

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 881 Hades“ Right Hand

Inside the Radiance Church...

The Liege of Death, having turned into a shadow, did not attack immediately. After finding out Francois' location, he backed off to a dark corner outside of the room while waiting for the shift of night to day and the moment when the gate of the cathedral was opened. That would be the moment when Francois was most relaxed and careless.

If he were to cast a spell right now, Francois could possibly sense danger and defense in time.

Since they were going to fight in a cathedral, he was not confident that he could defeat Francois when he hadn't recovered to his peak status yet.

Even though the cathedral was protected by the God of Truth, and lights were on all night, there was still darkness where the lights could not reach. The Liege of Death stood in it as if it had been melted into the darkness.

In the hall where the transmission circle was deployed, Francois stood up and waited for the message impatiently. Other people might be unaware of it, but he knew very clearly that a result concerning his future, if not the situation of the world, would take place tonight!

Holy light suddenly surged and glowed in the circle, illuminating the whole room and making it as bright as day. The air of divine power covered everything.

“Is there a result?” Francois immediately stared at the circle.

At this moment, two red spots suddenly emerged in the darkness. The Liege of Death had sensed the best opportunity to attack. The waves created by the transmission circle could cover all the traces before a spell was cast, particularly when Francois’ attention was fixed on the message.

He raised his right hand, and the black long sleeve of his magic robe moved backward naturally, revealing a pale hand that was completely dry. Every inch of skin and every streak on the hand was different and brimming with death. As they gathered into the runes of immortality, vague black air popped up, and intense desolation was manifested. It seemed that the realm of the dead had been recreated by the palm.

Tannanois curled four fingers and left only the index finger. The withered fingernail glittered in the mysterious black and gray.

As he let out the rough sounds that other people could not hear, spiritual faces appeared around him, writhing and raging, but they were all thrown into the desolate darkness at the tip of the index finger, dying it pale.

The Liege of Death’s body gradually turned transparent and was no different from the spiritual faces. Then, he was absorbed by his own index finger, leaving nothing but a pale and gray finger on the spot.

“Ahh!!!”

A miserable cry suddenly burst out, and a fuzzy face flew out of the tip of the finger with its mouth wide open. It covered the distance instantly and lunged at Francois' back!

"Assassination?" Francois looked at the transmission circle in confusion. He did not understand why he would suffer an assassination in the heavily-guarded Radiance Church.

Brilliant light burst out of his body. Extraordinary items were triggered and tried to stop the face from leaking in.

However, the finger, which had already turned black, white, and gray, suddenly emerged before Francois. Passing through the defense that was almost broken, it tapped his forehead softly.

The initial attack was the Liege of Death's most powerful and unique spell that he had named "Death Resonance". The other sorcerers had given it a nickname—God of Death's Call. His "finger" in the second wave of attack was the only legendary item the Liege of Death had—"Hades' Right Hand"—which could only be used once!

Francois' confused and shocked face was frozen, and his body quickly turned black and gray.

...

Fernando quietly flew to midair, only to discover that the cathedral in the city trembled violently as if it had an earthquake. After only one moment, the earth cracked, and a gap where red magma was flowing consumed the cathedral like the mouth of a monster.

The air of a legendary divine power burst out in the cathedral, and a holy light rose to the sky. However, it was enshrouded in a black ball and pulled downward. Flying more and more slowly, it began to descend instead of rising after only three seconds, falling right into the boiling magma.

Then, the crack of the earth closed, and there was no sign of an earthquake except for the missing cathedral as well as the clerics inside.

“The earth control of such an extent...” Fernando felt that it was the most unbelievable superpower of the earth class he had seen. Of course, the best he had seen was only the similar spells of the ninth-circle sorcerers. “Also, the attack is directed at the Church...”

From that, he concluded that it was done by a friend instead of an enemy. So, he slowly landed and waited for dawn so that he could sneak into the city and find out what happened.

...

In the Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City...

The old pope’s beard and hair were entirely white, and his wrinkles seemed to be falling from his face. He was too old to be a living human being. Wearing a sacred crown and holding the platinum staff, he looked at the grand cardinals and the divine knights down below with eyes that were as clear as before. “Except for the members who are obliged to watch over the fortresses, all the grand cardinals are here.”

His voice was solemn but benevolent. After a pause, he raised the platinum staff and announced seriously, “The Lord has appointed a new pope in an oracle. As for me, I will return to the Lord’s arms in Mountain Paradise tonight.”

All the grand cardinals lowered their head and said respectfully, “That is the Lord’s grace. Your contributions to the Church are as vast as the Boundless Ocean.”

The old pope nodded softly. “Our contributions are exactly our gains. I hereby announce the Lord’s oracle. The new pope will be...”

His eyes passed on the faces of a few grand cardinals. Satisfied with their tranquility and devotion, he raised his voice and said, “Griffith!”

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” A middle-aged man in a clean robe walked out and fell on his knees piously. His skin was dark, and his face was plain. The only thing that differed him from peasants was that he did not have as many wrinkles, and his every movement was full of charm.

“Only Truth lives forever!” All the other grand cardinals fell on their knees and drew crosses on their chests.

Then, everybody stood up and watched Griffith walk on the seven stairs.

As Griffith took each step, the holy and everlasting songs, the ivory and sacred light, and the sand-like angels appeared one after another, making Griffith seem to be walking in the realm of the God of Truth.

Lance was covered in overwhelming holy light. All the clerics and believers knelt and prayed.

The projection of Mountain Paradise appeared in midair, casting a streak of holy light on Griffith, which looked like a halo.

Griffith walked up to the last stair and took over the platinum staff from the old pope solemnly and respectfully. Then, he turned around to the grand cardinals and raised the staff high.

At this moment, a sacred and intimidating voice descended from the infinite heights.

“Your holy name will be ‘Gregory’!”

The old pope smiled. His body suddenly turned transparent, as if he were the purest holy spirit. Then, he crumbled into countless holy spots of light that flew into the projection of Mountain Paradise.

Griffith drew a cross on his chest and declared with a voice that echoed throughout Lance as all popes did when they were crowned, “From today on, I will be Gregory!”

All the grand cardinals fell on their knees again. “Only Truth lives forever!”

At the front of the grand cardinals was a golden-haired man in a white robe. His face was chiseled, and he was tall and handsome, except that his rising nose was a bit intimidating.

At this moment, he was more focused and devoted than any other grand cardinals on the spot.

Behind him, some of the grand cardinals further lowered their heads, preventing other people from seeing their faces.

...

“What? This place has been taken over by the Mother God of the Earth?” Fernando had pictured a new scenario where he might run into some powerful sorcerers, or someone had summoned a Devil Duke, or the primordial gold dragon attacked unexpectedly. Little did he expect that the place would become the territory of the Church of the Mother God of the Earth!

He did not need to investigate at all. After he snuck into the city, many priests of the Mother God of the Earth were delivering the fact to the believers.

“It was the Mother God of the Earth who killed the grand cardinal last time? That makes sense. Only the top legend who is best at spells of the earth class could’ve killed a grand cardinal who was under the protection of the cathedral so easily...” Fernando was greatly enlightened.

As a matter of fact, Douglas, Arnold, and he had all speculated that the heretic religion, which rose against the Magic Empire with the Saint Truth since the War of Dawn began, would eventually turn against them after the Saint Truth grew too powerful. The previous cases had proved that, like the Sun God who was killed by God’s Arrival. However, he did not expect the Mother God of the Earth to revolt so suddenly!

“The outcome might’ve been different if the Mother God of the Earth betrayed during the attack of Lance...” Fernando soon accepted the fact that the Mother God of the Earth had betrayed the Saint Truth, but he did feel sorry that it happened too late. He thought to himself, Maybe because of the

suppression of the Saint Truth without the pope, the coalition army finally decided to make significant compromises to the Mother God of the Earth.

Standing outside of the church of the Mother God of the Earth that had just been established, Fernando hesitated for a moment but decided not to come in. After all, there were many sorcerers among the night watchers, and the priests of the Mother God of the Earth must be too sensitive right now to trust him. He might as well go to Aalto as soon as possible and look for friends he was familiar with.

“Antec always told me that his classmate Stanis had remarkable talents and was about to become a legendary sorcerer. Hehe. I’d better meet him in person.” Fernando tried to get out of the city when he remembered his correspondences with his friend.

When he passed by two priests, he suddenly heard one of them speaking to the other in a low voice.

“Griffith has succeeded as the pope. His holy name is Gregory.”

“The new pope has been born?” Fernando was briefly stunned. “What does Ivan think?”

He had to go to Aalto immediately to find out!

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Chapter 882 Mean Good Friends

It was the middle of the day. The ancient and magnificent Aalto City stood next to the Bellen River, looking down at the villages around it.

The wall of the city was not in black, which was what most sorcerers would have liked. It was in dark yellow because it was as old as the everlasting sky.

Although Fernando dared not to fly, he still reached the central city of the empire a couple of days later since he did not rest at night.

He cleaned his clothes and walked to the city gate, which was defended by a dozen sorcerers. Their leader revealed the unmistakable air that he was an archmage!

It was the scorching noon, but peasants, dealers, and citizens going in and out of the city were not reduced at all. One could not help but sense the liveliness and exuberance of Aalto.

“Stop!” A middle-rank sorcerer stopped Fernando in wariness. In such an eventful period, nobody wanted to be killed by the night watchers.

Because Fernando was wearing a red magic robe, all the sorcerers shifted their attention to him. All of them looked grave except the archmage, as if they would attack him relentlessly if anything went wrong.

Fernando said loudly, “I am from Holm. I’m here to look for my good friend Antec. He’s a student of the King of Nightmare.”

Antec was merely a senior-rank who just made it to the sixth circle. He couldn't have been known by a lot of people. So, in case of an accident, Fernando simply brought up the name of his teacher, the legendary sorcerer "King of Nightmare".

The destination of their class was exactly "King of Nightmare", like Maskelyne who used to rule the city in the past. His "Book of Astrology and Elements" had only two legendary classes, "Prophet" and "Lord of Elements".

To obtain more legendary classes, one would have to make enough contributions to the empire to enter the "Tower of Gods", the library of the empire in Antiffler, to study them. In the heyday of the Sylvanas Magic Empire, the sorcerers were so confident that they believed that legendary experts were mortal gods and that different classes were the gods of different realms. So, the library of the empire was named "Tower of Gods". However, the rise of the Saint Truth made the "gods" fall into dust.

"The King of Nightmare?" Now that the name of a legendary sorcerer was mentioned, the archmage at the gate was much more serious and friendly.

Fernando nodded. "Yes, but I do not know him. I'm only familiar with his student Antec."

He was too proud to fake connections with a legendary sorcerer.

An oddly honest fellow... The sorcerers could not understand Fernando's pride and only presumed that he was silly because he had been too devoted to his research.

The archmage at the gate smiled. “I know Stanis, another student of the King of Nightmare. I heard the name Antec from him before. So, you may come in.”

Huh? Fernando was surprised at his privilege. He was let in so easily? They did not even ask his name!

The archmage mistook Fernando’s stun for not remembering Stanis or believing what he said. So, he said in a low voice, “Stanis is the King of Nightmare’s best student. Antec must’ve mentioned him before, right? His cognitive world has half-solidified since half a year ago, and he is considered a half legend. Hehe. Perhaps we’ll see two Kings of Nightmare in one city someday.”

“His cognitive world has half-solidified?” Fernando had thought that he, who almost reached the eighth circle, was the best of the “young” sorcerers in his generation. He did not know Stanis, who was not much older than him, had already reached such a level.

“Yes. He might try to make a breakthrough before long. He’s a real genius at illusions and dreams.” The archmage’s envy was obvious. The boundary between the ninth circle and legendary was slim, but the differences were too huge.

Instead of nodding, Fernando said eagerly, “I know a thing or two about illusions too.”

He was implying that he could communicate with Stanis and see if this “real genius” deserved his name. He would never praise, envy, or look up to anyone!

The archmage, however, thought that a sorcerer who was good at illusions had come to ask for the guidance of Stanis and the King of Nightmare. That was not rare, particularly when he was familiar with the King of Nightmare’s student.

“How should I call you?” After Fernando mentioned the King of Nightmare, he felt that it was necessary to make acquaintance with this senior-rank sorcerer. “I am Reece Brown. You can call me Reece.”

That’s the right protocol! Fernando thought. “I am Fernando Brastar. I prefer to be called Fernando.”

Reece paused and asked in hesitation, “Your last name suggests that you are from the Asso Empire, aren’t you?”

Fernando nodded. “Yes, but my teacher is a sorcerer of the empire.”

Reece did not further confirm his identity, as if he were certain about Fernando’s truthfulness. He said with a smile, “Fernando, come on in. Antec is already waiting for you. We should talk about magic knowledge sometimes.”

“What? Antec is waiting for me? I’m already allowed to go in? You don’t need to examine my identity? Are you not afraid that I have surrendered to the Church and become a night watcher?” Fernando felt that he had more and more questions after he knew Douglas.

With a weird smile, Reece said, “Rest assured. There are no night watchers in Aalto. Look, isn’t Antec over there?”

Following his finger, Fernando saw a young man in a monocle. He was slim and pale, with messy hair, rising cheekbones, and an untrimmed beard. The disgusting smell from him suggested that he hadn’t been out of the meditation room or the laboratory for a long time.

“You look as terrible as before,” Fernando mocked Antec straightforwardly. “And you don’t know how to sort yourself out at all.”

With a bitter expression, Antec said, “Whether or not I sort myself out, no beautiful sorceresses will ever like me. Only someone as handsome as you is worth sorting out.”

There were hints of envy and jealousy in his tone.

“Have you considered modifying your face?” Fernando did not consider Antec’s feelings at all.

Antec, however, thought about it carefully and said, “Few people in our magic tower are good at physical modification, and I don’t trust other people, fearing that I will become even uglier.”

“Hehe. You are still a coward who doesn’t dare to try and trust! You shouldn’t have studied after the King of Nightmare, and you should’ve gone to the Tower of Misfortunes!” Fernando was particularly mean today.

The Tower of Misfortunes was the demiplane of “Lord of Misfortunes”, a legendary sorcerer who had already perished in Antiffler.

Antec was not so cowardly in front of his friend whom he had known for years. He said proudly, “My teacher said that I am very gifted at dreams, and I’m most suitable to hide in someplace safe and manipulate dreams.”

“Yes. It’s indeed suitable for cowards,” Fernando said.

Antec suddenly smiled. “Fernando, let me tell you a story.”

“Huh? A story?” Fernando failed to follow Antec. He suddenly felt that his friend had something he could not understand since they last met ten years before.

Antec led Fernando through the gate into the crowded market area. The vampires under their parasols, the elves who embraced the sunlight, the dragons who stopped on the roofs, and the human beings who were coming and going made the place diverse and charming.

“The Lord of Abyss, my teacher’s good friend, is one of the best experts in bloodline melting and body modification. When he was young, he was often mocked by his good friend for being too hideous. However, he has plenty of mistresses right now,” Antec said in a calm tone.

Fernando was not envious at all. “He’s a legendary. Nobody can refuse him.”

In the Magic Empire, legendary sorcerers had great privileges. As long as they did not kill anyone too important, they would only be fined for murder.

Then, he chuckled. “So, that’s what you used to encourage yourself? How inspiring!”

“That’s not important. The important thing is that when the Lord of Abyss was only in the seventh circle and not as strong as his friend, he ambushed and killed his friend after having enough mockery, before turning his friend into a demon dog.” Antec suddenly sounded delighted.

Fernando was stunned for the first time during his interaction with Antec. He said with his face frozen, “Do you want me to thank you for not killing me?”

“Yes, but I dare not do so,” Antec replied with a smile. He was already satisfied to see the look on Fernando’s face.

Fernando was about to roar when he saw a vampire fighting an elf in the avenue up ahead. The blast of the senior-rank supernatural powers had demolished a lot of buildings.

“Nobody is going to stop them?” Was Aalto so unregulated? Then, perhaps the Church did not need to attack them at all; they would kill each other after a while!

Antec suddenly sounded extremely weird. He asked, both in amusement and confusion, “Fernando, have you pretended to be a girl?”

“How did you know?” Fernando was rather shocked. How could such a thing have been spread to Aalto?

Antec pointed at his side. “She’s right here.”

Shocked, Fernando looked at his right side, only to discover a petite red-eyed beauty was standing next to him shoulder to shoulder, except that she looked rather fuzzy.

He was lost at first, before he said in great enlightenment, “Is this Aalto City my dream?”

“No, it’s OUR dream,” Antec replied with a smile. He was much bolder when they talked about that.

“Our dream, as well as theirs?” Frowning, Fernando pointed at the human beings, elves, dragons, vampires, and dwarfs around them.

Antec nodded his head. “This place is based on the dreams of all the living creatures in the real Aalto. Now that you have come to this place, you’ve naturally joined the dream. It’s barely possible for traitors to hide in such dreams.”

“This is... too remarkable for your teacher to accomplish! Has he reached level three of legendary? It’s impossible for even the level-three legends!” Fernando had a profound understanding of illusions and read a lot of books on the battles of legends.

Antec chuckled. “Have you forgotten that Prince Dracula is in Aalto?”

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“Him? No wonder...” Fernando said in a low voice.

Although “Real Dream” was a naturally-endowed spell of vampires, Prince Dracula, who was a top legendary vampire, was the only one who could connect the dreams of so many people without

depriving them of their thinking abilities. Abel, who had perished, was stronger than Dracula in overall, but he was not as good as Dracula in terms of Real Dream.

It was said that other than connecting everyone's dream, Dracula could also substantiate his dream with his talents. The creatures in it looked real and could think and communicate, but they did not know that they were fake and part of a dream.

Antec continued to explain for Fernando, "Dream Aalto covers the real Aalto in case of the Church's sudden attacks. Also, there are a lot of contradictions among vampires, elves, dragons, dwarfs, and human beings. Greater conflicts may burst out if they are suppressed all the time. It's better this way. Since it's only a dream, they are free to unleash their hate however they want, and they'll be resurrected after they are dead."

Then, he smiled proudly. "Most of the power of Dream Aalto came from Prince Dracula, but my teacher, Stanis, my other classmates, and I are making our contributions. That's why I sensed your entrance and came to pick you up so quickly."

Fernando stared at his timid friend and discovered that he finally emanated his confidence. He sniffed and said, "I don't think your contributions are greater than a fingernail."

"That's right. I haven't advanced into the senior rank for long." Antec was actually quite proud of that. To become a senior-rank sorcerer was his childhood dream. As for the higher ranks, he did not even dare to dream about it back then.

Fernando clicked his tongue and focused his attention on the battle. The more he watched, the more shocked he was. He could not tell that the talents, abilities, and weapons of the vampire and the elf were fake at all. Even the aftermath of their battle was so real.

"This 'Real Dream' is not half as bad as I imagine," he admitted unwillingly.

Antec knew his friend's personality very well. He simply opened his mouth and chuckled.

Fernando was not angry about that. He suddenly remembered something else. "Dracula is in Aalto? Shouldn't he be in Tria or somewhere near Lance right now?"

Had the coalition army's counterattack been completely suppressed?

"A couple of days ago, Griffith became the new pope and was renamed Gregory. The same day, the five top legends, namely Prince Dracula, the primordial dragon of time, the elven queen, the Mother God of Earth, and the Master of the Boundless Ocean, as well as the Sun King, the Stellar Mentor, the Lord of Elements, the Tower scholars, the Master of Summoning, the Master of Transformation, the King of Devils, the Demigod-lich, the primordial red dragon, and Prince Sate and more than ten level-three experts, attacked Lance again. They were the greatest forces in the main plane except for the 'Mastermind' in the Dark Mountain Range." Antec was gloomy all of a sudden as he introduced the situation of the coalition army to his friend.

Same as the Sun King, the "Stellar Mentor" was no longer the legend who created the school of astrology.

"Was the Master of the Boundless Ocean involved too? And it still failed?" Fernando asked solemnly.

Antec nodded. "The master of the Boundless Ocean had to take part in the battle. If the Church won, the ocean would never be in peace. So, the nine sea generals as well as other sea forces attacked the Church's coast cities at the same time, stalling the saints, grand cardinals, and legendary knights. As for himself, he came to Lance in secret for the battle."

After a pause, he said rather sadly, “The Church was prepared for that. Also, Gregory showed the capabilities of a real demigod. Together with the help of the Angel King, Ivan, Rudolf, Felix, Hoffenberg, and Orvarit, they defeated us without any loss. If we had not retreated in time, many of us would’ve perished.”

“As strong as a demigod immediately after the succession... It seems that the new pope is a demigod whether or not the old pope died in advance because of God’s Arrival,” Fernando mumbled. It was certainly a harrowing fact. Then, he asked earnestly, “Did any top legend perish? Was ‘God’s Arrival’ used?”

Antec was in a better mood. “Well, the new pope did not perform God’s Arrival.”

“It seems that he has to get used to it before he can grasp God’s Arrival. Otherwise, he could’ve crushed the confidence of the coalition army by killing a top legend with God’s Arrival.” Fernando had always despised all the clerics, including the pope, believing that they could lose their strength as easily as they got it.

“Not necessarily,” Antec argued subconsciously. “If the pope kills another top legend with God’s Arrival, the rest of them will definitely be scared and work even harder to wipe out the threat. How many more times of God’s Arrival could the pope perform?”

“If they were all sorcerers of the empire, that’s a possibility, but Dracula, Danisos, the elven queen, the Mother God of the Earth, and the Master of the Boundless Ocean had their own conflicts. Some of them were even mortal enemies. Who would’ve sacrificed themselves to take the pope’s second ‘God’s Arrival’ so that other people could kill the pope when he was weakened?” Fernando pointed out Antec’s illusion quickly.

Antec stuck to his opinion. “It’s not up to them who was to be sacrificed, but the pope. If they were to back off, they would only be killed by the pope one after another in the future. They could only take their chances.”

“Hehe. How naive. The pope is still a demigod without God’s Arrival,” Fernando mocked before he looked at the sky. “Unless the Silver Moon recovers before the pope can use God’s Arrival again.”

“Yes. That’s the best scenario,” Antec said hopefully. “If there’s no choice, we’ll just...”

Then, he suddenly paused and looked ahead, as if he were attracted to the battle that was about to end.

“You’ll just what?” Fernando pursued in confusion. He realized that the sorcerers must’ve had their own plans too.

Antec chuckled. “We will retreat into the Dark Mountain Range. The environment is complicated there, and we won’t fear the Church anymore.”

“Hehe. A lying coward,” Fernando remarked briefly.

“Really. That’s really what I think,” Antec said sincerely.

Fernando revealed the fact mercilessly. “I don’t think other people think the same as you do. However complicated the Dark Mountain Range is, the Church will leave no place for you to hide in after it presses forward bit by bit.”

“Hehe. You will know it by then.” Antec kept it confidential. “Alright, I’ll lead you into the real Aalto, although it would be great to live in such dreams.”

“Don’t be addicted. The illusionists captivated by their own dreams will lose their minds sooner or later,” Fernando reminded him.

Antec nodded and did not say anything. He put his hand on Fernando’s shoulder as waves spread out of his body.

The scene before Fernando’s eyes suddenly shivered and blurred before it fell apart.

Darkness faded away, and Fernando saw sunlight again. The ancient Aalto City was right before his eyes. As it turned out, he hadn’t entered the gate yet.

Next to him, Antec surfaced, talking to him and leading him through the heavily-guarded gate, which was meant to prevent the special night watchers who were immune to dreams from entering the real Aalto.

The real Aalto was empty, without a single soul or any noise. It looked like a pale land of ghosts.

“Most people are sleeping.” Antec pointed at his head. “The food they eat in their dreams is from Prince Dracula’s power. It can directly fill their energy.”

“I don’t think ordinary people can live in such dreams for long,” Fernando said solemnly.

Antec nodded his head. “Three years at most. They are woken up on a regular basis to help their recovery. Well, Fernando, I want to ask you a favor...”

He suddenly stammered and blushed, unable to say anything after a long time.

“A coward who cannot even ask for a favor.” Fernando looked at him in despise.

As if he had been stimulated by that, Antec suddenly spoke fast, “Your transformation belt seems to be very effective. I cannot notice anything wrong at all. I’m hoping that you can pretend to be my date at a dinner. Those guys always laugh at me for not bringing a date.”

He said without any pause, almost unable to catch his breath.

“Poor lad.” Fernando eyed him up and down and finally observed with mixed feelings.

Antec was much more at ease after he proposed his request. He said with what he learned just now, “Aren’t you trying to attract a bunch of talented sorcerers? It will be easier if you appear as a beautiful lady.”

“Do you think all the talented sorcerers are male? I think a lot of female sorcerers will be into my current look. Of course, what matters more are our capabilities and our prospects,” Fernando said with contempt.

Antec pursed his lips. “However, the talented sorcerers in the dinner tonight are all males. Well, there are a dozen ladies with reasonable magic knowledge, but their leader likes girls. If you convince her, the other ladies will certainly follow you.”

“Fair enough.” Fernando nodded his head, feeling that he had been convinced. After all, he did not reject the transformation belt.

Seeing that Fernando was about to say yes, Antec suddenly became unconfident. “Would your transformation be seen through? Their eyes are all attached with certain magic effects.”

“It wouldn’t. I’ve modified this belt. After I use it, I will become a complete female in every body part. Even a legendary sorcerer could only tell that my body has been magically modified at most, but they can never tell what the transformation is from. However, there are still flaws. I cannot get pregnant...” Fernando introduced the belt and spoke of the matters related to it.

Antec was relieved. “That’s great.”

He had the common sense that taking off the transformation belt would not mean the loss of the magic effect. The way to use a magic item was through the pivot of spiritual power, not by putting it on, although it would accelerate the activation.

When he was proud that he finally had a date, Fernando suddenly said, “Wouldn’t it be very humiliating if your date flirts with other people right in your face?”

Antec was stunned. “Fair enough...”

Then, he hurried to say, “I think we’d better drop it.”

“No, I’m already interested in the party.” Fernando stared at the front.

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The sun was glowing like fire in the west, making the real Aalto even more like a graveyard. Except for the sorcerers who were watching the walls of the city in different areas, few people could be found on the street.

On the empty road, a wagon rode fast without raising any noises of hooves or wheels, as if it were an envoy from the Silent Hell.

The wagon was so quiet because it did not have any wheels. The four horses running ahead were all as hazy as if they were made of pale mist. However, an intense fire was burning on each of their heads, and two red spots were bouncing in their eyes.

“Is this the famous ‘nightmare’?” Inside the carriage where the window was half open, a magnetic and enthralling female voice echoed.

Antec’s magic robe had turned into a formal suit with a collar that reached the back of his head. It was quite fashionable, but he was very unused to it. He kept pulling different parts of the clothes, as if he had trouble catching his breath. “Yes, these are special horses that my teacher created. They can directly enter dreams. They are made by melting the ghost horse and ‘Dream Controllers’, a type of demon with special abilities.”

There were so many kinds of demons that even the most knowledgeable legendary sorcerer could not declare confidently that they could recognize all. Also, knowledge sharing was not a trend in the Magic Empire. Nobody would give away their knowledge without getting something important in return. Therefore, even though some kinds of demons had been discovered, it was possible that only a few people knew them. For example, Fernando had never heard of “Dream Controllers” before.

“Since ‘nightmare’ is dragging our wagon, is the party in a dream?” Fernando, who appeared as a gorgeous girl, was greatly enlightened.

Antec smiled dryly. “Not exactly. I borrowed it on purpose. Now that I have a date, I’d better be serious.”

“It seems that you are not entirely hopeless,” Fernando praised him in a unique manner. The red and bright eyes on his delicate and pretty face were as attractive as the flashes of lightning in a dark night.

Antec held his head high for a moment, but his back was soon hunched again. He sighed in grief. “It will only be more miserable when I am mocked later. ‘Look, the date that the idiot found through all the trouble and brought here with a nightmare has been stolen so easily. A loser is always a loser’.”

The latter half of his sentence was so vivid that he was obviously mimicking a companion who always laughed at him.

“It’s better than when you don’t have anyone to be stolen.” There was no telling whether Fernando was comforting him or mocking him.

Antec thought for a moment. “Fair enough... It’s good to make progress every time. After all, I have never dreamed to find a real date. After I become an archmage, I will have as many dates as I want in my dream.”

“Don’t mistake illusions for reality,” Fernando reminded his friend solemnly. After so many years, he realized that Antec seemed more and more addicted to dreams.

“Why can’t illusions be the reality? Why can’t dreams become a real world?” Antec was rather excited after suppressing himself for a long time. “It’s the wish of all the sorcerers of the school of illusions.”

“So, your highest achievement is to deceive yourself?” Fernando was much meaner than Antec.

Antec shook his head. “No, it’s not deception, but dreams really become reality...”

Before he finished, the “nightmare” already stopped. It was a gloomily-decorated villa ahead of him.

“We’re here. Hold that thought on illusions.” Antec pulled his collar again and walked out of the wagon. Then, he turned around, extended his hand, and helped “her” to get off according to the etiquette that Fernando taught him. Fernando was much more experienced than him in that aspect.

“There’s still hope in you.” Fernando nodded and took Antec’s hand with the professionalism of an actor. Since he was rather short, he was a good match for Antec who was slim and tall.

Antec immediately blushed, and his left hand moved unnaturally, as if he sensed certain firm and elastic parts below Fernando's neck.

"Are... Are... Are they real?" he stammered. His body was so tightened it appeared as if he had been attacked by a serpent.

Fernando said proudly, "Don't question my magic expertise. Even a legendary sorcerer couldn't have actualized such a perfect effect without my belt."

"But I still feel it is weird..." Antec led Fernando to the gate rigidly.

"Hehe. You don't even get to enjoy 'weird' on other occasions. Seize the opportunity," Fernando said with a brilliant smile.

Antec realized that Fernando's meanness was something that he could only look up to. So, he could only shut his mouth and climb the stairs.

"Do you think the demigod capabilities that Pope Gregory showed in Lance were real, or did he count on the divine power facilities in Lance?" Fernando suddenly asked something else.

"Huh, what?" Antec was not on the same "frequency" with Fernando at first. He wasn't back to himself until a while later. "I'm not clear, but according to my teacher, he was undoubtedly beyond the peak of legendary back then. However, he hasn't left Lance since the battle."

Fernando nodded his head before asking another question that Antec could barely follow. “Will Stanis be at the party tonight?”

It was a small party. Most of the participants were students of legends.

“Huh, what?” Antec expressed his confusion in the same way. He then said, “He’s not in Aalto recently. He’s out searching for materials.”

Many sorcerers had been gathered in the cities like Aalto, but materials would not follow them without a reason. So, sorcerers had been taking turns to leave the cities for forests and the Dark Mountain Range to collect resources. Some of them even went further into the north where gems were more abundant.

That gave the night watchers and the clerics an opportunity. Assassinations and sieges happened many times. The sorcerers, unwilling to swallow it, also set up traps and killed the personnel of the Church instead. So, although the cities were in peace, the areas around them had already become hot spots.

Some of them were traps trying to attract the legends to attack, but neither party secured great achievements.

Therefore, Stanis’ journey might be really meant for material collection, or it might just be a trap.

Fernando had learned a lot about the situation. He nodded. “I’ll talk about illusions and dreams with him after he’s back.”

“Alright. You can spend a few more days in Aalto so that you can look for the sorcerers who are talented and willing to go to Holm,” Antec said delightedly as Fernando was one of the only three real friends in his life.

Fernando grimaced. “Then, my nickname will become ‘Antec’s Humiliation’?”

“On second thought, I think you should go back as soon as possible... You’ve known the general situation after all.” Antec looked at his right hand sadly.

“Hehe. I need to know more about the details and collect the files of grand cardinals and legendary knights for future battles. So, I’m afraid that you have to be humiliated for a while,” Fernando said unconcernedly.

At this moment, the villa door was opened automatically, and a shrieking male voice echoed, “Hey, Antec, where did you find a date? Did you hire her from the ‘Pink Mill’?”

Sorcerers, dark knights, dwarfs, and ordinary people all have biophysical needs, so there was still room for prostitutes to survive, and “Pink Mill” was one of the places in the trade. Of course, they mostly provided their service in dreams.

“This is my good friend that I met in Rentato, Nando,” Antec introduced anxiously, fearing that other people realized that Fernando was a male.

Fernando said with a brilliant smile, “So, Antec does not have a girlfriend in Aalto.”

He sounded so pleased that Antec was almost stunned.

“Hehe. First of all, somebody needs to appreciate him...” The shrieking voice went away.

Antec secretly raised his thumb at Fernando, complimenting his performance. “He’s Beto. He likes to mock me most. His teacher is the Lord of Elements.”

...

In the villa, dozens of sorcerers, holding strange beverages, roamed in the hall. They were vaguely around four men and a woman.

Before the four men and the woman, a water curtain was floating and displaying the scene before the gate.

“Hehe. Antec turns out to have a female friend that he knows since childhood.” The shrieking voice was made by a man who had a mustache. He seemed angry at being embarrassed.

“Well, isn’t she pretty?” The woman, who was holding a strange drink, clicked her tongue. “Red eyes and red dress, bright and passionate, how appealing!”

She was tall and looked like a proper lady, but her words were unbelievably rude. However, those around her seemed to have already been used to it.

Beto sniffed. “Furan, it’s just a cheesy woman from the countryside, rude and stupid.”

He tried to speak evil of Fernando.

For the sorcerers of Antiffler, Holm was exactly a barbaric, underdeveloped village.

“However, you cannot deny that the countryside girls who are not corrupted by the luxuries of Antiffler and Tria are innocent and shy.” Furan, the beautiful girl, chuckled.

A gloomy, golden-haired man next to her snorted. “Are you planning to embarrass Antec? He’s also a legend’s student, and he is close to Stanis.”

“It’s all about our feelings toward one another. Why is it an embarrassment? Hey, just because you like me doesn’t mean you get to interfere with my life.” Furan scorned. She was just saying it randomly just now, but now that she was stopped, she was tempted to try in her anger.

The gloomy man closed his mouth, hoping that he could forget the pervert as quickly as possible.

Sensing something, Beto intentionally said, “That countryside girl has known Antec since childhood. Their bond must be strong. Furan, you wouldn’t succeed even if you try.”

“Is that so?” Furan knew that Beto was deliberately provoking her, but after seeing Fernando’s face on the water curtain, she still said, “Should we have a bet?”

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885 Who’s the Prey?

“What do you want to bet on?” Beto was very talented in magic and had always been his teacher’s favorite. However, he was also snarky and competitive for the same reason, and his social skills were no better than those of Antec, who only liked to hide in dark corners and manipulate dreams. So, he asked Furan, showing no lack of confidence.

Furan touched the sapphire brooch on her chest, and her white dress was dyed in dreamy colors by the hazy brightness. “Don’t you always like my ‘Mermaid’s Tear’? If I lose the bet, it will be yours.”

It was a level-eight senior-rank item. Even though Beto was a legend’s student, he couldn’t help but swallow hard. “Really?”

His teacher, the Lord of Elements, was good at alchemy, but he certainly did not create items for the students often.

Beto indeed had several senior-rank items, but none of them could compare to the brooch, Mermaid’s Tear. Not only did it boast powerful spells, but it could also significantly improve the effects of meditation and the performance of water element users. Beto had been yearning for the brooch for a long time!

However, Furan’s teacher was the famous “Stellar Mentor”. It was barely possible for him to steal it.

“Have I ever not fulfilled my words?” Furan was peaceful and beautiful, but she talked like a man.

“What if I lose?” Although he was delighted, as a sorcerer, Beto still asked cautiously.

Furan snorted. “You’re like a chick. So petty.”

“You!” Because of an accident in body modification, Beto’s voice was high and did not sound like a regular male. There was no way to heal it for now. So, he hated it most when other people mocked him for not being a man.

Furan combed her hair. She couldn’t have been more beautiful and charming when her ice fingers brushed on her soft black hair. She looked at the front and said, “If you lose, you will announce in the next meeting of our teachers that you love me.”

The legendary sorcerers who were close to each other had been meeting often to discuss the situation and exchange magic knowledge. Sometimes, they also brought their favorite students, both to show off and to broaden the students’ horizons.

Beto gasped hard. It would be very humiliating to announce that he loved Furan in front of so many legends. All of them were aware of Furan’s sexual orientation, but they did not really care about it.

“Then, I will decline you brutally.” Furan smiled brilliantly. “How about it? Do you want a bet? You should be better than the coward Antec, shouldn’t you?”

Stimulated by Furan, Beto snorted. “My humiliation in exchange for a level-eight item. The bet seems in my favor. Furan, are you so confident in yourself?”

“It’s just a countryside chick who hasn’t seen anything. She’s easy to be captured.” Furan sipped the strange beverage. She was glowing now that she found a target.

Dewey, a student of the Lord of Abyss, who had a crush on Furan, turned around and talked to a pair of twins, turning a blind eye to his two self-willed companions.

At this moment, the gate was opened, and Fernando walked in holding Antec’s arm.

Antec’s face was red, and his back was straight, perhaps due to his excitement, or maybe because it had been rigidified. In Beto’s eyes, he was just being cocky.

For the first time, Antec enjoyed the introduction part. “This is Beto, you’ve already met him. This is Furan. She’s the Stellar Mentor’s student, and she’s good at divinity.”

He was hinting Fernando to not cross the line in case Furan noticed anything.

“This is Dewey, the Lord of Abyss’ student. His body has been completely modified into an amalgamation of demons. Johnny and Kavins are twins. They are both the Demigod-lich’s students.” Antec introduced the central persons in the group.

Johnny and Kavins looked very familiar. They seemed to be only teenagers. Black-haired and black-eyed, they couldn’t have looked more innocent.

Fernando secretly crossed the names that Antec just introduced in his heart. They were all legends' students. It was unlikely that they would leave their teachers for Holm at such a moment. Therefore, he might as well pay attention to the sorcerers around who were talented but did not have a great background.

As the student of a legend, Antec only introduced the people who deserved his introduction. In the end, he pointed at Fernando and said, "This is Nando from Holm. She's a senior-rank sorcerer good at elemental spells."

"Is this your date or fiancée-to-be?" Furan suddenly interjected. Her voice was crisp and sweet, but her tone was not exactly expected of a lady.

Antec choked on his own saliva. Coughing for a moment, he said, "We grew up together..."

The indirect answer fitted his usual image very well, so nobody was suspicious. Johnny chuckled. "What a beautiful lady."

He appeared to be a boy, but his voice was old and coarse. A rotten soul seemed to be residing inside the elven body.

"Thank you." Fernando bowed with a brilliant smile intentionally, and as he expected, he caught Furan's glittering eyes.

After some chit chat, Fernando brought up a new topic. "I'm told that your teachers were all involved in the two battles of legends. I wonder, how is 'God's Guard' like exactly?"

As unworldly as I thought... Beto mocked in his heart and said, "God's Guard should be a space-time defensive spell. By twisting space and time, the target to be protected is placed in an intangible place. If the attacker does not understand the mystery of space and time, they cannot hit the target however powerful the attack is. At that time, my teacher..."

The intelligence of such an extent was not anything confidential in their circle. So, Beto, Johnny, and Furan added the things they learned from their respective teachers.

Fernando, on the other hand, listened so attentively that his red eyes glittered.

"Look, it's just a countryside chick. Innocent, naive, enthusiastic, and simple," Furan said to Beto in the telepathic bond with a smile.

Beto snorted. "However, it also means that she is conservative and not easy to seduce. Don't play tough."

"I always know how to deal with such inexperienced countryside chicks. All I need to do is to let her feel the strange happiness before she realizes it." Furan moved her fingers, as if she were in a great appetite.

"Don't lose your reputation," Beto said and thought that he could mock Antec even if he lost the bet.

Under Fernando's intentional direction, the details of the two legendary battles were extracted and saved in his head. Suddenly, Furan rose and stretched her arms gracefully and charmingly. "It's not fun to discuss those things at all. This is a party. We need to dance."

The moment she said that, the other female sorcerers who had been watching her immediately created warm melodies with magic.

She walked to Fernando with a smile, and with her eyes glittering, she said, “Nando, don’t hang around those boring men. Let’s go dance, shall we?”

Huh? Fernando did not expect Furan to be so active. He looked at Antec next to him subconsciously, which further convinced Furan, Beto, and the rest of them that he was a countryside chick who had never experienced anything before.

“I would like to invite your date to dance. I’m sure you are okay with that, aren’t you?” Furan looked at Antec with a faint smile.

Antec seemed scared of her. He nodded. “Of course.”

“Then, beautiful lady, let’s dance.” Furan took Fernando’s hand and ran to the center, bold and straightforwardly, not asking for Fernando’s permission at all.

Then, she grabbed Fernando’s waist, forcing him to dance right next to her.

“Are you not scared that Furan will steal your date?” Beto asked, grimacing.

Antec smiled in embarrassment. “Nando is not that kind of girl.”

The song was hot, and the two bodies that were next to each other were even hotter. Fernando had never experienced a female body in such a way before. His clumsiness made Furan giggle nonstop. Then, her mouth stopped next to Fernando’s ear, and she said in a low voice, “You are really beautiful!”

“So are you...” Fernando replied sincerely.

Then, he sensed a shivering ecstasy from his ear, as if he had been electrified. After that, his mouth was sealed by the pink lips.

Hehe. Very fresh, pure, and easy to provoke! Furan kissed and thought gloatingly.

Then, she sensed that Nando’s hands were holding her tightly and responded passionately.

I won!

She thought delightedly at first, but her libido was immediately ignited by the passionate beauty in her arms. She tried very hard to calm down and say, “Let’s go to my room.”

“Look at that!” Beto almost whistled. “Nando is not that kind of girl.”

He quoted Antec's words to mock the guy.

Blushing, Antec was more than angry. "Furan is also a girl. What's to be scared of?"

It remained to be seen who would suffer losses in this one!

"Haha." Beto laughed and thought that Antec had found the most terrible excuse. When was Furan a girl in their eyes?

"You'd better stay in your dreams as you usually do. You can always find a date there!" Beto scorned blatantly.

...

In the room, the dresses were all over the ground, and a weird smell occupied every inch of space.

On the bed, two naked bodies were entangled. One session was just over.

Furan touched Fernando's back and giggled. "I can sense your lack of experience. Is the euphoria unique and strange like you never had before?"

She was referring to Fernando's pureness.

“Yes, I did not expect it to feel like this,” Fernando admitted honestly. That was what a girl’s body felt like! It was truly different from a guy’s!

Furan smiled in satisfaction. The ecstasy of victory filled her with desires again. “Nando, did you mention that you came to Aalto to look for talented sorcerers?”

“Yes.” Fernando’s hands began to move subconsciously too.

“Haha. It’s useless. If we fail here, Holm will not end well either. Why bother taking risks there?” Furan said ambiguously. “Let’s continue our happiness!”

.....

On their way back, Antec looked at Fernando angrily. “Didn’t you score a bit too easily?”

It was a great humiliation for him!

“The feeling was great and fresh. I couldn’t stop.” Fernando had no intention to apologize. “She’ll come again tomorrow. She said that she would introduce to me a few sorcerers whose lives here haven’t been very good.”

“Furan is only into girls. If she learns of your real identity...” Antec tried to scare him.

Before he finished his sentence, he suddenly raised his head, sensing that Furan was approaching quickly. “Are you serious?! I was only talking!”

Furan stopped by the window. There was no lust on her innocent face anymore. She looked at Fernando very solemnly. “Has the Liege of Death recovered his capabilities?”

“Huh?” Fernando did not understand what she meant at all.

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Seeing Nando’s reaction, Furan reviewed what she did and decided that she was being too hasty. She had come straight after learning the message from another sorcerer on the road. It did not occur to her that it was impossible for Nando, who should have been away from Holm for a while, to learn the intelligence earlier than she did.

“Has anything happened?” After a brief moment of being stunned, Fernando immediately realized that new intelligence had been delivered from Holm to Rentato, so out of concern, he asked in a low voice. It was much easier for the legends to communicate than it was for the common sorcerers. For example, the two Excellencies of Cabin of Palmeira talked almost on a daily basis.

Keeping her right hand on the misty window of the nightmare wagon, Furan thought for a moment and believed that she could get more details from Nando. So, she smiled and said, “A while earlier, the Liege of Death killed ‘Graceful Angel’ Francois in the Radiance Church and destroyed the transmission circle. Such a terrifying outcome made people wonder if he had regained his top legendary capabilities. So, none of the legendary knights of Holm dared to come out again, and the new pope had to send the Sword of Truth back with two saints.”

After a brief pause, she said, “In such a way, the pressure we suffer has been greatly reduced. We’ll be on the winning side if Gregory does not leave Lance.”

“What? The Graceful Angel was killed in the Radiance Church?” Antec exclaimed in surprise before Fernando said anything. With the support of the divine power circles of the cathedral, Saint Francois could have resisted a top legend for a while. Had the Liege of Death approached the demigod level after his resurrection? Even if he didn’t, he had to have returned to his peak in the past, hadn’t he?

Fernando also found it hard to believe. He had only been away for half a month, and why had the situation changed so fast? The organization was keeping a low profile after attacking Kritonia and Alfonsol, but how was the highest leader of the Church in Holm killed all of a sudden?

Suddenly, he realized that a secret agreement had to have been reached in the battle against Kritonia. The targets of the Liege of Death and the old fox included not just the Heart of Time but also the Graceful Angel. They intended to create chaos and cooperate with this side.

Looking at Fernando’s changing expression, Furan thought of something. “Do you know what is going on?”

“I’m not sure. It’s been half a month since I left Rentato. The Graceful Angel was still as alive as ever back then.” Fernando did not propose his speculation.

Furan also did not think that a seventh-circle sorcerer who did not have a notable background could know that. So, she nodded, “Do you know anything else about the Liege of Death?”

“Earlier, our Union attacked the Heart of Time together with the Liege of Death.” Fernando felt that it was necessary for him to raise some valuable intelligence in case he was underestimated.

Furan chuckled. “Wasn’t it the Witch of Iceland and the Eye of Curse?”

Yours is just a wretched group without even a legend. Stop overselling yourself.

“I was there.” Not in a good mood, Fernando said straightforwardly.

“What?” Antec was even more surprised than Furan.

Furan did not lose her calmness now that Antec shouted out his surprise. She smiled thoughtfully and asked, “Nando, can you tell me the details?”

Her eyes were wet and full of charm. Although the Lord of Frigidity would inform the legends of the coalition army of the major events, he was not close to the Stellar Mentor and certainly would not tell him all the details.

Fernando did not intend to hide in the first place. He told the basic story and concluded, “... At that time, the Liege of Death behaved as a level-three legend; otherwise, Kritonia wouldn’t have escaped.”

As for whether or not the Liege of Death was pretending, he was not certain.

Furan listened quietly and asked about the details now and then. In the end, she nodded. “Your intelligence is very valuable.”

Suddenly, her face was rigid, and she sounded old. “Little girl, we are interested in what you said. We hope that you can come to my demiplane.”

“Yes, Your Excellency.” Fernando was stunned before he suddenly realized who the person who had just controlled Furan’s body was. In Aalto, only the Stellar Mentor could have done that without causing a conflict.

Furan shivered hard and looked around in confusion. Then, she rubbed her head and said, “Did my teacher invite you just now?”

“Yes.” Fernando respected the legends for their strength, but he was not intimidated by them. He seemed rather calm.

Furan smiled like the peaceful moonlight at night, which was entirely different from her usual look. Not only was Antec, a rookie, lost in it, but even Fernando was also rather amazed.

“For our teacher and for us, the issue about the Liege of Death is one of the most important things.” Furan smiled.

Damn! This chick has combined illusion, divinity, and her own vibe so perfectly? Fernando struggled to move his eyes away from Furan’s face, speculating that she was using illusion. In the meantime, he smiled. “I know that Prince Dracula, the primordial dragon of time, the elven queen, the Mother God of the Earth, and the Master of the Boundless Ocean are not sorcerers.”

Even though there were plenty of legends among them, the sorcerers were actually playing a supportive role in the war and could not decide their fate. At such a moment, the “Liege of Death” who had recovered his strength was like a gift from the Goddess of Fortune!

Furan was briefly stunned, not expecting Nando to be unaffected by herself. She smiled and thought that the countryside girl had a lot of potentials!

After only one moment, she had a new understanding and more interest in Nando than physical ones.

“You are very smart.” Furan touched Fernando’s face with her right hand. “Let’s go to my teacher’s demiplane now.”

It was not until the two of them were melted into the mist that Antec was back to himself. He sighed. “Furan is only into girls. Should I borrow the transformation belt from Fernando for my use? No, she knows that I am a man.”

He turned to the mist and said enviously, “Fernando was involved in such an important matter. It’s so much better than staying in Aalto and helping with the maintenance of the dreams...”

.....

In the demiplane of “Starry Ocean”, none of the legendary sorcerers revealed their real appearances, but only affected the space and showed unusual phenomena. For example, on Fernando’s left side was a scorching fireball that felt like the sun, and on his right was a weird pattern made of the four main elements.

In their eyes, Fernando, who was not even an archmage, was not qualified to meet them at all. They wouldn't have bothered to talk to him had it not been for the Liege of Death. That was the pride of legends of the Magic Empire.

"That's all I know." Fernando described the event in greater detail and stressed the old fox's role, but he did not mention Douglas' whys and his current research.

Right before him, the brilliant stars swirled and constituted into a fateful nebula. From the nebula, an old but clear voice said, "It's much more valuable than I imagined."

The Stellar Mentor was much more polite than the other legends, but he did not mention what the specific value was.

"I know why you've come to Aalto. We won't stop you from taking sorcerers away with you. There are indeed too many people here." The Stellar Mentor showed their attitude on behalf of other people.

Fernando was secretly relieved. That was the purpose of his intentional leakage. Although it was not important for the legends that he was persuading the talented sorcerers to leave, it was still possible that some of them would turn him into an experimental material someday when they were in a foul mood. Now that he had the endorsement of the Stellar Mentor, there would be no problem. His divinity told him that the Stellar Mentor would have accepted his request, but he did not expect that the guy would mention it before he asked.

Although he was impatient and mean, Fernando was not a reckless man. He had thought of and perfected most of the details.

After Fernando left, the nebula asked the twisting darkness nearby, "Did you notice anything?"

The darkness was vaguely showing the scenery of the abyss.

“There are signs of body modification, and she lacks the unique feminine qualities.” Natravos, the Lord of Abyss, was one of the best experts in body modification, only slightly secondary to Viken, the King of Calamities who once stood at the cutting edge of the field.

“Do you mean that she might not be a female?” the Stellar Mentor asked.

“It’s a possibility.” Natravos grinned hideously. “If you don’t mind, I can give her a test. Such a violent girl fits my appetite very well.”

“Forget it. We cannot afford any accidents right now. She’s a Red Eye noble of the Asso Empire, and she may be related to the Liege of Death.” The Stellar Mentor shook his head and thought of his student. However, he soon forgot about such trivia.

The Sun King said loudly, “Does she deserve any attention? Are you too idle? There are so many important things to do!”

Therefore, the Starry Ocean regained the everlasting peace, and the minds of the legends communicated and sparkled.

.....

In the days that followed, Fernando and Furan had a great time on the bed. Also, thanks to her introduction and Antec's, he made friends with quite a lot of sorcerers who had potentials but could not improve in cities like Aalto due to the insufficiency of resources. The few female sorcerers that Furan introduced were particularly remarkable.

Those sorcerers were not very happy to leave at first. After all, many companions had been gathered here, and it was easy for them to exchange knowledge here as they were in Antiffler. However, after learning that the Liege of Death had "regained" his capabilities and did something great, they began to feel that the prospects of Holm were promising and changed their mind.

One day, Furan told Fernando that there was an elemental sorcerer in Holsava, a city to the north of Aalto, who hadn't been doing very well. His name was Tuck. His talents were rather impressive, but he had been ostracized after pissing off Beto and was forced to live in Holsava City instead of Aalto.

Fernando immediately went there. Furan, however, was delayed by something else and was not with him for a couple of days.

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"Are you saying that Tuck has moved away?" "Nando", who now carried feminine charm, asked a middle-aged woman.

Because it was near the mines, the sky of Holsava City was covered by dust all year around, which made it dim and gray. He was now at the center of a dark valley, where the architectural style was more inclined to the mysteriousness and grimness that sorcerers preferred.

The middle-aged woman that Fernando asked was an ordinary person. She wavered and replied, "Yes, Mr. Sorcerer. Tuck moved away a month ago."

The reverence and fear for sorcerers had been etched to the blood of the civilians of the Magic Empire.

Fernando looked around. The buildings here were mottled and heavy, with the traces of aging everywhere. Realizing that Tuck did not seem to have enjoyed his life in this place, he went on to ask, “Do you know where he moved to? Exactly how many years ago did he move out?”

The middle-aged woman thought in fear for a moment before replying, “Mr. Sorcerer, I remember clearly that it rained hard that day. It was exactly the middle of the last month.”

As a matter of fact, the sorcerers had a detailed and complicated regulation on years, months, and days, such as the Year of Winter, the Month of Bronze, and Day Thanos. However, it was impossible for ordinary people to remember those things. They mostly still referred to the months with their original names in the common tongue.

Fernando nodded. The magic he secretly performed told him that her words were trustworthy and without interference. The middle-aged woman was also not secretly a senior-rank sorcerer, which he had already confirmed.

The middle-aged woman was more or less relieved seeing the beautiful girl before him nodding her head. She was much more smooth when she said, “Mr. Tuck is a sorcerer who does not like talking. He mostly hid in his room for experiments every day. However, a few days before he moved out, when I ran into him in the lobby, I heard him talking about ‘Kufuray’, ‘my new life will begin there’, etc.”

She had been a civilian in the neighborhood until she was hired by Tuck as his servant.

“Kufuray...” Fernando repeated the name and soon found the corresponding place in the map in his memories. It was a city to the northwest of Aalto on the border between the territory of sorcerers and that of a dozen heretic churches that were against the Saint Truth. There weren't abundant mines and unique resources in the city.

Why did Tuck go to that city? Fernando was puzzled.

Then, he performed divinity, and after making sure that there were no obvious dangers, he decided to go there and take a look. He could also observe the heretic churches by the way. He had always been curious about the gods' forms of existence and the reason why the Church was preaching about faith. It was a pity that the Saint Truth was too powerful in Holm for him to observe and study. Now that he had come to Aalto, he might as well take a look at it by the way.

After his wish was fulfilled, he would return to Aalto and go back to Holm with the newly-recruited sorcerers.

Furan is one hot chick. It's a shame that I can't spend more time with her, Fernando thought regretfully before he chuckled to himself. However, she will definitely go crazy if she learns my real identity. It's not bad to leave as soon as possible.

Now that the Liege of Death had raised the attention of the legends, their communication with Holm would definitely be more frequent. So, it would be a disaster if the old fox accidentally revealed that the envoy he sent was a guy named Fernando.

...

Kufuray City was a business city in the Magic Empire. It had a huge population and was significantly more prosperous than the mining city Holsava.

The sun was high. Fernando observed the city from the sky. Pedestrians walked like ants, and towers rose high intimidatingly. There was nothing wrong.

He descended and landed out of the city, not attempting to challenge the defense circles of the city. Then, with the credentials that Furan gave him, he passed the gate.

The moment he entered the city, Fernando felt that the bright sunlight was dimmed, as if he had come to a cold and obscure forest.

“The magic circles of this city have been kept running at such a level?” Fernando speculated.

On the street, the residents of Kufuray seemed familiar with each other. Fernando saw many people in groups of ten discussing something in a low voice.

“What’s happening?” Fernando thought warily. He cast a spell of distraction and approached them.

“Don’t forget to go to the priest tonight. He will pray for us.”

“I will. I have to repent.”

...

Similar words entered Fernando's ears. There was nothing that deserved his attention.

Fernando sniffed. "It seems that the heretic churches have developed new followers here. Hehe. It's better than believing in the Saint Truth."

He listened to another few groups and found nothing strange. So, he went to the Office of Sorcerers at the center of the city and asked about Tuck. According to the rules of the Magic Empire, only if the sorcerers were registered in the local office could they enjoy the privileges, including subsidies, of the sorcerers.

Very soon, he left the office in satisfaction. Tuck was indeed here.

And I was worried that he might've lost his mind and run loose.

Fernando thought to himself and walked to 24, Right Angle Street according to the file. It was the residence that Tuck was given.

The Right Angle Street was near the city wall. It was as lackluster as Holsava City in the dust. The buildings here were also grim and ragged, as if they hadn't been repaired for a long time. Sorcerers never bothered to waste their time on the houses other than their magic towers. According to them, the civilians they raised were exactly for such things!

"Tuck is ostracized in this place too? But he hasn't been here for long," Fernando murmured, suspecting that it was Beto's influence.

Of course, he didn't think that Beto did it directly, or Tuck would have gone missing. However, Beto's dislike would be spread out from his circle and his followers to other cities, and somebody would try to please him.

Dum, dum, dum.

Fernando stopped before a two-floored villa and knocked on the door.

The villa was so old that it did not even have a common magic doorbell.

After a few knocks, there was no response at all, not even a magic pet or an alchemical puppet.

"Tuck is not here?" Fernando mumbled. What bad luck.

He tried knocking again, with a greater force to create bigger noises.

Dum, dum. Squeak...

After Fernando's movement, the door of the room was slowly opened. It was not really closed at all.

Fernando vaguely sensed that something was not right, but then he realized that Tuck was only a sorcerer who just rose to the senior rank. So, he boldly released the Secret Eye and investigated every corner with it.

The desks and chairs in the house had a thin layer of dust. There was not a living soul both upstairs and downstairs. There wasn't a secret room either.

"Notes in the library, and materials in the laboratory... Did Tuck leave in a hurry when he was preparing for an experiment?" Fernando speculated according to the feedback of the Secret Eye. "It's also possible that he did not leave but went missing..."

Otherwise, a sorcerer wouldn't have left his notes in the library instead of carrying it with him.

It puzzled Fernando. The guy who made Tuck disappear didn't take away the notebook? Why? That was a sorcerer's most valuable treasure!

His confusion brewed. After confirming that there was no danger, Fernando entered the study and decided to find clues from Tuck's notes.

"Earth, fire, wind, and water. I'm so sick of the four elements and cannot understand the content behind at all.

"Maybe I should try studying the mysteries of gods! All the churches have so many experts and fake gods. It means that the secrets of power and immortality must be behind it..."

“The thing that I accidentally obtained seems related to the mysteries of gods. However, I cannot study it due to the lack of materials...

“I’m told that some heretic churches are preaching in Kufuray City, which still belongs to the sorcerers. This is truly a gift from the Goddess of Fortune.

“My new life will begin here!”

It was more like Tuck’s journal than a real magic notebook. Fernando was less puzzled. If the guy had left in a hurry, it was not entirely necessary to bring the notebook.

“Something is not right!”

Suddenly, a few words that were obviously written in a haste entered Fernando’s eyes. He could almost sense the fear in them.

“What did Tuck find?”

Fernando’s relief was gone. At this moment, he heard footsteps coming from the gate!

...

“Where are you hiding Nando? She’s supposed to be back the day before yesterday!” Furan came and questioned Antec.

Antec couldn’t be more innocent. “How would I know? I don’t even know where you sent her.”

“Hehe. If I know you’ve done anything bad because of jealousy, I’ll feed you to the nightmare in person!” Furan observed carefully and felt that Antec was not lying. In the end, she said, “That’s strange. It takes only half a day to travel between Holsava and this place. Why is she still not here?”

“What’s she doing in Holsava?” Antec asked curiously.

Thinking about other things, Furan answered casually, “I asked her to go and find Tuck. Although Tuck is not very likable, he’s still...”

Antec stood up all of a sudden. He was shocked. “Tuck? Wasn’t he allured to Kufuray by Beto with a trick?”

“What? Kufuray?” Furan was also shocked.

“This is bad. Nando hasn’t followed him there, has she?” Antec walked to Furan anxiously.

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888 Mysterious Kufuray City

Fernando grabbed the notebook and cast “Advanced Stealth” on himself, disappearing from the study. He listened to the coming footsteps quietly.

One, two, three... More and more people were coming to the gate.

“Why are there so many people? Why are they so stealthy?” Fernando created spying eyes and dispersed them in order to monitor the whole house. Although the spell had a range limitation, everything in Tuck’s house was still under watch because it was old and small.

In a corner, a crystal ball suddenly glittered and displayed what was in the hall. Even Advanced Stealth could not cover such an effect.

In the hall, the men and women in plain clothes walked lightly like ghosts, as if they feared that they might wake up the owner of the house.

There were about a dozen of them. They dispersed around a creepy-looking man at the center.

The man had scarlet thin hair, a protruding forehead, broken eyebrow, half-missing nose, rolling lips, and eyes that only had whites left. He was so unnaturally hideous that he looked like a doll that a naughty kid stitched on their own, or a monster that would only appear in the illogical dreams.

He looked at the ceiling with his blinded eyes, and his ears, which seemed to have been bitten by dogs, slightly shivered. After the dozen strangers stopped at their respective positions, he suddenly opened his mouth and said, “God saves the people.”

His voice was not as ugly as he looked. It was distant and intimidating, as if it came from the infinite heights.

“God, please save us.” The men and women held their arms and slowly leaned forward in a weird posture.

Continuing the previous tone, the man said gravely, “Everybody suffers and pays for their sins after they are born. Everybody endures hunger, trauma, jealousy, and betrayal without one day of happiness. They can barely catch their breath under the infinite pressure. Also, nobody can escape death in the end. They can only walk toward their doom in fear.

“However, God tells us that death is eternal, peaceful, and devoid of miseries and pains. Faced with death, we must thank God for His grace so that we do not need to sink in this filthy and disgusting world anymore...”

As he went on, the hall was covered in a tranquilizing and alluring atmosphere. The dozen men and women listened attentively and seemed to have understood the truth of death.

“Is a heretic church that believes in the God of Death preaching here?” Fernando basically realized what was going on in the hall through the spying eye.

Since this city had been infiltrated by the heretic churches, such a condition should be perfectly normal.

The moment the idea popped up, he suddenly sensed that something was not right. “But why are they holding a ritual in Tuck’s house? Did they know that Tuck’s house was empty?”

With puzzles rising up, Fernando identified the people carefully and did not find Tuck who attempted to study faith. Furan had created an image of Tuck with her memories so that it would be easier for him to find.

“That’s odd. Are they related to Tuck’s ‘disappearance’?” Fernando observed those “believers” even more carefully.

“As long as we earn the grace of God, we will enjoy painless immortality in death...” The priest suddenly raised his voice and his right hand.

After he raised his right hand, the dozen men and women rose from the ground and danced a weird dance that Fernando had never seen before. Their postures were so weird that they did not seem to worry about joint damages or pain at all.

“It’s not like a regular religious ritual...” Fernando knew a thing or two about that. “Are the believers of the God of Death so special?”

As the dance grew weirder and weirder, the atmosphere in the hall became chaotic. They all took off their clothes and crawled before the priest.

The priest put down his right hand, but there was now a sharp dagger that emitted cold brilliance in it.

Fernando thought that the priest would reap the lives of the believers to please the God of Death, but the priest rolled his right hand and stabbed the dagger into his own chest. Blood immediately spurted out.

“Huh?” Fernando was completely stunned. He knew a lot of sacrificial rituals, but none of them required the suicide of the host first!

Blood dripped on the filthy floor. A man on the ground, as if summoned by God, suddenly extended his tongue and licked the blood.

Then, with obscure noises from his throat, he lunged at the collapsing priest like a wolf and bit the priest’s neck brutally, tearing off a cluster of flesh and swallowing it in a hurry.

The rest of the followers also went crazy. They jumped at the priest, gnawed at his flesh, and chewed it in the most reverential way.

Fernando felt uncontrollably nauseated as he watched the blood, skin, and broken flesh on the believers’ mouths. He had studied necromancy before, but he had never seen such a disgusting scene before.

A lot of blood was wasted when they crazily competed for food. It was gathered below the corpse into a pool.

The blood in the pool was suddenly vaporized, creating a hazy mist of blood everywhere.

In the mist of blood, a face was crawling out crazily.

The redness was fixed to the face tightly as if it were a veil. Only the rising parts, such as eyeballs, nose, and mouth, could be seen, which made the face unbelievably creepy.

The man shouted hoarsely, “Help me!”

Startled by the voice, Fernando shivered hard, and the drowsiness that came into being at some point left his body.

It was not until this moment that he realized that the priest was still reciting the prayer and the believers were still dancing in the crystal ball.

“What happened to me just now?” Fernando asked himself subconsciously. He soon realized that he was affected by illusions and entered a dream without him realizing it!

He looked around warily and thought to himself, It’s at least a senior-rank sorcerer, if not an archmage, who put me into a dream through the previous scene. What exactly does he want?

Then, he thought in shock, Was the archmage who created the dream the one who cried for help? He created the dream just to send a distress call?

Fernando did not rush out to investigate the dozen heretic believers. The caller asked for help in such a way was obviously to avoid certain surveillance. If he were to take action recklessly, something might happen to him.

“Is the man in trouble caged? No, if he is caged, his leaking strength couldn’t have affected me at all unless he is above legendary, in which case whoever cages him is too much for me to deal with. If he is not caged but hiding somewhere in the city, it must be at least a level-nine expert who has put an archmage into such difficulties. The guy may be around...

“Such a method is obviously sorcery. Then, why doesn’t he just ask for help from the Office of Sorcerers, which can reach out to Aalto? Maybe the Office of Sorcerers is secretly monitored by the expert, or maybe the people in the Office of Sorcerers have betrayed or been replaced...

“So, will the expert in the dark allow people to leave Kufuray City and get help for the sorcerer?”

Fernando shook his head firmly. It couldn’t happen. Maybe he would be captured and killed as long as he attempted to leave the city.

At this moment, the dancing and praying believers slowed down. The ritual tonight seemed to have come to an end.

Fernando looked at the scene; his eyes unfocused. One thought suddenly flashed in his mind. “Is ‘the guy in need’ doing this on purpose so that I’ll be too intimidated to leave Kufuray and can only disappear like Tuck?”

He was very smart and therefore came up with a lot of possibilities. Hesitating, he did not know which one he should believe.

However, since he remembered Tuck, he brought out the notebook and read the following records.

“The ritual here is too weird. It is very different from what I know...

“The more I study the church that secretly develops in this place, the more scared I am. What are they exactly?

“No. Why have I never seen anyone leave the city? Why do the people who bring water and food return at the gate and never enter the city?

“I need to get out of here!”

After the scribble was hopeless blankness.

“Does everybody know that it is impossible to leave the city?” Fernando was even more perplexed.

Inside the crystal ball, the believers stopped praying and were ready to leave under the priest’s instruction.

Having a eureka, Fernando blinked to the hall and shouted, “Who are you? Why are you trespassing on Tuck’s house?”

Since he was here for Tuck, he had to behave like he was searching for Tuck. That was the best way for him to buy himself more time without raising attention and doubts!

The priest who was as hideous as a monster replied solemnly and honestly, “We have been invited by Tuck.”

“Tuck invited you to come here?” Fernando was slightly stunned, not expecting such an answer.

.....

With the credentials that their teachers gave them, Furan and Antec flew toward Kufuray City quickly.

“Right, whose turn is it to watch over the place right now?” Antec did not pay much attention to it before.

Furan thought for a moment and said, “His Excellency the Original Fire.”

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889 Tracing the Source

The priest, which looked like a stitched monster, looked at Fernando with his hollow eyes that did not have pupils. “He has offered this house to the great God.”

“Where is he now?” Fernando asked solemnly, feeling that it was getting weirder and weirder. Wasn’t Tuck planning to escape this place? How did he become the believer of an evil god all of a sudden?

Had he been completely twisted by the evil god’s priest, or even the evil god himself, into a selfless “contributor”?

The priest sounded as calm as before as he said, “He’s in the temple.”

“I’m his friend. I’m here for him. I would like you to bring me to meet him in the temple.” Fernando had been unwilling to risk going to the nest of those believers whose behaviors were weird, but logically speaking, he was here for Tuck, and he could have asked for help from the Office of Sorcerers in case of any danger. If he did not go, it was very possible that the mysterious hunter would notice some anomaly.

Of course, Fernando knew very well in his heart that this city might not be under the control of sorcerers anymore. He inferred it based on the cry for help.

The priest slowly moved forward and circumvented Fernando as if he could see. “Follow me, paranoid sorcerer. You will sense the almightiness of God after you come to the temple. You will know that Tuck has chosen a better path with his heart.”

He’s not stopping me? Having no time to think, Fernando walked out of the villa with the priest.

It was already late at night. The silver moon was hazy, and darkness was everywhere in the city. Few lights could be seen.

Following the priest unhurriedly, Fernando analyzed the whole thing. “A sorcerer somehow became an evil god’s believer after leaving such notes, the whole city has been blocked, and someone delivers water and food regularly... Are the sorcerers secretly doing something based on this city, or have some believers of the evil god infiltrated Kufuray and controlled it bit by bit?”

It was not difficult to come up with the two possibilities because the place was in the territory of the sorcerers after all. It was next to the churches of the other gods but beyond the reach of the dark creatures, elves, dwarfs, or the Saint Truth. The first possibility could also mean the cooperation with the evil god.

He weighed the two possibilities, hoping to figure out the situation and find a way of survival. Based on the fact that it was a sorcerer who cried for help, the second possibility seemed more likely.

The priest in the lead walked to the market area and opened one of the stores.

Many goods were placed behind the door. There was nothing special. The blind priest passed the messy place agilely without bumping into anything.

At the center of the store, stone stairs led to the basement, where bright and yellow light was leaking out.

Kufuray has such underground chambers too. No wonder the archmage can hide and ask for help. Fernando thought to himself. Then, he frowned and sensed the contradictions. “As I inferred before, the mysterious hunter must be at least a level-nine expert, or he couldn’t have forced an archmage who is capable of putting me into a dream to stay here.

“Would such an expert secretly investigate after knowing that his enemy is hiding in the city, or would he simply erase the city with his strongest attack?”

Fernando believed that none of the experts in this age had the kindness to care about other people’s lives. They would certainly do whatever it took to accomplish the mission as soon as possible in case the enemy’s reinforcements came. So, how could the expert have decided to play hide-and-seek with the archmage in Kufuray? Was he not scared that a legend would pass by the place by accident?

It was obvious that the most effective approach was to destroy the city with thunderous attacks so that the archmage would be forced out or killed in his shelter. Whatever protection he was under, when an attack that was powerful enough to destroy the city arrived, the magic effects would definitely be triggered, and he would be discovered as a result.

There was another possibility, which was that the method of hiding involved the deep mysteries of time and space. However, an archmage was apparently incapable of that. If it was naturally formed, he could have stayed in the shelter peacefully without asking for help in a hurry.

More importantly, this place was not close to Aalto. Whatever happened, as long as the Office of Sorcerers was destroyed in the very beginning, nobody would notice anything wrong in ten minutes.

“Therefore, it’s not that the mysterious hunter does not want to demolish the city, but his certain concerns prevent him from choosing such a radical approach. He is forced to play hide-and-seek with the archmage...”

Inferring the enemy’s thoughts from their action, Fernando sensed more and more “truth”. “Either the evil god in this place is beyond level nine and terrifies him, or it is this!”

Based on his previous speculation, Fernando believed that he had already seen through the mist!

“If the evil god has reached the level of legendary, the sorcerers would definitely be willing to cooperate with him in such a situation as long as he is willing to. He will be given a territory for his preaching. There’s no need to be so stealthy at all...

“Also, something has happened to many sorcerers in this place. Even though the enemy can fake voices and mails, there are always irrecoverable loopholes, like the people who deliver food and water but do not enter the city, and the source of the food and water... In such an intense situation, it can hardly escape the attention of the sorcerers in Aalto...

“Therefore, this place can only be a secret laboratory of the legends of Aalto! Only they can separate a city within their territory from the outside world without causing any suspicion! Only they can mobilize a large batch of food without raising any attention!

“That’s why the mysterious hunter did not destroy the city immediately, which would’ve attracted the legends!”

The mist before him gradually dispersed, and the situation was manifested before Fernando’s eyes. However, he was even more stunned after he figured out the truth.

“We’re here.” The priest’s old and rigid voice echoed next to Fernando’s ears.

He trembled and woke up from his thoughts, only to discover that he had finished walking down the stairs without him knowing it. He was standing in the middle of a temple that was fully engraved with patterns of death.

In the temple, many people were praying on their knees. Their genders and ages varied.

“Tuck.” Before his God, the priest’s voice became low.

A man in an old black jacket moved backward to the priest and Fernando. He did not stand up and was purely moving on his knees.

It was not until he left the praying mass that he finally turned around and looked at Fernando.
“Who are you?”

His eyes were lost and dirty.

Fernando identified that it was the real Tuck. He said solemnly, “I’m hiring a batch of talented sorcerers, and Furan recommended you.”

He specifically mentioned Furan and hid the information about Holm, hoping that whoever was behind it could be scared. Although it was highly unlikely, it was still worth trying.

“Hehe. Talented sorcerers...” Tuck stressed “sorcerers” before he said peacefully, “I’ve understood the real significance of my life. I will never study the boring magic anymore.”

“Is that so? I’m very sorry.” Fernando gave a polite and normal answer.

As a matter of fact, if anyone familiar with him were here, they would've noticed his strangeness immediately. How could the roarer not have spat on Tuck's face and lambasted faith and god.

At this moment, tides were surging in Fernando's heart, not because of Tuck, but because he had seen the truth of the whole thing!

"This issue can be divided into two parts. At first, the sorcerers were studying something with this cult. They blocked the city and forbade everyone from leaving for that purpose. Then, an archmage was hunted by someone and hid in a shelter in the city. He put me into a dream through a ritual and asked for my help.

"Then, the problem can't be more obvious now. Both the archmage and his hunter are certainly aware of the specialties of this place. Otherwise, someone would've tried to destroy the city, and they would've been killed by the legends.

"Then, would a city that is under the control of sorcerers watch an archmage be hunted without doing anything? Even though the archmage felt that the sorcerers in this place had been controlled by the mysterious hunter, he could have caused trouble and attracted the legend who monitored this place. But he didn't do that!

"Also, can a secret research base of sorcerers, which has blocked a city with great resources, be controlled so easily?

"It's only possible if the legend who monitors this place is on the same side with the mysterious hunter. Or rather, the legend may be the mysterious hunter!

"That's why the archmage, who sensed something wrong from a certain channel, did not ask for help. That's why places like the Office of Sorcerers were easily controlled, because they had been under control in the first place.

“The legend hasn’t resorted to any powerful approaches probably because many other legends are still watching over this place. He doesn’t dare to cause too much noise!”

Although he did not understand the reason behind the situation, or whether he had been involved in an internal strife, Fernando had no time to think about that right now. He only felt that his blood was freezing. Did he have to challenge a legend now?

He did not wait for Antec and Furan to look for himself who had gone missing, because the legend would definitely kill him before they did. After all, it was the rule that many legends made up together—entering Kufuray was allowed, but exiting it was not!

Tuck nodded and returned to the praying team. Fernando thanked the priest mechanically and walked out.

“How can I save myself?” Fernando thought hard but could not come up with a way to escape a legend.

When he walked on the street under the chilling moonlight, Fernando felt refreshed and decided to consider the problem from the perspective of the caged archmage.

“Since the issue here has something to do with the legendary supervisor, it was a rather risky move that the archmage put me into a dream. Also, there wasn’t any clue in Tuck’s notes at all. It means that he asked for my help because he believed it was hopeful. It was not a random or desperate choice.

“Then, where does the hope lie exactly? Is it my wisdom, my magic abilities, or something else?”

Throne of Magical Arcana

890 Risk

Under the moonlight, Fernando walked to Tuck's ragged house, trying to consider from the perspective of the trapped archmage.

"First of all, he has to choose his rescuer cautiously. If he asks for the help of a random sorcerer in the city, it's very likely that he will expose his traces. After all, not everybody can figure out the real situation as I can. One moment of carelessness, and he will be discovered by the mysterious hunter or the supervising legend."

It was something that Fernando confirmed at the beginning. For the trapped archmage, there were few opportunities for survival. He could not afford to waste any of them.

"Why did he choose me over Tuck or any other sorcerers? How am I different from them?"

Fernando believed that he certainly had advantages that could let the trapped archmage escape. That was why the archmage chose him and entered his dream to ask for help. He intended to find out the specific advances to decide his operation plan.

Fernando was both scared and excited when he realized that his opponent was a legend. His brain was much more active than usual.

"I am a seventh-circle senior-rank sorcerer, and Tuck is a sixth-circle one. The gap is not huge. I don't have obvious advantages. Besides, I never used any senior-rank spells in Kufuray City. It's certainly impossible for the trapped archmage to figure out my real capabilities, which means that my strength is not the reason why he chooses me. Well, faced with a legendary sorcerer, the strength of the senior rank matters little.

“My wisdom? I’m from Holm. Even if the trapped archmage knows me, he certainly does not know if I am a quick thinker.”

To be honest, Fernando had basically guessed who the trapped archmage was. Few ninth-circle archmages could put him into dreams after they were heavily wounded, and even fewer could hide right under the nose of a legendary sorcerer. There weren’t many archmages who were so good at dreams either. Only one archmage met all the conditions, which was Stanis, Antec’s classmate whose cognitive world had half-solidified. He happened to not be in Aalto. Both the timing and his strength checked.

“It’s not strange that Stanis heard about me from Antec before. However, those tales are certainly not enough for Stanis to choose me because of my wisdom.

“This place is separated from the outside world. My connections with Antec and Furan are pointless too...”

Fernando was puzzled for a moment, unable to figure out why Stanis entrusted such an important matter to him.

“Huh. I am wearing the transformation belt under the name of Nando. He has never met me before and couldn’t have recognized me...” Fernando suddenly remembered that he was now Ms. Nando.

However, he soon realized the reason. When he was in the Office of Sorcerers, he had registered himself in order to ask about Tuck’s whereabouts. He stated that he was Nando from Holm, endorsed by Antec and Furan. Taking the information into consideration, Stanis could roughly guess that he was Fernando based on Antec’s description in the past, except that he was now temporarily a female. After all, Antec had few friends, and barely any of them was from Holm.

“In such a case, he may be hiding somewhere in the Office of Sorcerers. The most dangerous place is the safest place... Well, eliminating strength and wisdom, what factors make me more suitable to help him get out of the trouble? Seduction?” Fernando ruled out the possibility without thinking. He could not even meet the legend or the level-nine expert. How could he seduce them? Besides, with their strength, they must have appreciated all the beauties in the world.

What can it be? What can it be? Fernando paced back and forth before the ragged house, looking for the greatest difference between himself and other people, as well as the qualities that other people might describe and remember him by.

Suddenly, he stopped with his eyes widened. “If I were Antec, I would’ve described my friend Fernando as a weaselly, impatient, reckless, mean, and unapproachable man who roars like rumbling thunders when he throws a tantrum...”

The qualities that were of no use ebbed, and “impatience” popped up in Fernando’s mind. “Perhaps only an impatient and reckless sorcerer can create an opportunity for Stanis to escape, or at least he thinks so!

“What would an impatient and reckless sorcerer do? A cowardly and cautious man like Tuck would have decided to sneak quietly. His materials and his notebook are just distractions to eliminate doubts...

“An impatient and reckless sorcerer does not wait. He will break out unexpectedly... In such a case, he will attract the attention of the supervisor or trigger the defense magic circles, which will give Stanis a brief window... Well, since he has escaped here, the King of Nightmare must be one of the legends who are involved in the research. It is possible that Stanis can reach out to the King of Nightmare during the brief window...”

For a moment, Fernando felt that he was Stanis. It was almost like they knew what was on each other's mind even though they had never met before!

"However, in such a case, it's very possible that they will vent their fury on me. If there's something wrong with the supervising legend, he can certainly kill Stanis and escape before the King of Nightmare arrives. Why is he confident to take the risk?"

Fernando couldn't figure out the reason. He could only trust Stanis, who would know better than him.

"If I don't take my chances, Antec and Furan will kill me to keep my mouth shut the moment they approach, and I won't be able to take my chances. Even if I die, I have to die while I'm trying to leave!" Fernando made up his mind. Then, he sniffed. "That's really the choice of an impatient and reckless sorcerer..."

He was as mean about himself as he was about other people.

"However, I need to observe tomorrow and see if it is forbidden to leave this city, in case I'm tricked." Fernando was not someone who believed everything other people said.

...

After spending the night in Tuck's house, Fernando pretended to go sightseeing after the failed recruitment. As he expected, nobody left the city at all! The wagons that delivered food and water would stop at the city gate!

After he confirmed it, Fernando took a deep breath. He decided to attack immediately when the supervisors and the cultists thought that he would go back and prepare himself!

Pa!

A silver bolt of lightning as thick as an arm glittered in the sky and struck the city gate, breaking the magic defense and splashing the mud.

In the meantime, the space before Fernando twisted, and countless runes gathered into a dazzling, queer gate.

It was Chaos Teleportation!

At this moment, the whole city suddenly glowed. The magic symbols and patterns appeared and piled into overlapping magic circles.

Right when the magic circles were triggered, clusters of mist rose from the Office of Sorcerers and were connected to the magic circles.

Immediately, stars were rising, and the whole city became blurry. Nobody could see beyond one meter.

Fernando felt so drowsy that he passed out before he was teleported.

...

Struggling to open his eyes, Fernando sensed his body again. Right when he was glad that he was still alive, a beautiful and friendly beauty appeared before him.

“Furan, you’re here?” Fernando greeted her subconsciously, but he realized that something was wrong the moment he opened his mouth. Why was it a male’s voice?

Furan was as gorgeous as a figure painting when she was quiet, and it was a major contrast when she talked. She laughed, and her eyes were cold as she said, “Why? Are you surprised that a chick has turned into a man? You are a pervert! You turned into a girl and tricked me. You even slept with me!” The more she talked, the angrier she became.

“That... That was a mistake...” Fernando suspected that Furan figured out the function of his belt and nullified it when he was sleeping.

Furan chuckled. “No, it was not a mistake.”

When Fernando looked at her curiously, she said with a faint smile, “I asked the Lord of Abyss to perform body modification for you. It will be permanent and irremovable. You will always be a girl. Rest assured. I will take good care of you.”

“Stop messing around!” Fernando only experienced it out of curiosity and never considered a permanent transition. He immediately roared, trying to stop Furan.

“Sleep now. You will always be a girl after you wake up!” Furan giggled.

Fernando tried to support his body, but the scene before his eyes suddenly broke. Darkness arrived and quickly disappeared.

“Antec?” Looking at his friend at a loss, he found himself in a regular bedroom.

Antec chuckled. “You had a nightmare just now? Tell me. Let me analyze what it is about.”

“Have I been physically transformed by the Lord of Abyss?” Fernando groped his body abruptly, only to discover that it was truly a girl’s!

“No,” Antec answered in confusion.

Seeing that the belt was still there, Fernando was immediately relieved. “Just now, I dreamed...”

Antec couldn’t stop laughing when he heard Fernando’s story. “That was the deeply-hidden fear in your subconscious! To be honest, I’m scared of her too. I stole you back as soon as possible because I feared that she might notice something. You’d better go back to Holm early.”

“What happened?” Fernando shifted the subject back to business.

Antec became solemn. “This is what happened. Stanis was ambushed by ‘Aurora Envoy’, who ranked the fifth among the night watchers, when he was out looking for materials. He paid a huge price to kill the enemy, but he sensed that he was followed by other enemies. So, not having the courage to return, he secretly hid in Kufuray City.

“However, when he was about to ask for help, he accidentally discovered that Archmage Prince, the Original Fire’s most trusted student, had secretly joined the Church and become ‘Bright Torch’, who ranked the sixth among the night watchers.

“Also, the Original Fire was engaged in an experiment and could not be distracted, and the whole city was watched by Prince. You know what happened later.

“After you passed out, the ‘Dream Transformation’ that my teacher secretly deployed was activated, allowing him to arrive in Kufuray and protect Stanis. The Original Fire, who came later, tried to capture Prince, but was one step late. The guy blew himself up, and even his phylactery was shattered.”

Fernando frowned. “Do you mean that something was wrong with Prince instead of the Original Fire?”

That could explain why Stanis was willing to take the risk.