

## Chapter 51 – Lowian’s Teachings

### Lowian’s Teachings

“Sir, do you need someone to show you around? I only charge 1 magic crystal!” Clamored the little boys and girls who crowded around Leylin.

“No need for that!” Leylin immediately refused.

After visiting a lot of markets, he found out that these guides did not require that much payment. Some of the families controlling these markets even provide free guides to help patrons move around.

The first time he entered a market, he gave a little boy a magic crystal. This was a huge deficit for him.

As for ordinary markets, they were considerably smaller. Circling for a few times would be enough for anyone to become familiar with the place. There were even signs around. So under normal circumstances, patrons do not require guides at all.

Leylin casually strolled inside the market. Later, he walked towards the largest Potion’s Shop.

“Greetings Sir!” A white-bearded geezer smiled and bowed.

“I wish to sell a batch of potions. Their prices may be a little high!” Leylin was extremely direct.

“Please follow me!” The old geezer was startled. He immediately brought Leylin to a small booth at the back.

After closing the door, Leylin felt the energy waves generated by an isolation spell formation.

“Our shop extends confidentiality towards our guests. Moreover, we also employ the best safety measures.....”The white-bearded geezer smiled as he explained.

“Not bad!” Leylin nodded his head, being able to avoid the crowd was extremely beneficial to him.

There were two sofas within the booth, and between these was a small wooden table with two hot piping drinks on it.

“Please have a seat!” The geezer gestured.

Leylin sat down and reclined on the sofa. He lifted the cup and sniffed lightly, “Powder of Tillan Beans with black pearls added, very beneficial for an acolyte’s meditation!”

“Your achievements in Potioneering have left me speechless!” The old geezer’s eyes widened in shock.

“Thank you. I have been inside an experiment lab for a year until now working on something important. Please appraise these potions for me!”

Leylin handed over a sack to the old geezer.

The old geezer opened the sack, and immediately cried out, “Eh?!”

In the sack was the remainder of Leylin's potions, each and every one of them glowed resplendently.

"Please wait a minute!" The old geezer took out a monocle and placed it over his eye.

After what seemed like half an hour, the old geezer looked a little exhausted and rubbed his temples after he put the monocle away.

"37 hemostasis potions, 45 antidotes, silence potions.....These potions are all of the good quality and have been preserved well. I can give you 900 magic crystals for them!"

"Very fair!" Leylin gently nodded his head.

The old geezer then stored the potions for safekeeping and counted out 9 high-grade magic crystals which he handed over to Leylin.

"Sir, you must be a Potioneering Master? Please keep this; you will be able to enjoy a 10% discount on items and services in our shop. We can also offer a higher price for other potions you may have....."

The old geezer said as he presented a purple card to Leylin with both hands.

Leylin glanced at the card and then pocketed it swiftly, "I'll keep that in mind!"

The old geezer then sent Leylin off. As they bade farewell, Leylin casually asked, "As you know, I've just finished my experiments. Are there places where I may inquire about the latest news on the Poolfield Kingdom?"

The old geezer stared blankly for a while before answering, "If you wish to learn some secrets and the latest intelligence, Gandor's Grocery Shop would be your best choice. Although his temper is a little wacky, but he's the most informed....."

According to the old geezer's direction, Leylin came to Gandor's Grocery Shop.

As he entered, the things inside the shop were very untidy, and various items were lying around. There were even many that the A.I. Chip could not identify.

One thing stood out though, no counterfeit products were inside. This piqued Leylin's interest.

"Who?" A voice sounded from behind the counter. Following which, a geezer, who appeared as if he was on the brink of death, popped out from behind it.

"The geezer from the Potion Shop recommended this place to me. I wish to gather the latest intelligence regarding the Poolfield Kingdom.

"Same old rules, only after buying an item in my shop will you will be able to obtain information from me." The half-dead geezer lips did not move but a mysterious voice could be heard from him.

"Alright! I'll simply pick anything I fancy!" Leylin wanted to pick an item at random.

"No can do, it is I who will choose for you!" The half-dead geezer sniggered.

"No wonder business is so bad here!" Leylin rolled his eyes, "Go ahead then!"

The half-dead geezer rummaged through a shelf at the back of the shop. The wooden shelf made a creaking sound. It looked like it would collapse any moment. Leylin was even worried about him since the shelf looked like it could collapse at any moment.

"I found it!" The half-dead geezer took a black coloured scroll from the shelf.

On this scroll were characters that Leylin did not recognize at all. Its corners were extremely frayed and looked like mice had chewed on it.

“This is a fragment of The great Magus Serholm’s spell. I’ll sell it to you for only 1,000 magic crystals, an absolutely worthy deal, what do you think?” The half-dead geezer eyes glittered.

“This could even be the inheritance of The Great Magus Serholm! Perhaps, you could advance to high-level Magus after you buy it.....”

Leylin was left speechless as he took it in his hands.

“A.I. Chip! Scan!”

[Beep! Confirmed: Carbon dating, document comparison analysis shows this page is composed of human skin! Belongs to: Lowian’s teachings: 89.5%, Blue Cobalt rare book: 56.5% and Serholm’s writing: 21.7%]

“There exists something like this? A.I. Chip, what is the strength of the geezer opposite me?”

[Estimated level 3 acolyte, based on energy wave emissions, Confirmed: he is in a process of reconstructing his physical body. Degree of similarity: Zombification: 86.6% and Aggrieved Soul Transformation: 45.6%]

Leylin pretended to scrutinize the page for some more time before looking up at the geezer, “This seems like a remnant of the Lowian’s teachings. You actually lied to me?”

“How can this be?” The half-dead geezer hurriedly lamented. A flash of shock crossed his eyes, which immediately changed into a cajoling expression.

“Even if it is the Lowian’s teachings, this assuredly belongs to Sir Rookmanst, a rank 2 Magus, 2 years ago, this same fragment was sold for 700 magic crystals. So, how about I sell it to you for that price?”

Leylin shook his head, "Lowian's teachings were written in an advanced-coded language. Only an official Magus will be able to decipher the code. Ordinary acolytes will definitely not be able to."

"Furthermore, although the contents were written in code, but their page numbers were written in the Angema language to make it more obscure!" Leylin pointed to the page number at the bottom.

"Look at this, it's only page number 12! According to , the first 30 pages of Lowian's teachings contained only records of his experiments, and insights penned when he was still an acolyte. Only when he turned into an official Magus, did he chance upon an inheritance and he began to display a terrifying talent! As for this overpriced page, the page number should at least be beyond 100 to be believable!"

"Transactions among Magi are based on the premise that the exchanged goods are equal in value. This derelict page of yours is not worth 700 magic crystals. According to my estimate, 70 is its highest asking price." Leylin concluded.

"Yikes.....Hahaha! Today's weather isn't bad!" The half-dead man tried putting up a front but finally gave in to Leylin's unwavering gaze.

"Alright, I never expected to meet a very erudite scholar! Take your pick then!"

"No need, I came here to gather intelligence! I'll just buy it at a fair price." Leylin held onto the black coloured page and placed 7 middle-grade magic crystals on the table.

Although the coding on this derelict page could only be deciphered by an official Magus, Leylin wished to give the A.I. Chip a shot at breaking the code. After all in terms of processing ability, Leylin was confident that the A.I. Chip's ability was much better than even an official Magus', despite this being his first attempt at such.

“Alright! Alright! What do you want to ask?” The half-dead geezer sprawled on the table and ate the magic crystals one by one. Leylin was rather shocked by this scene.

“I require a lot of energy. If you were to give me another 1,000 magic crystals I would’ve definitely completed my physical body’s restructuring.....” The half-dead geezer’s expression was resentful.

Leylin shook his head, “Tell me news about Abyssal Bone Forest Academy!”

“Abyssal Bone Forest Academy! You are an acolyte there?”

“Only some interest in the happenings over there. Besides, I don’t want to suffer any collateral damage from the war!”

“Alright!” The half-dead geezer did not ask anymore. “I graduated from there too. Now Abyssal Bone Forest Academy’s situation isn’t that great. I heard that Sage Gotham’s Hut and Whitewoods Castle teamed up to go against Abyssal Bone Forest Academy in this war.....”

The half-dead geezer spoke endlessly.

Half a day later, Leylin walked out from the grocery shop with an extremely miserable face. “I never thought that the situation would already be this bad. It seems like I need to stay out here longer than I expected.”

According to the half-dead geezer, the reason for the war had long since been forgotten. What mattered was that Sage Gotham’s Hut and Whitewoods Castle were factions on the same level as Abyssal Bone Forest Academy. Their alliance placed Abyssal Bone Forest Academy in a disadvantageous position. Right now, the academy could only rely on its defence spell formation to resist.

“A.I. Chip, how long will it take to decode this page?”

Leylin felt the derelict page of the Lowian's teachings. Although it was made from human skin, Leylin still wrapped it well and kept it within his robes.

[Beep! Analysis in progress! No comparable code found in the databank. Will require conjecture.....Estimated time to completion: 93 days 13 hours!]

"3 odd months? I can do that!" Leylin stroked his chin as he casually strolled around the market.

What he had told the half-dead geezer earlier was the truth, but Leylin simply wanted to gamble upon the A.I. Chip's abilities. Even if it did not work out, the information the half-dead geezer had provided was worth at least 20 to 30 magic crystals.

Although the page number of the Lowian's teachings' derelict journal page was pretty low and contained mostly information for acolytes, for a level 2 acolyte like Leylin, it still was pretty useful.

There may even be some of Rookmanst's meditation techniques, experiment records or even some discovery of resources. If he could discover them, Leylin would benefit immensely.

In any case, the processing capabilities of the A.I. Chip were very impressive. Leylin had not even used half of its capabilities, just letting it sit idle for most of the time. He might as well use this downtime for deciphering the code.



## Chapter 52 – Slaves

### Slaves

Leylin's footsteps did not stop until he walked out of Ellinel Market.

The exit was at the side of the village and was actually beneath a stack of hay. It was also guarded by a black-robed man with the Redbud insignia.

“A.I. Chip! Initiate area scan!” After walking out of the village, Leylin ordered after walking out of the village.

A faint light blue screen was projected in front of Leylin's eyes, clearly identifying a sneaky figure tailing him from behind. In the whole light blue projection, the red dot was extremely obvious.

[Target's identified. strength estimated at level 2 acolyte. No magic artifact detected!] The A.I. Chip's voice intoned.

“Only a level 2 acolyte huh? Seems like it's not any huge faction, but only an avaricious dog after some wealth!”

Leylin's eyes flashed coldly, “If I didn't have other plans .....

The level 2 acolyte tailing Leylin seemed to be extremely patient. Only after Leylin was a dozen miles away from the vicinity of the market did he make his sneak attack!

\* Whoosh! \* Suddenly two balls of mud rose beneath Leylin's feet, turning into two yellow-brown coloured hands that tightly held down Leylin's ankles.

A dagger suffused with purple light immediately stabbed towards Leylin's back.

"Success!" yelled the sneak attacking acolyte whose face was flushed with joy. He belatedly realised that Leylin had mysteriously dissolved, turning into a vine with thorns that coiled around his body.

The thorns mercilessly dug into flesh. The acolyte could even feel the vine come alive and was greedily feeding on his blood.

"Damn! It's a golem! What is this spell! Shadow Embodiment? Leeching Vines?" As the acolyte lost huge amounts of blood, he increasingly became muddleheaded.

"Ah! You can't do this! Please.....Please spare me....."

The acolyte pleaded. Alas, the immediately the vines squirmed and sealed his mouth.

\* Bang! \* The spell's effect disappeared, and on the ground was left the shrivelled corpse of the acolyte.

Against his enemies, Leylin was never merciful.

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The second day, Leylin once again visited the market.

"Sir! Do you need a guide? I only require 1 magic crystal!" The noisy little kids were still clamouring at the entrance.

Today Leylin had changed his clothes. And to conceal himself even further, he changed his appearance too.

Although his previous face was a fake, there was no guaranteed special spell effect that could penetrate and see through the cloak.

As for energy waves and the sort, Leylin was not too worried about it. Yesterday he deliberately avoided official Magi, so his energy waves would never be recorded.

To capture the energy waves generated by the spiritual force, an official Magus has to make enough preparations beforehand. There wouldn't be any Magi who had nothing better to do.

"You'll do!" Leylin randomly picked a little girl.

"Thank you! Sir, I am extremely familiar with this place!" The little girl was a little overjoyed. She wore a white coloured dress and looked to be somewhat thin.

After tossing a magic crystal to the girl, Leylin said slowly, "I wish to enter a higher leveled area!"

His voice was modified to sound different from the day before.

"A higher leveled area? You mean.....The second level?" The little girl asked a little hesitantly.

"Of course!" This was the point to the experience Leylin patiently amassed after coming to the market many times. These markets weren't very huge, and Leylin always felt that something was missing. Certain precious resources were absent in these markets too. These little children guides most likely stood here waiting for powerful customers to bring them to the more concealed areas.

"Since you know about the second level, then you should also understand that if you don't have an item worth over 1000 magic crystals or a guarantor, you will be denied entry."

“Naturally I do! Lead the way!” The little girl raised her head, yet she was unable to discern the expression behind Leylin’s cloak. She could only lower her head and lead the way.

“Although there should be many official Magi on the second level, there is no choice. The two ancient formulas, Azure Potion, and Tears of Mary, plus many of their ingredients have not been collected yet. If I can’t even find it here, biggest Magus market, then there is completely no chance anymore. I can only look for substitute ingredients!”

Leylin’s expression was rather dark. As he journeyed, he sold potions along the way and did his utmost to collect all of the ingredients of the two ancient potions. However, he was met with little success so far. Ellinel Market was the second largest gathering of Magi after Abyssal Bone Forest Academy. If he couldn’t find what he needed here, then Leylin was completely helpless.

Leylin followed the little girl. They arrived at a rather deserted alley.

She used a stone found on a wall corner of the wall to knock.

\* Bang! \* The alley’s walls shifted, revealing an underground passage.

“Here it is!” The little girl said softly, as if very afraid.

“Lead the way!” Leylin followed the little girl and they continued walking downwards. Several minutes later, they reached a door at the end of the passage.

Two level 3 acolytes wearing blood red robes were standing guard. According to the A.I. Chip’s scan, they carried magic artifacts on their bodies. This slightly startled Leylin. At the same time, he was filled with curiosity towards the market behind it.

The little girl went forward and exchanged a few words with the two acolytes before walking back to Leylin. She curtseyed, “Most respected Sir, I can only lead you this far!”

When she finished speaking, she hurriedly ran back up the flight of stairs disappearing into the darkness.

“It seems like there is something in this premium market that terrifies her!” Leylin thought indifferently as he walked towards the two acolytes.

“An item of proof, or an item worth at least 1000 magic crystals!” A red robed acolyte said icily. Standing before them, Leylin could somehow sense the wails of aggrieved souls hovering around them.

“What terrifying people!” Leylin thought inwardly. He tossed over a small sack containing 10 high-grade magic crystals.

The red robed acolyte opened and looked before tossing the sack back to Leylin. He then opened the door behind him.

Leylin walked in unhurriedly. Only after the large door closed behind him, was he inclined to observe the area in front of him.

This field was most likely beneath the market earlier. Its surface area was smaller, only having a street traversing it.

From time to time Magi walked past. Since it was not very crowded, the distance between passersby was rather far. There were almost no level 1 acolytes here. Level 2 acolytes too were very few. Most of the people here were level 3 acolytes. Their bodies all radiated strong energy waves. Official Magi too were rather common.

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Leylin inhaled deeply and walked down the street.....

Half an hour later, Leylin walked out of a stone hut with a Potion sign, his face had obvious signs of joy.

They had the main ingredients Kroft mentioned, as well as the rest of the ingredients, “It is indeed the largest market!”

The main ingredients of the two ancient potions, Azure Potion, and Tears of Mary, were the most important. As for other ingredients, they were easier to acquire. Being able to buy them all at once exceeded Leylin’s expectations.

Leylin spent more than half of the 1000 magic crystals he prepared to purchase these ingredients. He was still satisfied, though, and felt that the expense was worth it.

Putting away the ingredients, he anticipated that he had to find a safe place and begin brewing the potions. His mood was rather good. He even felt inclined to stroll around a bit.

The goods here were obviously of a higher grade than the market above. Leylin even saw a low-grade magic artifact dagger for sale.

However, the price was at least 400 magic crystals, which immediately made Leylin stop feeling lucky.

Suddenly, Leylin heard noisy clamouring voices travelled over leaving Leylin a little startled. He tracked these voices and made a new discovery.

“Slave market?”

What Leylin saw in front of him was a large fenced area. Many stark naked slaves were standing behind fences. Their faces showed either numb indifference or extreme humiliation as they let the acolytes and Magi take their pick.

“Just right! I’ll need a few slaves myself!”

Leylin wanted to stay in Extreme Night Town for around 3 years. He could not manage many things by himself. Originally, he planned to recruit a few guards and servants when he got there, but a few high-grade slaves were now conveniently available.

After all, they were all raised or controlled by Magi. This lent their owner better security and assured functionality.

“Sir! What do you think? Do you need a female slave for your bed?” Look, these are all good quality ones, some are even of the nobility.

A slave trader looked as Leylin walked forward. The slaver hurriedly patted the ample breasts of a group of female slaves behind him, which carried a rippling wave effect.

Behind him were a dozen utterly naked noblewomen. Their skin was extremely smooth, and their figures were quite vivacious. Even if they were slaves, their aura of nobility could not be stifled.

“How did they end up here? I mean, as nobles, wouldn’t it be troublesome?” Leylin was a little curious.

“Please don’t worry, these are all nobles who fought and lost in battles. Their fiefdoms have long since been usurped and their families destroyed. They are legally under the death sentence. There will absolutely be no trouble at all.

The trader smugly explained.

Leylin looked behind a noblewoman who was being dragged away. There was obviously a noble young lady standing there. He could not help but think of the young noble lady he met previously in the woods. If her revenge failed, who knows if she’ll be sold at this place too.

“How are they? Buy a couple, and it’s up to you how you play them! After you’re sick of them, you can use them for your experiments. Even if they die, it’s not a problem!” The trader did his utmost to entice him.

Leylin shook his head, “I wish to purchase a few guards, preferably of a Knight’s level. Also, I will need a few assistants for my experiments!”

“If it’s like this!” The trader stroked his chin, “What you’re looking for are premium slaves, and their price will be extraordinary! Of course, those who are able to enter here are customers with strength. Please follow me!”

Leylin walked behind the trader and saw many slaves. Some of them were well-built youths while some were still children. They were all staring outside from behind the fence looking fearful. From time to time a few Magi pointed at them or even walked forward to inspect them.

Leylin even saw a group of Magi surrounding a few beastmen and marine species slaves, bidding over them.

The trader pulled Leylin to a large tent, and called a fatty over, “This is my friend, Dylan. Right, he has some premium goods.”

Leylin did not know what Dylan whispered to the trader, but after a while, the trader laughed heartily as he walked away. Only then Dylan smile towards Leylin and said, “Most respected guest, I have already understood your requirements! We just received a new batch of premium slaves, please follow me!”



## Chapter 53 – Subordinates

### Subordinates

Leylin followed Dylan into a large white-coloured tent.

A smell of incense inside permeated the air. It masked the musky unwashed odor of the slaves and various bodily excrement. Despite this, the atmosphere was much better than outside.

The slaves in here wore some thin clothes that could somewhat cover their private areas.

Dylan brought Leylin to a few extremely muscled guys, “They were all raised and taught by a Knight! How do they look? I dare say these definitely meet your requirement!”

Leylin nodded his head and walked towards a large bald guy, “A.I. Chip! Stat Scan!”

[Beep! Target’s Strength: 3.1, Agility: 2.8, Vitality: 2.9, Spiritual force: 1.5. Status: Dowsed in neurotoxin!]

The other Knight level slaves’ stats were more or the less similar. Leylin observed that their pupils were widened and somewhat dispirited.

“The mind of these Knights seem to have been affected by something.....”

Dylan hurriedly smiled apologetically, “Knights’ resistances are always higher than normal, to meet the various needs of our customers, we are unable to use standard marking to control their consciousness! They have all undergone constant brainwashing and corporeal subjugation. Furthermore, they were controlled by drugs, turning them into high-level servants. Although they might not be as bright as regular Knights, they are still able to understand some simple commands.

Branding of the consciousness was what official Magi used to control their servants. However, it was somewhat ineffective if acolytes were to use it.

Dylan obviously noticed Leylin’s strength before offering this batch of goods to him.

“It’s not bad, what’s the price?” Leylin asked.

“100 magic crystals each!” Dylan replied.

Leylin nodded his head and picked out two with the best stats. After paying the magic crystals, he received a scorpion-like organism from Dylan.

“The sting of this Desert Scorpion contains a unique poison. These poisonous secretions from this scorpion were used on your two slaves. If they do not take the antidote produced by the scorpion in 10 days time, they will die horribly! Of course, this is should be used as a last resort to control them. After all, during their training, they have already been brainwashed to obey their Master’s commands! Now, the lives of these two Knights are yours!”

Dylan respectfully handed the box containing the scorpion’s sting.

Leylin nodded his head and kept the box. “Also, I require a serving maid, one who can take on the role of assistant during experiments.....”

As Leylin walked out of the market, two Knights wearing armour and a delicate yet pretty maid followed behind him.

The maid's eyes were limpid and she wore a black cotton dress. According to Dylan, this maid received extensive training since she was young. She was more than capable to take on the role of an assistant for simple experiments. She met Leylin's requirements rather well. Moreover, she had taken the Mandara Flower's essence, which could counteract the radiation from a Magus. This kept her looking youthful.

The cost was her life span, which was shortened to only 30 years.

"Ellinel Market did pretty well in designing this level. We can actually choose our exits freely. However, this is a service only premium customers may enjoy!"

When Leylin and his servants appeared, they were no longer at the small village. They were at the outer walls of a city.

This was a premium service provided by the Ellinel Market, but there was also a fee for it.

If this helped him avoid more trouble, it was worth it for Leylin who was not very strong right now.

"Master!" The Knights and the maid knelt and saluted him.

"En!" Leylin nodded his head indifferently, "Do you have names?"

The two Knights looked at each other, and their eyes dimmed eventually, "No, please grant us one, Master!" The maid too shook her head and indeed seemed rather pitiful.

"You will be called Greem! He pointed to the larger Knight. "You will be called Fraser!" This was another Knight.

“As for you!” Leylin looked at the beautiful maid, “Anna will do!”

“Thank you for granting us names, Master. We will loyally engrave it in our hearts!” The three subordinates knelt on the ground and kissed Leylin’s shoe.

“Alright.” Leylin waved his hands and got them to stand. He then looked at his surroundings.

It seemed to be a small forest, and there was even the silhouette of a large city ahead. It was, at least, ten times bigger than the city he was in earlier. The entrance had carriages and carts going in and out. It seemed to be flourishing.

“Greem! Go buy a horse carriage in the city, I’ll wait for you here!” Leylin tossed a black purse to the larger Knight.

“Also, buy some goods for our journey, as well as some clothes!” Leylin instructed him.

Even since he destroyed his chest of spell books and sold all his potions, His remaining possessions amounted to over 3000 magic crystals all in all. His luggage too was reduced by more than half. He could fit all of them in a knapsack. As for the camping items he used previously, he already destroyed them before going to the market to save himself the trouble of going back.

“Yes, Sir!” Greem took the money purse and bowed slightly as he was about to leave.

“Also, don’t call me Sir from now on, Young Master will do!” Leylin touched his youthful face and was somewhat stumped.

“We obey!” The three of them knelt on the ground.

Seeing the figure of Greem leaving, Leylin suddenly turned and asked Fraser, “Do you have any inkling of the time before you became a slave?”

Fraser had brown hair and blue eyes, and his body was littered with scars. Moreover, his age could not be determined, but he seemed to have had an abundance of experiences and suffering.

“I can’t remember anymore! Every time I try, I feel a splitting pain in my head.” Fraser touched his forehead as if trying to recall something. His visage crumpled with pain.

“So it’s like this!” Leylin surmised that it could be the influence of some drug or spell that was only effective on normal humans. Right now he could probably break it if he spent some time on it, but he absolutely had no intention of doing so.

After all, his objective was to acquire subordinates, not to seek trouble. Those who were captured as slaves were the losers of battles and wars. If they were to recover their memories and seek Leylin’s help, what should he do then? Even if they don’t, who knows if they will continue remaining loyal to him.

“How about you?” Leylin looked at the shy Anna.

Anna’s skin was extremely white and gave off a milky glow. It made Leylin impulsively want to touch her. Her face too was extremely exquisite like a doll’s.

“Anna has been raised by a merchant since childhood, and was eventually sold to Sir Dylan.....”

“For a maid like her, it was naturally more convenient to groom her at a very young age. Moreover, she had to learn various knowledge, and grooming of etiquette. Only then would she deserve the fondness of those higher ups. Of course, she had to take some lessons in pleasing men. Anna looked at Leylin who was still shrouded in the cloak, unable to discern his countenance. However, based on the voice alone, deduced that it should belong to a younger person. She could not help but blush.

What lessons have you taken before? How much do you know about the Magi?”

“I have learnt and , but.....but only some preparations of simple ingredients. Anna is not an acolyte. For experiments that require the use of energy particles, I am powerless in that area.....My apologies, Young Master!” Anna’s fingers clenched her dress and seemed discomfited.

“That’s not bad at all.” Leylin was actually satisfied.

He had many secrets. Letting an outsider join his experiments was inappropriate. Helping him with basic preparations was already good enough.

If he wanted a Magus assistant, he or she must be at least acolyte level. This level of a slave is extremely expensive and was always riddled with problems too.

Although he did not see any in the slave market, Leylin knew that some other place in the market, there would be another slave market that specialised in selling acolytes as slaves.

After all, for many Dark Magi, it was only acolytes who could resist radiation, were to best subjects for their experiments.

As to sources of such acolyte slaves, they made use of war criminals or prisoners.

If Abyssal Bone Forest Academy was completely defeated, and the headquarters seized, then the fate of all the acolytes in the academy- apart from the ones backed by strong factions- will most likely end up as slaves.

As for people like Leylin who escaped earlier, he could only draw a clear line between himself and the academy in future. And take the four seas as his home, becoming a pitiable wanderer.

“Right now, I can only pray that the academy wins..... Even if they lose, I hope they don’t lose badly.....” Leylin looked towards the west, his expression a little grim.

Seeing Young Master become pensive, Anna and Fraser bowed their heads too, not daring to utter a word.

With the noise of rolling wheels gradually getting closer, Leylin could see a Knight driving a horse carriage, the appearance seemed to be Greem.

The horse carriage was pitch black in colour and did not have much in the way of patterns on it. The merchants who sold the carriage did not know if Greem belonged to the nobility, so they did not dare inscribe on the carriage. However, it looked extremely sturdy. A couple of large black horses were pulling it, dashing rapidly towards Leylin.

“Young Master!” Greem got down the carriage, and handed the money purse back to Leylin with both hands, “The carriage cost.....”

“No need for further discussion.” Leylin took it over, and then threw the money purse to Anna, “In the future you will deal with the finances, if there is not enough then ask me!”

“Yes, Young Master!’ Anna carefully kept the money purse.

In it were only a few gold coins used by normal humans. Leylin only required a little effort to get as much as he wanted. What he was concerned about were the magic crystals, the currency used in the Magus World.

It was a pity that even in the South Coastal Regions, magic crystals were in extremely high demand as currency. After visiting so many markets, Leylin could see shops exchange coins for magic crystals, but never the other way round.

These were his subordinates in the future. After thinking for a while, Leylin undid his hood. and revealed a dashing face. His appearance, however, was still in its slightly altered state.

“You will be my trusted aides in the future, so take a look at my true appearance!”

The reason why Leylin disguised himself was to buy and sell resources. Right now since all his potions were sold, he did not need a disguise. These people also had to meet Leylin daily, so they will definitely see his true appearance—so the sooner the better.

After Leylin removed the spell, the muscles of his face twitched, and returned back to his original youthful visage.

Seeing Anna and the rest nod their heads, Leylin commanded, “Let’s set off towards Eastwoods Province!”



## Chapter 54 – Roran City

### Roran City

On the wide road, a horse carriage rapidly sped by. In the driver's seat sat two large guys wearing metallic armour and long swords. One look and people got the message that they were not to be messed with. Farmers in the vicinity scurried out of their way.

Inside the carriage, the smell of wood and lacquer mixed together and was somewhat unpleasant.

Leylin's nose wrinkled as he caught a whiff of perfume. Seeing that Anna was blushing beside him, Leylin smiled and beckoned, "Come here!"

When she drew near, Leylin made her recline halfway, then lay his head on her chest.

His hands conveniently roved around Anna's thighs. The thin cotton fabric could not hide her beauty. Leylin felt as if both his hands were touching a piece of warm and soft jade.

Savouring the softness he was leaning on, and hearing Anna's panting, made Leylin feel extremely content. He sighed, closed both his eyes and stayed still.

He had had been feeling on edge lately, as he had to exercise prudence after every trade. This occupied a lot of Leylin's thoughts. Now that he did not have to do so anymore, Leylin could finally take a break, and obtain ample time to rest. He even had two Knights to take care of the trouble.

Naturally, the two Knights would be sleeping outside, leaving the interior of the carriage to their master and the maid. Leylin was no gentleman. Moreover, Anna was also quite a beauty and excelled in that area. Idling away in the carriage, he naturally had already bedded her. There was even a faint trace of dark red blood on the cabin's floor.

As a maid bought by Leylin, how could Anna resist her master? All along the journey, she served him wholeheartedly and tried various positions with him, which also satisfied a few of his fetishes.

“Thankfully I am a magician. I can use magical herbs and undergo meditation to continuously recover and increase my vitality. With the previous Leylin's sad physique, I would most likely have aged prematurely.....”

Leylin ordered mentally, “A.I. Chip, show me my stats!”

[Leylin Farlier, level 2 acolyte. Strength: 2.7, Agility: 2.8, Vitality: 3.0, Spiritual force: 4.6, Magical Power: 4.0. Status: Healthy]

“Four to five months have passed, and I persisted in meditation everyday. To think that there was only an increase of 0.2.....” Leylin's expression was a little unsightly, “I have to hurry to my destination and settle down to try brewing the ancient potions. Who knows when I will meet the requirements for advancing?”

All acolytes encounter a bottleneck when advancing to level 3. Even a fifth-grade acolyte like Jayden still requires years of training in order to breakthrough.

After analysing the conditions needed to advance, mastering the spells and brewing reactive elixirs became trivial. Only getting past the 7 spiritual force bottleneck remained baffling for countless genius acolytes. Even official Magi did not have good solutions to address this aspect of spiritual force cultivation. Only constant painstaking meditation had any effectiveness or maybe the use potions and the sort

could be an alternative. The cost of these, unfortunately, could not be borne by the typical acolyte.

Right now Leylin too was stuck on the same spiritual force bottleneck.

“A.I. Chip! How is the analysis of the two potions? And what is the progress in deciphering Lowian’s Teachings?”

[Beep! Azure Potion analysis progress: 100%, Tears of Mary analysis progress: 78%, Lowian’s Teachings analysis progress: 63.7%] The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned.

“The Azure Potion has been fully analysed long ago. Unfortunately, the main ingredients are now completely extinct. Finding substitutes requires countless experiments. As for the Tears of Mary, it has been at 78% for 3 months now with no signs of progress at all. Could some crucial procedures be missing?

Leylin’s brows furrowed; the A.I. Chip’s processing ability was extremely powerful. The progress in analysing the ancient potion Tears of Mary analysis stagnated at 78%, which made Leylin rather surprised.

“These formulas that Professor Kroft gave me should be correct. If the A.I. Chip could not analyse them after all this time, it might have met with some difficult question that was beyond the parameters of the databank.....Tears of Mary! Tears!” Leylin guessed.

“Could it be.....That this ancient potion formula has something to do with a soul?”

After all hearing the name of this potion, one will easily associate it with some ill-fated event.

As for Lowian’s Teachings, the progress was rather good. Although the creator used extremely complicated coding to ensure secrecy, the A.I. Chip was least daunted by the complicated computations.

Leylin roughly knew the general contents of this scroll through reading the previous portions that have been analysed.

“Unfortunately, though this item is not bad, I can only make use of it when I become a level 3 acolyte!”

Leylin shook his head and got rid of these distracting thoughts.

Suddenly, the horse carriage stopped.

Leylin’s brows furrowed as he asked, “Did something happen?”

“Young Master please be at ease, it is merely a group of bandits who have blocked the path!” Fraser has already gone over to take care of it!” Greem’s voice travelled through the wooden wall.

\* Ping Pang! Bang! \*

As expected, moments later it seemed that negotiations failed. The sound of various weapons clashing could be heard. After a few profanities and continuous wailing, Fraser’s voice was heard saying “It’s settled.” The horse carriage once again resumed the journey.

This kind of an outcome made Leylin feel very satisfied.

The reason why he bought two Knights and a maid was so that all the trifling matters would be handled by them, allowing him more time to focus on researching spells and doing more experiments.

These matters along the way were trivial. Leylin had the faint outline of a plan that would require the participation of many people to accomplish. And these 3 people were at the core of it.

“Young.....Young Master!” Anna who was behind him, let off a low pant.

Only then did Leylin realise that his hand slipped. While he was deep in thought, his hand had unknowingly touched Anna's private part.

Leylin smiled and withdrew his hand.

Seeing that Anna's face was still flushed, he said, "Right now Young Master is occupied with something! I'll have time tonight to play with you....."

These intimate words made Anna somewhat shy as she lowered her head.

Pretending not to see the temptation right in front of him, he said "A.I. Chip! Transmit the fully analysed Azure Potion formula!"

Leylin always drew a clear line between entertainment and research. At the most crucial moment, he would definitely not be infatuated and lose the will to improve.

.....

Seeing Leylin had already closed both his eyes, Anna's eyes dulled. She then rearranged her clothes back to its former neatness and tried her best to adjust her body so that Leylin could rest more comfortably....."

Night fell after what felt like a moment.

Leylin regained consciousness after meditation.

"Young Master! There is a city not far from here!" Greem's voice travelled over.

"Where are we now?"

"According to the markings on the map, we should have already entered Eastwoods Province. This is Roran City, which is situated at the provincial borders!"

The crashing sounds of things being rummaged sounded, as Fraser spoke.

“Roran City huh?” Leylin muttered to himself and adjusted the map stored in the A.I. Chip.

On the faint blue map, a red coloured line was linked with many cities. Roran City was towards the west of Extreme Night City, only several days’ journey.

“After half a year of travelling, we are finally arriving huh?” Leylin felt a little rueful.

The reason why he chose this place earlier was its distance from Abyssal Bone Forest Academy- he wouldn’t be affected by the conflicts taking place over there. Another consideration was that only by being far away from the academy, would he be able to conduct a few prohibited experiments.

After all, he had the A.I. Chip in his body and also the process for many of the experiments were very unusual. If he had experimented at the academy, using the remnants or rubbish, the possibility of being discovered was inevitable.

However, Leylin felt less restrained ever since he had left- like a caged canary that was set free and soared into the sky.

Leylin opened the carriage door, and a gust of cold wind blew in.

“The feeling of freedom!” Leylin looked at the city, which seemed a little desolate, and the nearby farmers. He could not help but smile.

“First, find us a place to lodge in We’ll set off tomorrow morning!”

Leylin gave the orders. In the wild, it was natural to either stay in the horse carriage or inside a tent. However, since they had reached human habitation, Leylin naturally did not want to deprive himself of this chance.

The black-coloured horse carriage entered the city under the respectful gaze of the guard.

To the people in Eastwoods Province, having a horse carriage, guards, and a maid, elevated Leylin to the level of idle nobility.

In fact, Leylin was indeed a descendant of nobility. It was just that it was not this continent's nobility.

Leylin never considered using the dukedom title from Chernobyl Islands here. However, the status of a noble could indeed greatly reduce problems.

After finding a place at a local inn for lodging, Leylin called an attendant over.

“Do you know where I can hire people here?” Leylin played with a gold coin in his hands.

Seeing Anna behind Leylin, and staring intently at the gold coin in Leylin's hands, the attendant could not help but to gulp down a mouthful of saliva.

“Most respected Sire! If you require attendants, the employment marketplace beside the city lord's Manor would be your best choice. There, you can hire strong warriors, proficient housekeepers, and even various maids and stable hands.....”

“Very good! Bring me there tomorrow and this gold coin will be yours!” Leylin smiled.

This time, he could stay in Extreme Night City for a long period. Leylin naturally wanted peace and quiet. He required people who could carry out his bidding. Since he did not want to be controlled by others, he would not be able to avoid wielding his own influence.

With Anna and the two Knights as his core retainers, and hiring a few more from Roran City, his retinue would be more or less complete.

Although he could hire more people in Extreme Night City, they will definitely be infiltrated. As for Roran City, although it could not be avoided, it was good to reduce the numbers and influences to a minimum.

Dinner was white bread with vegetable soup. Although the shop owner had already taken out the best items to serve Leylin, it was still somewhat lacking compared to the academy's cafeteria.

As Leylin was eating, many customers in the shop hid in the corner. They wore grey or brown coarse robes. Their gazes carried respect and fear.

Looking at the empty space around him, Leylin smiled bitterly.



## Chapter 55 – Roran Hawks

### Roran Hawks

The next morning, Leylin was guided to the employment marketplace in Roran City by the attendant.

The employment marketplace was beside the city lord's castle, so the public security there was not bad. At the very least Leylin did not see any brawls taking place.

Along the way, there were many people who looked at Leylin and his group. They were especially interested in Anna, who was behind Leylin, as she was an exceptional beauty, and was even more so after some dressing up. Fortunately, they did not dare try anything funny for they were rather fearful of Greem who was covered in steel armour.

“Sir! This is the employment marketplace in Roran City. All the people you require can be found here, besides you can also issue any mission related hiring.....” The attendant explained to Leylin's group of three.

As for Fraser, Leylin made him stay at the inn to look after the horse carriage and luggage.

Although the important possessions such as potion ingredients and magic crystals were on Leylin, if they were to lose a few items like gold coins and the sort, it would prove rather troublesome.

Leylin surveyed the employment marketplace before him.

In his view was a large field, with groups of stable hands, mercenaries and the sort squatting on the ground, waiting for some employer to hire them.

Leylin knew that there had to be a slave market too, however it could not be displayed blatantly out in the open. After all, even a Magus market had to organise one covertly.

However this was well within Leylin's plans, he only wanted an entourage to hire here, so his requirements were lower.

"Young Sir, may I help you with anything?" As Leylin entered the marketplace, a group of traders and merchants swarmed around him. They were obviously dazzled by Leylin's lavish attire and shouted themselves hoarse as they tried to promote their products.

"I need a group of mercenaries to escort me to Extreme Night City, and also to guard my estate there. The contract duration would be at least two years!" Looking at the fervent traders, Leylin stated his requirements.

After reaching this part of the continent, Leylin realised that the novels, in his previous world talking about mercenary groups and bandit gangs and the like, were all nonsense.

Apart from a few large cities that Leylin was yet to visit, in Roran City and other smaller city marketplaces, there were no such groups to speak of.

All such employment, assassinations or similar missions, were arranged at the local bars or trade offices, some locations were even extremely bizarre.

“After all, the costs have to be factored in, and, if the remuneration does not even cover the cost of operations, there wouldn’t be any fool who would be willing to toss their gold coins into the water!”

“Then could I inquire if you have any requirements regarding the number of escorts and their strength?” A skinny man with a shiny bald head squeezed through the traders and asked loudly.

“Number of people huh? Around 10 to 15! Their strength only needs to be equivalent to the average guard’s standard. The only request I have is loyalty and honour! As the mission might extend over 2 years, I will have to issue a contract, and the salary is to be given monthly!”

Leylin said blandly.

“In that case, I have a group of mercenaries here that fits your requirements!” The bald trader smiled.

“The Roran Hawks mercenary group has just finished their vacation. Moreover, they are citizens of Roran City, so their reputation can definitely be assured of!” The bald trader explained.

Leylin noticed that when the baldy mentioned the Roran Hawks mercenary group, the crowd all turned silent. There were even respected and envious looks. It seemed like the Roran Hawks had a large reputation around here.

“Alright then! Bring me to have a look at them, the commission will definitely be given to you later!” Leylin said.

“Please follow me!” The bald trader led the way, bringing Leylin out of the marketplace.

After the attendant in the inn received his gold coin, he bade his farewell. Anna and Greem followed closely behind Leylin; the current group of four walked on for about half an hour before reaching the southern part of the city.

Having reached here, the surrounding buildings were constructed differently. If the central part of the city was modelled after the city lord's castle, with the buildings being extremely imposing and respectful, then the southern part of the buildings were multi-coloured with various styles. Very much like residential estates.

“This seems to be the area where the free citizens of the city gather!” Leylin muttered as he looked at the crushed rock laid into a pavement, and the small flower terrace and stone-made lamp.

“You have a good eyesight, Sir. Those who live here are predominantly the traders and free citizens of Roran City. The Roran Hawks mercenary group also reside here!”

“Are you not going to bring us to the training grounds of this mercenary group?” Green asked at the side.

“Respected Sir! Roran Hawks mercenary group is only a small unit, and their number does not exceed 30. Their reputation is only spread within Roran City. It is only a casual alliance formed by their leader. The cost of renting some space for them to train would have made their mission earnings obsolete. Thus, who would be willing to do that?” The baldy said with a wry smile

“Normally, the members are each busy with their own matters. They gather only when they receive a mission!” Saying which, the baldy looked at Leylin, and smiled apologetically, “Although the Roran Hawks Mercenaries are few in number, most of them are retired veterans. Moreover, their leader was once a middle ranked troop leader in the army, and his strength is not bad.....”

Obviously, the baldy was worried about Leylin being prejudiced against the mercenary group, but these matters could not be concealed either, so he could only say before they found out.

“A middle-ranked troop leader huh? I am looking forward to meeting him!” Leylin smiled, he actually did not really mind who he hired in Roran City, as their roles will primarily be to run errands for him in future.

“We’ve arrived!” The baldy brought Leylin and the rest in front of a two-storeyed villa. Within a circle surrounded by a rosewood fence, there was a small pond and garden. There was a type of small white flower, their petals being extremely small, but with a dense aroma, a middle-aged lady was currently watering the flowers.

“Hello! Madam Lariette! Is Fayern around? I have brought some business for him!” The baldy greeted the lady watering the plants.

“Of course, he’s around, my dear friend!” Before the lady got to respond, a bold and unrestrained voice sounded from within the house.

A large guy wearing a white-coloured shirt walked over and hugged the baldy.

“My dearest Fayern! Let me introduce to you- this is Sir Leylin who came from the central part of our city. He wishes to employ your Roran Hawks mercenary group to escort him to Extreme Night City!” The baldy explained to Fayern.

“Hello! Respected Sir, if you choose to go to Extreme Night City, then the Roran Hawks mercenary group would be your best bet. We have traversed the route over 100 times, and recognise every rock, nook, and cranny on the path.”

Fayern bowed slightly towards Leylin and laughed as he spoke loudly.

Leylin noticed that this group leader’s eyes had been sizing up the three of them. Especially lingering on Greem for a while, as if discovering something. However, he overlooked Leylin.

“A crude outer appearance but his inner qualities are astute! He is also a Preparatory Knight!” Leylin observed, and at this moment, the A.I. Chip scanned Fayern’s stats.

[Name: Fayern. Strength: 1.8, Agility: 1.5, Vitality: 1.7, Spiritual force: 1.4]

These stats amongst Preparatory Knights was only considered average, however from Fayern's callus and multiple scars on both of his hands, it can be seen that he has bountiful experience as a mercenary.

"We can discuss this later, won't you invite us in to take a seat?" Leylin smiled and gestured towards the villa.

"Oh, of course, I will! Please enter!" Fayern patted his head and moved his body while bowing. His right hand stretched, making an invitation for them to enter.

After exiting the garden, it was soon the living room of the villa.

The floor was painted red, and on one the four surrounding walls there hung a rusty and stained cross blade. Beside it was a skull belonging to an elk, with bent antlers that were intertwined and had a jet-black lustre.

Fayern cordially invited Leylin and the group to have a rest on the sofa in the living room. He also asked Madam Lariette to give Leylin and the rest a beverage similar to black tea and then began to discuss the details.

"I heard from Nigel that this respected Young Master wants to go to Extreme Night City? If it is not inconvenient, could you tell me the reason why? Please forgive me, only after assessing the risk can the group make preparations for it....." Fayern's tone was rather sincere.

Leylin sipped on this beverage similar to black tea- it was rather sweet and salty and thus he did not like its taste- before he placed the cup down.

"Regarding the mission, this time, I only wanted to start some business there and require manpower for security. Do not worry about any other trouble!" Leylin looked at Fayern, while the latter was rather embarrassed and looked down.

Obviously, Fayern assumed Leylin was the bastard son of a noble who had lost in a power struggle and was sent away.

“The reason why I hire you was because the people in Roran City will not be easily bought when compared to those in Extreme Night City. Moreover, I have received news that there were some interesting events recently happening within Extreme Night City.....” Leylin smiled and said.

“Interesting events?” Group Leader Fayern guessed, “Is it about the incident where the vegetation near the surroundings of Extreme Night City suddenly withered? ”

“Correct! A forest, the size of a small village, suddenly withered. It really makes one worried. Because of this incident, I believe it is necessary to increase the strength of the guards.”

“Concerning the earnings, I can give each a monthly salary of one gold coin. However, each one must sign an employment contract for agreeing to follow my commands for at least 2 years or more.”

Leylin interlocked the 10 fingers of his hands, as he gave his opinion.

Fayern’s face was indecisive, clearly he was making a choice. After being silent for some time, he struggled to say, “The other matters will be alright, what about the mission duration?”

“Although the period of two years is rather long, you don’t really have to always stay at Extreme Night City. I promise you during any idle period, I will grant them leave to visit their loved ones. Also, if they want to bring their wife and family over to Extreme Night City, I can also arrange an appropriate position for them.....” Leylin’s voice reverberated in the living room.

“Sir, I have seen your sincerity. I would like to talk it over with a few of my brothers; after all, I do not run the mercenary group alone. I can give you an answer tomorrow, so please be rest assured, Sir!”, said Fayern as he stood up and bowed slightly.

“Good! We will wait for good news from you!” While Fayern saluted, Leylin calmly got up and together with his servants and the bald trader, left the villa.



## Chapter 56 – A Visit

### A Visit

A golden object arced, flashing in the light, and landed in the arms of the bald trader.

“Take this; it’s the commission that you deserve,” Leylin said

“Many thanks for your conferment, most respected Young Master!” The baldy hurriedly bowed.

“Next, I need a housekeeper and two people who can keep accounts well! If you’re able to find them for me, this gold coin is yours!” Leylin flicked a gold coin on his hand.

“Let me think! Let me think!” Seeing that it was another gold coin waving its hand at him, the baldy suddenly became lively. He began muttering incoherently while grabbing his bald head and racking his brains. “That’s right! Old Welker! Old Welker was a housekeeper for a Baron before. Recently, He has been saying that he wants to come out again to make a living!”

The bald trader said.

“Very good! Bring me to him!” Leylin nodded his head approvingly.

Two days later, in the morning. While the mist still had not completely dissipated, there was still some frostiness lingering in the cold morning air.

\* Creak! \* Roran City gates opened slowly, and a horse carriage emerged from between them.

A dozen odd mercenaries, wearing broken armour and carrying metal spears and bows, escorted a large horse carriage as it slowly left the city.

In front of the horse carriage, Fayern was leading a brown colored handsome steed. Behind him was a 20-year-old mercenary carrying a red-coloured flag. On it was embroidered the image of a hawk; the insignia of the Roran Hawks mercenary group.

Greem rode close to the horse carriage having given up the driver seat. The person who sat there instead was a white-haired geezer. Although he faced the wind and his hair was blown about wildly, his clothes were impeccable and without any creases.

He was the housekeeper that Leylin got— Old Welker. Earlier, the Baron he served had gone bankrupt, hence, he became jobless. He was in the same boat as the bald trader who visited him and joined Leylin's party.

Going from Roran City to Extreme Night City only required 7 days. Roran Hawks mercenary group was worthy of Fayern's praise. They were extremely familiar with the route and could even find lodging along the way, saving them from the hassle of setting up camp.

7 days later, the group safely arrived at Extreme Night City.

Leylin lifted open the hanging screen on the horse carriage and saw that the clouds ahead were rather dark. The layers of cloud were crowded together, completely blocking any sunrays. It seemed that it would rain soon.

There was also a shadow cast on the surrounding bushes and grasses, which made it look very gloomy.

“Fayern!” Leylin walked out of the horse carriage’s door, “Didn’t you say that Extreme Night City has a large area of vegetation that withered? Which area was that?”

“Young Master!” Fayern grasped the reins firmly and reduced the pace of the horses to match the pace of the horse carriage.

“Extreme Night City is enormous. These mysterious happenings only belong to a small portion in the eastern part. Normally, we try our best to detour around that area. After all, humans have also done their best to avoid danger.....”

“Where is that forest?” Leylin leaned against the side of the door as if he was enjoying the scenery.

“The eastern part of Dark Night Woods is closer to the core of the city!” Fayern looked at Leylin and he lowered his voice and said, “Dark Night Woods had an abundance of certain herbs. Ever since the withering event, however, the supply of herbs in Extreme Night City has decreased by 30%!”

“Is that so?” Leylin smiled. Extreme Night City was considered a large city in Eastwoods Province and one of the pillars of its economy was the herb industry. Now, it seemed that most likely the City’s Lord and his officers were worried about the situation.

“Dark Night Woods? I’ll remember it!” Although the woods in the kingdom were rather dangerous, this was only true for normal humans. Leylin even traversed his academy’s Abyssal Bone Forest, so naturally he was not worried about the present dangers.

“Did any of the herb gatherers disappear in the withering zone?” Leylin asked suddenly.

“Herb gatherers? You mean various hired hands, bandits, and adventurers?” Fayern shrugged his shoulders, “The woods are full of dangers, and a few people dying is very normal, so who knows?”

As the two conversed, the horse carriage slowly approached Extreme Night City.

The city walls were not very high, yet they were extremely thick. It seemed to be made by piling granite rocks, and was extremely sturdy.

The guard at the city gates recognised Fayern and allowed the horse carriage to enter after payment of the toll fee.

“Let’s find lodging first!” Leylin ordered briefly.

.....

Night approached, and Leylin sent Anna, who was serving him, away and stayed alone in the inn’s room.

Opening the window, a cold gust of air blew in. The outside was extremely dark, and there were few lighted lamps.

Leylin closed the door and took out a blue coloured crystal ball from the sack he carried at all times.

This crystal ball was extremely small and let off a strange glow. In the centre of the glass were many golden specks of light that continuously rove about like little fireflies.

“Activate!” Leylin muttered an incantation.

The specks in the crystal ball started to shift about until finally forming a strange symbol.

This symbol was rather curvy and swirled continuously. It finally looked like an eye that was bloodshot.

Leylin's expression was extremely solemn. First, he turned the symbol towards his face allowing his somewhat skinny face to be reflected onto the crystal ball.

"Shadow Calendar, Year 1032, Month of the severe cold, Day of the ravens weeping." Leylin enunciated slowly in an extremely distinct voice.

"Today, I have arrived at Extreme Night City and am currently residing at Hoof's Inn." Leylin turned the crystal ball so the surroundings were reflected into the symbol inside. He then walked over to the windowsill and soaked up the imagery outside.

"Currently, news has it that the withering area belongs to the east area, Dark Night Woods. As of this recording, there have been no reports of any member's death. Tomorrow I will prepare to set off and enquire, maybe gather new information."

"The above-mentioned records are by level 2 acolyte, Leylin Farlier!"

After he finished speaking, Leylin wiped the crystal ball with his pale white fingers. \*Hehe! Hehe!\* From within the crystal ball came a strange sound, like a kid's laughter. Following which, the eye symbol flickered and disappeared, turning back into countless golden specks of light

The crystal ball was given by the academy to Leylin to be used as proof of having undertaken the mission.

The crystal ball was able to record a few scenes and voices. All that Leylin had to do was to record every important event during the mission. He could then hand it over as proof upon returning to the academy.

Of course, the crystal ball's controlling right was with Leylin. As long as he did not want to activate it, the crystal ball would not be able to record anything without his magical support.

This was why Abyssal Bone Forest Academy dared to allow their acolytes to go out on long-term missions without fear of being duped.

“From Fayern’s description, the withering danger zone is not that huge. I’m afraid that it could either be some tree demons or organisms that feed on humans. A level 2 acolyte would be more than enough to deal with them!”

Leylin weighed things carefully, “I don’t have to be that frantic, I still have over two years! I should first send some mercenaries over to have a look.....”

“The most important thing at hand now is to settle down here. Moreover, I have to visit a ‘friend’..... Leylin’s lips curved into a mysterious smile.

Although the location of Extreme Night City was rather remote, it was close to a few Magi resource points. There was even a magic crystal mine nearby that was being excavated. Of course, the resources were already exhausted, but they still attracted a good number of wandering Magi and small families. It even gave rise to a small scale Magus market and was indicated on the map Bicky gave.

Moreover, within the short span of time, while they were entering the city, the A.I. Chip had already picked out several energy waves emitted by other acolytes. It seems that there were quite a few acolytes living in this city.

This was extremely normal, as wandering magicians or those who were reclusive preferred remote towns to settle in, and to better conceal their identities.

Of course, due to having longer lifespans, appearance and radiation emissions, they cannot stay in the same area for long, often changing locations after a few years.

While Leylin was thinking thus, he yelled, “Anna!”

“Young Master, what are your instructions!” Not long after, Anna entered wearing a beautiful red dress. As she curtsied, her snow white calves were revealed.

“Prepare a gift; I want to pay someone a visit tomorrow!”

“As to the specifics, Welker will tell you!” Leylin yawned and stated blandly.

After dismissing the somewhat disappointed Anna, Leylin casually set up an energy particle array as an early warning device before he blew out the candles and entered dreamland.

The next morning, Leylin left with Anna who brought along a beautiful hat.

“Is this the gift that Old Welker picked?” Leylin took the cap and gave it a once-over, realising that it was made of beast hide. It was very smooth to the touch, and there was also a feather stuck on it.

“Housekeeper Welker said that in Extreme Night City, Sticking the Night Hawk’s feather on a leather cap represents peaceful intent and friendliness. It is the gift of choice when paying a visit for the first time!” Anna put on a rather frightened expression.

“Young.....Young Master! Are you going to visit another ‘Sire’?” Anna’s voice became somewhat shaky.

“Yes! He is also an acolyte!” Leylin lowered his voice so that it was only audible to Anna and himself.

After he spoke, he saw the young girl’s shoulder trembled. Leylin smiled, Anna was sold to a Magus before she was resold as a slave. It seemed to have been a traumatic experience for her.

“If you’re afraid, you can always go back first!” Leylin moved forward and embraced Anna’s slender waist.

“No! Anna wants to go together with Young Master!” Anna forced herself to smile.

Leylin shook his head, “Follow me if you want to!”

Extreme Night City's construction was somewhat gothic with sharp spikes on the roof tops. The pavements were also layered with smooth rocks giving the impression that Extreme Night City was one of the wealthier cities around.

As Leylin and Anna neared the eastern side of the city, the people's outfits here became much more urbane than that of other places and the decorations on the buildings became more gorgeous too.

"It seems like the east of Extreme Night City is where the nobles and scholars congregate."

Leylin looked at the clusters of flowers on both sides of the road. There was even an outdoor fountain. He could not help but smile as he said to Anna.

Afterward, the two of them came to a white-coloured two storey villa. On the door plate was hung, "Cecelia Main Street, 59".



## Chapter 57 – Murphy

### Murphy

Leylin rang the doorbell that hung on the door. A crisp ring of a bell could be heard, followed by the noise of scurrying footsteps.

“Hello! May I ask who you are? Do you have an appointment?” A meticulous looking butler appeared in front of Leylin.

“Leylin Farlier, I am here to visit the owner of this villa!” Leylin smiled.

The butler obviously looked distressed as he said, “Sir, as you know, my master, Murphy, is a renowned scholar. His schedule every day is extremely packed, perhaps.....”

At this moment, a girl, who seemed like the maid, hurriedly ran over and whispered into the butler’s ears.

The butler’s complexion immediately changed as he bowed deeply, “Master invites you into the living room!”

Leylin smiled as he retrieved the energy waves he radiated.

Upon entering inside the villa, there was a corridor littered with various art pieces like paintings and exhibited on the faint yellow colored walls were all kinds of oil paintings, and other specimens of art, which were rather pleasing to the eyes.

As the living room came into view, it became quite obvious that it was a spacious house.

The decor in the room was extremely aesthetic. Although there were no dazzling golden or silver items or gems, these pieces had an aura of history and gave off a feeling of understated elegance.

Beside the fireplace in the living room, an old scholar with white brows and beard lounged on a dark red recliner.

The old man's eyes seemed muddy with only occasional traces of intelligence within.

The old man's originally squinted eyes opened upon seeing Leylin. He stood up and spread his arms in an embracing gesture, "Welcome, my young friend!"

Leylin went forward to hug the old man, "It is an honour to be able to meet you! I hope you like this present I brought for you!"

Anna stepped forward and handed over to the butler an extremely exquisite cap.

"I like the tail feathers of the night hawk. They represent peace!" The old man waved his hands, "Lille, you may take your leave, I want to have a good chat with this friend of mine!"

"Take your leave too!" Leylin told Anna who was beside him.

After extending their salutations, the few maids, and the butler left, closing the door behind them. Very soon, there was only Leylin and the old man left in the living room.

“Alright, let’s reintroduce ourselves! Murphy, level 3 acolyte! I have been a resident of Extreme Night City for 3 years now.....” The old man’s eyes showed signs of his reminiscing past events.

“So then, guest from afar, how about you?”

“Leylin Farlier, level 2 acolyte and wandering Magus. I have recently come to Extreme Night City and wish to reside here for several years.” Leylin smiled and executed the bow between Magi.

“I detect signs of youth in your body. Being able to advance into level 2 acolyte at this age, you have a rather great aptitude!” Murphy sighed in admiration.

“I was just lucky.....” Leylin demurred. Although the old man’s body had degenerated, the energy waves of a level 3 acolyte told anyone that it was not good to provoke him.

“A.I. Chip, initiate scan!”

[Murphy. Strength: 1.5, Agility: 1.4, Vitality: 2.9, Spiritual force: 2.9, Magical Power: 8. Status: Healthy. Evaluation: level 3 acolyte, relatively dangerous!]

The A.I. Chip faithfully relayed the figures onto Leylin’s field of vision.

Being a wandering level 3 acolyte, Murphy’s array of magic spells definitely surpassed Leylin’s. Moreover, he would have some extremely-difficult-to-deal-with trump cards hidden to protect his life.

However, Leylin came with good intentions. From the A.I. Chip’s area scan, the number of acolytes residing in Extreme Night City was not high. As for this Murphy, he radiated one of the strongest energy waves.

After exchanging several polite greetings, Leylin delved immediately into the main purpose of his visit.

“So it’s like this! I wish to reside permanently in Extreme Night City, and even open an ingredients shop. You know, the procedures are extremely tedious, and I also need a resident to act as my guarantor.....”

“So you came here to look for me?” Murphy smiled and drank the cup of red tea that was on the table.

“To be honest, as an ambitious and truth seeking Magus, gold coins and the like should no longer sway us. Although I don’t know why you arrived at this conclusion, on a whim perhaps? Or for some other reason? To me, this indeed is a small matter!”

“Coincidentally, I have some friendly relations with the Lord of Extreme Night City. One of his sons is also under my tutelage. Moreover, any city lord will not refuse the request of a Mysterious Entity..... The residential procedures here in Extreme Night City, as well as the shop permit, can all be settled very easily.”  
Murphy guaranteed.

“Then I must really thank you!” Leylin nodded his head, “If there are any areas I could help you with, do not hesitate to ask!”

Although this was said to satisfy the requirements of etiquette, both Leylin and the old man knew that it was mentioned as a mere courtesy.

The handling of residential procedures may be difficult to regular humans. However, for a famous scholar like Murphy, it was only a matter of a few words. Even if Leylin wanted to handle these procedures by himself, he would have to spend more time than the old man.

For both Murphy and Leylin, this matter was simply a means to establish a basic friendship of convenience between them.

“Extreme Night City is a peaceful and quiet place. If you wish to have peaceful days then this place will definitely meet your needs. Later on, I will also introduce you to a few friends of mine. However, there are some set conventional customs

that have to be complied with.....Don't worry, they are all customary practices, for example, one should not massacre the residents or something like that!"

"I definitely agree!" Leylin's coming to Extreme Night City was to avoid the chaos of war and intrigue. Naturally he would not do anything that would draw attention to himself.

Leylin and Murphy then talked about many Magi related questions, from how to stabilise a spell model for advanced levels to some of Murphy's personal adventures.

Although Murphy was only a level 3 acolyte, his experience was abundant due to having remained at this level for a long time already. This made Leylin feel that the trip was not in vain.

On the other hand, Leylin's vast knowledge and eidetic memory shocked Murphy.

Both of them regretted not having met earlier. They even had their lunch together all the way until dusk before Murphy let Leylin leave. When they bade farewell, they even arranged for their next meeting.

"According to what Murphy said, the magicians in Extreme Night City are all of the acolyte level. As for the few nearby cities, official Magi were also extremely rare making this place very suitable for an acolyte to live in!"

The inquiries he made today caused Leylin to feel at ease, letting him walk at a slower and a more relaxed pace.

"Only regarding this case where plants and wood withered is Murphy completely ignorant. After all, he is already quite old and does not wish to take risks....."

The two street lamps were lit with a dim yellow flame, allowing Leylin to see the road ahead.

Anna followed quietly behind Leylin. Being an outstanding maid, she obviously knew what she had to do, which was not to interrupt Leylin while he was deep in thought.

After Leylin ran through a simulation of his plans one more time, they had both arrived at the inn.

“Young Master!” “Sir!”

Old Welker, Greem, and Fraser came forward to receive them.

Leylin nodded his head, “After dinner all of you come to my room. There are many things I want to inform all of you regarding my future plans!”

Dinner was vegetable salad and mutton soup, followed by huge pieces of dried cookies. After Leylin finished and allowed Anna to clean up, the core people among his subordinates went to Leylin’s room.

Leylin sat on a chair wrapped in beast hide and quietly listened to their reports.

“Welker, how was the search for a residence?”

“Young Master, Old Welker has already contacted a Knight who is preparing to move to Sage Province. He is willing to sell a small manor in Extreme Night City to you.” Old Welker reported. Despite being an old man, he was brimming with energy after finding them a new home.

“Very good, what is the area like? Is the place enough to house all of us? How much is it?” Leylin asked.

“Please be at ease Young Master. Old Welker, I have gone to the manor and taken a look today. The area was very big and has no problem accommodating a hundred people. Moreover, there is even an oil palm forest, a fish pond, and a mill. Knight Victor originally built it according to a baron’s standards. He never thought that it

would change ownership this quickly. As for the price, Knight Victor has set it at 5000 gold coins!”

“It’s not that expensive, gold coins aren’t an issue!” Leylin twined his fingers. To a Magus, such earthly items as gold coins are insignificant. What they were concerned with were only magic crystals, high-grade ingredients, and the acquisition of remnant ancient knowledge.

Leylin had high-grade magic crystals of his own. Any one piece would be able to fetch a price far surpassing this amount of gold coins. However, Leylin was not prepared to do that. After all, magic crystals were rarer. If he really could not get the gold coins, then he would go borrow some from Murphy in exchange for a few potions—which was not a bad idea at all.

“Very well!” Let’s take a look tomorrow. If the price and the area are both suitable, we can sign the contract immediately.” Leylin nodded his head, saying, “Also, go walk the streets and scout something for me. Recently, the herbs available in Extreme Night City have decreased. There will definitely be many small-sized shops that can no longer manage and are about to close down. Go and look into them first!”

“Forgive me for asking, but Young Master, are you thinking of opening a herb shop? The permit for doing such business has rather strict requirements……” Fayern said.

“Regarding that, none of you have to worry. I have already made arrangements. The permit will be here in a few days.”

Hearing this, Fayern and Old Welker were dazed. To be able to guarantee such a thing quite easily, Leylin’s identity as a noble had already been confirmed.

“In Poolfield Kingdom, the nobility represents progress and hope!”

With this in mind, their gazes towards Leylin became more fervent.

Fayern silently clenched his fists. Being one of the few who could look ahead, he naturally knew that he could not work as a mercenary for much longer. Most of the mercenaries carried a lot of injuries and scars with to their graves knowing little enjoyment in their typically short lives. However, getting hired by this Sir Leylin as his private army could be the fastest way out of the trade.



## Chapter 58 – A Banquet

### A Banquet

The brilliant rays of the sun lit up the path with a golden light. Walking on it was like walking on a golden, paved road.

Today Leylin had especially changed into formal ceremonial attire. He had Greem personally drive the horse carriage to Murphy's villa.

Similarly, Murphy also wore formal attire and carried a black cane as he waited. After seeing Leylin, his wrinkled face revealed a joyous expression, "Welcome, my friend!"

"My apologies for being a little late!" Leylin opened the window and said.

"The agreed time isn't up yet, I just deliberately got out earlier!" Murphy got into the horse carriage with the help of his servant. With the crack of the whip, Greem drove the horse carriage towards the centre of the city.

"City lord's banquet is to be held today. He invited you too. After all, as the owner, he has developed a curiosity for any guest with strength..." Murphy left his sentence hanging.

"That's understandable!" Leylin answered. As someone who has control over a city, seeking Leylin out only after so many days since he had entered the city was somewhat surprising.

"Are you somewhat bored?" Murphy noticed Leylin's indifference.

“To be honest, I am not adept at these kinds of social interaction. Given a choice, I’d rather stay inside my experiment lab...” Leylin smiled wryly.

“Haha...” Murphy let off a benign laugh, “I felt exactly the same way when I was younger! However, you must learn to enjoy life, young man! Compared to tasteless experiments, delicacies and fervent, unrestrained women can sometimes lead you towards excitement!”

Leylin nodded his head. This was actually the difference between retired magicians and newly advanced ones.

Murphy has no way of advancing in the path of a Magus anymore, so he could only divert his enthusiasm towards other areas. As for Leylin, he still had a lot of options, so he naturally would make use of the time to cultivate—not waste it on such mundane matters.

“Brighten up kid!” There are several comrades I will introduce you to....” Murphy smiled lightly.

“Could they be...?” Leylin’s eyes flashed.

“Indeed! They are acolytes like us, and they are all younger than me. You would have some common interests to talk about.”

“I’m starting to look forward to this banquet now!” Leylin’s lips curled up and smiled.

The city lord’s castle was in the heart of Extreme Night City. Standing guard around it were two rows of fully equipped black-armoured arms men.

“Those are the Black Iron Guards of Extreme Night City’s Lord, Viscount Jackson. They once defeated a 500-man army troop with roughly hundred men.

After alighting the horse carriage, Murphy introduced Leylin.

Leylin looked around. There were several other horse carriages in the vicinity. From time to time, gentlemen in lavish attire and ladies in low-cut ball gowns got down.

Murphy appeared to have quite a reputation amongst this circle of nobles based on the exuberant greetings Murphy happily responded to. They even chatted for a while before moving on.

Upon seeing Murphy, the guard at the door ran in immediately. Not long after, an extremely loud voice boomed from within.

“Murphy, my friend! You have finally arrived!” Accompanying the voice, a burly middle-aged man walked out of the castle. The nobles and troops around respectfully greeted him. This apparently was Viscount Jackson of Extreme Night City.

Leylin’s height in the South Coast area was considered average, but this Viscount Jackson was actually taller than him by two heads. He had the classic western features and an extremely wide forehead. He even had extremely long sideburns.

Jackson gave Murphy a firm hug, “Little Jackson has always been asking about you!”

“I too miss that cute fellow. He is one of the smartest amongst all my students!” Murphy said.

“This is a good friend of mine from far away, Sire Leylin Farlier!” Murphy introduced Leylin to Viscount Jackson.

“Extreme Night City welcomes you!” Jackson sized up Leylin, and opened his broad shoulders, giving Leylin a hug.

Leylin’s smile was somewhat stiff, which he quickly concealed.

Right at that moment, he was completely distracted by the stats shown by the A.I. Chip.

[Jackson. Strength: 7.9, Agility: 4.5, Vitality: 6.3, Spiritual force: 3.5. State: Healthy. This human is deemed as dangerous, it is strongly suggested that the Host maintain a distance of 50 metres from this person.]

“These stats can only belong to a Grand Knight!” Leylin’s pupils shrank.

“The vitality of Grand Knights is extremely high. And, after constant activation and stimulation of their internal life energy, they have surpassed the bottleneck that held back most humans. Moreover, they have also developed a slight resistance to rank 0 spells.” Leylin recalled a description he had read before.

“Very well! You should be a Knight too, right?” Lord Jackson was slightly astonished by Leylin’s strength, and he looked upon Leylin now in a friendlier light.

“I only recently advanced, and am nowhere close to you!”

Leylin said humbly and ordered the A.I. Chip, “A.I. Chip! Show me a simulation if I were to fight against this city lord Jackson.”

[Beep! Establishing parameters, inputting data, simulating battle scenario, predicting outcome....]

A large light screen flashed continuously, and the results: [Battle simulation complete. 50 metres and beyond, Host win rate is 89.8%. Between 20 to 50 metres, Host win rate is 58.7%. Below 20 metres, Host win rate is 33.9%!]

“As expected, the physical power of Grand Knights is extremely astounding. They are capable of closing the distance before a magician can cast a spell. If magicians do not try to stay out of range, they would be on the short end of the stick!”

Leylin’s expression did not change as he walked together with Murphy into the castle’s hall.

It was obvious that the large hall had been decorated for the occasion. The marbled floor was so smooth that it reflected the figures of people walking around on it.

A huge golden chandelier hung from the centre of the large hall. It was densely packed with lighted candles that shone through the surrounding coloured crystals letting out a colourful light.

At the side of this huge hall, was an orchestra of musicians wearing swallowtail coats and performing a slow enjoyable tune.

The area filled with long tables covered in white cloth. On these tables were gold and silver platters with various fruits and barbecued meat. On the side, there were even flasks and silver flagons, which emitted the strong aroma of wine.

Right in the centre was a huge open space where many of the nobility were waltzing to the music.

“It seems like a ball with a buffet on the side!” Leylin nodded his head.

“Go enjoy yourself! I’ll have to say hello to a few old friends!” Murphy said to Leylin.

“Please do!” Leylin gestured with his head in assent. He then picked up a cup of grape wine and sat on a nearby sofa.

Not long after, he spotted Murphy together with a number of coquettish women in revealing outfits. They even entered a small side room, which made him rather speechless.

“He’s so old and he still wants to pretend to be rather strong, can he even make it?”

“Do you mind if I sit beside you?” Just as Leylin was thinking such indecent thoughts, an elegant voice sounded beside him.

Leylin raised his head and saw a young lady wearing a purple gown. She had a head of golden hair that fell to her shoulders like a waterfall; even her skin was a milky white.

Looking around, Leylin discovered that there was no one else near him. Leylin was quite good looking and kept himself well groomed, which naturally attracted a few young ladies.

“Of course, I don’t mind!” Leylin smiled lightly and chatted happily with the young lady.

To him, the combination of his memories from a previous life and the memories of this body’s previous owner made making a little girl happy an easy task.

Not long after, the young lady was completely enraptured by Leylin’s made-up stories.

“Haha...Haha, running naked on the street? He actually did that?” The young lady completely lost her earlier elegance; she laughed almost uproariously without much of her former delicate demeanor. This drew a lot of curious stares from the people close by.

“Sorry to interrupt you Leylin! However, our friends are here!”

Murphy followed closely by several noble women with whom he had just tangled violently, walked over. Surprisingly, his attire was still extremely neat and tidy, which left Leylin rather shocked.

“Alright, I have to go!” Leylin made a helpless gesture and rose from the sofa.

“This...Sir! After talking for so long, I haven’t asked for your name yet?” The young lady slapped her forehead.

“Leylin Farlier, just call me Leylin!”

“I...I’m Alicia, my house is located at Cecelia Main Street, 34. You’re welcomed to come over to play anytime!”

“Haha, I never thought that you might be so sought after by ladies huh!” After the both of them left, Murphy made fun of Leylin.

“It’s only a young lady who likes to listen to stories. Have they arrived?” Leylin asked.

“They’re all here, followed me!”

Murphy said, and brought Leylin to a small room beside the dance hall.

There were several acolytes already waiting in the room. Leylin could sense that their energy waves made them either level 1 or level 2 acolytes.

Murphy obviously had the highest standing in this circle. When he entered, the acolytes all stood up to receive him.

“Alright!” Murphy swept his gaze around, “Let me introduce all of you to a new comrade! Leylin, he came from the west...”

After Leylin’s self-introduction was over, he could not help but ask Murphy, “Would a gathering like this cause an issue?”

“No worries, Jackson has reared some Beastmen and their noses are more sensitive than a dog’s. He already knew of our identities long ago. It’s just that all of us do not mention it explicitly!”

An acolyte with acne spoke, picking up a silver flagon and drinking from it from time to time.

“Oh! Mayflower, my Mayflower!” At this moment, a guy’s heavy panting sounded.

“Oh! Baby! So hot, so good!” A woman’s murmuring groans followed soon after.

It seems like there was a couple in ardent passion in the room next door.

Black lines formed on Murphy’s face. He promptly swung his hand and a faint energy membrane enveloped the room isolating the noise of the outside world.

“This is an accident, an accident!” His old face actually reflected his embarrassment.

Leylin wanted to faint, and there was a voice that repeatedly echoed in his mind.

“Alright! I really shouldn’t harbour any hope toward this group of acolytes. They are all just a bunch of trash that has completely lost their motivation and prudence!”



## Chapter 59 – Recording

### Recording

Of course, on the surface, Leylin continued to pretend that he was naive as he began to converse in a friendly and amicable manner with this group of acolytes.

After the ball ended, the various horse carriages from different families set off. In a secret chamber within the city lord's castle, the Viscount Jackson that Leylin saw today was talking to his subordinate.

“Is it confirmed?”

“I have detected the smell of a Mysterious Entity on his body. It has also been confirmed that he is extremely young!” The person who replied was draped in black robes; tufts of yellow fur could be glimpsed growing on his face.

“He is different from those befuddled acolytes. I do not think he will be retiring at such a young age. No matter if he is hiding from enemies or is concealing some other motive, his appearance is not good news for us!” A worried expression flickered through Jackson's steely face.

“Please pardon my forthrightness! Although we are able to deal with a Mysterious Entity right now, if we draw the ire of the rest of them, then whatever gains we achieve would not make up for the losses we may incur!”

The Half-Beast Man said slowly.

“Indeed!” Jackson became quiet for some time before giving out an order, “Do not incur the wrath of the other party, but never let him out of your sight!”

“I understand!” The Half-Beast Man disappeared into the darkness....

Ever since the ball, Leylin’s agenda progressed extremely quickly. First, he borrowed 4500 gold coins from Murphy to buy the villa.

Afterward, through the search done by Old Welker, Leylin chose a medicine shop that was about to close down but had a good geographic position. He took over it and obtained the shop permit.

With the unexpected enthusiastic help from the city lord’s castle, many procedures were actually settled in a matter of days.

Of course, Leylin discovered a few spies loitering around the medicine shop and the villa. However, these secretive parties exercised restraint against Leylin, and only made basic surveillance measures, not insinuating their influence onto Leylin’s people. So, Leylin was not too bothered by their presence either.

Through Murphy, he hired a few pharmacists. Once the minimum standards for managing the medicine shop were met, he then completely handed over the reins to his core personnel and buried himself in his magic experiments.

After some renovation, the Knight’s villa looked even newer than when it was brand new.

Previously, the Knight stayed in a three storey high, white-brick loft. Now, Leylin chose the few really big rooms for his private use.

The largest of these was used as his bedroom while the rooms on both sides served as a study room and an experiment lab. After putting in place a few detection spells he had learned at Abyssal Bone Forest Academy as an early warning grid, he

passed down strict orders to his subordinates that without his order, no one was access to these rooms.

As for Greem and Fraser, they were posted near the master bedroom, as guards.

Fayern and other mercenaries were all given guard duty that rotated between the villa and the medicine shop. Leylin also gave out notices that serious and hardworking people may purchase small tracts of land on his property in 3 years later, permanent residence being a possibility for qualified persons or families. This was a very strong motivation for normal mercenaries and farmers.

Occasionally, Leylin looked through the windows and saw the serious hardworking serious mercenaries and farmers at work.

Because he always stayed at the villa, apart from the occasional visit to Murphy's place, he rarely even went to the medicine shop. The rumors that were slowly spreading outside gained Leylin the reputation of a benevolent yet lazy villa owner.

"Young Master! The people from the medicine shop are here!" Anna's voice travelled through the door.

"Let them drop off the items in the living room and get Greem to move them to the experiment lab!" Leylin used his fingers to tap on the window pane, letting off a dull thudding noise.

"Your wish is my command!" The voice very soon was replaced with noises of things being moved about.

A dozen minutes later, Leylin came to the experiment lab.

Right now, the originally spacious experiment was littered with crates and a few wooden long tables. There were no windows in the room, and only a chandelier hung from the ceiling emitting a dim glow.

“Young Master! According to your orders, the medicine shop has acquired for you every type of herb that can be found in the market.”

Anna lifted her dress and curtsied. She turned around and opened a red wooden crate revealing stacks of tied roots and stems, as well as many other herbs of indeterminate quantity and type. On the side of each stack or bundle was stuck a yellow paper note indicating the names of these herbs.

“Also, these are all the formulas that normal pharmacists own. They are only to normal humans.

Anna handed over yet another stack of dark yellow parchment notes.

Leylin’s eyes skimmed over these and placed the list on one of the long tables.

“All of you may leave! Anna, stay behind!” Leylin waved towards Greem and his assistants.

Greem bowed and strode through the large heavy door, closing it behind him.

With a huge clang, the experiment lab’s lighting turned even dimmer.

Leylin’s brows furrowed. He took out a white coloured rock from his sack.

He then pressed his fingers lightly on the rock and a layer of bright white light radiated from it.

This was a Sunlight Rock. It is an item that magicians normally use during their travels. Slight radiation energy is contained in it that can let out a bright light for a prolonged period of time.

However, this radiation was extremely small and could only be used for illumination.

“This is much brighter than before!” Leylin was very satisfied as he looked at his well-lit surroundings. He then said to Anna, “Store the herbs well, and arrange them in an orderly fashion on the experiment table!”

“Yes.” Anna hurried with her task.

Leylin casually picked up a purple coloured fruit. This fruit was the size of a thumb. It had lost all the water contained on its surface, thus its wrinkly exterior. Its weight was extremely light too.

“According to the medicine books delivered yesterday, this is the Warter Fruit, a type of fruit that grows in swamps.”

Leylin placed a finger on the surface of the fruit, “A.I. Chip! Extract data and save it in your databanks!”

Right now he no longer had to ingest the herbs. He could determine their medicinal properties with a mere touch.

[Beep! Data extraction in progress!]

In Leylin’s field of vision, the A.I. Chip overlaid a light blue screen, with many numbers and figures that changed constantly.

[Name: Warter Fruit. The area produced: Swamps. Uses: Mild poisonous properties with a numbing effect. Data stored!]

The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned before a second had gone by.

“Very good. Again!” Leylin picked up another dried stem.

This was one of the reasons why Leylin had opened a medicine shop. Through his years of being an apprentice under Kroft, he recorded almost all the herbs used by Potioneering Masters, storing it into the A.I. Chip’s data banks.

However, those were special ingredients used by the Magi. As for herbs used by normal people, the A.I. Chip had no record of them. He now had to fill these missing bits of information.

Moreover, Leylin obtained two ancient potion formulas from his mentor and wanted to find substitutes for them. This could only be accomplished through innumerable experimentation and the consumption of huge amounts of precious and rare herbs. Even if Leylin had the A.I. Chip, he could not get around this step in the process.

With such a vast undertaking, Leylin could see no end to the task at hand even if he expended all his magic crystals.

However, if some ingredients could be substituted with herbs used by normal humans, he could economise by a huge margin.

“Although this might just be a daydream, the advantage was the potential savings a successful substitution promised. No matter how many experiments, it would still be considered a favorable exchange. Thus, by utilising the terrifying processing capabilities of the A.I. Chip, there is a glimmer of hope.

Leylin’s gaze was resolute, “Anyway, no matter how many ingredients I consume, they are just ingredients used by normal humans. I only need to spend some gold coins to be able to buy them again. This is much better than spending magic crystals!”

As for the investigation he commissioned, it had long since been tossed to the back of Leylin’s mind.

After all, there were still two odd years of time and as long as he fully carried it out within these two years his mission would be counted as accomplished.

Even if the mission were to fail, because Kroft was his teacher, the worst punishment would be a fine a few magic crystals. Hence, Leylin was not the least bit worried.

Time slowly passed, and the experiment lab became quiet. There were only the occasional scraping noises Anna made when placing herbs on the table.

Two days later, only Leylin remained in the lab. His face had a happy glow to it.

[3217 types of herbs successfully stored in the databank. Would you like to create a separate folder?]

The A.I. Chip's voice intoned.

“No! Combine them with the earlier record we made of some normal ingredients, establish a folder using the name “Compendium of ordinary ingredients”! Leylin ordered.

[Folder created...transferring relevant simulation models into the databank]

“Alright, next will be an analysis of the various combinations of medicinal properties. This is a huge project, even with the simulation I must still carry out experiments to verify the actual data and increase the probability of getting the results I desire.”

Leylin thought.

“Young Master, it's time for dinner.” Anna's muted voice sounded through the door.

“Okay, I'm coming out.” When it was time to work, he worked; and when it was time to rest, he rested. This was his principle for living. He would seldom do things like neglect food and rest to conduct more experiments, unlike other magicians.

To him, along the path of pursuing truth, appropriate rest was allowed.

Leylin smiled and tidied up the experiment table before leaving the lab.

“When I am conducting important experiments, I will hang a sign on the door. At that time, do not interrupt me no matter how many days I stay inside. Do you understand?” Leylin told Anna who was serving him.

“I’ll do as you bid, Young Master.”

“And what’s for dinner?” Leylin walked towards one side of the room. Although many masters practiced eating some meals together with their subordinates, this did not fit the customs of the Magi. So Leylin ate alone most of the time.

Several plates of food covered with hemispherical cloche tableware were arranged on a serving platter and placed on a small, round and white-colored table.

“It’s veal with purple vegetable soup and apple strawberry pie!” Anna said lightly, lifted the cover. A strong appetising aroma permeated the air.

“Not bad!” Leylin nodded his head as he let Anna place a napkin around his neck. He picked up the knife and dinner fork and began to eat.

“Also, remember to remind me tomorrow to set aside an hour of my time every day for Knight training!”

Leylin said to Anna, having suddenly recalled something. He had already ignited his internal life energy. As a Knight, he only needed to train some more to get his various stats above 3. Although Leylin planned to walk the path of a Magus, he had nothing to lose by increasing his stats.



## Chapter 60 – Hove Violet Leaves

### Hove Violet Leaves

The cold winter breeze was blowing and a bone-piercing chill permeated the air.

On a small field, Leylin was practising his cross-blade techniques while half-naked.

The muscles on his chest had become more defined. Although not very prominent, they were very robust, exuding a sense of vitality.

Forward! Uppercut! Pierce! Every move was a flawless, textbook-perfect execution.

After Leylin finished his training, Anna— who was observing from the side— hurriedly ran forward and handed him a white towel.

Leylin dried his sweat and called his stats onto his visual field.

[Leylin Farlier, level 2 acolyte, Knight. Strength: 3.1, Agility: 3.3, Vitality:: 3.2, Spiritual force: 4.7, Magical Power: 4.0. Status: Healthy]

“A.I. Chip, what is the progress from today’s training?”

[Assessment in progress! Host’s internal life energy has been raised to the maximum, further increase is not possible at the moment!] The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned.

“This day has finally arrived!” Leylin exclaimed, “Being able to maximize these stats was already good enough. Even if I were to spend more time, I will not necessarily gain anything more. From now on his Knight training could be put on hold. After all, I just need to practice my blade skills in the future, so they don’t get rusty. With the A.I. Chip, this is no challenge at all.”

After the early morning Knight training ended, Leylin took a brief respite and waited until he was fully recovered before burying his head in more experiments.

Within the lab, Leylin placed a violet leaf into a beaker and added to it one spatula of a green-black, ink-like solution. He then lit a flame underneath the beaker.

The bright yellow fire continuously licked the bottom of the beaker, and purple bubbles began to froth.

“A.I. Chip! Record this down. Test 145, items of substitution: Hove Violet Leaves, Ninuo Root.”

[Record complete.] The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned as it recorded in detail the various medicinal properties and reactions obtained through the experiment.

In this span of time, Leylin had already conducted more than a hundred experiments and made use of the A.I. Chip’s simulation feature over tens of thousands of times.

“This is the moment! I have a very strong premonition that it’ll be successful this time.”

As he murmured to himself, Leylin glanced at the volatile, green- and purple-coloured mixture.

Using normal human herbs as ingredients to synthesize the medicinal properties of magic herbs just seemed to be a fantasy, besides there were countless hurdles to overcome.

Although these experiments required ingredients that could be bought with gold coins, some magic ingredients were still needed to catalyse certain aspects of the experiment.

These were all magic ingredients that Leylin had acquired from the Magus Market. He had now almost used up all of them all.

Without the A.I. Chip simulating a large proportion of his experiments, Leylin's rate of consumption would far outstrip his current rate.

Synthesizing a few important ingredients could already dry up Leylin's resources.

\* Crash! \*

The violet leaf in the beaker completely dissolved and the green coloured liquid became more translucent.

"This is it!" Leylin eyes widened. He picked up a glass rod and stirred in a counterclockwise direction at the same time extending a thread of spiritual force carefully into the contents of the beaker through the glass rod.

As the seconds became minutes, Leylin's face grew more and more solemn. A few beads of sweat even began to form on his forehead.

\* Ding Ling Ling! \* A crisp ringing sounded from the beaker. At the heart of the faint green liquid, many black wormlike dots appeared and began continuously extending themselves in all directions.

Leylin's expression did not change and his hands were as quick as a phantom, as he took a red-coloured pearl—lying on a petri dish nearby— and added it to the ongoing reaction.

\* Pi Pa! \* As the pearl was tossed inside, the black dots in the beaker quickly retreated and the faint green liquid became fainter and fainter, completely turning transparent.

[Beep! Azure Potion main ingredient substitution succeeded! Assessed as capable of standing in for 45.8% of the main ingredient's medicinal properties.]

This prompt was extremely pleasing to Leylin's ears.

“After combining several conjectures into tens of thousands of the A.I. Chip's simulations, I have finally succeeded!” A corner of Leylin's lips quirked up into a smile and he clenched his fist tightly.

At the same time, Leylin deeply lamented about the fact even though he was a Potioneering Master, it was difficult to modify formulas.

He had the original formula, and the A.I. Chip to run simulations for him. This saved a lot of time and ingredients. Even so, he took this long to successfully modify the formula. Instead, if it was his Senior Merlin, he might not even be able to afford the cost of the ingredients, and that also true for the powerful family that supported him behind the scenes.

Squandering precious ingredients for a gamble with a chance of less than one in ten thousand was simply illogical to the typical Magus.

Moreover, during the process of experimentation, each failure would be an agonizing psychological burn that would singe the psyche of a Potioneering Master, day and night. If one could actually change the formula, then that would be out of pure luck, even for Potioneering Grandmasters who had abundant experiences and skill.

However, once the formula was changed, it would lead to huge profits, especially for a potion that could raise spiritual force.

“A.I. Chip! If I were to substitute the original ingredients, how much will the retained effect be?”

[Comparison in progress. Databank information is insufficient. Establishing conjecture. Simulating...Beep! The new formula will retain roughly 35.4% of the original's effectiveness.]

“This is on the low side, but I have no choice. The substituted ingredients are mainly normal ones even commoners can obtain. Quantity can compensate whatever is lacking in quality.”

Leylin analysed the pros and cons of the new Azure Potion, “Based on this, the price could be in excess of 100,000 magic crystals. A pity, this formula was achieved with my current stats. For other people, the effect would be extremely hard to predict. Moreover, the procedures are extremely complicated and some steps are impossible to do without the A.I. Chip. Other Potioneering Masters, will definitely fail many times when brewing this potion.”

In fact, it was clear to Leylin that even if he became an official Magus, once others became aware of this formula, he would not be able to hold onto it. After all, the ingredients for this new spiritual force formula could be bought in mass amounts. It would be game-changing for the lower levels of the various academies and factions. None of them would willingly let go of such an opportunity.

After making up his mind, he burned the formula completely into his memory. The potions he would brew would only be for personal consumption. Leylin then tidied up all traces of his experiments, before stepping through the door of the experiment lab.

“Young Master.” Anna, who was dozing on a chair nearby, got up in a hurry.

“Housekeeper Welker has been looking for you for two hours. There appears to be some crisis at the medicine shop!”

“Oh? Let him come to my study after dinner!” Leylin took off the soiled, sterile robe designed especially for his experiments and changed into more casual soft clothing.

“Apart from Welker, are there any other recent incidents?”

Leylin lounged on a nearby sofa. On the table beside it were purple grape-like fruits and some red berries, which Leylin usually liked to eat.

“Knight Fraser came over earlier and said that the reward mission you commissioned has some developments!”

Although Leylin did not give a high priority to the academy’s mission, some superficial work still had to be done. He, thus, issued a mission notice to the mercenaries and adventurers of Extreme Night City to scout the situation within the depths of the Dark Night Woods, the reward being 1000 gold pieces. It seems that the mission notice was beginning to bear fruit.

After dinner, Leylin received Old Welker and Fraser in his study.

Fraser wore leather armour and was as robust as ever. As for Old Welker, he looked careworn and his body had hunched over.

Old Welker bowed towards Leylin, “Respected Young Master, our earnings from the medicine shop this month is...”

“No need for that!” Leylin leaned against the study table behind him and waved his hands interrupting Old Welker’s speech, “Pass down instructions to buy all Hove Violet Leaves, Ninuo Roots, and Three Flowered Snake Fruits....”

“Then Young Master, how many of them are we buying?”

“All!”

“All?” Old Welker raised his head and looked at Leylin in astonishment.

“That’s right. The three ingredients that I’ve stated, you must buy all of them in the market, and store them at the villa.” Leylin remained indifferent as he said this.

“But...may I remind the Young Master, the medicine shop business is not doing well, together with the herbs that Young Master purchased from time to time, our balance books right now are already in a precarious state...” If not for the villa forking out gold coins all the time, the shop would have been bankrupt by now—this was something, though, that Old Welker did not dare to voice out so he kept it to himself.

“I know that, but you must remember this. If the gold coins are not sufficient, you may take more from Anna. These purchases must not be discontinued. These are my standing orders.” Leylin steepled his fingers. Although he was approximately 15 years old, he could apparently impose his will.

“Al...Alright! I got it.” A layer of cold sweat beaded Old Welker’s forehead. He immediately bowed then left.

He was not the same as Anna and the three men who were aware of Leylin’s identity. It was only natural that he was a little apprehensive about the way Leylin handled financial matters.

However, for Leylin, the only reason he set up a household was to serve his own purposes and to help him with miscellaneous tasks such as the collection of ingredients. So the loss of some gold coins was no big deal.

Anything and everything was to pave the way for his progress to become a Magus. Everything else was a nuisance.

“Although I have walked the path of a Magus, it is just to obtain freedom and a worry-free life. It is a pity, though, that my current strength is far from enough.”

Leylin sighed deeply. He appeared to have become a person of consequence within Extreme Night City, largely owing to his having a villa and servants. However, for

Magi, such things were illusory soap bubbles that could completely vanish with a gentle tap.

The collateral damage of a battle between any two official Magi would definitely be a deadly situation for the current Leylin.

What was the point of fleeting comfort when life or death was not entirely guaranteed?

“More importantly, if the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy was totally defeated, then Sage Gotham’s Hut would perhaps classify all of the faculty and students of the academy as fugitives. I would have to abandon everything and flee.”

“In this chaotic era, only one’s own strength can ensure freedom.”