

The First Order

- Chapter 1111 – 1120

Chapter 1111: Spying

On the first night after the trade caravan set off from York County, the vice president of the York County Chamber of Commerce, who was in charge of the entire expedition, organized everyone to set up camp.

Ren Xiaosu realized these people were quite particular when it came to setting up camp. The horse-drawn carriages were parked in a circle around the campsite, and they even used suitcases as wheel chocks for them.

In just a short while, a variety of horse-drawn carriages were placed on the perimeter of the camp, forming a wall.

“How professional,” Ren Xiaosu praised, standing next to Melgor. “What does that vice president do? Why is he so professional?”

In Ren Xiaosu’s opinion, it would be very difficult for bandits to charge into the camp with a wall like this. This was especially true as Ren Xiaosu saw that the Chamber of Commerce’s members were armed with bows. In a civilian population that could not arm themselves with firearms and explosives, they would have no problem fending off four or five times the number of enemies.

“The vice president is a retired veteran who used to hold quite a high rank in the royal army,” Melgor explained, “Actually, he has no knowledge in business. The reason why the Chamber of Commerce gave him the position of vice president and offered him a large salary was because they valued his ability in organizing such trade expeditions. He’s the person who leads basically all of the large trade caravans in York County.”

“That’s why he’s not in charge of business discussions and just needs to lead the trade caravan’s guards?” Ren Xiaosu nodded and said, “No wonder he doesn’t look like a businessman. A vice president of the Chamber of Commerce who’s always carrying a bow on his back and has a broadsword on his hip is a really weird sight. Let’s put it this way. Look at the surrounding horse-drawn carriages. The alternating short and tall horse-carriages are well-spaced. The guards in his trade caravan all look energetic and never relax while they’re standing guard. This shows that that person is really good at leading troops into battle.”

“Sir, you flatter me.”

‘As Ren Xiaosu was praising the vice president, a nearby voice suddenly thanked him.

Melgor turned around and was surprised to see Qian Weining, the vice president of the Chamber of Commerce, standing next to them.

Ren Xiaosu asked, “Is the route to Ghent City so fraught with danger? You hafta be this cautious?”

“Sir, aren’t you also from the Kingdom of Sorcerers? Why would you ask such a question?” Qian Weining smiled. “There’s a dozen mountain ranges controlled by bandits along the way to the north. Moreover, this estimate was from four months ago. Now that four months have passed, there might be even more of them. I don’t know why, but they seem to be suddenly increasing in numbers.”

“Does no one do anything about it?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“Those bandits are all seasoned veterans. Unless the lord sorcerers personally take care of them, no one can stop them. But the lord sorcerers... haha, Lord Melgor, I’m not criticizing you. I know you. You’re a good person,” Qian Weining said.

‘With that, Ren Xiaosu understood the nation of sorcerers was on the verge of collapse. Coupled with the drought last year, all of the residents were unable to pay their taxes.

Right now, they only had two choices left. They could occupy a mountain and reign over the surroundings, and even if they were surrounded later, they could still live happily for a while. Otherwise, they could just go to prison and suffer for not paying their taxes.

Qian Weining said, “But Lord Melgor, don’t worry. With you leading the trade caravan, everything will definitely be fine.”

Melgor smiled and said, “Mhm, if the bandits really attack, I’ll take care of them.”

Ren Xiaosu thought to himself that the people in the Kingdom of Sorcerers had really praised the sorcerers to high heaven. Melgor was acting as though he did not know what he was truly capable of.

With Melgor’s Wind Bind and Earth Bind spells, he could at most control four or five bandits if they came. If several hundred of them were to charge together, he would still get hacked to death, even though he was a sorcerer.

At this moment, dozens of campfires had been lit. Hundreds of people were around their own campfires, and some of the youth were even singing and dancing.

The women held up their fluffy skirts and linked arms with the men as they danced a dance Ren Xiaosu had never seen before.

Qian Weining had someone bring over the food that had been prepared. Ren Xiaosu looked around as he ate. He was surprised to find that the middle-aged woman he had

encountered earlier in the day did not seem to have gotten out of her carriage and had remained inside.

He looked over to the carriage and saw the window curtain had been lifted a little. It looked like someone was secretly sizing him up from behind it.

When Ren Xiaosu looked over, whoever was behind the curtain quickly lowered it.

In the carriage, the young sorceress lowered her voice and said, "Aunt, that guy seems to have noticed me."

"The woman said, "Were you spying on him?"

"Mhm." The sorceress muttered, "I wanted to watch him, but when his gaze swept over, I felt like I was spotted."

"The woman thought for a moment and pulled open the curtain. She smiled at Ren Xiaosu and waved at him. It even seemed like she was inviting him into the carriage.

Immediately, Ren Xiaosu shifted his gaze away.

"The middle-aged woman said to the young sorceress, "He's more than meets the eye. We can't be sure if he's already started to suspect us, so you should stop spying on him."

"OK," An'an answered.

In the dead of the night, the sound of horses trotting suddenly came from outside the perimeter of carriages.

A lot of people were jolted awake. Before they could figure out what was going on, they heard a whooshing sound above them. Then a fletched arrow landed in the middle of the camp.

Someone screamed, "Bandits! Bandits!"

Qian Weining, who was sleeping, jumped off the ground and shouted at the trade caravan's guards, "Follow me!"

"The bandits were approaching from the east, which happened to be where Ren Xiaosu, Melgor, and the sheeple were at. They watched Qian Weining quickly assemble his men and use the carriage windows as battlements to fire back.

Melgor was a little flustered. Although he was a sorcerer, he had never experienced a battle like this before. One after another, arrows kept flying in, but it was impossible to get a clear sight of them in the dark.

Everyone looked for cover to hide behind while Ren Xiaosu grabbed Melgor and quickly moved off from where they were.

During this time, Melgor was a little surprised to discover that when arrows flew over on two occasions and should have hit them based on their trajectory, Ren Xiaosu seemed to have unintentionally dodged them each time.

Although they looked a little pathetic while running away, it didn't really matter as long as they were still alive.

Melgor did not know that someone was secretly watching everything from the window of a carriage in the distance.

Although her aunt had instructed her not to spy on Ren Xiaosu anymore, An'an could not help but look at where he was the moment the bandits arrived. She wanted to see how he would deal with them. Perhaps she could find out more about him during the chaos.

However, Ren Xiaosu's reaction disappointed her.

An'an muttered, "Why'd he just run the moment the bandits showed up?"

Her aunt glanced at her. "This is what a smart person does. If you encounter a hail of arrows in the future, remember to find a spot to hide.."

Chapter 1112: Excellent archery!

"Why aren't you panicking?" Melgor asked, looking at Ren Xiaosu.

Ren Xiaosu said, "Wait here for a while. I'll take those two sheeple somewhere safe."

With that, Ren Xiaosu ran back into the hail of arrows. Shortly after, he dragged the two servants over, with Mox and his men following behind.

Mox was the knight commander assigned to protect Melgor by the Li clan. He was accompanied by 35 knights.

Logically speaking, they should also be quite strong in combat. However, they were pinned down by the bandits' volley of arrows. As the bow was a prohibited weapon, even an organization like the Chamber of Commerce was only permitted to arm themselves with 60 bows.

Mox said to Ren Xiaosu and Melgor, "Sirs, let's take refuge here. Please don't try to be a hero! Especially Lord Melgor! If anything happens to you, my job's at stake."

Melgor frowned and said, "That won't do. As a sorcerer, how can I hide in cowardice when the trade caravan is besieged by the bandits?"

Ren Xiaosu pulled Melgor aside and whispered, "Aren't you overestimating yourself? Do you think you can block those arrows? Stay here quietly. Everything will be fine soon."

Although Mox and his men could not hear what Ren Xiaosu was saying from a short distance away, they somehow felt that his body language when speaking to Lord Melgor was a little strange.

Mox asked Li Chengguo, "Young Master, does Lord Melgor's steward usually speak so rudely to him, or is it only this time?"

Li Chengguo, who was hiding in the corner, replied, "Don't fuss over nothing. He's always like this."

Melgor still did not let go of his curiosity. He asked again in a whisper, "Ren Xiaosu, are you not even a little scared?"

"What's there to be scared of?" Ren Xiaosu glanced at him. "It's only a bunch of bandits. It's just that I can't take any action now. If I could, the bandits would all be dead within a minute."

Melgor lamented, "You're the biggest blowhard I've ever met. You're so good at it that you've even convinced yourself."

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After Melgor and the sheeple got the impression that Ren Xiaosu was someone who liked boasting, they assumed everything he said was just braggadocio. Their impression was not going to change until they were presented with ironclad proof that he was not one.

But what kinds of situations had Ren Xiaosu been in? On the battlefield, he had dealt with bombardments from firearms and explosives, such as mortar shelling, thermobaric bombs, RPGs, and most commonly, heavy machine gun fire.

Comparing bows and arrows to those weapons, Ren Xiaosu felt like he was dealing with a bunch of amateurs since arriving in the Kingdom of Sorcerers.

It was too easy. In fact, this form of battle hardly even interested him.

'The roars of the bandits came from outside the carriage walls' perimeter. As arrows flew in nonstop at them, Ren Xiaosu suddenly said to Melgor, "These bandits are probably here for you."

"Me?" Melgor said in disbelief, "How can that be?"

“If you were killed in the city, it would provoke the anger of the entire magus order. But by having bandits kill you, it would be too easy for an archmage to silence all of them after you were taken out.” Ren Xiaosu said, “Then everyone would just blame your death on the world for being too chaotic, but no one would get suspicious. Think about it. This place is only half a day away from York County. Most bandits normally don’t choose to make a move somewhere so close to the city.”

Lowering his head, Melgor started pondering this.

Ren Xiaosu continued, “Since the Tudor family is so powerful, it’s so easy for them to instigate or threaten the bandits to kill you. Just look, they’ve been shooting arrows at us for quite some time. Why would a group of bandits have so many arrows? And they’re even high-quality fletched arrows! If it’s really as I’ve guessed, you’ll have to be much more careful. Qian Weining also mentioned that there’s more than a dozen bands of bandits scattered along the way to the north, and I wouldn’t be surprised if there’s elite troops disguised as bandits either.”

“Then why don’t we head back...” Melgor stared hopefully at Ren Xiaosu. Ren Xiaosu shook his head. “You’re getting cold feet already? With me around, what’s there to be afraid of?”

“You saying that makes me even more afraid!” Melgor said in a serious tone.

An’an and the middle-aged woman were quietly watching the battle outside through the carriage window. An’an said, “Aunt, should I take care of those bandits?”

“What for?” The middle-aged woman shook her head. “Those people are all outlaws, so you might not be able to escape unscathed under their arrow fire. I think the Chamber of Commerce’s vice president is competent and tough enough, so he should be able to deal with the situation.”

An’an involuntarily turned her gaze over to Ren Xiaosu and muttered, “He’s clearly very skilled, but he ended up hiding like a coward. When he chased after me that night, I thought he was really brave.”

While they were talking, a shadowy figure quickly approached the bandits in the wilderness.

As the shadowy figure ran, it trampled the mud on the ground and splattered it all around, exuding a very powerful aura.

The bandits knew nothing about the impending danger as they released their arrows to suppress the trade caravan while avoiding their return fire.

Every bandit was equipped with three full quivers of arrows that they fired like it didn’t cost a thing. Meanwhile, there was no effective way for the trade caravan to take out the

bandits due to poor visibility at night. As a result, the trade caravan's arrow supply dwindled, but only a few of the bandits got killed.

Soon after, when the shadowy figure was about to close in on a group of bandits riding on horseback, one of them discovered it. "Who's there?"

White Mask was like an apparition in the darkness.

Just as he finished speaking, the white-masked "Old Xu" picked up two fallen arrows from the ground and threw them with its bare hands!

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The arrows flew like lightning and struck a bandit, forcefully knocking him off his horse!

Old Xu sprinted forward. Even though it was moving extremely fast, it continued picking up arrows that were stuck in the ground. When it came to the front of a bandit's horse, the bandit wanted to switch from his bow to using his saber instead, but Old Xu gave him no chance to do that.

In the blink of an eye, Old Xu leaped up and swept past the bandit's side, stabbing an arrow in its hand ruthlessly into the bandit's forehead.

In just ten seconds, the formation of the bandits was broken up by Old Xu.

The trade caravan's guards within the "walls" carried on nocking their bows. Although they did not have a clear view of the situation outside, they could not stop firing back at their enemy. If they did not hold off the bandits and maintain a buffer between them, they would probably all die once the bandits broke through the perimeter.

Gradually, the vice president, Qian Weining, heard a constant howl from the bandits. Their screams sounded shrill and horrified.

Qian Weining was a little puzzled. Did the bandits all get hit by his arrows? But he clearly felt that he had not landed any shots.

He was a little unsure since he was in total darkness.

Hearing the screams outside the perimeter gradually coming to a stop, everyone in the trade caravan was encouraged when they didn't see any more arrows flying in from outside. Ren Xiaosu took the lead and started clapping. "Vice President Qian, excellent archery!"

suddenly, thunderous applause sounded from the inside of the carriage walls, leaving Qian Weining totally dumbfounded.

Chapter 1113: Causing defections

Everyone was sleeping soundly in the middle of the night when the group of bandits suddenly arrived on horseback and sent a hail of arrows raining down from the night sky.

Just the first wave of arrows killed more than a dozen people, with several more dozen casualties happening in the aftermath. Was this a situation normal people were used to?

In the chaos, someone had suddenly stepped forward and killed the bandits one by one with his precise and overpowering shots, so how could everyone not applaud this? Everyone stood up and started applauding, following Ren Xiaosu's lead. As they clapped, they smiled at Qian Weining to express their gratitude.

Ren Xiaosu said, "When I heard that Vice President Qian was appointed the vice president of the York County Chamber of Commerce due to his strength, I couldn't believe it at first. But Vice President Qian has now proven just how capable he is! With you protecting us, we feel much safer on our journey north!"

A middle-aged woman dressed rather expensively echoed, "That's right, thank you for protecting us, Vice President Qian!"

All of a sudden, Qian Weining had somehow become the hero of the trade caravan. This left him at a loss.

'When Qian Weining looked at the faces staring at him in admiration, his mouth remained agape for a long time, and he couldn't say a word in response.

First of all, he was unsure if he had hit any of the bandits with his arrows, but it appeared that they were really dead. Second, who didn't enjoy being admired?

Qian Weining gave an awkward laugh and said, "It's probably just a coincidence. Actually, I'm not really that good at archery."

The applause had slowly subsided. However, Ren Xiaosu started clapping harder again. "Not only is Vice President Qian strong, but he's modest as well. What a rare guy!"

The applause went wild again!

With that, Qian Weining did not say any more. At some point, he even felt the bandits might really have died to his precise archery.

A distance away, An'an wondered inside the carriage, "Aunt, is Vice President Qian really that good at archery?"

“It looks like he is.” The middle-aged woman said, “Judging from the horse trots I heard, there were at least 50 bandits who came this time. He’s really impressive for being able to kill them all so quickly. Actually, I didn’t have many expectations when I saw him drawing his bow and firing even though he’s an experienced archer. He didn’t seem like he had much strength. But it turns out I underestimated him.”

An’an nodded. “There’s many talented people hiding in plain sight, indeed. Let’s have Little Cheng go with the guards and check on the bandits’ corpses later to see how accurate his shots were.”

Meanwhile, Melgor whispered to Ren Xiaosu, “Since Vice President Qian is so good at archery, does that mean we won’t have to return to York County?” Ren Xiaosu raised an eyebrow. “Why? You no longer scared?”

“We have to head to Ghent City sooner or later, anyway. It’ll be better to have an expert like him escort us north than turn back and wait to die. Melgor said, “By the way, you were probably a practitioner of martial arts in the Central Plains, right? Have you learned archery before? Why don’t I borrow a bow for you from Vice President Qian?”

Ren Xiaosu shook his head. “I’ve never learned it before, so I don’t know how to use one.”

When Melgor heard this, he even felt a little disdainful of Ren Xiaosu. “You didn’t even learn archery?! Look at how skilled Vice President Qian is at killing enemies over long range. Aren’t you envious?”

“No.” Ren Xiaosu shook his head. “There’s really nothing to be envious about.”

“You just don’t want to admit it.” Melgor curled his lips and said, “Alright, I’ll borrow a set of bow and arrows for you to practice with. Otherwise, it would be a huge waste of your immense strength!”

After that, Melgor went to look for Qian Weining.

Ren Xiaosu was puzzled. Was there a point in learning archery? Wouldn’t he be better off using an automatic rifle? Or was his black sniper rifle not good enough?

No matter how lethal bows and arrows were, they were just a primitive weapon. In the era of firearms and explosives in the Central Plains, who would still need to use bows?!

Therefore, it was not that Ren Xiaosu did not want to learn archery, but that there was really no point in learning it!

After a while, Melgor came back with a longbow and a quiver of fletched arrows and handed them to Ren Xiaosu. “Give it a try.”

Ren Xiaosu glanced at the bow in Melgor's hand. It was a self bow! that wasn't complicated to make.

Ren Xiaosu reluctantly took the longbow from him. He mimicked the way Vice President Qian handled the bow and gently pulled the bowstring back. With just a light pull, he was able to bring it to a full draw.

He was being so gentle because he was worried he would break the bow. How could this weapon withstand the strength of a superhuman from the Central Plains?

Ren Xiaosu let go of the bowstring and nocked a fletched arrow on it before shooting it at a campfire. However, the arrow landed more than two meters away from its target.

Melgor lamented, "So you really don't know how to use a bow. You couldn't even hit a campfire that was five meters away."

From his tone, it sounded like Melgor loathed Ren Xiaosu's skill in archery.

Ren Xiaosu curled his lips and pushed the longbow back into Melgor's arms. "I already said that I don't know archery, yet you still insisted that I try it out. Don't worry, I won't even bother using something like that when I'm killing enemies. It'll only hinder me!" Melgor said resentfully, "Will you die if you stop bragging?! If you don't know how to use it, just say so. Why are you talking down the bow?!"

"If you're so capable, get me a gun." Ren Xiaosu leisurely sat down at the campfire. "Everyone in the Central Plains carries firearms. Who still uses bows and arrows?"

"Firearms are only one-shot weapons and take too long to reload, so they might not necessarily be as effective as the bow," Melgor said.

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. He could deduce where the level of firearms technology in the Kingdom of Sorcerers had stopped solely based on Melgor's remark.

During their exchange, the sorceress was sneaking glances at Ren Xiaosu from inside her carriage. Although her aunt had repeatedly emphasized to her not to spy on that young man anymore, she couldn't help it.

'When she saw Ren Xiaosu bringing the bowstring to a full draw in an instant, she tugged on the middle-aged woman's sleeve and exclaimed, "Aunt, look! That kid's strength is enormous!"

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'The middle-aged woman had a look and analyzed, "To be able to draw the longbow so easily, that kid probably has a muscle strength of over a 100 kilograms in each arm. It seems like he's blessed with great strength."

“No wonder he could catch up to me that night. So it turns out he’s that physically strong.” An’an muttered, “But look, Aunt, his archery is totally not up to the mark.”

“No, it’s not like that.” The middle-aged woman shook her head. “He doesn’t even know archery at all. Look at how he holds the bow. It’s completely wrong.”

“That young man probably didn’t come out of the royal army.” An’an said firmly, “Everyone in the army is trained in archery, so it’s impossible that someone from there would be so amateurish.”

“Maybe he’s only blessed with great strength but has never undergone any form of systematic training before?” The middle-aged woman said with some regret, “What a pity for that great strength of his. Those who haven’t undergone any training can at most utilize 50% of their strength. It’s really such a pity.”

The middle-aged woman emphasized the word “pity” twice as she really felt it was a waste.

“Aunt, since that kid was never in the royal army and has no relation to the sorcerer clans, do you think we can persuade him to join us?” An’an said curiously.

The middle-aged woman smiled and said, “I knew you would ask this, but you should understand that we have to find out everything about him if we want him to join us.”

“Then let’s continue observing him along the way,” An’an said.

The middle-aged woman thought for a moment and answered, “Alright.”

Chapter 1114 If you have to ask, it was destiny

There were no longer any signs of activity from the bandits beyond the perimeter, but those who were within the carriage walls were still a little worried. They wanted to check on the situation on the outside.

In such times, keeping guard on the inside of the perimeter was absolutely pointless. Surely they weren’t going to remain on the defensive here for the next ten days, right?

Qian Weining considered it for a moment before ordering the trade caravan’s guards to pick up the arrows scattered around the camp. These arrows were the ones the bandits had fired over.

After they were done collecting them, those that were still intact could be reused as spares, while those that were damaged would have their arrowheads removed and the shafts used as kindling.

“Vice President Qian, there’s something odd about these arrows,” a guard muttered.

“What’s the matter?” Qian Weining turned around to look.

“Look, the ends of the fletching are very neat and tidy. We’ve all served in the royal army before. This is what arrows look like when they first come out of the workshop, right?” the guard said in a low voice.

He was referring to new arrows that were just drawn from the supply division. The feathers at the end of such arrows were pure white and had straight shafts fitted with brand new arrowheads.

Under normal circumstances, it would be great if the bandits got to use improvised arrows since not many of them had access to metal arrowheads.

Not only were the bandits who attacked them tonight using the finest quality fletched arrows, but the arrows also looked like they had just left the workshop. This made the guard suspect that something was not right.

Qian Weining took the fletched arrow from him and checked it carefully. Then he said in a low voice, “Don’t tell anyone, lest it causes panic.”

“Yes, sir,” the guard said. As they all used to serve in the royal army, they knew the purpose of such a gag order. The royal army was just the general name for the monarch’s troops in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. It did not mean they were troops who only guarded the capital. There were nine main armies in the Kingdom of Sorcerers, and they were all together known as the royal army.

In the Kingdom of Sorcerers, only a small number of troops were bestowed with special designations. For example, the sorcerer clans’ Knights of Radiance, Knights of the Inferno, et cetera. Every sorcerer clan had its own troops. For example, the House of Tudor’s troops were simply known as the Knights of Tudor.

A long time ago, the designation of “Royal Army” was synonymous with superior combat capability in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. But things were different now. Everyone knew the knights of the sorcerer clans were the most elite troops around. “Vice President Qian.” The guard said in a low voice, “There aren’t any royal troops garrisoned nearby. Could it be that one of the sorcerer clans’ knights impersonated the bandits?”

“No,” Qian Weining said.

Qian Weining recalled that there wasn’t really much strength in the arrows fired over by the bandits. He had come across many skilled archers in the military, and it was even possible that an iron arrow shot by such archers could pierce a carriage. Therefore, even though they knew there was a problem with the arrows, Qian Weining was quite sure they had been loosed by real bandits.

It looked like someone was making use of the bandits to stop them from journeying northwards.

Qian Weining instinctively glanced at Melgor and wondered if the bandits could be here for the lord sorcerer.

“Go retrieve your leather armor.” Qian Weining said to the guards, “I want everyone to wear their armor and follow me.”

With that, the guards of the caravan put on their brown leather armor and strapped a dagger to their thigh. After preparations were made, they slowly made their way out of the carriage wall perimeter.

Suddenly, a young man said, “If anyone still has strength left, let’s go together with Vice President Qian. We can’t simply let him and the troops risk their lives for us. If they get ambushed by the bandits, we can still provide some cover for them.” Then the young man took the lead and followed the caravan’s guards. Several other young men followed suit. Ren Xiaosu examined that young man. He was wearing a simple cotton shirt that was starting to yellow from washing. He was also wearing a pair of suspenders a commoner would usually wear.

However, the high-top leather boots he had on caught Ren Xiaosu’s attention. The boots looked very sturdy and did not look like something normal people would wear.

Moreover, Ren Xiaosu was sure he had not seen him before now.

After all, he had gone around the caravan twice during the day. The young man’s appearance stood out with his sharp eyebrows and bright eyes, so if Ren Xiaosu had seen him before, it would be impossible not to have any impression of him. Even if his memory was not as good as Wang Yun’s, he would not forget a person like this.

Therefore, the other party must have been hiding in the carriage during the day. And the only carriage that remained shut belonged to that suspicious woman.

Ren Xiaosu had a rough idea of what was going on. As such, he followed the caravan guards and walked out of the carriage wall perimeter.

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The group slowly made their way into the darkness with the guards leading the way. Everyone was holding their broadswords on their hips, ready to spring into battle at any moment.

Ren Xiaosu was not particularly nervous because he knew there were no more threats outside. But as he followed slowly, the young man who led the volunteers suddenly spoke to him. “Hello, my name is Chen Cheng. What about you?”

Ren Xiaosu replied with a smile, "My name is Ren Xiaosu."

"Mhm, pleasure to meet you." Chen Cheng's smile was bright and dazzling. If it were any other person who interacted with him, they would probably have an immediate good impression of him.

However, Ren Xiaosu was different. The moment the other party opened his mouth, he immediately understood. Oh, so it turned out this person had a motive for getting close to him.

Who would have the free time to try to get close to him? Ren Xiaosu could roughly guess who was hiding in that carriage. Chen Cheng, the middle-aged woman, and the young sorceress, An'an, were all extraordinary people. In the past, they could even avoid the magus order's tracking by changing their identities and concealing their whereabouts. Therefore, they felt it should not be a problem for them to deal with a minor individual like Ren Xiaosu.

But in terms of combat experience, there might not be anyone in the entire Kingdom of Sorcerers who was more experienced than Ren Xiaosu.

Ren Xiaosu did not say anything more to Chen Cheng. He was sure Chen Cheng would try to talk to him again.

Gradually, the group found their way to where the bandits' corpses were lying. When they saw the tragic state of those bandits, they gasped.

Other than a few bandits who were struck by arrows in their chests, the rest had an arrow sticking straight out of their forehead between the eyes!

Immediately, everyone looked at Qian Weining in silence. This caused Qian Weining to feel a little uncomfortable. "Why are you all looking at me?"

A guard said with a laugh, "Vice President Qian, we know where our capabilities lie. It'd be good enough if we managed to hit anyone in the dark. So we're sure we didn't kill most of these bandits."

"Yeah, and since it's not us, it must be you!" Ren Xiaosu applauded and praised, "Vice President Qian, your archery is amazing. Every shot that you fired landed straight in the center of their foreheads. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to call you a sharpshooter."

Qian Weining was dumbfounded. In his mind, he was quite sure he was not the one who landed these shots. But who else could it be? Furthermore, these arrows did belong to the York County Chamber of Commerce. The feather fletching clearly identified them as such.

Qian Weining hesitated for a long time. Then he finally said with an awkward laugh, "Ahem, I just got lucky, that's all."

"How could that be just luck?" Ren Xiaosu earnestly corrected him, "It's not right for you to continue acting so humbly. Being overly humble is really just another form of pride!"

On this ordinary day, the title of Greatest Sharpshooter in York County was created.

Ren Xiaosu remembered reading in a book that there was an ancient high-ranking official who was a keen angler. However, his fishing skills were not that great.

One time, his colleagues and he agreed to have a fishing competition. As such, he arranged for his subordinates, who were extremely good at swimming, to dive underwater and secretly hook fish on the end of his line. In just one day, he caught more fish than all of his colleagues combined. In an instant, his reputation skyrocketed, and he was even respectfully addressed as the Master Angler by his colleagues.

The Master Angler and Greatest Sharpshooter titles were almost of the same caliber. The only difference was that the Master Angler knew how he got his nickname while the Greatest Sharpshooter, Qian Weining, believed it to be the arrangement of fate.

Chapter 1115 Mutual inquest

With the trade caravan guards, Qian Weining collected the longbows and arrows the bandits had brought with them. "Bring everything back. Remove their leather armor as well. We can still put them to use with some cleaning after we get back."

He held a bandit's longbow and drew the bowstring twice. As soon as he did that, he realized it was even better than the ones issued by their own Chamber of Commerce!

This made Qian Weining feel that something was amiss. What bandits would have access to such high-quality bows?

Something was not right! However, Qian Weining did not make a fuss about it. Instead, he had the caravan guards equip themselves with the better quality bows. On the way back, he said to one of the guards, "Chen Lin, when we get back, check with the other merchants regarding the guards they brought with them. Distribute a set of bow and arrows to whoever is good at using them."

The guard was stunned. "Vice President Qian, we might get castigated for distributing bows and arrows without authorization. These are prohibited weapons."

"One more person equipped with a bow means an extra person fighting on our side." Qian Weining whispered, "I'm afraid that it won't be peaceful on the route north. Do you want to die, or do you want to obey the rules? Don't worry, I'll speak with President Li when we get back. He'll handle it for us." When Ren Xiaosu heard this from nearby, he

thought to himself that Qian Weining was really quite a talented individual. Just by looking at the bandits' weapons, he was able to conclude a lot of things. It was no wonder the York County Chamber of Commerce had chosen him as its vice president. It seemed like he was truly capable. Therefore, Ren Xiaosu seriously contemplated if he should also abduct this person to the Prosperous Northwest.

However, talents like him were not urgently needed by the Northwest. After all, the modes the two sides did battle in were completely different. If he were to abduct Qian Weining to the Prosperous Northwest, it might take a long time for him to adapt to the way the Northwest fought.

Moreover, it seemed that Qian Weining was more suited to being a company commander in the short term. Whether or not he joined Fortress 178, it would not affect the overall situation of the Northwest by much.

Ren Xiaosu decided to put this thought aside for the time being and watch for a while longer.

When the group returned to the camp, many of those in the caravan stood up nervously at their campfires in salutation. Qian Weining said with a smile, "The bandits are already dead, so there's no need to worry. Additionally, does anyone from our caravan have experience in the bow? Please step forward if you do."

A guard looked at Ren Xiaosu. "Sir, do you want to take a longbow with you?"

"No." Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "With Vice President Qian's skills, what do I need a longbow for? That would be such a waste of arrows."

After that, he returned to his campfire.

To Ren Xiaosu's surprise, the young man named Chen Cheng followed him over. Melgor looked up and asked Ren Xiaosu, "And this is?"

Chen Cheng smiled and said, "I'm just a new friend of Brother Xiaosu's."

Ren Xiaosu shook his head. "Nope, don't know him."

Melgor was speechless.

Chen Cheng was speechless as well.

This time, it was the two servants who looked at Chen Cheng sympathetically. They thought to themselves, 'Of all people, you actually chose to be friends with him?!'

Chen Cheng was not discouraged. He sat down at the campfire as though he were already part of the group. "Your Excellency Lord Melgor, where are you guys heading on this trip?" Melgor replied with a smile, "We're heading north to Ghe-

Before he could finish speaking, Ren Xiaosu stomped on his foot. Melgor suddenly gasped and said, "Tss! We're going to Reese County!"

Reese County was situated along the way to Ghent City.

Ren Xiaosu glanced at Melgor and thought to himself what a sweet idiot he was. Why was he always so honest when talking with strangers? He had already confirmed there was something suspicious about Chen Cheng, so how could they tell him the truth about where they were going?

He wasn't afraid Chen Cheng would do anything to their group if he knew their whereabouts. It was just that Ren Xiaosu had already spoken with Melgor before setting off that they should not speak carelessly on this journey. If they were really serious about helping Melgor win his love back from the Tudor family, they would have to be extremely careful. Therefore, Ren Xiaosu was just trying to help him develop that habit now.

Chen Cheng was stunned by this sight. This was the first time he had seen a steward treating his own lord sorcerer like that.

More importantly, Melgor did not even seem too angered by that!

Ren Xiaosu turned to Chen Cheng and said with a smile, "And where are you heading?"

Chen Cheng answered, "I'm on the way to Ghent City."

Melgor smiled and said, "Oh, what a coincidence!"

Ren Xiaosu snapped, "... Are you dumb?!"

He decided to change the subject and interrogated Chen Cheng further. "Are you heading to Ghent City by yourself?" "Oh, no." Chen Cheng said with a smile, "There's me and my aunt. She had a short conversation with you in the carriage today. Have you forgotten?"

Telling 10% lies and 90% truth was the best strategy in deception. Chen Cheng had said that to hide An'an's whereabouts so Ren Xiaosu would not continue asking about who was in the carriage.

"Why are you going to Ghent City?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

“My aunt said we have some relatives there, so she’s thinking of going there to seek help from them.” Chen Cheng said with a yearning look, “They say Ghent City is extremely prosperous, and even the walls are built out of sandstone and look extremely exquisite. Someone also said that Ghent City never sleeps, so there’s many opportunities for young people there.” When Ren Xiaosu realized he could not get any answers from all the questioning, he casually took a leg of ham from the campfire and handed it to Chen Cheng. “It’s getting late. Lord Melgor needs to rest already, so take this back with you for your older sister. She hasn’t stepped out of the carriage for the entire day already.”

Chen Cheng was stunned by the words. Sweat broke out and beaded on his back.

“You’re really funny, sir. I don’t have an older sister,” Chen Cheng quickly said with a smile.

Ren Xiaosu hurriedly said apologetically, “Look at how forgetful I am. Sorry, I misspoke. I meant your aunt!”

Chen Cheng took the ham and thanked him before leaving. After hopping back into his carriage, he immediately parted the curtains a little and secretly checked the outside. However, he realized Ren Xiaosu was not looking at their carriage.

“Could he really have misspoken?” Chen Cheng wondered.

“What’s the matter?” the young sorceress, An’an, asked.

“Somehow, I feel like he’s already discovered us and even knows our identities, but I can’t be sure.” Chen Cheng related the conversation he had with Ren Xiaosu.

An’an said, “It could have been a slip of the tongue. Look, he doesn’t even know how to use a bow. Maybe all he has is that great strength of his.”

“I don’t think so.” The middle-aged woman refuted, “If he only had great strength, how could he possibly have discovered you sneaking into the Sorcerer’s Tower in the middle of the night? You should be more careful for the time being. He might really have realized something.”

“Then why didn’t he capture us?” An’an muttered, “Although it looks like there’s only the four of them, quite a number of the traders’ guards are actually protecting them in secret. If he gave the order, we would probably get attacked by several dozen people at the same time. So why didn’t he say anything if he realized something?”

“I’m not sure what his motives are either.” The woman was also puzzled. They could not even figure out whether Ren Xiaosu was friend or foe right now.

“Wait a minute.” An’an was stunned before saying, “This might have something to do with those words he mentioned previously. Riders! Ren He!”

The woman asked, “What were you saying before he mentioned those words?”

An’an recalled, “Only faith, the sun, and the moon are eternal.”

Chapter 1116 Ascertaining the situation

“Only faith, the sun, and the moon are eternal,” the middle-aged woman muttered. “Does this motto have any hidden meanings?” An’an asked.

The middle-aged woman suddenly said solemnly to An’an and Chen Cheng, “Remember, from today onwards, don’t ever provoke him again. Although I don’t know who he is, I suddenly feel that the reason you were able to escape unscathed that night was because he decided to let you go when he heard you say those words.”

“What makes you think he was the one that let me go?” An’an was puzzled. “I escaped with my own abilities!”

“Silly child.” The middle-aged woman said helplessly, “Just think about that person in the white mask. Those crossbow bolts even shattered when they hit him. Surely you can see that there’s a problem with him, right?”

“Alright.” An’an said softly, “But it’s White Mask who’s powerful, not that kid.”

“He might be trying to pass on some information related to himself to your father through you.” The woman said, “I’ve actually heard your father and grandfather mention the name Ren He before. Perhaps your father will understand everything once I tell him, so don’t go and provoke that kid for now, understand? Who knows, he might even be a relatively important person. Let’s wait until we get to Ghent City safely before we do anything.”

An’an muttered, “He looks really young, so how can he be anyone important?”

The middle-aged woman explained, “That motto was passed down in our organization from a very long time ago. I don’t know where it originated from, but I’ve always heard everyone mention it. Could he... really have some links to us?”

“Father didn’t mention the origins of that motto before?” An’an asked curiously.

“When I was young, I did ask your grandpa before. But he always told me the same thing.” The middle-aged woman pondered it for a moment. “His answer at that time was

that it was better for the girls at home not to know about these things.”

“Why? Does Grandpa still favor boys over girls?” An’an pursed her lips.

“That’s not it.” The middle-aged woman smiled and helped An’an straighten her hair. “At that time, he said girls shouldn’t have to know about such dangerous things. The magus order has a huge feud with us. As we haven’t accumulated enough strength to fight them yet, he thought it’d be better not to let us in on too many things.”

“I know we have a feud with the magus order. Why don’t I go and kill Melgor right now?” An’an said, “The Chamber of Commerce serves food to them daily. That Ren Xiaosu might not be easy to deal with, but we can poison him through the Chamber of Commerce without anyone finding out.”

An’an’s full name was Chen Shen’an. They had been taught since childhood that they had to be wary of all sorcerers and learn to question every word they said. Because every word the dirty sorcerers said was a lie.

The middle-aged woman shook her head. “Sorcerers like Melgor are a little different. The so-called Children of Heaven are just poor souls controlled by the magus order. In my opinion, if you don’t do evil and wreck an entire county, you’re actually no different from a normal person. On another note, your act of arson that day to distract attention from yourself was wrong too. You should avoid doing such things in the future.”

“But I was fleeing for my life. Besides, the people in York County who can own horses are definitely very rich, and none of those rich families are good people,” An’an said angrily.

The middle-aged woman suddenly sat up straight. “An’an, you cannot look at the world this way. Life isn’t simply black or white. Are the poor definitely good? Must the rich all be bad people? If only the world were really that simple. You have to understand that we only perform meaningful deeds and do not do things based on our own preferences.”

The middle-aged woman continued, “You and Little Cheng are still young, so it’s normal that your attitudes are extreme and rebellious. But you have to understand one thing. Only by judging people without any bias can you become someone like your father.”

An’an lowered her head. “OK, Aunt, but what can I do now? The stable has already burned down.”

“Before we left York County, I placed ten gold coins under a pillow at their place. I believe they’ve already discovered it.” When the woman saw that An’an had taken her advice to heart, she heaved a sigh of relief. “But compensation is just compensation. If the owner of that family had feelings for their horses, you couldn’t recompense an intangible thing like that. Feelings are priceless.”

Curious, An’an asked, “What if I was only able to save myself by hurting others while escaping? What should I do then?”

The middle-aged woman thought for a moment and replied, “In that situation, it’s better to hurt others than get hurt yourself.”

The sorceress, An’an, was stunned. “Aunt, why is it different from your earlier advice?”

The middle-aged woman said helplessly, “That’s the complexity of the world, I guess.”

“By the way,” Chen Cheng suddenly said from next to them, “that young man called Ren Xiaosu treats Melgor as he pleases. Just now, Melgor was about to reveal they were heading to Ghent City, but Ren Xiaosu stepped on his foot.”

“Mhm.” The middle-aged woman nodded. “It’s good enough that we’ve identified him as someone special. Let’s keep that a secret for now and talk about it after we arrive in Ghent City. When the time comes, we can relay all of this info to your father. We’ll get an answer then.”

“We still have a long way to go before we get to Ghent City.” Chen Cheng said, “Why don’t I go and ascertain the situation further?”

“It’s better that you don’t go and find Ren Xiaosu anymore. You’re not his match when it comes to probing others for facts,” the woman said.

“Then I’ll start with Sorcerer Melgor and his two other servants. Those three don’t look too smart,” Chen Cheng said.

The middle-aged woman thought for a moment and said, “I guess that’s fine.”

An’an asked with a sparkle in her eyes, “Will we get to see Big Sis Summer on our trip to Ghent City this time?”

“Mhm, she’ll be there as well,” the middle-aged woman replied with a smile.

“Awesome,” An’an said with a smile.

The next day, the trade caravan set off early in the morning. Unlike the previous day, the caravan guards were much more alert. They all rode on their horses to patrol the front and rear of the caravan, and Qian Weining even sent out two men to act as scouts in case they got ambushed by bandits.

Seeing that Qian Weining had deployed all the guards in an orderly fashion, Ren Xiaosu was even more tempted to bring him to join the Prosperous Northwest. Although he would only be a company-level officer, Ren Xiaosu could not be too picky since the Northwest was still a rising power.

In any case, Ren Xiaosu had already made up his mind to abduct several hundred thousand people, so one more person wouldn't make a difference. During this time, Chen Cheng took advantage of Ren Xiaosu's busy schedule to quickly become acquainted with the sheeple, Li Chengguo and Liu Ting.

Li Chengguo and Liu Ting were from well-off families, but Chen Cheng was a smart young man. He fooled the two sheeple easily with his extensive travel experiences, with both of them hanging out with Chen Cheng all day long to listen to his stories.

It only took a while before Chen Cheng was shocked to learn from the sheeple that the young man named Ren Xiaosu was not a local citizen of the Kingdom of Sorcerers..

Chapter 1117 Oppressing the good

"So you're telling me that he's not from the Kingdom of Sorcerers?" Chen Cheng found it a little unbelievable. "Then where's he from?"

"Where else?" Li Chengguo muttered, "Fortress 178, of course."

Chen Cheng looked very interested. "I've never been to Fortress 178 before. Quick, tell me what happened."

As such, Li Chengguo told him about how the two of them had discovered Ren Xiaosu's whereabouts before Melgor restrained him with the Earth Bind spell. Chen Cheng was surprised. "So he was actually taken captive to the Kingdom of Sorcerers by Lord Melgor? But he doesn't look like a captive to me? And he's not particularly polite to Lord Melgor either."

Logically, since Ren Xiaosu was a captive, his status should be very low. So how did the tables turn and make him look like he was the boss now?!

Li Chengguo and Liu Ting thought back on everything for a long time before saying with a sigh, "Actually, we can't figure out what went wrong either...."

To be honest, they really did not know where it had gone wrong. Ren Xiaosu had become the authoritative voice in their group, and even Sorcerer Melgor would subconsciously listen to Ren Xiaosu's suggestions.

Chen Cheng mentally took note of what they said. He felt this should be considered very important information.

Ren Xiaosu came from the Central Plains, yet he was extremely interested in the traditional motto of their organization.

The young man named Ren Xiaosu might just prove to be very important to their organization. “By the way, what hobbies does Ren Xiaosu have?” Chen Cheng asked with a smile.

Liu Ting said expressionlessly, “He enjoys oppressing the good!”

Chen Cheng felt his chest tightening. Their organization did not like such people at all. “Be more specific, in what way does he oppress the good? Who does he oppress?”. Liu Ting pointed at Li Chengguo first, then at himself. “Mainly the two of us.”

Chen Cheng’s mouth twitched. “Interesting...”

Just as he was about to ask more questions, Ren Xiaosu’s voice rang out behind Chen Cheng. “What are y’all chatting so happily about?”

Chen Cheng turned around and saw Ren Xiaosu looking at him with a smile. There was clearly nothing wrong with that smile, but sweat again beaded on Chen Cheng’s back. “Ahem, nothing much. I’ll be going now.”

When he returned to his own carriage, the middle-aged woman was dismantling and cleaning her crossbow. “What’s the matter? Why do you look so flustered?”

Chen Cheng said in a low voice, “Aunt, Ren Xiaosu came from the Central Plains. He was brought here as a prisoner by Melgor.”

The middle-aged woman was taken aback. “The Central Plains?”

“Yes, does our organization have any links to the Central Plains?” Chen Cheng asked. “That I do know a little about,” the middle-aged woman said with a frown. The young sorceress’s interest was also piqued. “Father has mentioned the Central Plains to me before as well. What’s our relationship with the Central Plains?”

“I can’t tell you too much for the time being, but there’s something I can let you know. The founder of our organization was from the Central Plains,” the middle-aged woman said.

The trade caravan continued advancing for two days without encountering bandits again. On the third night, Qian Weining quietly paid a visit to Melgor while everyone was asleep.

The vice president of the York County Chamber of Commerce looked at Melgor and said in a serious tone, “Revered Lord Melgor, we’ll be entering the mountains tomorrow.

Can you please tell me what kinds of enemies you're facing? Why are they pursuing you?"

Ren Xiaosu listened from nearby and thought Qian Weining was sound in his judgment.

Melgor looked at Qian Weining and said, "How do you know those people are targeting me?" "Because other than you, no one else in the trade caravan is worthy of the other party mobilizing so many people to go after." Qian Weining said softly, "The goods might be worth a lot of money, but it's not worth it for the other party to take such a risk with those brand-new fletched arrows and longbows from the military. It's also not worth it for them to make a move so close to York County."

"Then why didn't you turn the trade caravan around and return to York County?" Melgor asked curiously. "That's actually the most appropriate action to take, isn't it?"

Qian Weining lowered his voice and said, "I have my reasons for continuing the expedition. All I want to know is what kinds of enemies you're facing, Lord Melgor. Only then can I determine how to deal with them."

Nearby, Ren Xiaosu cut in with a smile, "I think you're mistaken about something. Lord Melgor doesn't have any enemies. Those bandits are not here for us. Who knows, it might be you they're actually after?"

The words left Qian Weining stunned. However, Qian Weining did not refute Ren Xiaosu's accusation for the moment.

Ren Xiaosu was just bluffing Qian Weining, but little did he expect to hit the mark. After Ren Xiaosu brushed off Qian Weining with a few simple words, he then said to Melgor, "Why do you think Qian Weining insists on going to Ghent City?"

"I don't know." Melgor shook his head. "Maybe he wants to make money? I know he doesn't receive a fixed sum for his salary as the vice president but earns a commission based on how many trade expeditions he can put together. If he makes one less trip, he'll earn less money. If the goods suffer any losses, the Chamber of Commerce will also deduct the money from his pay."

"It's definitely not that simple." Ren Xiaosu shook his head. "That person is very smart. He definitely knows which is more important, making money or keeping his life. It's clear now that the road ahead is super dangerous and he might even die in the process. In that case, there must be something more important than his life since he still wants to go to Ghent City."

In reality, Ren Xiaosu was already a little curious on the first night. At that time, Qian Weining had already discovered something fishy about the bandits, but he did not lead the trade caravan back to the city.

Under normal circumstances, merchants prioritized making money. As the saying goes, peace breeds wealth. What merchant would risk their lives to sell their wares for no reason?

However, Qian Weining did not turn around. Instead, he decided to conceal his suspicions of the bandits and continue with the expedition.

Melgor looked at Ren Xiaosu. "Then what should we do? Is this good or bad news?"

"Let me analyze it for you." Ren Xiaosu said, "The Tudor family wants you dead so that their precious heir won't have to face gossip after marrying your childhood sweetheart, right?"

"Um, yeah," Melgor said.

"Qian Weining wants to go to Ghent City for some reason, but there's also people who want him dead. You've figured that out, right?" Ren Xiaosu said.

"Um, yeah," Melgor said.

"I don't have enough info right now to determine whether the bandits that attacked us on the first night were here to kill you or him." Ren Xiaosu said, "But regardless of who the target might be, their goal was definitely to wipe out the entire caravan. So this is just a relatively simple case of addition and subtraction. Right now, be it you or Qian Weining, the number of enemies you two have to face has just doubled. Are you surprised?" Ren Xiaosu said.

Melgor stared blankly at Ren Xiaosu again. "Then should we run?"

Ren Xiaosu patted Melgor on the shoulder. "Don't worry, I'm here!"

Chapter 1118 Mystical archery

On the third night of the trade caravan's expedition, the group had just stopped to set up camp when Qian Weining sent out his guards to patrol the surroundings of the campsite.

The guards were all wearing brown leather armor sewn together from several layers of cowhide. This was enough to stop the attacks of the average bladed weapon. At the very least, it would be very difficult for the average attacker to immediately cause them fatal injuries while they wore the leather armor.

After Qian Weining was sent away by Ren Xiaosu, he returned a second time.

He said to Melgor in a serious tone, "Your Excellency Lord Melgor, I have to be honest. I'm currently facing some danger. But at the same time, I also understand something

very clearly. Although the enemy you're facing is different from mine, our situation is exactly the same. So no matter whose enemy we encounter on this journey, please don't hold back your strength. Only like so will we reach Ghent City safely. Can we agree on that?" These words made Melgor worried. He knew full well that Qian Weining would only have such a serious discussion with him if he were facing a very powerful enemy. He pondered it for a long time and then looked at Ren Xiaosu...

Ren Xiaosu smiled at Qian Weining and said, "Don't worry, I'm here."

When Qian Weining heard this, he was stunned. Meanwhile, Melgor became even more worried. At some point, Melgor even suspected these words might be Ren Xiaosu's catchphrase. No matter what you asked that young man, he would always answer you with those words.

The atmosphere at the camp was no longer cheerful like it was on the first day. It even felt a little gloomy as they traveled during the day.

The young people who had just left York County to pursue their dreams in the big cities came to understand the cruelty of the world as soon as they stepped out of their hometown.

They would never forget how they had to personally bury their companions on the first night.

After the wagon fort was set up, Ren Xiaosu leaned against one of the carriages and asked, "What's the purchasing power of the Kingdom of Sorcerers' currency? How much can gold coins buy?" Melgor shook his head. "Gold coins aren't usually used in daily transactions. It's more common to see silver and copper coins on the market. Under normal circumstances, one copper coin can purchase five kilos of rice. A 100 copper coins are equivalent to one silver coin, and 20 silver coins are equivalent to one gold coin. Of course, there are fluctuations in the exchange rate between silver and gold coins. Basically, the fluctuations are generally between 19 to 21 silver coins for one gold coin, and some people even hoard gold or silver coins for arbitrage."

Ren Xiaosu nodded and said, "That's very easy business since they'd only need to pay attention to the gold and silver prices. But does no one do anything about them?" "Why would anyone care?" Melgor remarked, "There's a transaction fee for every currency exchange. You might be able to make money from arbitrage, but the sorcerer banks will never, ever make a loss."

Ren Xiaosu suddenly stopped in his tracks. Curious, Melgor asked, "What's the matter?"

"Enemies," Ren Xiaosu said.

Melgor was a little puzzled. "How do you know? Why didn't I notice anything?" "Intuition," Ren Xiaosu said with a smile.

Melgor looked at Ren Xiaosu and realized he was observing Qian Weining and the others. He was unsure of what Ren Xiaosu might be thinking

Ren Xiaosu's so-called intuition finally shocked Melgor. While avoiding being pursued, Ren Xiaosu had used his powerful intuition to help Melgor avoid the Flame Pillar spell.

Then on the first night the trade caravan was attacked by the bandits, Ren Xiaosu helped him avoid dozens of arrows fired at them. At that moment, Melgor even felt that as long as Ren Xiaosu was around, no arrows could hit him once.

Gradually, he got a strange feeling that as long as Ren Xiaosu was protecting him, he would definitely not die.

Melgor did not know why he felt this way. Perhaps he had started to believe Ren Xiaosu's bragging?

Previously, Melgor did not think too much about it. Just as Ren Xiaosu had told him, even though he had become a sorcerer, he was still only a rookie sorcerer who had never killed anyone before.

But now, when Melgor saw Ren Xiaosu's calm expression, he suddenly wondered how he could stay so composed. Did Ren Xiaosu brag so much that he even started to believe it himself? Or was he already so capable he did not have any fear?! "Then should I go and help Qian Weining and the others?" Melgor suddenly asked.

"Forget it, arrows don't have eyes. They'll be fine." After that, Ren Xiaosu called the two sheeple over from the campfire to take cover behind the carriage together.

At this moment, hundreds of bandits were closing in on the camp from the mountain path outside. They did not notice a shadow watching them distantly from the mountain. Ren Xiaosu did not control Old Xu to make a move immediately because he was waiting for the bandits to engage Qian Weining and his men and start firing at each other.

Ren Xiaosu was hoping Qian Weining would get recognized as a sharpshooter in everyone's eyes and wanted to use these repeated battles to help cement his reputation. After that, all of the enemies would focus their attention on Qian Weining and neglect him, or even Melgor.

Bandits were again coming to attack them. But once the other party realized bandits were not enough to accomplish the mission, they would start deploying their regular troops.

At that time, it would all depend how many regular troops the other party wanted to send in disguised as bandits. By this point, that group of bandits on the mountain had arrived near the camp. They quietly calculated the distance before launching an arrow volley at the same time.

Concurrently, a group of several dozen bandits approached the trade caravan's camp under the cover of the arrow fire.

As this group of bandits slowly approached the carriage walls, Qian Weining was suddenly alerted. Before he could get up, an arrow landed in the middle of the camp with dozens more following close behind.

Qian Weining's expression froze. He immediately got up and fired back in the direction of the arrows through a gap in the carriage walls.

As soon as the arrow left his hand, the scream of a bandit came from the bushes on the opposite slope. Qian Weining was stunned. He had clearly not aimed his shot properly, yet he still managed to hit someone?

Qian Weining nocked another arrow and loosed. Then another scream rang out from the other side.

To be honest, Qian Weining had never experienced such a fun battle before. It was as though once he drew his bow, someone would surely die on the opposing side.

This was no longer a battle bound by physical laws. It was pure magic!

Qian Weining shot arrows one after another as screams rang out in succession on the other side of the mountain. Even Qian Weining himself thought he might have been possessed by a god. He was simply the reincarnation of the God of War!

When the two guards at his side saw how valiant their vice president was, they even stopped firing their bows and ran over to Qian Weining to pass him more arrows. They were like specialists whose dedicated job was to load the ammunition belt of a heavy machine gun.

An instant later, an arrow suddenly shot through a gap between the carriages and grazed Qian Weining's scalp.

In shock, Qian Weining subconsciously leaned back to dodge, while the arrow he had just fired lost its aim.

When he saw that arrow fly into the sky, Qian Weining even felt a little regretful.

But before he could completely lament that miss, another bandit's scream came from the opposite side of the slope. Qian Weining froze.

Chapter 1119 Another bounty hunter appears

No matter how much confidence Qian Weining had accumulated prior to this moment, he also understood this arrow was totally off target and could not have hit any of the bandits.

However, after the arrow disappeared into the darkness of the night, a scream still rang out on the opposite slope where the bandits were.

Immediately, Qian Weining asked the guards next to him, "Was that bandit shot by one of

you?"

A guard beside him said, "Vice President Qian, we were all taking cover just now and couldn't even lift our heads. None of us fired an arrow at the enemy."

Qian Weining's expression turned strange. What was going on?

But before he could deliberate further, another group of bandits who had found their way over from the foot of the mountain were closing in. When Qian Weining saw the moving figures, he hurriedly shouted, "Don't get distracted. Hurry up and stop the enemy!"

When Ren Xiaosu saw Qian Weining stunned, he knew it was bad.

Earlier, Ren Xiaosu had controlled "Old Xu" to take out the bandits the moment Qian Weining fired his arrow. He was doing everything reflexively, so he did not notice Qian Weining had slipped up and fired off an arrow at a wrong angle.

What a miscalculation it was by Ren Xiaosu!

But it did not matter. He knew how to remedy the situation.

At this moment, everything seemed to have returned to normal. Qian Weining was still on his "one shot, one kill" rate while the number of bandits rapidly decreased.

In just half an hour, only about a dozen bandits remained from the 100-odd bandits who attacked. Furthermore, they were still unable to get close to the carriage walls of the trade caravan.

The leader of the bandits was filled with hatred. He really wanted to kill the guards of the trade caravan to avenge his comrades, but he understood he had been rendered powerless.

"Retreat!"

With his command, the dozen-odd surviving bandits turned around and ran into the mountains.

Some of the guards wanted to give chase, but Qian Weining stopped them. "Don't pursue them. Let's seize their bows and arrows first. After that, split up into teams and follow my lead. We're going to inspect their bodies!"

With that, Qian Weining leaped out through a gap in the wagon fort and headed straight for the slope the bandits were previously holding. He did not care if there were any more ambushes waiting outside.

The guards looked at each other and followed close behind. Everyone could not understand why the usually calm Vice President Qian would suddenly get so impatient. When they all climbed up the slope, they saw the bandits' corpses strewn all over the ground with arrows impaled between the eyes. The guards praised, "Wonderful archery, Vice President Qian!"

"That's right, how did you train your archery to be able to hit so precisely between the eyes?"

Although they were partly trying to flatter him, most of their praise was sincere. In the entire royal army of the Kingdom of Sorcerers, how many people could master archery to this level?

However, Qian Weining ignored the guards' flattery. Instead, he looked around for any suspicious corpses.

A second later, he saw a corpse that did not seem quite right. Almost all of the bandits were shot directly between the eyes, but this person... had an arrow sticking out from the top of his head.

It was as though the arrow had fallen out of the sky and landed squarely on this bandit's head.

One of the guards praised, "Vice President Qian is really godlike. I thought that missed shot totally missed its mark. I didn't expect Vice President Qian's archery to be so amazing. It looked like you misfired that arrow, but it was actually a very astute shot."

These words left Qian Weining dumbfounded. Listening to everyone's praise, he became a little unsure of the situation. However, he felt the odds of this shot were ridiculous.

While the guards were flattering him, the dozen-odd bandits who escaped had fled into the depths of the mountains. The pathetic-looking bandits did not even notice there was a black figure quietly following them. Suddenly, the leader of the bandits slowly stopped in his tracks. He drew a saber from his belt and looked straight ahead. "Who's there?!"

A figure wearing the attire of a bounty hunter appeared at the end of the mountain path in a flash with an orange Eye of True Sight held tightly in his hand. "You people are really disappointing." In the dark of the night, the violet sigil on his orange Eye of True Sight pulsed, like it was breathing. The bandits all looked at the bounty hunter in fear and tensed up. "You didn't say there was a sharpshooter in their group." The bandit leader roared angrily, "Dozens of my men have been killed by him. I've never seen anyone whose archery was so precise before. Who on earth did you ask us to kill!? They have such a powerful expert protecting them!"

The bounty hunter sighed. "You're weak, yet you claim that your opponent is strong. There aren't any 'sharpshooters' in that group at all."

"How is that possible? Are you saying I'm lying when I say that my comrades were shot between the eyes?" the bandit leader said.

"Never mind, there's no need for me to waste my time with you people." The bounty hunter asked, "Where's my gold coins? Since the mission was not completed, I can't let you leave with the payment." The bandit leader sneered, "Then wouldn't my comrades have died in vain? I won't tell you where the gold coins are. Furthermore, you'd better think it over carefully. I know what you look like. If the fact that you tried to assassinate a sorcerer today gets leaked, you know very well what the consequences will be."

ass

Bounty hunters were backed by the sorcerer clans, but they were also chess pieces that could be abandoned at will by the same clans. The magus order's laws stated that whoever attempted to assassinate sorcerers would become a public enemy.

This was a rule everyone had to abide by. You could find a loophole around it, but you could not go directly against it.

Therefore, even if they wanted to kill a measly sorcerer like Melgor, the mastermind would still have to find a scapegoat.

The bounty hunter smiled calmly. "Are you threatening me? No wonder you all ended up here in these remote mountains and turned to banditry." After that, the Eye of True Sight in the bounty hunter's hand glowed. He even started chanting a faint incantation.

When the bandits saw that the situation had turned unfavorable, they tried to escape. But before they could get far, a blue streak of ice burst out from under the feet of the bounty hunter. The icy streak emitted dense cold air, and the meandering shape on the ground resembled an irregular crack splitting a glacier.

The line of ice moved extremely fast. When it caught up to the bandits, they stopped in their tracks in an instant.

Cold air spread upwards from under the bandits' feet as white frost covered their bodies at visible speed. The bandits turned into ice statues with their backs facing the bounty hunter as their skin turned an icy blue.

It was early summer. With more than a dozen ice statues suddenly appearing in the warm climate, it was an extremely terrifying sight.

The bounty hunter did not stop there. He further recited the incantation for Wind Bind and used an invisible stream of air to shatter the ice statues, turning them into powder.

However, when the bounty hunter cast Wind Bind on the last frozen bandit, he realized his spell had no effect on him.

The bounty hunter was stunned. "What's going on? How could it not have shattered?"

After three seconds of silence, Old Xu, who was wearing the white mask, turned around and picked up a branch. It kneeled on the ground and wrote, "Why don't you... try again?"

Chapter 1120 Gold coin

What the fuck? Try again?!

When the bounty hunter saw the words written on the ground by Old Xu, he got so angry he nearly flipped out. "Who're you? Why did you disguise yourself as one of the bandits?"

Old Xu wrote on the ground in response. But just two strokes in, the branch in its hand snapped. As such, Old Xu went to search for another branch while the bounty hunter waited in confusion.

After a while, Old Xu finally found another branch. Then it kneeled on the ground again and wrote, "None of your business."

The bounty hunter sneered, "Are you making fun of me?"

Old Xu shook its head and wrote on the ground, "Why do you want to kill Melgor?"

"I get it now. You must be the one protecting Melgor." The bounty hunter's voice slowly turned solemn. "Those two bounty hunters sent to kill him previously were also killed by you, right? And their Eyes of True Sight must be in your possession too?"

Old Xu wrote on the ground, "You can say that."

Ren Xiaosu was still at the camp at this moment. When he heard through Old Xu's perception what the other party said, he thought to himself, 'They've already sent three

bounty hunters after Melgor. Taking them out one by one like this, I'll probably attract a bunch of enemies to me. Who knows, an archmage might even get involved personally and deal with me.'

That would really be great!

The bounty hunter started laughing. "I'm really lucky then. I'll just need to kill you, and I can retrieve their Eyes of True Sight in one fell swoop."

Old Xu expressed some puzzlement and wrote on the ground, "You that tough?" Just as Old Xu was writing with its head lowered, the bounty hunter launched a sneak attack. Two streaks of ice shot out from under his feet again.

Those two intimidating icy blue streaks resembled two interweaving azure dragons as they forged ahead. But when they got to Old Xu's feet, the shadow clone did not seem affected by the spell at all!

The bounty hunter was stunned again. "What the hell are you? Why aren't you affected by my Ice Seal spell?"

But Old Xu did not intend to waste any more time explaining to him. It conjured a black saber in its hand, and with a darting step, rushed to the front of the bounty hunter and thrust the black saber into his heart.

However, something weird happened. As the bounty hunter slowly fell to the ground, the blood spurting out of his chest started flowing on the ground.

As the trickle of blood moved, a strange magic circle was drawn onto the ground in a mere three seconds.

Then a blast of cold air burst out through the circle. Instantly, the dense air solidified near its center and formed into an ice bust of a person.

When the ice sculpture opened its mouth, an elderly voice spoke, "Who activated the Bloodline Summoning spell—".

The ice sculpture suddenly stopped mid-sentence because Old Xu was poking at its nostrils with the branch it just used to write on the ground. Ren Xiaosu could see via Old Xu's perception that the ice sculpture resembled a dignified elder whose facial features included a strange hook nose and extremely deep-set eyes. From what the ice sculpture had just said, its appearance here was probably related to the bounty hunter. However, Ren Xiaosu found it surprising. So it turned out there were such strange spells in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. When the ice sculpture appeared, Ren Xiaosu could feel the temperature around Old Xu drop by at least 30 degrees Celsius.

Compared to this spell, Melgor's Wind Bind and Earth Bind spells were way too crappy.

It was no wonder Melgor always claimed to be just a fringe figure. So it turned out the sorcerer clans indeed controlled some pretty mysterious spells. In that case, it was better for him to tread carefully.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu's usual contempt for Mel surfaced again. Meanwhile, the ice sculpture opposite Old Xu was completely enraged.

In all these years, this was the first time someone poked his nostrils with a branch while he was speaking!

The ice sculpture floated in midair. He formed a pair of hands using the frosty air and crushed the branch poking his nostrils. Then he said in a deep voice, "You killed a member of my clan?"

Old Xu thought for a moment before squatting down to write on the ground with its black saber, "Cut the crap."

The ice sculpture remained in stunned silence for a long time, not knowing how to react.

In his opinion, everyone in the entire Kingdom of Sorcerers should recognize his face. As such, instead of arguing with him here, everyone should feel a sense of fear and awe the moment he appeared!

The ice sculpture suddenly laughed. "Interesting. You can still remain this calm after seeing me. You don't look like a grown-up to me, young man. As someone who's been through it all, I used to be ignorant and shot my mouth off like you when I was younger—"

Before he could finish speaking, he saw White Mask squat down in front of him again and write, "Yeah, you certainly came through that circle, alright! Where did you come from? Did I ask you over?"

It was at this moment that the ice sculpture realized the two of them were on totally different wavelengths. There was no way to communicate!

No, the other party was, in fact, not interested in communicating with him. He was just messing around and trying to confuse him with those nonsensical replies!

Thinking of this, the ice sculpture stopped talking. He placed his hands together and turned from an ice sculpture into an icy crystalline falcon before soaring at Old Xu.

The falcon was extremely swift and went for Old Xu's face like lightning. Old Xu slashed at it with the black saber head-on, but the falcon turned into a frosty gust and dodged the attack. After the black saber's blade passed through it, the frosty gust transformed back into its falcon form and forcefully ripped off Old Xu's white mask.

Ren Xiaosu finally realized the other party's intention was to uncover Old Xu's mask so he would know who to look for to seek revenge on at a later date.

From this, it could be seen that the other party was unable to fully wield his powers in this summoned state. Otherwise, he would have just fought Old Xu without the need for so much trouble.

However... when the ice falcon removed Old Xu's mask, the sorcerer was shocked to discover there was no face underneath it. There was only a cloud of black mist!

Honestly, not even the most powerful sorcerers of the ancient clans in this current era had seen such a strange sight before!

Before the sorcerer could think any further, Old Xu swung its saber at the ice falcon that was flying away, shattering it into pieces.

Ren Xiaosu thought to himself, 'This old man seems pretty famous. He sounded like everyone should know him and even expects to be recognized from his appearance as an ice sculpture.'

But it just so happened that Ren Xiaosu was from another land.

Ren Xiaosu made Old Xu pick up the orange Eye of True Sight on the ground before disappearing into the wilderness.

The crowd at the camp gradually grew relieved as they noisily discussed things among themselves.

They were not as panicky anymore, since a powerful sharpshooter had emerged in their caravan.

At this moment, everyone was lauding Qian Weining's amazing archery, or rather, it was mainly Qian Weining's guards who were flattering him.

Ren Xiaosu glanced at the crowd and whispered to Melgor, "Are there any people in the Kingdom of Sorcerers that everyone knows? Like someone who's known to everyone.'

"Of course there are." Melgor smiled and took out a gold coin from his sleeve. "Here. Their portraits are engraved on either side of the gold, silver, and copper coins in the kingdom. Everyone knows them." Melgor thought he was being witty and cleverly answered the question. As for Ren Xiaosu, he got the correct answer he needed.

Ren Xiaosu pointed to the old man on the obverse of the gold coin and asked, "Who's this?"

“He’s the current head of the House of Tudor. Since 40 years ago, he’s had his bust engraved on the obverse of all gold coins issued by the mint.”

“What about the reverse side?”

“The bust of the current head of the House of Norman is engraved on the reverse. The two black Eyes of True Sight that I mentioned are in their possession.”