

Chapter 71 – Preparing To Breakthrough

Preparing To Breakthrough

The heat wave caressed the earth. In the blink of an eye, a few months passed, and it was autumn.

In the small villa, Leylin swirled a tastefully refreshing iced grape juice in a wine glass.

He was attired in a leisurely frivolous apparel favoured by nobles and looked quite lackadaisical.

“A.I. Chip! Bring up my current stats!”

[Beep! Leylin Farlier, level 2 acolyte, Knight. Strength: 3.1, Agility: 3.3, Vitality: 3.2, Spiritual force: 7.1, Magic power: 7 – (magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force). Status: Healthy]

“I have finally reached the 7 spiritual force bottleneck!” Leylin sighed as he looked at the data.

After getting back from his solo exploration several months ago, Leylin got busy brewing potions to breakthrough the spiritual force bottleneck.

Viscount Jackson had expeditiously sent over a warehouse full of Hove Violet Leaves. At the same time, Fraser and the others continued to purchase ingredients found elsewhere as per Leylin’s standing orders.

Sadly, the modified Azure Potion's brewing success rate was on the low side while consumption of Hove Violet Leaves was outrageously high. On top of that, Leylin could only take in the potion during the most optimal times recommended by the A.I. Chip for maximum medicinal effect. It was only now that he reached a spiritual force of 7.

“Young Master! Fraser's back!”

On the other side of the door Anna wore a black gauze ensemble that showed off her alluring curves beneath the fine muslin, especially her snow white thighs which was seductively enclosed in black fishnet stockings.

Right now she acted as Leylin's chief aide, at the same time she had control over the finances, which could be considered as having high authority. However, in the presence of Leylin she was as gentle and as obedient as a little pussycat.

“Let's go! I'll go meet him!”

Leylin got up and left the room, his leather shoes gave off a thudding noise on the floorboard with each step.

“Young Master!” Upon seeing Leylin's arrival, two maids hurriedly curtsied.

“En?” Leylin suddenly walked in front of a maid. She had snow white thighs and perky breasts, but right now her head was lowered and she dared not move.

“You're new here?” Leylin caressed her smooth chin. Her face still had some residual baby fat on it making her look extremely adorable.

“Yes... Yes, I am Trixy, the daughter of Luke who works in your farm ranch milord!” The maid replied softly did not dare reject Leylin's teasing.

“Work hard!” Leylin waved his hands as he left.

“That maid earlier should now be very agitated huh?” Leylin slowly rubbed his fingers against each other as he revealed a mischievous smirk.

Ever since he had been transported to this world, because he occupied the body of a youth, he realised that his attitude was reverting more and more towards one befitting the host’s age. During emergencies or crises, it was not obvious. But now that he was in safe haven, he could not help but have some notions of tomfoolery.

He expunged the expression on his face as he strolled to the warehouse. He was once again the great and stern magician lord.

“Young Master!” Fraser stated as he half knelt on the ground. “Your subordinate, I have collected another 20 pounds of Hove Violet Leaves from Austere Winter City. They have all been stored inside the warehouse!”

“Very good!” Leylin walked to the warehouse, and took a look at the amount and quality of the Hove Violet Leaves.

Amongst the whole pile, the only ones that could be used for potion brewing were those whose central stems were thinner than the stalk of an oat. The amount of spiritual force an Azure Potion provided remained considerable enough to justify Leylin’s continued use, despite the increasingly high resistance towards the potion he was developing.

The bizarre purple leaves filled half of the warehouse. There was a strange scent permeating the air, a rather stinging sulfuric pungence.

Leylin casually picked up a purple leaf, “A.I. Chip, detect properties!”

[Beep! Gathering data!]

After a brief pause, the various properties of the Hove Violet Leaves were projected onto Leylin's visual field. The chemistry, the medicinal properties- even the smidgen of various residue from other items on the surface of the leaf- all projected by the A.I. Chip.

"Based on this inspection, this batch of Hove Violet Leaves will still do!" Leylin nodded his head.

"Young Master!" Fraser lips moved, yet he did not speak.

"Say what you want to say!" Leylin's brows furrowed.

"All the Hove Violet Leaves in Extreme Night City have now been purchased by us. What remains are those of poor quality. In fact, Greem and I have already seen a number of counterfeit batches from traders who wished to hoodwink us.

"Indeed, Hove Violet Leaves are a special product only found in Eastwood Province. They take at least a year to grow!"

Leylin stroked his chin, and estimated the amount of Hove Violet Leaves in the warehouse.

"Put our purchasing drive on hold until next year's Hove Violet Leaves hit the markets. We can then resume buying them again!"

From this recent batch of Hove Violet Leaves, Leylin discovered that the quality was getting poorer and poorer. Some could not even be used for potion brewing.

Indeed, it seems like he purchased quite a huge chunk of the total Hove Violet Leaf production in this area.

The ingredients in the warehouse should be enough to meet my requirements for manufacturing enough potions to get to level 3 acolyte. As for official Magus, it is not something that I can consider right now.

Leylin entered into deep thought. Right now his spiritual force has already reached 7. He has long since brewed the Reactive Elixirs. Advancing to level 3 acolyte no longer posed any problem for him at all.

However, Leylin still knew nothing about how to advance to official Magus from level 3 acolyte. Even though Leylin was authorized to access the academy's library, he had not found any hint of the process.

It seemed like the academy had forbidden all information pertaining to this topic.

“Whether the academy or the market, I have always paid special attention to information related to official Magus. Until now, I could not even unearth a single clue.

This was also why Leylin was hesitant about leaving Abyssal Bone Forest Academy.

The higher ups in the Magus World kept a tight lid on all information regarding how to advance to official Magus. More so for Leylin, who became an acolyte from afar. He had to fulfil certain requirements and run errands before he would be granted a peek at the advancement methods to study them.

“This is something out of my control. Maybe the Magus experiment lab has something that I can profit from?”

Leylin thought again of the Magus experiment lab concealed near the withering woods.

After his previous stint there, he could already confirm that the person who left the experiment lab was an official Magus. Moreover, it had been forsaken for a long time already.

This was a piece of good news.

He only needed to be rid of all the spell formations laid on the experiment lab. Then, everything in it would be his, including the unlucky magician's items lying just outside the door.

“level 3! I only need to advance to level 3 acolyte, and imbue another set of rank 0 spells so I can depart!”

Leylin made up his mind.

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In a small secret lab with an extremely simple layout, there weren't many household items, only a wooden bed in the middle.

Leylin sat cross-legged atop the bed. Before his impassive face was a tangerine-yellow potion.

He was prepared and determined to breakthrough to level 3 acolyte.

He did not breathe a word of this to anyone. Like before, he informed Anna that he was just going to carry out an experiment. No matter what happened, he didn't want any interruptions.

It was not that he couldn't trust his subordinates but they had neither the strength nor the ability to render aid if anything untoward happened. They wouldn't be of much use so he might as well hide the fact that he was attempting to breakthrough.

After all, he 'disappeared' from the villa from time to time. His manor staff had gotten inured to it by now.

Once he had accomplished what he set out to do, when he next appeared before his people, everything would have been fait accompli.

Although there might not be any prying eyes or ears, especially any spies sent by his adversaries, he was conscientious of the possibility.

“level 3 acolyte, the final step before official Magus. For first grade and second grade acolytes, level 3 has always been hailed the peak of cultivation.

A level 1 acolyte could merely use energy particles, but could not cast any spells yet. Their fighting strength was roughly equivalent to a Knight's. As for level 2 acolytes, they were able to cast some rank 0 spells. Though these were simple ones, it bolstered their battle abilities to such an extent that they surpassed the Knights.

level 3 acolytes, on the other hand, had exponentially greater spiritual force than regular humans. They had a more profound understanding of spell theory and its uses in combat. They were masters of techniques like instantaneous casting, which enabled extremely rapid casting of prepared spells. Even Grand Knights were not their opponents.

Moreover, level 3 acolyte had always been considered the preparatory stage to becoming an official Magus. The faster one advances as a level 3 acolyte, the higher chances of eventually becoming an official Magus.

Among Magus academies and factions, the number of official Magi was extremely small. Level 3 acolytes were universally considered the backbone of any academy's or faction's battle strength!

Any young level 3 acolyte was counted as a valuable asset of the academy. These institutions were inclined towards dedicating resources to nurture them, hoping that these seeds would advance beyond level 3 acolyte in the future.

“Breaking through level 3 acolyte requires mastery of two spell models, a spiritual force of 7, and the aid of Reactive Elixirs!”

Leylin picked up the tangerine-yellow potion before him.

“I have long since gotten both the elixir and the requisite spell mastery. Now, with the help of the Azure Potion, I have also met the spiritual force requirements, all

within a few months. This speed has long since surpassed Jayden's aptitude. A fifth grade acolyte!"

Even if they were genius acolytes of the fifth grade, before the huge gulf between level 2 acolyte and level 3 acolyte, 3 years would be the minimum they would spend getting there.

However, after obtaining the potion, Leylin's speed had long since surpassed that of Jayden and the rest. In no time at all, he had reached the standard required to advance to be a level 3 acolyte.

"As long as my spiritual force gets enhanced, even if the breakthrough fails, I can always make another attempt. My body would suffer some major damage though, so being successful in one go is for the best!"

For the final time, Leylin mentally reviewed all information regarding advancement to a level 3 acolyte. After confirming that he had not left anything out, he popped the cork keeping the tangerine-yellow potion securely plugged.

"This Reactive Elixir is not meant to be drunk!"

Leylin undressed and smeared the Reactive Elixir over his face, limbs and chest.

The potion felt rather cool wherever he smeared it. However, after a few moments, a wave of heat gradually coursed through his skin. In an instant, his skin started to shudder and turn beet red.

[The Reactive Elixir is taking effect, medicinal properties under surveillance!] The A.I. Chip's voice intoned.

As the potion continued to take effect, Leylin felt as if the potion coating his skin had come alive and was worming its way through his pores and into his body.

Chapter 72 – Advancing To Level 3 Acolyte

Advancing To Level 3 Acolyte

An itch!

An unbearable itch!

Leylin felt that his bones had split open and many ants came crawling out from within. An extremely itching sensation was coursing through his body at this moment.

“Damn it! And I actually have to enter a deep meditative state under this condition and remodel the mind runes.”

Leylin’s face turned red. He clenched his teeth and resisted the urge to scratch his body as he closed his eyes.

Due to the adverse yet intense effect on his body, Leylin spent several more times longer to enter a meditative state.

Inside the meditation, Leylin seemed to have come to a place.

The surroundings were a grayish blur. Up in the air, there were many lights which seemed like stars, illuminating this place.

Leylin lifted his head. In the air were 24 mysterious runes- glowing with a fluorescent light- which gathered to form a circle.

These were the mind runes that he had painstakingly constructed during the past few years.

Although these mind runes were all constructed through various special means, each and every one of the construction required a huge amount of effort and time. Previously, Leylin had spent more than a year before he could finally construct them in his mind.

“The mind runes of a level 2 acolyte cannot be considered to have fully consolidated. A level 3 acolyte has to integrate the mind runes together based on the foundation set in level 2 acolyte. Moreover, there needs to be a reinforcement of the sea of consciousness!”

Leylin was extremely curious towards that state too.

Right now, he was in a completely ‘conscious’ state. The sea of consciousness did not appear in any parts of his body. At least, the A.I. Chip had already used a microscopic scan at the atomic level on his body but yet could not find anything.

“The cultivation of Magi spiritual force, may very well have crossed over into the aspect of souls!”

Leylin let out a sigh from the bottom of his heart. And at this moment, the sea of consciousness had a phenomenon.

A layer of tangerine-yellow light continuously permeated over the blurry, grayish mist. Not long after, the whole of the sea of consciousness turned into a bright tangerine-yellow.

“This is the effect of the Reactive Elixir! It was only with a potion that can be smeared on the body, and I also know of the ingredients it is made up of, but that it can actually affect my sea of consciousness, that is really mysterious....”

Before Leylin could gasp again, the tangerine-yellow light immediately rushed up into the sky, as if it wanted to dye the 24 mind runes into a tangerine-yellow colour too.

* Bang! *

The mind runes let off a glow and rejected the contamination of a foreign object, A huge force of impact travelled over. Leylin’s vision darkened, and he almost fainted.

“Suppress it!” Leylin hurriedly borrowed the strength of his spiritual force, to suppress the resistance of the mind runes.

* Pop! *

Towards the mind runes that he constructed, Leylin’s mastery over them was not little. A few seconds later, the 24 mind runes all stopped resisting, and they were dyed a tangerine-yellow

Under the contamination of the light, the many mysterious patterns appeared on the surface of the mind runes.

These patterns continuously kept extending till they had completely covered the surface of all the mind runes.

* Bang! * The 24 mind runes finally stuck together, forming into an even greater rune.

In Leylin’s sea of consciousness, many patterns also appeared. And after the presence of these patterns, the sea of consciousness turned even more resplendent and transparent, as if it were being reinforced.

After the reinforcement, as if listening to some command, the tangerine-yellow light hurriedly retreated, immediately vanishing in the sea of consciousness.

The large mysterious rune let off a glow, and Leylin's consciousness was pushed out from it.

“Where is this place?”

Leylin grew confused; suddenly releasing that he was in a mysterious place. The area was pitch-black, with no light whatsoever.

He wanted to reach out, but there was no concept of “hands” as if he never had any hands before.

In this manner, he floated in the air with no concept of time, yet he couldn't move.

To Leylin, in this space, every minute was like a dozen years.

This feeling could completely drive a sane person over the cliff.

Leylin was somewhat frustrated, “Haven't I advanced into a level 3 acolyte yet? Why would I come to this space? How long has the time passed?”

Suddenly, Leylin's heart jumped, “A.I. Chip!”

[Beep!] A bright blue screen was projected in front of Leylin and although it could not illuminate the darkness, still it made him feel much better.

[Scans have picked up that the Host's spiritual force is in an abnormal state. Under this circumstance, the Host will fail the breakthrough to a level 3 acolyte in 5 Minutes 23 Seconds! 13 Hours 45 Minutes later, due to the failure of all organs death will ensue! Whether to use magic power to get rid of the status? Yes/No?]

“Yes!” Right now Leylin completely did not feel any magic power left in his body, but the A.I. Chip could still circulate it, which made him elated.

[Obtained Host’s confirmation and now transferring magic power. In the process of getting rid of the abnormal status....] Along with the A.I. Chip’s voice intonation, there was suddenly a strange movement in the pitch-black space.

Leylin’s eyes flashed open. He realised that he was still in the secret lab and that not much time had passed since he began.

“During the advancing to a level 3 acolyte, there are actually such strange scenarios!”

Leylin’s expression was solemn. His degree of progress was too quick, most of his knowledge had been obtained from the library and also from the simulations and conjectures of the A.I. Chip.

He had no info about some scenarios of advancing into level 3 acolyte.

“Normally speaking, when many level 2 acolytes are in the midst of advancing, they all have their Professors to explain in detail to them... but I’m unfortunate! Even Professor Kroft wouldn’t have expected that I would face a breakthrough this quickly!”

Leylin held onto many secrets and would never tell the truth. In Kroft’s eyes, he was just a newly advanced level 2 acolyte, so why would he tell him about some notes to pay attention regarding the advancement to a level 3 acolyte?

Furthermore, the books in the library were available commonly. Many things in it had vague explanations. Even if Leylin had the A.I. Chip and was able to erase the false information, together with his experiments, he wouldn’t be able to obtain the perfect results.

This caused Leylin to encounter a phenomenon that occurred during his advancement and he was at a complete loss.

“Luckily I had the A.I. Chip this time, if not I will be finished! The road to becoming a Magus is indeed very precarious!”

There was some lingering fear in Leylin’s heart.

But this, too, confirmed his deductions. The A.I. Chip had been with him when he was transported and for some unknown reason, it had merged into his soul.

Hence, when his soul met with an abnormality and was isolated and without help, he could still activate the A.I. Chip to get rid of the inner influences from the outside.

“So, advancing to a level 3 acolyte is not about the combination of the mind runes nor reinforcing the sea of consciousness, but about the space of darkness that comes after!”

Leylin suddenly understood much more. All these were usually precious information secrets that were not announced by professors or the academy, many factionless acolytes usually died during this aspect.

[Beep! The Host’s spiritual force has some change and is more lively. The Host has advanced into a level 3 acolyte! spiritual force increasing....] The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned.

Following which, Leylin felt dizzy, and his spiritual force increased at a rapid speed.

7.2

7.3

7.5

.....

9.7

10.1

The spiritual force which seemed to ride on a rocket had continuously increased. When the final number jumped, it turned into 10.1, and finally stabilising itself.

“My head hurts!”

With the sudden increase of the spiritual force, right now Leylin’s body could still not adapt to the change. He had a runny nose and when he touched the area, he realised that he was bleeding from his nostrils!

“The increase in spiritual force is too fast, and the body could not take it!”

Leylin smiled wryly but very soon his expression changed and cracking noises came from within his body. At the same time, intense pain travelled from all parts of his body continuously.

Leylin’s facial muscles contorted and he fell flat on the bed, like a shrivelled up shrimp.

“Damn it! Damn it! The Reactive Elixir’s effect is up and the backlash from the potion has started!”

Leylin howled, “A.I. Chip! Begin to coordinate with the magic power and get rid of the remnants from the elixir!”

A layer of a grayish-black halo of light appeared and floated on his body, enveloping his whole body. Along with the flickering of the halo, much of the yellowish-black pus was expunged from Leylin’s pores, releasing a very acute stench.

A dozen minutes later, Leylin struggled to get up. He took out a red-coloured potion from the bag lying beside him and drank it fully before his expression changed for the better.

At this moment his body was drenched in sweat and pus, bringing about an acidic stench, as if he had just been scooped out from the sewers.

Leylin tried to pick himself up. His face was pale stricken and he was weak in the knees. His eyes were sunk in as if having been bedridden with an illness for many months.

After pushing open the door of the secret lab, Leylin jingled the bell placed beside the door.

* Ding Ling Ling! *

A crisp yet penetrating sound rang, and it travelled far after a while.

“Young Master! You...” A few minutes later, Anna brought two maids as she rushed over. It seemed like Leylin’s lips were covered by his hands.

“It’s fine! Send me to the bathroom! I wish to take a shower!”

“Do you want me to call the herbalist or doctor over?”

“No need!”

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Half an hour later, Leylin lay in a pool that was constructed from marble. The warm water flowed over his body, bringing away the dirt and grime from him.

Anna was buck-naked as she nestled up against Leylin. She used a white towel to scrub his body.

“Mi...Milord! Your deer blood soup and steak!”

On the other side, Trixy too was stark naked, and her delightful curves were all exposed in front of Leylin eyes. She blushed, as she carried a propped up tray over.

The ray was made of wood and floated on the pool. Leylin picked up his utensils and ate voraciously.

Some time later, Leylin wore a loose bathrobe and reclined on a nearby chair. His back leaned against Anna's chest and enjoyed the sensational perky abundance.

And at his side, Trixy and another beautiful were giving a massage to Leylin.

They had only donned some clothes, which were smaller than a palm. The private areas weren't covered, only faintly discernible at times. This made it even more embarrassing yet alluring.

Trixy and the other maid were only daughters of farmers and they had toiled in the farms since they were young. They had a layer of calluses on their hands even. However, they were extremely young and their slender figures were beautiful. Their bodies radiated the vibrancy of youthfulness. Compared to Anna, it was a kind of wild flavour.

However, right now Leylin completely did not have any interest to engage in an intense bout with them. Instead, he felt somewhat traumatic about the advancement today.

Chapter 73 – Reexamination

Reexamination

“A.I. Chip! Bring forth my current stats!” Leylin commanded inwardly.

[Beep! Leylin Farlier, level 3 acolyte. Strength: 3.1, Agility: 3.3, Vitality: 3.5, Spiritual force: 10.1, Magic power: 10 – (magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force). Status: Healthy]

The A.I. Chip projected the data in front of Leylin’s eyes. Apart from him, nobody else could see it.

Leylin closed his eyes, yet his mind was rapidly processing and thinking.

“En! My vitality has increased by 0.3, which should be related to the use of the Reactive Elixir. Also, not only did my spiritual force increase to 10.1, I can feel that my spiritual force is brimming with more energy as compared to before. My perception towards energy particles in the air has increased too, so casting rank 0 spells should now be easier!”

“The realm of a level 3 acolyte is indeed not something a level 2 acolyte can compare to. However, the process of advancing is too perilous!”

Leylin put on an expression of lingering fear. No matter if it was his consciousness being trapped in the black space, or the backlash from the Reactive Elixir, they were all developments which he had not expected.

To Leylin, all the data and information he had garnered was still too little. Although the A.I. Chip's calculation abilities were extremely tremendous, if the basic information was not there, being able to simulate the correct advancement technique was already considered to be not bad.

As for the setback met during the advancement, due to the various differences in vitality between people adding on to the shortage of information, even the A.I. Chip was unable to predict them.

“After all, in the library that Abyssal Bone Forest Academy opened for its students, much information had been restricted. Some high levelled information was not even released to be read by the acolytes!”

“Also, even if the A.I. Chip's calculation abilities are comparable to 10 supercomputers, the Magus World has, at least, tens of thousands of years of history. With all of the hundreds of thousands of acolytes experiments, the results and models will surpass the A.I. Chip's calculation abilities!”

“The advancement, this time, was indeed rather lucky, and luck played an important factor in it!”

Leylin's face turn solemn, “I cannot go on like this next time! This is only for advancing to a level 3 acolyte! In the future, when I advance into an official Magus, I won't be so lucky if something like this happens again!”

The difficulty of the advancement from a level 3 acolyte to an official Magus far exceeded that of advancing from a regular human to a level 3 acolyte,

And if at that time there were some mistakes or oversights due to negligence, even if Leylin had a few lives, it wouldn't be enough to save him.

“After returning, I must inquire greatly about all the details pertaining to advancement into an official Magus, and not try to break through blindly again!”

Leylin gave himself this mission for the future.

“What’s next is to wait until my body has adapted to the sudden increase in spiritual force, and muster the few rank 0 spells that only level 3 acolytes can learn, then go back to reexamine that lab!”

Leylin opened his eyes and sent Anna and the other two maids away. After setting up a circle of warning with a spell formation, he dragged his weary body onto the bed on the other side and entered into slumber.

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In the blink of an eye, half a month had passed like that.

Night and the splendor of moonlight shone upon the ground. It was another full moon night.

Nearby the withering woods, beside that same large black granite boulder, Leylin muttered an incantation and repeated the same procedure as before.

Seeing the same dark hole of the cave, Leylin smiled and walked in.

After the observation of his previous exploration, he had already roughly understood the rules that were governing the spell formation. Moreover, he recorded all the danger inside there and had a way to counter them.

Furthermore, he had already advanced to a level 3 acolyte and had more confidence to break the defensive mechanisms laid by the unknown Magus.

The black tunnel passage was very short, and the surface was extremely shiny, reflecting Leylin’s black robed figure. It was even projected at multiple angles on the wall behind Leylin.

The villa that Leylin had seen previously was at the back of the tunnel. The Devil Vines and Bone Eating Flowers still littered the floor. There were even grey slates on the floor, and within it resided the Gnawing Slate.

On the door of the villa, there was a circular hole. At the side of it was a corpse and a black diary which brought lustre lay beside the corpse. Seeing this book that had records of Alchemy, Leylin's heart began to palpitate faster.

In Leylin's eyes, the exterior of the villa was set up with a dangerous halo of light coming from magic spells, and it was unknown how many traps were concealed under the brilliant light.

* Hehe! Haha! *

Just as Leylin's right foot stepped on the stone slate, a childish laughter sounded. The slates on the floor twisted open and revealed a mouth filled with razor sharp teeth, snapping viciously at Leylin!

"The first defense! Gnawing Slate!" Leylin smiled and tossed a gob of black stuff into the huge mouth.

* Ka-Cha! * The huge mouth gobbled up the black mass.

* Pu! * The grey mouth chewed, and immediately spit the black residue out. A red tongue continuously flickered outwards, and spat a yellowish green spittle.

This scene looked very much like a regular human eating something disgusting and spitting it out.

"With Stinky Stench Flower, Faeces Carapace Mantis, and the Rotten Stemmed Grass as the components of this vomiting powder! It is indeed the bane of the Gnawing Slate!" Leylin looked at the grey slate vomiting again, which immediately grew two small legs as it ran away, and the sight made Leylin laugh.

“To the unknown Magus, this should be a temporary lab since the spell leaned towards concealment. As for its resistance, there should only be 3 layers! Moreover, using the Gnawing Slate, Devil Vines and Bone Eating Flowers combination, this is the trademark defensive measures of the Michael School of Thought!”

Leylin walked towards the front door, and immediately grabbed the black diary with his hands.

It was extremely heavy, and carrying it felt like carrying a brick. It was probably made with special materials.

Leylin kept the diary in his robes and walked towards the large door.

A layer of blackish green vine immediately wrapped around the door, and on it, many red petals bloomed. The petals assembled, and actually formed the face of a female.

“Intruder! This is somewhere that you shouldn’t have come!” The petals formed the opening and closing of the lips as the female talked.

“The Magus in there is already dead, I will inherit his fortune! As for you, I will keep your existence alive, and give you all the nourishment you require for evolving, how is it?”

Leylin took a red coloured fruit from his sack, “To you, the whole experiment lab cannot even be compared with this ingredient in my hand!”

“With it, you may even leave in the future, and regain your freedom, returning back to the woods where you came from....” Leylin spoke softly, with a tinge of beguilement.

“Freedom!” Hesitation and contemplations streaked across the woman’s face.

“I cannot betray the promise from before! Outsider, please leave!” The woman struggled, but she still rejected Leylin’s proposition. A green vine continuously writhed, as if it would strike anytime.

“Sigh...” Leylin returned the fruit to his sack and sighed, “I thought that I wouldn’t have to strike!”

“Stubborn intruder, only death will be your ending!”

The Bone Eating Flower howled, this time changing into the face of a male, and many black vines immediately came lashing forward.

* Bang! * The black shadow charged forward, and Leylin ducked with his body. The thick vines slapped the floor, and the stone pieces flew in the air, revealing a huge pit.

“Don’t be so impulsive, what if you damage the experiment lab?”

A layer of green light flew into the vine in the air, turning into a ball of light, and enveloped the flower and vine completely. The vine’s attack speed decreased.

Leylin’s brows furrowed and he took out a black powder from his sack, before sprinkling it all over the ground.

Moreover, as he scattered the powder, Leylin hurriedly chanted an incantation.

“Intruder! Die!” The human face formed by flower petals roared, and continuously changed, sometimes it was the voice of a male, and sometimes it had the face of a female.

* Bang! Bang! Bang! *

The blackish green vines were continuously brandished and hit many holes in the surrounding walls of the cave.

Leylin relied on the stats of a Knight to dodge, and his incantation never stopped.

Finally, after Leylin ran around the villa, the surrounding was already scattered with the black powder.

At this moment, the chanting stopped. Leylin pointed a finger at the human face, “Go to hell! Cloud of Afterlife!”

* Boom! *

The black powder continuously dissolved, turning into a gaseous body, and formed into an ominous black cloud that engulfed the entirety of the villa.

* Sssii! * From within travelled noises, which made Leylin recall the decomposition process of a man eating plant.

The black clouds grew denser, finally shielding what was happening within.

However, there were the occasional sounds of the Bone Eating Flower which continuously waned and finally disappeared, only leaving behind decomposing sounds, which would make people cringe.

5 minutes later, the black smoke dissipated, revealing the villa from before again.

By this moment, the surface of the villa had been severely corroded, and it looked as if it was going to collapse any moment.

The Devil Vines and Bone Eating Flower had long since disappeared, leaving behind only a few remains.

“What a despotic spell! Cloud of Afterlife, a rank 0 spell which only level 3 acolyte can muster. Each use costs 5 spiritual force and 5 magic power, but it is worth it!”

Leylin nodded his head approvingly.

With one use of Cloud of Afterlife, not only did the Devil Vines and Bone Eating Flower disappear, the villa had suffered from extreme corrosion, leaving behind only part of the defense, which could be said to no longer pose a threat to Leylin.

Moreover, the Cloud of Afterlife was a Shadow, Dark Element spell which was the least destructive. It was something Leylin specially chosen in order to destroy the spell formation on the villa, at the same time leaving behind the construction of the villa.

“Only that.... The villa seems to have been corroded, and cannot stay erect for much longer!”

Leylin walked forward and knocked on the wooden door. * Crash! * The wooden door immediately crumbled into many pieces and fell to the ground.

Chapter 74 – Great Magus Serholm

Great Magus Serholm

“I must hurry!” Leylin strode into the villa.

“A.I. Chip! Scan the main structure of the villa!”

[Mission establishing, beginning scan....]

Previously, the A.I. Chip could not scan the blueprints of the villa due to the layer of spell formation and defensive measures on the surface of the villa. But, that was not the case now.

Very soon, a layer of light in the shape of a blue map appeared in front of Leylin’s eyes.

“En! There are two storeys in the villa. On the higher floor, it’s the bedroom and bathroom! The first floor would be the guestroom. As for the experiment lab, it is located underground! The entrance is built into the back of a wardrobe!”

Under the scan of the A.I. Chip, the interior of the villa was displayed in front of him fully.

“To the bedroom first!” Leylin rapidly ran up the second floor.

Gripping the yellow bronze handle, Leylin opened the large door to the bedroom. A layer of dust immediately infiltrated his nose. The surface of Leylin’s body

automatically created a layer of black coloured light membrane, shielding him from the dust.

Leylin then scanned the area, “Everything is all neatly placed!”

The bedroom was very small, with only a bed, a table and a chair, and a closet.

Leylin opened the closet, “The clothes have all disappeared, it seems that the owner here has prepared to abandon this place!”

Although he had thought of this before, Leylin was still somewhat disappointed.

He immediately rummaged through the bedroom but found nothing of value. Even the drawers of the table were empty, and there was only some blank parchment paper in the corners of the room.

“These should be remnants of the diary or record book! A pity that there’s nothing written on them!”

Leylin felt that it was somewhat a shame. His eyes suddenly flashed, “Diary! I got it!”

The yellow parchment paper was very old and seemed as if would break into many pieces. However, to Leylin, these few pieces of parchment paper were supreme treasures!

“A.I. Chip! Scan the traces on the parchment paper!”

Leylin ordered, and a layer of blue light was immediately projected in front of his eyes. As for the parchment paper, lines of red handwriting were intermittently surfacing.

“This is something that the Magus wrote on a piece of parchment paper, but traces of his handwriting were left on these pieces of parchment!

Leylin was somewhat elated. Magi would only use spells to appraise items, but there were spells that defended against such attempts. However they had absolutely no defences against Leylin’s previous world’s graphology, and he eventually found some clues.

The information on the parchment paper was extremely disorderly. Many characters were overlapping with one another, and even the A.I. Chip was unable to differentiate between them.

After putting together the scattered pieces, what little information Leylin gotten should have been this diary:

September 1st, clear. Extreme Night City is a very tranquil city, I hope I can carry out my experiments here peacefully....

December 5th, dark. Oh! Damn it! The experiment has failed yet again, as expected! The difficulty of synthesizing bloodlines has far exceeded my expectations....

What remained was extremely vague, and even the dates could not be deciphered:

After reading Wayne’s letter, I conducted a few more experiments. I have to admit, he was right, I was heading in the wrong direction all along, this is indeed some sorrowful news....

The experimental body has failed completely. As for what’s left of the eggs, even if they could hatch, my plan has completely failed. Oh, my heavens....

There is nothing of value here anymore. Maybe I should go to the Dylan Gardens to have a look. Wayne said that his experiments have already achieved a few stages of success, this is a great piece of news for us....

The contents of the diary stopped here, it was a continuous record of a Magus' failure and ended in the abandonment of the lab.

Besides a person called Wayne from the Dylan Gardens, Leylin gained nothing whatsoever.

However, there were too many Wayne's, and as for Dylan Gardens, Leylin never heard of it before.

“Not right, wait a minute!”

Leylin's eyes suddenly flashed, and in the corner of the parchment paper, he discovered a name.

The faint red writing was extremely vague, hence, Leylin almost missed it earlier.

“Nor... Norco Curadu Sfar!”

“Norco Curadu Sfar!” Leylin's eyes widened, “Great Magus Serholm!”

“Could it be that the owner of this lab was the great Magus Serholm?”

Norco Curadu Sfar was a legend of the south coast! In the legends, not only was he an erudite scholar, he had obtained extremely outstanding results along the path of a Magus. He had even led the whole of the south coast Magi to repel the countless advances of the subterranean people and marine creatures.

This kind of great Magus was the role model for all Magi in the south coast.

Earlier in the market, the dishonest merchant who tried to sell Leylin the Lowian Academy Teachings had tried to pass off the original decrepit page as the writings of the great Magus Serholm, but it was seen through by Leylin.

“A respected figure like this, his legacy would definitely be of value. A pity that the two storeys were left with nothing and there definitely would not be any legacy or things of the sort!”

Regret streaked across Leylin’s face, but he still memorised the contents on the parchment paper.

“I hope that there will be something to gain from the experiment lab!”

Leylin gave the bedroom one last disappointed glance before he puffed out a breath, and blew the parchment paper into bits.

Coming to the wardrobe on the first floor, originally, the in built wardrobe should have been stuck on the wall. However, due to a small crack, Leylin could now see the passage behind it.

This should be something that was done by the Mankestre Snake.

Leylin shifted away the emptied wardrobe, and the black passage appeared before him.

* Pa! * Leylin snapped, and a layer of light illuminated the area, dispelling the darkness and revealing a flight of steps that led downwards.

Leylin’s eyes flashed fervently as he walked down.

* Clang! *

The leather shoes and ground made a dull noise from friction.

Compared to the villa above, the underground space was more spacious, and was almost the size of 3 to 4 villas.

Criss-crossed walls littered the area, separating the underground lab into a few large areas.

Leylin continued down the passage, and from time to time, he could see the labelling of the areas.

An ancient handwriting was used. However, it had some relevance to the Byron language. As Leylin walked, he looked.

Data area, garden area, incubator area, potioneering area, herbology area... Each and every special area appeared in front of Leylin's eyes.

After seeing the incubator area, Leylin's eyes flashed, and he walked in.

A ball of light always floated around him, illuminating the sight of the incubator area.

What initially entered Leylin's sight were many circular glass domes, but the glasses had already cracked, revealing many rotten eggs of mysterious organisms.

Under the alert from the A.I. Chip that there were no signs of life around, Leylin put on a pair of gloves, and held a grey egg that resembled a granite stone in his hands.

[Scanning in progress, similarity level to the Mankestre Snake: 73.2%, Huge Wood Python: 34.5%, Huge Tree Lizard: 13.8%]

The A.I. Chip continuously projected the results of the scan.

"It seems like these are all the brothers and sisters of the half adult Mankestre Snake!" Leylin gasped as he saw the many dead eggs within the glass domes.

If they were all still alive, Leylin would most likely not be able to escape.

After some searching, Leylin discovered a strange incubating pool. On the surface of the glass ball, there was a circular hole that was cracked through, and the remnants of some egg shells.

“The Mankestre Snake from earlier should have been bred in this incubating pool....”

Leylin sized up the area and was unresigned as he continued searching, finally obtaining nothing. He could only pick up a dead egg that looked like a stone and toss it.

Data area, garden area, potioneering area, herbology area...

Leylin looked over everything once. The great Magus Serholm would have definitely spent a lot of time and effort on it. The set up in each area was extremely thorough.

However, when he left, he brought along everything with him. Leylin, who originally wished to get lucky, had now also completely tossed that notion away.

Apart from the few blank pieces of parchment paper in the bedroom, there was nothing that Leylin found.

“The final area! The dissecting room!”

Leylin wore a disappointed expression that he found difficult to mask, and walked into the room.

* Clang! *

The steel door boomed opened and a concentrated aura of dense negative energy permeated the air. Leylin could even hear the faint wails of countless souls.

“On the way of a Magus who seeks the truth, one can never avoid spilling blood!” Leylin muttered the maxim of the great Magus Serholm.

After sizing up the area, Leylin noticed that there were some traces of black blood on the white experiment table. He picked up some powder from it.

“A.I. Chip! Scan!”

[No surviving cells were detected! Due to various intense radiations, there are deficiencies and mutations in the fragments of the cells, unable to detect source!]

The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned.

“F*ck!” Leylin felt utter disappointment as he kicked the experiment table.

Towards Magi who loved explorations, nothing was more disappointing than devoting countless effort and energy to enter the vestiges of ancient times and returning empty handed.

Although the Alchemy diary could already be considered to be extremely beneficial to Leylin, compared to the great Magus Serholm, that kind of loot was somehow inadequate.

This was the great Magus Serholm!!! An official Magus that was at least rank 4!!!

But in his lab, Leylin gained nothing at all, which made him extremely vexed.

“Forget it! At least I still have the diary of that unlucky fellow. I did not suffer any loss. Moreover, this experiment could very well be a lab that the great Magus Serholm used when he was a rank 1 or 2 Magus. If not, I would have definitely not been able to enter....”

Suddenly, Leylin was rather glad.

If he had trespassed into the lab of the great Magus Serholm when he was at his peak. and if there had been some curse laid out, Leylin certainly would have been unable to resist right now.

* Bang! *

As if kickstarting some kind of chain reaction by kicking the experiment table, a gust of wind blew past the ground, turned into a whirlwind, and coiled the dust up in the air.

“Eh?” Leylin’s face tightened, and his right hand extended into his waist pouch.

The cyclone grew larger and larger, before finally forming into a translucent human figure.

“How many years... How many years has it been already! I have finally caught a whiff of a living human!” The translucent figure seemed to gasp and revealed a vague elderly visage.

Chapter 75 – Holding Captive

Holding Captive

“A spirit body!”

Leylin’s pupils contracted.

The Magi were clueless as to the appearance of spirit bodies but most of them assumed that a spirit body was the external embodiment of a soul.

Also, many Magi were in the dark with regards to the formation of a spirit body.

It seemed that the creation of a spirit body required many coincidental encounters. Sometimes, even a regular human could turn into an evil spirit after death, yet even official Magi never had such things happen to them.

Moreover, spirit bodies were extremely rare. With regards to their research, even if the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy had a large number of observations, they only slightly understood the behavior of spirit bodies.

As the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy only sought knowledge, Leylin managed to learn a little about spirit bodies through a few words mentioned by professors, so he wouldn’t be like others who might be frightened.

“Who are you?” Leylin asked warily as he retreated back by several steps.

“Name?” The translucent spirit body shook its head, “I’ve forgotten that long ago!”

“Countless years have passed and I have been wandering here always, up to this day! I felt that an interesting fellow had trespassed into my lab, so I came out to have a look at you!”

Leylin’s eyes flashed, “So you are the owner of this lab! Accept my apologies, for interrupting you so presumptuously!”

Saying so, he gave a polite bow used between Magi and his gesture had no flaws.

The spirit body’s faint lips curled upwards, “I like little fellows with manners!”

He reached out his translucent hand, and a layer of light appeared in his hands, “You can obtain a great present from this magnificent wizard!”

“Really? Honestly, this is too good!”

Leylin seemed to be ‘ecstatic’ as he stepped several steps forward. Suddenly, a gob of green ball appeared and was shot out from Leylin’s hands, which passed the spirit body, directly landing on the experiment table behind.

* Sssii! * A large hole corroded through the experiment table.

“A physical attack has no effect?” Leylin’s turned solemn.

“Little fellow, what are you doing?” The spirit body smiled but it seemed to be more sinister from before.

“This is the magnificent Magus Roman’s inheritance, which can allow you to successfully advance into an official Magus!”

“Are you kidding me? You are just a spirit with a grievance that impersonated your owner!”

Leylin retreated several more steps and a purple potion appeared in his hands.

“I reckon that light in your hands is not anything good!”

* Bang! * The potion flew from his hands and let off an intense combustion. The purple smoke rose continuously, and under the engulfment of the purple mist, the layer of light in the spirit body’s hands dispersed, revealing a sinister looking visage that howled with unwillingness. It looked rather similar to the spirit body.

“A malicious, vengeful spirit who loves to invade the physical bodies of living humans!”

Leylin thought of some distant narration and exclaimed, “Vengeful spirit! You are a vengeful spirit!”

“Who knows?” The spirit body had a bloodthirsty smirk.

“The thing that really lured you out should be this book right?” Leylin waved an Alchemy diary book, which he retrieved from his robes.

“Indeed! This is something that belongs to me!” Seeing the black diary, the eyes of the spirit body seemed to be reminded of something.

“You are the corpse at the front door. During the exploration of this lab, you were killed by the Gnawing Slate. Your spirit was trapped by the spell formation, before finally turning into a vengeful spirit!”

Leylin summarized the series of events, as he already knew who the real owner of this lab was.

“An intelligent kid!” The spirit body toyed with its fingernails, “A pity that you will die here today!”

* Whoosh! *

Leylin only felt a light flashing by and tried to dodge, but he found several traces of blood on his chest.

“The smell of fresh blood!” Seeing the blood, the expression of the spirit body turned even more desirous and he placed his fingers in his mouth and licked them.

“What a quick movement! The naked eye cannot keep up with it!”

A blue light appeared from Leylin’s eyes, and the A.I. Chip calculated quickly.

“You won’t be able to escape! Surrender and become an offering of the magnificent Roman!” The vengeful spirit howled and charged forward again.

His fingernails sprung forward as if turning into a razor sharp blade.

* Dang! * A layer of light membrane appeared from Leylin’s body, shielding him from the force of the frantic attack.

Trevor’s Revolving Shield Potion!

“I’ve caught you!” Leylin sneered.

Leylin could not entirely keep up with a spirit body, which travelled as fast as the wind. Even if the A.I. Chip could calculate its trajectory and movements, with Leylin’s physical abilities, he could not follow it. Moreover, due to the illusory appearance of the spirit body, most physical attacks were of no use.

Thankfully, Leylin’s potion- the Trevor’s Revolving Shield Potion which he had concocted before- was the only defensive potion that acolytes had access to. There were even some suppression effects towards spirit bodies.

The hand, which was enveloped in light, directly grabbed hold of the right hand of the spirit body.

“Im...Impossible! How are you able to touch me?”

The spirit's face contorted and it howled as it struggled.

“Spirit bodies may be very mysterious to the acolytes of other academies, but it's a pity that you met me, who came from the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy! Accept the fate of a failure!” Leylin's face was serene and he took out a black coloured crystal ball.

This was something that he had managed to obtain in the academy- a Confining Spirit Sphere, which was specifically used to capture and store spirit bodies.

* Chi! * After the black coloured crystal ball came into contact with the spirit body, glowing light radiated and a suction force appeared on its surface, which sucked the continuously howling spirit body directly into it.

Minutes later, nothing stood in front of Leylin anymore. The inside the black crystal ball had an extra-translucent figure in it; thus, the black crystal had a resemblance to amber.

Leylin heaved a sigh of relief. “Thankfully this old geezer is only a level 3 acolyte, and fortunately, I had the Trevor's Revolving Shield Potion and Confining Spirit Sphere. If not, I would have been in trouble today....”

Concerning spirit bodies, the strength of their soul would determine their might.

As for the meditation of magicians, it is the cultivation of spiritual force, a type of method to strengthen their soul.

There was once an official Magus who, when he transformed into a spirit body, actually retained his spell casting abilities, finally turning into a spirit body Magus.

If today he met with a spirit body that was an official Magus, Leylin would have had no chance at all of escaping.

Once a physical body is occupied, the soul will forever be connected to it.

Looking at the black crystal ball in his hands, Leylin thought and then added several more seals on it, then placed it into a small black sack. He even tightened the mouth of the sack and hung it on his waist.

After doing so, Leylin searched the entirety of the villa. After confirming that there were no more oversights, he left the place with extreme regrets.

“What a pity!”

Leylin looked at the huge black granite boulder behind him, and without further hesitation, he rode a handsome blade steed and rapidly left the area,

* Boom! *

When he left, the huge black granite boulder exploded loudly, destroying the whole area and turning into ashes.

Half a month later, in the experiment lab, Leylin closed the black diary after reading its last page.

“I never thought that the synthesis of a magic artifact as depicted by Lowian Academy Teachings, or the ancient formula of the Tears of Mary, would include the aspect of souls....”

Leylin had only heard of this information vaguely from Kroft back in Abyssal Bone Forest Academy, but he had never researched it on his own.

“I’m afraid that... I can only adopt the crudest method, which is to research and observe from various trial and error experiments. Also, I have to use the A.I. Chip to gather data.... In this aspect, perhaps Viscount Jackson, in his capacity as a city lord, could help me”

Thinking of which, Leylin took out a black crystal ball from the corner of his lab.

The crystal ball was originally placed on an altar with mysterious runes scribbled over it and there were 3 white, lit candles that surrounded it.

Leylin knocked on the surface of the crystal ball.

* Dong! *

A wave suddenly erupted, and the mist in the crystal ball dispersed, revealing a vague fuzzy figure.

This figure only had the upper half of its body, and its lower limbs were replaced by the continuously swirling white mist. As for its countenance, it was that of an old geezer.

This old geezer's expression was extremely rapt and fright permanently lingered on his face, as if it was a small worm that was solidified within amber.

Looking at this vengeful spirit, Leylin suddenly laughed and chanted an incantation.

“Where is this? Release me quickly....” Suddenly, the solidified contents in the crystal ball turned to life again. The old geezer howled. Although his face was still filled with vehemence and craziness, it could not conceal his fear and helplessness!

“How is it, Mister Roman? How is the feeling of having your thoughts frozen?”

Leylin propped the ball in front of him.

“It's you!” The vengeful spirit head-butted the surface of the crystal ball, but it was to no avail.

Seeing Roman, who was like a helpless mosquito, wildly charge against the interior walls of the crystal ball, Leylin chuckled and flicked his finger at the surface of the crystal ball.

* Bang! * Roman, who was inside, seemed to have been struck by a steel hammer and collapsed onto the ground, completely dispirited.

“How is it? Now, hurry up and tell me everything you know about the experiment and your life. I may consider letting you off after that!”

Leylin’s face was impassive.

“Dream on!” Roman put on a resolute expression.

“Then I have no choice!” Leylin shrugged his shoulders and placed a fiery red rock beside the crystal ball.

“Arghhh!” Flames immediately appeared on Roman’s body, as he wailed pitifully.

“In the aspect of adding suffering to a spirit body, I have some skills! Moreover, in this crystal ball, you cannot even commit suicide. This kind of torture will last for a very long time! A veerrrrry loooooongg tiiiiime....”

Leylin dragged his last words to the extreme, which would make someone who listened to it want to sleep.

“Be... A Bewitching Charm? Dream on!” Roman, who was squeezed into the crystal ball, gritted his teeth.

“That is some unexpected mental fortitude!”

Leylin’s brows furrowed, “It seems like I have to cast it once a day in the future, to make this vengeful spirit’s life force reduce greatly....”

The life force was the foundation of vengeful spirits. When the life force of vengeful spirits is weakened, their intelligence will often lower, turning into a retard.

Under the current circumstances, adding on to the bewitching charm, there is a great chance of success.

Even if it did not drive Roman crazy, there shouldn't be any issues at all. Leylin, as a Potions Master, had confidence in preserving Roman's life force before it dissipated. By prolonging Roman's life force, and repeatedly torturing him, with perseverance, Leylin would obtain the information he needed.

As for what Leylin had now, it was time. Time to toy with Roman slowly!

1. Amber, a gemstone that may have some fossil trapped in it.

Chapter 76 – Experiment And Precipitate

Experiment And Precipitate

In the blink of an eye, it was already late autumn.

The arable farms were all brimming with golden yellow ear wheat. The windmills in the distance were continuously whirling and the earth seemed to be joyous from the abundance.

* Dang Dang Dang! *

Travelling on the road in the middle of the farms was a group of horse carriages and armoured Knights with the strength and robustness that far exceeded those of ordinary men. On the armour on their shoulder plates was an insignia of a crescent moon- this was the insignia belonging to the city lord of Extreme Night City, Viscount Jackson!

Upon seeing the horse carriages, the farmers hurriedly avoided the road, taking off their caps and bowing.

In the middle of the Knights and troops, were several horse carriages that were veiled with black cloth. As these carriages advanced, sounds of clanging metal chains were produced from it which gave off an ominous feeling.

“Look at this direction! It seems to be headed to the villa! This should be the third group in this month!” A farmer with a brown beard muttered to himself.

“Old Johan! What are you looking at?” A farmer at the other side called out.

“Those horse carriages! I keep having the feeling that something is amiss. Previously when the wind blew, I saw the figures inside the horse carriage....” Old John’s brows furrowed.

“So what? It might be that the lord of our manor has started to purchase female slaves on a whim! You know what, our kind-hearted yet lazy manor lord, is still in his teens!”

The farmer beside Old John supported him and grumbled, “It’s better for us not to bother with the matters of these people. Let’s go! Rose Pub recently has new rum....”

Both farmers’ silhouette disappeared gradually in the distance.

As for the other side, the procession of horse carriages stopped outside of Leylin’s manor. Greem and Fraser have long since been waiting for them.

“According to the city lord’s orders, the ‘goods’ have arrived!” The leader of the Knights peeled his cloak open, revealing a hideous face littered with scars.

“Open the prisoners’ carriage!” With the leader’s command, the subordinates hurriedly opened the carriages carrying the prisoners, revealing the chained prisoners within.

These prisoners only wore coarse armour and these had holes and were covered in grime. They were all of different stature. Short, tall, thin and fat. However, the common similarity is the killing aura masked in their expressionless eyes.

Knights such as Greem and Fraser were extremely sensitive to killing intent. Only people who have truly committed homicide would have this aura.

“There are 5 men. They are all heinous criminals. Every legal case regarding them is enough to execute the capital punishments a dozen times.... Of course, the city lord has long since approved of their death sentence. In the eyes of the law, they are already ‘dead’”

The Knight leader smirked, and his face which was littered with scars turned even more grotesque. “For whatever reason, even for the sake of those innocent victims, never let them go easily....”

“Their fate is all in the hands of Young Master!” After receiving the criminals, Greem said, “However, we can guarantee that not one of them will walk out of this manor....”

After getting a satisfactory response the Knight leader brought his troops and the empty prison carriages out of the villa.

As for Greem, he forcefully brought the 5 criminals under the basement of the manor.

The torch in the darkness, the tightly locked door, and the dry stifling underground passage gave all these criminals an eerie feeling. However, with the two Knights, Greem and Fraser, they had no chance to resist.

Greem led the way familiarly, bringing the 5 criminals each into different prison. Afterwards, he came to a newly tunneled experiment lab and waited by the side.

Although there were thick walls, and the surroundings had torches which were scorching bright, Greem still felt his hairs stand on end, and cold sweat trickled down his body.

As a slave Knight, he knew part of Leylin’s identity. He knew even more about the darkness and the terror behind those walls!

“That place is practically a hell!” The first time Greem was summoned inside by Leylin, he had blurted his thoughts. Afterwards, this fearless Knight had puked for an entire night.

Half an hour passed. For Greem, time seemed to have crawled like half a year long. Especially when the indistinct screams that occasionally seeped through the sturdy walls with the impression of piercing his ear drum!

May the heavens have pity! Although Greem was no good person, and his hands too were covered with blood, the moaning and wails behind the stone walls were something that a human was incapable of producing anymore.

* Creak! * The sturdy steel door swung open and Leylin strode out from it. On his body were traces of blood stains.

“A pity that the experimental body was not strong enough and was unable to endure the effects of the spell! I hope the next few experimental bodies will be more durable....”

To research on souls, Leylin did not have any readily available ingredients. So he could only adopt the crudest method which was to continuously gather data through experiments.

“Young Master!” Greem hurriedly bowed. “Today the city lord’s Castle has sent another 5 people over and they are all inside their cells....”

“Very well!” Leylin nodded his head.

Although he was a level 3 acolyte, before advancing into an official Magus, Leylin did not have enough assurance for challenging those self-proclaimed “Light” Magi, so some things still had to be concealed.

Only Greem and Fraser were handling the reception of goods. Apart from them, Anna, too, knew a little about it. Other than them, even Fayern and Old Welker, the housekeeper, knew nothing of Leylin’s deeds.

Although they had some faint surmises, but Leylin always disposed of those useless ‘ingredients’ by cremating them with medicinal powder. Under no evidence, even if anyone had suspicions, they could not do anything towards him.

“This is the limitation of strength! The official Magi in the academy can saunter through slave markets to purchase slaves as ingredients. They could even lure and cheat acolytes but nobody could punish them! However, I am just a lowly acolyte and all by myself. I still have to mind my reputation....”

Leylin stroked his chin.

“A.I. Chip, how is the gathering of data on experimental bodies today?”

Leylin asked inwardly.

[The spiritual force of the experimental subject has already been discovered to have 23 abnormal cerebral fluctuations and within the cerebrum were 45 hidden locations....]

The A.I. Chip’s voice intoned.

“Using the prisoners as living subjects and carrying out experiments to obtain research and data on the spirit body, seemed like it’s doable!”

Leylin nodded his head, “It’s just that the amount is still too little....”

Turning back, he looked at Greem who seemed to have been uneasy right from the start, “You did well, take your leave now!”

“As you wish, Master!” Greem bowed and heaved a secret sigh of relief as he hurriedly ran away.

As a regular human, naturally he was somewhat conflicted with these issues, not to mention the limitations set from the slave training. But Leylin’s strength had far

surpassed Greem's. Hence, he could only find it difficult to bear but did not dare to display any reluctance.

As his owner, Leylin naturally had seen through this point.

“After all, he is just a regular human and such occurrences are to be expected. As long as he is still obeying orders, the others I need not care about...” Leylin recalled Greem's expression for a moment, before completely forgetting him. His black robes swirled about him as he disappeared into the underground lab.

“Leylin, my friend, we meet again!”

His green hair trailing the ground, Langford looked at Leylin and sincerity was shown on his face.

Ever since the previous incident between Leylin and Langford, they actually had traded a few more times. They had even established a friendship and became pretty good friends.

How things turned out like this was because Leylin discovered that when Langford was not crazy, his character was rather good. Moreover, his supplies of goods were constant and the prices in the Brey Canyon were cheaper than other magicians'.

Between magicians, benefits are the only constant. As for other things, most of them could be forsaken.

“Langford! This time, I require the goods urgently! Have a look!”

Leylin nodded his head as he handed over a yellow parchment paper with scribbles on it.

“I seldom see this side of you! Let me take a look!” Langford took the parchment paper and immediately ground his teeth.

“The faeces of the Kosh Bird, Stellar Alloy.... These items are all connected to the aspect of souls and are not cheap items!”

* Dong! * A small sack was immediately slammed onto Langford’s table.

After loosening the ropes around it, glittering magic crystals were revealed within it.

“Do not worry about magic crystals, these are the deposit. I will make up for the difference later with potions!” Leylin spoke in a rich and overbearing manner.

“That’s right! With your ability, magic crystals are only a small issue!”

Langford eyes glowed, and immediately kept the magic crystal sack into his robes, “The Kosh Bird is on the verge of extinction. I heard that some people had chanced upon it before in the Black Death Mountain Plains. As for Stellar Alloy, I have a piece of it here....”

Langford immediately rummaged through the shelves behind him, after which he opened a small black box.

In the centre of the red satin interior was a silver-coloured rock with blue spots

“The ingredients that you need, Stellar Alloy, Flowerless Leaves... I have one of each here. As for the others, maybe you could look further within the canyon....”

Langford hurriedly piled the items together, and calculated the final value, “785 magic crystals!”

“Alright!” Leylin stroked his chin somewhat grudgingly, “I will go for a look at the market. Also, you have to keep a lookout for the items I requested and purchase them when you can!”

“Alright!” Once Langford agreed, his countenance changed and the green hair continuously shrank, very soon reaching the waist area from the legs.

“Lea... Leave now!” Langford’s face contorted, and one of his eyes was already bloodshot.

Leylin turned around, until he left the cave for a distance before a howling sound travelled to his ears.

“An intermittent illness like this is really scary....” Leylin’s footstep did not stop and directly headed towards the depths of the canyon.

“Hurry, look! Langford has acted up again....”

“Should we inform the protectors?”

“I’m afraid there won’t be of much use. Hehe, not long later, Langford will be chased out from this place.”

At the same moment, from both sides of the cave, many acolytes who wore pointed hats looked at the direction of the howling sound. Expressions of anxiety, indifference and schadenfreude were seen across various faces.

After being busy for some time, Leylin emerged from the Brey Canyon. On his back was an additional black backpack stuffed full of various ingredients.

Leylin turned around to look at the Brey Canyon, before riding his dark horse and left.

Chapter 77 – News From The Academy

News From The Academy

Inside a spacious and bright room was a full-length mirror.

The mirror was taller than a person and was ornamented along its sides with black leaves which contrasted with the white birch wood. A large variety of different colored gems were also embedded along its edges, making it look extremely extravagant.

At this moment, a youth wearing a swallow-tail coat was standing in front of this mirror. Behind him were a few maids, who were busy straightening out their master's attire.

After tidying up, the youth waved his hands, sending the maids away, leaving him alone in the room.

This youth judged his reflected figure– a medium-height build with a slim stature. He was brown haired and somewhat pale-skinned. His countenance could be described as delicate, but the shining luster in both his eyes indicated he had a very active mind.

“Unknowingly, I have already turned 17!”

Leylin looked at himself in the mirror and spoke with a hint of melancholy.

Time was the most incisive weapon. It turned babies into old people and created barren deserts by drying up seas. Even if a person was a Magus, they could only

slightly prolong their lives. But even if they could live for several thousand years, they could still not evade the slow corrosion of time.

Over a year had passed ever since Leylin returned from his previous exploration.

“No! I must fight the eternal curse of time and seek immortality. Only then would I be deserving of the fate of having being transported to this world!”

Leylin’s eyes turned a fiery black as if a deep magnificent flame was burning within them.

“Master! The city lord’s horse carriage is here!” Outside the door, Anna’s voice could be heard.

“Let him wait for a while, I’ll be coming over shortly.”

Leylin faced the mirror and finished sorting out his bearings, before picking up a short black cane and leaving the room.

* Deng Deng! *

The black horse carriage flew rapidly across the street and, after seeing the insignia of the city lord Castle; the citizens avoided it and made way. They all sent respectful and envious gazes to the horse carriage.

In the cabin, there was only Leylin. Currently, this youth was lying comfortably against a velvety goose feather cushion. His hand laid on its side, revealing a strange pendant on his palm.

The pendant was strikingly similar to the silver cross. On its surface were a few red and blue diamonds, which glittered in the light, giving off a faint glow.

As Leylin stared at this pendant, a satisfied expression crossed his face.

“According to the A.I. Chip’s calculations, with the Stellar Alloy as the centerpiece and the support of various precious alloys that I have obtained during my travels, this prototype of the magic artifact has already been perfectly synthesized.”

This pendant artifact was something that Leylin had synthesized according to the magic artifact section of the Lowian Academy Teachings.

3 years ago Leylin had managed to buy the decrepit page of the Lowian Academy Teachings, having the A.I. Chip slowly decipher the contents within.

The earlier portions of the teachings were only suitable for acolytes, with many travels and adventures recorded down. If not, Leylin could never have purchased the page at an extremely low price.

Leylin’s luck was not bad. After the A.I. Chip finished deciphering, he obtained a method to synthesize a low-grade magic artifact.

Fallen Star Pendant — This was the name of the magic artifact recipe he had obtained. According to the Lowian Academy Teachings, this Fallen Star Pendant, while a low-grade magic artifact, was of the rare defensive nature. Compared to a few attack type magic artifacts, its value was naturally much higher. Even an official Magus might be interested in it.

After having to see the materials needed and the process, Leylin had immediately decided that he had to synthesize the Fallen Star Pendant.

Although the spells of acolytes are rather destructive, their low defense capabilities have always been an issue.

Only by turning into an official Magus, and being able to form an innate defensive spell, can there be a spell projecting a force field that constantly protected the body. Only then, could someone be considered to be an awe-inspiring Magus.

As for acolytes, they could lose their lives at any time from sneak attacks.

The few acolytes who had entered the withering woods with Leylin previously were the best examples of this case.

Although they were able to cast destructive spells, due to the Great Mankestre Snake, they had all perished due to the lack of defensive spells. Only Murphy was fortunate enough to stay alive, but that was due to Leylin saving him.

Once he had synthesized the Fallen Star Pendant, coupled with a couple of defensive potions, Leylin's defence would be comparable to a fraction of the defence that a Magus had.

Furthermore, the Fallen Star Pendant's defence force field would be activated immediately. For instance, as long as the opponent's attack power does not exceed the threshold of the Fallen Star Pendant and before its energy was completely depleted, Leylin's defence would be like that of a sturdy turtle shell. As long as the Fallen Star Pendant was active, nothing would happen to Leylin.

“Fortunately, there was a magician market near Extreme Night City, if not I wouldn't have been able to find so many precious ingredients so quickly!”

Leylin somehow felt glad for that.

After smashing and grinding most of the magic crystals he had, as well as adding all of the ingredients from the Great Mankestre Snake, he managed to create this prototype of a pendant.

“I have basically consumed all of my expendable resources. According to the Lowian Academy Teachings, this is only an incomplete product. The core of the Fallen Star Pendant has already been completed. What's left is the final step....”

Glancing at the Fallen Star Pendant in his hands he saw that the silver cross glittered and glowed with a wide range of different hues. On its surface were inscribed mysterious patterns, and altogether it seemed like a mystical art piece.

“As for the final ingredient, I have it with me already. I need to only wait for the opportune moment before I can initiate the spirit awakening for the Fallen Star Pendant!”

Leylin gripped the Fallen Star Pendant tightly and kept it on his shirt.

“As for the Tears of Mary, this ancient formula is really difficult to comprehend. Even after a lot of experiments and obtaining large amounts of data on spirit bodies, I still don’t understand anything from looking at this formula!”

Leylin appeared downcast, and his thoughts spun rapidly, “Could it be that my conjecture is wrong? What if this formula has nothing to do with spirit bodies...”

“Halt!” The coachman’s voice travelled from the front. The horse carriage jerked, as it came to a stop.

“Sir Leylin! The city lord’s Castle is just ahead,” reported the coachmen, respectfully.

Leylin shook his head and organized his inner thoughts as he walked out of the carriage’s door.

The city lord’s Castle was still the same – just as imposing and dignified as before. Rows of guards on both sides of the entrance were standing facing each other, and their gaze never wavered, appearing formidable.

“Viscount Jackson is rather intelligent!” Ever since the withering woods incident, he had pretended to be heavily injured and allowed the news to travel out. After his enemies confirmed the news and began to gather in cahoots for an attack, he caught them all at once lightning quick. He cut off all of their heads and their blood

overflowed into the moat. From then on, all of Extreme Night City has been extremely quiet....”

“Leylin! My brother!”

Viscount Jackson had long since waited at the main door. Upon seeing Leylin, he immediately went forward to receive him.

Viscount Jackson had witnessed Leylin’s strength first hand. Not to mention that Leylin was Viscount Jackson’s lifesaver. If not for Leylin, Viscount Jackson would have long since become prey for the Great Mankestre Snake.”

“City lord,” said Leylin, as he nodded his head.

Viscount Jackson grabbed Leylin’s hands in a cordial manner. After bringing Leylin for a stroll around his castle’s garden, he then brought Leylin to a private study room.

Within the privacy of the castle, Viscount Jackson finally revealed a worrisome expression.

“My brother Leylin! Last time you had requested for 50 men, but I am simply unable to provide you with that many.... I have already sent all the criminals from all of my jails to your place. Also, I have even sent you cheats and thieves whose crimes do not warrant a death sentence. However, it is still too far from the number you requested....”

“It was like this?” Leylin nodded his head, and sat on the sofa, entering into deep thought.

Extreme Night City could barely be considered as a medium-sized city. Their residents would not exceed 100,000 people. For Viscount Jackson, providing Leylin with a few prisoners meant for the death row was still within his means. However, as time passed, the number of death row criminals became less and less,

yet Leylin's request only kept increasing. So now, he could no longer fulfill the requests of Leylin.

“As you know,” continued Viscount Jackson while Leylin was in deep thought, “I am only a city lord. My noble status is only that of a Viscount. For individual death sentences, I may still be able to decide on them. However, once it exceeds a certain threshold, I have no choice in the matter. After all, there are still laws presiding over the dukedom....”

Viscount Jackson waved his hands, and his eyes flashed, “Unless there is a war happening at the moment, if 50 or 100 people disappeared at once, it would definitely incite the wrath of the masses!”

“War!!!”

Leylin was startled, but very soon his startled appearance turned into a frosty smirk. This was indeed a good chance to collect samples.

However, Viscount Jackson chose to mention it at this time, so it was very likely that he had already thought of a plan.

“Regarding this, I...” As Leylin wanted to speak further on the matter, his chest pocket suddenly vibrated as a crow-like ‘caw’ sounded. Immediately Leylin's expression changed.

“Is there something wrong?” Viscount Jackson asked with a ‘concerned’ look.

“It's.... It's nothing; I've received news from a friend!” Leylin reached his hands into his chest, and the cawing stopped immediately. His countenance also resumed its previous tranquility.

However, Leylin lost interest in speaking any further. He hurriedly exchanged a few more words with Viscount Jackson before bidding farewell.

Although something was troubling Viscount Jackson, seeing Leylin, who became absent-minded towards the end, he still did not say what was on his mind.

After Leylin came out of the castle, he hopped onto the horse carriage and rushed back to the manor.

“I actually received news from the academy at a time like this” According to the news, the war of Abyssal Bone Forest Academy had already reached the peak of its intensity, where the victor and loser could be determined at any given moment.

As Leylin was an acolyte who was sent out on a mission, the academy had given him items with which they could contact him. There were also various items for contact purposes, with a ‘single-use’ effect, sent with him. This way, they were able to get the most updated news of the school during critical times.

“Right now, the news given would most likely determine the winner and loser. The Abyssal Bone Forest Academy’s strength is limited, and there are two other factions of Abyssal Bone Forest Academy’s strength opposing it, so the chances of winning are slim,” mused Leylin, as he had a good grasp of the current predicament of Abyssal Bone Forest Academy.

“Unless some external faction has stepped forward to mediate, the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy will definitely take a huge loss this time, and may even result in being disbanded....”

Leylin carried a solemn expression as he stepped into his secret lab.

Chapter 78 – Arrangements

Arrangements

The shadow of a mahogany circular table could be seen under the dim glow of the lantern.

The four legs were elongated in the projection and when projected on the walls, it looked like a beast with four limbs, making it seem ominous.

Leylin stood in front of the table, and his shadow, too, was elongated.

A bunch of black scrolls were placed on the mahogany wood table. On the surface of each of the scrolls was a picture of a crow. At this moment, the crow seemed to have come alive and cawed continuously, giving off a noise that would terrify people.

“No matter what, I have to look at the contents within!”

Leylin made up his mind, “Even if it was a trap, which contains some sort of tracing spell inside, I still have enough time to escape!”

Even if that was the case, Leylin still gripped the Trevor’s Revolving Shield Potion – that he had just brewed – tightly in his hands.

After which, with a solemn voice, Leylin spoke in the Byron language, “Open in the name of Leylin Farlier!”

* Caw Caw Caw! * The black crow cried, and its figure twisted. Many black lines converged, forming the image of a black skull.

Leylin picked a red crystal from his robes and tossed it into the skull's mouth.

* Crunch! Crunch! * The black skull immediately flew out from the paper and devoured the red crystal.

* Puff! * After finishing its meal, the black skull exploded, and the scroll shuddered violently. It started to burn at the bottom, where a green-coloured flame was seen.

The greenish flame then formed many characters in mid-air.

Leylin's eyes shifted. These green characters were a kind of secret code, which outsiders would not understand. But he has learnt its corresponding encryption and decryption back at Abyssal Bone Forest Academy.

Under the green-coloured characters was a bright red stamp, with a distinguished name written below it in the Byron language. There even was an image of a black snake which crawled out from a skull.

“Even the chairman's seal has appeared — it seems like this news is not a fake!”

Leylin's expression became volatile upon seeing the fluctuating characters.

Some time later, after the flame finished burning, the green characters disappeared into the air, leaving behind a pile of grey ashes.

Leylin sighed and furrowed his brows.

“They actually sent the highest order — asking all acolytes, who are working on missions outside, to rush back to the academy immediately!”

“Furthermore, they have also set severe punishments. Those who do not make it back to the academy within 3 months, will immediately be labelled as a traitor, and be subjected to the academy’s disciplinary team’s execution!”

“I’m afraid that I have to go back this time!” Leylin muttered.

As to whether it was a trap set by an enemy, Leylin was not at all worried.

First of all, Leylin was only a lowly acolyte. The enemy would not go through such painstaking means for him. Also, the chairman of Abyssal Bone Forest Academy was a legendary figure. He was, at the least, a rank 2 Magus. Even if Abyssal Bone Forest Academy was defeated, his personal seal would never land in the hands of the enemy.

“Abyssal Bone Forest Academy” Leylin sighed and thought of Kroft, Bicky, Nyssa and the rest, wondering how they have been.

Previously when Leylin made a hasty decision to leave, it was indeed rather selfish of him. However, his strength was not even likened to that of an ant in front of the two academies, so he could not think of a better way.

“I’d never imagined that after 3 years, I will finally be returning!”

Leylin suddenly ordered, “A.I. Chip, bring forth my stats now!”

[Beep! Leylin Farlier, level 3 acolyte, Knight. Strength: 3.1, Agility: 3.3, Vitality: 3.7, Spiritual force: 13.1, Magic Power: 13 – (magic power is in synchronisation with spiritual force). Status: Healthy]

More than a year had passed, and the modified Azure Potion, even for a level 3 acolyte, had a very beneficial effect. It managed to bring Leylin’s spiritual force up by another 3 points.

His body's resistance towards the medicine, however, had now reached its limits. Drinking more of the Azure Potion would no longer have any effect.

Raising his spiritual force for the next few years would be impossible for Leylin unless he were to concoct a new type of spiritual force medicine.

“After level 3 acolyte, it will be the realm of an official Magus!” Leylin muttered, “Advancing from level 3 acolyte to official Magus, there will be a huge bottleneck. The difficulty is much higher than that of advancing from a level 2 to level 3 acolyte.”

It seemed like all of the factions in the Magus World deliberately controlled the information regarding of official Magus. Even if Leylin were to fork out huge amounts of magic crystals, he would not be able to retrieve much.

The previous, harrowing incident of advancing to a level 3 acolyte suddenly surfaced on Leylin's mind.

“The higher ups in the Magus World have strictly kept the information regarding Magus advancement highly confidential. No matter how genius a wandering magician may be, as long as they don't join a faction, they will never be able to obtain knowledge of advancing. This is to keep the lowest tier from resisting and creating a rebellion and to maintain the ruling.

Leylin, too, had experienced the evil consequences of advancing without prior knowledge. If not for the A.I. Chip, he would have died without even leaving behind a corpse.

“Abyssal Bone Forest Academy! I have to return once and obtain knowledge of advancing into an official Magus.

This was the only place where Leylin knew he could obtain information more easily. As for markets and whatnot, they were completely not worth considering.

The path of a Magus would be covered with thorns. One misstep would result in an irreversible consequence.

Last time, Leylin took a risk and advanced to the level 3 acolyte, but because of the lack of guidance from the academy and his mentor, he could only rely on the A.I. Chip to simulate. In the end, he met with two unexpected situations. If not for the A.I. Chip's immense capabilities, coupled with a little luck, Leylin would never have been able to advance that easily, and that too without any side effects.

“Only that...I have to reconsider the arrangements for my subordinates!”

Leylin stroked his chin, “Maybe, arranging for a backup plan here won't be a bad idea after all”

“Give out the orders, I wish to join the subordinates for tonight's dinner!”

After exiting the secret lab, Leylin instructed Anna.

“Yes, Young Master!” Leylin was on the solitary side, and he usually left the daily chores and trifle things to Anna, Greem and the others, while he holed himself up in the experiment lab all day. He also rarely left the manor, so giving out an order suddenly did startle Anna. However, she was a quick-witted woman, so she did not ask much. After curtsying, she retreated while displaying her beautiful curves in front of Leylin.

In the manor, naturally there were halls large enough which could accommodate the master to have a meal with his subordinates.

The hall was constructed with large red rocks, the windowsill was rather small, and the sunlight could only dimly light up the place. However, at the centre, a silver rack with hundreds of candles lit solved that problem completely.

In the centre of the large hall, a long red table was placed. The attendants and kitchen staff were shifting the huge chairs with backrest, which caused squeaky

noises. They also laid a thick, white cloth on the table, and arranged silver forks and spoons, plates and other cutlery.

When it was time to eat, the table was already filled with many delicacies. At the centre was a barbecued mutton. Around the golden yellow barbecue meat, there were many purple and red fruits. It complemented the combination of dishes and was a tantalising display.

Leylin immediately sat at the most respected position and looked at the group in front of him.

Immediately, to the left and right sides of Leylin, were Fraser and Greem respectively. As Knights and subordinates who had followed Leylin from the earliest, their positions were naturally of the highest. After them were housekeeper Old Welker and Roran Hawks mercenary group's leader, Fayern.

As for Anna, she awaited behind Leylin silently, like a dutiful serving maid. However, all the people present did not dare think that her status was just that of a maid.

Everyone knew that Anna was exceptionally favoured by this Young Master. Not only could she see Leylin regularly, but she even held the key to the gold vault! It incited a few, feeble grumbles from Old Welker, but Leylin did not care.

After Leylin had purchased the land here, Fayern had moved his whole family over, and turned into a truthfully loyal subordinate of Leylin.

After which it was Roran Hawks mercenary group. The contract with them matured not long ago. Half of the mercenaries continued to stay on under the generous conditions that Leylin had provided.

Many others sat on the long table, but Leylin was only familiar with these few. The others merely looked familiar to Leylin, but Leylin knew of their faces and names, which he could remember by relying on the A.I. Chip.

Leylin never bothered about the trifles of regular livelihood. The pathway to being a Magus already expended a huge amount of his concentration. He absolutely could not allocate any of his concentration on other matters.

Of course, Leylin's outward mannerisms were similar to that of many magicians. It also fit with how regular humans expected from magicians.

In the hearts of all the people on the south coast, magicians were a group of people who wielded mysterious powers, but they were extremely solitary. They often resided in dark woods or concealed marshes. Only when they needed ingredients and other items, would they leave their dwelling.

“Young Master!”

The masses around the long table stood up and bowed.

* Ding! * Leylin used the silver spoon and tapped on the glass in front of him, giving off a crisp noise.

“Everyone! By calling you all out here today, is because I have something to announce to everyone!” Leylin's eyes swept the crowd. As of now, his spiritual force had already reached 13.1, and the mysterious gaze of his eyes was awe-inspiring; it was as if his eyes had been chiseled from the highest grade jewels. Anyone who was looked at by him would experience a sharp pain in their eyes, and tears would involuntarily leak out.

Even if it was Greem or Fraser, they could only bow their heads low at this moment.

“Please give your orders, Young Master!”

“I will leave for a period of time, and there will be no set date on returning. When I am not around, the medicinal shop and daily matters of the manor would all be decided by Anna, Greem and Fraser.”

Leylin looked at the masses below him and said slowly.

“What?” A bout of commotion sparked, and immediately the group whispered fervently to each other, as they used strange gazes to look at the trio of Anna, Greem and Fraser.

Greem and Fraser could tolerate being the focus of numerous eyes. However, as a woman, Anna was somewhat uneasy as she twisted and clutched at her dress.

“Silence!” Leylin knocked on the silver glass again, and the crowd turned silent.

“From today onwards, the words from those 3 would be the same as mine. Any decision of theirs must be completely obeyed and carried out by you.”

“We obey!” Although Leylin did not usually bother himself with many matters, the imposing aura coming from him was extremely immense. There were also rumours flying around that he was part of the Mysterious Entity, which made his subordinates’ reverence towards him even greater.

Chapter 79 – Tidying Up

Tidying Up

“Anna, Greem, Fraser, you three come to my study room together after dinner!”

Seeing that his subordinates did not have any objections, Leylin nodded his head and said, “For now, everyone please enjoy yourself!”

The group nodded their heads, returned to their positions, and sat down. The sound of clanging cutlery continuously rang.

Ever since Leylin had issued his orders, the hall was much more silent than before. Although the dinner was sumptuous, the masses seemed to have something weighing down on their hearts.

After dinner, Leylin received the trio which knew of his magician identity.

Greem and Fraser wore leather armour, which looked extremely imposing. Anna still wore a low cut blouse, and appeared even more seductive.

“You guys know that I am a magician. Right now, I am about to embark on a journey, and due to some reasons, I can only keep you guys here....”

Leylin sat behind the desk, speaking solemnly to the three of them.

“The orders outside earlier were only for the others to see. From now onwards, Greem and Fraser, you must treat Anna the same way you treat me, do you understand?”

“We understand!” Greem and Fraser nodded their heads. Compared to the rest, they knew how terrifying this master of theirs was and had no objections towards Leylin’s orders.

After sending Greem and Fraser away, the room was only left with Anna and Leylin.

“Young... Young Master!” Tears welled up in Anna’s eyes.

“The Mandara Flower’s essence on your body, I have already created an antidote for it. Also, take these!” Towards his own women, Leylin was much gentler.

Saying so, Leylin handed over some potions and a parchment paper over to Anna.

“This is....” Anna opened the parchment paper to have a look, and she became startled.

“These are letters of authority. You will be managing all of my establishments in Extreme Night City. Furthermore, if I don’t return within ten years, all of these will be transferred over to your name!”

Leylin crossed his fingers, “Furthermore, Murphy and Viscount Jackson are witnesses to these procedures! If you meet with any trouble in the future, you can seek their aid!”

These worldly possessions, Leylin could have as many as he wanted. Naturally he would not mind giving them to Anna as a backup plan for himself.

Moreover, even if he played this chess piece wrongly, there wasn't much to be regretful about.

After all, right now, Leylin was only an acolyte in the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy. According to the academy's rules, acolytes are not allowed to bring their followers or maids into the academy compounds.

Since these are things which he had to eventually let go of, naturally, Leylin's heart did not ache for them.

"Also, this is the desert scorpion sting, which is a tool specially used to control Greem and Fraser. You must keep them well...."

Leylin handed over a red box to Anna.

"No!" Anna bit her lips, before finally pouncing forward and hugging both of Leylin's legs. "Young Master, don't chase Anna away! Anna wants to be by Young Master's side no matter what she has to do, alright?"

The young lady held onto Leylin's legs and tears as bright as pearls slid off of her beautiful face.

Her warm and mildly shuddering body wrapped itself around Leylin's legs. One could see that Anna had mustered extreme courage to speak these words.

Leylin looked at Anna with a touch of gentleness in his eyes. He reached his right hand out and stroked the young lady's hair and back.

"I'm very sorry Anna. The place I have to go is extremely dangerous for you...."

"But...." Anna lifted her face filled with tears as if wanting to say something else.

"Don't mess around, listen!" Suddenly, Leylin's face hardened.

Seeing her master act this way, the deeply ingrained pain and suffering for disobeying a master's orders surfaced in her mind. After all, Anna had undergone slave training. Although these were the methods of the slave traders, it was etched right into Anna's soul itself.

"Yes, Young Master!" Anna stopped her crying and kept the scroll and box. She only looked at Leylin, the same way as a cat that had been abandoned by its owner.

Seeing the girl act like this, Leylin withdrew a few potions from his robes and handed it to her. After all, he was not a stone-hearted person.

"This is a recovery potion, which can quickly heal physical wounds. Keep this well!"

"Also, this purple potion is an attack type potion. If there comes a day when you encounter a danger that not even Greem nor Fraser can handle, throw this out at it. Do you understand me?"

Leylin pointed at the purple potion and instructed Anna.

"Anna understands!" Her eyes turned red. She knew that she could not disobey her master's orders, so she kept the potion well.

"Sigh...."

Looking at her leaving figure, Leylin sighed suddenly.

Although he had made many preparations, he knew that after a dozen odd years, this faction that he had left would most lightly disappear into thin air.

However, he had no regrets. These were all regular humans without any aptitude for becoming a magician. They would be of limited use to him in the future.

Most likely, the only use of this small faction to him would be to act as a cover for him to hide from people, and even then, it wasn't very secure at all.

In the end, entrusting everything to Anna was not a bad choice.

Apart from the Mandara Flower's essence on Anna's body, all other restrictions on Anna's body had already been removed by Leylin. From now onward, Anna would be a free human.

"I hope that after having these things, you will be able to live a happier life!"

Leylin's eyes were unreadable.

If Anna was to land in the hands of another magician, she would at most be a tool for them to vent their pent up energy. After their interest wanes, she may very well be used in an experiment. Now that Anna had followed Leylin, not only was she free from her status as a slave, Leylin had even saved her from the poison of Mandara Flower's essence. He had even given her the manor and medicinal shop, so no matter what happens next, he would be free from all guilt!"

"The troublesome matters have all been resolved. What's left is to finally dispose of the experiment lab and underground cells thoroughly!"

Leylin thought and got up to go to the underground.

This was the forbidden area that he had demarcated. Anna and the two Knights would not dare come down here so easily.

Under the dim light from the torch, Leylin withdrew a crystal ball. An old person's figure could be seen within it. His expression was crazed, and even had terror in it.

"We meet again, Mister Roman!" Leylin smiled and gave his salutations. However, in Roman's eyes, this smile was more harrowing than the devil's.

"Don't... Don't come over!" Roman's expression twisted, and he fearfully backed up to the walls of the crystal ball behind him.

However, Leylin's acute senses picked out the resolution behind the expression of the frightened vengeful spirit.

“Let me tell you a piece of good news, and a piece of bad news!”

Leylin proficiently placed many tools beside the crystal ball, and let the vengeful spirit let out ear piercing screams as he spoke.

“The good news is that I am going to leave here for a while!” Before the vengeful spirit had any response, Leylin smiled and said, “And the bad news is that no matter where I go, you will be going along with me!”

“Oh! No! No! I beg of you....”

“Alright! So then, tell me everything you know!”

At the beginning, Roman naturally would not speak of anything. However after over a year of torture, he had already begun to cough out some information.

After the narration of the vengeful spirit, Leylin shook his head. “It seems like Mister Roman still harbours wishful thoughts, so let us continue....”

Following Leylin's statement, many hair-raising screams filled the lab, as if the howls of a person right before their death.

Although this vengeful spirit had showed signs of a mental breakdown half a month ago, it still managed to give misleading information to Leylin regarding the secrets he knew.

This vengeful spirit gave much information at once, and it was extremely complicated. However, with the A.I. Chip, Leylin was able to record all of its narration quickly, and sort it systematically.

The next few times, he discovered a problem.

Towards things which are pertaining to more general and common knowledge, Roman always handed them over easily. However, towards the crucial points and secrets, Roman glossed over them and hid much of the important information.

However, Leylin did not mind at all. It would give huge amounts of information each day. Along with the filtering and sorting of the A.I. Chip, he would still obtain plenty of information.

Moreover, with the continuous and prolonged torture and interrogating, Leylin believed that one day, this vengeful spirit would tell him everything, and pray for a fast death.

After the daily routine of ‘questioning’ was completed, Leylin went towards the other rooms underground.

In here, various blood-stained torture instruments were hung along the walls. On the floor, there were even a few corpses with wounds littered across their bodies, causing them to be almost indiscernible as a human body.

[Beep! The surrounding negative energy density is higher by 34.5%, which satisfies the most basic condition for a spirit body’s existence. The target’s physical body has undergone various suffering and tortures. Chance of spirit body appearing: 1.23%]

The A.I. Chip scanned the few corpses and reported the figures.

“Compared to the one-thousandth chance of a spirit body forming naturally, this proportion can be considered extremely high already!” Leylin stroked his chin, “If I were to be given more time, I would definitely be able to induce the formation of an artificial spirit body!”

The most efficient way to do research on souls was through the use of spirit bodies. This established theory was publicly accepted by all Dark Magi.

What Leylin had to do now was to continuously simulate the conditions of the outside world, and induce the forming of an artificial spirit body!

If this piece of news were to leak out, Leylin's reputation would be completely interlinked with savagery and ruthlessness, which would be bad for his future developments.

“Reputation is also a kind of benefit! Although I'm not afraid of how people view me, even Magi wish to have dealings with those who have good reputations, but not a fellow with a dredged reputation.

Leylin sucked in a lungful of air and sprinkled power on the corpses.

With hissing sounds, the corpses turned into yellow pus after corroding, and very soon, they disappeared.

“Although I have finally stopped my experiments, which is a little bit of a pity, it's not like I haven't obtained any results!” Leylin comforted himself, “At least, regarding the Lowian Academy Teachings' final step, the spirit awakening, I have already obtained sufficient data!”

As for the other ancient potion formula, Tears of Mary, Leylin still hadn't found any clues regarding it.

Chapter 80 – Return

Return

Within Extreme Night City, there was recently a matter that was neither big nor small happening. This turned into an idle conversation topic discussed by commoners after lunch tea.

Mister Leylin, an heir of a noble who had stayed in the city for three years and Viscount Jackson and Scholar Murphy's good friend, was temporarily leaving Extreme Night City.

Before he left, he actually handed over the manor and medicinal shop to his serving attendant, a maid, to handle the running.

For nobles, although they did vent their pent up energy on their serving maids frequently, they would never have handed over important establishments and such over to them because of this act.

After all, to them, maids were like toys, which could be changed or abandoned at any time. As for establishments and lands, they would often become the inheritance of an heir, and was the root for the growth of a family's continual development.

By doing this, Leylin had turned into a joke in front of the rest of the nobility. Not only did his reputation contain a lazy and kind person, it also extended to a muddle-headed trademark.

However, to the surprise of many, the maid, with the help of two Knights, very soon made the remainder of Leylin's faction submit to her. At the same time, Viscount Jackson city lord and Murphy stepped in personally to express their support for the maid, which allowed her to act on Leylin's behalf with his establishments.

After taking over Leylin's establishments, Anna dedicated herself to managing them and did it neatly and tidily. Not only did Leylin's establishment in Extreme Night City not fail as predicted by the other nobles, it continually developed, which made many nobles fall from their chair.

However, all of these things had nothing to do with Leylin. At this moment, he had long since left Extreme Night City.

* Pitter Patter! *

The sky turned dark, and bean sized drops of rain fell on the ground, initiating countless splashes.

* Thud Thud Thud! * A dark, handsome steed continually dashed along the road, and the scenery on both sides hurriedly retreated. Rainwater fell onto the body of a Knight, but was blocked by a raincoat.

By the time when it was midnight, the downpour stopped, and the Knight sought shelter in a cave.

A warm and bright flame illuminated the cave. A steel wok hung above the bonfire, and a white mushroom broth with a fragrant smell boiled. From time to time, a few pieces of meat jerky floated to the surface.

The Knight took off his coat, revealing a young face with brown hair and eyes that glittered like jewels.

This person was Leylin. At this moment, he drank the mushroom soup, while time bringing out a map from the A.I. Chip.

“After two months of continuous journeying, I am finally going to arrive at the academy!”

Leylin looked at the destination on the map. His expression was complicated. Previously, if not for him constantly changing his route and going to other markets to sell his potions, he wouldn't have been in such a rush, and the journey would have been a breeze.

However, with such a hastened journey, he had suffered plenty.

After having lived like a king for the past 3 years, Leylin had gotten used to the extravagant life of a noble, and almost could not adapt to his current situation.

“However, I have finally arrived. According to the map, I will arrive at the academy after three more days!”

“I never thought that a third party would actually intervene, and make the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy and the other two factions come to a ceasefire agreement!”

Recalling the news that he heard from the markets in the past few days, Leylin was still somewhat in disbelief.

According to the news, with the pincer attack from the Sage Gotham's Hut and Whitewoods Castle, Abyssal Bone Forest Academy should have been in a precarious situation. Even the academy headquarters' defensive spell formation was damaged by half and was almost broken.

However, in the end, it was unknown what method the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy chairman used. He had actually managed to appeal for help from the Lighthouse of the Night.

The Lighthouse of the Night was one of the finest organisations in the south coast. Its leader was rumoured to have the strength of a rank 3 Magus.

Under the forceful mediation of the Lighthouse of the Night, the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy finally managed to escape from its dangerous situation, eventually reaching a treaty between the two rivaling factions.

Leylin was not someone who would immediately respond when he was requested to return to the academy. Along the way, he always inquired for news. Only when he was indeed certain that Abyssal Bone Forest Academy was freed from war, and that the recalling of the acolytes was not a trap, did he decide to return to the academy.

“With this distance, I can already initiate the communicative method that mentor showed me before! It’s best to first discern the truth!”

Leylin’s face turned serious, and he withdrew a pink coloured potion from his robes.

After removing the plug, he used the pink coloured potion to draw a mysterious rune on the ground. It was cursive and winding, like a worm.

* Sssii! * Pink smoke rose into the air continuously, before finally turning into the shape of a large pink ear.

“Who is this? This energy wave?” Beside the ear, Kroft’s voice sounded, carrying many other static noises with it.

“It’s me! Professor!” Leylin spoke softly.

“This voice! These spiritual force waves! You are Leylin! You have actually become a level 3 acolyte!” Astonishment could be heard in Kroft’s voice.

For third grade acolytes, if they wanted to advance from a level 2 acolyte to a level 3 acolyte, it often required at least 5 years of constructing the mind runes and reinforcing of the sea of consciousness.

However, Leylin had spent only 3 years to advance to a level 3 acolyte, which shocked Kroft.

“You are only 17 this year, yet you have entered the realm of a level 3 acolyte!” Kroft’s voice, which was usually stable, carried a trace of excitement in it, “An acolyte who is level 3 before the age of 20 often has an extremely huge chance of advancing to an official Magus. However, the numbers of such acolytes are extremely rare. Even your senior, Merlin, only advanced to a level 3 acolyte when he was 21.

If Kroft knew that Leylin had advanced to a level 3 acolyte only 1 year after he had left the academy, he might immediately label him as a genius!

However, striking it rich silently was always Leylin’s norm of handling his affairs. Towards his mentor’s astonishment, Leylin only bowed and said, “I was only lucky, and found a rare Void Flower”

A Void Flower was a type of mysterious plant. Its petals were purple, and if a magician were to raise it, it would be an extremely strong stimulant towards a magician's spiritual force. The most crucial point was that the laws of reproduction for the Void Flower were strange. they could appear at any place on the continent. There were even cases in which magicians found traces of these plants at the bottom of the sea or in a pit of a volcano.

Moreover, the Void Flower had a special attribute. Once its petals were plucked, the whole stalk will immediately combust, leaving no traces behind.

Naturally, this was an excuse that Leylin thought of long ago. Through the A.I. Chip's data gathering of various mysterious plants, he had already prepared this excuse as a reason for his advancement.

It was not like there weren't any other level 2 acolytes who had used a Void Flower to advance to a level 3 acolyte before.

“Void Flower?” Kroft's shock was relayed through the ear. “Such a precious magician resource could also be found by you... That is a top grade material of which one petal can cost several thousands of magic crystals.... It can even aid a magician in advancing....”

However, it was extremely difficult to predict luck in this world. After sticking to his statement that the Void Flower was indeed used up, Kroft had no other choice but to believe him.

What followed next was that the mentor and student spoke of Leylin's recent journeying experiences. When Kroft learned that Leylin had successfully completed the mission from the academy, he expressed his congratulations.

Towards the end, Leylin asked in a solemn tone, "Professor, regarding the recalling of the acolytes to the academy....."

Why he did not ask the academy directly was, naturally, because he was afraid that it would be a trap. It may have very well been that the chairman of the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy had some other plans, and might be prepared to sacrifice a bunch of acolytes.

"...." Kroft remained silent on the other side of the communication spell, before finally speaking again some time later.

"The recall of acolytes, this time, had indeed been approved by the chairman and board of directors. I can assure you that there is no lie in the recall, but...."

Leylin hesitated and held his breath, afraid to disturb his mentor.

“Originally, if you were still a level 2 acolyte, I would most likely have not approved of you returning to the academy. However, now that you are a level 3 acolyte, things are different. Let me ask you, do you wish to advance to an official Magus?”

Kroft asked suddenly.

“A rank 1 Magus. It is often the starting point for a Magus who pursues the truth. I definitely want to advance!” Leylin’s voice was low.

“If that is the case, then come back! When you’re here, I’ll tell you everything! There isn’t much time now....” The pink ear shuddered and exploded immediately, turning into a huge cloud of smoke as it dissipated into the air.

In the empty cave, Kroft’s voice finally resounded one last time, “Heed my words! This opportunity is extremely rare but is also accompanied by danger. If you wish to walk further down the path of a Magus, then hurry back!”

Leylin looked at the gradually disappearing smoke and muttered to himself.

Through the long distance communication with Kroft today, although time was short, Leylin was able to understand the circumstances within the academy.

From this, he knew that the Abyssal Bone Forest Academy had indeed extricated itself from danger but the war seemed to still be ongoing. This was why the academy forcefully recalled its acolytes back.

Moreover, opportunities often came hand in hand with risks. Looking at Kroft's opinion, it seemed that plenty of opportunities would await him if he returned. It even related to the advancement that Leylin would have to undergo in the future.

“An official Magus!”

Leylin walked towards the entrance of the cave, and looked at the downcast sky and pitter-patter sounds of the downpour, letting out a sigh.

These few days, apart from making haste, he did nothing else but to go to a few magician markets to have a look. However, no matter how many magic crystals he was willing to part with, the market never contained any information pertaining to the advancement of an official Magus. Moreover, no one even sold a method of obtaining such information.

Looking at it, it seemed as though a large, invisible hand had directly hauled all of the information regarding official Magi away, not letting anyone else know of it.

“To be able to monopolise the information to such an extent, it must be supported by, at least, a majority of magicians within the large organisations and factions in the south coast....”