

Great Master 133

Chapter 133: Checks and Balances x Agent x Pie Drawing

"I'm not!"

"I didn't!"

"Stop talking nonsense!"

Arthur flatly denied all three accusations and quickly shut the door.

"Hahaha!"

"Harris has told me everything—he fell for Isidore's scheme, completely focusing on you, allowing Isidore's 'scent' to fade away."

Marinda laughed without any semblance of self-image, her body rocking back and forth.

"Tch."

That sound came from Arthur's mouth.

"Are you admitting it?"

Marinda asked eagerly.

Arthur didn't respond, heading straight to the kitchen—the rainstorm outside had lessened, but the autumn rain had already brought a chill to the whole of South Los.

On such a night, the best way to keep warm was naturally hot pot.

But with ingredients lacking, Arthur had to settle for the next best thing.

Your journey continues on empire

He opted for hot cocoa with added milk and sugar.

Of course, he only prepared his own.

"What a stingy man."

Seeing only one cup of hot cocoa, Marinda curled her lip and then entered the kitchen herself to start making hot cocoa—behind her, Arthur's eyes showed a trace of surprise.

Not surprised that Marinda would enter the kitchen.

But surprised by Marinda's recent display of excitement.

Could his random urination have actually thrilled the illustrious Lady of the Long Night to such an extent?

She must be ill.

Arthur guessed.

However, when Marinda turned around, Arthur simply raised his hand, using the cup to cover his face.

Marinda seemed not to notice these actions, sipping her hot cocoa while saying.

"Harris came to see me, attempting to mend the relationship between you and him—of course, from my perspective, I'd rather you two maintain a strained relationship."

As she spoke, Marinda's lips pursed slightly downward.

Then, without waiting for Arthur to ask, Marinda volunteered.

"Harris will take over Rat Tail Alley."

Rat Tail Alley, the core of Rat Street, was the preferred secret assembly spot for Mystic Side persons of South Los, aside from Marinda's auctions.

Even more so, many favored it for its discretion.

Because it allowed secrecy.

And because of its chaos.

The former ensured that individual identities could remain confidential.

The latter meant murder for loot—greedy individuals wielding blades of greed, seizing objects of their avarice.

And as the Mouse Council existed in name only, Rat Tail Alley's secret assembly should logically have been disbanded, yet Harris had taken over as its new overseer.

Undoubtedly, this was with the approval of the Countess.

Or rather, it was her doing.

Why?

Naturally, to balance out Marinda's 'Salon of the Lady of the Long Night'—the Countess would not allow a monopoly within her territory.

Unless...

It was her own business.

Arthur paid no heed to Marinda's frustrations, as the young Spirit Medium considered what Harris continuing to run Rat Tail Alley could bring him.

Firstly, Wiggins could gain a certain level of support on Rat Street outside Rat Tail Alley.

Secondly, there was a chance to acquire some fine Mystic Side goods—not by buying from Harris, as Arthur believed that anything legally available for purchase was likely the Count's chosen and permitted wares.

What he needed were the unchecked items.

Those bringing goods to the secret assembly for sale were who he cared about.

Preferably with malice.

Thievery or foul play?

Dirty deals?

No, no, no!

That was too crass.

He preferred to think of it as 'robbing the rich to aid the poor'.

To achieve this, he was willing to mend his relationship with Harris, and at the same time, he needed to cultivate an 'Agent' who would keep an eye on The Gathering at all times, preferably one who could own a fixed store.

Of course, establishing a store on Rat Tail Alley would take some time.

However, the 'Agent' Arthur had in mind was a perfect fit.

Wiggins!

This Golden Finger was smart, alert, and a permanent resident of Rat Street, simply the ideal choice.

As for not being a Mystic Side Person?

For Arthur, it was a priority that Wiggins was not a Mystic Side Person!

If Wiggins were a Mystic Side Person, Arthur would hesitate.

He couldn't be certain whether Wiggins, upon finding something good, would inform him or claim it for himself.

But now?

He had no such concerns.

Wiggins wouldn't know what the seller was bringing.

But Wiggins knew that the sellers could be extremely dangerous.

Therefore, Wiggins would be very clear about what to do—find a suitable seller and notify him as quickly as possible.

With this in mind, Arthur took a sip of his hot cocoa.

"Is this why Harris is so eager to prove himself?"

Arthur recalled the look of one of the founding members of the Mouse Council from that afternoon in 'Tate's Wand Store,' who had fixed his gaze on him relentlessly.

"That's just one reason!"

"It's also because..."

Isidore has something of vital importance on him!"

As Marinda spoke, she sized up Arthur.

Arthur just rolled his eyes.

"Don't test me!"

The item of vital importance could only be the Hercules' Key or the Crown of the Rat King, both of which were in Arthur's possession, but he would never admit it.

"Hehe, just a reasonable suspicion!"

Marinda laughed, not at all embarrassed as she smoothly changed the subject.

"Lord Countess has heard about your performance in the Swan District, and she admires your reactions and decisiveness. She has promised that if you can become the Champion of the South Los Swordsmanship Competition, she can confer upon you the title of 'Knight'!"

Marinda spoke earnestly.

Arthur, however, was muttering to himself.

Here we go! It has begun!

Finally, it has started!

The capitalist is baiting the hardworking laborer with visions of reward!

I knew the Silent Successive Steps weren't that easy to get!

First they give you a piece of candy, then they dangle the bigger carrot!

"Are you thinking something impolite?"

Marinda looked at Arthur skeptically.

Though she didn't have an Omnivorous Talent and couldn't quantify attributes or skills, this woman's Eagle Eye and Insight skills were assuredly not low-level.

Arthur didn't bother to conceal this and even intentionally showed a trace of dissatisfaction, which she noticed.

The squeaky wheel gets the grease!

Knowing this, Arthur wasn't going to stay silent.

He needed to adequately express his discontent, for only then could he attain satisfaction.

So, faced with Marinda's question, Arthur sighed softly.

"It's just different from what I expected."

"You don't expect to receive the 'Knight' title and acquire the complete Swift Bird Swordsmanship at the same time, do you?"

Impossible!

Although 'Knights' to some extent are seen as 'Nobles' and can enjoy various privileges just like other Nobles, and are allowed to trade Family Sword Techniques, obtaining the full swordsmanship set all at once would still be censured by other nobles.

You may choose one from among the technique, breathing method, or meditation method, and then, trade your Meritorious Service for the remaining two."

Can one trade 'Family Sword Technique' by having Noble status?!

Upon hearing Marinda's words, Arthur was taken aback, as he wasn't aware of this particular advantage of Noble status, but he pretended as if he knew.

And, he wanted to know more.

The next moment, his Lv5 Bluff skill started flickering again.

Arthur set down his hot cocoa and, after a slight pause, spoke in a soft voice—

"You know, these are not what concern me."