

ABNORMALITY IN TYPE-MOON: MADNESS OF ANIMEVERSE

Chapter 81: Chapter 81: The Curse Spirit



[👉 Shoutout to Zachary_Beauman & Mr_Akillies for joining patreon. Thank you very much.👉]

Kasumigaoka Utaha and Nakano Ichika wore grim expressions.

Even though they already knew Roy was an artificial human and understood the low status of artificial humans in this world, witnessing so many beings with human-like appearances and intelligence lying there waiting for death was a different matter entirely. The sight was suffocating, almost making them faint on the spot.

Sure, humanity has no qualms about slaughtering chickens or pigs—because survival necessitates it. But how could anyone justify this level of cruelty toward artificial humans, beings as innocent as infants, capable of maturing into individuals indistinguishable from real humans? How could anyone commit such atrocities without hesitation?

Are all magi such morally bankrupt creatures?

Kasumigaoka Utaha once believed she understood the ways of magi, but now she realized just how naive she had been.

Even Tohsaka Rin's face darkened.

Thanks to Tokiomi's early demise, she hadn't been indoctrinated into the twisted ethics of magi. While her rational mind told her this scene was normal in their world, her gut churned in disgust.

If it were up to her, she'd ensure she never became a magus of that sort.

"Let's go. Roy's place is up ahead."

The only one unaffected was Illyasviel.

Her expression remained cold and indifferent, betraying not the slightest hint of emotion as she led the group forward.

Once again, the scenery around them morphed, blending and distorting like a surreal kaleidoscope.

In the realm of dreams, the dreamer's will shaped reality. They could arrive anywhere with a mere thought. Under connected dreams, even entering someone else's deepest memories was entirely possible.

When the surroundings stabilized, they found themselves in a hospital room.

It was a single-occupancy ward, meticulously clean, devoid of anything sharp. The room's sterility was unnerving, a stark reminder of the patient's condition.

On the bed lay a lone figure.

He had the same white hair as those artificial humans from earlier, a fragile body dressed in an oversized, translucent hospital gown. Through the thin fabric, one could see the healed scars crisscrossing his skin.

But what truly caught their attention was his eyes—or rather, the lack of them. A thick bandage wrapped around his head, robbing him of sight and trapping him in eternal darkness.

"Get out!"

The patient violently shoved away the blurry figure of a girl by his bedside, his voice raw and filled with venomous hatred.

The scene left Tohsaka Rin and the others in stunned silence.

There was no mistaking it—this hospital room was the core of the dream.

A dream constructed from Roy's past, centering on the man himself.

Which meant...

The broken, blindfolded artificial human, scarred and screaming on the hospital bed, was none other than Roy.

"So it's true... I guessed as much, but..."

Tohsaka Rin's chest tightened painfully. Watching Roy's feral outbursts and despairing state drove a dagger of guilt into her heart.

Kasumigaoka Utaha and Nakano Ichika, on the other hand, were too shocked to utter a word.

"My, my. Did I get careless? Looks like some rats have snuck in."

Suddenly, the hospital room blurred out of existence, vanishing into the void as though whisked away at light speed.

When the scene stabilized again, the group found themselves back on the desolate hilltop where they had first arrived.

Standing before them was a figure cloaked entirely in black, save for a pair of cold, glimmering eyes. In his hand, he held a claw-like blade, sharp and menacing.

Tohsaka Rin and Illyasviel immediately went on high alert. One pulled out her gems, while the other readied her silver threads.

"Tch. You picked the wrong time to test my patience," said the figure, his eyes narrowing into slits radiating palpable malice.

The killing intent swept over them like a tempest, setting every nerve in their bodies on edge.

Then, as abruptly as it appeared, the oppressive aura dissipated.

The black-cloaked man suddenly broke into a bright, unnervingly wide grin. His teeth shone stark white against his dark visage, but the malevolent air clinging to him only grew more suffocating.

"Ah, but maybe this is perfect timing," he said with a sinister chuckle.

With a snap of his fingers, a towering cross materialized atop the hill.

Bound to it, arms and legs spread wide, was a figure all too familiar to them.

"What's wrong? Still sulking because I turned you down?"

The man hanging from the cross sneered coldly, his tone laced with mockery. Though disheveled and restrained, Roy's sharp gaze pierced through the distance.

But then, his expression shifted as his eyes landed on the four girls below. His brows furrowed tightly.

They made it here... Is this Oranges' doing?

"Roy? Is it really you?" Tohsaka Rin gripped the gemstone in her hand tightly, her voice trembling with a mix of relief and trepidation.

If we rescue him, we can escape this nightmare!

"Is Roy all you see? Look next to the black one," Illyasviel chided sharply, narrowing her eyes at the figure beside the man they presumed to be Angra Mainyu.

It was grotesque—a floating mass of flesh, vaguely the size of a human torso.

The thing had no limbs, but its body was riddled with eyes. Most of them stared unblinkingly at the girls, while the remaining ones gazed toward Roy, their malicious intent as clear as day.

"That's... a curse spirit?" Tohsaka Rin gasped, her teeth grinding together.

Curse spirits had no place in Fuyuki City. The only reason one might appear was due to the chaos wrought by Zouken Matou's scheming.

This monstrosity must have followed him here!

"...What are you playing at?" Roy's voice cut through the tension, his tone cold and dangerously calm as his glare bore into Angra Mainyu.

"You've buried your malice far too deeply. What a waste," Angra Mainyu said with an exaggerated grin. "So, I'm doing you a favor—dragging it out into the open!"

The man's smile stretched unnaturally wide, his mocking gaze glinting with delight.

"I know you're resilient—three years of curses couldn't break you. But no matter how tough your mind is, there's always a limit. So let me ask you: ever experienced this?"

Angra Mainyu jabbed a finger toward the four girls.

"They've entered your dreams to save you. Must be nice, having people care so deeply. What if I tortured them? Killed them, maybe a hundred times over? Would that be enough to bring out the darkness lurking in your heart?"

"Oh, and this little guy here?" He pointed to the grotesque meatball hovering beside him.

"Ugly, I know, but don't underestimate it—it's a nightmare curse spirit. Killing people in their dreams? That's its specialty."

The girls paled as dread and panic surged through their hearts.

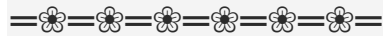
"Angra Mainyu... you bastard."

Roy's voice turned frigid, his face darkening with fury.

A searing wave of hatred welled up from deep within him, threatening to boil over into unrestrained violence.

"Ahahahaha! So, have you figured it out?" Angra Mainyu sneered, his tone dripping with mockery.

"If you don't sign my contract soon, I'll make sure they all die horribly. Your choice."



Chapter 82: Chapter 82: The False Image



"Shiina, Ichika, you two need to exit the dreamscape immediately!"

Rin Tohsaka stepped forward, shielding them with a determined posture.

"Understood!"

Ichika and Shiina nodded hastily, their faces pale with unease.

Killing someone within a dreamscape wasn't a joke—it was a very real threat. This was no situation for their first serious combat experience. Staying would only make them liabilities. It was better to retreat, get help from Aozaki Touko, and let her devise a solution.

The two quickly closed their eyes, concentrating on escaping the dreamscape.

However, after a brief moment, they reopened their eyes to find themselves still standing atop the same desolate hill. The familiar sight of Aozaki's workshop was nowhere to be seen.

"What's going on? Why can't we leave the dreamscape?"

Before they entered, Aozaki Touko had meticulously explained the mechanics of this shared dream. As she had clarified, their link to Roy's dreamscape wasn't meant to be a permanent lock-in. As long as they had a strong desire to awaken, they should have been able to leave.

"It's probably that cursed spirit."

Illya's indifferent gaze fixated on the grotesque blob-like creature.

"Angolmois referred to it as the Nightmare Cursed Spirit. I suspect it has the power to forcibly drag people into dreams and keep them there. If we want to escape, we'll either need to destroy it or get far enough away from its influence."

"Easier said than done."

Angolmois snickered, his tone dripping with mockery.

"You're already well within the Nightmare Cursed Spirit's domain. Escape? Resistance? All futile! It can undo any of your defenses with a mere thought. For example—this!"

Rin's instincts screamed at her, and she reflexively reached for her gemstones to erect a barrier. But as her hand moved, she grasped nothing but air.

"What?"

Her wide eyes darted to her empty palm, disbelief etched across her face.

"My wires are gone too..."

Even Illya grit her teeth, struggling to process the reality.

This was their dreamscape. In theory, gemstones and wires should have been endlessly replenishable, yet all their supplies had vanished without warning. It was as if control of the dream had slipped entirely out of their hands.

"Go on, finish them off. Let's kill them once and see how they handle it," Angolmois ordered casually, his smirk widening.

The cursed spirit responded in silence, its grotesque form trembling as its fleshy mass expanded rapidly. What was once a creature the size of a child now grew into a towering monstrosity, its size quickly surpassing that of a three-story building.

Roy's gaze darkened as he observed the transformation.

"Don't underestimate me!"

As his voice echoed, a sharp gust of wind howled through the air.

A figure descended from the sky, her blade gleaming with lethal precision. In one swift motion, she plunged her sword straight into the cursed spirit's head. With a clean, vertical slash, the creature's grotesque body split in two as though the heavens themselves had parted.

"Uuuuooooo!"

The cursed spirit let out an ear-piercing wail as it staggered backward, retreating in panic.

"Not so fast!"

The woman—Saber Okita Souji—launched herself forward, her blade relentless as she pursued the wounded spirit.

Rin seized the opportunity, focusing her thoughts. She visualized a mountain of gemstones, each one glimmering with raw magical power. When she opened her eyes, the shimmering vision materialized beside her—a veritable arsenal of weapons at her fingertips.

"Now! Get out of here while you still can!"

Rin urged Shiina and Ichika while clutching a handful of gemstones. Without hesitation, she hurled them toward Angolmois in a barrage of glowing projectiles.

For the first time, Rin fought a battle where resources were in excess, and she wouldn't waste the chance to overwhelm her opponent.

"So, the cursed spirit's weakness lies in its eyes. When it diverted its attention from us, its control over the dream waned," Illya deduced with a hint of satisfaction.

She raised her hand, summoning a myriad of silken swords from thin air. The blades formed a grid of light, raining down upon their enemies like a merciless storm.

"Tch, why does everything have to go wrong at the worst times?"

Angolmois clicked his tongue, reluctantly turning tail to flee.

Despite being a servant, his abilities were limited. At best, he was akin to a minor soldier. Against Rin and Illya, he wouldn't last long, especially with someone as skilled as Saber thrown into the mix.

"Hey, meatball!" he yelled at the cursed spirit, his tone furious. "Get moving and manifest the dream properly, or I'll kill you myself!"

The cursed spirit let out another guttural cry, clearly reluctant, but it obeyed.

The world around them twisted violently, the hill vanishing in an instant. In its place stood a sprawling urban city in the middle of a desolate wasteland. From above, it was unmistakably the layout of Fuyuki City.

Rin and Illya scanned their surroundings, finding themselves within a park. They quickly erected defenses, their eyes sharp and watchful.

A cacophony of howls erupted, shattering the eerie silence.

From countless homes, buildings, and shops within the replica city, shadowy humanoid beasts emerged. Each stood over two meters tall, their muscular forms cloaked in darkness. Their glowing red eyes radiated bloodlust as their claws scraped against the ground, ready to rend flesh.

"What kind of twisted dreamscape is this?"

Rin and Illya stood back-to-back, sweat trickling down their brows. The pack of monstrous wolves closed in from all directions.

Fortunately, in the brief lull, Shiina and Ichika had managed to escape the dream. Now, all Rin and Illya could do was hope they brought reinforcements—preferably Aozaki Aoko herself. With her firepower, they could end this chaos in no time.

"You two holding up?"

Saber Okita Souji appeared beside them like a gust of wind.

"Where's Roy?" Rin demanded.

"When this dream transformed, he vanished along with Angolmois and the cursed spirit."

"What? And you didn't go after him first?"

"I didn't have a choice! That cursed spirit has so many eyes that even I couldn't let my guard down. If I lost focus for even a second, it could have overtaken me—and then we'd all be dead!"

Okita's explanation was curt as she dispatched two of the wolf-like creatures with swift, lethal strikes.

"Besides, I trust my master will be fine!"

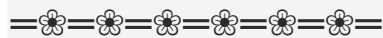
"What kind of blind optimism is that?"

While Okita held back the pack, Rin and Ilya worked quickly to strengthen their barrier. They wanted to locate Roy, but the dreamscape's shifting nature made travel impossible.

For now, they had to stay put and survive.

"This cursed spirit must have poured all its energy into solidifying this dream," Okita speculated. Her sharp eyes scanned the false Fuyuki City. "The dream's structure feels almost indistinguishable from reality."

She paused, pointing toward the city center. "Roy is somewhere in that direction. But with these monsters swarming the streets, we can't even get close. What a pain..."



Chapter 83: Chapter 83: A Mysterious Force



At the Aozaki Residence.

Kasumigaoka Utaha and Nakano Ichika woke up simultaneously from the dream world, gasping for air as if they had been pulled from the depths of a nightmare. Their faces were pale, reflecting their lingering fear and unease.

"Ichika, are you okay?"

Nakano Miku, startled by their sudden movements, rushed over to check on Ichika. She handed her a glass of water, concern written all over her face.

"Just barely..." Ichika muttered, still shaken. She accepted the glass and took a sip, hoping to calm the tempest of emotions raging within her.

On the other side, Hayasaka Ai passed a glass of water to Utaha.

"Congratulations, girls. You've taken another step forward," Aozaki Touko remarked dryly, her sharp gaze flicking to the still-unmoving figures of Tohsaka Rin and Illya. Her tone implied she already knew their mission hadn't gone smoothly.

"Now, who among you feels calm enough to explain what happened in the dream?"

From the courtyard outside, Aozaki Aoko leaned against the doorway, her silhouette outlined by the faint light of dawn. "I'll take any details you can give me."

"I'll do it," Utaha volunteered, standing up with deliberate composure.

She described the nightmare realm, recounting the eerie landscape and the monstrous entity that had dominated their experience. Her words painted a vivid picture of the horrors they had faced, leaving the room heavy with tension.

"A curse spirit..." Touko mused aloud, her eyes narrowing thoughtfully. "So, this is Angra Mainyu's scheme."

She didn't seem entirely surprised, as though she had anticipated such a move.

"Well then, Aoko, it seems it's your turn to step in."

"Can't do it," Aoko replied with a nonchalant shrug.

Touko froze, her expression souring. "What do you mean, 'can't do it'? Roy is in danger! Surely the rules don't apply to dreamscapes?"

"They do," Aoko admitted, letting out a frustrated sigh as she scratched the back of her head. "I can't intervene without a... nudge, you know? Something giving me the push to act. I've felt it before, twice actually, but this time, I don't sense anything urging me forward."

"Twice?" Touko frowned, her mind racing. "You've intervened twice before because of some mysterious force? And now it's absent?"

"Exactly."

The implications weren't lost on Touko. Her gut told her this "push" wasn't simple happenstance. But there was no time to dwell on that. Right now, Roy's survival was what mattered most.

Suddenly, a clear chime echoed through the house.

Ding-ding-ding.

The sound of wind chimes broke the silence, jolting everyone's attention.

"Someone's breached the barrier," Touko said grimly, her expression darkening. "At a time like this? Who could it be?"

The barrier surrounding the Aozaki residence was connected to wind chimes at the entrance, which rang whenever the protective wards were disturbed. With Roy incapacitated, Aoko restricted, and everyone else preoccupied, an intruder could spell disaster.

"I'll handle it."

Aoko pushed off from the doorway, heading toward the front courtyard. Though she couldn't take offensive action, self-defense was fair game, and as a mage who could manipulate time, her defensive capabilities were second to none.

The gate creaked open, revealing a Servant standing on the other side.

The figure exuded an aura of overwhelming malice, as if steeped in resentment from the depths of hell. Yet, surprisingly, they showed no hostility. Their weapon remained sheathed, and their gaze carried a curious humility.

"You are?" Aoko asked cautiously.

The Servant hesitated before bowing slightly. "May I come in?"

"...Are you serious?" Aoko blinked, utterly taken aback by the strange request. "You're a Servant, aren't you? You've fought Roy before. Why would I let you in?"

The Servant didn't lift their head. "I... I know how this looks. But Roy is in trouble, isn't he? I want to help him."

"You? Help him?"

"Yes. This isn't my Master's order. It's my personal decision," the Servant insisted, their tone earnest.

Aoko raised a skeptical eyebrow. "That's hardly a reason for me to trust you."

"Please!" The Servant lowered themselves further, their posture almost groveling. Despite the intense resentment clinging to them, their demeanor was pitifully meek.

"I swear I mean no harm. I was... compelled to come here by a force I can't explain. Something is guiding me to assist Roy. If you don't believe me—"

"Wait." Aoko held up a hand, her gaze sharpening. "What did you just say?"

The Servant blinked, confused. "That I was compelled by a force?"

"I see. That explains everything." Aoko let out a soft sigh, her earlier wariness melting into reluctant understanding.

"Come in."

The Servant hesitated, clearly not expecting such an easy acquiescence. Still, they wasted no time stepping into the courtyard. Following an invisible pull, they navigated through the house until they reached the main bedroom.

Inside, they found a group of women surrounding the unconscious Roy. The scene gave them pause.

Their expression twisted slightly, a mix of bewilderment and subtle disapproval. This is what he's been up to?

Before anyone could react, Touko's sharp voice broke the silence. "You... You're that Servant!"

She recognized the intruder immediately. Footage from her familiars had captured this Servant during their first confrontation with Roy.

"No time for introductions." The Servant brushed off Touko's alarm, walking toward an empty spot on the floor. "Send me into the dream world as well."

"What?" Touko blinked in disbelief.

The Servant knelt on a spare futon, closing their eyes as if preparing for battle. Their resolute demeanor left no room for argument.

"What are you even doing here? And how did Aoko let you in?" Touko demanded, her tone incredulous.

"It's fine, Touko," Aoko said, stepping into the room. She wore her signature lazy smile, though her eyes betrayed her own confusion. "She's here to help. Trust me on this one."

"...Fine." Though clearly reluctant, Touko set to work preparing the spell.

As she sent the Servant into the dream, she couldn't shake the feeling that she might come to regret this decision.

"Let's hope I didn't just make a huge mistake..."

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Chapter 84: Chapter 84: The Saintess



Within the dream, an illusory version of Fuyuki City.

A horde of werewolf-like beasts surged toward the barrier surrounding the park, wave after relentless wave, crashing like an ocean's tide.

Their claws raked and fangs snapped, sparks flying against the barrier's shimmering surface. The once-stable shield rippled and boiled, as though on the verge of collapse.

"This is ridiculous!"

Rin Tohsaka hurled gemstone after gemstone to reinforce the barrier, her voice a mix of frustration and disbelief.

"If this dream world is supposed to mimic reality, why are they allowed to cheat? How is it fair that they can summon endless monsters while we have to scrape by using every scrap of mana we have?"

Outside the barrier, a blue-clad figure darted through the sea of beasts like a blade cutting through silk.

Each of Saber Okita's strikes sent limbs flying, though no blood spilled. The beasts disintegrated into black smoke upon death, vanishing like remnants of a nightmare.

"That's not it!"

Illya's voice rang out as she unleashed threads of magical energy, forming shimmering swords that skewered the advancing beasts, alleviating some of Saber's burden.

"This isn't just the dream's logic at play. It must be Angra Mainyu's power. He embodies the evils of mankind—everything he touches becomes corrupted, even these creatures. That's why he can endlessly spawn these monsters!"

Dream-based spirits could indeed manipulate the dreamscape, but only by working within its established framework. If the rules of this world mirrored

reality, then Angra Mainyu's powers should also follow those same restrictions.

"This is likely a conceptual ability!"

"A conceptual ability?" Rin practically screeched, clutching her aching arm as she threw yet another gemstone.

"That just means they're impossible to kill off completely!"

In her desperation, Rin's composed demeanor had all but crumbled, leaving her ranting as she burned through her family's precious collection of gemstones.

Outside the barrier, Saber Okita found herself briefly overwhelmed, surrounded by beasts on all sides. Without hesitation, she leapt backward in a graceful arc, retreating into the safety of the barrier.

Breathing heavily, she snatched a handful of gemstones from the dwindling pile and joined Rin in bolstering the barrier.

"We're completely outnumbered. There's no way we can cut through this."

Illya stopped her offensive spells momentarily, her expression calm but her tone heavy with the weight of the situation.

"What we need now is either a teleportation spell or overwhelming firepower—something on the scale of a light cannon."

As she spoke, Illya glanced meaningfully at Saber Okita, her gaze filled with unspoken hope.

Caught off guard, Saber turned away, her cheeks flushing in embarrassment.

"...I'm sorry, but I don't have a light cannon."

Illya sighed deeply, her earlier optimism fading.

"Well, I suppose it was too much to ask."

Rin, however, couldn't help but groan.

"Seriously? You're a Saber-class Servant! The most well-rounded class in the whole system! And you don't even have one flashy attack? How did that happen?"

Illya was equally baffled. While she didn't fully understand Roy's thought process, she knew him well enough to realize he wasn't someone who made careless decisions. Yet, for some reason, he had summoned a Saber who lacked the raw firepower they desperately needed.

It didn't make sense.

Still, there was no time to dwell on Roy's motivations. Illya turned back to the gemstones, resigned to her task.

Meanwhile, Saber Okita resumed her routine of darting out to cut down monsters before retreating to rest, over and over. Each cycle brought the shimmering mountain of gemstones closer to depletion.

"Where's our reinforcement already?" Rin growled, her hands trembling as she tossed another gemstone. Her bloodshot eyes burned with frustration as she glared at the horde of beasts.

She wasn't just mad at the situation.

All those gemstones—those beautiful, priceless gemstones! She'd never even seen such a massive stockpile before, and now they were being wasted on these mindless beasts.

Her heart ached with every throw.

Okita opened her mouth to speak but froze, her face lighting up in relief.

"Reinforcements are here!"

Suddenly—

"Vrrrrmmm—!"

A radiant white light poured from the heavens, bathing the battlefield in divine purity.

The monsters howled and writhed under its glow, their twisted forms trembling violently. Some disintegrated outright, their bodies vanishing like smoke in the wind.

Descending through the light was a figure so radiant it seemed like an angel had arrived from the heavens themselves.

"Lancer...?" Okita stared in shock at the figure descending before them.

Rin and Illya stepped forward cautiously, equally stunned.

The young woman before them wore a deep blue nun's habit, reinforced with silver armor. In her hands, she carried a flag adorned with the sacred fleur-de-lis, standing tall and commanding as though she were a seasoned general.

Her resemblance to the Lancer they had previously encountered was uncanny. The only difference was her hair—no longer short and silver, it now cascaded in golden braids down her back.

"My name is Jeanne d'Arc. I've come to aid you in rescuing Roy."

Jeanne glanced down at her attire and, recognizing it, exhaled in relief. A warm, gentle smile spread across her face as she turned to them, her expression radiating kindness and serenity.

Okita, however, was speechless.

This was undoubtedly the same Lancer from before, though the overwhelming malice that had once surrounded her was gone. In its place was an aura of sanctity so radiant it felt almost blinding.

The holy light emanating from Jeanne pushed back the darkness, causing the beasts to falter.

Still, the monsters showed no signs of retreat. Bereft of self-preservation instincts, they surged forward, undeterred.

"Where is Roy now?" Jeanne asked, her voice resolute as she surveyed the battlefield.

"I know where he is!" Okita stepped forward confidently.

"But the monsters are too many, and we lack the firepower to clear a path. Do you have a light cannon? Anything to cut through them?"

Jeanne hesitated, her expression clouded.

"I... do have a powerful attack. But I can only use it once. If I use it here, I won't have the strength to reach Roy."

"Then it seems we're at an impasse."

A suave, melodic voice suddenly echoed around them, its source indiscernible.

"Who's there?!" Rin and Illya whirled around, their guards up.

Okita's eyes widened in recognition.

That voice... Could it be Rider? The one Roy had forbidden from interfering?

"Whirr!"

Without warning, a crimson magic circle materialized beneath their feet.

There was no sign, no warning—just an instantaneous shift.

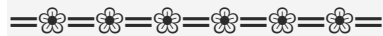
"By the decree of Heaven, go forth!"

The world spun around them, and in the blink of an eye, they vanished from the park. Even the precious mountain of gemstones disappeared along with them.

When the light faded, a man clad in ornate robes appeared where they had once stood. His fox-like grin radiated satisfaction as he gazed at the empty battlefield.

"So even magi and Servants can feel that mysterious 'push,' hmm? This world truly is fascinating."

With a laugh, Taigong Wang turned and vanished into the shadows.



Chapter 85: Chapter 85: The Crimson Saintess



In a void of absolute darkness, a small bubble floated aimlessly.

Inside the bubble, fleeting images played out like projections—some pitch-black, some vividly bright, others featuring indistinct figures flashing by. The scenes spanned an endless stretch of time, from beginning to end.

After watching the entire display within the bubble, Angra Mainyu rested his chin on his hand, deep in thought.

"Do you enjoy prying into others' pasts this much?"

Beside the bubble stood a cross, steadfast and immovable.

Bound to the cross by ropes, Roy stared coldly at Angra Mainyu, his disdain for the creature evident in his voice.

Nearby, the Nightmare Curse Spirit loomed ominously, its countless eyes fixated on Roy like something out of a horror movie, sending shivers down the spine.

"Well, perhaps a little," Angra Mainyu admitted with a chuckle. "But don't get the wrong idea. I have no interest in just anyone's past. It's only because this is yours that I'm intrigued. Can't you appreciate my dedication?"

"Disgusting. Would you kindly cut out your tongue?"

"My, how cold," Angra Mainyu sighed, though his smug expression betrayed how much he was enjoying himself.

Roy's stomach churned in revulsion. Suppressing his disgust wasn't in his nature, so he made no effort to hold back his sharp tongue.

"You're even worse than I imagined. Did humanity evolve while you were hiding in a cave? Pretending to be human must be exhausting for you. Do us all a favor and stay indoors—civilization doesn't need creatures like you wandering the streets."

A barrage of barbed insults rolled effortlessly off Roy's tongue, leaving Angra Mainyu momentarily stunned.

As the embodiment of malice, Angra Mainyu wasn't particularly bothered by verbal abuse. What truly amazed him was Roy's sheer proficiency in hurling insults. How many books on mockery had this man studied to be this fluent?

"Enough of that." Angra Mainyu's interest waned, and he waved dismissively.

"Let's get back to the point. Even after delving into your past, I still can't understand—how do you suppress the malice inside you? Is it because of something that girl, Jeanne, once said to you? That can't be it, right?"

Jeanne, with her saintly aura, was like a flawless saint devoid of selfish desires or shadows. Her words and actions were beyond the grasp of ordinary humans.

But Angra Mainyu's instincts told him that Jeanne's words weren't what had held Roy back.

As the embodiment of malice, he was acutely attuned to such things. He could see that while Roy's words and actions were steeped in malice, the man's core beliefs—the foundation of his being—were far more complex.

Yet, Angra Mainyu couldn't discern what lay beyond the malice. It confounded him.

"I refuse to answer."

Roy cut him off bluntly, his voice filled with disdain.

"And frankly, I don't need to. If anyone should be worried right now, it's you."

Angra Mainyu tilted his head, puzzled.

The current situation was clear: Roy was his prisoner, and the would-be rescuers were trapped in a dream world under his control. What could Roy possibly mean by that?

Before he could respond, his expression froze.

"Buzz—!"

As if responding to Roy's words, a crimson magic circle suddenly materialized beneath them, expanding in an instant.

From the glowing array emerged a group of strikingly different figures: Miss Okita, the twin-tailed mage, and the white-haired loli—familiar faces to Roy.

But what caught him off guard was the last figure—a golden-haired, blue-eyed battle nun.

"Jeanne? Why is she here?" Roy murmured, momentarily stunned by the unexpected arrival of this particular reinforcements.

"She came to the Aozaki residence of her own accord, insisting on entering the dream to rescue you," Taigong Wang's playful voice echoed in Roy's mind. "And, oh, her concern for you seemed quite genuine. Interesting, isn't it?"

Ever since entering the dream world, Taigong Wang had maintained a connection with Roy, acting as his hidden ace. The timely transfer of Okita and the others was part of a prearranged plan—a wild card reserved for the right moment.

Inside the void, Jeanne's gaze immediately sought Roy.

Her expression was a complex mix of relief, guilt, and a trace of tender sorrow.

As soon as she arrived, Okita charged straight at the Nightmare Curse Spirit, her blade cutting through the void with relentless precision. She aimed to neutralize the creature before it could react.

Meanwhile, Rin and Illya worked quickly to free Roy from the cross.

Once on the ground, Roy rolled his wrists, then looked up sharply, his eyes locking onto Jeanne's.

In that fleeting moment, her conflicted gaze betrayed everything—reluctance, hesitation, and a guilt she couldn't hide.

"Jeanne..." Roy's voice was low, carrying an unmistakable edge.

Her eyes widened momentarily before she averted her gaze, flustered, as if trying to escape his piercing stare.

"Hmph." Roy snorted coldly.

"Is that guilt I see? How utterly pathetic. Do you really think 'sorry' is enough?" His voice rose several octaves, slicing through the tension like a blade.

Jeanne's shoulders trembled at his sharp words. She bit her lip, her face flushed with embarrassment, as if wishing she could disappear entirely.

"Ang... Angra Mainyu!" Jeanne suddenly raised her voice, attempting to deflect the attention.

But her stammer betrayed her, and the strength in her tone faltered.

"I don't go by that name." Angra Mainyu retorted nonchalantly, though he frowned in annoyance at the turn of events.

"Still, I didn't expect the Saintess herself to show up. Talk about the worst possible matchup. What a disaster..."

"You won't be allowed to wreak havoc any longer!" Jeanne's voice regained its composure as she forced herself into a battle-ready state.

Without hesitation, she drew a gleaming silver sword from her hip and slashed her palm, crimson blood dripping onto the blade. She knelt, clasped her hands in prayer, and whispered a solemn invocation.

"Lord, I offer this body unto Your will—"

Blinding flames erupted around her, pure and radiant like sunlight, forming a lotus of fiery petals that spread in every direction.

At the heart of the flames, Jeanne's form transformed, adorned in immaculate armor radiating an aura of divinity.

Her voice rang out, resounding with unshakable faith.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day, they pour forth speech; night after night, they reveal knowledge.

Not a word is spoken, not a sound is heard, yet their voice goes out into all the earth. From the ends of the heavens to their farthest reaches, I go where I must. My life is but a shadow, my strength not my own, but I shall not falter. Lord, I offer this body unto Your will—where despair reigns, hope shall rise!"

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Chapter 86: Chapter 86: The Intent of the Root



"Who starts off with their ultimate move?!"

Angolmois gasped in disbelief.

The Scarlet Lotus Saint (La Pucelle)—a manifestation of Jeanne d'Arc's final moments—was a Noble Phantasm that embodied the flames which consumed her. A conceptual crystallization of those flames, it functioned as a subtype of a Reality Marble. However, activating it came at the cost of Jeanne's own life, making it an ultimate strike with catastrophic destructive potential.

But this wasn't just any fire. These flames selectively targeted only those Jeanne deemed necessary to defeat, sparing everything else entirely from harm.

Angolmois had always been confident in his own fragility. Forget a Noble Phantasm like this—even a casual strike from Jeanne was something he doubted he could withstand.

Panicked, he spun around and bolted, eyes darting toward the Nightmare Curse Spirit. His plan? The same old trick—use the Curse Spirit's abilities to escape.

"Ah... hopeless..."

The moment he turned, reality set in. This game was over.

The conceptual flames had already consumed the Nightmare Curse Spirit before Angolmois could even act.

Jeanne had instinctively recognized the source of this nightmare-filled domain as the Curse Spirit. Whether it was divine guidance, intuition, or some inexplicable force, she had targeted it first.

Even Okita Souji, who had been battling the spirit in close quarters, was startled by the encroaching flames. But when she realized they carried no heat or hostility toward her, only a comforting warmth, she quickly grasped their nature—this was an ultimate attack that automatically distinguished friend from foe.

The Curse Spirit was devoured by the flames, unable to utter even a dying scream. With its demise, the surrounding dreamscape shattered like a fractured mirror.

As for Angolmois, he merely shrugged in resignation, standing still as the flames engulfed him. Without resistance, his figure dissolved into nothingness.

Jeanne herself vanished from the dreamscape as well, her life sacrificed in unleashing her Noble Phantasm.

"Such a fleeting visit."

Roy's cold smirk deepened as he gazed at the spot where Jeanne had disappeared.

She ran fast enough, indeed.

A dream was a dream, and reality was reality. With the Nightmare Curse Spirit gone, the events of the dream would no longer affect the real world. Jeanne, back in reality, should have already awakened by now.

"Wow... It's finally over!"

Rin Tohsaka let out a long sigh of relief, leaning on her knees as if her strength had been drained.

"Save your words for when we're awake," Roy said.

"Fair enough."

"Agreed," added Illyasviel.

Though it was just a dream, the exhaustion they felt was all too real. Without further complaint, Rin and Illya departed from the dreamscape, leaving only Roy and Okita Souji behind.

The space around them warped unpredictably—a sign that their time in the dream was nearing its end.

"Rider, is that Curse Spirit confirmed dead?"

Roy adjusted the black-rimmed glasses that had suddenly appeared in his hand, now perched neatly on his face.

"Absolutely."

"Good."

Roy exhaled slowly, a faint tension easing from his shoulders.

Angolmois's fate was irrelevant—being tied to the Holy Grail made him nearly impossible to kill. But the Nightmare Curse Spirit? That was a different story entirely. Eliminating it had been non-negotiable, even if it meant enduring the violation of having his past scrutinized.

Once alone, Taikoubou materialized before Roy with an amused expression, his tone as casual as ever.

"Thanks to Jeanne's self-sacrificing Noble Phantasm, the Curse Spirit is confirmed gone. I must say, her timing spared me from exposure yet again. Twice now, in fact!"

"Indeed. Seems our luck is holding strong," Roy replied, his voice carrying a trace of relief.

Okita Souji nodded in agreement. The first crisis had been resolved by Aoko, and now the second by Jeanne.

Though Taikoubou's presence meant neither had been true threats, keeping his existence hidden had been the highest priority.

"Luck, huh? I'd like to agree, but, Master... I don't think this is mere luck," Taikoubou said, his sly grin widening.

"What do you mean?"

"I overheard some interesting tidbits during our little ordeal. Both Aoko and Jeanne were compelled by some mysterious force to aid you. This wasn't Aoko's first time, either—it was her second. And here's the kicker: I confirmed just now that magicians, like us celestial beings, are forbidden from intervening on this world's surface."

"...Forbidden by what?"

"By the very foundation of existence—Akasha, the Root itself. Hard to wrap your head around, isn't it?"

Even Taikoubou's perpetually smug expression faltered slightly, his frustration evident.

Roy's breath caught. He processed the implications slowly, his brow furrowing in thought.

"What's the Root playing at?"

"It gets stranger," Taikoubou continued. "The Root doesn't normally interfere. It's the ultimate observer, detached from all things. And yet... something compelled Jeanne and Aoko to break its rules. If anything could push magicians to defy such restrictions, it would have to be the Root itself."

The idea was absurd—a contradiction that seemed impossible. Yet it was the only explanation that fit.

"This world wasn't abandoned—it was chosen."

Taikoubou's words carried weight, as if he were sharing a revelation long hidden. Even the gods and celestial beings had been kept in the dark, their curiosity about this world heightened by the mystery surrounding it.

"So, what are we looking at here?" Roy asked, a trace of dread in his voice.

"A stage," Taikoubou mused. "A stage prepared for something monumental—a world-scale event orchestrated by the Root itself. But what that event is, I can't even begin to fathom."

He sighed, frustrated by his inability to unravel the puzzle.

"That's assuming your logic even applies," Okita Souji interjected, shrugging nonchalantly. "We're talking about the Root, aren't we? It's supposed to be unfathomable. Maybe we're better off not knowing."

"Hah! Simplicity really is a virtue," Taikoubou said, laughing heartily.

"Rider, keep pushing your luck, and I'll show you just how 'simple' I can be!" Okita retorted, baring a glinting smile as her petite frame bristled with mock indignation.

Roy ignored their banter, lost in his thoughts.

The Root had chosen this world as a stage, and for some reason, it had singled him out.

So, what does the Root truly want?

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Chapter 87: Chapter 87: Approaching the Endgame



[T/N: Do check out my new book— "Diary Of Service Club: Helping The Elf Princess" 📖]

The dim, sunless chamber was steeped in shadows, illuminated only by the ominous red glow of a massive magic circle set deep within a volcanic crater. Like a solitary beacon amidst a desolate wasteland, its eerie light cast long, jagged shadows across the cavern walls.

This was the subterranean hollow beneath Mount Enzō—the very heart of the Great Holy Grail.

In this cursed domain, even the most accomplished mages of the Mage's Association would struggle to traverse, for the air itself seethed with malevolence, threatening to consume all intruders.

"Looks like someone's been having a bit too much fun."

Standing at the edge of the volcanic crater was a middle-aged man garbed in priestly robes. At first glance, his demeanor seemed tranquil, but there was a peculiar glint in his eyes—a blend of malice and amusement.

Moments later, as though sensing a presence, the man's lips curved into an unsettling smile.

"You've returned, I see."

From within the Great Holy Grail's magic circle, a shadow began to ooze forth like a viscous liquid. Slowly, it coalesced into a humanoid form, its features obscured save for two glowing eyes piercing through the darkness.

Angra Mainyu.

Grinning broadly, the shadow greeted the priest as though greeting an old neighbor after a long journey.

"Yo, Father Kirei! Were you waiting for my grand return?"

"To be precise," the priest—none other than Kirei Kotomine—replied with a faint chuckle, "I was waiting for you and the Nightmare Spirit. But alas, only you returned."

His tone carried a hint of reproach, as though lamenting wasted potential.

"That Nightmare Spirit... If properly utilized, it could have created some truly delightful chaos. Such a shame you squandered it so recklessly."

Angra Mainyu flinched slightly. He could already envision the grotesque scenarios Kirei might have concocted with the spirit's power.

"...Let me ask you this. If the Nightmare Spirit had survived, what exactly were you planning to do with it?"

"Oh, nothing too elaborate," Kirei mused, his voice betraying a perverse glee.

"Perhaps send it into the dreams of that homunculus Roy and Rin Tohsaka. Force Roy to slaughter Rin in a fit of madness, provoke Rin into retaliating, and drive a wedge so deep between them that their bond shatters entirely. A little betrayal here, some manipulation there, and voilà—self-destruction."

The sinister grin on Kirei's face widened, the sheer joy of such cruelty lighting up his features.

Angra Mainyu's eyelid twitched uncontrollably.

Even after collaborating with this man, he still couldn't fathom how deranged Kirei truly was.

But alas, the Nightmare Spirit was gone—obliterated beyond recovery. As tragic as it was to lose such a rare and powerful entity, Angra Mainyu felt no regret. The gains from this venture far outweighed the loss.

"And what about your plan to find someone to replace me?" Kirei's voice broke the silence, his gaze fixed squarely on Angra Mainyu. "That homunculus, perhaps?"

Ten years ago, Angra Mainyu had exploited Kirei's innate malice, unleashing the entirety of his own evil through the Great Holy Grail to engulf the world in flames.

Yet Kirei was not a simple villain. Unlike mindless evil, his twisted psyche thrived on pleasure—a sensation he derived solely from the despair and suffering of others. To him, humanity was both a toy and a necessity. Without it, his pursuit of pleasure would cease.

This subconscious desire had influenced the Great Holy Grail, which, instead of annihilating all life, had left a remnant of humanity alive. The world was devastated, but not entirely lost—a calculated compromise reflecting Kirei's distorted will.

Angra Mainyu, however, was not satisfied.

Born as the incarnation of all the world's malice, his very essence demanded complete and utter annihilation of humankind.

And so, he had turned to Roy.

"Yes, I sought out that homunculus," Angra Mainyu admitted, scratching his cheek with a troubled expression. "But I miscalculated. He would've made the perfect Master—his hatred alone could have reshaped this world. But no

matter how I tempted him, he refused to cooperate. And the strangest part? He's absurdly resilient, even when I pry into his past. I can't figure out how he suppresses his malice so completely. Could it be... he still harbors a shred of goodwill toward humanity?"

Angra Mainyu shook his head, perplexed.

Roy's desire to destroy the world was genuine. The death of that girl, Jeanne, should have stoked his hatred to unimaginable heights. Yet instead of succumbing to evil, Roy had buried it deep within himself.

It defied logic.

Before Angra Mainyu could dwell further, a booming voice echoed through the cavern.

"Hah! So this is the extent of the so-called 'All the World's Evil'? Reduced to fretting over the duality of human nature like a petty mortal!"

A blinding golden radiance descended, accompanied by a figure so dazzling it seemed as though the sun itself had materialized.

The man's flowing blond hair shimmered like molten gold, his scarlet eyes exuding the dangerous allure of a serpent. Clad in resplendent golden armor, his very presence radiated an aura of dominance and grandeur.

Gilgamesh.

The King of Heroes.

Angra Mainyu's lips twitched into a strained smile.

"Oh, it's you. What wisdom does His Majesty wish to impart this time?"

Despite his sarcastic tone, Angra Mainyu's posture remained casual, as though Gilgamesh's presence was merely an inconvenience.

"Hah! Foolish shadow!" Gilgamesh scoffed, his laughter reverberating like thunder. "Let me ask you this—when faced with equal amounts of good and evil, which side do you think humanity will favor?"

"Evil, obviously," Angra Mainyu replied without hesitation.

Gilgamesh's crimson eyes gleamed with approval.

"Exactly. Humanity clings to the facade of goodness, yet it is their malice that truly defines them. Shower them with blessings, and they may offer gratitude. But strip those blessings away, add a touch of cruelty, and they'll curse you with a venomous hatred that obliterates all memory of your kindness. Even beasts are not so base! Humanity, in its essence, is a vile and wretched existence."

He sneered, his disdain for humanity palpable.

"And so I ask you, shadow, what force could possibly suppress a malice powerful enough to destroy the world?"

Angra Mainyu fell silent, unable to answer.

Gilgamesh clicked his tongue, his expression one of profound disappointment.

"It is neither simple goodness nor shallow righteousness," he declared, turning away. "But something far deeper, far heavier, and infinitely more sorrowful..."

Without another word, Gilgamesh departed, leaving behind an air of cryptic finality.

Kirei, meanwhile, wore an expression of thoughtful intrigue, while Angra Mainyu stuck out his tongue at Gilgamesh's retreating figure.

"Seriously, can these riddlers just drop dead already?"

Despite his grumbling, Angra Mainyu's gaze turned toward the distant horizon.

"The endgame is here," he muttered. "Let's see what lies buried in your heart, Roy—the one thing even the malice of the world cannot suppress..."

