

Great Master 22

Chapter 22 Performance!

Boom!

The monster struck the door of No. 2 Cork Street once again, and Arthur was pushed back once more.

He lowered his head to look at his bleeding palms, filled with disbelief.

But with this collision, the monster had completely shaken off its constraints. Rather than attempting to ram the door again after seeing the Knight's Sword shoot through the firing hole, it grabbed the door frame with both hands and began pulling backward with force.

Creak!

In the midst of the grating noise, the door frame slowly dislodged from the wall.

Eventually—

Boom!

The door, along with the frame, was torn off by the monster.

This time, without the need for a Peeping Mirror, Arthur could see everything clearly.

The creature, shrouded in darkness, seemed unable to stop its momentum in time; it stumbled backward, dragging the door along, until it finally came to a halt outside No. 2 Cork Street's courtyard.

The monster had fallen in a sprawl.

It appeared quite clumsy.

This made its words even more credible.

Arthur in the hallway didn't spend much more time observing the scene; he quickly retreated.

It was not a flight, but perseverance!

"Three minutes!"

"Just three minutes is all I need!"

Arthur chanted to himself, then proceeded not only to activate the room's machinery but also to take out weapons and equipment from a secret compartment.

A setup to stop the monster by all means possible!

And in his heart, he was resolutely thinking—

Three minutes!

Delay for three minutes!

That's my way out!

It's my only way!

What Arthur said aloud and what he thought deep inside reached an unprecedented unity,

Then, naturally, came action—

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Arthur adjusted his breathing as he wrapped explosives around his body.

At the same time, with a sword in his left hand and a firearm in his right, he was determined to fight to the end.

But just as Arthur aimed the barrel of his firearm at the monster, preparing to pull the trigger again, the creature in the night burst out laughing.

"Hahaha!"

"Without the 'door's' protection, do you think your little tricks will still work?"

The fallen figure stood up, tearing off the door still clinging to its body.

At that moment, Arthur pulled the trigger.

Boom!

The bullet, propelled by gunpowder, shot out of the firearm's barrel.

Arthur could see the bullet clearly.

Because the bullet had stopped, frozen in front of the firearm's muzzle.

Before Arthur could react, a pressure comparable to a mountain suddenly weighed upon him.

Instantly, Arthur couldn't move at all.

Just barely maintaining his upright stance, he was already exerting all his strength.

And under his gaze, the bullet suspended in midair began to disintegrate.

Then, so did No. 2 Cork Street.

Break apart!

Everything began to shatter!

The world around Arthur seemed like a broken mirror, all of it turning into fragments, and behind those shards was an endless darkness.

A darkness indistinguishable from the one enveloping the monster.

As the two dark mists touched and merged, the creature's form began to rapidly expand, growing as large as a hill in a single breath.

Meanwhile, Arthur, pulled from the remnants of the fragments, was brought in front of the monster. As the firearm flew out of his hand, it too instantly turned into shards.

With narrowed eyes, Arthur took a quick look around and clenched his teeth.

Not to endure pain, but to keep himself from 'wild thoughts'; in the enemy's 'home field,' no amount of caution was too much.

So, he needed to stay focused!

Focused on the thought of 'surviving three minutes'!

As the fragments of No. 2 Cork Street left more and more scars on Arthur's body, by the time he reached the monster, he was already an unrecognizable mess of flesh, his whole body pressed in front of the monster's feet.

"Come on, struggle!"

"Never give up!"

The monster's mocking, taunting voice echoed in this dark space.

But the pressed Arthur on the ground seemed not to think at all; head first and arms straining, he tried to stand up again.

With each attempt, fresh blood spewed from the wounds on Arthur's body, the pain surging like a tide, assaulting his nerves.

Such pain was enough to make anyone collapse.

But Arthur appeared numb to it, just biting down on his teeth, trying to stand up over and over—as if to say—

If you give up, you really die.

If you don't give up, there's still a chance.

Even if every bone in his body were crushed, he wouldn't give up; he had to seek an opportunity.

He did not want to die!

After all, it only took three minutes!

Endure three minutes!

And he could leave!

"Hahaha!"

The monster laughed even more joyously, subtly adjusting the oppressive feeling it had intentionally controlled, wanting to give Arthur even more of a chance.

To let this insect in front of it taste more hope.

Only then could it have its full enjoyment.

As for three minutes?

Clearly a trap!

Of course, it was mostly for toying with its prey.

Was there anything that made it happier than a prey drowned in despair?

That was to give the prey hope first.

Huff, huff!

With heavy breaths through his nose, Arthur could clearly feel the pressure on him lightening, already weaker than the limit he had just shown.

If he exerted his full strength, he could easily break free from this bind.

But Arthur wasn't in a hurry.

He knew there was only one chance.

Now?

The opportunity wasn't ripe yet!

Not enough!

Huff pant, huff pant.

After several struggles, which consumed a great deal of Arthur's physical strength and coupled with the continuous loss of fresh blood, Arthur was not just breathing heavily through his nose, his mouth was also wide open as he gasped for air, his entire body looking as if it had drained all its vitality, just lying there limply.

"Tsk, is this all you've got?"

The monster swayed its body in disdain and then lowered its head, ready to mock this troublesome adversary a couple more times.

It hoped Arthur would regain his vitality.

If not?

That didn't matter either!

Eating him would suffice!

The monster's head drew near!

Coming close within an arm's reach!

And this was the moment Arthur had bitterly waited for!

Whoosh!

The Arthur who had been lying on the ground leaped up, thrusting the longsword he held tight straight towards the monster's head.

The speed was fast, extremely fast!

Thud!

The blade pierced directly into where the monster's eyes would be.

"Aaargh!"

"You're deceiving me!"

"I want you dead!"

"Die!"

The intense pain drove the monster into a crazed roar, but what truly enraged it was the realization that it had been deceived—it felt the calmness in Arthur's heart at that moment.

No enduring, and no struggle.

Just calm!

"I'll kill you! I'll kill you!"

The monster, covering its eyes, jumped up and down, shouting. Its palm had already pressed Arthur under its eyelid, the immense pressure breaking his bones all over his body, and amidst the crackling, snapping sounds of Arthur's breaking bones, Arthur's face remained serene as he glanced at the bundle of explosives tied to the hilt of his sword and the fuse that had burned to its end, whispering—

"Idiot."

His cold verdict made the monster realize something was amiss.

At that moment, it truly understood; the action of stabbing its eyes had also been part of Arthur's scheme, meant to obstruct its vision, preventing it from seeing the explosives wound around the sword's hilt.

No!

From the moment Arthur wrapped explosives on himself, he had been misleading it.

"Aaargh!"

Having realized everything, the monster roared while lifting its hand to grab the explosives.

But it was too late!

Boom!

A flash of fire, then a deafening explosion echoed.

The darkness faded swiftly.

The mountain-like monster began to shrink as if it were a deflated balloon.

Arthur, who should have been reduced to smithereens, stood there unharmed and watched the monster, now a palm-sized, toad-like creature, and immediately understood what was happening.

"A dream layered with a phantom realm?"

No!

It should be that you were subtly manipulating the 'dream'!

The monster I just saw and the injuries were what you wanted me to see, and only the unexpected explosion could harm you, the 'Core' hiding beneath the huge 'Monster Armor'!

Or to be precise, stunned you!"

Arthur muttered to himself, his right hand grabbed the toad-like monster.

"Wait, wait, I'm not one of Them. I'm just here searching for Ciudik. You have remnants of his 'serpent' Bloodline, you must be his descendant, we can sit down and talk, maybe when you were little, I even held you..."

The toad-like monster that had been caught suddenly woke up and began to speak loudly.

Arthur, however, did not pay any attention to it at all and squeezed the monster's body in his palm fiercely.

Splat!

As juices splattered, Arthur's nose twitched.

Then—

"Bleh!"