

Chapter 41 – Making Purchases

Making Purchases

Leylin did not feel the slightest bit odd. Despite any pretenses, the atmosphere in the academy was very different with such a huge war imminent. Besides, a large number of talented Magus acolytes going missing would definitely rouse the attention of others as well.

Moreover, the academy didn't seem to want to hide this news. After all, they would still be relying on the official Magi for the upcoming battle, and these acolytes would not be of much help at all.

Those that were left behind would definitely be those with the lowest aptitude and levels, only there to be used as cannon fodder.

“Mentor Harosi has already cleared out the area around the school of Beastmen and any creatures who would pose a problem. They have been all reduced to skeletons by spells, especially the Beastmen, and their souls have been trapped in their bodies to suffer for eternity.....”

Leylin gave a slight nod of his head. It seems like the vicinity of the academy was safe for the moment.

“How about the other Magus potentials?”

“Very troublesome! According to the news that my other sisters have gathered, many of the acolytes with high aptitudes, including Chester and Sherpa, have all

left the academy for various reasons. I'm afraid that it won't be much longer before this news spreads.....What did you find out?"

"My senior, Merlin, already left a few months ago! Furthermore, I, too, will take on a mission and leave soon!"

Leylin blandly spoke of the news he had gathered, and this made Neela's face turn even paler.

"What about you? What are your plans?" Leylin still asked her at the end.

"I plan to return to my family. You know, although my Welter family is not very famous, we are still able to take care of ourselves. Do you want to come with me?" Neela clearly wanted to rope in a talent like Leylin for her family.

"No thanks! I have made plans for myself already!" Leylin smiled, turning her down. He would be subjected to various contracts and restrictions if he joined a family. However, he had too many secrets and was not suited to having an entourage.

The light in Neela's eyes dimmed. Leylin also knew that their relationship had come to an end. After all, they had just been enjoying themselves, but going their separate ways now, in a time of crisis, was very normal.

"There is still something that I have to ask of you!" Leylin took out a black-coloured wooden box and placed it on the dining table.

"What is it?" Neela smiled, but it seemed rather forced.

He opened the black box. Many potions in test tubes were neatly arranged inside, and the sight dazzled Neela's eyes.

“This is.....” Neela’s mesmerising eyes let off an astonished look.

“These are the potions that I have accumulated until now. Help me sell them off!” Despite crossing his fingers, Leylin’s expression remained calm.

Of course, this was only a small portion of the potions that he had secretly brewed. Saying that it was his accumulation after a year was reasonable; their total value was several hundred magic crystals.

Letting Neela sell them for him was because Leylin didn’t want to be conspicuous. On the other hand, it also provided her with a little compensation.

After all, a trace of chauvinism still remained, deep in his heart. Breaking up would require him to give some form of compensation at least, and letting Neela be the middleman gave her a chance to earn some profits.

“No problem! Right now, the values of the various ingredients and spell models have fallen sharply, while potions and low-grade magic artifacts have drastically risen in price.” Neela’s eyes flashed.

This was a normal occurrence. Spell models and other materials would definitely decrease in price whenever war was imminent, as they could not be used to improve one’s practical strength immediately. As for the other items that are able to raise one’s battle strength, they would be in high demand.

“After selling these potions, just give me 300 magic crystals for them!” Leylin sipped the hot cocoa which had been resting on the table.

Neela’s expression was a little complicated, “Of course it’s possible. In fact, my family could just buy them all! Do you have more? I can let my family know and give you a fair deal.....”

“These are all the potions I have accumulated in the past year! You should know, I still need to rely on selling potions to obtain resources. If not for the market doing

well right now, I wouldn't let them all go in one breath like I am doing now!" Leylin's expression seemed extremely earnest.

"Alright! I will do my best to help you!" Neela understood. In her eyes, Leylin brewing these potions nonstop and having such a collection was already the limit with his current ability.

As the two of them had their own worries, the meal that followed was not very appetising for the both of them.

After the meal, Neela hurriedly bade farewell to Leylin. Leylin entrusted some people to bring a few messages to the people that he mixed well with as well. He did not mention any details and only gave them subtle hints. Whether or not they could uncover the plot was all up to them.

Neela was extremely fast, and she handed Leylin a pouch of magic crystals the very next day.

After giving it some thought, Leylin decided it was better to spend his magic crystals while he was still at the academy. After all, he might not be able to find a trading depot outside, and even if he did, the resources there may not be as complete as what the school has.

This departure would most likely last an extended period of time. Leylin made preparations for his advancement outside. He prepared to buy ingredients to brew reactive elixirs and spell models available. As for any knowledge that a level 3 acolyte might require, it had been stored in the A.I. Chip since long ago.

However, the knowledge provided by the professors stopped there. As for the advancement to an official Magus and the basic information for a Level 1 Magus, the knowledge was heavily guarded by the academy. Only level 3 acolytes who have signed a contract with them would have the right to access them.

Leylin headed to the spell models' shop first.

“What do you want?” The attitude of the old lady behind the counter was even more vehement now. However, Leylin’s good mood didn’t waver. He already knew that those level 3 acolytes had failed in advancing to an official Magus and they had signed a contract with the school, to stay behind and provide basic services. Due to the restrictions in the contract, they could not run even if they wanted to. With the impending battle and the collateral damage that would be inflicted upon them, it would be weird if they had a good attitude!

“Apart from Umbra’s Hand, I want all of the basic spell models for the Shadow and Dark elements!” Leylin put on a very magnanimous air.

The old lady behind the counter looked at Leylin in surprise. After all, such a wealthy level 2 acolyte like him was rarely seen.

“There is a total of 13, for 130 magic crystals.”

“I also want the Basic Transfiguration spell model!”

“That’ll be 140 magic crystals then.” The voice of the old lady sounded from behind the counter.

Leylin nodded his head and poured a bag of magic crystals out onto the counter. The lady counted them and put them away, after which she carried 14 spell books over. Each of them was as heavy as a brick, and they stacked up to almost Leylin’s height.

“It seems like I should buy some horses as well!”

Leylin hired a few servants and got them to bring the spell model books back into his room, and then he returned to the trading area.

At this moment, the trading area was one of the few places that were still bustling with people.

The number of acolytes who came here had also increased. Many premium goods had been put up for sale, attracting the attention of numerous acolytes.

“It seems like even the acolytes have noticed.” Leylin mulled.

It was similar to how, in the forest, a small number of animals would sense danger and take flight before a huge disaster befell them, but other animals would naturally follow when they saw the animals leaving, even if they did not sense any danger.

“However, there are still no magic artifacts here.” Leylin felt a little depressed. He had always wanted to own a magic artifact, but they were just too rare. Moreover, the prices were sky-high, and they would end up in the hands of a Magus every time they appeared. On the occasion that the Magi were dissatisfied with the magic artifact, the level 3 acolytes would all madly rush forward to grab it. Leylin simply didn’t stand a chance.

“magic artifact creation requires alchemy and enchanting, and it’s such a profound subject. I don’t even have enough time to focus on my Potioneering studies now!”

Leylin laughed bitterly, even the A.I. Chip had a limit to its processing. According to Leylin’s previous experience, only when his soul continuously advanced, would the A.I. Chip’s level increase.

“When I become a level 3 acolyte, if I don’t have any other means, I will dabble in enchanting and see if I can create my own magic artifact!”

These stalls that had no magic artifacts did not attract Leylin in the slightest bit.

However, there were still some unusual happenings. For example, the stalls that were selling potions were filled with people and the sale of bows, arrows, and leather armour was also great. But as for the stalls that sold ingredients, they were rarely frequented.

He walked to Woon’s store, which he was familiar with.

Right now, it was crowded with acolytes and they bought any potions that they saw, in a very forthright manner.

Woox was so busy that he was sweating, and had even employed a few acolytes to help him. Such a scene was definitely not common in the past.

Leylin looked around. The potions on the shelves sold very quickly, many empty shelves were labelled as sold out.

Woox's eyes shone when he saw Leylin. He called an acolyte to fill his position, and especially went to receive Leylin.

“Hey! My dear Leylin, I heard the cries of a skylark today, and I know you will definitely bring good news. So? How many potions? I can give you 10% more than usual!” Woox greeted Leylin cordially and looked at Leylin as if he was looking at a magic crystal.

“My apologies.” Leylin waved his hands, “I’ve been busy with missions, so I haven’t been brewing much recently!”

“This is indeed a tragic piece of news!” Woox sighed, “You don’t know how good the market is these days!”

“Alright! Alright! I came here to purchase ingredients.” Leylin said and handed a list of items over to Woox.

After Woox received the slip and looked at the scribbles and quantities required, his face changed and bean-sized sweat droplets begin dripping down.

“So many raw materials! Let me see, White Crystals, Purple Vine Radish Roots, claws of a Ghost Goblin, are you trying to brew a Reaction Elixir?” The fatty asked straightforwardly.

“Yes! Indeed! I want to make preparations for my advancement. If you have any completed reactive elixirs in stock right now I’ll buy them off you. You can set the price!”

Leylin spoke casually, the formulas for the reactive elixirs could be found in the library and many people have seen them before. The fatty being able to recognise the ingredients was nothing amazing.

Underneath the reactive elixir ingredients, Leylin had also added the many common ingredients needed for the Azure Potion and Tears of Mary. As for the few important ingredients, they have already been extinct in the Magus World for several hundreds of years, so Leylin did not even bother to write them down.

“The brewing of reactive elixirs is extremely complicated and the success rate is also very low. The demand for it is so high, and they immediately sell out once they appear. How could I still have stock left?” Woox shook his head.

“At least, you Potions masters are better off, you can brew whatever potions you need by yourself. I remember that when I was still a level 2 acolyte, I committed so many crimes just for a bottle of reactive elixir!”

Chapter 42 – Leaving Temporarily

Leaving Temporarily

“Alright, let’s not talk about this anymore! These ingredients weren’t originally this cheap, but the prices of raw materials have fallen now, so I’ll sell them for 200 magic crystals.”

Woox set his price.

Leylin nodded and handed over 20 middle-grade magic crystals to Woox.

He then received a huge bundle from Woox, drawing the attention of many onlookers in the vicinity.

Leylin smiled bitterly, carried the bundle on his back, and begin casually chatting with Woox.

“So? Have you obtained any news of magic artifacts?” Leylin wouldn’t let any chances of rapidly increasing his strength pass him by.

“Of course not!” Woox shook his head quickly, “The prices of magic artifacts have recently been driven up wildly. After all, who wouldn’t want to keep their life-saving items and would go sell them?”

Woox suddenly lowered his voice, “Buying so many ingredients and asking about magic artifacts, you must have received that news too, right?”

Leylin nodded his head, “I am preparing to take on a long-term mission so I can go out and avoid all of this.”

Woox nodded his head, “Avoiding it will be good, I will also leave in a few days’ time.”

“Even Woox, a level 3 acolyte with a magic artifact, has to flee!” The compelling feeling in Leylin’s heart only grew stronger, and after exchanging several more lines with Woox, he hurriedly bade farewell and left.

“The mission cannot be put off any longer, I have to leave immediately!”

Although it wasn’t necessary to register for a mission in order to leave, there was still the hurdle of the academy guardians. Leylin still wanted to return to obtain relevant information on Magi, so he would naturally follow these regulations.

In spite of his rather average aptitude, his Potioneering talent had been acknowledged by even Kroft, so the academy would not keep him here to die.

Because Harosi had already done a sweep of the school’s surroundings, the Mission Area managed to regain some of its former liveliness. However, Leylin realised that there were extremely few level 3 acolytes upon a closer inspection. Naturally, he knew what this was all about.

“They are all a pitiful bunch of people.” Seeing these low-leveled acolytes splitting mission rewards and working hard to earn money to exchange for information, a pitying look surfaced in Leylin’s eyes.

These were obviously the forsaken ones. Although a lone acolyte would be absolutely helpless against a Magus, they could still cause damage and even kill an official Magus if tens or hundreds of them banded together to execute a formation. That was their role here.

However, being in the vicinity of a Magus fight was extremely dangerous. It was already considered extremely lucky for them to have a 30% survival rate here.

Although Leylin felt pity for them, he still would not mention the news. He had already pushed the limits by hinting to his friends. If he were to publicise the news, even Kroft would not be able to protect him.

Leylin had a look at the missions on the wall; most of them had short durations and were also located very close to the academy. It seemed as though the academy had hidden all the other missions.

When there were few people around, Leylin took the opportunity to quickly head up to the counter.

“What kind of mission did you want?” The reception was a very skinny old man and seemed extremely amiable.

“The missions on the wall don’t suit me at all, are there any special ones? My name is Leylin Farlier, apprentice of Professor Kroft.” Leylin said in a low voice, tossing a small pouch over.

The old fellow hurriedly caught the pouch. After opening it, he smiled. “Of course, there are!”

He took out a scroll from underneath the counter, “Look at this. The missions are all written there.”

The black-coloured scroll seemed to be extremely plain. Leylin opened the scroll and quickly skimmed through the missions written on it.

These missions all had a common characteristic. Their difficulties were not high, but their duration was extremely long. In short, the missions let those Magus potentials avoid the imminent calamity.

With the scan of the A.I. Chip, Leylin quickly decided on a mission.

“Investigate the wilting vegetation in Extreme Night Town. Mission duration: 3 Years.”

“I choose this one.” Leylin pointed to the investigation mission and relayed to the old man.

“Extreme Night Town is located in the Eastwood Province of Poolfield Kingdom. You will have to travel through almost half the kingdom before you reach it. Do you want to buy a map?” The old man smiled like a crafty merchant.

“Give me a map!” Although Leylin had a map of his own, it was always good to have another for comparison.

After spending two magic crystals, Leylin obtained a brand new map. Not only were the various provinces of the Poolfield Kingdom highlighted on it, there was even a red line to mark his journey.

“According to the map, Extreme Night Town is on the eastmost side of Poolfield Kingdom, where the boundary is, and is very far from the academy. But the good thing is that it was near one of the Magi assembly points mentioned in the information Bicky sent, which would make acquiring information and news convenient.”

This was also why Leylin chose this mission.

“This is your exit pass.” The old man handed a red metal card to him. “Don’t lose it, it’s irreplaceable.”

“It seems like the academy has been very strict in governing any entries and exits lately.”

Leylin thought this inwardly, but he did not say anything aloud as he took the metal card.

After walking out of the Mission Area, Leylin went to bid farewell to Kroft, Bicky, and his other friends.

After all, he did not know how long he would be out for. Some things still had to be settled first. Having received Leylin's hint, Bicky was already preparing to return home. As for Kaliweir and the others, however, their complexions were rather bad. They had come from Chernobyl Islands and with no place to return to, Leylin could only pay them lip service and console them.

Pushing his room's door open and seeing the familiar setup, Leylin suddenly felt a little regretful.

"I wonder when I'll be able to return back here."

The spell books and ingredients that he bought today were all lying neatly in a corner, filling up two big chests.

After brooding for a while, Leylin moved his bed away to reveal some floorboards with very little dust on them.

"Farlier!" Leylin gently tapped a black dot on the floor.

Ka-cha! There was a mechanical noise, and the wooden floorboards slowly moved apart to reveal many potions stored in test tubes.

The amount here was at least 10 times more than what he gave to Neela!

If Woox saw this, his eyes might even pop out. Leylin smiled.

This was his private potions collection. With the A.I Chip's help, his success rate has long surpassed what could be expected of others. He had sold a small portion of them, but the bulk of them remained here.

“Let me count! 200 strength potions, 150 antidotes, 180 hemostasis potions, and an assortment of other potions, their total value would be at least 3000 magic crystals!”

Leylin looked at these potions. They were his greatest asset and had always been locked away beneath his bed. The spell used to secure them was a little magic trick that all level 2 acolyte knew. Apart from the owner using their spiritual force to open it, any means of forcing it open would only cause the items locked inside to self-destruct!

“Now, with the chests of spell books and the other ingredients acting as the premise, I can move these potions out with very little inconvenience. I will also have to draw some runes on the outside for concealment.”

Leylin opened a small box that was covered in runes. Sponges, silk, and other such materials were placed inside to prevent the potions from rolling and being ruined.

After spending almost half the night, Leylin finally managed to move all the potions into the box. He then covered the box with some ingredients and placed spell books around it.

“It’s already past six!”

After hearing his alarm ring, Leylin switched off the clock in his room.

He hurriedly washed up and brought the two big chests to the highest floor of the academy, where he bought 3 fine, sturdy black horses and a carriage. Leylin took a deep breath and rode the carriage to an elevator-looking mechanism.

“Take out your exit pass!” A man’s voice sounded. Leylin hurriedly took out the red metal card that he received yesterday.

Bang!

The elevator-like mechanism rose slowly and when it finally reached the top, the sound of gears could be heard.

The two stone doors opened, and a beam of resplendent sunlight came shining in.

Leylin squinted his eyes, “The academy indeed has other exits. The original entry must be for people to use as a passage. However, the one here is for large items to go through.”

“Hyaa!” Cracking his whip, he urged the horse carriage forward. Only then did Leylin realise that his current position was at the back door, right behind the central graveyard that they had entered from in the beginning.

Afraid of being inconvenienced, he had told Bicky and the others that he was preparing to leave in the next few days but did not specify an exact time. Hence, his departure was a quiet one.

Leylin gave the academy one last glance and then began his journey.

“Alright. Why does my luggage make it seem like I’m escaping from something, not the appearance of someone who is carrying out a mission?”

Leylin could not help but smile bitterly as he looked at the horse carriage he was driving and the heavy chests behind him.

“A.I. Chip! Bring out the map!”

At Leylin’s command, a map came into view. It was more detailed than the one he had gotten from the old man yesterday and had a route carefully marked out.

“Based on the map that I obtained yesterday, compute the most optimal way to travel! Requirements: Convenient and safe! Also, it has to approach as many Magi assembly points as possible!”

Heeding Leylin's voice, a red line showing the route surfaced on the map. It was a little different than the one he got from the old man. There were several more bends and they were all in the vicinity of Magi gathering places.

"Let's go!" Leylin followed the route that was given to him by the A.I. Chip and drove the horse carriage forward.

"A.I. Chip! Increase the detection area to the fullest!" Because it was an individual trip, Leylin did not dare to lower his guard at the slightest.

[Mission establishing, beginning detection!]

The A.I. Chip loyally carried out its duties, and a 3D image of the vicinity was constantly projected in front of Leylin.

"The danger is the smallest when it is very close to the academy or very far away. The middle section is the most dangerous part of the journey!" Recently, the Magi protecting the academy had been cleaning up the area, but they were too lazy to pursue the enemies so it was likely that only the middle section would be littered with danger.

However, Leylin could only take a gamble. Harosi had also given them a lesson earlier, so he hoped that his journey would have more smooth sailing. After all, he might not be able to leave even if he wanted to, given enough time.

The horse carriage rapidly dashed on the road and the bird cries on either side of the road decreased from before.

As they got further from the academy, Leylin became more and tenser.

[Beep! Warning! Warning! A high-energy living organism has been detected ahead!]

The A.I. Chip's voice sounded, and a red object was projected onto the screen. There were huge branches constantly spread across the area, with many red spots of lights also floating above it.

“This image? It's a tree?” Leylin placed his hand into his waist pouch and reduced the speed of the carriage.

Chapter 43 – Giant Tree Demon

Giant Tree Demon

With the horse carriage drawing nearer, the approaching scene entered Leylin's sight.

In the middle of the road, there stood a huge ancient tree.

Its green branches seemed to extend endlessly in all directions, forming a very large canopy with numerous vines hanging down.

On the enormous trunk, there were a pair of eyes and a mouth, and it looked like a human face. However, it had green eyes.

Surrounding the tree were a few winged creatures that were continuously flying around. Their skin was green and they were shaped like a human. They were also stark naked.

“giant tree demon!” Leylin exclaimed. He laughed bitterly, “Didn't the academy clean up the area around the school already? Why is there still such a big fellow here?”

“An acolyte of Abyssal Bone Forest Academy?” The huge tree spoke, and the winged creatures growing on its back also turned their eyes to him.

“I am merely a lowly acolyte who is preparing to leave. May I ask if you might give way for passage? I can pay a price for it!”

Leylin made a last attempt.

“Only death awaits any living organisms who try to make any futile attempts to leave!”

The giant tree let off a reverberating noise that even made Leylin’s ear hurt. At the same time, a green vine was slowly lowered, and hanging from it was a human corpse. Its whole body was withered, and it was wearing the grey robes of an Abyssal Bone Forest Academy acolyte.

“Big Brother! Stay behind and play with us!”

At this moment, a little sprite that had been flitting around the giant tree demon flew over. To Leylin, it sounded like the very pleasant voice of a girl’s, the sound of her voice intoxicating him. It was as if this voice belonged to his most important person in this world. Gradually, Leylin began to feel that staying here might not be such a bad idea.

[Warning! Warning! The Host is affected by a demonic charm!] The A.I. Chip’s voice prompted him, bringing Leylin out of his hallucination.

“They actually charmed me!” Anger coloured Leylin’s face.

“A.I. Chip! What were the scan results?”

[Shuger giant tree demon. Strength: 5, Agility: 0.5, Vitality: 9.8, Spiritual force: 3.5. Skills: Leech, Vines] [Green tree sprite. Strength: 0.9, Agility: 2.5, Vitality: 1.5, Spiritual force: 3.1 Skills: Charming on living creatures] [Rumours have it that the green tree sprite and the giant tree demon have a mutual relationship. Normally, the green tree sprite will seduce the target into the attack area of the giant tree demon and then the giant tree demon will commence its hunt!]

The A.I. Chip’s voice sounded.

“The giant tree demon’s strength and vitality are too high, and its body is extremely huge too. There is simply no way to go around it!” Leylin’s face was calm, “It seems like I can only fight!”

“The first will be you! You actually dared to charm me!”

[Critical point confirmed! Calculating wind power, adjusting trajectory!]

Leylin suddenly raised his hands, and revealed the hidden crossbow as he pulled the trigger.

* Xiu! * A black line streaked across the air and flew directly into the green tree sprite from earlier.

The arrow pierced the right side of the green tree sprite’s chest, causing its eyes to tear. Green fluid, what appeared to be juice from the tree, was flowing out of its chest as it fell onto the ground.

“Dyrisse! That human actually killed Sister Dyrisse!” The enraged and shocked voices of the other green tree sprites came from the treetops.

“You actually dared to kill my daughter!” The giant tree demon let out a furious roar, its huge vines racing towards Leylin.

“Hyaa!” Leylin moved the horse carriage backward, avoiding the vines.

“According to the A.I. Chip’s calculations, the giant tree demon’s vine’s greatest attack range is only 20 metres! Its movements are also extremely slow, which is its greatest weakness!”

Leylin drew his cross blade and steadied the carriage before getting off.

“I only asked to leave, but since you refuse to listen when talked to nicely, it seems like a fight is the only means of resolving this!”

“You actually killed my lovely Dyrisse! I’m going to turn you into a shriveled corpse and hang you on my body for a hundred years!”

The giant tree demon’s roots emerged from the ground and stood up like a human before chasing Leylin.

“At this speed! Are you kidding?” Leylin laughed loudly and dodged as he clashed with the giant tree demon.

A dark green tree shadow whipped at Leylin, but he dodged by rolling away, easily evading the attack.

* Pa! * The green vine was like a whip, and it smashed a very huge hole into the ground.

Leylin slashed with the cross blade and chopped at the vines. The silvery white blade had made contact with the surface of the vine, but ended up leaving no more than a mark on it.

Leylin felt a huge force coming towards him, and a few black shadows appeared behind him.

[An attack has appeared from behind. The most optimal way is to turn right for 50 degrees and jump right!] The A.I. Chip’s voice sounded.

Leylin deflected a vine and turned to his right and jumped immediately, avoiding the sneak attack from the black shadow behind him.

“Great Father! We will help you!”

Roughly 7 to 8 green tree sprites swooped down, and they even carried small bows in their hands that looked like toys. However, when Leylin saw the dark green liquid on the arrow head, his expression changed.

“There’s poison!”

He withdrew a purple potion from his waist pouch and viciously flung it at the green tree sprites.

* Ping-Pong! * The test tube broke, and a gust of purple misty smoke rose, turning into the shape of a harpy. The harpy opened its mouth and let out an ear-piercing scream!

“The Howling Witch potion! I spent 20 magic crystals on it!” Leylin covered both of his ears. Although he had made preparations ahead of time, he still felt uneasy. As for the green tree sprites, they had all fallen to the ground long ago.

Using potions to mimic the effects of a magic spell was the normal fighting technique used by a Potions master. With Leylin’s current abilities, he could not brew the Howling Witch potion yet, so this potion had been bought from Kroft instead.

Not only were these potions extremely expensive, they only had a one-time use, which made Leylin’s heart ache.

Taking advantage of the fact that the giant tree demon and green tree sprites were still under the effects of the Howling Witch potion, Leylin hurriedly stepped forward and lunged at them with the cross blade.

“A few green tree sprites were easily cut into two just like this.”

“The eardrums of these green tree sprites are extremely strange and they are more sensitive towards sound waves. However, the Howling Witch potion was obviously their bane!”

Leylin's eyes flashed, and he stomped on a few more of the green tree sprites who were lying on the ground until they were dead.

“Oh! No! Julie, Delia.....”

The vitality of the giant tree demon was extremely high and it quickly recovered from the shock caused by the Howling Witch potion. Looking at Leylin torturing its daughters to death, it could not help but howl loudly. More of the vines came snaking over, and the remaining green tree sprites were carefully moved and kept amongst the crown of the tree.

“That human's spells are extremely evil, don't come out!” The huge tree's voice buzzed.

“A good chance!” Leylin's eyes flashed, and he hurriedly chanted an incantation.

“Acidic Aqua Shot!”

A green-coloured sphere appeared, and with Leylin's control, it avoided the vines and hit the left eye of the giant tree demon perfectly.

* Sssii! * White mist rose continuously, and green thick fluid flowed out along with the cries of the giant tree demon accompanying it.

After the white mist dissipated, the giant tree demon's left eye was completely gone, leaving only a charred hole.

“I will kill you! I will kill you! Hancus will kill you!”

The giant tree demon trembled and the vines around it continuously weaved around, forming a net.

“Who are you speaking to?” At this moment, Leylin had already arrived at the bottom of the tree. Its crown completely blocked the sunlight, leaving only a huge black shadow.

While the giant tree demon was howling, Leylin had already reached the trunk of the tree.

“Go and die!”

The giant tree demon roared, and countless vines interweaved, forming a huge green palm, making a grab at Leylin.

“Goodbye!” Leylin laughed lightly and threw the remaining dozen or so potions at its trunk before taking flight.

* Bang! * A fiery flame rose up, engulfing the giant tree demon whole. What followed next was an even stronger explosion and black smoke.

“The effect is indeed excellent when using ten explosive potions together. Moreover, it is even more advantageous against a tree type Tree Demon like this!”

Although Leylin ran away quickly, he was still scorched by the flames from behind. Even the hair on his head was tinged and burnt .

“Ah!” The giant tree demon screamed and howled in agony, falling to the ground with a crash, its body still set ablaze.

As for the green tree sprites that were hiding in the treetop, they too were not spared and were all burnt to charcoal.

[Beep! The target has lost all signs of life!] The A.I. Chip’s voice sounded.

Leylin nodded his head and returned to driving the horse carriage, going around the giant tree demon’s body.

Looking at the huge branches that were charred and the corpses of those green tree sprites, Leylin suddenly thought of something and went up to extract some of their cells and remnants.

“Only one battle and I have already used almost half of my stockpiled potions!” However, the giant tree demon and green tree sprites combo is a threat to even a level 3 acolyte. Having an outcome like this is already considered not bad!”

Afraid of the arrival of reinforcements, Leylin hurriedly drove the horse carriage away, until the three strong horses were frothing in the mouth. Travelling as fast as the wind, he disappeared from the horizon.

Half an hour later, a grey-coloured owl swooped down and landed on top of a branch.

“Hankus is dead!” The owl let out a human’s voice.

“I know, I know!” Suddenly a human face appeared beside the tree branch, “It’s a level 2 acolyte, should we chase after him?”

“The plan has already begun! This stupid tree demon totally deserves it for dying here!” The owl pecked the feathers on its body.

“I’ll be leaving first!” Saying which, the owl spread its wings and flew up into the sky.

The human’ face turned silent for a while and then revealed a human-like smile, “Although it’s just a slave, one must still pay the price for killing my subordinates!”

The branch extended to where the giant tree demon lay. At this moment, the fire had already been extinguished, only leaving behind some charred wood and green tree sprite corpses.

Suddenly, a corpse jerked. It was actually still alive.

This green tree sprite was already completely charred. Without any immediate treatment, it would definitely lose its life.

The tree branch brought the green tree sprite right in front of the human face, “Do you want to seek revenge?”

“Yes! For.....Vengeance, Doris.....Is willing to pay any price, even if.....It means the soul!” The green tree sprite struggled to speak.

“Haha.....Very well!” The human face laughed loudly, “It just so happens that I have one potion from a previous experiment that ended up in failure. I’ll use it on you then!”

Suddenly an opening appeared on the black-coloured tree, and it enveloped the entire green tree sprite...

Chapter 44 – Grey Stone City

Grey Stone City

Leylin was unaware that there were people planning to deal with him, so he carried on driving the horse carriage and travelling rapidly.

After the fifth day, when the surroundings started to show traces of human activity, he heaved a huge sigh of relief.

Although Magi generally view acolytes in the same way that humans viewed ants, it couldn't be denied that they originated from normal human beings.

Even though human experimentation was continued despite repeated prohibition, especially at the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy, all the Magi still chose to avoid large human communities. This prevented human casualties from piling up and inciting the wrath of other Magi.

“Once I reach the city up ahead, I can take a breather!” After 5 days of continuous travel, Leylin and his horses were all extremely exhausted.

At this moment, he lowered the speed of the horse and had a look at his surroundings.

There were now loosely spread fields on either side of him, and not far away was a giant windmill.

A crystal clear stream flowed beside these fields, and there were even some unknown species of fishes swimming in it.

Leylin suddenly felt relaxed as he viewed this scene.

“Serenity! The peaceful world of humans! I have not felt tranquillity like this in a long time

“According to the map, the nearest city should be Grey Stone City!” Leylin looked at the indicator on the map provided by the A.I. Chip in his mind.

“This place is still too close to the academy. There may be a gathering point for Magi nearby, but it still looks far too dangerous to sell potions or ask about the latest news here.”

“Moreover, I keep getting this ominous feeling!” Leylin’s brows furrowed as he looked behind him.

“Will the enemy let me go so easily after killing the giant tree demon?”

[Beep! Transfiguration Spell analysis complete!]

The A.I. Chip’s voice sounded in his mind at that moment.

“That’s great!” There was an elated expression on Leylin’s face. He hurriedly read the introduction of the Transfiguration Spell.

[Transfiguration Spell: rank 0 spell. Effect: Ability to slightly reconstruct the muscles of the face for an extended period of time. Consumption: 1 spiritual force, 1 Magical Power a day]

This was a rank 0 spell that Leylin specifically chose for concealing his identity.

“Can it only change the outer appearance?” Leylin muttered to himself. “Many Magi can discern someone’s identity through the energy waves emitted by their spiritual force and some can even look right into their soul. Of course, these people are all official Magi at least. Right now, it’s most likely that I won’t meet with any of them.”

“A.I. Chip! Is it possible to optimise the effects of the Transfiguration and enhance the concealment of the energy waves from the spiritual force?”

Leylin asked.

[Beep! Establishing spiritual force energy wave concealment optimisation task, beginning analysis.....]

A dozen odd seconds later, the reply of the A.I. Chip sounded. [Able to optimise. Requires 7 spiritual force points. Time to completion: 14 days 5 hours. Supplemental data required: Spirit Research Studies, Obscure Runes.]

“7 spiritual force points? I can achieve that in a few years. However, the information on Spirit Research Studies and Obscure Runes will not be as easy to obtain!”

Research concerning the likes of spirits has always been the most mysterious aspect of the Magus World. Although Abyssal Bone Forest Academy has a reputation for being at the forefront of this field, the academy actually only had a few superficial theories. As for Leylin, he was just a level 2 acolyte so he did not have access to such information.

“The Transfiguration Spell should be enough for the time being.” Leylin gazed at his surroundings while driving the horse carriage hurriedly into the small forest nearby.

When Leylin reappeared a moment later, his appearance had changed completely.

His original youthful appearance had now become rather mature. Coupled with thick eyebrows and big eyes, he possessed a very common looking face.

His clothes had also changed into weather-beaten leather armour. The cross blade hanging on his waist buckle also looked older.

Leylin originally had a tall stature and looked well-fed. His body was already that of the typical adult before the change. Looking at him now, he seemed like a skinny yet experienced soldier.

Leylin walked to the side of the stream to get a glimpse of his reflection. “En! Not bad! Even my voice changed and I can modulate its pitch too.”

His voice gradually became coarser, a drastic change from the soft, immature and youthful one from before.

“I will temporarily enter the city in this disguise!” Leylin nodded his head and took out a leather bag. In it was some white powder.

“The Scent-Removing Powder of the Subterranean Blind Worm, just 1 gram can rid any living organism of their scent completely!” Leylin said softly.

“This should be the ultimate disguise method in the mortal world. My appearance and scent have already changed, so it won’t be easy to find me through regular means! But as for the spiritual force energy waves, I can’t do anything about them.”

Leylin looked through the horse carriage again. He then threw away any unnecessary items, only keeping the chest filled with potions and spell books. He also tied the chest filled with ingredients onto one of the two horses.

“Let’s go!” Approaching the last horse, which did not carry any burden, Leylin undid its reins and whipped it.

“Woo!” The black horse whinnied then ran in a random direction.

Subsequently, Leylin went back to the horse carriage and sprinkled a kind of red powder all over it. He followed that up by sprinkling the remaining Scent-Removing Powder over the two horses. He then mounted one of the horses and rode off.

Not long afterward, black smoke appeared in the forest, followed by a blazing flame.

As he continued along the main road, more and more signs of humans could be seen. After an hour, Leylin saw the silhouette of Grey Stone City.

The walls of the city were short. Circular rooftops and sharp pointed grey buildings could be seen from the outside.

Beside these walls were armed soldiers who were patrolling the area.

“State your purpose.” The patrol leader wearing leather half-armor stopped Leylin.

“I’m a mercenary, and also a merchant!” Leylin smiled. He could see the greed in the patrol leader’s eyes.

Looking at the horse Leylin was riding and the chests behind him, the leader gulped down saliva. His eyes swept over the outfit Leylin wore. When he saw the cross blade hanging from Leylin’s waist, his expression changed to one of fear.

“The fee to entering is one bronze coin!”

“Here you go!” Leylin tossed over a brand new yellow bronze coin to the leader.

“You may enter! Remember not to wander around at night. If you are caught doing so, you will be imprisoned!” The leader revealed a very unsightly smile.

“Thank you!” Leylin brought his luggage through the city gates.

“Leader?” A soldier was obviously unresigned.

“Shut up!” Didn’t you see how he was dressed? Being able to travel solo while carrying goods and arriving in the city unscathed means he is no regular person. Who knows, he might even be a Knight!” The leader growled in a low voice, “Next time, don’t find any trouble with these sorts of people!”

“It seems like no matter where it is, strength can let me pass through easily.”

Leylin rode into the streets of the city. He saw commoners on either side of the streets avoiding him in fear. When they looked at Leylin, their gazes held both a huge amount of fear and envy as they nodded in approval.

“The development of this Grey Stone City does not seem to compare to even one of the small towns from my previous life!”

Leylin estimated that, at most, there were only around 10,000 inhabitants in the whole of Grey Stone City.

As for its standards of living, they were even worse.

The pavements were made of yellow mud and riddled with coarse sand. A slight gust of wind would cause yellow dust to swirl in the air.

Most of the people on the two sides of the road were malnourished and only wore crude grey or black robes that even had a lot of jagged holes in them.

Along these streets were several fences enclosing cattle or sheep. Some small-sized livestock was even running around freely. Odour from the fresh layer of dung continually pervaded the atmosphere, with no sign of dissipating.

“Dirty, messy, lousy!” This was Leylin’s first impression of Grey Stone City.

“Let’s find a place to stay first!” The journey had made him somewhat weary.

Leylin did not manage to find any sort of inn even after searching for some time. In the end, he decided to spend some coppers in exchange for information regarding a place to stay from a local.

“Big Sword and Wine Cup. This is it.” Leylin looked at the words on the signboard and was a little speechless.

This family shop was situated somewhere to the west, where public order seemed to be more chaotic. Along the way, Leylin saw many drunkards and fights breaking out. A knife and dagger were even used in one instance. Despite this, there were no traces of security officers at all.

Pushing the door open, the smell of an inferior wine infiltrated Leylin’s nose.

“Come! Have another cup!” “Nice one, Jack!” A hubbub of noises constantly assaulted Leylin’s eardrums.

The interior was a pub of sorts. There were many drunkards guzzling drinks to their hearts content. Some were even half asleep and drunk, pawing the female hostesses and talking dirty.

“Sir! What would you like?” The bartender was a yellow-haired youth who looked like the soberest one in this pub.

“I heard that I could find a place to stay here?”

Leylin sat on the stool beside the counter.

“Yes! We are the only establishment in the whole of Grey Stone City that provides lodging services!” The bartender shrugged his shoulders, “However, it is nothing to be proud of. We do not have many visitors here all year round!”

“Give me a quiet room and take care of my two horses. How much is it?” Leylin looked at the big barrel behind the bartender.

“Give me your best beer here too!” Leylin tossed a silver coin over.

“Pleased to be at your service!” Very soon, the bartender brought a cup with a handle to the table, “Honey butter liquor! Our best liquor here!”

Leylin sipped the liquor while listening to the bartender’s introduction.

In reality, many Magi did not like liquor since it could dull the senses. They preferred drinks that could raise their vigour.

Leylin did not drink often either. However, his curiosity was piqued so he wanted a taste. This honey butter liquor was simply average, though. It even had a tart smell, which made Leylin feel cheated.

“Lodging here for a night would be 30 coppers and taking care of two horses, including their fodder, means an additional twenty coppers!”

Before leaving the academy, Leylin had already changed some pocket change to carry with him. So now, he very forthrightly tossed two silver coins over, “I’ll stay here for 4 nights first.....”

“Look! Such fine horses! This fur colour! This build! They are definitely more valuable than the battle horses in the city lord’s manor!”

A very annoying voice was heard.

Chapter 45 – Reconnaissance

Reconnaissance

Glancing outside, Leylin's brows furrowed. His two horses seemed to have stirred up some trouble.

His lips curled into a sneer as he turned around and quickly left the pub.

Several local hoodlums were surrounding his black horses and sizing them up. Their gazes were marred with greed as they gazed at the spirited horses and the chests on them. One of them was actually in the act of impatiently untying the reins.

“Are you trying to take my belongings?” Leylin strode over.

He looked rather intimidating in his leather armour with his menacing cross blade hanging from his belt. But apparently it was still not enough.

One of them, a cross-eyed hoodlum, shouted at him, “This is undoubtedly the horse that I lost! How come you have it? You stole it from my family, didn’t you! You damned thief!”

This gang of crooks thought that even though Leylin was an armed soldier, he wouldn’t be able to take on their whole gang.

“That’s right! Capture him and bring him to see public security!” The others raucously interjected.

The surrounding inhabitants surreptitiously loathed what was happening. But nobody had the guts to step forward.

“Let’s go! He’s alone!” Cross-Eyed drew a dagger from within his robes and led the attack.

Leylin sneered, “Looks like I get to loosen these creaky joints.” He dodged, avoiding Cross-Eyed’s piercing dagger attack. He immediately grabbed hold of Cross-Eyed’s right wrist and shook it slightly. Cross-Eyed screamed in agony as the dagger fell to the floor.

“Argh! That hurts! What are you doing? Let go of me! My brother-in-law is a public security officer. He won’t let you get away with this!” Cross-Eyed wailed in pain.

“Oh really? Public security officer? I’m so scared!” Leylin cried exaggeratedly, and then he twisted viciously.

* Crack! * The piercing sound of breaking bones was heard. Cross-Eyed fainted right away from the excruciating pain.

At this moment, Leylin’s physical power had already reached the Knight stage. Against these hoodlums, he naturally did not have to exert much effort.

“Boss! Boss!” The rest of the hoodlums shouted, but none of them dared approach.

Leylin smiled. He turned into a black shadow and dove right in their midst.

* Bang! Crack! Argh! *

The pitiful cries of the hoodlums and the gut wrenching sound of bones being crushed could be heard continuously. Leylin was like a black gust of wind. In a few

moves, he knocked them all onto the ground, each one sporting a broken arm or a broken leg.

Leylin smiled amiably at them and walked towards the spot that Cross-Eyed had fainted at. He raised his foot and stomped viciously on the boss's right leg.

“Argh!” Very soon, the pain jolted him awake. Both his eyes rolled around, and then he fainted once again.

“Take your boss away! You can call me anytime if you want revenge. But if you ever do, it won't be as simple as getting a broken arm or a broken leg!”

Leylin said to the hoodlums. In their eyes, his smile was like that of a devil's.

After seeing these hoodlums scampering away, Leylin returned to the bar.

“At the least, he has the physical power of a Preparatory Knight!” The bartender groaned inwardly as he put on an even gentler and humbler expression.

“My most respected sir! Is there anything I can do for you?”

Seeing the deathly quiet that loomed over the pub, Leylin couldn't help but inwardly smile with bitterness.

He did not want to be seen as a monster. However, he had brought many goods along with him, so what could he do if someone were to steal them when he was in the room? Although he left a Tracing Spell on his belongings, if the spell were to disappear, Leylin wouldn't even have a place to cry.

However, after Leylin displayed the strength of a Preparatory Knight, many of those who had some malicious intent towards him quietly retreated.

"Help me bring these chests to my room, put my horses in the stable and give them the best fodder you have!" Leylin said as he tossed another silver coin at the bartender.

"That hoodlum from earlier, what kind of background does he have?"

The bartender lowered his head, "Sir, you completely don't have to worry about it. He may have some shady dealings with a public security officer but nothing too serious, though."

Having the strength of a Preparatory Knight means having access to a Knight's training technique.

Such people are either nobility or have some huge power backing them. A small city's public security officer will not dare to do anything at all.

"Take me to my room!" Leylin asked casually

The bartender intentionally took him to a room at the very back of the building, furthest from the pub. He took out a key and opened the room.

A ray of golden sunlight shone through the window into the room

The bed was in the middle of the room, and the bed sheets on it seemed to be very clean. There was a blue vase on the bedside table with some unknown wildflowers in them.

"It seems very clean. This place will be fine!" Leylin nodded.

"Here is your key, please keep it safe!" The bartender respectfully handed over a brass key.

Leylin took the key and sent the bartender away to take care of his horses. He unpacked the contents of the chests and ordered a steak to be sent to his room. After he telling the bartender not to disturb him, he closed the door.

As he closed the wooden door, he found the room's noise cancellation effects to be rather good. The noises from outside were greatly reduced.

“My actions today were a little too eye-catching! I didn't have a choice, though. Grey Stone City is too small, the activities of any stranger will definitely arouse unwanted attention. However, it is still much safer to be behind city walls. People will, at least, think twice before casting large area-of-effect spells!”

“Furthermore, there is a 50-50 chance of the faction which sent people to block the path sending someone after me. It'll be best if they haven't. If not, I must definitely kill the next wave of pursuers so I can get away cleanly.”

Leylin was deep in thought, “The spiritual force energy waves and the spirit sent to follow the trail look like the doings of an official Magus. But this seems like a waste of resources. Afterall, who would send an official Magus to track down and kill a level 2 acolyte?”

“The greatest possibility is a level 3 acolyte with a magic artifact or some pet reared by a Magus!”

“I should recuperate and remain observant of any activities that are happening while preparing to get rid of the enemy! I also need to cast the transfiguration spell daily!”

Leylin thought as he brought a piece of the piping hot steak that he ordered to his mouth.

The steak’s flavour was not bad and Leylin, who was famished, ate it all up in the blink of an eye. When he was done, he asked the bartender to clean up the mess. After the bartender left, Leylin hung a wooden ‘Do Not Disturb’ sign outside his door and set up a layer of energy particles to act as an early warning alarm system before falling into a deep meditative state.

Meditation is something a Magus has to do regularly. Although the increase in spiritual force from this is rather small, Leylin still persevered each and every day.

After toiling for over an hour, Leylin’s head slumped and he entered into slumberland.

.....

Outside Grey Stone City, in the air above the scorched woods.

* Pss Pss! * A green coloured winged creature suddenly swooped down.

“Doris has finally caught a whiff of the enemy’s scent!” The green tree sprite Doris retracted its wings and stepped onto the burnt wood with its bare skin with a puzzled expression.

“This is where the scent ends.” At this moment, the green tree sprite no longer had the same appearance as before.

Previously, It had merely been the size of a human head. However, Doris was now as big as a 7 or 8-year-old child.

Moreover, the originally pretty face now had layer upon layer of warts marring it. It looked extremely repulsive.

Its mouth was filled with fangs, and its tongue constantly flickered like a snake’s.

Its body now had many creases, as well as some strange looking scales.

Originally, green tree sprites were a kind of living creature that represented extreme beauty. Now, no one would link Doris with the green tree sprites.

Doris let out a yell filled with hatred, “Human, you won’t be able to escape!” Its tongue flickered. It suddenly spread its wings and flew towards the additional horse that Leylin had released.

In the next two days, Leylin stayed inside, finally recovering his strength and spiritual force back to its peak.

“It has been two days already, and they still have not caught up! It seems like it’s not an acolyte chasing me or they would have used magic to sniff me out by now! It’s probably some slave or creature reared by the Magus!”

Leylin surmised. His movements had been extremely quiet these two days. The only noteworthy event was when the public security officer brought gifts as he paid Leylin a visit. The officer said that he was there to plead for his wife’s younger brother. He then tried to ask about Leylin’s past, but Leylin only deceived him and did not reveal any information at all.

Later, Leylin changed into black robes and pulled up the hood to cover his face as he jumped out of the window.

In a gloomy and dark alley.

“Sir!” “Sir, you’re here!” A few hoodlums, upon seeing Leylin’s black robes, immediately came forward to receive him.

“How is it? Have there been any strange happenings around Grey Stone City these past few days?” said a hoarse voice from under the black robes.

“I’ll speak first, I’ll speak first! In the nearby village, Auntie Sofia’s cow gave birth to a two-headed calf. The others all said that it was cursed!”

This was what the hoodlum, who pushed the others away, hurriedly said.

[The target’s blood flow has increased by 12.4%. His brain waves appear to be stable. Judgement: It’s not a lie!] The A.I. Chip intoned inside his head.

Leylin nodded his head and tossed a silver coin to the hoodlum.

“It’s my turn now, Uncle Hugo and his son disappeared in the nearby woods while travelling! And traces of a wolf pack have been discovered at the scene!”

.....

These were the hoodlums that Leylin had subdued over the past two days. They were extremely convenient for gathering news.

At first, they tried to give false information to get the reward, but how could Leylin be fooled by an average human like them with the A.I. Chip to help him? He immediately broke the arms of the liar on the spot, shocking everyone present at the time.

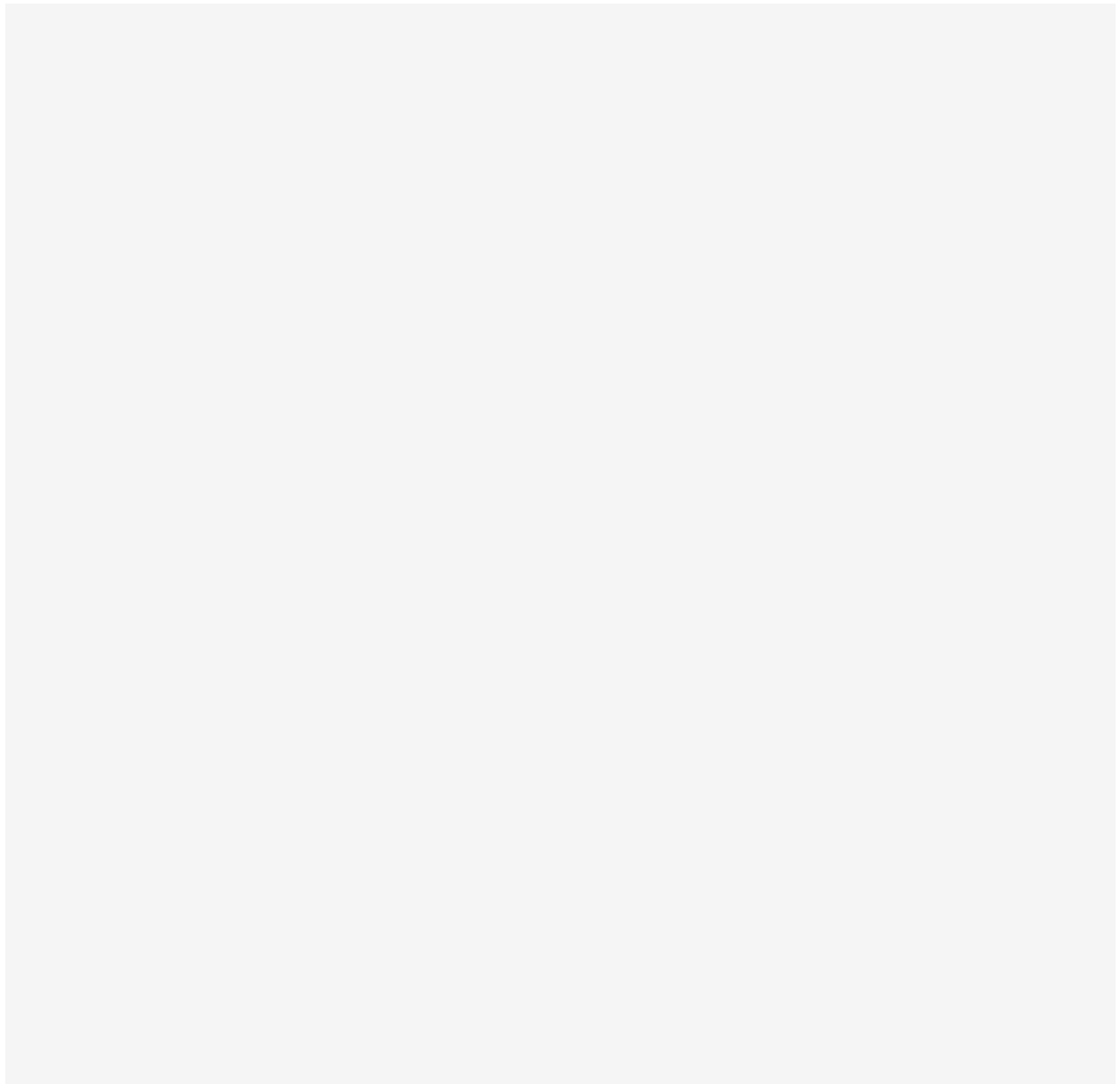
Under the coercion of both money and the threat of violence, these hoodlums were very soon, faithfully reporting all the news happening in and around Grey Stone City.

“What did you say, human corpses were discovered? There were also traces of thick green fluids?” Leylin was obviously interested, “Speak clearly and this gold coin is yours!”

A skinny red-haired youth gulped down his saliva, “This is news I just heard. In the mill beside Messi Village, a few corpses were discovered. All the blood had

been sucked dry. Everyone suspects this to be the work of a vampire. The city lord even sent several Knights to investigate!”

“En! Very good!” Leylin asked for the location again and realised that the area was very close to where he had last erased his tracks. He nodded his head and gave the gold coin to the youth. After listening to the rest of the news, he left the alley.



Chapter 46 – Ambush

Ambush

“Based on the latest news and the A.I. Chip’s calculations, the creature sucking the blood of others might be after me!”

“Moreover, it’s tracking me down by smell! Their numbers are unknown, but they shouldn’t exceed two, or there might actually be just one!”

Previously, Leylin got rid of his scent using the scent-masking powder and changed his appearance before he entered the city. He wanted to use the mixed scents of people to conceal his. He would then gather sufficient information about the enemy before planning a counterattack.

Now, it seemed to have paid off pretty well.

“What a pity! My scent-masking powder is almost used up, if not, I would have been able to leave here long ago!” Leylin surmised regretfully.

The Subterranean Blind Worm was a rather rare ingredient used by the Magi, and its price was never cheap. Leylin had spent quite a lot to obtain a small packet of the ingredient before refining it into a scent-masking powder.

However, he had enough for only about 3 or 4 days. Within such a short period, he could not possibly run far. Once the enemy expands the range of detection, his traces would definitely be discovered.

“It’s better to settle this as soon as possible. If they chase me to my destination, then that wouldn’t do me any good!”

Leylin’s face became solemn.

Even now, the effects of the powder were wearing off. He was relying more and more on the complicated mix of smells in the city to mask his scent. Alas, the unknown creatures were still able to trace him even after all he did.

After returning to his room, Leylin casually sat on the bed and mentally called up the A.I. Chip.

“A.I. Chip! In accordance with the news obtained during these past two days, simulate the enemy’s movement patterns, and design a plan for killing them!”

[Beep! Establishing mission parameters, beginning simulation.....Map imported.....The Host’s battle strength imported, analysis in progress.....”]

The A.I. Chip’s icy cold and unfeeling mechanical voice intoned within his mind.

The A.I. Chip was a tool specifically allocated to scientists in his previous world, so how could it have the intelligence or even emotions? Due to human rights concerns, they had forbidden A.I. Chips from manifesting intelligence and emotion as a core directive in its programming.

[Simulation complete. Host kills the target but will sustain light injuries. Success rate: 67.7%]

The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned while transmitting a large amount of information into Leylin’s mind.

“Sustain injuries?” Leylin stroked his chin, “Are there any possibilities of killing the target unscathed?”

[Insufficient Data! Requires more detailed information on the target!]

“So it’s like this,” Leylin shook his head. According to the news he got from the hoodlums, the creature outside the city was already in an enraged mood and had started attacking the locals. At this rate, it would definitely charge into the city within 24 hours.

Although there was a mutual accord among the Magi to not disrupt the lives of the regular humans, there were still some who were crazy enough to do so.

If massive casualties resulted, and his identity was discovered, Leylin had to take responsibility for the collateral damages, aside from taking into consideration the creatures and the Magi behind them. This was a problem that he clearly did not want.

“67.7%, this is enough for me to take my chances! I also have confidence in being able to retreat fully!” Vehemence marked Leylin’s countenance as he walked out.

The pub’s atmosphere remained as boisterous as ever. Upon seeing Leylin, the bartender went forward and bowed, “Sir, do you have any instructions?”

“Help me find a person.....” Leylin spoke slowly and made his request.

“No problem! Although there aren’t any mercenaries of the sort in this city, there are bandits here. I can contact them on your behalf.”

The bartender said, “By the way, Lord Roland, the city’s lord, sent men over. He wishes to meet you, sir!”

“The city’s lord?” Leylin nodded his head. No matter where a Preparatory Knight went, they would always be warmly greeted and received by lords. If Roland were to know of Leylin’s status as an acolyte, the treatment would be even grander.

“I have something on right now. How about we change to meeting time to the day after tomorrow?” Leylin enquired.

“Of course!”

“Also, the steak that you guys have here isn’t bad, send a serving of it to my room tonight.” Leylin instructed once again.

“As you wish!” The bartender smiled.

.....

The second day, late in the night.

A grey robed figure appeared in the charred woodland nearby.

“Investigate? What is there to investigate here? There aren’t any treasures here. Most likely this was caused by some careless farmer, which resulted in this area going up in a blaze!”

The grey robed man was quite skinny. His movements, though, were rather swift as he continuously rummaged through the piles of charred wood.

“Something isn’t right! These scorch marks were not done by normal flames!” The man’s brows furrowed. His experience as a bandit made him realise something obviously wasn’t right just by looking at the scorch marks.

“This..... Seems to be the doings of mysterious entities.” The bandit’s hair stood on end. As a member of the underground activities, he had only heard of these entities in myths. These stories emphasised the most important things about them: their mysteriousness, their cold-heartedness, and that they were not to be made enemies of!

“I’d better hurry and leave! If I knew this mission was linked to these mysterious entities, I wouldn’t have accepted it even if the rewards were dozen-fold!”

The grey robed man trembled and wanted to leave.

“I found it. The smell of my enemy!” At this moment, a hoarse and repugnant voice sounded from behind.

The bandit’s body shivered. He saw an abomination, the size of a child, floating in midair.

Its body was strewn with scales in a disorderly fashion. Its face was full of warts. From time to time, its snake-like tongue hissed out.

“I’m afraid that even the devil wouldn’t be as ugly as this!” The bandit thought as he jumped back by 5 metres.

“I should have thought of this before! I have actually turned into bait!” The bandit shouted.

“Don’t think about leaving!” Doris spat its tongue out and flew above the bandit, almost immediately with just a few flaps of its wings.

“We can talk about this! I have a lot of information on this mission’s principal!” The bandit yelled in despair.

“Die!”

Doris’s eyes were bloodshot. It did not care about the pleas and screams of the bandit. Immediately, it chewed on the right arm that was waving the dagger about and fed voraciously on the bandit’s blood.

A few minutes later, only the bandit’s shrivelled corpse remained.

“A scent lingers on his robes! That damned acolyte is definitely in the city!” Doris squinted at the silhouette of the city walls.

* Xiu! *

A black arrow zoomed past. A boom was heard as it went supersonic, directly piercing Doris’ chest.

“The last of the scent-masking powder was wasted here. I even sprinkled some paralysis powder on the bandit’s body. I don’t believe that this arrow won’t hit its target!”

From behind some tall shrubs, Leylin emerged wearing a leather armour and carrying the crossbow he had just used.

“Enemy!” Doris’ face twitched. Its originally repulsive face now even showed veins bulging from it. It was a sight that would definitely make children cry.

“Even I wouldn’t have guessed that the one chasing me was the Green Tree Sprite from before! This originally beautiful creature has now turned into something like this!” Leylin was a little shocked.

[Mutated Green Tree Sprite. Strength: 3.1, Agility: 4.3, Vitality: 3.5, Spiritual force: 5.5. Abilities unknown!] The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned the readings and situation over.

“Its attributes were actually raised by this much! What an astonishing spell. However, its body’s unstable condition can slowly be seen on its surface. It is unlikely to survive more than half a month.” Leylin eyes flashed coldly.

“The enemy who murdered my father and sisters! Even if Doris had to betray its soul, Doris will avenge them!”

Doris howled as it yanked the arrow out of its chest. A puddle of green liquid gushed out of the wound.

The green liquid quickly covered the whole chest., A plant root could be seen extending continuously and very soon the wound was suppressed.

“Go to hell!” Doris charged at Leylin in a green blur.

“It actually went through so much mutation that melee attacks are no longer effective?” Leylin nodded his head and snapped his fingers.

“Pa!”

Suddenly, a mud ball rose from the ground, blocking Doris’s path. Its contents were revealed to be crimson coloured potions.

* Bang! * A flame rose up. The accompanying heat wave even scorched the nearby vegetation.

The flames engulfed Doris and the crackling sound of something being barbequed was heard.

* Hu! * A green figure emerged from the sea of flames. Its body was scorched black. It even still had the fire burning on it as it charged towards Leylin.

[Target’s speed reduced by 67%!] Chimed the A.I. Chip.

“It was first affected by the paralysis powder, and then injured by the explosive potions. Even if it specialises in fire resistance, it will definitely still receive damage!”

Leylin’s face was calm. He threw away the crossbow and then drew his cross blade as he charged forward.

“Cross Slash!” The silver cross blade shone. This time, Leylin even circulated his ignited internal Knight energy. The sharp blade reflected a glimmer of light.

When the cross figure directly struck the Green Tree Sprite, immediately a pool of green liquid appeared.

Doris toppled, and Leylin stopped advancing. He looked at the cross blade in his hands and his brows furrowed.

The silver blade was already filled with bumpy spots where the various liquid from Doris's body splashed.

“Even its bodily fluid has a strong corrosive effect? This cross blade is ruined!” Leylin felt a little rueful. This cross blade had been taken from a noble youth while in the travelling party. It was extremely handy to use, but he never thought that it would be destroyed here.

He threw away the cross blade. As he looked at Doris who was still trying to charge over despite the cross slash on its chest, Leylin quickly chanted an incantation.

“Umbra's Hand!”

A black-coloured palm rose from Doris' shadow. It grabbed hold of its ankles and kept them firmly on the ground.

* Sssi Sssi! * A layer of white mist rose from the black-coloured palm.

“Although Umbra's Hand has a corrosive effect, it seems like, against the mutated Green Tree Sprite, it is still somewhat lacking! Leylin's mind quickly worked out the situation.

“I'll use you as a guinea pig for my newly learnt spell!”

“The sound of the azure thunder! Listen to my command! Descend to the mortal realm and strike my foes down!” (Byron Language)

As Leylin voiced his incantation, silvery-blue lightning suddenly appeared in his hands.

“Go!” Leylin pointed his fingers and dazzling lightning flew towards Doris in an arc.

“Doris is not afraid of death!” At this moment, Doris stretched its hands forward, and its palm split open. From it, a tree root-like object extended out.

* Xiu! * The tree roots entwined and assumed the shape of a bow. A brown coloured arrow was already loaded onto it.

“Not good!” Leylin hurriedly dodged.

Chapter 47 – Inconvenience

Inconvenience

Leylin tried to wrest his way out, but an excruciating pain radiated from his shoulders.

[Host has sustained injuries from an arrow! Warning! Warning! High bacteria concentration on the arrowhead, recommend immediate disinfection of the affected area!]

“Damn it!” Leylin hurriedly pulled out the arrow and took a silver dagger from his robes. Gritting his teeth, he gouged out the flesh surrounding the wound.

He hurriedly retrieved a green coloured potion from his waist pouch and poured half of it onto the wound. The other half he emptied into his mouth. Only after hearing the A.I. Chip’s voice, [Crisis under control], did he heave a sigh of relief.

When Leylin was struck by the arrow, Doris had also been struck by the lightning, and had fallen down, crashing onto the ground.

At this moment, Doris’s whole body was charred and its wings were more than half broken.. One of her hands had vanished without any trace of it left behind, and her ankle was still grasped by the Umbra’s Hand spell. Her life force had dropped to a dangerous level. She could die at any moment.

“Revenge! My revenge!” Doris unconsciously kept muttering those words. Suddenly its eyes flashed coldly, and it bit off its own right leg.

* Pa! * The leg flew in the air. The Umbra's Hand, which was holding onto the ankle, disappeared quickly as well.

“Let's die together!”

Doris's whole body inflated. Warts on its face vibrated. Her speed tripled as she charged directly at Leylin.

“Damn it!” Leylin pressed down on his shoulder wound and hastily retreated. At the same time, he threw out the last explosive potion.

* Bang! * An intense explosion reverberated.

Red flames and green liquid mixed together. It let off a dark green firelight.

Leylin rolled back several times before he could finally escape the blast radius.

At this moment, the surroundings were showered with a bunch of green-coloured bones and flesh. It was utterly repulsive.

“Eh?” Looking at the green-coloured remains on the ground, Leylin saw that a yellow fluid swiftly flowed out, continuously corroding the ground. His expression involuntarily changed, and he hurriedly inspected his body.

A few drops of thick fluid had unknowingly corroded his leather armour and opened several wounds on his body. Around each of these wounds was a patch of yellow that was beginning to numb that area.

[Host is suffering from an unknown secondary pathogenic infection. It has invaded the Host and is spreading at very rapidly. Recommend to take counter measures!]

“A.I. Chip! Scan the injury! Find a way to treat it!”

[Mission parameters established! Scanning.....] [Beep! Treatment requires 30 grams of Human Head Bird, 500 millilitres of pink ink oil, 50 grams of Green Coconut Rock.....]

The A.I. Chip continued to list down a huge number of items.

“When would I have the time to buy these? A.I. Chip, generate the method for immediate suppression!” Leylin’s face darkened.

[Cauterising the wound with a flame will be effective in reducing the rate of infection!] The A.I. Chip responded.

“A flame?” Leylin ripped his clothes and casually picked up a burning branch as he placed the glowing flame on his wound.

* Sssii! * The sound of something being barbecue was heard accompanied by the smell of charring flesh. Leylin’s face contorted in pain.

Minutes later, the A.I. Chip pronounced the treatment effective. Leylin put away the fire and sat limply on the ground panting, cold sweat dripping all over his body.

“The enemy, this time, was extremely dangerous! Its resistance towards physical and flame attacks was extremely high. Its speed was also fast, and it had a poison attack. It seems to have been prepared specifically for me. If not for the A.I. Chip, I’m afraid.....”

Doris’ body fluids, containing the secondary infection from the arrow’s poison, were something that the A.I. Chip had not factored in. This made Leylin, who expected only mild injuries from the encounter, suffer such a wretched victory.

“On top of that, the explosive potions that I had prepared have all been used! I have to prepare more ingredients again!”

The past few battles, Leylin had highly relied on potions to defeat his enemies. However, the consumption was also huge, and he threw away close to a thousand magic crystals in value.

Fortunately, he knew how to brew explosive potions; if not, the cost would have skyrocketed even higher.

“Flame can only temporarily constrain the spreading of the pathogen. I have to buy the necessary ingredients to cure it completely!” Leylin looked at his charred wound, his brows furrowed as he gulped down another strength Potion before picking himself up and heading back to Grey Stone City.

This was a huge disturbance. It was very likely that the city’s guards already sensed that something was amiss and would very soon send someone over to inspect.

Leylin endured the intense pain and sneaked back inside Grey Stone City. He stealthily took out his chest, not bothering to even bring his two horses along with him. After stealing a light brown coloured horse outside the city walls, he escaped under the cover of night. He was headed towards the Magus market located on the map.

As for the summons of the city lord, it was only natural that he ignored it completely.

.....

A dozen odd days later, on the way to Wolkan Province, a light brown coloured horse could be seen carrying two huge chests with a black robed figure astride its back. The horse was panting heavily as its four hoofs dashed across the ground.

“A.I. Chip! Show me my current status!” Leylin’s body which moved up and down with the horse’s movement, thought inwardly.

[Beep! Leylin Farlier, level 2 acolyte, Knight. Strength: 1.3(2.5), Agility: 1.5(2.7), Vitality: 1.0(3.0), Spiritual force: 4.1(4.4), Magical Power: 4.0. Status: Host is in a weakened state due to infection from the pathogen]

“Although the pathogen was inhibited, it has been a dozen odd days since then. My body is still in a weak condition. Only my spiritual force has increased again- this must be due to the result of constant meditation!”

Leylin looked at his stats and smiled bitterly.

Right now he had a completely new face. He had changed from an icy cold soldier into an extremely dashing golden-haired blue eyed westerner. His face, however, was devoid of colour.

“A.I. Chip! Project the mind map!” Leylin looked at the little information he had compiled superimposed onto an extremely detailed map.

“From Bicky’s intelligence gathering, there should be a gathering area for Magi nearby. There, I will be able to buy ingredients to treat this infection!”

Based on half a month of probing and simulation, Leylin surmised that the opponent had only dispatched Doris. Due to the official war with Abyssal Bone Forest Academy, nobody could be bothered with a lowly level 2 acolyte like himself. This was a great piece of news.

“I can probably even make inquiries about the current situation in Abyssal Bone Forest Academy!” Leylin made up his mind and left the main road. He quickly found a spot, took out his tent and tools, and went about setting up camp.

“This area seems a little desolate. However, it’s only normal. Magus activities always steer clear of human communities as much as possible. Moreover, the radiation from a Magus is not something that regular humans can withstand.”

Leylin sprinkled some white powder around the tent area to prevent bugs and beasts from approaching. He then picked up a metal pan, poured some stream water into it, and lit a bonfire.

Just as the stream water began to boil, Leylin emerged from the trees and threw some mushrooms and other plants into it.

A moment later, after adding some spices and a few strips of jerky, a fresh fragrance of food permeated the air.

Leylin scooped a bowl for himself. The soup base was white in colour. It felt extremely comforting to drink it while it was hot.

Leylin sighed in contentment, “As expected, food that’s hot is the best. I could almost puke from constantly eating biscuits and jerky.”

The surroundings were dotted with wildflowers, and there was also the sound made by an unknown bird; its cry was much similar to that of a skylark.

“If not for my injury, this would have been perfect!” Leylin finished his meat broth and adjusted his robes.

Under his clothes, a charred area of flesh had a layer of fine hair growing around it looking like hair on one’s head, which creeped people out.

“Over there, kill him!”

Signs of movement came from the trees nearby. Leylin’s brows furrowed. The shouting gradually became closer. He had a feeling that trouble had come knocking once more.

The bushes nearby split apart as a large guy protecting a nobly dressed young lady rushed out.

When the large guy saw Leylin, he was shocked. He never expected someone had set up camp here. He said with a bitter smile at Leylin, "I'm afraid you'll also be implicated in this."

"Over there, don't let him escape!" A group of armed soldiers in leather armour rushed over. The leader wore an extremely beautiful chainmail.

"This outfit does not seem like something mercenaries or adventurers would wear. These people are most likely the personal retainers of some nobility which is even more troublesome!" Leylin's brows furrowed.

According to the A.I. Chip's scan, this large guy was obviously injured but still had the strength of a Preparatory Knight.

As for the pursuers, the leader was at Knight level, whereas the soldiers behind were just a little stronger than the average human.

"Who are you?" The leader looked at Leylin.

"I'm just an innocent bystander, please continue and don't mind me. I haven't seen anything today!" Leylin continued drinking his meat broth.

This casual vibe obviously made the private squad leader apprehensive since the large guy and young lady stood on the other side.

"Please save us! We are the descendants of Viscount Barrett. If you were to lend us a helping hand, I will definitely remember your kindness, and you will forever have the friendship of the Barrett family!"

The young lady had a pair of mesmerising blue eyes. At this moment her face had a pleading expression that would most likely move the majority of noble male youths to impulsively swear to fight for her honour.

"Miss Lanning, the Viscount only asks for you to return. Please do not resist!" The leader told the young lady.

“That underhanded and despicable worm, he covets the possessions of my family and poisoned my father to his death. Even if I die I will not go back!”

The young lady poured all of her problems out in one go, sneaking a glance at Leylin from time to time. Although her movements were extremely well concealed, Leylin still saw through it.

“It seems like a struggle of inheritance by a descendant who has failed. By purposefully revealing this conflict, you want to drag me down into this huh?” Leylin shook his head.

“Viscount Sire has not done any of the things you claim. As for the inheritance, it is to be decided after the meeting with the nobles!”

The leader exclaimed loudly.

“I have proof on my body!” The young lady snarled.

“Quick, bring Missy home!” The leader seemed prepared to not negotiate any further.

A few of the commoner troops brandishing their knives and swords charged forward. The large guy roared and shielded the noble young lady.

The large guy’s strength was obviously not bad. Even though he was injured, he still made 5 of these soldiers pay with their lives.

The commoner troops went forward to chop and retrieve the head of the large guy. They then tied the screaming noble young lady up and only then did the leader who had been wary of Leylin give him a suspicious glance.

“It looks like we have been bothering you! Let’s go!”

The leader said as he turned around and prepared to leave.

Chapter 48 – Market

Market

“Really? Then why are you still wielding your sword?”

Leylin rose up slowly.

“The secrets of our Sire cannot be heard by anyone else!” The leader brandishes his sword slowly. “Moreover, the wounds on your body is the reason why you cannot lend a hand!”

“Cough cough.....” Leylin coughed feebly, “Accurate discernment! Seems like you have resolved to kill me today? I swear never to reveal a word of today’s matter!”

“Only the dead will keep secrets!” The leader shouted as he slashed at Leylin, his sword reflecting a snow white glint.

Leylin dodged in a rather miserable manner.

The leader’s expression became elated, the muscles on his body bulged, but just as he was about to charge forward, his complexion suddenly changed and he retreated several steps.

Behind him the soldiers and the young lady collapsed weakly onto the ground. Only their eyes could still move. “You actually poisoned us!” The leader snarled in shock.

“As expected of a Knight, you actually have the strength to withstand it!” Leylin nodded his head. Although with his strength now he could completely massacre this crowd, if there was a more convenient method available, why shouldn’t one use it instead?

The leader threw down his long blade and turned to flee. His speed was actually similar to that of a regular human.

“Under a poisoned state, and yet still having this speed. This is rather remarkable.” Leylin assessed indifferently.

He raised the crossbow, “A.I. Chip! Calculate wind speed and humidity! Adjust trajectory!”

* Xiu! * A black line pierced through the Knight’s chest. When he saw the arrow that entered from his back and exited his chest bringing blood along with it, fell down with a look of disbelief.

Leylin strode to where the young lady was and towered above her. He stared down then tossed the contents of a bag of powder into her mouth. A moment later, the young lady stood up and stretched her limbs.

“You are..... a Magus?” The young lady looked at Leylin as her eyes filled with curiosity.

“No! Just a Potions master. Shift them all over here and take care of them!” Leylin pointed at the fallen soldiers on the ground.

“Why don’t you do it?” The young lady pursed her lips, but she still shifted the paralysed soldiers over. She even moved the Knight leader and the large guy’s corpse over too.

Afterward, the young lady's eyes flashed coldly. She took out a dagger from her robes and stabbed all of these paralysed soldiers to death.

Throughout the whole process, Leylin watched on frostily, as the young lady stabbed her pursuers to death.

“You are definitely a Magus!” The young lady said confidently.

“As long as you help me with my revenge, I will hand over all my prized possessions to you. This includes the inheritance of a Magus. And I also will belong to you!”

The girl said as she unfastened her robes.

“Are you sure that there is a Magus inheritance in your family?” Leylin was rather amused as he asked.

“I swear it upon the honour of my family!” The young lady's expression was staunch.

[Scanning in the process! Target's blood flow is rapidly increasing. Unusual brainwave activity detected. Conclusion: Lie – 93.3%]

Looking at the conclusion of the A.I. Chip, Leylin shook his head.

“Why don't you leave!”

“What?” The young lady was obviously shocked, “You don't fancy me? I have a lot of prized possessions in my family, you can have anything you like.....”

“Could it be that you have read too many tales about Knights in shining armour?” Leylin interrupted her speech.

“In a dense forest, an adventurer chanced upon a princess who was fleeing, and even helped her seek revenge. After overcoming a series of adversities. They triumphed over their enemies. The adventurer obtained the treasures, the love and the admiration of the princess. From then on, they lived happily ever after!”

Leylin recited it in a poetic, bard-like manner.

“It’s merely an empty illusory, full of false promise. At most, I’ll obtain your body and flesh then I have to help you seek revenge against a Viscount who has the backing of a huge faction. Do I look like an idiot to you?”

“But.....”The young lady was obviously still struggling.

“Get lost!” Leylin bellowed.

The young lady got up helplessly. A malicious and poisonous gaze flashed in her eyes, as she prepared to leave.

“Wait!” After the young lady walked for several steps, Leylin’s voice travelled over.

The young lady, looking gleeful, turned around.

* Xiu! * An arrow bore through the beautiful face of the young lady and pinned her to the tree right behind her.

“Actually, I could have let you go, but I saw a malicious and raging intent in your eyes!” Leylin gradually sighed. “To a person who had always protected and followed you, you did not even bother to bury his corpse before leaving. From this, it can be seen that you are a brazen ingrate.”

“Moreover, to get your revenge, you contemplated some sort of reprisal against me. You will definitely announce this matter today to everyone. Although I am not afraid of trouble, I detest such inconveniences very much.....”

“With these many reasons, why would I still let you go?”

Leylin pulled out the arrow and heaped the corpse of the young lady, who died with a grievance, together with the others.

From his bag, he withdrew a yellow coloured potion and poured it on the wound of a corpse. * Sssii! * Soon, the corpse putrefied into a puddle of yellow viscous liquid.

Leylin did the same thing for the rest of the corpses, destroying them all completely.

Moments later, the area surrounding the camp, had only a puddle of yellow water left. The large guy, the young lady, and the pursuing soldiers, all of them, had disappeared with nary a trace.

These potions that could putrefy corpses, and the paralysis powder- all were Leylin’s inventions, done when he was bored. Although they do not have much effect against a Magus or even an acolyte, it was still extremely effective against normal humans.

“Right now, the most important thing still is to get enough ingredients to treat my wounds. Anything else would just be an inconvenience!”

Leylin sighed, “What a waste of a newly erected campground.”

Leylin packed his things once more, and erased any sign of his existence, before disappearing into the woods.

.....

Nighttime, on the outskirts of a densely packed forest.

A figure fully draped in black robes and even had on a conical bamboo hat to conceal its face, appeared.

“Lost Forest, it’s here!” Leylin took in his surroundings and compared it again with his map. Without turning around, he entered the darkness.

His leather shoes stepped on the dried twigs, which let out a * Chi-Chi * sound. In the darkness, it sounded even eerier than normal.

“A.I. Chip, initiate area scan!”

[Beep! Slight illusionary field discovered! Field effect: Regular humans who enter will be baffled, walk around in circles, and eventually leave unknowingly.]

“Indeed, no wonder there are tales of ghosts and demons in here. There is often news about humans going missing.” Although they were under the illusion, if any Magus met an unsuspecting victim, they wouldn’t mind having another sampling for their experiments.

“Hello! acolyte! Welcome to the Magus Market!”

A black figure leapt down lightly from atop a tree and landed on a broken gravestone. Its eyes were gleaming with a dark green light.

Leylin walked closer, and discovered it to be a black cat.

“A Magus’ companion? A modulated organism? Or the result of a spell?” Leylin thought inwardly. He then bowed slightly.

“I am a wandering acolyte who heard that the market here is open to any Magus, is that correct?”

“Indeed, this market is governed by the mighty Walker family. Moreover, it promises that every Magus who enters will be ensured safety and protection. Of course, that is only within the perimeters of the market!” The black cat licked its paws as it let off a human-like snigger.

“Then, I wish to enter!”

“All acolytes have to pay a fee of 1 magic crystal! It’s free for all Magi!”

“Here!” Leylin nodded his head and tossed over a low-grade magic crystal over.

The black cat caught it in its mouth, turned around and while leaping away from the gravestone, it made a beckoning gesture towards Leylin.

Leylin shrugged and followed it.

The further in they got, the denser the white mist became. However, there was a road under their feet that seemed to be specially constructed before.

“We’re here!” Along with the black cat’s voice, the mist ahead dissipated and boisterous clamouring sounds could be heard. This made Leylin feel like he had returned to his academy’s trading area.

The only difference was that the people here were all tightly wrapped in cloaks or grey robes, not revealing any piece of their skin at all.

Occasionally, some did not bother about concealing their identity, which made Leylin broaden his horizons.

In here were some marine species who had scales on them, and half-beastmen who had fur on their necks. They were different from beastmen, since they were rather a loving and affectionate of species. There Magi could be produced too, and Leylin even saw a Magus with the head of an owl.

A large number of these people also exuded the energy waves of acolytes, but Leylin felt that their aura reeked of blood.

“Although the acolytes in the outside world do not have a firm foundation compared to those in the academies, they are able to advance in an environment

where resources are scarce. Their experiences must be bountiful, and they even may be more adept at fighting!” Leylin’s heart sank.

The potions in his hands were almost consumed, and right now he was at the most a stronger acolyte amongst the level 2 acolytes, having barely enough strength for self-preservation. If he were to reveal the potions he was carrying, these acolytes would swarm around him like crocodiles and rip him to shreds.

Lowering his head, he found that the black cat had vanished completely.

“Sir! Do you need a guide? I only ask for 1 magic crystal!” A rather skinny little boy ran over.

He had the energy waves of a level 1 acolyte coming from his body., Even though his face was extremely thin, his eyes were very lively.

“Bring me around to have a look!”

“Alright!” The boy was in glee as he hurriedly ran in front of Leylin to lead the way.

“This market is under the protection of the Walker family, a well-received family by both wandering acolytes and Magi alike. Look over there, the wooden hut in the centre is a shop personally set up by the Walker family.

The small boy tried his best to fulfill his duties as a guide.

“So these are other people’s stalls?” Leylin pointed at the acolytes displaying their goods on the floor. Their goods were much better than those in the academy, and of course, more of them were counterfeits too.

“Yes, you only need to settle the procedures in the central hall, pay the fees, and then you’ll be able to obtain a place to set up your stall!” The little boy nodded, “Sir, is there anything that you’d wish to sell? The Walker family also provides consignment services.”

“I’m not in a hurry now. Bring me to the centremost area for a walk!” Leylin said.

In this Magus Market, he discovered several official Magi with activated defensive force fields surrounding them. These are existences he could not fight against right now, so he was more cautious than usual.

“This is the smithy! It specialises in selling weapons! Next to it, with the sign which has a test tube on it, is a Potioneering shop. On the far left is an auction house. From time to time, they have a few premium goods!” The little boy was extremely familiar with this place.

“An auction house? Then will they have the information about magic artifacts?” Leylin casually asked. He was a little more interested now.

Chapter 49 – Recovery

Recovery

“Magic artifact?”

The little boy shook his head, “That is a very precious item! Last year the auction only sold one low-grade magic artifact. There were even official Magi present who joined the bidding.....”

“So it’s like this. Take me to the weapons shop!”

Leylin followed the little boy to where the blacksmith’s smithy was.

“Hey! Big-bearded old man, I brought you some business!” Once the little boy entered the forge he started shouting loudly.

“I’ll be right there!” The shop owner did indeed have a thick and bushy beard. He was not tall, but the muscles on his arm were extremely hard and gave an impression of power.

“Greetings esteemed guest! I am the owner of this smithy, please call me Black Hammer!” The shop owner introduced himself.

“I need a cross blade!” Leylin spoke of his intentions. Previously, he had ruined his cross blade when fighting the mutated Green Tree Sprite. He now wanted a better quality one, something that wasn’t easy to obtain.

“A cross blade huh, follow me.” Black Hammer undid the wine flagon hanging on his waist and took a sip. The scent of alcohol wafted out.

“Oh! Haven’t I told you to tone down your drinking?” The little boy frowned as he pinched his nose.

“Hiccup.....Edgar, you are still a child and cannot appreciate the absolute bliss of fine tasting wine!” Black Hammer shook his head and led Leylin to a wooden shelf.

“My shop’s finished cross blades are all here. Please take your pick. Of course, if it isn’t satisfactory, you can have one custom made, as for the price.....”

When he spoke of the price, Black Hammer’s words were extremely clear. He did not seem even a little bit drunk.

Leylin casually scrutinized the cross blades on the wooden shelf. These blades obviously already went through the rigors of war. Their silver surface emanated a bloodthirsty aura.

Leylin casually picked one up. It had an intricate yet sturdy feel that tingled into his palms that felt rather heavy.

“A finely smithed steel blade. It even has a metallic star smelted onto it. The hilt is wrapped in black silk, to prevent it from slipping through one’s hands.....” Black Hammer described the item.

Leylin nodded his head and placed the cross blade back on the yellow wooden shelf, then picked up another one.

This cross blade’s exterior was a little darkened. It let out a solid reliable aura.

“A blade made of alloy. It has been modified before. Able to resist corrosion and flames!”

“Oh?” Leylin was a little moved, “Can it deflect a Magus’ spell?”

“Of course not!” Black Hammer shook his head immediately. “To resist a spell, there should be runes inscribed on the blade at the very least. Moreover, it has to be compounded using precious materials from an Alchemist. Such a blade would already be considered a magic artifact, and wouldn’t be displayed in the open like this for sale.....”

“My apologies, I have been too greedy!” Leylin shook his head.

Picking up the black blade, “I want this, and prepare another 20 crossbow bolts for me.....”

“Alright, the price is.....” Black Hammer’s eyes shone. He did not bother to drink his wine anymore.

When Leylin and the little boy walked out of the weapons shop, Leylin hung the cross blade from his waist, at the same time he took a magic crystal and tossed it over to the small boy.

“This is your remuneration for today! I wish to walk alone now!”

“Alright! Have a good day!” The little boy was extremely delighted and put away the magic crystal before trotting off.

Leylin stood rooted to the spot until the little boy could no longer be seen. Only then did he turn back to the stalls he had first went in, where the goods were lying on the ground.

After browsing for a bit, Leylin visited every wooden shop found in the central area. Only then did Leylin walk into the shop with the test tube sign.

“Sir, how may I assist you?” spoke a young male staff who wore a fashionable western style suit.

Leylin looked at the potions on the shelves. These sparkling potions radiated various colours. The transparent glass counter also displayed various precious ingredients.

“It seems like this shop’s goods are a little better than fatty Woon’s!” Leylin nodded his head in approval.

“I will need the feathers of a flamingo, eyeballs of multi-tailed owl, feather from a Human Head Bird, Pink Ink Oil, Green Coconut Rock.....”

Leylin hurriedly listed his items. These were all ingredients needed to treat his injuries, to make explosive potions and formulate other basic potions.

The staff quietly listened until Leylin finished speaking before bowing and saying, “My apologies, but may I ask if you are a Potions master?”

“I have a little bit of knowledge in the field!” Leylin’s facial features were concealed by the hood of his the cloak. Thus, the staff was unable to discern his expressions.

“Our Walker family wholeheartedly invites you to join our family. The terms we offer are the absolute best amongst Magi families of equal ranking” The staff bowed even deeper.

Leylin did expect this a little. Potions masters were a difficult breed to raise. Plus, Magi cannot do without potions so Magi families have always tried to recruit them by offering generous remuneration.

He would definitely not be able to conceal his identity as a Potions master if he were to buy raw ingredients. However, as long as no one discovers his talent, he wasn’t afraid of letting them know. After all, as long as he was not found out,

others would not know if the person standing before them was a Potions master or an acolyte.

“I will give this some consideration. Do you have the ingredients I listed earlier?” Leylin said with a raspy voice.

“We do have 2 flamingo feathers. As for eyeballs of the multi-tailed owl, we still have a pair left. However, it has been around for 3 years, so some of its medicinal properties have spoiled a little. As for the feathers from a Human Head Bird, Pink Ink Oil, Green Coconut Rock, we have them here, also.....”

The staff seemed to remember every item in the shop from memory and blurted them all out.

Leylin nodded his head. A Magus’ main cultivation is the spiritual force. After advancing, their brains will also develop. Hence, all Magi were intelligent people. As for Leylin’s conjecture, when Magi have advanced into a higher realm, their brains would even be comparable to the processing abilities of the A.I. Chip.

“I want all of them, name your price!” Leylin nodded his head.

“The total amounts to 157 magic crystals!” The staff smiled.

Leylin nodded his head and took out a small box, which he had prepared earlier, from his robes. After opening, one could see that it was densely packed with cyan-coloured potions.

“Look, these are all strength potions!” Leylin took out the strength potions and lay them in front of the front of the staff.

strength potions were one of the basic potions. In fact, most of the Potioneering acolytes chose to brew it first. After seeing this, the staff became evidently disappointed.

But he quickly recovered his composure and began to inspect.

“30 strength Potions, I can give you 130 magic crystals for them,” the staff said.

Leylin approved silently. If he were to sell these at Woon's, he would have gotten 120 magic crystals at most. Prices outside were indeed higher, but it was more dangerous too.

“Okay!” Leylin counted another 27 magic crystals and handed them to the staff.

“Bring me the materials I ordered!”

“Okay, give me a moment!” The staff put away the potions and magic crystals before swiftly running to the back.

Leylin waited for what seemed like another dozen minutes before the staff returned with a small wooden chest, which he placed in front of Leylin.

“These are the goods you requested, please inspect them!”

Leylin opened the small wooden chest. It was compartmentalised using wooden trays, where various ingredients were placed on them. There were colourful feathers, green-coloured rocks, and various coloured powders.

Leylin fingers traced the various ingredients, “A.I. Chip! Inspect.....”

After the A.I. Chip indicated that all the ingredients were up to standard, only then did Leylin keep the wooden chest. He then rose to leave the Potion Shop.

“What I'm selling is only the most basic of strength Potion, and to gather the ingredients is already this complicated. Even I cannot guess the uses of these ingredients completely. They will definitely not be able to as well.”

Leylin hid the small wooden chest beneath his robes and circled around a few times before he slowly left the market.

“The most important thing is, my trades only cost around 100 magic crystals. If the Walker family was stirred because of this paltry amount, then their reputation would have long since gone bad!”

On the way, he increased the A.I. Chip’s detection area to the maximum. Only after confirming that no one was following him did Leylin leave the Lost Forest.

Ever since the earlier incident, Leylin moved camp. Right now he sheltered in a cave. As for its previous owner, a Black Bear, it had long since become Leylin’s dinner.

* Bang! *

Leylin stacked a few large boxes together to form a simple experiment table. Then, he placed his apparatus on it.

“I am finally going to be rid of this damned pathogen!” Leylin gritted his teeth, “Every day I have to cauterise this wound. With the limitations of my vitality and strength, I’ve had enough of it!”

Leylin picked up a green-coloured rock with the shape of a leaf on its surface.

This was a Green Coconut Rock, a rare half plant half mineral commodity.

Smashing the Green Coconut Rock apart, Leylin took the Pink Ink Oil and heated it. When it began to bubble, he added the grounded Green Coconut Rock powder.

* Sssii! * As the powdered Green Coconut Rock was poured onto the Pink Ink Oil, a hissing sound was let off.

The Pink Ink Oil turned green in a moment. It released a strangely fragrant odor.

[Potion successfully brewed!] Upon hearing the A.I. Chip’s confirmation, Leylin nodded his head slightly.

He stripped all his clothes off. All sorts of burns and scars could be seen littering his body. His shoulder and stomach each had an extremely horrifying scar with tufts of hair growing around them.

“Qiesiter – Kesi!” Leylin murmured an incantation.

The green-coloured potion in the test tube immediately boiled, and continued to evaporate, making the smell in the air more concentrated.

* Sssii! * As if having been granted a life of its own, the hairs around Leylin’s wounds started climbing out and wiggled their way into the test tube.

“Wu!” Leylin gritted his teeth and let these hairs make their way out as they pleased.

A dozen minutes later, Leylin’s wound no longer had black hair around it. As for the test tube, it transformed into a ball of hair.

Leylin’s expression remained apathetic as he wiped off his cold sweat. He lit a feather on fire and threw it on the ball of hair.

“Boohoo.....”

Green flames rose and mimicked the crying sound of a female, which was rather similar to Doris’ voice.

Many strands of hair tried to escape, but they were trapped by Leylin within a ball of milky white substance. They had no option but burn into oblivion.

Chapter 50 – Ellinel Market

Ellinel Market

After the green flames died down, what was left behind was a pile of white dust.

Leylin's expression was extremely solemn as he lightly dabbed on the dust. * Hu!
* The dust swirled in the air, transforming into a female's face, "Enemy! Enemy!"

"This pathogen contains the poison of an aggrieved soul, no wonder it is so strong!" Leylin shook his head, took out a green-coloured potion, and splashed it onto that female face.

* Sssii! * The human face rapidly turned into white mist, vanishing completely into thin air.

"A.I. Chip, initiate scan!" Leylin ordered.

[Beep! Scan complete. Result: Pathogen in Host body has been completely eradicated!]

Hearing the A.I. Chip, Leylin's face finally revealed his relief.

He stretched lazily and touched the scars on his body, "It's a little unsightly! If Neela were to see these, what would her expression be like?"

After rummaging through the big chest, he found a potion and downed it.

A dozen minutes later, Leylin's superficial layer of skin quivered and forced out the layer of scars and dead skin replacing them with glossier skin.

"Once I got rid of the pathogen, healing the scars on my skin is just a matter of a few potions!"

Leylin touched the scars which were extremely faded now, "I estimate that after one more dose, these will be completely gone!"

Leylin then took out the remainder of the unfortunate black bear's paw and rewarded himself with a good meal.

While eating and drinking until he was full, the sky outside had already dimmed. Leylin lit a small fire inside the cave and began to think of the journey ahead.

"Doris has finally been disposed of. There aren't any pursuers remaining so I can rest easy while travelling!"

"The academy's mission isn't really important. After all, I have 3 years to complete it. I wonder how the academy is faring right now?" Although Leylin could enquire about news concerning Abyssal Bone Forest Academy in the market today, he did not dare to.

Who knows if there might be spies around. If he were to expose his identity, wouldn't that be like walking right into a trap?

He could only wait till he journeyed through half the kingdom before he could safely begin making inquiries.

Such a huge matter will definitely be a hot topic at Magi gathering points. He only has to be careful not to expose any information about himself.

“All of these could be dealt with later, what’s important is to hurry and change all the potions into magic crystals. It is simply too inconvenient to lug all these huge chests around!”

Leylin patted the solid hard wooden chest. He thought of the miserable brown horse days ago that seemed like it would die anytime. He smiled bitterly.

“I can’t go to the Walker family’s market anymore. After all, I have just sold a number of potions there!”

Leylin mentally called up the map and located his current position.

“From the academy to Eastwoods Province, I have to travel through 5 other provinces. I can sell potions along the way. At best, I can only sell potions until Jersha Province.

On the map, the Jersha Province was midway to his destination. There were two more provinces separating Eastwoods Province from it.

If he were to sell his potions all the way to Eastwoods Province, wouldn’t that mean giving away his itinerary and purpose? Leylin wouldn’t be so foolish as to do that.

Although he sold his goods along the way, others may not be able to discover it. After all, the trades done every day were numerous. Leylin, however, would rather be a little more cautious in safeguarding his tracks.

As for Jersha Province, it was in the central region of Poolfield Kingdom and was accessible from all sides. Other people would not be able to guess Leylin’s destination at all.

“En!” Anyway, there is still time. If it’s necessary I can reroute to further locations. In any case, I must be careful never to reveal my identity!”

Leylin looked the points marked as Magi gathering spots and entered into deep thought.....

Two odd months passed.

On a path to Jersha Province, a sturdily built black horse carrying a wooden chest and a black robed man could be seen cantering along.

The black robed man had bright red hair and was extremely handsome.

This was naturally Leylin in disguise.

Ever since that time, as Leylin journeyed, he found some Magi gathering points or some small scale trading sites time to time, where he sold the potions he brewed.

As he only sold a few each time, he did not attract the avarice of other experts. Occasionally, some foolish acolyte blinded by greed would waylay him, but they were completely not his match at all. The most dangerous instance was when a level 3 acolyte brought a group of other acolytes to surround him. Still, Leylin managed to evade them with the help of the A.I. Chip's detection capability.

Through these trades, he acquired a few precious materials, and many books on specialised Magi knowledge, greatly enhancing the data bank of the A.I. Chip.

In these past two months, he finally recorded all the Shadow and Dark Element spell models he purchased previously. He then completely obliterated the contents of the book.

This lightened his luggage tremendously.

After selling a huge portion of his potions and getting rid of those bulky spell books, Leylin could fit all of his belongings into one chest.

According to his projections, he could simply travel with a knapsack after selling the remaining potions.

“I have underestimated the popularity of potions. Right now, I have amassed over 2,000 magic crystals. If not for purchasing information and other miscellaneous items, I might have gotten over 2500 magic crystals!”

Leylin stretched his hands and felt around his robes. A sack of hard texture travelled to his hands. He could not help but smile.

“Fortunately, there are high-grade magic crystals in this Magus World. One piece can be exchanged for 100 ordinary magic crystals. Otherwise, I would have a problem carrying all those magic crystals.....”

“A.I. Chip, stat update!” Leylin ordered.

[Beep! Leylin Farlier, level 2 acolyte and Knight. Strength: 2.7, Agility: 2.8, Vitality: 3.0, Spiritual force: 4.6, Magic Power: 4.0. Status: Healthy] The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned.

“En! Strength and Agility increased. This is the result of continuous stimulation of my internal Knight energy. After it stabilises, I can begin to gradually take on the next phase of Knight’s training. This should raise all my stats to at least 3! As for spiritual force, it only increased a little. This was the only return I got after a number of life and death situations. Magus training, as expected, is only going to get more and more difficult!”

Leylin sighed and mentally projected the map again.

On the huge map, Jersha Province was in the central region of Poolfield Kingdom. There were many small Magus families here.

Although this was the capital of a regular human kingdom, it attracted all sorts of travellers, many wandering Magi, and even criminal Magi.

These Magi, because of their radical opinions, or some other matter, were exiled from their previous association, faced with persecution, or even put up on bounty lists. They turned into wandering Magi, often making them very dangerous people.

“In Jersha Province, it just so happens that there is a huge Magus market controlled by the Redbud family, one of the three big families supporting Abyssal Bone Forest Academy. I will definitely be able to obtain the latest news here!”

In these past two months, Leylin had secretly made inquiries about the various news related to the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy. However, the information he got were all rather vague. He only knew that it was at war with some factions to its west. As for its opponents, and how the academy was faring, everything was extremely hazy.

“We’re here, Ellinel Market. I’ll sell my remaining potions and ask about news of the academy before resuming my journey.”

Leylin decided.

.....

In a tiny village’s ruined wharf.

“If not for the intelligence report, I would never have believed that the first Magus market in the Poolfield Kingdom would actually be hidden underneath a regular human village”.

As Leylin scanned the village’s surroundings, a lifeless atmosphere greeted him.

“The Magus market should be below here since there are signs of occasional radiation emanating from it. The villagers above are also definitely sickly, where some might even die suddenly. How would they be able to flourish? I’m afraid after a dozen or so years, this village would become another ghost town!”

Leylin adjusted the grey robes on his body and covered his facial features, before coming to the entrance of a hut made of bricks.

The corroded door let out a dull noise as Leylin knocked lightly.

“Who are you?” An icy voice sounded from inside.

“I am a wandering acolyte, who wishes to have a look at the market!”

* Creak! * The large door opened and revealed a black robed figure.

Leylin was shocked; he felt murderous intent oozing from the black robed figure. This may be a very obscure concept but if one killed too many of their kind, they will definitely be different from others. The feeling that this black robed figure gave Leylin was that many experts of the same level died in his hands.

“As expected of a large market, even the guard is so fierce!” The black robed figure emitted the energy waves of a level 3 acolyte. He even carried a one-time use magical item. It could not escape the A.I. Chip’s detection, though.

“No matter if it’s your first time or not, I will enumerate the rules. Any fights inside the market will be deemed as a provocation by the Redbud family.” The black robed figure said icily.

Only then did Leylin notice the Redbud insignia on his sleeves.

“I understand!” Leylin nodded his head.

“Alright, the fee would be 1 magic crystal!”

After Leylin paid the entry fee, the black robed figure tapped lightly on the fireplace, and steel machinery rumbled. The fireplace swung to the right revealing a flight of stairs going downwards.

“Even the style is reminiscent of the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy!” Leylin shook his head.

After entering the tunnel, the fireplace swung shut, and the passage dimmed once more with only a few lamps dimly glowing in the depths.

Leylin descended the stairs. After he felt he had gone a dozen metres underground, a huge cavern emerged.

The market was extremely huge. It was the size of several football fields. The ceiling was studded with some kind of stalactite that made Leylin wonder if they were natural.

In the middle of the market, buildings built using grey rocks were lined up in a row. Surrounding them was a circle of wooden huts. As for the street stalls, they were actually rather sparse.

Magi and acolytes wore robes of various colours; white, black, and grey-robed people could be seen stepping in and out of the shops.

Leylin began to understand the rules of the Magus World a little better.

Normally, official Magi would either wear black or white, and acolytes would wear grey. White represented the factions that were more peace loving, for example, the healing arts and the like. As for the black robes, they leaned more towards combat, and their dispositions were rather strange too.

Of course, these are the conventionally attired ones. There were also some Magi who wore various odd looking costumes that were rather bizarre.