

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 91: Relief

"Did you see Joel, Alisa and Iven? Are they safe now? Where are they now?" Recovering from the surprise of suddenly seeing the princess on his windowsill, Lucien asked so eagerly that he forgot to use the proper salutation.

Anyone who cared about his or her family would definitely react like this. And Lucien regarded them as his closest relatives in this world.

Although he had killed Janson and the squires in the dungeon, Lucien was still looking forward to the confirmation from the princess. After all, the battle tonight was so cruel that ordinary people like Joel, Alisa and Iven could easily become the innocent victims of the many powerful magic spells.

"Well... I was fighting on the frontline, Lucien," said Natasha a bit embarrassed. "Sorry, I should've paid more attention to your family... But don't worry, Lucien. I did confirm with the knight who was responsible for saving the hostages, and they are safe."

"Thank you very much, Your Grace." A sincere smile appeared on Lucien's face. As his whole plan was like walking a tightrope, any tiny mistake could kill the people that he cared the most in this world. "Then where are they now? When I can see them?" Lucien asked again.

"They are in the main cathedral right now, since they were tortured badly, both physically and mentally," Camil answered. "The pastors in the church will take care of them, and they need to be questioned later."

"But they are innocent! They're just ordinary people..." Lucien shuddered to think of the questioning that he received, or say, the one this body once received, from the Church.

"I know what you're worrying about, Lucien," Natasha comforted him, "Last time you were wronged as a suspect, but this time it's different. The Church just wants to ask them some questions about the dungeon guards of Argent Horn, nothing else."

Then Natasha said to lady Camil, "The power of a radiant knight is surely impressive. That sudden attack you launched toward the great priest was so powerful that the poor people in the dungeon were even knocked out. I wonder when I will become a radiant knight."

"May... may I ask what is Argent Horn?" asked Lucien purposefully.

"It was Argent Horn that kidnapped your uncle and his family. They are followers of demon, and they call themselves Argent Horn," explained Natasha. "Their souls are completely corrupted by darkness. When we were trying to catch the heretics alive, they shouted 'Return to the eternal silence' and blew themselves up."

Speaking of this, Natasha's heart was still beating fast. Although she was only one step away from becoming a radiant knight and was quite experienced in fighting, the horrible scene of the heretics exploding themselves in front of her was still bothering the princess's mind.

"All of the heretics... they killed themselves?" Lucien of course hoped that they were all dead so the Church and the princess would never know how he actually awoke his Blessing.

"Most of the heretics died, and some of their leaders escaped." Then Natasha slightly raised her head and said with pride, "But I caught a priest alive. And we learned that the right hand of a powerful demon was sealed in the relic, but it was taken away by the heretics who escaped."

Hearing that a heretic got caught, Lucien's heart skipped a beat. He quickly calmed down and asked, "Any other information? I'm afraid they're plotting something toward you and the grand duke."

"Yes, they are planning on something big." Natasha touched her chin thoughtfully, "But only the great priests know the plan."

"We'll investigate the personnel of our intelligence department. I'm sure we can find more later," added Camil seriously.

"I see... so I'm safe now, right?" asked Lucien although he already knew the answer. He felt he could be a pretty good actor.

"Although we did not find the person who was always watching you, I'm quite sure that you're safe now. After all, the heretics suffered a great loss tonight, and they are currently busy with running for their lives."

Lucien nodded, putting on a relieved look.

"Thank you, Lucien. Your information helped us a lot this time," said Natasha sincerely.

"That's my pleasure," Lucien lowered his head and answered politely.

At that moment, Camil's face darkened and her eyebrows frowned together, which made her look even more serious than usual.

"What happened, auntie?"

"Viscount Stuart killed himself before our people arrived, Your Grace," answered Camil in a low voice.

Viscount Stuart was in charge of the intelligence department of the duchy, who was also a grand knight.

Natasha waved her right hand and her vambrace made a crisp clack, "Someone's behind Stuart... But why did Stuart betray us? Why he wanted to become the enemy of the Church?"

"We should go now, Your Grace," Camil reminded her.

"Oh... I just realized that I'm still standing on the window. I gotta go now, Lucien." Natasha nodded to him, "The whole thing is even more complicated than I thought. And I'll tell the Church that you've awakened your Blessing under my help."

Then she paused a bit and said to Lucien, "I'm sorry that I cannot make you a knight and give you a title, since according to the law, you're not as powerful as a knight yet. Besides, making you a knight at this time might put you at great risk. I hope you understand."

"I totally understand, Your Grace," answered Lucien. "Your trust is the most important thing to me, and my family is safe. I cannot ask for more."

"I'll reward you with a manor several months later. You have my word," said Natasha.

"A manor? Your Grace, that's... that's too much." Lucien refused subconsciously, knowing that he would be leaving Aalto sooner or later. Money was better than a manor to him.

Natasha waved her hands and insisted, "House Violet always pays. It's our royal tradition. By the way, how did you find out the approximate location, Lucien?"

"I saw a special kind of long-tailed tit in the ball." Lucien was prepared for this question and thus lied without any hesitation, "When I was too poor to feed myself, I often went to the Black Forest for the wild mushrooms and I saw them a few times. Around Aalto, these birds only live around Melzer Black Forest and Lubeck Mountain."

"Interesting. Never heard it before." Natasha nodded, "Besides the manor, you should have a knight sword. I'll find you one, Lucien."

"Thank you so much, Your Grace." Lucien bowed to the princess.

Natasha took a step backward and floated in the air. Although she was not a radiant knight, her Dragon Blood Armor could help her fly.

"Remember to take a walk in the moonlight, Lucien." Natasha laughed and then flew away with Camil.

After watching them leave, Lucien released a long sigh of relief. Suddenly, he felt very exhausted.

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Chapter 92: The Prophecy

Close to the Dark Mountain Range, the silver-robed great priest Ilia was standing on a rock, looking down at the few heretics kneeling on the ground.

The rage of the great priest was horrible. The huge rock started to crack from his dark power.

"Who can tell me... what the hell happened?!" Ilia was shouting like a wounded beast.

They suffered a great loss tonight. The power of Argent Horn in the duchy was almost annihilated. The number of the members who survived was less than ten, including a level five dark knight, Dragan, two high priests, three ordinary priests and an ordinary dark knight.

Years of Ilia's hard work were ruined overnight. Now his body was covered by a layer of black fire with a strong smell of sulphur. As the silver hood slipped down, Ilia's face was revealed.

There were two goat horns on his head, and his eyes were bloody red. The knights and the priests kneeling in front of him didn't dare to look up.

After a while, Ilia calmed himself down and put the hood on again. Then, he asked, "Who can tell me... why the Church and House Violet were there tonight?"

"The so-called Professor... he was escaping from the Church tonight and somehow he found the underground palace. That's what I know," answered Dragan carefully.

After a moment of silence, Ilia shouted again, "Then who's that bloody Professor?!"

"The night watcher said that this Professor might come from the Continental Congress of Magic," answered Dragan, "Actually, we got the news that Professor was gonna meet a sorcerer apprentice somewhere in the Black Forest. Since it was very far from us..."

"You f***king idiots!" Ilia almost wanted to tear Dragan into pieces.

Knowing that he said something stupid, Dragan lowered his head and dared not contradict the great priest. In Dragan's mind, it was just impossible for them to block the whole Black Forest and drive all the people in the forest away.

"Professor... he did this on purpose." Gnashing his teeth, Ilia said slowly, "Killing two birds with one stone, even without getting any blood on his own hands. But why he did this..."

"But I thought the Congress of Magic was on our side..." asked a level five priest with confusion.

"Internal conflict is everywhere," sneered Ilia.

Then Ilia turned around and started to pray to the Great Master of Argent, seeking for the revelation from his God.

All the followers started to pray as well.

A black shadow came out from Ilia's silver robe and gradually covered all of them.

In the darkness, all the followers present heard a deep voice in their mind, but only Ilia could understand the message.

Soon the shadow disappeared and Ilia stood up. He raised his right hand high and said to all the followers, "The Great Master of Argent assured me that despite the setback we suffered tonight, we'll still be able to accomplish the task, and build the great realm for our true God on the ground."

"May you walk on the ground, as you walk in your realm," responded the other followers in an encouraged way.

"The Great Master also showed me a prophecy: 'A falling star has brought the chaos. The throne of fate has lost its master. The nonbeliever who walks in light and darkness will make his debut'."

"What does it mean?" asked Dragan, "It's like a poem..."

"The devil sullied Aalto. We cannot see it clearly." Ilia shook his head.

Fate and time were the hardest to understand. Even the greatest prophet was like an ordinary person when facing a huge mountain, and all he or she could see was only a very small part of it.

...

Lucien slept very well last night. He woke up with the pleasant twitter of birds around eight in the morning.

The ball ended very late. Many people were still in their beds. Thus, no one urged Lucien to go for breakfast.

It was the first time Lucien enjoyed such nice and soft blankets since he crossed over to this world, thus it took Lucien more than half an hour to actually get up and get dressed.

When Lucien was walking downstairs, a maid came to him and smiled, "Good morning, Mr. Evans, what do you want to have for breakfast?"

"Bread, cheese sausage... with milk, please," answered Lucien. He ordered a rich breakfast since he had a pretty good work out last night.

"Sure." The maid nodded, "You'd like to have the breakfast in the dining room or your own room, sir?"

Lucien glanced at the dining room downstairs and saw Rhine was sitting there.

"Dining room, thank you."

When Lucien entered the dining room, Rhine was sending a piece of rare-cooked steak into his mouth.

"Morning, Lucien!" greeted Rhine, "You really should try the steak, very juicy."

Lucien took an opposite seat and said to the maid, "A steak for me, please. Medium."

Then Lucien turned to Rhine and smiled, "Good breakfast starts a good day."

"Also a perfect supplement for a good work out," said Rhine meaningfully.

"Evans, Yvette is like a beast." A young noble man was sitting beside them. He laughed a bit, but had clearly misunderstood their conversation.

"Come on, Albay. I didn't do anything last night." Lucien was introduced to this young man last night by Felicia, "I hurt my ankle."

"I see. No wonder..." Albay laughed even harder, "No wonder Yvette went for hunting very early this morning and she looked angry. Good for you, Lucien."

The breakfast was pleasant. Seeing that Rhine almost finished his food, Lucien asked hurriedly, "Can you tell me where it is... the dream like place that you mentioned to me last night?"

"Since it's as beautiful as paradise, I'll tell you the location after you can hold your own concert, as an award." Rhine smiled in a cunning way. To him, it was very interesting to see Lucien's growth.

After Rhine left, Albay asked Lucien curiously, "Where is that place you were talking about?"

"I don't know. He won't tell me right now," answered Lucien, shrugging his shoulders.

What he knew was that his life had better go back to normal, at least for a period of time, to meet Rhine's requirement as soon as possible. Firstly, Lucien had to abandon the pseudonym Professor.

Finishing his breakfast, Lucien saw a sleepy Felicia coming downstairs. He greeted, "Good morning, Felicia."

"Morning, Lucien. How's your ankle?" asked her.

"It's fine now," answered Lucien. "I'm sorry, Felicia. I'm afraid I cannot go hunting today. I have to go now to deal with some of my personal stuff."

"What happened?" Felicia asked with concern.

"Sorry, but I have to keep it a secret, Felicia," Lucien put on a slightly awkward look, "since it has something to do with the princess."

"Sure, Lucien." Felicia was a bit surprised for a moment, "I'll send a coach for you."

Getting on the coach, Lucien asked the coachman to go to Lord Venn's manor first.

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Chapter 93: Recomposing

The coachman was so experienced that Lucien did not feel the road bumpy at all.

Having lots of issues troubling his mind, by the time Lucien stopped thinking, the coach was already in front of Lord Venn's manor.

"Mr. Evans, we've arrived. Do you need me to tell the guards?" The coachman turned around and asked Lucien politely. An elegant gentleman usually did not talk to ordinary guards.

"No, thanks." Lucien smiled, "My friend is a squire here. We're equal."

With his awakened Blessing, Lucien was only a step away from becoming a knight. However, in his mind, he and John were simply good friends, and there was no level or class difference between them.

It was Ian and Durago who were guarding the gate today. Immediately they puffed out their chests when they saw the fine coach with the coat of arms of Fire Bull, ready to welcome the guest.

They were very surprised when they saw Lucien again. They still remembered him: in their memory, Lucien was only a pauper who did not show much respect to them, and now in the white shirt and black suit, the young man looked like a decent noble.

They did not come to themselves until Lucien was standing in front of them, "So... sorry, are you looking for John?"

"Yes, please." Lucien did not recognize them.

When Ian was about to go into the manor, Durago asked with a bit hesitation, "Excuse me, sir. Are you... are you Mr. Evans?"

After the great success of the concert, even John, as a very moderate young man, could not help himself sharing what he knew about Lucien and all the praises his good friend received from the grand duke, the grand cardinal and princess.

"Yes, I'm John's friend," answered Lucien.

"Your work, Fate, was played on Lord Venn's banquet several days ago. It was fantastic!" Durago said to Lucien with great excitement, "I'm so sorry that I was being really rude to you."

This big tough guy was very sincere and excited. Lucien sort of recalled the conflict that happened between them before and was quite surprised that Durago was this enthusiastic about music.

Soon Lucien realized Aalto was indeed the City of Psalm.

"It's okay. I'm glad you like my work," answered Lucien politely.

Standing beside Durago, Ian put on an embarrassed smile.

After the concert, Lucien experienced a big change in the way many people treated him. Durago's sincere apology and all the flattering words triggered Lucien's thought. The sudden upgrade in his social status turned what happened several months ago into a distant dream.

"Mr. Evans, can I invite you to my place?" asked Durago, rubbing his hands nervously with excitement.

Finding a random excuse, Lucien refused him politely, but he felt quite awkward.

Soon John came following Ian, looking a bit confused, "Lucien! I'm going back home later this afternoon. Has anything happened?"

"Yes, but it has been solved. No worries." Lucien pulled John's arm, "Let's get on the coach first."

The old coachman was smart enough to know that he should not be listening to the conversation. So he tied the horses firmly to the hitching post, walked away from the coach, and took out his tobacco under a big tree.

When John was listening to Lucien, his face darkened and his brows knotted. His knuckles turned white as he gripped his hands so tightly that his whole body was shaking. When he heard that his parents' fingers were cut, his teeth were gnashing. However, John did not say even a single word. He remained silent and listened carefully.

"I'm terribly sorry, John," said Lucien, whose heart was full of guilt.

Lowering his head, John did not answer immediately.

Lucien knew that his friend needed some time to recover from his pain and great anger. So he remained silent with John.

After a while, John finally started to talk,

"Lucien, it's not your fault. I don't blame you."

That was the first thing John said to Lucien. Instead of venting his frustration, John chose to comfort his best friend to free him of his horrible guilt.

Lucien was quite surprised, and he was touched, "Thank you so much, John. What you just said means a lot to me."

When John was about to go back to ask for a longer leave from his duty, Lucien stopped him.

"Wait, John. Here's twenty grams of Moonlight Rose dust." Lucien pulled out the small black bag and handed it over to his friend.

John had heard just now where did the Moonlight Rose come from. After more than ten seconds, he firmly took the small bag from Lucien's hand.

"Thank you, Lucien. I'll awake my Blessing. Only this way I can protect my family and friends," said John seriously.

"No rush. Follow Lord Venn's instruction and take your time." Lucien nodded, "Also, can you keep this a secret? After all, I lied to the princess about how I got these roses."

"You know me, Lucien. I'm more reliable than a dead man." John patted his friend on the shoulder and promised seriously.

...

The arrival of the House Hayne's coach caused a stir in Aderon, the poorest district in the whole city. Although most of them could not name all the coat of arms of the big families in Aalto, they still registered in mind those of the few most powerful noble families.

Joel, Alisa and Iven had been sent back home by the Church. The pastors did not find much valuable information with them.

Seeing John and Lucien getting off the coach, Iven suddenly burst out crying, as if the little boy was trying to wash away all the horrible memories with his tears.

John gently patted Iven's head and gave him a firm hug, "It's okay, now, Iven. You're already a grown-up man and you did a great job. God bless us."

Lucien hugged Joel and Alisa. His apology, worry and joy were all in this big hug.

"It's not your fault, Lucien." Joel and Alisa comforted him, "And you see... we're fine now."

As the hostages of the vicious heretics, they did not expect that they could survive in the end. When they were saved, they were so grateful to the God of Truth that now they became even more understanding and tolerant. After all, nothing else really mattered when facing death.

Then Alisa and Joel told Lucien what the Church and the intelligence department of the duchy questioned them. The thing that concerned the pastors and the intelligence the most was why Alisa and Joel passed out outside of the cell, but were found by the knight inside of the cell later.

As the great thunder caused by lady Camil's power knocked them out instantly, no hostages present could provide any valuable information. In the end, the people from the Church and the intelligence department were guessing that it was probably because the heretics first locked the hostages back in case they would escape, and later on they did not have enough time to come back and kill them all.

"We got really lucky there. Thank God!" Drying her eyes, Alisa was telling Lucien the story.

At this time, there came a knock on the door.

It was Corella and a church guard that Lucien did not know.

Lucien was a bit more relieved seeing that the Church only sent a knight squire there, which meant he was not really suspicious to the Church.

After a short and regular investigation, Corella stood up and thanked Lucien on behalf of the Church, "The bishop appreciated what you did. Without your information, we would have suffered a greater loss."

Lucien's musician identity made it almost impossible for the Church to draw a link between Professor and the princess' personal consultant. However, there were still some coincidences which involved Lucien that they were unable to explain right now.

...

Lucien finally came back to his normal life, busy with studying music and magic. He also asked Joel and his family to move into his new house temporarily, since Gesu was way safer than Aderon.

In these days, Lucien did not take even a single glance at the broken wall where he usually left secret messages to communicate with the apprentices. To be prudent, he also left aside his plan of destroying his magic lab for the time being.

This day Victor started to teach them "canon", a contrapuntal compositional technique that employed a melody with imitations of it played after a given duration.

With just a few rules, even beginners could achieve much with canon.

"Actually, you've subconsciously employed cannon in your Symphony of Fate, Lucien," commented Victor. "It looks like you learned a lot in the library of the association."

"Um... yes, I guess. Thank you, Mr. Victor," answered Lucien, a bit absent-minded.

His mind was occupied by the thought that he needed to come up with enough music works for holding a concert to meet Rhine's requirement. Eighty years ago, someone produced a piece of music work which was very similar to the well-known Pachelbel's Canon, or Canon and Gigue in D, in his original world. However, he could still rewrite Pachelbel's Canon into a piece of piano concerto.

Although he still needed some more "original" pieces of music for a personal concert, recomposing was definitely the best time-saving way for Lucien to have his repertoire as soon as possible.

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Chapter 94: The Sword

At the end of the class, Victor said to his students, "I know many of you are hard-working and some of you have been studying canon on your own for a while. I'd like to see every one of you try to write a piece of canon to facilitate your understanding toward this compositional technique."

While the other students were pretty excited about it, Lucien remained silent with his own thoughts. Seeing that, Victor said to Lucien, "Lucien, although you're indeed very talented, don't underestimate canon. Simple as it seems to be, an outstanding piece of canon can still become a masterpiece that lasts for generations, just like Mr. Hersey's Canon in D. And practicing canon is very beneficial to a student like you who don't have a very solid music foundation."

Victor was often mindful of giving Lucien, the young genius, some proper "warning" to avoid his possible arrogance, which was very common among musicians who became famous at an early age, and unfortunately most of them ended up wasting their talent and lost their reputation very quickly.

Not until Victor started to talk to him did Lucien come to himself. He nodded and explained, "Thank you, Mr. Victor. I understand how important a solid foundation is and I'll definitely go all out to work on my canon."

"Good. Then what were you thinking about?" asked Victor.

"When you were introducing Mr. Hersey's Canon in D, I was thinking that I could probably recompose this classic piece of work and turn it into a piano concerto. Maybe a piano concerto version of Canon in D will be quite unique."

"Interesting idea, Lucien." Victor touched his chin a bit when he was thinking, "The challenging part is that Mr. Hersey's Canon is composed of very short music bars, thus it's hard to make considerable changes within it."

"Do you think it's doable, Mr. Victor?" asked Lucien with expectation.

"Well... Canon in D was recomposed into a few different versions before, so I'd say a piano concerto version is definitely something to look forward to." Victor confirmed Lucien's idea and smiled.

After the class, when the students were heading toward the practicing rooms, Felicia caught up with Lucien and asked him in a low voice with expectation, "Are you gonna play the piano concerto version of Canon in D on my birthday party next month?"

Canon was not a very demanding nor complicated technique. She did not think it would take Lucien too long to do it.

Lucien was suddenly inspired, then he smiled, "Felicia, I won't forget the help you offered me. I'll play the piano on your birthday party, but not a canon. I'll compose a piece of serenade for you."

"Really!" That was a big surprise for Felicia. The fact that the personal music consultant of the princess would write a piece of serenade specially for her was totally beyond her expectation.

"Yes, but it won't be a very complete one since the time is quite limited. It's probably only an opusculum."

"You're so great, Lucien!" Felicia was excited but also feeling a bit concerned, "But you only have a month... If the work is not good enough, that might damage your reputation."

Although composing a piece of opusculum within a month was not rare, Felicia still worried about Lucien. Since Lucien was drawing so much attention right now after the concert, many people who envied his talent were watching him like vicious beasts at night, waiting for any possible chance to launch their attack and to give this young musician a hard time.

"A piece of serenade shouldn't be a problem." Lucien seemed to be quite confident. And Lucien's confidence came from the fact that he already found a very classic piece of serenade in his spirit library which resembled no music work in this world.

In order to avoid being too suspicious, Lucien decided only to do an opusculum on the birthday party.

"Alright... I'm looking forward to your serenade," said Felicia with both expectation and concern.

...

In the following month, except for analyzing magic spells and reading the book named Astrology and Magic Elements written in the ancient Sylvanas language with the help of the witch's note at night, Lucien spent all his time on studying music and composing his canon and the serenade. After all, music now could provide him with the chance to find the headquarter of the Congress of Magic.

With his hard work and great memory, Lucien now finally felt he was qualified enough as a music student. Within this month, he also successfully recomposed Canon in D and finished the serenade for Felicia's birthday.

Meanwhile, John was still working on his knight training. Although he wanted to awaken his Blessing as soon as possible, he was warned by Lord Venn that, without a solid foundation, the awakening would be very likely to fail. Even if he succeed this time, his future growth would be very limited.

Thus, John was being very patient, even though that meant he needed to do the same training over and over again everyday. In John's spare time, he would go into the Black Forest to fight with goblins and cynocephaluses to gather more experience. At the same time, Lord Venn gave John a sum of money and asked him to rent a unit in the administrative district, in order to protect his family.

Although Joel and his family had a pretty good time in Lucien's house, they were definitely even happier with their own place, especially since it was a place that was earned by their son. Therefore, they soon moved out of Lucien's house, and Lucien respected their choice. After all, they were family, and that would never change, no matter if they lived together or not.

...

The last Thursday of the Month of Gold (October). War Gallery.

"I'm finally satisfied with this part." Natasha just finished her discussion with Lucien about a movement, "Now this part is exciting enough to meet the theme."

"The last version was pretty good already." Lucien smiled, "You indeed have very high expectations on yourself, Your Grace."

Natasha's music knowledge was actually way more profound than Lucien's. By working together, Lucien also learned a lot from the princess.

"Well... if you do something, then you do your best," said Natasha in a good mood.

"Yes, Your Grace," Lucien agreed.

When Lucien was about to leave, Natasha asked him with curiosity, "I heard that you wrote a new serenade for your classmate's birthday party tonight?"

"Yes." Lucien nodded.

Pointing at the piano standing in the center of the room, Natasha asked, "Can I listen to it first?"

"I'm sorry, Your Grace. It's a gift for Felicia's birthday," Lucien refused the princess politely.

"Well, I guess..." Natasha took a few steps back and forth, "Although I'm very curious, I think you're right. I feel like writing a love serenade for Silvia's birthday, too."

"That's... that's very considerate." Lucien was almost used to it now.

At this time, Natasha turned around and said something to lady Camil. Camil left the room and, a moment later, came back with a fine sword in her hand.

"This is the knight sword that I promised you," said Natasha. "Its name is 'Alert', and it's a level one high rank sword with an extraordinary quality. With Alert, your instincts will be way sharper, making you more aware of any approaching danger."

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Chapter 95: Felicia's Birthday Party

Felicia's Birthday Party

Since it was not an investiture, the manners were not of great complexity. Lucien saluted the princess with a knight's etiquette and the princess leaned the sword against Lucien's shoulder.

"May your sword guard your will," said Natasha seriously.

Then Lucien took the sword from Natasha's hands, and followed her instruction to leave a willpower mark on Alert.

Alert was of an ordinary level one knight's attack force, and it could help its owner to be as sensitive to the surroundings as a level two knight.

While sorcerers called them magic weapons, the nobles and pastors called them extraordinary weapons, which did not require registration in their owner's spirit. The owner of an extraordinary weapon or item just needed to leave a mark of his or her will power to activate it. However, according to some makers' will, some of these weapons or items rejected certain kinds of users and their power could not be activated.

Carrying the sword, Lucien saluted the princess again and left the room. Watching Lucien leave, Natasha said to Camil gently, "You have any plans for this evening, auntie?"

...

In preparation for the birthday party that night, Felicia did not attend the class today.

During the break, Lott and Lucien were chatting casually. Lott told Lucien that this was Felicia's eighteenth birthday and this was her coming-of-age ceremony, thus many nobles and all the musicians of the association would be present.

"Are you feeling nervous? After all, this is your first performance after the concert," asked Lott.

In order to make sure Lucien could focus on studying music after his success, Victor was "protecting" Lucien with great caution. On behalf of his student, Victor turned down many invitations and offers for Lucien, and that made many people feel even more curious about this young talented musician.

"Not really," answered Lucien in a relaxed way, "I don't think there'll be that many guests tonight though."

"At least some of them will be there just because of your birthday gift for Felicia, the new serenade," Herodotus, who was usually very quiet, joined their conversation, and commented in a calm voice, "They're hoping to see what you can present a whole month after the concert."

"I agree with Herodotus," said Lott. "As the current host of House Hayne, Felicia's uncle should be there tonight, too. Hopefully he won't find an excuse to give Felicia and her parents a hard time."

"Well... we'll see, then," said Lucien thoughtfully.

...

In the early evening, Lucien got on the coach and headed toward the house where Felicia lived. This time he hired his own coach and felt a bit proud of it.

By the time Lucien arrived, it was already very busy in front of the luxury three-storey house. Lots of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen were getting off their coaches, chatting and laughing.

The house was originally built by the old count to host parties.

Through the gate, Lucien walked on the path and went through the garden. Then he saw Felicia was standing in front of the hallway.

She was welcoming the guests accompanied by her mother, wearing another bright red dress tonight. Red was House Hayne's color and the color always suited her very well.

"Thank you for coming, Lucien," said Felicia sincerely. "Lots of famous musicians came here tonight because of you, including Christopher, the president of the association."

"I'm quite sure they came because of you." Lucien smiled and kissed Felicia's hand without his lips actually touching the hand to show his politeness.

"Welcome, Lucien. We're all talking about you recently. You're such a genius." Felicia's mother greeted him. Felicia really looked like her mother, except for the hair, since her mother's was brown.

Lucien nodded to them and entered the hall. Lots of guests were holding their cups and talking to each other. It was a perfect chance for socializing.

"Hi, Evans." Many people greeted Lucien when he was walking. Their facial expressions varied. Some of them looked excited and curious, while some were throwing Lucien meaningful and unfriendly looks.

What would the so-called most gifted and creative genius ever present tonight? Everyone was waiting for Lucien's new serenade.

Among those serenades made for parties good ones seldom appeared, since their themes and styles were rather limited. Many musicians commented that these serenades were "not even close to being elegant". Thus, many of them tonight were actually expecting Lucien's failure tonight, and then they could teach this young genius a lesson.

Christopher, who was surrounded by many musicians, said to the many musicians who did not have much hope in Lucien, "He's still young, and we shouldn't be too critical with those younger musicians. We shall applaud for their success, and also be more tolerant of their failure. Just leave them some space."

When Lucien came over, the musicians ended the topic and started to talk about music creation. Lucien took a cup of water from a waiter and listened to their conversation quietly and politely, a few steps away.

Several elder musicians noticed that and significantly changed their attitude toward Lucien, since clearly he was not one of those young musicians who instantly become very arrogant after making some achievement.

Then Victor, Rhine, Lott and some other of Lucien's classmates arrived too.

...

It was already seven thirty in the evening, but Count Hayne was still not there. The atmosphere started to become a bit awkward.

Felicia's father, Urbain, looked every embarrassed. He was also very angry with Scott, his brother. Despite all the conflict they had in the past, Felicia is Scott's niece, and today was her eighteenth birthday. It was the current Count Hayne's responsibility to show up and send his best wishes to Felicia. Urbain was really angry with his brother.

Wringing her hands, Felicia looked embarrassed to the point of almost bursting into tears. On this occasion, Count Hayne's absence definitely would do damage to her reputation among the nobles.

Ten minutes later, the steward of Count Hayne finally arrived and said to Urbain in a polite but also cold manner, "Lord Hayne will not be able to come tonight, since he's sick."

Urbain's face looked very gloomy, and he was so choked that he could not even say a single word.

A few high-status nobles who were close to Count Hayne were waiting in their houses, since they were not sure if they should attend the party or not. After confirming that Count Hayne would not be there tonight, several servants who were waiting outside of the party house secretly left to report this to their masters.

Fortunately, some other nobles were still coming, since Urbain was still the clerk of the town hall.

Taking a deep breath, Urbain asked his daughter to stay calm and continue to welcome the guests.

"Too bad. If a family member is held in detestation by the host of the family, unless the member could awaken his or her Blessing and become a knight, the family member would always have a hard time in whatever they want to do." A musician named Comotz said to Lucien in a meaningful way.

Lucien pretended that he did not get it, "I believe no matter what a person wants to do, as long as he or she is persistent enough and works really hard, the person can be successful."

His voice was a bit loud, and it could be clearly heard since the hall was relatively quiet from the weird atmosphere.

Felicia heard what Lucien just said, and the fact that Lucien made such an achievement from scratch cheered her up. As a noble lady from one of the most important families in the Duchy of Orvarit, Felicia was way more privileged than her classmate and there was no reason for her to easily give up her dream.

After a while, Othello, the director of the association, came to Lucien, followed by Mekanzi Griffith and three young men.

Mekanzi greeted the other musicians present and introduced the three young men to Lucien, "Mr. Clemen, Mr. Baret and Mr. Julian are from Tria. They've read all the reviews of Symphony of Fate on Music Criticism and Symphony News, and they come here especially for you, Lucien."

"I'm glad to meet you. Thank you so much for coming." Lucien shook hands with them one by one. The three young musicians from Tria were all in their early twenties. Dressing tastefully, they were all very decent young men.

"Your teacher, Francois, had already introduced all of you to me through a letter he wrote." Christopher recalled their names, "I've listened to your music works before. All of you are very talented."

Francois was born in the Kingdom of Syracuse. When he was a teenager, Francois came to Aalto to study music and then achieved great success in music in his late twenties. A few years ago, Francois went back to Syracuse and became the prime music consultant for the royal family.

The three young musicians hurriedly saluted Christopher, who was known as the "living music legend", with great respect.

Mekanzi said to Lucien with malicious intention, "I hope your serenade surprises everyone here tonight, genius!"

"A serenade? I have a piece of serenade for miss Hayne tonight, too!" The black-haired Julian was the most talented and also the most arrogant one among the three, "We can present our serenades together."

Mekanzi seemed to be relatively acquainted with Julian.

When Lucien was about to answer, the whole hall suddenly quieted down. The sword "Alert" Lucien was wearing reminded him that someone he knew was coming.

Lucien turned around and saw a luxury coach stopping in front of the steps on the other end.

A tall, purple-haired beauty in her white uniform and black long boots was walking toward Felicia, with a pretty young lady walking with her arm in arm, while Camil was quietly following behind.

"Your Grace?!" Felicia exclaimed with great surprise.

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Chapter 96: The Serenade

"Hi, Felicia. Happy birthday!" Standing in front of Felicia, Natasha smiled, "Sorry that I came without being invited."

"No, no... It's... It's my great pleasure, Your Grace." Felicia was almost too excited to speak properly, "I really wanted to invite you, Your Grace. But I'm not qualified... I'm just..."

"I know, I know..." Natasha gently touched Felicia's hair and comforted her, "Don't call me 'Your Grace'. Just call me Natasha like many years ago when we were playing together in the manor. I remember that back in the days when the old count was still alive, we always went hunting with uncle Samuel, Alfred and Harrington."

"I was so short and always fell over." All those memories came back to Felicia, "I cried a lot."

"Yes, you did. And ten years later, you're turning eighteen." Natasha's heart was also softened by those memories, "Alfred and uncle Samuel must be very happy in heaven seeing you become such a gorgeous noble lady."

Alfred was the eldest son of the grand duke, Natasha's elder brother, who was also a level five grand knight in his early twenties. Samuel was the elder brother of the current Count Hayne and Urbain Hayne, who was the first heir of House Hayne's title. Both of them died in the battle with the heretic knights almost ten years ago.

Ten years changed a lot. Felicia's father did not manage to inherit the title and Natasha turned from a little girl into a real warrior after her elder brother died. All the friends back in the old days gradually drifted away from each other, and those beautiful days would never come back again.

Before the princess arrived, Felicia was forcing herself to smile in order to welcome the guests and keep the party going, although she was facing great disappointment and anger. Now, different emotions mixed together in her mind and she could not hold her tears back anymore, "I'm so happy you're here tonight, Natasha."

"Don't cry, Felicia." Natasha gave Felicia a big warm hug, "You're my younger sister. As Count Hayne is sick tonight, I'll host your coming-of-age ceremony tonight."

"Yes, Your Grace." Felicia sniffed and put on a smile, "I'm so honored that the princess is going to host my ceremony."

Natasha also had tears in her eyes but she was trying to cheer Felicia up, "And my personal music consultant is gonna present you with a beautiful piece of serenade."

In her mind, Natasha was blaming Lucien for tempting her to attend the party tonight with his new serenade. As a grand knight, she did not expect that she would cry when she saw Felicia and that made her feel very shy.

Natasha and Lucien were getting more and more like friends after what happened with the heresy.

Mentioned by the princess, Lucien suddenly captured a lot of attention from the nobles and musicians present. Now all of the guests were expecting Lucien's serenade tonight.

"Welcome, Your Grace. Welcome, lady Camil, lady Silvia." Urbain was also excited and led the princess into the hall.

All the nobles and musicians were saluting the princess. Natasha was fed up with all the noble manners but was still smiling and nodding politely toward them. Silvia, while holding the princess's arm, was very nervous and her face flushed, since it was her first time showing up in public with Natasha like this, facing lots of musicians she knew.

"Mr. Christopher, good evening," Silvia greeted her teacher.

Looking at his student coming together with the princess, Christopher paused a bit as if he wanted to say something but he stopped himself. He just simply said, "Good evening, Silvia. There're several musicians here tonight, and I know you're very interested in this new music instrument."

Natasha had previously told Lucien that Silvia was interested in his new fingerings, but also that she might be too shy to talk to him, so Lucien took the initiative to talk to her. Silvia was encouraged and started to share her understanding of piano with Lucien.

The three musicians coming from Tria were completely ignored. They were a bit pissed off but there was not much they could do. After all, no one really knew them in Aalto.

However, their angry faces amused Mekanzi, standing on the other side.

...

When they heard that the princess went to the party tonight, many nobles rushed to come. Thus, the ceremony was put off for half an hour.

The coming-of-age ceremony was not complicated. Taking a flame-like flower and the badge of House Hayne from Felicia's mother, Natasha put them on the left side of Felicia's chest and delivered a short speech.

Then Natasha invited Felicia for an opening dance, which was the last part of the ceremony.

The dance was just gorgeous. As a level five grand knight, Natasha was excellent in strength, agility and coordination. Led by the princess, Felicia presented the best dance in her life so far.

Then it should be Lucien's turn to present his new serenade for Felicia. However, at this time, Julian came to the center of the hall.

"Your Grace, Distinguished guests, I'm Julian from the palace of Tria. I'm sorry that I just came here tonight with Mr. Griffith without lady Felicia's invitation. Here I want to present lady Felicia with a piece of my newly-written serenade, in order to bring all my best wishes."

"It seems like our talented young musician is having an unexpected challenger here." Natasha lifted her eyebrows and said to Lucien in a low voice.

Lucien shrugged his shoulders a bit. He did not really care.

Natasha nodded, "Well. Then let's welcome Julian from Tria."

Handing his sheets of music to the band, Julian was waiting for them to get prepared. Julian was quite excited since the music genre of serenade was Tria's forte.

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Chapter 97: G Major

In this world, serenade was originally a music genre performed for expressing love or affection, which was considered a suitable kind of music piece for the evening. As there were many nobles who were fond of chasing different music trends, the style of serenade also changed over time, and was played more and more often over evening parties.

In Aalto, the City of Psalm, serenade was never really mainstream, instead, symphony and concerto were more popular as they were always regarded as "more solemn and elegant".

When they were talking about piano fingerings, Silvia smiled to her teacher and said, "I've seen Mr. Julian's serenade in your office before, and indeed it's very suitable for playing on evening parties."

Christopher immediately understood the intention of her words. He shook his head and smiled.

Several of the famous musicians present like Othello and Victor smiled with the president as well. What Silvia was actually saying was that Julian's work was to some extent too shallow to be presented on formal occasions.

On the other hand, Baret and Clemen, the two musicians who were visiting Aalto for the first time, were not quite sure about the connotation of Silvia's words.

Lucien did not realize the meaning of Silvia's comment until he saw the other musicians' meaningful smile. Maybe it was Lucien's friendly attitude that won Silvia's preference for him over Julian.

At that time, Julian picked up his violin and his playing started.

The beginning of his serenade surprised many of the traditional musicians present, including Christopher, Othello and Victor. Julian recomposed his music work and made it relatively solemn and serious.

An interested smile emerged on Natasha's face. She has always loved surprises. Silvia, standing beside her, looked more confused than surprised.

Julian was indeed a genius. The combination of the pleasant features of serenade and the solemnity of orchestra in his music work impressed every musician present at the party.

During the second movement of Julian's serenade, even the president Christopher smiled and praised, "This part is challenging but Julian handled it very well."

Clemen and Baret gave Julian an admiring glance, since a good comment from the president of the musicians' association of Aalto meant a lot for a young musician.

The gentle and elegant lento was followed by a more cheerful allegro, designed for the evening party. The playing ended in a pleasant and high-spirited atmosphere.

Warm applause came to Julian. Felicia, as the host of the coming-of-age ceremony and the evening party, thanked Julian, "I appreciate your gift a lot, Mr. Julian. It's very impressive as a piece of serenade."

"It's my great pleasure playing for you, Miss Hayne." Julian kissed Felicia's hand and bowed to her, "May your beauty and happiness always be with you."

Then he left the dancing floor and rejoined the musicians with a big smile on his face, knowing that the piece of serenade which took him more than five months to accomplish was acknowledged by the many musicians in Aalto.

Although the playing was not perfect because of the lack of practicing of the band, Julian still achieved success.

"Awesome, elegant, passionate! No one can compete with you in the field of serenade." While Mekanzi was complimenting Julian, his eyes were peeking at Lucien.

However, Lucien did not care. Lucien never regarded himself as a real musician.

Othello, as the director of the association, also extended his congratulation.

After Othello, Silvia expressed her different opinion with a gentle smile, "Impressive as it is, the pace of the serenade in general is a bit sluggish and the structure is not well-designed."

"Well..." Julian felt a bit embarrassed, "What you just said... The problems you just mentioned are relatively inevitable for a serenade, aren't they?"

Christopher was a bit surprised that his student, who was always nice and gentle, was this aggressive and sharp tonight. Thus, he took a step forward and took over the conversation, "Anyway, this is a piece of serenade with outstanding quality."

"Thank you!" Julian's big smile came back again. He could already see the prosperous future that awaited him as a very famous musician in Aalto.

Then suddenly he turned around and said to Lucien in an arrogant intonation, "Now, it's your turn, Mr. Evans."

At this time, Felicia's mother said to all the guests, "Thank you, Mr. Julian. Thank you for your passionate playing. In this beautiful evening, Mr. Lucien Evans, as my daughter's music classmate, will also present us a piece of bagatelle as well!"

Lucien's name caused a stir in the crowd.

"Yes, 'the' Mr. Lucien Evans. The young talented musician who composed Symphony of Fate!" Felicia's mother introduced with pride.

Lucien tidied his clothes a bit and was about to walk to the center of the hall, when Mekanzi said to him in an ill-intentioned way, "Hope you don't press the wrong key, Lucien."

Natasha took a glance at Mekanzi and lifted her eyebrows, and then looked at Lucien. She had confidence in Lucien since she had seen Lucien playing piano several times after he awoke his Blessing, and his playing skill had improved a lot.

"Don't let Natasha down," Silvia said to Lucien in a low voice, "You're Natasha's musician consultant."

Lucien was not bothered by Mekanzi. He nodded to Natasha, Silvia and his teacher Mr. Victor, and then walked toward the center of the hall where a piano was placed. Victor raised his glass toward his student as his encouragement.

Felicia was a bit nervous, since she was not sure whether playing a piece of bagatelle tonight was a good idea. Now in comparison to Julian's serenade, any flaw in Lucien's playing might be exaggerated.

The applause to welcome Lucien gradually stopped. Many musicians and nobles were waiting.

The first movement was an Allegro, pleasant, graceful and brief. And it captured everyone's attention immediately with a very cheerful sonata-allegro form.

Julian's smile froze on his face. As a musician, he instantly realized the gap existing between his serenade and Lucien's work. Excellent as his work was, this young Aalto musician's serenade could be called classical.

What Lucien was playing was Amadeus Mozart's Serenade No. 13 for strings in G major.

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Chapter 98: The Charm of Piano

Natasha's purple eyes were lit up by the allegro. After listening to the first two bars, she instantly knew that this piece of bagatelle would not let her down.

Subconsciously relaxing her hands, all of Felicia's concerns disappeared and her eyes started to shine with excitement. That was the most fabulous serenade she had even heard, even though it was just part of the whole work.

Pleasant and cheerful, gentle and elegant, a few guests at the party nodded slightly following the rhythm while beating time to the music. They wanted to dance. Smiles appeared on their faces.

Lucien's long and beautiful hands were moving on the keyboard in a smooth and free manner. His fingers, wrists, arms and even his body were working cooperatively to present this perfect piece of piano bagatelle.

Besides the melody itself, Lucien's manner of playing was also a feast for the guests' eyes.

Many young nobles, while enjoying the music, were longing for learning piano and Lucien's new fingerings. Many noble ladies were staring at Lucien in great admiration.

"What a decent, elegant and talented gentleman!" The girls were wondering about how much a piano playing could show one's artistic elegance.

Several minutes later, Lucien pressed down the last key of the piano bagatelle. His right hand was raised in a dégagé way to show the end of his playing.

Then he stood up, bowed to Natasha, then Felicia and the guests present.

Lucien's listeners paused a bit, as if they needed some time to recover from the great surprise and excitement. A couple of seconds later, Lucien was surrounded by the thunder of applause from the guests.

"Beautiful, graceful and balanced. I'm proud of you, Lucien!" commented Natasha, "Finish the following movements and turn this amazing piece of bagatelle into a serenade masterpiece."

Felicia's face flushed with excitement, "Lucien, thank you so much for the gift. I think my coming-of-age ceremony will be recorded in the history of music because of your serenade."

Lucien gently hugged Felicia, giving her an encouraging pat on the shoulder.

Then he went back and rejoined the musicians.

"Lucien, you're indeed a genius. This piano bagatelle is the most beautiful serenade I've ever heard." Christopher smiled and his eyes were shining with praise.

"No one can doubt your talent anymore, Lucien." Silvia nodded. She was very impressed with the movement of Lucien's fingers, wrists and arms when he was playing, and with the elegance of this

new musical instrument, piano. In her mind, the piano was no inferior to the violin, the queen of all the musical instruments.

As Lucien's teacher, Victor was very proud, "I believe that this piece of serenade will become the most popular music work for parties and feasts, even more popular than Symphony of Fate." Then, Victor paused a bit before continuing, "What I appreciate the most is that you employed many challenging playing skills in the bagatelle. After all, beautiful as a serenade is, it cannot be the mainstream of music in Aalto."

Lucien nodded with mixed feelings. He always appreciated all the help that Victor provided him, but he also knew that his future might not have anything to do with music, since the path that he chose was magic. After he got to know where the Continental Congress of Magic was from Rhine, he would leave Aalto very soon. Lucien did not want to let Victor down.

While most of the musicians present were marveling at Lucien's extraordinary talent, Mekanzi looked very resentful. He took a glance at the very disappointed Julian and then he stepped forward as if something hit him all of a sudden.

Mekanzi pointed at Lucien and said in a loud voice in front of the guests, "There's no way that a beginner can compose something like this! You, so despicable, you made a pact with the devil!"

All of the guests were shocked. They turned around and looked at Mekanzi as if he was insane. It was a very, very serious accusation against Lucien. In other words, Mekanzi wanted Lucien to die.

"Mind your words, Mekanzi!" Victor looked angry and serious, "Talented as Lucien is, he still works very hard." He was the first person speaking out for Lucien, while Lott and Herodotus remained silent. Facing an accusation involving a deal with the devil, even nobles didn't easily dare to defend their classmate.

"You're Lucien's teacher. Of course you speak for him." Mekanzi looked around at the guests, "Ladies and gentlemen, do you really believe that a pauper who just started to learn music several months ago can achieve such a level?"

The guests started to whisper to each other. Indeed, the fact that, within only a few months' learning of music, a poor, young man was already capable of holding his own concert was definitely very surprising.

"You betrayed the God of truth," said Mekanzi in a vicious way.

Everyone was looking at Lucien now. When he was about to say something, Natasha said to Mekanzi in a slow but authoritative way,

"I know you want to put Lucien onto burning gallows very much, Mekanzi." There was a slight of smile on Natasha's beautiful face, "However, Mekanzi, Lucien's my personal music consultant. You think I'm that stupid to have someone who made a deal with the devil to serve me?"

"I... No, I'm not saying that, Your Grace." Mekanzi was flustered by the princess's words.

"Then what do you mean?" asked Natasha sternly.

"I... I mean... It's not normal for..." stammered Mekanzi.

Natasha cut him off right away, "That's why we call him a genius. Lucien received rewards from my family, and that's also why he made such a progress. You have anything to say about that?"

Mekanzi's face was as red as a tomato. He opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something, but finally he released a long sigh like a deflated ball, "Of course you're right, Your Grace. I'm... I'm overreacting."

Then, Mekanzi found an excuse and left the party, followed by the frustrated Baret and Clemen, while Julian cheered himself up and said to Christopher sincerely, "I'm sorry I was being so arrogant. I want to stay in Aalto for several years to learn from the great musicians... Aalto is the paradise for musicians."

"Welcome, Julian." Christopher nodded to him, "We need fresh blood for our association, and we learn from each other."

Julian picked up a glass of wine and turned around to face Lucien, "I gotta admit that your serenade is better than mine. I'll learn from you, and one day I'll catch up with you."

"Then I wish you success." Lucien slightly raised his glass of water.

The music for the party started again. Instantly, Lucien was surrounded by a bunch of noble ladies.

"Mr. Evans, can I have a dance with you?"

"Mr. Evans, you were so charming when you were playing the piano!"

"Can you take a look at my hands to see if I'm suitable for playing piano?"

The mix of sweet perfumes dizzied Lucien. Luckily, at that moment Felicia came over and saved Lucian by having a minuet with him, after which he went to the patio to stay away from the ladies.

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Chapter 99: Natasha's Request

The breeze was gentle and cool. Standing on the patio and bathing the bright moonlight, Lucien felt revitalized.

However, at that time, Lucien realized that he was being rude since he saw that two beautiful ladies were on the patio as well, snuggling and kissing. The arousing scene of the two beauties showing their love toward each other in the moonlight was like a fabulous painting.

Lucien's face twitched a bit and then blushed. When he was about to leave the patio, one of them stopped him and asked, "Lucien, what's that look on your face?" It was Natasha.

With a slight redness on her cheeks, Silvia was hiding behind Natasha, slightly gasping from the intense kissing.

"I'm fine... fine." Lucien smiled in an embarrassed way.

"What's going on in your mind?" Natasha slightly lifted her eyebrows and questioned Lucien closely.

"Well... I'm thinking that... what I just saw was not good for my eyes," said Lucien in a playful way.

"Umm..." Natasha pointed at herself and then at Silvia, "Aren't we beautiful?"

"Sure, both of you are real beauties." Having never been with any girl before, Lucien made fun of himself, "Let me put it this way. What I just saw hurt my heart."

Natasha laughed and stretched herself a bit, "I like your personality, Lucien. You're interesting enough to be my friend."

Then she said something to Silvia in a low voice, which made Silvia giggle.

"Excuse me, I need to have some water." Silvia then said to Lucien and left the patio.

After Silvia left, Natasha asked Lucien to follow her back to the party. When they were on the dance floor, Natasha turned around, bowed to Lucien and reached out her right hand, "May I have a dance with you?"

Lucien looked at her hand and paused a bit, "Your Grace, I'm afraid that it's not a proper invitation."

"What?" Natasha looked surprised. When she realized what was wrong, she took back her right hand and stood straight, waiting for Lucien's invitation, "Sorry, my bad. I forgot you're the gentleman and I'm the lady. I'm used to... you know what I mean."

Lucien nodded and smiled, "Yes, I know."

Recalling the dancing manner, Lucien reached out his right hand to the princess, "Your Grace, may I have the honor to dance with you?"

"Sure, you're my music consultant." Natasha laid her hand on Lucien's palm and followed Lucien to the center of the dance floor.

The dance between a decent gentleman and a beautiful young lady should be very pleasant. Unfortunately, their dance wasn't exactly like that.

"You stepped on my foot, Lucien!" said Natasha.

"I'm sorry, Your Grace," Lucien apologized. "But have you figured why? You're dancing in the manner of man."

"Am I? Um..."

"Your Grace, you just stepped on my foot."

"Sorry Lucien. Why don't you dance in the lady's way, then? That would solve all the problems," Natasha suggested.

"I'd rather keep letting you step on me." Lucien shook his head.

It took them a while to become cooperative. Natasha asked, "Lucien? Can I ask you to do me a favor?"

"What is it?" asked Lucien.

"Well..." A rare shy look appeared on Natasha's face, "Silvia likes your serenade a lot, and she wants me to play a piece of love-themed serenade for her birthday before the new year."

"That's sweet." Lucien did not understand how he would be useful to Natasha yet.

"But you know I'm not really a serenade person..." said Natasha, "I like music which is intense and passionate, not soft and gentle. I just can't do it."

"So, Your Grace, you want me to compose the serenade for you?" Lucien asked.

"Umm... sort of..." Natasha looked a bit embarrassed but soon made up her mind, "Yes, can you do me that favor?"

"Well... I don't think a decent knight like Your Grace would find a ghostwriter for herself." Lucien blinked in a funny way.

"You're not my ghostwriter! I just don't want to present Silvia with a piece of mediocre work on her birthday." Natasha was trying to justify it, "I'll tell Silvia that it's your work..."

"Don't worry, Your Grace." Lucien grinned, "I was just joking. I would be honored if I could help you solve that problem, Your Grace."

Natasha nodded, "Awesome. Thank you, Lucien. I'll at least try to work on it as well, and your work will be my second plan."

"The name of the serenade will be 'For Silvia', then." Lucien paused a few seconds and looked a bit worried, "Since I haven't gone through any love experience yet, I may need some extra help."

"Such as...?" Natasha leaned forward a bit.

"I noticed that you have lots of books in your study, Your Grace." Lucien had been coveting the great number of books in Natasha's study for a long time, and he would not let this precious chance slip away, "I wonder if I can have the chance to read some of them, say, those love stories books and some books that introduce histories, cultures and traditions of other countries, in order to be inspired. The library of the association has only music books."

"Of course." Natasha smiled, "It's not a big deal at all. As many of the old books are actually written in the language used by the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire, I can ask the scholars to translate them for you."

"That would be great." Although Lucien looked pretty calm, his heart was full of excitement. He did not expect that one of his biggest problems could just be solved like that. By copying the many books from the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire, Lucien could not only better plan his future trip on the continent, but also learn how to read ancient Sylvanas characters.

Although many books of college level were still sealed in Lucien's spirit library, he was already way more knowledgeable than a common sorcerer. Had it not been for the insufficiency of his spiritual power, Lucien should have already become a first circle sorcerer, which was exactly the opposite situation for the other sorcerer apprentices. Most of them were having a hard time moving forward because they did not have enough knowledge to analyze more complicated spells.

"Lucien, you stepped on me again!" complained Natasha.

When the dance ended, Natasha asked Lucien, "Do you have any other plans recently, aside from composing the canon and finishing the bagatelle? I don't want to interrupt your schedule."

"Um... Not really. Composing serenade can help me relax. Actually, I'm considering composing a piece of sonata to record the perseverance and the great faith that supported me all along when uncle Joel and his family were held as hostages," answered Lucien. All he wanted to do now was to come up with new music works and hold his own concert.

"I'm looking forward to that." Natasha looked at him seriously, "I know you're good at this theme. And I'll have the scholars translate the books for you starting from tomorrow."

After the dance, Lucien was about to get some water when he met Rhine, who was holding a glass of wine in a very elegant way.

"Good work!" Then Rhine whispered to Lucien, "I almost forgot to tell you that I already helped you get rid of your basement. No worries anymore."

"You..." Lucien was very surprised. He never expected that Rhine knew this much about him. He was also glad that he did not have to worry about his underground lab anymore, which had been a burden on his heart for a long time since he just could not find a proper chance to destroy it.

"I know you want to thank me, and you're welcome," Rhine said to Lucien, smiling, "I mean no harm toward you. I hope you can trust me."

"But why... Mr. Rhine?" asked Lucien. After all, the whole thing had nothing to do with Rhine at all.

"There's no why." Rhine shrugged casually, "Maybe I just want to see a great musician making progress without being distracted by something trivial."

Then, Rhine raised his glass toward Lucien with a meaningful smile and left.

The party tonight was perfect because of Lucien's serenade. Thus, Felicia exempted the debt that Lucien owed her to show her family's appreciation.

At a cost of ten Thales, Felicia made a great deal with Lucien!

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 100: The History

In the following morning, on his way to the musicians' association in the administrative district, Lucien was very surprised to find that the bagatelle he played at the party last night was being played everywhere in Aalto.

Just like Victor said, it was way easier for a piece of serenade to become popular than for a symphony.

As soon as Elena saw Lucien coming into the lobby, she waved to him with a big smile on her face.

"Morning, Elena!" greeted Lucien, "Why are you so happy today?"

"I'm happy for you!" Covering her mouth, Elena giggled in a low voice, "Before you arrived, a few noble ladies came to the association to look for you. They were hoping that they could become your piano students. Miss Felicia's friend, Yvette, was here as well."

Then, she handed a pile of letters to Lucien, "These are all feedbacks from musicians who live nearby."

Lucien took the letters and was about to walk upstairs, but paused a bit and turned to Elena instead, "Can you tell the ladies that this year I won't accept any students? Apart from being the princess' music consultant, I still have to work on producing more music."

"Mr. Lucien, how come you're always that inspired?" Cathy's eyes were wide open and she asked with great curiosity, "I heard that, aside from the serenade, you also finished recomposing Mr. Hersey's Canon in D."

Lucien nodded, "I'm just hoping that I can hold my own concert as soon as possible."

"Wow..." exclaimed Elena and Cathy at the same time.

Then, Elena asked Lucien with expectancy, "I understand that you don't want to have any student right now... but can I ask you some questions related to music once in a while?"

"Of course, we can exchange our ideas," said Lucien. The true reason that Lucien refused to have any student was that, as a sorcerer, he might be found out by the church someday and his students would be in great trouble.

After giving Joseph the music sheet of his serenade for registration, from the window Lucien saw that a purple coach was arriving, which was sent by Natasha.

...

In the study of War Gallery.

Natasha, wearing a long black dress, was introducing the books to Lucien, "Some of them are written in common tongue. I take it that you want to start to read them as soon as possible."

That was Natasha, passionate, decisive and motivated. As soon as she decided to do something, she wanted to get it done as fast as she could.

From her introduction, Lucien had a rough idea about the different book sections in the princess' study. At that moment, a middle-aged man came in and bowed to Natasha, "Your Grace."

Turning around, Natasha nodded to the man and then said to Lucien, "Mr. Bake, from House Hill, is a very reputable scholar and linguist. He is your designated consultant and translator for these books."

Bake was already bald in his forties. A thick pair of glasses was sitting on his round face.

"Thank you, Mr. Bake," said Lucien.

"It's my great pleasure to serve the princess and to be your consultant, Mr. Evans," Bake bowed slightly to Lucien.

"You're working on translating the books already, Mr. Bake?" Lucien noticed that there was a thick book under Bake's arm with many small colorful tags among the pages.

"Yes... as you may see, Mr. Evans, translating these books takes time, and the princess told me about your hunger for knowledge. I'm hoping that I can cover as many books as possible in this study for you, Mr. Evans," answered Bake slowly.

"That's very nice of you, Mr. Bake." Lucien was grateful, "And thank you, Your Grace." Lucien smiled to Natasha.

"It's very sweet to see that, young as you are, Mr. Evans, you're this interested in the ancient language and culture of Sylvanas Magic Empire. You'll see that their culture was fascinating." Bake walked toward the desk and opened the black book in front of Lucien, "The book that I'm working on right now is Heroes' Epic, very beautiful poems..." Bake became a bit excited.

"What is this book about?" asked Lucien, "Sorry, I'm... I'm not really well-educated with in history."

"Oh, that's totally fine." Bake smiled. "The beauty of poem does not require its reader to have much educational background. Instead, it's something you can feel. Get closer and take a look, Mr. Evans."

Lucien's long fingers gently ran down the spine of the thick, black book, feeling its antiquity.

When Lucien was flipping through the pages, Bake said to him, "The poems in the book were written in memory of those great heroes who followed the lead of the God of truth and together overthrew the rule of the vicious mages."

"Fascinating." Lucien quickly went through all the pages, and then in his spirit library the copy of the book emerged on one of the bookshelves in the "Ancient Literature" entry.

Then, Lucien turned to Natasha, "Have you read these books before, Your Grace? Do you have any book that has already been translated?"

"I've learned Sylvanas in the noble abbey before. I don't need translation," answered Natasha casually. "I'm going to the practicing room now. If I have any question I'll come back for you. Enjoy your reading, Lucien."

After Natasha left, Lucien directly jumped onto the books and started to read them assiduously.

...

In the following month, Lucien gradually gained a new perspective toward the continent and even this whole world from the effort he put on reading.

In order to gain great power and break the limit of the human body, lots of sorcerers and sorceresses in the past operated countless cruel experiments on human beings by infusing them with the different powers extracted from magic creatures. Most of the subjects died, but the ones who made it gained tremendous power.

Surprisingly, yet undoubtedly reasonable, following the lead of those surviving experiment subjects, people from different parts of the continent who were fed up with being bullied launched uprisings against the empire.

At the same time, the Saint Truth, with its many years of secret development, quickly gained its momentum and became the shared belief for those people. That was when the great powers derived from the magic creatures started to be called "Blessings" and the Saint Calendar started to count, followed by the epic war called "the War of Dawn", which lasted for over four hundred years.

Because Lucien was reading the translated versions of the books, all the texts were shedding glory light on the people fighting against the empire while depicting the sorcerers and sorceresses as terrifying representatives of the darkness and the devil.

At that time, Natasha's family, House Violet, was guarding the remote west territory of Holy Heilz Empire with the great power of the Violet Knights. In the end of the War of Dawn, House Violet provided the Church with great help and became the biggest contributor to the success of taking down Aalto. The host of House Violet was thus granted the title of the grand duke of Aalto and became independent from Holy Heilz Empire.

In the year 425 of Saint Calendar, the church held one of the most significant synods in history, discussing the topics related to the final stage of the war and the further attack toward the fiend empires across the Dark Mountain Range in the west. However, during that meeting, a great, carefully premeditated divergence over the reading of the doctrine bursted out between some of the grand cardinals and the pope.

Since then the Church was divided into two. Supported by Schachran Empire and the other duchies, the grand cardinals betrayed the pope and set up a separatist regime in the north. The westward march of the Church's army was thus stopped.

Lucien realized that the topic of heresy in this world was way more complicated than he thought.

Knowing that the Sword Brothers were stationed on the border between the Duchy of Orvarit and Schachran Empire, Lucien asked Natasha why the Church never started to march westward again. Her answer was very obscure but meaningful, "In most believers' eyes, the enemy within concerns us more than external threats. Today, no one except the pope knows why those cardinals betrayed us."

Lucien also read from the books that the the frontline against the heresy was formed by the north provinces of the Duchy of Orvarit, the Kingdom of Syracuse and Holy Heilz Empire. Among the total of 60 kingdoms, duchies, empires and territories on the continent, most of them retained their glory through the years. However, in some, like the Gusta Empire to the far south, the royal family had lost their control over the empire, since the several preeminent noble families in Gusta seized a major part of the political and economical power.

Besides, there was a continental sea in the center of the continent, which was called Storm Sea. Natasha's mom was the princess from the kingdom across the Storm Strait, although very little reference could be found about that kingdom.

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Two weeks before the new year, sitting in front of the fireplace, Lucien was reading Astrology and Magic Elements.

After the great amount of reading, now Lucien could already understand the most commonly used characters in Sylvanas.