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Chapter 3001

The fact that Rudeus had gotten a bronze treasure was the main reason why he acted so arrogantly in front of everyone, cursing and berating them without them fighting back. It was because that bronze treasure was to be shared with everyone.

He had gotten something good with his skills, so they had no place nor reason to talk back to Rudeus. On top of that, Rudeus was the strongest one there. For all these reasons, the alchemists were forced to tolerate Rudeus' beratement.

All of a sudden, someone else entered the scene and came out to be better than Rudeus, earning a golden treasure that was a higher level than Rudeus' bronze treasure. No matter how they looked at it, Rudeus could no longer impose himself on everyone else. At that moment, his eyes widened as he looked at the words on the Heaven Array in disbelief.

Someone had exceeded him and gotten a golden treasure? He was not the strongest?

Who did better than him? Was it Nash?

No, Nash could not possibly have done it with his skills. Why else would Nash willingly be in his shadows?

He would always get to pick out the best resources before Nash could. If Nash was really stronger than him, Nash would not have willingly endured that!

The more Rudeus thought about it, the more conflicted he felt. His hands started to tremble as intense jealousy threatened to swallow him whole.

For all these years, he had always felt like his talents and skills were the best. In terms of alchemy, no one in Hestia was better than him. All of a sudden, someone appeared and got the golden treasure!

How could Rudeus bear with that?

He started to pant heavily. His expression changed from the initial shock, to anger, to one of apathy. The jealousy in his eyes threatened to leak out.

Mitchell did not look any better, either. He had thought that he was only behind Rudeus, but someone even better than Rudeus came into the scene. He, in turn, fell to number three. He could not really accept that, but compared to him, Rudeus was in a worse state.

He could not accept the fact, and Rudeus suddenly stood up from the mat, staring right at the words on the Heaven Array. "Someone got a golden treasure? Could the seventh round be especially easy?! Maybe the other two worlds didn't send any strong alchemists in!"

After he shouted that, the inner city fell into silence again. Everyone looked at each other, obviously seeing a lot from each other's eyes.

Rudeus' composure was all over the place, and he could not control what he wanted to hide at all. It was obvious what he was trying to do the moment he spoke.

An alchemist from Deer Pavilion whispered to his fellow student, "He's burning with jealousy at the moment. He doesn't want to admit that anyone's better than him! Does he think we're stupid enough to listen to whatever he says?"

"Someone got a golden treasure, there's nothing else to say. He said that the seventh group was easy. Well, in that case, we can say that the second group that he was a part of was incredibly easy, too!"

"That's right. He's already too used to showing off, so much so that he can't accept the fact that someone else is better than him. He can't gloat around anymore."

"Even if he wants to get angry at anyone from now on, he'll have to hold back!"

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"We were too nice to him before this, letting him curse at us for so long. He said so many nasty things, and we finally don't have to bear with it anymore. If he continues shouting at people as he pleases, we have a reason to shout back at him and shut him up!"

Rudeus was seen to be the 'leader' of all the alchemists before this. He did not just give our orders and set rules, but he also spat nasty words on the regular, cursing and berating others alchemists. The alchemists, at this point, refused to be bossed around. Before, they did not have a reason or standing, nor did they want to cause any trouble. At this moment, they finally had a reason. They would no doubt fight back if Rudeus continued his reign of terror.

Rudeus felt like he was struggling to even breathe as he stared at the words on the array with gritted teeth. If looks had power, those words would have had a hole pierced through them with Rudeus' glare.

Mitchell let out a sigh, looking at Rudeus. "It looks like Nash is even better than you in alchemy, but I never thought that he'd be so patient. We thought of him very poorly, but he merely took it all in stride, putting up with your nasty temper."

It would have been better if Mitchell had not said anything. The moment Mitchell did, it lit a fuse in Rudeus' head.

He turned and shouted at Mitchell, "What kind of nonsense are you saying? When have I ever looked down on him?! I treated him incredibly well before! I've never bullied him before, so stop trying to cause a scene! Furthermore, he might've gotten a golden treasure, but it doesn't mean that his skills are better than mine. I know his skills better than you do. If he's that better than me, then why isn't he my senior? It looks like his tournament round is probably much easier than ours!"

Rudeus practically screamed his last few words, wanting everyone to digest the fact that this result: did not prove Nash was better than him.

Mitchell merely snorted, and even his shoulders shook as he looked at Rudeus with disdain. Rudeus was a sore loser, not willing to admit that anyone was better than him.

The center of the inner city was incredibly noisy, but the discussions in the outer parts were no less loud. Even though Rudy and Aaron were in a secluded corner, they could hear the intense discussion.

A man in dark purple robes said excitedly, "Seems like the strongest are usually more humble after all. Nash had always just stood by Rudeus' side before. Even when Rudeus was being unreasonable, Nash here with it as well. He never reacted too much to Rudeus' attitude, and I thought that it was because Nash wasn't as good as Rudeus. Nash was actually no worse than Rudeus all this time, and maybe even better. He was just hiding his skills and didn't want to bother with Rudeus!"

"You're right. I didn't pay much attention to Nash before this. I felt like Nash might be stronger than Mitchell but was no stronger than Rudeus. It looks like I stand corrected."

Rudy's lips twitched, looking very impatient and disagreeing with their discussions.

Aaron looked at Rudy and asked curiously, "Why do you look like that? Do you not agree with everyone else?"

Rudy said, "Of course I don't. Nash acted so humbly before solely because he knows he's not as good as Rudeus. It's nothing like what the rest of them are saying at all!"

Aaron frowned as he looked even more confused.

Rudy ignored Aaron as he continued speaking.

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“Just wait and see. Everyone will be shocked when the results are shown!”

Aaron’s lips twitched as he looked even more confused, “And why is that?”

Before he could finish asking, the Heaven Array let out another radiant glow. This time, everyone held their breaths, knowing that it was a sign that someone was transferred back.

After a few moments, 10 figures slowly materialized in front of everyone. Jackie stood behind the group as usual, maintaining a casual expression. The other nine, on the other hand, had strange expressions. Some hung their heads low, not daring to look at the other alchemists. Nash stood in front like before. Only, his expression was incredibly stiff. His face was pale as if he had been dealt a heavy blow.

The other alchemists were confused to see such expressions.

Why did those 10 alchemists look like that?

They got a golden treasure! Should they not be cheering? Why did it look like they had just suffered?

The first person to walk down the Heaven Array was Jackie. Those in front were too emotional and merely stood still like wooden puppets.

Jackie was much calmer than the rest of them. Since they were not moving, he decided to just walk down from the Heaven Array by himself.

The other nine saw that Jackie had walked down and exchanged looks between themselves. They sighed collectively as they walked down the Heaven Array.

The transfer this time had taken about 20 minutes. It had been faster than when they were sent to the competition. In truth, they had not had the chance to compose themselves. After all, they had just experienced an out-of-body expression that they struggled to comprehend.

When Nash walked off the Heaven Array, a few alchemists rushed over to welcome him. After all, Nash was the big contributor, having earned a golden treasure for everyone. Even though they had not participated in the competition, they would still benefit from him.

Before Nash could compose himself, congratulatory words poured out in front of him.

“Congratulations for returning victorious, Nash!”

“I can’t believe you’re so amazing, Nash. I was blind not to see it before!”

“It must not have been easy getting first place. That Ethan guy kept on mocking us so much before this, speaking as though he was the best in the world, but we finally ranked first!”

“That’s right. He won’t be able to show off now. Did you make sure to rub salt on his wound a little?”

Nash’s expression soured even more upon hearing these. If he was not concerned about embarrassing himself in front of everyone else, he would have pushed away everyone in front of him and run out. He did not want to appear in front of them anymore.

Slowly, everyone began taking note of just how bitter Nash looked, much to their bewilderment.

Was he not happy to be congratulated?

He had gotten a golden treasure, for goodness’ sake, and he should be happy!

However, Nash’s mood was strangely heavy, and they felt like something was incredibly off. Meanwhile, Rudeus merely stood behind everyone the whole time with a dark look on his face, not willing to say anything.

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At that moment, Rudeus should be standing in front of everyone and congratulating Nash, yet he was not able to say anything like that. He was not willing to let Nash stand head and shoulders above him. It made him feel a little helpless.

Regardless of how irked he was, his eyes were keen as ever to have noticed Nash’s peculiar expression. In his conflict, he felt helpless as if he had a lot he wanted to say but did not know how to.

Rudeus frowned as he started to walk quickly toward Nash. He pushed away the people trying to butter up Nash and said, “You’re not happy?”

Nash frowned as he looked up at Rudeus. At that moment, Nash looked like he had just swallowed a load of crap and could not spit it out. He looked like he was suffering immensely.

When Rudeus asked that question, Nash's expression soured even more as he said, "I... The person you should be congratulating... Isn't me!"

In truth, Nash wanted to tell them that they were congratulating the wrong person, that it was not him who had gotten the golden treasure, but everyone's gazes were fixed on him at that moment, and he found himself unable to speak clearly.

Rudeus frowned in confusion and unhappiness. "Just speak up. What's up with your expression? Are you so stunned that you don't know what to say after getting the golden treasure?"

Nash's lips stiffened as he paled even more. The other alchemists that participated in the round who were standing behind him had incredibly strange expressions on their faces as well. They seemed to be averting their gazes, looking like they were sick.

At that moment, Jackie walked out from behind everyone. He took out a golden ring from Mustard Seed and placed it on the Heaven Array. That was the golden treasure that Jackie had obtained.

At that moment, there were three rings at the corner of the Heaven Array, a black ring, a bronze ring, and the golden ring which Jackie had brought over. He placed the ring between the two other rings. The golden ring glowed faintly. It was a storage ring that was incredibly vast within and had various incredible resources inside!

Everyone's expressions began to shift at the sight.

Why was the golden treasure in Jackie's hands? Should it not be with Nash?

Just as everyone was confused, Nash could no longer take it as he tossed aside all his earlier awkwardness. "I didn't get the golden treasure. You're congratulating the wrong person. Jackie was the one who got first place and won the golden treasure!"

The moment he said that, all of the alchemists in the inner city fell into a strange silence. Jaws hung open in sheer disbelief, and they even wondered if Nash was crazy. He could not possibly spout such nonsense otherwise!

Rudeus' eyes widened. "What sort of nonsense are you saying? Jackie got first place?! That's a load of crap. How could he even think about getting first place? Just open your eyes and look. He has a sixth-grade alchemist badge on his chest. He's not a seventh-grade alchemist. This kid doesn't have any background or standing, so how could he beat you and get first place?!"

"Fair warning, Nash! Stop joking around, or I'll have to smack some sense into you!"

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Nash's expression soured even more. Before that, Rudeus might have ordered him around, but Rudeus had never used such nasty words. Nash's skills might not be as good as Rudeus', but he was not someone Rudeus could just humiliate and insult as he pleased.

Nash frowned as he loudly refuted, "How could I be spouting nonsense? If you don't believe me, ask the other alchemists behind me that took part in the seventh round. Ask them if I'm lying!"

At that moment, everyone's gazes fell on the other alchemists from the seventh group. Everyone had strange expressions on their faces, but they knew very well that there was no way to avoid this. Even if they chose to remain silent, the truth would not change. When everyone looked toward them, they gave their most earnest nod, albeit a little forced.

A gray-robed man said helplessly, "Jackie was the one who got first place. He managed to beat Ethan from White Marsh Continent and Emilio from Chaos Continent, getting first place. He got the golden treasure?"

Fearing that people would not believe him, the gray-robed man recited all three of their results, especially Jackie's. The crowd were even more shocked after they heard that, wondering if they were dreaming.

Rudeus was dealt a heavy blow. After he took a few deep breaths, his lips trembled as he snapped, "Impossible! Absolutely impossible! He cheated, he must have! How could he get first place? How could he have beaten the best alchemists from the two other worlds? I don't believe it, I refuse to believe it!"

At that moment, Rudeus spiraled out of control. It was even harder for him to accept that than knowing that Nash had gotten first place.

In truth, Nash getting first place might have shocked Rudeus and made Rudeus jealous, but he could wrap his head around it one way or another. When he knew that Nash had not gotten first place, but Jackie instead, Rudeus could not handle it at all. He did not dare to believe it nor could he.

His breathing quickened as he stared right at Jackie and barked, "You must have done something! How could you have gotten first place? Tell me! How?!"

Jackie furrowed his eyebrows as he looked at Rudeus in exasperation. He knew that Rudeus might not be able to accept the truth, but he never expected Rudeus to end up acting as crazily as Ethan did.

He snorted as he said coolly, "Why do you think I can't get first place? I've already said that I'd get a treasure, yet you remained adamant in believing against it. I don't really care if you want to believe it or not."

Jackie could not be bothered explaining things to Rudeus, nor was he responsible for that. Whether or not Rudeus believed it had nothing to do with him.

Rudeus gulped as his eyes reddened. He looked like he was about to rush forward and fight Jackie to the death, but Nash reached out and pulled him back.

Nash could not possibly stand still and watch Rudeus break the laws. If Rudeus truly failed to control his temper and attacked Jackie, he would immediately be punished. Rudeus would never be able to leave the inner city alive by then!

Nash grabbed Rudeus' arm tightly, worried that Rudeus would attack Jackie if he managed to break free.