

Magic Era 211

Chapter 211: Instigation

Fran had thought that even if Nolan didn't come, the one he would send would be Karon.

Fran would be at ease if one of those two came. Nolan was always gentle with his disciples, and even if they made a mistake, he would only say a few words and let it go. Karon wouldn't even say anything. As the most successful disciple, Karon would take good care of all of them. When Nolan couldn't make a personal appearance, he would usually send Karon.

Fran was certain that recounting the bitter experience he had experienced on the road would be enough to convince Nolan or Karon to stick up for him.

But Suyass had appeared...

Among Nolan's numerous disciples, Suyass was the latest disciple, but he was shockingly talented. Not only was he one of the peak Master Alchemists of Okland, he had also become an Archmage a few years ago. The name Magic Flame Suyass had been spreading through Okland for the past few years. He was considered by many as the 3rd most prominent person of the Mercury Tower.

In contrast, Fran's achievements were too embarrassing to display...

Fran had become a disciple of Nolan at least ten years before Suyass, but after many years, the ones he had once looked down upon had surpassed him. Fran made no progress all that during that time. Whether it was in alchemy or magic, there was no clear improvement.

Moreover, the relationship between both of them kept worsening.

In the past two years, Suyass would usually not speak to Fran unless it was to shout at and scold him. Fran couldn't raise his head in front of Suyass and could only turn and walk away when seeing him, avoiding him completely. Fran feared this young disciple.

Of the many members of the Mercury Tower, Fran wasn't afraid of Nolan or Karon.... But he was afraid of Suyass.

Seeing Suyass appearing at such a time, Fran couldn't help complaining inwardly.

"Follow me." Suyass glanced at Fran and entered the tent after saying those two words with an icy tone.

Fran couldn't help feeling nervous when he saw Suyass' expression. He glanced around reflexively but remembered that this wasn't the Mercury Tower, so there was no one that could help him here. Thus, Fran had no choice to but brace himself and walk inside the tent, with an expression similar to that of a prisoner on death row facing the scaffold.

"Teacher already saw your letter," Suyass said with a very peaceful voice as he casually sat down in the tent.

But for some reason, Fran was afraid, afraid to the point that his voice shook when he asked, "What... What did Teacher say?"

“Teacher was afraid that you can’t handle it by yourself, so he sent me to help you. If you really found that set of Spiritual Magic Tools, then I’ll have to discuss with the other forces. The Mercury Tower is willing to use other assets to trade for it.” After saying this, Suyass looked at Fran with dissatisfaction. “But I think that the set of Spiritual Magic Tools you mentioned doesn’t exist...”

Fran was startled... What he feared had happened.

“Fran, do you think Teacher didn’t notice your trick? Unless you ran into some huge trouble, would you be willing to write to Teacher? Do you think that mentioning Vaughn’s alchemy laboratory and that set of Spiritual Magic Tools would make Teacher personally visit the Four Seasons Canyon? Are you asking Teacher to settle your problems?”

Suyass looked at Fran with a sneer as he scolded, “I already told you quite a few times to spend more time studying alchemy. If you spent half as much time on alchemy as you do on scheming against the Merlin Family, you would have already reached the peak of the Master Alchemist realm. Would you still need Teacher to help with these minor problems then?”

“I didn’t want for it to come to this...” Fran was unable to raise his head.

“Forget it, Fran, it’s the path you chose. I can help you this time, but I hope that you won’t write a letter to Teacher next time. Teacher is already a few hundred years old, do you think he has the time to worry about you all day long? Do you feel no shame?”

“I... I didn’t think it would be like that...”

“Okay, tell me, what kind of trouble did you meet? My time is very valuable, after solving your problems, I have to go to the Golden Forest plane to take over Karon’s task.”

“It’s like this...” Hearing that Suyass was willing to help, the scared and anxious Fran suddenly regained his drive. After straightening out his thoughts, he said, “After arriving at Thousand Sails City, I spent my time researching Vaughn’s treasury. After flipping through many books and materials, I found out that the arrays of the Vaughn Treasury exceeded my abilities. I originally wanted to give up, but Lys kept asking, so... so...”

“So you made up a story and wrote a letter to Teacher to ask for help.” Suyass sneered before bluntly nodding. “This is fine, I’ve been studying the Hexagram Star of Vaughn, so I have some understanding of that last Artisan of the 3rd Dynasty. When you guys send an exploration team, save me a spot.”

Hearing this, Fran knew that things were going well, so he acted as if he wanted to say something but was hesitating. “It’s just that...”

“Hmm?” Sure enough, Suyass prodded him to continue. “It’s just that what?”

“Well, I don’t know who Lys listened to, but he unexpectedly found someone else to break the arrays.”

“Isn’t that good?”

“The problem is that I’m not too sure about the abilities of the person Lys found. He is called Mafa Merlin and is a Great Mage. At the same time, he is also a Master Alchemist and is about to turn twenty this year. It could be said that his talent is good, but how could I feel reassured by his age?”

“That young?” Hearing that, Suyass couldn’t help being impressed. Becoming a Great Mage and a Master Alchemist before turning twenty... He was a rare talent. Even Suyass himself had only reached that level at the age of 25.

But, was it really a problem to be that young?

He might be a genius in the field of magic. Suyass also had great achievements in magic at a young age. But in the field of alchemy, no shortcuts could be taken. The more profound the alchemy, the more experience was needed. Every achievement in the field of alchemy was obtained through pushing on while piling up failures.

Using a Master Alchemist that isn’t even twenty to crack complex arrays...

What was Lys thinking?

This was like gambling with the lives of the hundreds of people of the exploration team...

“I already advised Lys many times. Although this Mafa Merlin is a genius in the field of alchemy, he is too lacking in experience at this age. The arrays within the Vaughn Treasury are too much for him to handle. But Lys didn’t listen. Moreover, that Mafa Merlin is extremely arrogant and insisted that he could break the arrays. He even said that the reason I wasn’t confident was the alchemy level of the Mercury Tower being too low!”

Fran stopped there and slightly lowered his head while paying attention to Suyass’ expression.

“Eh?” Suyass frowned. “The Mercury Tower’s alchemy level is too low?”

“Yes, that Mafa Merlin said so. If not because of that, I wouldn’t have written a letter to Teacher. I truly didn’t want to see the hundreds of people of the exploration team being driven to ruin because of the arrogance of a kid...” After saying that, Fran sighed helplessly.

“Haha, it looks like the Mercury Tower had been too low key in the past few years... Low key to the point that a young kid could actually question the Mercury Tower’s level of skill in alchemy...” Suyass’ frown deepened before he showed a rare smile.

“Haha, maybe it’s because Thousand Sails City is too remote?” Fran smiled, knowing that he had reached his goal.

They were fellow disciples. Although their relationship wasn’t good, how could Fran not know that whenever Suyass exposed that smile, it meant that he was truly infuriated?

Him being infuriated was perfect.

‘It’s time for Mafa Merlin to taste the kind of fear I have been feeling in the Mercury Tower...’

“Let’s go. Take me to see this Mafa Merlin. I want to see how skilled he is to dare to question the skills of the Mercury Tower.” After saying that, Suyass slowly got up. He still had the smile on his face, but in Fran’s eyes, that smile signaled Mafa Merlin’s death sentence.

Although Fran was secretly happy, he still added a few more words. “Oh right, Suyass, there is a 9th Rank High Mage outside named Solomon, he is the disciple of Star Sage Jouyi and is very protective of

that Mafa Merlin. You should be careful, you can't be too hard on Solomon so we can avoid Teacher having to explain himself in front of Jouyi..."

Fran's words were very treacherous. It sounded as if he was trying to stop Suyass from acting too excessively, but in reality, he was saying that Solomon was relying on his relationship with Star Sage Jouyi to protect that young Master Alchemist who questioned the Mercury Tower.

Most people would be careful of Star Sage Jouyi's reaction when listening to this.

But who was Suyass? He was the only genius under Nolan who could chase behind Karon. In all of Okland, only Nolan and Karon were worthy of his respect. What Jouyi, what Harren? Suyass never paid attention to them. Hearing these words, his expression became even more frightening. "Solomon? I see..."

Chapter 212: Stakes

Seeing Suyass' expression, Fran knew that he would be avenged, but he still pretended to look worried as he warned, "Suyass, by all means, don't act recklessly. That's the Star Sage, Teacher has to give him some respect..."

"Hmpf, Star Sage," Suyass coldly snorted before leaving the tent.

When Suyass walked out, Fran leaked out a barely perceptible smile. 'Solomon, ah, Solomon, even I feel sorry for you now...'

Solomon was truly getting caught in the crossfire.

Fran and Solomon had nothing to do with each other to begin with and they had always maintained a polite and indifferent relationship. But on this trip, Fran had clearly noticed that Solomon was very protective of that Mafa Merlin. The two definitely weren't mere acquaintances. If he wanted to deal with Mafa, he would have to dig a hole for Solomon first. Otherwise, he would have wasted his energy if Solomon had a way to contact the Star Sage and insisted on protecting Mafa Merlin.

'Mafa Merlin, you can only blame yourself...'

At this time, the conversation that had been interrupted because of Suyass had already resumed. The leaders of the nine forces of Thousand Sails City were sitting in a circle next to a bonfire, still chatting about the earlier fight. The atmosphere was friendly and harmonious.

"Who is Mafa Merlin?" But Suyass' appearance destroyed that atmosphere. The Archmage with the title of Magic Flame emitted a stifling pressure just by standing there.

He was now standing next to the bonfire, sweeping across everyone with a cold and detached gaze. Besides asking his question, Suyass didn't say anything else, but that stifling pressure made everyone feel as if they were choking.

"And you are?" Lin Yun slowly got up, his face devoid of emotion, yet inwardly vigilant. He could feel the enmity from the mana fluctuations that suppressed the entire camp. It was hostility from an Archmage...

“I am Suyass, from the Mercury Tower.”

These words made those next to the bonfire exclaim in surprise. Magic Flame Suyass, one of the youngest Archmages of Okland, the number 3 of the Mercury Tower. All kinds of rumors had spread about him, even in the distant Thousand Sails City.

“Hello, Sir Suyass.” Lin Yun was unaffected by hearing the name.

“You are Mafa Merlin?” Suyass squinted as he gazed at Lin Yun. “I heard that you are very confident in your skills with arrays. It so happens that I have some knowledge in the field of arrays. How about we make a bet?”

“Sir Suyass, you must be joking...”

“I’m not playing with you.” Suyass’ expression didn’t change, but his words were a bit rude. “I recently completed a new array, how about we use that array to bet? I’ll give you one day. If you can crack this array within a day, it’ll be my loss, and if you cannot, it’ll be your loss. How about it?”

After saying this, Suyass glanced at Lin Yun and casually said, “As for the stakes, one arm should be fine.”

“...” When Suyass’ words came out, the surroundings went silent.

Although everyone felt the hostility when Suyass introduced himself, most of them had guessed that he was there to stick up for Fran.

But no one had thought that this Archmage would actually be so unreasonable and ask for an arm. Moreover, the bet was about breaking an array.

Who was Suyass? He was Nolan’s disciple, and he had already been known as a peak Master Alchemist for years. The arrays he was researching, if not True Spirit level, were at least close to True Spirit level. Bringing out such an array against a young Master Alchemist was truly unreasonable...

Merlin was not even twenty! Even if he had been studying alchemy since his birth, it would be less than twenty years worth of experience with alchemy. How could he compare to a peak Master Alchemist like Suyass?

This was simply bullying!

“Sir Suyass!” Solomon stood up. “Coercing a young Master Alchemist as the disciple of Sir Nolan, aren’t you being a bit too overbearing?”

“Oh?” Suyass’ eyes moved away from Lin Yun to land onto Solomon, a faint smile on his face. “You are the disciple of Star Sage Jouyi? Solomon?”

“Whose disciple I am doesn’t matter. What matters is you, Sir Suyass, using such an unfair method on Merlin.”

“Fairness? Haha, Solomon, you are talking about fairness with me?”

“Sir Suyass...” Solomon was stunned, but he then had a bad feeling. But when he realized that something was wrong and tried to cast a protective spell, he was already out of time.

Just as Solomon closed his mouth, a spark appeared on his arm, immediately followed by an explosion, as raging flames fiercely roared on his arm. His entire arm was on fire.

Solomon's reaction was pretty quick. He had already prepared a Frost spell the moment the spark landed on his arm. A mist appeared as a layer of ice covered Solomon's arm at a crazy speed. It was only a small dot at first, but that small dot covered Solomon's arm in an instant.

Solomon's reaction was very timely.

But...

Just as everyone sighed in relief, another explosion echoed and the flames that had been extinguished by the ice reappeared. A dazzling blaze flared up as the fierce flames turned the ice into vapor.

This sudden change made everyone feel scared. The difference between an Archmage and a Great Mage was just one rank, but that one rank wasn't easy to overcome.

As a 9th Rank High Mage, Solomon simply couldn't retaliate in front of an Archmage...

"Sir Suyass, didn't you want to bet?" At this time, Lin Yun calmly stepped forward, as Syudos gently coiled around Solomon's arm and swallowed those raging flames.

Syudos, as an Upper Rank Flame Spirit, could be said to be the purest flame in this world. Let alone Suyass even if a true Magic Flame descended, playing with fire before Syudos was only displaying one's mediocre skills before an expert.

"Pretty good Magic Tool." Suyass no longer paid attention to Solomon, and he only stared at Lin Yun. "Seems like you plan to agree?"

"Wait a moment." Lin Yun carefully helped Solomon take a seat before looking for searching his pocket and taking out a bottle of Ice Spirit Potion. This was something Lin Yun had prepared for his expedition to the Demon Plane. It was specialized against the dark flames of the Abyss. Using it to treat Solomon was like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

But he didn't have anything else that would work at this time.

Even though Solomon's help always had some ulterior motive, Lin Yun knew that this was because he was setting up a way forward for the Sage Tower. Moreover, he truly had helped Lin Yun a lot. It could be said that without Solomon, he might have still reached this stage, but it would have been a lot harder.

After drinking the Ice Spirit Potion, Solomon's expression relaxed. His burn was also recovering at a visible speed.

After Lin Yun carefully checked and confirmed that there was no issue with Solomon's injury, he slowly stood up and looked at Suyass with a strange expression for a long time before asking, "Sir Suyass, are you sure you want to use an arm for the bet?"

"What? Are you afraid? Looks like you aren't very confident in your alchemy level. But it's too late to be afraid, Mafa Merlin. If you are willing to bet, then do so, but the stakes cannot be changed."

“No...” Lin Yun helplessly shook his head. “I meant, Sir Suyass, how about betting both arms?”

“Ah?” Suyass was stumped at first. He carefully looked at Lin Yun for a long time before smiling, “Good, good, Mafa Merlin, you are very confident in your level of alchemy...”

After chuckling, Suyass took out a scroll from his pocket. “This is the array I recently completed. You have one day to crack it. If you cannot crack it within a day, then you’ll have to leave your arms behind.”

Lin Yun took the scroll and examined it. Sure enough, it was close to True Spirit level. A third of the skills within had reached the level of an Artisan. If it had been a day earlier, Lin Yun might have found this array to be rather headache-inducing.

But it was too late now...

“One day? Hahahaha...” Lin Yun laughed before spreading the scroll next to the bonfire and taking out a quill from his pocket. He searched in his pocket some more, but found out that he had already exhausted his Melting Snow Ink. Thus, he turned to Suyass and asked, “Well, Sir Suyass, could I trouble you to lend me some Melting Snow Ink?”

“Hold on.” Suyass frowned before taking out a bottle from his pocket and giving it to Lin Yun.

The whole camp then turned silent. Nothing could be heard besides the crackling of the bonfire and the sound of Lin Yun’s quill dancing across the scroll. Everyone seemed to have tacitly agreed to hold their breaths, afraid of bothering the young Master Alchemist.

It was to the point that no one noticed a flame sweeping across the sky...

No one but Fran...

‘How come Karon also came?’

Chapter 213: Don’t Lower Yourself To His Level

The battle in the Golden Forest Plane had already reached the critical juncture. They were about to suppress the rebel Dark Elves. As soon as Karon took the Mercury Tower’s puppet legion to march forward, the tumor that had been plaguing the Golden Forest Plane for several hundred years would be cleanly removed. But Grant was sent from the Mercury Tower to replace him, while he had to check on Suyass in the Four Seasons Canyon...

Karon felt strange... Suyass was a peak Master Alchemist and a newly advanced Archmage. He had been doing well in the Golden Forest Plane in the past few years, and moreover, he had entered the Bloody Plane three times and escaped unscathed. He was powerful and ranked third in the entire Mercury Tower.

‘How come Teacher is so anxious with him going to the Four Seasons Canyon to help Thousand Sails City’s joint exploration team?’ Karon thought at the time.

But after asking, he learnt that Mafa Merlin was part of that joint exploration team.

And Karon clearly understood from that. Suyass was too headstrong, and if he joined the expedition, he wouldn't allow anyone to go against him.

It would have been fine normally...

It was quite normal for an Archmage like Suyass to demand absolute control in a group made up of High Mages, Spirit Archers, and Expert Swordsmen.

But Mafa Merlin was also too headstrong.

Others might not know this young Great Mage very well, but Karon did. He got a good understanding of the young Great Mage's character during the Fanrusen Formula's research. Mafa Merlin wasn't easy to deal with. He would remain courteous if others were courteous, but with Suyass' temperament, it would be strange if the two didn't come into conflict...

Moreover, Mafa Merlin wasn't an ordinary Great Mage. He truly had the ability to make Suyass suffer.

Hogg was a good example. The 9th Rank High Mage who was known for his ability in data computation was slapped in the face because of one spell matrix and was almost kicked out of the Cloud Tower by Jouyi.

Not to mention that the current Mafa Merlin was far different from his former self. Not long ago, at the Magic Hand's gathering, he had taken the limelight. His three Meditation Law Sets caused a stir, and who knew how many major forces wanted to have a good relationship with him, including his teacher Nolan. Otherwise, he wouldn't have hurriedly gotten Karon to return from the Golden Forest Plane.

And if a conflict really happened, it would be hard to say who would suffer.

Aware of the seriousness of the matter, Karon immediately felt anxious and travelled day and night from the Mercury Tower, not pausing to drink or eat, before he finally managed to catch up to Suyass.

When Karon fell from the sky and landed, he noticed Suyass next to a bonfire, as well as Merlin, who was immersed in some writings.

Karon's appearance startled many people. This was the Mercury Tower's number two, only inferior to Nolan in terms of status and strength. Moreover, the Mercury Tower had quite a lofty presence in Okland. Many people hurriedly approached to greet him, and even Lin Yun and Suyass temporarily halted the gamble to greet Karon.

"Karon, how come you came?" Suyass smiled when he saw Karon.

Moreover, that smile was completely different from before.

Regardless of whether he was looking at Fran or Lin Yun, Suyass' smile had been cold and sinister. But now, Suyass stood in front of Karon with a genuine smile on his face.

Suyass was very headstrong, but Karon was the true proud scion of the Mercury Tower. He had been a Master Alchemist for over twenty years and was in his fifties now, yet was one step away from becoming an Artisan. He also became an Archmage at the age of 45. Almost ten years had passed since then, and his strength could only be described as unfathomable.

Even Suyass had to admit that Karon was on an entirely different level and was already qualified to stand alongside the peak powerhouses of the kingdom such as Nolan, Jouyi, and Harren.

Not to mention that Karon cared a lot about his fellow disciples. From the time Suyass became Nolan's disciple till now, he had become used to going to Karon if he had a problem. Over the years, his reputation in the Mercury Tower was already comparable to Nolan's.

Suyass was very prideful, even daring to snort at Star Sage Jouyi's name, but he truly accepted Karon.

It could be said that in Suyass' mind, Karon was both like an elder brother and a teacher.

"Teacher sent me to check on the situation..." After saying that in a hurry, he greeted Lin Yun. "Merlin, you are also here, such a coincidence."

"Haha, it is, such a coincidence, Sir Karon."

Lin Yun had a very good impression of Karon. When they were conducting research on the Fanrusen Formula research, Karon had been able to deal with a module on his own. Lin Yun respected his skill, and after the two came into contact, they got along quite well. Lin Yun had originally thought of visiting the Mercury Tower after going to Okland.

But he'd never expected to meet such circumstances in the Four Seasons Canyon.

"Merlin, long time no see. How has it been recently? I haven't seen you getting involved in research ever since your contribution to the Fanrusen Formula. Oh, right, I heard Teacher say that your Meditation Law Sets that stole the limelight also made Mogg bankrupt. Haha, it was such a good deal..."

"Haha, Sir Karon must be joking, I just took out those three sets casually, I didn't expect that others needed it so much and would trade so many mana crystals for it."

"The income Sir Mogg gets by sitting on Whistle Island for one year is equivalent to two of our Mercury Tower's planes. Don't be polite with such a rich person..."

The passionate exchange between the two froze the smiles of a few leaders of Thousand Sails City.

'What... What is going on? How come Great Mage Merlin seems to be familiar with Sir Karon? What's this about the Fanrusen Formula? What about Sir Mogg?... Sir Mogg... Whistle Island... The master of Whistle Island? Hurricane Envoy Mogg? No way...'

At this moment, many of them looked at Lin Yun as if he were a monster. Who in the entire Andlusa Kingdom didn't know about the Hurricane Envoy? Although he was only a 5th Rank Archmage and wasn't a top powerhouse of the kingdom, he was sitting on the incomparably fertile Whistle Island, and the wealth he possessed could contend against that of the Cloud Tower and the Black Tower. Such a person almost went bankrupt due to Merlin?

How could a Great Mage like Merlin do that?

"Eh, Merlin, you are cracking an array?" Just as everyone was lost in their thoughts, Karon noticed the scroll.

'Hold on...'

It only took one glance for Karon's expression to suddenly change. He recognized that scroll... The array written on it had been recently completed by Suyass.

Suyass had named that array Tenebrous Field, and it had been a thought he had come up with after reading some of Vaughn's notes. After being refined by Nolan and Karon, the Tenebrous Field was finally completed. But now, this Tenebrous Field was here, and it was covered in lines made from Melting Snow Ink.

'What Teacher feared the most happened...'

"Right, I just made a bet with Lord Suyass, he bet that I couldn't crack this array in a day."

'Sure enough...' Karon suddenly understood when he heard that. 'Suyass was too headstrong and indeed came into conflict with Merlin and they are fighting over authority... I hope... I hope the stakes aren't too big...'

"Turns out it's a bet. Well, Merlin, Osul had praised you incessantly for your skill in the field of alchemy. It's fine to show off to Suyass, but I hope the stakes aren't too big..." Karon's smile was friendly, but he was already very tense as he kept praying, 'Please don't be too big... By all means, please don't be too big...'

"It's only two arms..." Lin Yun casually replied.

"Fortunately, fortunately, only two ar..." Karon seemed relieved for a moment, before suddenly realizing what this young Great Mage had actually said. Karon's face suddenly paled before looking at Lin Yun with disbelief. "Two... Two arms?"

After saying that, Karon suddenly felt the surroundings darkening. 'How could the stakes be so huge!'

"Right, Suyass proposed the gamble and bet an arm. He used High Mage Solomon for a 'demonstration', so I felt that one arm wasn't satisfying enough and immediately proposed two arms instead."

"Merlin, listen to me, listen to me..." Karon almost went mad on the spot and simply didn't care about the audience as he pulled Lin Yun aside. "Suyass is too young, don't lower yourself to his level, can you let him go?"

"Suyass is too young?" Lin Yun looked at Suyass and saw that he was at least 45... How could that be considered young?

"Eh..." Karon also noticed that his words were a bit wrong. When it came to age, Suyass was at least twice as old as Merlin. The problem was that it wasn't necessarily the oldest one who would win in the field of alchemy. "What I meant is that Suyass' brain has had problems since he was born, don't lower yourself to his level, okay?"

Chapter 214: Apologize

"I didn't want to lower myself to his level, but the problem is that Sir Suyass didn't agree..." Lin Yun's smile disappeared after saying that, he pointed at Solomon, "See, Sir Karon, that's High Mage Solomon,

one of the most respectable elders of Thousand Sails City. He repeatedly took care of me, and his arm got burnt by Suyass just because he tried to stop this bet.”

“This...” When he heard this, Karon understood that he had underestimated the severity of this matter. Karon thought that Suyass had only said some unpleasant words and infuriated that young Great Mage, but he didn’t expect Suyass actually making a move and attack the disciple of Star Sage Jouyi....

This was big troubles...

As he thought about it, Karon felt a painful headache coming his way. He knew a bit about the friendship between Merlin and Solomon. In fact, Mafa Merlin originally joined the Fanrusen Formula because of Solomon’s recommendation. ‘Damn Suyass, he actually dared to attack Solomon.’

‘Let alone Star Sage Jouyi...’

‘Even Mafa Merlin wouldn’t let you go.’

‘What can I do now?’

“Merlin, I’ll personally apologize to Sir Jouyi and Solomon, can you let it go for me?”

“Sir Karon, it’s a bit too late now...” But Lin Yun shook his head and returned to the scroll. He moistened the quill in the ink before adding a few more lines...

“Don’t, don’t, Merlin, say something. Don’t, don’t be like this...” Karon was suddenly frightened. This was no joke. If the Tenebrous Field was broken, Suyass would definitely be unable to keep his arms.

If it was someone else, Karon might let the bet unfold since the other side wouldn’t be able to break the Tenebrous Field.

But Karon truly didn’t dare to bet against this young Great Mage...

Karon had watched with his own eyes as this young Great Mage cracked a dozen core spell matrices of the Fanrusen Formula. That abnormal computing ability made the entire research team gasp in admiration. Although the Tenebrous Field approached the True Spirit level, the whole reasoning behind it relied on calculations. It definitely wouldn’t be able to withstand that abnormal computing ability.

‘But that idiot Suyass...’

‘You gave him one whole day, what a joke... He broke a dozen spell core matrices of the Fanrusen Formula in a day... Giving one day for your insignificant Tenebrous Field, do you think you are Osul or Teacher Nolan?’

“Merlin, please do it for me? Suyass is the youngest disciple of Teacher, I always treated him as a younger brother. If you were in my position, you wouldn’t want to watch your younger brother lose both arms, would you? Please, let it go, don’t lower yourself to his level...”

Lin Yun couldn’t help sighing as he looked at Karon’s panicked expression. The most outstanding disciple of the Mercury Tower was just as the rumors said, he cared a lot about his fellow disciples.

Lin Yun thought about Nolan...

In the Magic Hand's gathering, Nolan did do him a favor. Moreover, that favor was quite expensive. If it wasn't for Nolan, that 3rd Meditation Law Set would most likely sell for fifty spirit mana crystals or less.

It was thanks to Nolan that the price had shot to sixty mana crystals. That favor was worth at least ten spirit mana crystals, which was enough to buy an entire Gilded Rose.

Seeing Lin Yun's expression softening a bit, Karon intensified his persuasion, "Merlin, you wouldn't be able to watch it either. I'll make Suyass apologize to Solomon, sincerely and clearly apologize, and after we return, I'll let Teacher know and make him personally review his manner education. Just let it go, for me, please."

"Make him apologize." Lin Yun wouldn't press on since Karon already said this. He thought about it and rolled the scroll before handing it back to Karon.

"Sure, of course, of course..." Karon took the scroll back in relief before walking over to Suyass.

"Suyass, your issue with Mafa Merlin stops here. No one will mention it later. Now go and apologize to High Mage Solomon. You are really... High Mage Solomon is the disciple of Sir Jouyi. Aren't you afraid of his teacher peeling off your skin because you attacked his disciple?" Although the matter had been fairly settled, Karon couldn't help criticizing Suyass.

Suyass wasn't surprised...

In fact, as soon as Karon appeared, Suyass knew that the bet wouldn't go through. Karon was that kind of person, too kind and too gentle. He ate quite a few losses when negotiating on behalf of the Mercury Tower because of his character, making the Mercury Tower lose some benefits...

It was the same this time.

Mafa Merlin definitely used Karon's character and said some graceful but insincere words to persuade Karon to step in and stop this bet, 'Karon you are really... How can you let yourself be convinced by outsiders? That Mafa Merlin dared to slander our Mercury Tower, yet you are willing to help him...?'

'Forget it, since Karon wants to stop this bet, then the bet is over. He is only a Great Mage, it's not big deal for him to keep his arms, hopefully this will teach him a lesson so that he wouldn't keep talking shit in the future.'

As he thought about that, Suyass nodded and took the scroll back. But before apologizing to Solomon, he disdainfully glanced at Lin Yun, "Mafa Merlin, it looks like you aren't too confident in your alchemy level. I'll let it slide this time, but I hope that you'll be able to control your mouth after this lesson..."

"Slap!"

Suyass was still speaking when Karon suddenly slapped him.

As the clear slapping sound echoed, the entire camp turned silent.

"Karon?" Suyass covered the cheek that was swelling as he looked towards Karon, his gaze filled with incomprehension.

Suyass was stunned by the slap.

This Archmage with the title of Magic Flame never expected that Karon would hit him. After all, ever since he became a disciple of Nolan, Karon had always looked after him. To Suyass, Karon was like an elder brother.

Moreover, Karon's character had always been very good. He was known in all of Noscent as Good Guy Karon, and he had never said anything harsh to any of his fellow disciples.

Suyass clearly remembered when he had made a mistake as a High Mage in the Golden Forest Plane, leading to several thousand puppets being wiped out and the Dark Elves grabbing the opportunity to counterattack, nearly making the Mercury Tower lose the Golden Forest Plane. At that time, Karon only smiled and said nothing. He never mentioned that matter afterwards.

Fortunately, they managed to preserve the Golden Forest Plane.

But three years later, Suyass learnt that the reason why they were able to preserve the Golden Forest Plane was because on the same night, Karon sneaked out and infiltrated the enemy camp and assassinated three important leaders among the Dark Elves, effectively dissolving the imminent crisis of the Golden Forest Plane. For this, Karon paid the price of being seriously injured for three years. It was only three years later, after recovering, that Karon told the truth to his teacher.

At that time, he lowered his head and apologized to Karon. But Karon only shook his head and said that it was fine.

But now, his face turned white after being slapped by Karon, "Suyass, are you trying to infuriate me?!"

"I... I..." Suyass was at a loss when he saw Karon's appearance, he was panicking and didn't know what to say.

"Apologize to High Mage Solomon immediately!" Karon almost had a heart attack, 'Suyass, ah, Suyass, do you not know the difference between life and death? I'm doing my best to preserve your arms, yet you still have to provoke others. Before asking others to control their mouth, you should work on controlling yours instead!'

Thankfully, that slap was enough to turn Suyass completely docile.

Under Karon's supervision, he politely apologized to Solomon.

Moreover, his attitude was very sincere.

"High Mage Solomon, I am sorry. Please forgive me." Suyass bowed deeply before taking two bottles of Spring Rain, a potion specialized in restoring all kinds of burns. Each bottle was worth at least 100,000 golds.

Just as everyone thought that the apology was over, Suyass actually chanted a spell and a Flame Burst heavily blasted his hand.

A crack could be heard as Suyass' bone snapped. He instantly paled and cold sweat could be seen falling down his forehead.

Everyone was shocked by this scene.

Then, Suyass endured the pain and let the flames of the Flame Burst burn his fractured arm for a full minute before Solomon couldn't bear to watch this and repeatedly persuaded Suyass to stop burning his arm.

This huge farce was finally considered over.

On that night, Karon remained within the camp. Suyass followed him into a tent. The two didn't speak. This strange silence lasted until about midnight, when Karon broke it with a sigh.

"Suyass, do you feel that I was too excessive?"

Chapter 215: Azkara Formula

"I really don't understand..." Suyass answered after a minute of silence.

"Haha..." Karon got up in the dark tent and cast a Light spell. "Take out your Tenebrous Field scroll and take a look, you should understand..."

"Tenebrous Field?" Suyass was puzzled, but he took out the scroll as instructed and carefully studied it under the light.

He read through it very carefully, to the point of analyzing every circuit and node, but after half an hour, Suyass still didn't notice anything odd with his Tenebrous Field.

"Karon, there is no issue with the Tenebrous Field..." Suyass didn't understand and doubtfully asked, "Moreover, the last part of the Tenebrous Field had been completed by Teacher and yourself, how could there be any flaw?"

"I'm not talking about the Tenebrous Field itself..." Karon shook his head helplessly before walking over to Suyass and pointing at the formula written in Melting Snow Ink. "See this formula?"

"You mean this Azkara Formula? Haha, that Mafa Merlin is truly interesting, he actually thought of using this kind of brute force method to break the Tenebrous Field..." As a Master Alchemist, how could Suyass not know the meaning of that formula?

The brute force method of the Azkara Formula was also known as solving via exhaustion. As long as there was enough time, the Azkara Formula would be able to break all alchemy arrays.

But there would never be enough time.

Suyass was confident in his computing ability, but if he wanted to use the Azkara Formula to break an array, even the simplest Spiritual level array, he would need a month at the very least. Nothing could be done about that, as the Azkara Formula's brute force method was the simplest and most brainless way to break arrays.

Usually, the Azkara Formula would only be used when one wanted to save strength at the cost of time.

But a Master Alchemist like Mafa Merlin used a brainless Azkara Formula to try to crack a near True Spirit Array in a day. This could only be described as laughable.

“Do you think that the idea is too simple and brainless?”

“Ahah, I just feel that Mafa Merlin is very naive...”

“Then you are wrong, Suyass, you are the naive one...”

“Ah?” Suyass’ laughing face suddenly froze when he heard that. “Me?”

“Yes...” Karon sighed and pointed at the small Nesser runes on the scrolls which were the calculations of the Azkara Formula. “Take a look at that...”

“Sure.” Karon’s insistence made Suyass have no choice but to take another look.

But after looking over it for a while, he still couldn’t understand.

To be honest, Mafa Merlin’s alchemy skills were quite good, even the near-impossible task of cracking the array with the Azkara Formula was done very methodically, to Suyass’ surprise. This discovery gave him a good impression of Mafa Merlin.

But it wasn’t much...

Because in Suyass’ eyes, this was too simple and too mindless.

The results of those calculations were completely unrelated to the Tenebrous Field. In other words, in the past hour, Mafa Merlin had completed useless calculations, basically wasting the hour in vain.

He felt that if not for Karon’s sudden appearance, Mafa Merlin might have wasted a full day before being forced to pay with his arms.

“Looks like you don’t understand...” Seeing Suyass remaining silent for so long, Karon knew that he hadn’t noticed anything. After thinking, he reminded him, “Look there, how large is the scope of those results?”

“Hmm?” After Karon’s reminder, Suyass finally found some clues.

That’s right, the results of these calculations were large in scope.

It gave the feeling of having no pattern, spreading in multiple directions.

But what was the meaning behind it?

Since Karon made him look very carefully, it wouldn’t be that simple. After thinking of this, Suyass reined in his temper and carefully examined those runes.

‘Hold on, there seems to be a pattern...’

Suyass then noticed that these calculations weren’t random but, were in fact following the trajectory of the Tenebrous Field and were just skipping parts.

Suyass suddenly felt cold sweat trickling down his back.

Although reason told Suyass that this was impossible, completely impossible, the shocking results still made Suyass forget himself as he ferociously grabbed that parchment, his red eyes staring intensely at those calculations.

The more he looked, the paler he became.

Cold sweat started trickling down his forehead as the hands that were holding the scroll were already shivering.

Because Suyass found out that the range of these calculations was becoming smaller and smaller.

Although the answer hadn't appeared, the calculations of that exhaustion method had already been approaching the correct answer.

If it had been another cracking method, Suyass might have thought that this was guesswork and that he had missed the true answer due to a moment of carelessness.

But this was using the proof exhaustion method of the Azkara Formula. Suyass knew that these calculations were only aiming at narrowing down the answer, and that only the remaining one would be the correct answer.

"Do you understand now?"

"I... I understand." As he said that, Suyass could clearly feel jitters. His hoarse voice carried some happiness as Suyass knew that he had escaped the worst.

At this time, Suyass truly understand why he had been forced to talk to the other side for so long and slap himself...

"That Mafa Merlin, he... He is truly capable of cracking the Tenebrous Field..."

"It's more than just being able..." Karon shook his head, sighing. "You were in the Golden Forest Plane before, so you didn't know. Do you remember that I've spent a few years helping Star Sage Jouyi try to crack the Fanrusen Formula?"

"Yeah, I remember. Jouyi even came to the Mercury Tower to thank Teacher, saying that your work on alchemy modules was very beautiful."

"Haha, very beautiful... I also believed so at the time, but I learnt not long ago that it depended who you compared it to..."

"Ah?"

"If my work was compared with Merlin's, I'm afraid that my work would amount to nothing..."

"How could this be!?" Suyass was in disbelief.

Karon already had a foot in the Artisan realm. Few alchemists could compare to him in all of Noscent. He was an authority in the field of the magical use of alchemy modules, and even his teacher Nolan praised him. Otherwise, Star Sage Jouyi wouldn't have paid such a huge sum to ask for his help.

Suyass could understand Mafa Merlin having the potential for breaking the Tenebrous Field, but Karon's words were too unimaginable, saying his work "would amount to nothing"...

Didn't these words mean that Mafa Merlin had made a greater contribution than Karon in the cracking of the Fanrusen Formula?

“What did that Mafa Merlin do? Why do you hold him in such high regard?”

“Haha, Mafa Merlin only did one thing, which was cracking spell matrices.”

“Just this?” Suyass froze when he heard that. “Isn’t that Hogg’s work?”

“Just this? Haha, if Hogg heard your words, he wouldn’t be able to stop crying. I shall let you know, on the day he joined the research team, he completed three years of Hogg’s work. What followed was even more frightening. In one day and one night, Mafa Merlin received some unknown stimulation and started frantically breaking spell matrices. In front of the entire research team, in front of the entire Cloud Tower, in one night, he completely cracked a dozen spell matrices...”

“A dozen!” Suyass was very startled. “Isn’t... Isn’t that almost the entire Fanrusen Formula? Doesn’t that mean that Mafa Merlin pretty much cracked the Fanrusen Formula on his own?”

“What do you think?”

“How could this be...” Suyass didn’t know exactly what kind of concept a dozen core spell matrices was, but he knew that Star Sage Jouyi had spent over twenty years working on the Fanrusen Formula and only broke a few core spell matrices...

“The miracle of that night is still spreading in the Cloud Tower. You see, not many people know of Mafa Merlin in Okland as of now, but sooner or later, Mafa Merlin will come to Okland and shock everyone. This is why I rushed back from the Golden Forest Plane, and the true reason I slapped you earlier.”

“This is... This is Teacher’s opinion?”

“Indeed.” Karon nodded. “Teacher had already been paying attention to this Mafa Merlin for a while. He originally wanted me to get in contact with him and see if I could pull him into the Mercury Tower. But after the recent gathering of the Magic Hand, Teacher changed his mind and told me not to be hasty and to just give him a few favors to establish a good relationship.”

Chapter 216: Treasury Discovered

“I heard that Teacher sold a favor to Mafa Merlin worth ten spirit mana crystals!”

“Thankfully, I only burnt Solomon...” Suyass couldn’t help feeling apprehensive after hearing all that. Thankfully he hadn’t directly harmed Mafa Merlin, or else he might have wasted a favor worth ten spirit mana crystals.

“Haha...” Karon chuckled and remained silent.

Karon originally wanted to say that he might not necessarily be able to burn Mafa Merlin even if he tried.

Karon had some knowledge of the young Great Mage’s strength. When Hoen of the Cloud Tower left for Thousand Sails City to act against Mafa Merlin, the Star Sage himself assessed that Mafa Merlin had the strength to take Hoen down with him. At that time, Mafa Merlin was only a 5th Rank Great Mage.

Now, Mafa Merlin was already approaching the High Mage realm, making him many times stronger. If he and Suyass truly came to blows, the outcome would be hard to determine.

But Karon felt that Suyass had suffered enough for one night and wouldn't be able to endure such a hit to his pride.

The two chatted about the situation in the Golden Forest Plane before both going to sleep around midnight.

Early in the morning, Karon left the camp. The battle was still raging in the Golden Forest Plane, and although Grant was there to oversee it, his strength and prestige were far from equal to Karon's. He might be able to manage the situation in the short term, but he wouldn't be able to handle it for long.

Karon was still a bit uneasy before leaving and warned Suyass a few times to rein in his own temper.

Suyass readily consented.

It could be seen from this that although Suyass was rather blunt and direct, he wasn't narrow-minded like Fran.

As for Fran...

He hadn't been able to sleep during the night.

Fran originally was hiding in the tent to watch the scene unfold. He had been in a cheerful mood when he saw Suyass burn Solomon's arm and force Lin Yun into the bet over breaking the Tenebrous Array, because it all followed his plans.

Fran had expected that Mafa Merlin would lose the bet, and his arms, too. The exploration team would have no choice but to seek help from Suyass and himself to break the Vaughn Treasury's arrays.

With Suyass' nature, he would disdain to haggle over the price, so that task would be left to Fran himself. The price he would quote at that time wouldn't be just half of the magic materials. He would raise it by 20%. And what if they didn't agree? He would just take Suyass and leave. Who would be the one breaking Vaughn Treasury's arrays then?

But he never expected Karon to appear...

Moreover, Fran couldn't understand what had unfolded before his eyes. Why did it look like Karon knew Mafa Merlin? And why was Suyass apologizing to Solomon? What did Karon slap Suyass for? Why was it so different from what he had imagined?

These questions perplexed Fran for the whole night. Whenever he closed his eyes, these questions would fill his mind. Fran originally thought of finding an opportunity to ask Karon indirectly what he had told Suyass the previous night, but before the opportunity came, Karon left.

'What should I do? Do I have to ask Suyass?'

Fran was hopeful at first. After all, they were both from the Mercury Tower, so they were from the same side. Even if Suyass was usually rather thorny, he wouldn't show it openly in front of the others

But Fran hadn't expected the actual result...

Not only had Suyass shown it, but it was even more intense than usual. After the two of them saw Karon off, Fran was about to ask a few words when Suyass coldly snorted, “Fran, you had better be honest!”

Fran was startled on the spot and ran away...

That afternoon, the expedition began cleansing the Four Seasons Canyon.

It was a joint decision made by the leaders of the nine major forces after losing a dozen scouts. They had sent several batches of scouts to find traces of the Vaughn Treasury, but they lost a dozen of them in the process.

“Push another meter deeper!” Solomon, who had recovered from his burn, had a heavy murderous aura.

Although the Four Seasons Canyon had already broken away from the influence of the ancient tree and the magic beasts weren’t as fierce as before, it was still a very arduous fight for the members of the expedition force.

Under Sasu’s lead, the team of several hundred people slowly started moving towards the depths of the Four Seasons Canyon. During that day, they fought a dozen battles, the largest of which happened next to the Four Seasons River’s sole tributary. When the joint exploration team moved there, they met a group of over a hundred Thunder Elephants.

That battle alarmed even Suyass. That Archmage with the title of Magic Flame had openly shown his might in that battle. During that hour-long battle, Suyass floated in the sky, almost evaporating the river with the swarm of fire spells that he shot out. After cleaning out the battlefield, everyone realized in shock that at least half of the Thunder Elephants had died from Suyass’ flames.

On the contrary, Lin Yun didn’t make a move...

Lin Yun had remained in his tent, focusing on processing his previous reward.

Successfully cracking a True Spirit Array was an opportunity that was desired by any Master Alchemist, but that couldn’t be obtained when sought. The rewards were too great, and Lin Yun needed to spend all his time digesting this. Over a few days, Lin Yun’s skills with arrays increased by leaps and bounds leaving him about twice as skillful as when he entered the canyon.

As for external battles, Lin Yun wasn’t worried. He had already experienced the frightening beast tide and personally gotten rid of the source. Although the fighting outside was fierce, it wasn’t enough to pose any true danger for the expedition.

Moreover, Suyass had joined them. He was a genuine Archmage, and he was able to greatly reinforce forces. It could be said that as long as Suyass was willing to put in some effort, the joint exploration team would easily clean up the entire Four Seasons Canyon.

It was because of him that Lin Yun had no issue just staying inside the tent, single-mindedly focusing on his own task.

But Lin Yun actually sent Xiuban to participate.

Xiuban's first Draconic Mana Pattern had appeared. It was starting to awaken, and what Xiuban needed the most right now was the chance to participate in fierce battles.

The 2nd day passed, and then the 3rd, and the 4th...

Days passed one after the other, and soon, they had been in the Four Seasons Canyon for a week.

During that week, not only did Lin Yun improve his skills with arrays, but Xiuban also got stronger day by day. The previous night, Xiuban had followed the exploration team and annihilated a squadron of several dozen Shadow Wolves before entering the Expert Swordsman realm. Moreover, four mana patterns had appeared on his skin.

As an Expert Swordsman, he was considered top tier among the melee fighters of the entire joint exploration team. Xiuban's fighting strength was a few times higher than it had been before he met Lin Yun.

Xiuban's strength now completely suppressed William's, to the point that William complained a few times, saying that he had been born the wrong race. He was putting so much energy into meditation, yet he wasn't as efficient as this Draconic Beastman who spent his time mostly sleeping and eating...

"Carefully study the Crimson Heart, this is your foundation." Lin Yun simply ignored William's complaints. Given his incredible growth in just the past few months, what right did he have to be dissatisfied?

Moreover, it only seemed unfair when comparing others to Xiuban.

The problem was that Xiuban's growth speed wasn't comparable at all. When a Draconic Beastman just awakened, their growth speed would be the most amazing part. Let alone William Merlin, not human could compare to him. That was the advantage of races and bloodlines.

The week quickly passed, and the joint exploration team had already combed the greater half of the Four Seasons Canyon, from east to west, and they had already annihilated thousands of magic beasts. Fortunately, the Silver Moon Mercenary Group and the Flash Arrow Mercenary Group were both experts at handling animal corpses. They specially picked a group to handle the corpses of the magic beasts. Over the course of a week, all kinds of mana crystals piled within the camp, forming a small mountain.

But there was still no trace of the Vaughn Treasury.

Until noon...

Lin Yun had sent away the Draconic Beastman as per usual to get some experience while he remained within his tent to do some array research. While he was calculating a key piece of data, footsteps and a heavy voice could be heard outside the tent.

"Merlin, follow me quickly! The Vaughn Treasury has been found..." Solomon entered the tent and grabbed Lin Yun without saying anything.

"Eh?" Hearing this, Lin Yun put away his quill, followed Solomon, and soon reached the outskirts of the forest.

There had clearly been a fierce battle, as magic beasts; corpses littered the ground and blood was seeping within the earth. The air reeked of a thick smell of blood, but no one was paying attention to that. Several hundred people started digging at Sasu's command.

"Sir Suyass found some clues here. After discussing it, we arrived at the conclusion that the treasury might be here," Solomon explained, pointing into the distance.

Chapter 217: Void Python

'The battle was quite fierce,' Lin Yun thought as he looked over. There were at least three hundred corpses of magic beasts, and they were all level 10 or higher. The strongest ones were as high as level 27 or 28. Just based on the levels, they weren't any worse than the joint exploration team.

Fortunately, Suyass was with them. The crushing power of a newly advanced Archmage thoroughly changed the course of the fight. Hundreds of magic beasts were turned into corpses, yet the joint exploration team lost less than twenty people.

The battlefield had already been cleared, and a large number of magic beast corpses were carted back to the camp after some simple treatment. The excavation was carried out with great energy, and through the cooperation of hundreds of people, a tunnel leading underground had already been opened. Suyass, Lys, and the others were waiting at the entrance, discussing something nervously.

"Merlin, Solomon, you two came right on time..." Lys hurriedly welcomed them when he saw them. After a few polite words, he led the two of them to the entrance while explaining the current situation. "We already sent scouts to investigate, and from the style of the building, it should be some ruins of the 3rd Dynasty. But the tunnel is too long, almost two kilometers, and if we keep expanding it, it might collapse. So we are discussing whether we should give up on the previous plan and change it to sending a small squad made up of a one or two people from each force..."

"Well, that works for me." Lin Yun nodded in approval. A tunnel over two kilometers long was very dangerous. If they kept widening it too much, one small vibration could lead to a cave-in. At that time, the forces of Thousand Sails City and the two from the Mercury Tower might end up buried in the Four Seasons Canyon.

Everyone understood that reasoning.

Thus, after Lin Yun and Solomon arrived, they all sat together to talk about it and quickly drew up a new plan. Each of the major forces sent a few of their most powerful members, such as Solomon and Thorpe for the Sage Tower, Lys, Bassoro, and Granger for the Alchemist Guild, Sauss and Bell for the Viper Nest, and Lin Yun, William, and Xiuban for the Gilded Rose.

In contrast, Monchi's power wasn't worth mentioning, and although Ryan had a good future ahead of him, he was only a 2nd Rank Great Mage at the moment. Thus, the Monchi Family only sent a 9th Rank Great Mage Elder.

This was a bit awkward, as it wasn't just a matter of reputation; it meant that the Monchi Family would completely lose the right to speak after departing. In this exploration team made up of High Mages,

Expert Swordsmen, and Spirit Archers, a 9th Rank Great Mage wouldn't have the right to speak unless that person was named Mafa Merlin.

When night fell, the twenty-man group entered the tunnel and quickly made their way to the end.

The tunnel opened up to a slightly wider area with a few dozen meters of open space, just enough for the exploration team of about twenty people to make some shelter. Here, they could clearly see the stone walls covered in decorative designs. This was indeed the style of the 3rd Dynasty. Only such an excessive extravagant era would spend so much on just decorating a wall. There had already been a gap created by the excavation team, and two people could enter side by side. The black paint inside had some faint traces of mana fluctuations.

"Let's go." As an Archmage, Suyass didn't feel any danger from that. Even after learning that this was a ruin from the 3rd Dynasty, he only looked over it composedly before going in.

After going through that decorated stone wall, a long hallway appeared before everyone's eyes. The candles on both sides of the hallways had already burnt down, only leaving two rows of empty candle holders. The floor was paved with moonstone, which emitted a faint glimmer in this darkness. Everything in the surroundings was tinted with a deathly pale color.

"Careful, behind!" Suyass quietly warned with a heavy tone.

"Fuck..." Just as Suyass' voice fell, a rumbling sound could be heard behind them. They all turned and were shocked by a pair of window-sized lights flickering in the darkness. Relying on the deathly pale glow of the moonstone, everyone could clearly see a python with a body that was ten meters thick. Those lights were the eyes of the python. Its head was the size of the hallway, and they couldn't tell how long its body was.

The only saving grace was that the python was still fast asleep.

Otherwise, even if they had Suyass, they would be in for a very difficult battle in this narrow hallway.

"Quick, let's go the other way." Suyass made a prompt decision and led them in the other direction.

They all agreed to hold their breaths, afraid of waking the sleeping python.

The group of twenty followed the hallway and walked for nearly ten minutes before the lights disappeared. Most of them sighed in relief.

"That thing was at least level 30..."

"Fortunately, it was asleep..."

"Yeah, this place is too narrow, we wouldn't have any room to evade the attacks of such a big monster..."

They were all secretly rejoicing, to the point that no one noticed that Lin Yun was looking closely at the rows of candle holders.

After avoiding the sleeping python, the group pressed onwards. After they had walked for an hour...

"Wait." Lin Yun suddenly stopped.

“What’s the matter?” Suyass frowned. During the week spent clearing out the Four Seasons Canyon, this Archmage had always been the core of the team, and he was used to everyone following his lead. Suddenly hearing someone stopping them put Suyass in a bit of a bad mood.

By the time he discovered that the one who stopped him was Mafa Merlin, it was already too late...

In any case, Suyass was an Archmage. Even if he had talked with Karon for a whole night and now understood that this Great Mage wasn’t someone he could offend, what he’d said before couldn’t be taken back. He couldn’t suddenly change the way he talked to him and fawn over him, could he?

Thus, Suyass could only squeeze out a stiff smile as he tactfully asked, “Merlin... Great Mage Merlin, did you figure something out?”

“I didn’t find anything in particular...” Fortunately, Lin Yun didn’t plan on causing trouble for Suyass and only smiled. “However, Sir Suyass, don’t you feel that this hallway is too long?”

“Too long?” Suyass thought for a bit before frowning.

Suyass came from the Mercury Tower, after all. He couldn’t be compared to others after going through countless fights in the Golden Forest Plane. He hadn’t found any abnormalities at first because he hadn’t thought about it. But after hearing Lin Yun’s words, Suyass suddenly reacted.

‘Indeed, isn’t it too long?’

After discovering that python, they had all walked for an hour. How could they still not be able to see the end of the hallway by then?

“And those candle holders...” Seeing Suyass’ puzzled expression, Lin Yun pointed at the candle holders on both sides of the hallway.

“What about the candle holders?”

“These candle holders are exactly the same. The distance between each of them, the traces of rust, everything is perfectly the same. It’s like... like they’re perfect duplicates...”

“...” Suyass suddenly held his breath and subconsciously glanced at both walls, carefully comparing. It was just like that young Great Mage said, the candle holders on both sides were identical. Even if Suyass was far slower to reach this conclusion, he knew that there was an issue with this hallway.

“Gr... Great Mage Merlin, you mean that we sank into an illusion?”

“It’s not as simple as an illusion...” Lin Yun shook his head. “Since that python appeared, I’ve used Spirit Defense three times and True Sight twice, but I haven’t found any signs of illusions.”

“Then...”

“Right, Sir Suyass, don’t you feel that the mana fluctuations are very strange...”

“Indeed...” Suyass had a pensive expression on his face, his brows faintly creasing, as if he had thought of something but wasn’t sure about it. “It gives me the feeling... of a heartbeat...”

“Indeed, a heartbeat.”

“...” Suyass was originally pensive, but as a possibility came to his mind, he felt lost for words. His eyes stared at Lin Yun as his voice was already shivering. “Is... Is it really a heartbeat?”

“It is said that a huge disaster happened at the Angel Coast at the end of the 3rd Dynasty. A kilometer-long Void Python charged in and countless lives were lost in one night. The Emperor had been furious and sent the 3rd fleet to fight the Void Python in the East Sea. After paying a heavy price, they seriously wounded the Void Python and the latter disappeared without a trace...”

Lin Yun didn't answer Suyass' question and only narrated a story.

But everyone paled as that story was told.

“We... We are in the body of the Void Python?”

Chapter 218: Shattered

These people had heard of the disaster of the Angel Coast. It was said that the Void Python was a true level 40 magic beast, and not only was its strength on par with that of a Heaven Mage, but it was also a rare ancient beast that had the innate ability to control space. There were countless spatial cracks in its body, and even a Heaven Mage might be suppressed by the overlapping spatial cracks after being swallowed.

If it was as that young Great Mage suggested, then it would be very hard on all those people stuck inside the body of the Void Python. This unending hallway would most likely be a road leading to hell.

That was a level 40 magic beast...

Thinking of the terrifying power of the Void Python made everyone pale. It was a frightening existence on par with a Heaven Mage. In the Four Seasons Canyon, even the newly advanced Archmage Suyass couldn't handle a light attack from the Void Python.

Not to mention that everyone was still standing in this never-ending hallway.

After listening to Lin Yun and Suyass, everyone had gradually realized that this hallway was probably the body of the Void Python. To these High Mages, Expert Swordsmen and Spirit Archers, it was an existence that they couldn't hope to bring down.

“That trap is too treacherous...” Sauss' expression was even more unsightly. He originally thought that the elites of Thousand Sails City were plenty powerful, and that regardless of the dangers, they would be able to thread their way forward if everyone cooperated. But he never expected that he would suddenly end up in the body of a Void Python just as they entered, giving them no chance to escape.

Sauss' words were just whining, but it somehow managed to ignite Fran. The expression of that Master Alchemist of the Mercury Tower turned unsightly after hearing the discussion between Lin Yun and Suyass. Hearing Sauss' complaint, he burst out in anger.

“Lys! Take a look at what you did. You clearly knew there was danger and you still led us into a trap! Are you trying to kill everyone?”

"I..." Lys' face flushed red. He glared at Fran but couldn't say a word. This was too unreasonable. Even a child would know that exploring ruins was very dangerous. No one could anticipate the dangers of old ruins, especially ruins like the Vaughn Treasury. Those were remains of the 3rd Dynasty's last Artisan, someone who had stood at the peak of alchemy. Who knew how many tricks he had left behind?

But Fran clearly had lost his mind.

"You what? Do you think I don't know that you are dissatisfied towards the Mercury Tower? I know it's not from the recent events. Isn't it because you didn't become Teacher's disciple that year? Isn't it because your Alchemist Guild had suffered some interference? What now? You want to retaliate against Suyass and I by taking us to this place? I'll let you know, Lys, if anything happens to Suyass or me, you and your Alchemist Guild will never enjoy a good future!"

"Fran! What are you saying!?" Lys' heart almost burst with anger. Originally, the two had gotten along quite amicably. Even if they couldn't be described as very close, they were still polite to each other. Lys never expected that when everyone fell into a dangerous situation, Fran would act like a mad dog.

"I'm showing what's hidden within your heart!"

"Okay, Master Fran, you can save some strength..." Lin Yun originally didn't plan on saying anything, but after hearing Fran's continuous shouting, he felt quite annoyed and had no choice but to interrupt him. "If you have the strength to bite indiscriminately, you'd better think of a way to escape from here..."

"Bite... Indiscriminately?" Due to Karon's previous appearance, Fran now lacked the courage to go against Lin Yun.

"Master Fran, you are worrying a bit too much. I only recounted a story and you already lost all self-control. You truly need to strengthen your mentality..."

"..."

"Shut up, Fran!" Suyass had been recuperating with his eyes closed. The quarrel of two High Mages was something he could turn a deaf ear to. But Lin Yun's words made Suyass open his eyes again. He looked at Lin Yun once more and said, "Great Mage Merlin, you mean..."

"I only heard that Void Pythons lifespans weren't that long, perhaps a few hundred years, up to a millenium."

"Hmm?" Suyass realized something from Lin Yun's words. Even a Void Python with the greatest vitality possible wouldn't be able to survive 1,600 years. If this Void Python was the one that had caused a disaster in the Angel Coast, then it simply wouldn't be able to live till now.

"However, Void Pythons' bodies are almost eternal. Even death just dissipates their souls. Their corpses and the countless spatial cracks within would continue existing for a very long time. During that time, a brilliant alchemist could use the corpse of the Void Python to create an unbreakable maze..."

"I understand..." Hearing this, Suyass understood completely. No wonder he kept feeling that something wasn't right. At first, he had thought that it was because he had been walking in the body of a Void Python, but now he felt otherwise. Although the Void Python's heart kept beating, it gave off an empty feeling... There simply wasn't a single trace of a soul.

If it had been before, Suyass wouldn't have understood.

But he now knew that this was because they were in the corpse of the Void Python, which had been turned into a labyrinth.

A maze array was also an array. As long as it was an array, there would inevitably be a way to crack it.

Thinking up to here, Suyass calmed his heart before starting to analyze the entire hallway. Suyass confirmed that Lin Yun's words were correct and that the seemingly endless hallway was in reality a maze array. But that maze array was more complicated than anything he had ever seen before.

The only bright side was that after analyzing it, Suyass found out that this maze array hadn't reached True Spirit rank. This discovery made him sigh in relief. Suyass was only a peak Master Alchemist. He hadn't broken through the Artisan realm. If he really met a True Spirit Maze Array with a Void Python's corpse as its core, he would truly have to give up.

However, it wasn't far from being a True Spirit rank array.

Although the skills used were within the range of a Master Alchemist, with the Void Python's corpse, the complexity of this maze realm was raised by one whole rank. That kind of innate spatial control and the overlapping spatial cracks couldn't be imitated by any skill. This was a maze array that had been generated almost completely naturally. Even Suyass didn't dare to say that he could break it.

Time slowly passed, and Suyass' expression gradually paled. Sweat started sliding down his forehead as his frown deepened...

The quickly moving quill seemed to weigh a ton, and each character he wrote seemed to exhaust his entire strength. Everyone knew that this was because Sir Suyass had met some difficult problem. At this time, they all tacitly agreed to even breathe silently out of fear that they would disturb Suyass.

"Sir Suyass, how about you try the Cliff Formula?"

"Hmm?" When the frowning Suyass heard that, it felt like he was hit by a sudden enlightenment. His mind became clear. 'That's right! The Cliff Formula!'

Suyass' eyes opened wide, and his quill wrote at a shocking speed as paragraph after paragraph appeared on the paper. Suyass finally found the three weakest parts of the maze array.

"Got it!" Suyass spread the paper flat as he said, "Now, I need two mages. It would be best if they could accurately control their casting time. There is no requirement for strength, so Great Mages would do. I'll count to three and after reaching three, I'll cast Flame Burst on the first weak point. Three seconds after I cast Flame Burst, the second mage needs to take over and use Flame Burst on the second weak point, and three seconds later, the third mage needs to act..."

"I'll do it." When accurate control over casting time was mentioned, who other than Solomon would be thought of in Thousand Sails City? At such a critical time, the 9th Rank High Mage was unwilling to let others bear his responsibility.

"Need another one..."

"Merlin, stop being lazy." Solomon didn't even think about it before calling Lin Yun's name.

“...” Lin Yun scratched his cheek and stepped out from the crowd.

“Are the two of you ready?” If it had been before, Suyass might still have had doubts towards Merlin. Even though he had shown power far beyond his level, being able to precisely control one’s casting required experience. Given his age, he shouldn’t be better than old fellows like Cadgar or Lys.

But Suyass wasn’t thinking like that anymore.

Because Suyass himself knew how critical that earlier reminder was.

Suyass even felt that the one who truly broke the maze array wasn’t himself, but rather the young Great Mage who had prompted him to use the Cliff Formula.

At that time, Suyass had already approached the core of the maze array, which was the link between the Void Python’s corpse and the array itself. As long this step was completed, they would be able to thoroughly collapse the maze array. But he couldn’t figure out which formula to use up until the young Great Mage reminded him that the Cliff Formula was the best choice.

Suyass was a peak Master Alchemist, only one step away from becoming an Artisan. In terms of knowledge alone, even ordinary Master Alchemists were unfit to act as his assistants. How could Suyass not know what kind of insight was needed to remind him of the Cliff Formula at such a critical moment?

In that split second, Suyass even thought of his teacher Nolan.

Only an Artisan like his teacher would have the insight needed to see through this array.

But now, this kind of insight had appeared in a Great Mage that was less than twenty years old. Remembering Karon’s words, Suyass had no choice but to admit that this young mage might have attained a far higher grasp on the intricacies of alchemy than he himself had.

Insight, experience, age, these made no sense in front of that youth. Sometimes, you had to admit that there were some completely unreasonable geniuses in this world. They didn’t need to accumulate experience over time, and they would always create some glorious miracles.

That young Great Mage might be one of them...

“One, two, three...” After Suyass reached three, a Flame Burst exploded in one of the walls of the hallway.

Three seconds later, the second Flame Burst exploded.

And after another three seconds...

A loud rumble could be heard echoing loudly as the surroundings shook. Everyone seemed to hear a mournful howl as the world before them started shattering just like glass breaking apart. One piece, two pieces, three pieces... It ultimately broke into countless fragments!

A long lost radiance shone from the broken fragments.

The world before them suddenly cleared up. A lush tree, a sweet breeze, the soft earth, and farther in the distance, a lake so clear that the ripples were easily visible. The flourishing scene carried an

intoxicating aura of life, and it wasn't as abnormal as the aura of life that the Four Seasons Canyon had before. It was rich, thick, soft, and relaxing, making people unconsciously feel intoxicated.

It could be said that this was a completely different world from the hallway that had been making them feel despair.

But now, the ones standing there felt a chill. Whether it was Lin Yun, Suyass, Solomon, or Fran, they all felt cold.

Because they found out that no one else was within sight!

It wasn't just one or two people missing, but rather most of the group.

Before setting off, the nine forces had combined power with the Mercury Tower and dispatched twenty people..

But now, only Fran, Suyass, Solomon, and Lin Yun were standing there. In other words, when the maze broke, a total of sixteen people went missing!

"Fuck..." Solomon immediately swore. "How could this Vaughn Treasury be so evil?"

"No..." Suyass was crouching under a tree, carefully examining a plant with seven leaves. When he heard Solomon's complaints, the newly advanced Archmage shook his head. "This place might not necessarily be the Vaughn Treasury..."

Chapter 219: Botanical Garden

"What... Not necessarily the Vaughn Treasury?" Solomon was stunned, and one of his eyes twitched as he repeated Suyass' words.

"Lys might have been mistaken..." Suyass had pulled a plant with seven leaves out and was holding two of the leaves on his palm. After examining it with the aid of a Light spell for a while, he raised his head and said with an affirmative tone, "Yes, Lys did make a mistake."

"No way..." Solomon seemed to have come to terms with it, but he looked lifeless. His mouth was wide open from the shock.

"This is a Psychedelic Flower. One of the most common materials used in mind-affecting potions. When blooming, it releases a kind of fragrance that ants have a fatal attraction to. Thus, Psychedelic Flowers usually bloom in places where many ants nest..."

Seeing that Solomon was suddenly searching the ground looking for ant nests, Suyass didn't know whether to laugh or cry as he said, "Don't bother, this Psychedelic Flower bloomed several decades ago. You'll at most find traces of dead ants. Moreover, if the Psychedelic Flower bloomed, the fragrance wouldn't just attract ants, it would also turn you crazy. A dozen Spirit Defense spells wouldn't be able to save you..."

"Oh..." Solomon stood up, slightly embarrassed, and asked, "But what does that have to do with this place not being the Vaughn Treasury?"

“What we always mention as the Vaughn Treasury is actually the tomb of this Artisan. But in the 3rd Era, it was blasphemy to allow ants into one’s tomb. Thus, two types of plants would be planted in the tombs of nobles and civilians of the 3rd Dynasty. One was the Star-Shaped Orchid, and the other was the Snake-Patterned Vine. The odor emitted by the Star-Shaped Orchid would chase away ants, while the Snake Patterned Vine was the natural enemy of the Psychedelic Flower. They only needed to grow the Snake-Patterned Vine throughout the area and the Psychedelic Flower wouldn’t be able to survive there. We haven’t seen any remains of Star-Shaped Orchids or Snake-Patterned Vines, and here is a Psychedelic Flower. How could Vaughn be buried in this place?”

“Then... where are we?”

“If I’m not wrong, this place should be one of Vaughn’s numerous laboratories. It was written that Vaughn toured Noscent for thirty years before becoming an Artisan. During these thirty years, he lived in seclusion in many places. The Angel Coast was one of them, and the Four Seasons Canyon is only one mountain away from the Angel Coast. It’s not impossible for him to have left a laboratory in the Four Seasons Canyon...”

Suyass paused before continuing, “Moreover, we just encountered that maze array that hadn’t quite reached True Spirit rank. It should have been the work of a peak Master Alchemist. This could have been one of the laboratories that he created before rising in rank.”

Suyass didn’t notice that Lin Yun frowned as he talked...

It wasn’t because Lin Yun doubted Suyass’ analysis.

In fact, Lin Yun admired Suyass’ analysis.

In the entire exploration team, only Lin Yun knew that the true Vaughn Treasury wasn’t here, but rather on the remote Crystal Island. Major forces would gather there a thousand years later and a large-scale war would overturn the land, before the Ivory Tower would finally snatch the Vaughn Treasury.

But Lin Yun knew the truth, because he came from 30,000 years in the future.

Suyass was someone of this era, yet he managed to guess most of the truth just by examining a Psychedelic Flower... This was an admirable quality.

What made Lin Yun frown were Suyass’ final words.

That maze was very abnormal.

Lin Yun even felt that the maze hadn’t been created by Vaughn...

Vaughn could be described as quite influential in the history of alchemy, and even later generations of Saint Alchemists would have a very high evaluation of him. The Hexagram Star of Vaughn surpassed its era. In the later era, it was something every alchemist had to learn. The analysis of Vaughn made by the later generations was so detailed that it could be taught over a whole summer. Vaughn’s knowledge, habits, and everything else had been analyzed thoroughly.

Vaughn wasn’t the typical genius alchemist. He wasn’t brimming with talent and wasn’t bold or very imaginative. Vaughn’s greatest achievement was that by being extremely precise with the finest details,

he used the Hexagram Star as a core alchemy system and opened a completely independent system. Cumbersome and dull details had turned into art in Vaughn's hands.

But the maze array in the stomach of the Void Python was completely different.

They were two extremes.

The maze array attached to the Void Python could only be described as sloppy, not simple or crude, just sloppy. It gave the feeling of the creator being lazy all along. Places that could use the innate ability of the Void Python wouldn't have many magic circuits. If one thing had to be praised, it was that this array was very natural and not polluted with excessive additions.

Moreover, the thought process behind that maze array was very disjointed. It was unconstrained, without any idea being clearly outlined. If it hadn't been the case, Suyass wouldn't have found it so hard to break it. It truly was strange and confusing.

And that was why he was doubtful.

Vaughn was very suspicious of others. Besides his close friend, Robinson, he wouldn't trust anyone else. According to all the accounts left behind, Vaughn had always been working alone. He never had any living assistants, as the only helpers he used were alchemy puppets. It could be said that no other living beings ever entered his laboratories.

So, who was the one who arranged that maze array with a completely different technique?

Did someone enter before them and use the Void Python's corpse to make a sloppy maze?

As Lin Yun was considering the issue, Solomon scolded, "Shit, not the Vaughn Treasury... What happened to Lys' intelligence? We spent so much time and effort only to find a damned alchemy laboratory. Wait until I find Lys and make him compensate my losses!"

"No need to be anxious..." Suyass waved his hand as a smile appeared on his face. "Although this isn't the Vaughn Treasury, the benefits one might get here wouldn't necessarily be lower than what could be obtained at the treasury."

"Oh?"

"Look around... Psychedelic Flowers, Magic Fruits, Snake Tongue Grass, Void Flowers, Thousand Knots Vines... All the plants growing here are rare magic materials. If I'm not wrong, this is the botanical garden Vaughn used to cultivate materials for his experiments. Think about it, the botanical garden created by an Artisan, and one that hasn't been harvested for two millennia. How much wealth has been accumulated during this time?"

"Indeed..." Lin Yun nodded. This place was indeed a treasure trove, as most magic materials commonly used for potioning could be found here, and in a high quantity at that. He estimated that if he harvested everything, it would be enough to sustain the Gilded Rose for ten years...

"Well, there are too many magic materials here and we can't harvest everything. Let's split into four to search. Keep what you find. Let's meet back here in an hour." Suyass thought for a bit before raising a fair proposal. Although this primitive forest range was only a few kilometers wide, the quantity of magic

materials within was enormous. Even if the four of them turned into alchemy puppets specialized in harvesting them, it would take them a few days to completely clean the place out.

Thus, they would spend an hour to take the most precious materials that they could find and carry.

“Okay, see you in an hour.”

The four set off in different directions and began harvesting the best things they could find.

Lin Yun went south, and his harvesting speed was shocking. He was a peak Master Alchemist, and his eye for detail transcended his era. Whether it was in the bushes or between trees, Lin Yun always found the most precious materials to harvest, and with his spatial ring, Lin Yun didn’t have to worry about storage. As long as he saw something he wanted, he would directly toss it in the ring.

He was like a locust, only leaving a mess behind.

Vaughn was truly rich and overbearing. Of the magic materials he left behind, although none of them were unique treasures, they were all of high quality. The materials Lin Yun harvested formed a pile in the spatial ring akin to a small mountain.

“Merlin!” Just as Lin Yun felt like he had harvested a satisfying amount, Solomon’s silhouette came out from a bush.

“High Mage Solomon, time is very valuable...”

“Damn, I’ve been fooled!” Solomon seemed quite indignant. “The three of you are alchemists while I’m just a layman, I know nothing about harvesting magic materials...”

“...” Lin Yun thought about it and awkwardly felt that he had no choice but to set aside some valuable materials for him.

“Forget about it. I’ll just follow you and pick some of your scraps...”

“...” This esteemed 9th Rank High Mage had so little ambition. Lin Yun could only take him along to harvest various magic materials, while painstakingly leaving half for Solomon.

Chapter 220: Parasitic Tree

The one hour passed quickly.

Despite seeing that forty minutes had already gone by, Lin Yun didn’t think of turning around and kept searching in the depths of the forest.

“Merlin, what are you looking for?”

“Something very important...”

Solomon watched him poking around and couldn’t help asking with a cautious expression, “Need help?”

“Sure.” Lin Yun thought for a bit before deciding not to turn him down. “You check if there is anything running around nearby. Oh, right, that thing should look like a tree and shouldn’t be too tall, at most a meter tall.”

“A running tree?” Solomon’s eyes were wide open as he felt that his knowledge of magical plants was indeed outdated.

“That thing is called a Parasitic Tree. It grows in very harsh environments, only in places that are densely populated with magic materials. You will gain great benefits if you find it.”

“I can still have some great benefits with you here?” Solomon snorted.

“Well, High Mage Solomon, you have remained a 9th Rank High Mage for quite a long time, don’t you want to become an Archmage? Don’t you want people to address you as ‘Sir’ when they see you?”

“Nonsense...” Solomon bitterly chuckled. Who wouldn’t want to?

But just wanting it was useless...

When his Mana Whirlpool was damaged, his foundation was destabilized, ruining any chance he had to reach the Archmage realm during his lifetime. And let alone reaching the Archmage realm, he didn’t even know if he would be able to live a few more years. Wouldn’t someone like Mafa Merlin know about what had happened? Why would he talk about it, isn’t that just touching a sore spot?

‘Eh, well... Merlin isn’t that kind of person...’

After considering this, Solomon’s heart raced.

‘Right, Merlin isn’t ignorant, so why would he mention this? Could it be...’

“Mer... Merlin, do you have some way to...?” Solomon asked with a shaking voice. Those who hadn’t experienced such a state couldn’t understand how he felt right now.

Solomon had experienced many ups and downs in his life.

He was brimming with talent when he was young and was taken in as a disciple under Star Sage Jouyi. At that time, Solomon was truly flushed with success, becoming a Great Mage in his twenties and having achievements not much inferior to the current Mafa Merlin. After getting pointers from Jouyi, he made leaps and bounds in the field of magic. He had already stepped into the High Mage realm at thirty and snatched the limelight of all geniuses of his time.

The other prodigies who later became famous, like Solan, Hoen, and Suyass, were all quite a bit inferior to the past Solomon. At the age of forty, Solomon stood at the peak of 9th Rank High Mages, one rank away from becoming an Archmage.

But it was at that time...

Solomon went to an active volcano and suffered the biggest setback in his life. At that time, Solomon had fought with someone over a Spiritual Magic Tool in the active volcano. Had he won, he would have been able to become an Archmage early. But as he was wrestling for control over the Spiritual Magic

Tool, a High Mage from the Flame Tower appeared and attacked Solomon. A Flame Spear shot through Solomon's Mana Whirlpool, making him lose the chance to reach the Archmage realm.

At that time, Solomon felt as if his future had collapsed in front of him.

He remained convalescing in the Cloud Tower for a full three years before being able to walk away from the shadow of failure.

He was still disheartened after that, and against Star Sage Jouyi's advice, he returned to his hometown, Thousand Sails City, to take over the Sage Tower. From that point on, he didn't have any further progress in his magical ability.

Now, twenty years later, his injuries had worsened further. And in the past year or two, even the medicine crafted by Thorpe wasn't able to completely suppress his fits of coughing.

Solomon was sure that he only had a few years left to live.

In fact, for the past two years, Solomon had been preparing for what would happen after he died. He nurtured Solon and befriended Lin Yun, all in order to give the Sage Tower a chance for a brighter future. Even resorting to thievery in the Ash Tower was because Solomon wanted to gather more powerful treasures for the Sage Tower while he was still alive. He didn't want the Sage Tower to fall to the Ash Tower after he died...

Solomon never even dreamed that this young Great Mage would ask whether he wanted to become an Archmage.

'Of course I fucking want to! ...But is it even possible?'

Solomon stood there in a daze, looking fixedly at Lin Yun with hope and fear in his eyes... Hoping that he would be able to learn life-changing information, but afraid to face despair one more time.

"If we find the Parasitic Tree, you'll have an 80 to 90% chance."

"Really?" Solomon grabbed Lin Yun's arms, his eyes moistening.

"Really..."

"Good, I'll go look for it!" Since he had a solution, Solomon was filled with vitality and didn't wait for Lin Yun as he immediately cast seven or eight Mage Eyes and sent them to search all the corners of the forest.

"I wish you luck." Lin Yun nodded before rousing his arrays and also creating many Mage Eyes.

The Parasitic Tree was just as important to Lin Yun...

To Solomon, the Parasitic Tree was like a chance for rebirth, but to Lin Yun, the Parasitic Tree would get him two Obsidian Flower Fruits, as well as a chance to strengthen a magic array.

Lin Yun wasn't very interested in having more than one Obsidian Flower Fruit. He would at most trade it or use it to strengthen a True Spirit Magic Tool. Even if he didn't have the Book of Death, he still had the half-finished True Spirit Magic Tool, Soul Walker. As soon as Mogg finished sending those sixty spirit

mana crystals, upgrading the Doom Staff might not be out of question. If the Upper Rank Flame Spirit Syudos burst out, he wouldn't be inferior to a True Spirit Magic Tool by much.

The most annoying thing was that the Soul Walker, the Doom Staff, the Book of Death, and Syudos all required a large investment of resources to bring them to their full potential. But Lin Yun was already feeling overwhelmed even though he was only supplying the Soul Walker at the moment. It was a huge amount, and he didn't know when it might bankrupt him.

Right now, Lin Yun wasn't in a hurry to finish developing the True Spirit Magic Tools.

But he definitely wouldn't let go of the opportunity to strengthen his Magic Arrays.

The Parasitic Tree was also known as the Wood Monster. In most cases, it would exist in the shape of a tree. It had a height of one meter at most, looking like a small sapling, but when it reached its aging period, the state of its soul would change. At that time, it could parasitize any plant, and every time it did so, the infected trees would quickly wither.

And the Parasitic Tree would mature by doing this.

Every time the tree grew, it would absorb the characteristics of the plants it had infected. For example, when the Parasitic Tree infected an Obsidian Flower, after it withered, the Parasitic Tree would not only become highly poisonous, but would also be able to create True Spirit level Fruits, and two of them at that!

What Lin Yun needed was that kind of devouring ability.

If the Magic Array gained such an ability, the speed at which he could break the characters in the Book of Death would be raised at least tenfold. At that time, Lin Yun would be able to enter the High Mage realm and simulate the characters of the Book of Death.

Lin Yun originally planned to go to Okland and take the opportunity to tour the Savage Highlands.

Because he remembered reading about a Parasitic Tree Seed being there. But trying to get that one would be very challenging, because the headquarters of the Gaugass Battlemages wasn't a place that could be casually entered.

But he hadn't expected that in this trip to Vaughn's laboratory, he would catch the trace of a Parasitic Tree. How could Lin Yun let go of that opportunity?

"Merlin!" Solomon called from nearby as Lin Yun was still continuing to cast more Mage Eyes.

"What's the situation?" Lin Yun's heart moved as he rushed over.

"Ahead, slightly to the right... Three hundred meters, I saw a red shadow flashing..."

"A red shadow? That could be it! Hurry!" Lin Yun immediately cast Haste and left.

Solomon also increased his speed to the limit, and it only took a short time before they arrived at the location Solomon had seen the red shadow.

"It's here indeed!" Lin Yun took a deep breath as he felt the aura of the Parasitic Tree. Moreover, the aura had yet to disperse, meaning the tree wasn't too far from them...

“Wait.” Lin Yun raised his hand and stopped Solomon, who had wanted to search the surroundings. Lin Yun was looking at all the trees nearby when a bush caught his eye. A smile suddenly appeared on his face.

“You were hiding pretty well!” Lin Yun fiercely advanced while pouring mana into the Lava Dominator.

That bush suddenly looked as if it had been hit by a gust of wind as a sharp, arrow-like weed pierced over from it. It flew extremely quickly, and even Lin Yun was a bit surprised, despite still having Haste active.

Unfortunately, it wasn't faster than the flow of mana.

Lin Yun had already activated the Lava Shield when the weed struck. In a flash, the wall of fire was already surrounding that patch of weeds.

The weeds were helplessly trying to break through the flames, but they would never be able to do so. Moreover, Lin Yun had already started chanting. Flame Shackles appeared out of nowhere and coiled around the bundle of weeds.

“Still thinking of running?”