

Great Master 24

Chapter 24 Joel Jock

Arthur paused in his steps, thinking of Eivor.

The passionate owner of the snack stand that had left a profound impression on him with yesterday's lunch "appetizer."

That sweetness, that sourness.

Even now, Arthur remembered it and felt a toothache.

What mattered most was the vendor's enthusiasm.

To be honest, Arthur, in his usual state, had a hard time dealing with overly enthusiastic people.

In the face of an enemy, Arthur could kill without hesitation and could be diplomatically disingenuous, but normally, facing an enthusiastic vendor like Eivor caused him to feel like he should buy something the moment the vendor greeted him warmly.

Not that it was expensive, but it truly wasn't delicious.

However, if he didn't buy anything, he'd feel a bit guilty.

All in all, it was very conflicting.

Arthur often used the excuse "People are full of contradictions" to comfort himself.

Yet, when faced with such a "contradictory (awkward)" situation, this outstanding individual, revered as a Master "Spirit Medium," would stand in front of his house's door, making sure there was no food cart at the street corner before sprinting all the way down Cork Street to West Mok Avenue.

At the intersection of Cork Street and West Mok Avenue, Arthur looked back, and only when he didn't see Eivor's food cart did he breathe a sigh of relief and begin heading towards the "Jorge Jock Swordsmanship Club," a place remembered by his former self.

His predecessor had been very fond of swordmanship, and although he wasn't particularly gifted, he knew the swordmanship clubs of South Los like the back of his hand.

Not just the dozen or so famous clubs in the Shire District but also the dilapidated ones on the verge of closure in Old Town were well-known to his predecessor.

However, Arthur didn't choose any of those.

He went straight to the most famous "Joel Jock Swordsmanship Club."

Despite the existence of "hidden gems," the "Joel Jock Swordsmanship Club," which had won third place in the last "Swordsmanship Competition," also had considerable prestige.

Most importantly, it required no effort to find.

Arthur stood in front of the club, surveying the entire "Joel Jock Swordsmanship Club."

The club was located at the front half of West Mok Avenue and took up an entire three-story building. The exposed brick wall was studded with rocks of varying sizes, giving an impression of solidity and reliability.

The wooden signboard, avoiding the cross-shaped windows, hung between the first and second floors, with the name "Jorge" written in large, coherent letters, followed by "Swordsmanship, Mounted Lance, Tournament (Melee) Club" in small, elegant script at the end of the sign.

Mounted lance, tournaments—Arthur knew about them.

In the memories of his former self, he was very eager for these two events.

Especially the thirty-person tournament which had captivated his predecessor, who would occasionally boast that "he too could attain the honor of a Marshall"!

Even when informed that Marshall was one of the greatest knights of that era, his predecessor never showed any fear but believed that he could become, and even surpass, him.

This optimism greatly impressed Arthur.

Unfortunately, with the fall of the Holy Empire and the advent of gunpowder, these two events had long lost their former lustre.

They used to be the yardstick of knighthood, where one could not be considered a "knight" without winning three consecutive times in mounted lance or knocking out an opponent's teeth in a tournament, but now they were merely included in "swordsmanship clubs," not even warranting a mention.

Arthur was indifferent about this.

Because he knew if it weren't for the tradition of the "Swordsmanship Competition" in South County and its generous rewards, perhaps even the "swordsmanship clubs" would be gone.

Simply put, firearms were just too convenient.

Not only were they easy to use but also powerful.

One sentence summarized it all—

Times had changed!

With these reflections in mind, Arthur pushed open the door of the "Jorge Jock Swordsmanship Club."

The door was a heavy wooden one; surprisingly, it bore marks of sword slashes. Upon closer inspection, Arthur realized the thick door had a double layer; the original wooden door had been fitted with shields that had seen use, which, in combination with the studded rocks on the brick wall, immediately made him think of a "castle."

Subsequently, he concluded that the owner of the "Joel Jock Swordsmanship Club" had quite the business acumen.

At the very least, he knew how to package his business.

Indeed, this was the case.

As Arthur pushed open the door, he was greeted by a lady dressed in a modified autumn hunting outfit.

The traditional hunting outfit consisted of trousers, boots, a vest-like hunter's liner, and a trench coat, whereas the lady before him only wore the indoor set, skipping the trench coat.

She had discarded the vest as well, only donning the hunting trousers, round-toed leather boots, and a blouse one size too small, which accentuated the lady's figure; the high-waisted hunting trousers further elongated her legs and slimmed her waist, making her appear taller and more slender.

The most important thing was that the lady couldn't even see her feet when she looked down.

Together with her attractive appearance and sweet voice, she could immediately gain the favor of the guests.

"Sir, is this your first time at Joel Jock? Would you like me to introduce you to it?"

"Thank you very much."

As Arthur nodded with a smile, the female receptionist immediately began to introduce with enthusiasm.

There was no hint of strangeness in her expression, which confirmed to Arthur that only he could smell that particular scent.

"We have four floors here, with the three floors above ground dedicated to swordsmanship, dining, and a lounge, respectively; the basement floor is for practicing shooting, as well as for jousting and tournaments, etc. However, jousting and tournaments require a separate fee in addition to the membership fee."

After a general introduction, the receptionist informed Arthur of her own name and started to highlight the key points.

"We offer two types of memberships, regular and VIP."

Arthur didn't interrupt but motioned with his eyes for her to continue.

"Regular members pay 20 Suo a month and can use all the facilities above ground."

"VIP members pay 45 Suo a month and, in addition to using all the facilities above and below ground, also receive personal guidance from our coaches."

Speaking, Amy stealthily sized up Arthur.

Only after seeing no hint of shock, hesitation, or nervousness on that young and handsome face did she let out a slight sigh of relief.

The fees at 'Joel Jock Swordsmanship Club' were not exactly cheap.

Especially after winning third place in the last 'Swordsmanship Competition,' the fees at 'Joel Jock Swordsmanship Club' had shot up drastically.

The monthly fees of 20 and 45 Suo had already exceeded the budget of an average family.

Only the well-off middle class, merchants, and nobles could afford such expenses.

But how many of them were there?

Even if they were all concentrated in the Shire District, there were still too few, because the wealthiest merchants and nobles all had their own swordsmanship instructors and wouldn't frequent the club, leaving only the well-off middle class, who were the most unstable financially.

Amy had seen more than a few well-off middle-class families go bankrupt over the past year.

A single venture out to sea, a single storm, could leave these seemingly prosperous middle-class families destitute on the streets.

Looking at Arthur, Amy did not wish for him to suffer these hardships.

Apart from Arthur's youthful and handsome appearance, which made Amy feel he shouldn't have to face such tragedies, it was also because she wanted to earn her commission.

The owner of 'Joel Jock Swordsmanship Club' provided not only a base salary but also a rather generous commission—this was precisely why the club's receptionists were even more motivated.

Amy was one of them.

To make her pitch more persuasive, the young receptionist immediately added.

"Our coaches are swordsmen with dozens or even hundreds of real combat experiences!"

"If they were in the Seven Years' War Period, they would all be elites in the military!"

Upon hearing this, Arthur smiled.

His smile wasn't one of mockery but one of goodwill.

After all, he was aiming for the elite.

The reason he chose the renowned 'Joel Jock Swordsmanship Club' was for the formidable swordsmen and their profound mastery of swordsmanship, wasn't it?

As for Amy's ulterior motives?

Those were nothing more than human nature.

Didn't he also come with his own purposes?

The whole thing was a mutual benefit transaction.

Of course, some things needed to be made clear upfront.

With this thought, he asked—

"Are they that impressive? Can I try them out?"