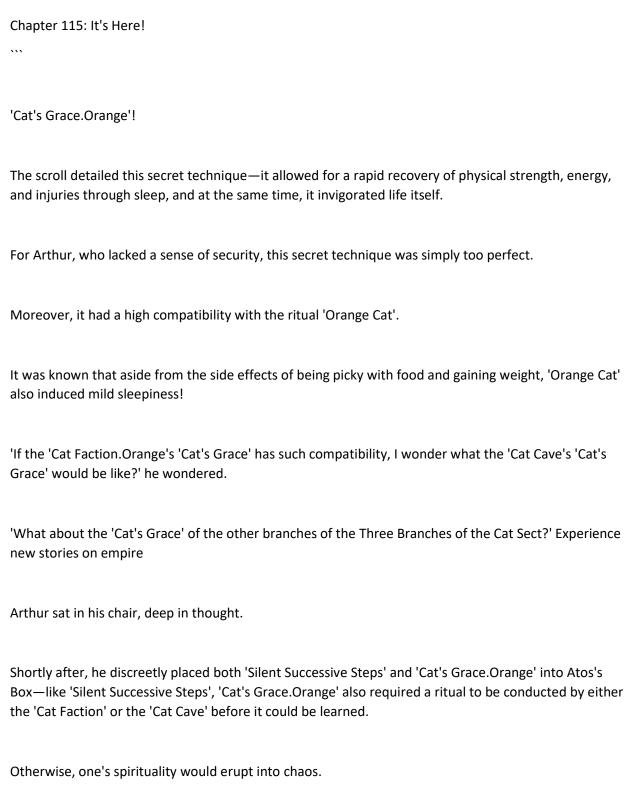
Great Master 115



'Whiskers, oh whiskers!' he sighed inwardly, looking at Pendragon, who was sleeping in the Cat's Nest on his back in a 'C' shape, full of anticipation—when he collected six whiskers and completed the 'Orange Cat' ritual, it would be the time to solidify his position as the heir to 'Cat Faction.Black'. However, in order to truly become the contemporary Black Cat of 'Cat Faction.Black', he must get his hands on the Core Mystical Arts 'Necromancy' of 'Cat Faction.Black'! 'Where should I start?' he pondered. Arthur's thoughts unconsciously drifted to the Countess. During the Seven Years' War's witch hunting, the 'Black Cat' was besieged by numerous forces, and the legacy of 'Cat Faction.Black' was naturally divided among the major powers of the time; the fact that the Countess of South Los could produce 'Silent Successive Steps' was the best proof of that. Therefore, she might truly possess the Core Mystical Arts 'Necromancy' of 'Cat Faction.Black', or other Cat Faction or even Cat Cave Mystical Arts. Otherwise, she would not have easily offered 'Silent Successive Steps'—a Core secret technique; according to human nature, only those who possess something better can confidently offer something of a lesser level. Of course, not everyone is like this. There are those sincere individuals who will give away all they have. But Arthur was certain that the Countess was not one of them. 'Glory Potion!'

'Cat Faction.Black's secret techniques!'

'You are indeed a treasure!' With such admiration, Arthur's gaze returned to the four ingredients: Sunflower, Moon Grass, Golden Acorn, and Vampire Fang. The Vampire Fang resembled a pale canine tooth. The Golden Acorn was even more familiar; Arthur had five of them here. Moon Grass looked a bit like wild grass by the roadside, but it had a faint luminescence, and when placed in a test tube, it somewhat resembled tiny fireflies circling around wild grass. The Sunflower was like a miniaturized sunflower, with a flame burning in its center—of the four ingredients, aside from the Vampire Fang, Arthur was most concerned about this Sunflower. Not only because it was the most valuable, but also because the Sunflower was essential for the Fragmentary Griffin Training Method. Even if it were just the incomplete Griffin Training Method, it was enough for Arthur to breed an exceptionally good mount—having carefully read through its content, although it lacked key parts of the later stages, the initial breeding methods were sufficient for Arthur to acquire a steed far beyond his expectations. This was of utmost importance to a Spirit Medium who was always conscious of their own safety. 'I'll have to find time to pick out a fine horse at the stables!' Arthur thought to himself and then put away all the ingredients.

With Marinda by his side, it was natural for Arthur to refrain from practicing mystical arts or making any plans; he slightly adjusted the pillow behind him, propped his legs up on the desk, and closed his eyes—

the candle was immediately blown out, leaving only the oil lamp burning faintly in the 'Spirit Medium Parlor'.

In the dim light, the Spirit Medium Parlor became even quieter, with only two evenly spaced and prolonged breaths, no, three including Pendragon's.

At daybreak, Arthur woke up abruptly when Pendragon made another leap and caught the confused cat in his arms.

"The same tricks are useless against a 'Spirit Medium'."

...

Arthur chuckled softly.

He did not lower his voice because Marinda had woken up the moment Pendragon stepped out of the Cat's Nest, stretching and yawning.

Watching Arthur stroke the cat on the head with his hand, the lady commented directly.

"Childish," she said.

As she spoke, the lady tapped the ash from her pipe into the ashtray, refilled it with fresh tobacco, and then, while smoking, picked up the ashtray and walked towards the small courtyard of No. 2 Cork Street—outside the fence gate, the loyal coachman Edwin had brought breakfast and... a complete set of toiletries.

The breakfast was made by Mary, Marinda's most trusted cook, and consisted of honey bacon, beer sausage, fried eggs, salad, white bread, and milk.

Of course, what pleased Arthur the most were the egg tarts and puff pastries—he watched Marinda eat one of each before he started.

This action greatly irritated Marinda. "I studied poison mixing on the islands; only after smoking the pipe can one eat this food without being poisoned!" "While you were washing up, I took two puffs—tasted quite nice," Arthur said without even looking up. "Huh," Marinda scoffed coldly. The pipe had indeed been on the dining table while she was freshening up, but she was certain that Arthur hadn't touched her pipe—she would have definitely noticed if something of hers had been tainted with someone else's saliva. "Typical 'cat,' always so edgy and cautious," she commented as she rose to her feet. She had many things to attend to each day and had no time to bicker with Arthur here. However, before leaving, the lady admonished him. "Don't touch my toiletries; I'll be back in the evening!" she said. After speaking, the lady stepped out of No. 2 Cork Street, greeted the surprised neighbors like a hostess, and then boarded the carriage. Of course, the scene caused quite the stir among the neighbors of Cork Street. The unlatched door allowed Arthur to hear everything clearly—he knew that Marinda had done this deliberately, also wanting him to hear the neighbors' comments.

And why would she do this?

She wanted to make him feel embarrassed and uneasy. "Childish!" Arthur remarked quietly, yet in his heart, he pondered Marinda's 'obstinance' concerning Isidore! Or perhaps... Marinda had some clue or information unknown to him, which could confirm that one of the founders of the 'Mouse Council' would surely seek trouble with her or him? Drinking milk sweetened with an extra spoonful of sugar, Arthur sat at the dining table, deep in thought. He understood well the principles of eradicating evil and that there's no such thing as a thief-proof plan. 'Serve as bait and then hook the adversary?' he thought, but then shook his head. The other party was not foolish, especially after being warned by the Countess; they were like a frightened bird and definitely would not be easily lured. It had to be natural; it had to make the adversary believe they had created the conditions themselves. As Arthur narrowed his eyes, pondering how to achieve this, Malz jumped down from the police carriage, pushed open the door of No. 2 Cork Street, and burst in excitedly. "We've got a lead!" he exclaimed. "Look at this!" the Police Chief said as he took out a cheque from his pocket and placed it in front of Arthur.

Arthur was taken aback, but then he guessed what it was.