the world. Was it true that the deeper they went, the simpler things would be?

“So to speak, there are only three kinds of basic particles: nucleon, electron, and photon. Also, the interaction between the charged particles and the photons behaves as the electromagnetic force?”

“This makes sense. The fundamental things cannot have so many complicated categories!”

“Is this the truth of the world?”

Sometimes, complications did not necessarily result in astonishment, and it could be the extreme simplicity that brought an astounding sense of beauty. Therefore, although the arcanists hadn’t finished reading the paper, they were already inclined to Hathaway’s speculation.

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 750: Special Prize

In the hall of the Allyn branch of the Moonsong League, the arcanists expressed their praise and astonishment about the simplicity of the components of the microscopic domain.

“I remember that Mr. Haynes once said that the nature of arcana was simplicity and straightforwardness and that the beauty of arcana came from determinism and the awe-inspiring symmetry. Although straightforwardness has been disapproved by Levski Geometry, Evans Geometry, the general theory of relativity and matrix mechanics, and determinism bordering on bankruptcy as the probabilistic explanation of the wave function and the uncertainty principle that are being verified in experiments, it seems that simplicity and symmetry still govern our world. That’s why the Brook equation can be praised as the poem of the goddess, and the mass-energy formula boasts such extreme beauty.”

An arcanist remarked so touchingly as if he were giving a speech.

Haynes was a legendary sorcerer of the Congress a century ago who made great contributions to arcana and magic. He claimed the highest honors of many fields. Many formulas on the changes of force field and astrology were his achievements. If everything had gone well, he probably would’ve become a grand arcanist. It was a shame that he encountered a saint of the South Church during an exploration, and they died with each other.

Jurisian put down his journal and smile. “So, according to symmetry, the nucleon and the electron should both have their corresponding antiparticles. The category of microscopic particles is not as short as we imagine.”

“That’s normal. There is only a night when there is a day. The existence of antiparticles is philosophically acceptable. It does not reduce the beauty of the simplicity of the fundamental particles,” another arcanist said while feeling full of confidence.

Jurisian nodded and intentionally said, “Of course, while the category is simple, the intrinsic properties of microscopic particles are not simple at all.”

The moment he said that, all the arcanists on the spot changed their faces. Some smiled bitterly, some were helpless, some grew agitated, and some were stunned.

While the wave-particle duality hadn’t been unanimously agreed upon, it was basically the mainstream explanation right now and was accepted by most arcanists. However, the uncertainty principle and the probabilistic explanation challenged their nerves and their souls, as if the whole world could turn illusionary and surreal at any moment. As for the double-slit experiment with electrons, the quantum superposition, and the ensuing “observer effect”, the arcanists had no choice except to flee from those tricky questions. Whenever they thought of the problems, they felt that their brains were exploding.

“Mr. Jurisian, I have to say goodbye now. The questions of the quantum field theory are prompting my every cell for a careful reading.” One of the arcanists stopped his bitter smile and left under the excuse of studying quantum field theory.

Jurisian smiled. “I hope that your work will inspire the Excellencies.”

“I hope so,” the arcanist replied with a rigid smile. How could he inspire the Excellencies when he could barely understand the paper?

Although there was still hope for him to understand the quantum field theory on this issue of “Arcana” if he spent a year or two on it as a level-five arcanist, it would still be one to two years later. By then, chances were that the quantum field theory had been developed to the point that he could not understand at all!

He sensed the gap between his knowledge and the cutting edge of the microworld widening. Without fortuitous incidents, better guidance, and harder work, the gap would only further expand inevitably, until he could only study other people’s papers that were published years ago. He could only follow the tail of this age, if he were not eliminated at all.

Of course, he was not too terrified about that, because he could tell from the journals such as “Arcana”, “Magic”, “Nature”, “Elements”, and “Electromagnetics” that there were no more than a hundred arcanists who were really discussing and studying the cutting edge of the microworld, and that the other people could only verify or give opposite examples to their theories. That is to say, people like him were the mainstream of the age.

“Perhaps every age is led by the minority, particularly when it comes to arcana. For most of the arcanists, all we need to do is to digest their work.” The arcanist shook his head and abandoned his previous self-consolation.

...

The Third Generic School of Rentato had been established by the Kingdom of Holm and the Congress of Magic after the two generic schools operated well and the students were well-acknowledged by the citizens of Rentato with their performance in daily life. Since the first batch of students hadn’t finished their five-year curriculum and graduated, and their real performance hadn’t been revealed yet, the generic schools were still only founded in Rentato and not introduced to other major cities yet.

Under the freezing wind, Ali trembled hard. His wool vest, his thick shirt, and his even-thicker double-breasted suit did not make him feel any warmth.

He kept his hands in his pocket and lowered his head into the collar as he walked forward quickly.

“Rentato is really much colder than Samara.” He had never experienced such bitter coldness before because Samara was located on the south side of a high mountain, which blocked the cold air from the north.

Supposedly, Ali had to wait for the entrance exam next June in order to be admitted by the generic school, and he had to take the prep classes that were hosted by various scholars and magic apprentices until then. However, the establishment of the third generic school gave him a chance.

Because of the increased number of magic apprentices, the unclaimed missions in the past were now taken. Also, many workers had flooded into Rentato. As a result, the third generic school was established half a year earlier than it should’ve been. The city hall of Rentato, which was having financial difficulties during the expansion of the city, was unwilling to see the new school left unused for half a year. Therefore, a special entrance exam was held in advance, and a batch of new students was admitted before the new year.

“Grandpa Shaw, is there any letter for me?” Ali stopped at the gate of the school and asked the muscular, gray-haired old man. It was said that he used to be a squire to a senior-rank knight until he was wounded in a battle against demon-corrupted creatures. He had been recommended to work as the janitor of the third generic school.

Shaw shook his head. “Ali, there is no letter for anybody today.”

“Thank you, Grandpa Shaw.” Ali left in disappointment. After he came to Rentato, he felt humbled and stopped writing to his pen pal, Jane. It was not until he was admitted by the third generic school and settled his life that he finally wrote a letter to her about his updates and his new mailing address. He had been waiting for her response since.

After he returned to the classroom, he was immediately greeted by the warm air. The coldness was gone, and Ali felt unprecedented coziness.

“Every classroom has the ventilations of the magic air conditioner. It’s so much warmer than furnaces.” Ali found that he loved his life in Rentato more and more.

At this moment. Mr. Brian, who taught “Basics of Arcana”, walked in. He knocked the table softly, hinting everyone to lower their voices.

Brian was a medium-height man with a shy smile. It was said that he was a student of the Douglas Magic School and senior-rank magic apprentice. He taught “Basics of Arcana” as a part-time job to fulfill his mission and to earn arcana points.

“You are all very hard-working. There are still ten minutes until the first class, but you are already all present.” Brian nodded in approval.

There were no kids who hated books and learning in any generic schools at present. Their enthusiasm was unquestionable. Also, the school retained the right to kick out any students who violated the rules of the school more than three times.

“Mr. Brian, why have you come so early?” Ali knew that Mr. Brian was approachable and therefore boldly asked.

Brian replied with a smile, “I’m here to announce a piece of great news. The proposal of the education department of the city hall of Rentato has been approved by the Affair Committee of the Congress. The top twenty students of your grade in the next monthly exam will be invited to visit Allyn.”

“Allyn? The City in the Sky? The headquarters of the Congress?”

“Will we really get to visit the City in the Sky?”

“Can we visit the Atom Institution?”

The students immediately seethed. Thanks to “Arcana Voice” and all kinds of newspapers, the names such as Allyn and Atom Institution had been deeply etched to their heart. Now that they heard that they had a chance to visit them, how could they not turn thrilled and obstreperous?

Although Ali had been living independently since a young age, he found it impossible to control his feelings. He clenched his fists. Too many pictures that he dreamed about in the past popped up in his head. *Do I have a chance to go to the City in the Sky and to take a lot of at the world-famous “Atom Institution”?*

“Yes, you may visit the City in the Sky and the Allyn magic tower, talk to Prospell, and take a look at the Heredity Laboratory, the Laboratory of Life Matter Synthesis, the Research Center of Psychology, the Library of Arcana and...” Brian paused with a smile and continued, “... and the Atom Institution.”

“Great!”

“Hooray!”

Exclamations of excitement burst out in the classroom. All the students were blushing.

Brian knocked on the table to quiet them. “Therefore, you have to study hard. Only by making your way to the top twenty of your grade will you receive the invitation. By then, the top twenties of the first generic school, the second generic school, Mills Noble School, and many other schools will go with you.”

“Mills Noble School?” Ali’s face was frozen from his excitement. Too many thoughts were rolling in his head, but they were all about a simple name—Jane!

Will she go there? She always says that she’s one of the top three students of her grade!

Should I introduce myself? How should I talk to her?

Ali thought further and further until the bell rang and announced the beginning of “Basics of Arcana”.

Brian’s smile was gone. He said solemnly, “Today, we will focus on the basic concepts in the microscopic domain.”

It was not a detailed interpretation but only meant to let them know the basic ideas.

“Ever since Mr. Evans discovered the electron and opened the gate to the microworld, we have discovered four fundamental particles up until now, namely proton, neutron, electron, and photon... Protons, neutrons, and photons cannot be further divided and are the most basic structure for any matter... Also, there shouldn’t be too many other fundamental particles. The foundation of the matter is definitely simplistic...” Brian taught fluently.

“The most basic structure for any matter... cannot be further divided...” Ali wrote notes carefully.