

Great Master 251

Chapter 251: Calamity Follows Death!

Marinda's voice echoed within the study—a lady's study that was quite spacious. Aside from a long desk that measured three meters in length and two meters in width and the matching sofa and coffee table, even though there were enough bookshelves lined up along the walls, when one spoke loudly, their voice would still reverberate in the room, especially when sitting in Marinda's current position.

It was clear that this was a special architectural or decorative technique.

Specifically designed to highlight the master's authority.

Arthur, with the help of Wuni's eyes, scanned the curvature of the study's ceiling edges and two specially made hangings, then his gaze fixed on Edwin.

The young 'Spirit Medium' was also very curious as to what news made the coachman show such an expression.

Curiosity is human nature!

Who doesn't long for a taste of the melon field!

Under Marinda's gaze, Edwin took several deep breaths and then mustered the courage to say—

"Someone just spread the word that...

you are a 'plaything' put forward by Mr. Arthur Kredos to attract South Los's attention!"

After saying this, the coachman Edwin closed his eyes, already prepared to meet his master's reprimand.

However, after a dozen seconds, nothing happened. The coachman opened his eyes and was astonished to find that not only was his master not the slightest bit angry, but she was actually smiling.

Could this be too shocking?

Edwin thought to himself.

However, after Marinda waved her hand, the coachman immediately left the study.

And when the study door closed, Marinda could no longer contain herself.

"Haha!"

This laugh was quite hearty, but to Arthur, it sounded extremely grating.

South Los has bad people!

He did nothing, but now he's taking the blame!

While the news seemed to put Marinda in the disdainful position of a 'plaything', the fact that a 'plaything' could achieve the title of Lady of the Long Night suggested the person behind the 'plaything' must be incredibly resourceful. Plus, with the strength of an 'Entrant', it's likely that even the Mother Tigress of South Los wouldn't be sleeping well!

They are probably plotting how to deal with him already!

Such a huge injustice!

To suffer such a grave injustice, he, a young, innocent, honest, and kind 'Spirit Medium'!

"Alas, maybe I should just go back to South Los!

I'm tired, let it be destroyed!

I want to see a meteorite strike South Los!"

Speaking through Wuni, Arthur slowly said.

In the face of such a display from Arthur, Marinda simply rolled her eyes.

Of course, the lady knew that Arthur was joking, but the words...

were half true, half false!

If pushed to that extent, the fellow before her could definitely make it happen.

A madman?

No!

Just pure madness hidden beneath calmness.

He's not a madman.

Neither is she.

"Worry not, I'm like you, but I'm more practical. I've more than once wanted to burn down South Los completely—for that, I even surveyed several blocks personally."

Marinda said this while drawing on her pipe.

"What changed your mind?"

Arthur asked curiously.

"The Countess offered too much!"

Marinda replied, shrugging her shoulders indelicately.

The faint smile at the corner of her mouth stirred something in Arthur.

Unlike his joke, he believed what this woman had just said was true; she definitely wanted to set South Los ablaze at some point.

However, there must have been some mishaps that forced her to halt her plans.

But that's not important!

What's important is, how exactly did that Countess bribe this woman?

Her asking price must have been incredibly high!

It couldn't possibly be for selling her favors, right?

Arthur thought to himself and immediately said.

"Was it also a reward promised by the Lord Count for conferring upon you the title of Baron Kemir?"

Yet, there is still some time before the conferment, and now such rumors have arisen, clearly someone is unwilling to give up."

Arthur knew that asking directly would yield no answer from this woman; he had to beat around the bush.

However, the lady didn't bite and simply said indifferently.

"They want to target us—they or perhaps want to kill two birds with one stone... if we don't give them a chance, it really would be impolite of us."

Confronted with Marinda's change of topic, Arthur secretly grimaced.

But the young 'Spirit Medium' did not press further.

The cooperation between both parties has been so pleasant; there is no need to sour it with these trivial matters.

As for the 'opportunity' Marinda spoke of?

After some thought, Arthur guessed a bit of it.

It's nothing more than showing weakness to the enemy, letting him take center stage, while Marinda reaps the benefits from behind the scenes.

With a 'contract' guaranteeing their cooperation, this approach was quite safe. In fact, it could catch them off guard—You claim one of us is a 'plaything,' the other a 'behind-the-scenes orchestrator'? Well, we'll become exactly what you've described, and hit you when you least expect it.

The idea was feasible.

But he wasn't particularly good at dealing with those people onstage.

And for him, the benefits weren't crucial; they were simply some Gold Coins, compensations in property.

These, he temporarily did not lack.

What he lacked was 'identity'!

An 'identity' that allowed for the legitimate purchase and exchange of the Mystic Tools controlled by the Nobles!

Accordingly, the young 'Spirit Medium' with the Crow's mouth uttered an 'unlucky omen'—

"Such an opportunity must be given!

The upcoming 'Swordsmanship Competition' is quite suitable—Didn't you say that the Lord Count places great importance on this competition?

Then why don't you advise the Countess to raise the status of the 'Swordsmanship Competition' and the rewards for the 'Champion'? If the 'Champion's' prize becomes a 'Knight' title, I think it will surely ignite everyone's enthusiasm.

And those watching you would certainly be distracted by the added 'option.'

They will definitely send their elite to participate in this competition.

And I will participate as well.

Then, I will help you cut down those elites one by one, and all you need to do is set up some harmless bets on the outskirts of the competition to lure them in."

Listening to Arthur's words, Marinda's azure eyes narrowed.

"Hmm, this is the first time I've heard someone describe seeking noble status in such a lofty manner."

"It's a win-win!"

Arthur stressed.

Marinda countered with even greater emphasis.

"I'm taking a bigger risk!"

As these words left her mouth, Arthur knew the deal was sealed.

Marinda's emphasis was nothing but a bargaining tactic to gain more advantages.

This sort of thing...

Requires not yielding an inch!

"Of course, I'm the one taking the greater risk! Don't forget, the 'Swordsmanship Competition' Champion must head to Inner Bay. If the Old Lion loses his sanity, it will be a matter of life and death for me. I am risking my life to scheme with you! Therefore, a 'Knight' title and a thirty to seventy split is what I deserve."

Arthur named his price.

"The 'Knight' title for you, the remaining profits for me!"

Marinda began to haggle.

Their bargaining was a mix of pestering and shamelessness.

However, both had a limit.

Because—

Arthur was still troubled by the Aura of Death.

Moreover, Simon's presence was getting weaker.

Ultimately, for the sake of his companions' lives, Arthur obtained the 'Knight' title, thirty percent of the profits (convertible into shares, with the priority to select Mystic Tools and techniques), and what Marinda had originally lent to shield him from the Aura of Death, was now given as a gift.

The pair would supplement the written 'contract' after they met.

"Alas, I an ordinary 'Spirit Medium,' can't compete with such a dark-hearted 'businessman' like yourself!"

Arthur let out a sigh.

"My heart is black, that's true.

But it's still better than certain 'Spirit Mediums' with no heart at all," Marinda retorted.

Just as they were preparing to set off, the coachman Edwin knocked and entered once more.

This time, although the coachman's face was free of the awkwardness from earlier, his eyes were still filled with deep shock.

Seeing her coachman's expression, even someone like Marinda began to frown privately.

'What's going on?

Why are all these issues erupting at this moment?

I have a feeling that ever since I got involved with this bastard Arthur, troubles keep coming non-stop! Could it be that after being exposed to the Aura of Death too much, he has been 'Favored by Calamity'?

Stealthily glancing at the young 'Spirit Medium' borrowing the body of a Crow, staring at that distinct colorful black, the lady couldn't help but feel as if an 'unlucky omen' was brewing. She discreetly moved a step aside, putting a slight distance between herself and Arthur.

Then, without giving Arthur a chance to react, she immediately asked her coachman—

"Out with it, what's happened?"

Chapter 252: Amiel's Mini Class!

Rat Tail Alley, deep within.

Amiel sat behind a desk, using a stack of files as tall as herself as a shield to block Freeman's line of sight, silently spacing out.

After Harris's death, she and Freeman had been assigned to Rat Tail Alley to succeed Harris as the new person in charge.

She was responsible for the main tasks.

Freeman was her assistant.

It seemed just like the previous searches for the 'Bloodline Clan.'

But there was a fundamental difference.

Because...

Tired!

What kind of job starts at eight in the morning, goes until eight at night without ending, and then requires three more hours of overtime?

Is this a job meant for humans?

Even cattle and horses have it no worse than this.

No!

The owners would even take pity on cattle and horses.

But her?

Nothing!

She was literally like a slave in a cotton field!

Of course, the most important thing was, if she could endure this hardship, why would she have left Talin to become the aide to that countess?

She was supposed to work without actually working!

Even if she did work, she would just sit there pretending, nodding along with the crowd when asked questions.

And if asked alone, she could pretend to be profound, speaking off the cuff with 'destiny' at the beginning and 'destiny' at the end.

This was the job she wanted.

Not to toil endlessly like a slave.

'Should I just run away?'

The thought surged desperately in Amiel's heart.

But immediately, this lady from Talin dismissed it from her mind.

Leaving before meant at most being scrutinized by that countess, but with the appearance of the '66th Staff Group' and the Grand Duke of the Inner Bay's spy, everything had changed.

Especially after Freeman revealed another spy yesterday; if she dared to propose leaving now, she would likely be thrown into that Countess's dungeon.

You should know, that countess has never been known for her kindness.

Moreover, even if she left the countess, there were still the 'Blood Descendants' and the 'Spirit Medium.'

The 'Blood Descendants' were okay, at worst she could dedicate herself, as long as they didn't make her into a 'Blood Bride,' everything could still be negotiable.

But that 'Spirit Medium'...

Amiel furrowed her brows.

This lady from Talin always felt that the other person was terrifying, especially when she smiled at her, making her feel like she was not only plotting against her but also wanted to bite her like a fox or a serpent.

Without the protection of that countess, she would be directly under the gaze of that 'Spirit Medium.'

Most likely, there would be no good end to it!

Thinking of this, Amiel couldn't help but hold her head with both hands, vigorously rubbing her hair.

Subsequently, a secret message appeared within the 'Messenger Stone' on the table—after Harris became the new person in charge in Rat Tail Alley, it was 'specially approved' by that countess.

Under the guise of 'facilitating communication. '

In reality, it was just another form of 'surveillance.'

Amiel was well aware of this.

Therefore, most of the time, this lady from Talin chose to selectively ignore this 'Messenger Stone.'

However, she naturally had to check the information inside.

As usual, this lady from Talin prepared to employ the 'read but not reply' method to show she was 'working hard.'

But when this lady from Talin saw clearly the content inside the 'Messenger Stone'—

"Hiss!"

"Entrant!"

Amiel inhaled sharply, jumping up from her chair, eyes wide open, mouth agape.

"Damn it, what are you doing?"

The sudden exclamation startled Freeman, who was calculating the 'available revenue' of Rat Tail Alley, causing his hand to tremble and draw an unsightly diagonal line across the parchment.

Immediately, Freeman glared at Amiel.

You should know, this 'available revenue' was what he had calculated in the shortest possible time, prepared as a tribute to his 'father.'

Now it needed to be rewritten!

Although it was already well calculated and rewriting it wouldn't be too troublesome, the unwarranted rework still annoyed this newly initiated 'Blood Descendant.'

Especially considering, while he was 'working hard,' this woman appeared to be slacking off, which only intensified his irritation.

"That guy is an 'Entrant?'"

"The 'Spirit Medium' is actually an 'Entrant?'"

"Lord Kledos is indeed extraordinary, but I never expected him to be an 'Entrant!'"

Amiel noticed Freeman's annoyance, but at this moment, the lady couldn't care less and just kept muttering to herself.

Moreover, every time she muttered, her reference to Arthur became more respectful.

"Are you stupid?"

Freeman looked at Amiel with a gaze reserved for fools.

The lady from Talin shook her head.

"No!

It is you who don't understand the meaning of 'Entrant' for Lord Kledos—didn't you ask me what the 'Arcana Level' was before?"

"Yes, but you felt I didn't need to know."

Freeman leaned back in the chair, arms folded, emitting a derisive chuckle regarding Amiel's "stinginess."

"Some things, not knowing them, is what keeps you free from trouble!

'Arcana Level' powerholders are those with a 'Talent' who choose a potential-filled 'secret technique,' perfecting it to a high realm, reaching a point of minor influence on celestial phenomena—the common folk simply lack such 'Talent,' and even if they had it, they lack the 'secret technique.'"

"Once a person reaches the 'Arcana Level,' in the Silver Age, they automatically receive a noble status. Unlike those granted the titles of 'Knight' and 'Noble,' this status is hereditary because the nobles recognize such 'Bloodline.'

In simple terms, the descendants of 'Arcana Level' powerholders inherently carry a trace of unique power, as long as they have extraordinary talent.

The nobles call it 'Bloodline Power.'

And many of the nobles we know today are the descendants of these 'Arcana Level' powerholders."

Amiel slowly explained.

"And then, there are 'Entrants'?"

Freeman inquired, immensely interested in the matter of power.

"Of course not!

Following 'Arcana Level' is the 'Great Arcana Level'—a stratum of powerholders who train their 'spirit' and 'physique' to the utmost, bending the void with their 'consciousness'!"

Seeing Freeman's puzzled frown, the lady from Talin immediately added,

"If you ever see someone launch an attack and a shadow appears behind them, that is a 'Great Arcana Level' powerholder.

The more real the shadow appears, the stronger the adversary!

As for 'Entrants'...

Do you know the 'God Ascension Steps'?"

Freeman earnestly shook his head, his eyes shimmering with fervor.

The newly born 'Blood Descendant' seemed to feel power beckoning him.

"'God Ascension Steps' is a classification left in the world after the 'Twilight of the Gods,' during the 'Golden Age' when ancient species were still prevalent.

'To ascend the God Steps, to seal divinity at the Tenth Order'!

When any being steps onto the tenth step, they become a 'Divine Spirit'!

And an 'Entrant' is a powerholder nearing the 'God Ascension Steps'!"

Amiel relayed what she knew.

"To become a god...

Then isn't an 'Entrant' a kind of reservist for 'Divine Spirits'?

Is Lord Kledos really that powerful?"

Freeman naturally altered his form of address.

Following that, the newly born 'Blood Descendant' stared intently at Amiel.

The implication was unmistakable, and Amiel simply spread her hands.

"Don't look at me; Talin's core secret technique only reaches the 'Arcana Level' limit, and to advance to 'Great Arcana Level,' one must study at the 'Forty-Six Towers.' Not to mention the rituals of the 'Entrant's' Holy Sword, Holy Shield, Holy Grail, Scepter, and Holy Coin.

Even the 'Forty-Six Towers' might have only fragmented rituals, and only some Great Nobles might possess the complete legacy.

If you're not afraid of death, go ask Lord Count about his family's legacy.

But even if it exists...

Who has such Talent?"

The lady from Talin sighed softly.

"My 'father' definitely has it!

Maybe, my 'father' is an 'Entrant'!"

The newly born 'Blood Descendant' declared with unwavering confidence.

Watching Freeman, deep inside, Amiel wanted to laugh.

She thought Freeman was being too naïve.

The 'Blood Descendant' she acknowledged was strong, but...

An 'Entrant'?

Impossible!

Just as the lady from Talin was about to mock the newly born 'Blood Descendant' with a few words, the 'Messenger Stone' flickered once more.

Upon seeing the message, the lady from Talin's face underwent a sudden change.

The next moment, her eyes on Freeman became strangely altered, and she involuntarily said—

"Freeman, are you missing a mother?"

Chapter 253: Shadow Behind!

Freeman gazed at Amiel, his tall and burly form swelling with each breath.

The red in the eyes of this freshly-transformed Blood Descendant was boiling.

What followed was a string of curses mixed with various dialects.

Some of which even Amiel had never heard before.

But roughly, Amiel could guess the gist her curses tracked back as far as three generations up her opponent's maternal line, expanding the radius to include the primary reproductive organs of her sisters.

It was very straightforward.

Yet, this lady of Talin origin did not retaliate.

At least, not outwardly.

This lady handed the Messenger Stone to Freeman.

The newly transformed Blood Descendant immediately stopped frowning and meticulously inspected the information within.

Instantly, ecstasy spread across the face of the new Blood Descendant.

He saw the transaction between his 'father' and the Spirit Medium.

From the tone and demeanor of both parties, it was completely equal.

What is equal to an Entrant?

It must also be an Entrant!

'As I thought!

My father is an Entrant!'

Thinking this, the new Blood Descendant began to rethink—his previous 'precise calculation' was clearly insufficient, he must recalculate.

Otherwise, it wouldn't befit his father's status.

Thinking this, Freeman quickly returned to his desk.

Amiel also sat back in her own seat.

However, unlike the newly motivated Freeman, Amiel was not idling as before, but rather, was seriously contemplating.

She wasn't joking earlier.

But...

The difficulty was a bit high!

There was something fishy about the annihilation of the Bloodline Clan back in the day.

Moreover, considering the Bloodline Clan had hidden such a high-ranking 'Entrant' among them, it was clear the fishiness was well beyond her depth to get involved.

Even listening was forbidden.

But, she was a bit reluctant to not cling to such a strong support.

Immediately, this Talin-born lady began to struggle with her thoughts.

Then, she suddenly thought of something.

Instantly, her eyes lit up.

...

In the abyssal paths of the netherworld, souls flit like shadows.

A horse-drawn carriage, escorted by numerous specters and shrouded in grey smoke, flew low with great speed.

Inside, Marinda clutched her pipe, puffing vigorously.

The smoke billowed out, part of it replenishing the grey mist, and part merging into the numerous specters; even occupying Wuni's body, Arthur could distinctly feel the Aura of Death contained within the smoke.

'What is this secret technique?

Utilizing smoke to propel the Aura of Death!

It somewhat resembles 'Smoke Mirror Usurpation' that was part of the deal given to me before, yet there's a difference, was there an alteration added later?' Arthur mused silently as he had once scrutinized the secret technique 'Smoke Mirror Usurpation' thoroughly.

Marinda, however, paid no heed to Arthur's observations.

If secret techniques could be deciphered merely by sight, there wouldn't be any so-called Nobles.

This lady changed her position and spoke softly—

"I didn't expect the guy from the Cloak Society to react so quickly!"

"To choose to disclose the information he previously held directly!"

Regret filled her tone.

Clearly, when this lady spotted a mistake by the Cloak Society, she had ideas.

But before she could act, new information about the Spirit Medium and Blood Descendants spread faster than the news that 'Arthur is an Entrant' across all of South Los.

This reaction surprised Marinda.'

While Marinda regretted, Arthur was focusing on something else.

"I just want to know now, how did the news that I am an 'Entrant' spread like this!"

The response of the Cloak Society informed Arthur that they were not, as he previously thought, merely a makeshift group, a rabble.

Instead, they had a significant structured organization.

"There will always be some unexpected surprises—thus, we must make more preparations!"

Marinda did not wish to talk too much about the Cloak Society.

It wasn't that she was disinterested.

It was just that the common were below, but none could be found above.

Marinda would never say such a thing.

Once voiced, it would only serve to entertain Arthur, that bastard.

Hence, the lady diverted the topic, forcefully slapping the bag beside her.

Arthur knew she was changing the subject, but gazing at the bag that was almost half his height, he was still lost in thought.

Smoke enveloped the carriage, bringing it to Arthur's campsite at a speed that surpassed imagination.

Looking at the young 'Spirit Medium' sitting on the log, shrugging his shoulders, Lady of the Long Night who had alighted from the carriage with the bag began reaching into the bag, then grabbed something inside and tossed it out forcefully—

Every single granule of Coarse Salt immediately landed around.

But before these grains could even hit the ground, they had turned completely black.

When they did land, they were charred like soil, indistinguishable as salt.

"Tsk, you, looking like that, would have been clenching proof during the 'witch hunting' era that 'all wizards are utterly evil.'"

As this sight unfolded, Lady of the Long Night clicked her tongue.

The young 'Spirit Medium' curled the corner of his mouth.

"So, are you exorcising evil spirits then?"

"No!

At your level, simply blessed Coarse Salt isn't enough to exorcise evil spirits—some age-old 'Hunter Families' probably have methods to drive you away.

Do you know the legend of 'The First Blade'?

I feel it would relish meeting someone as demonic as you!

As for me?

I'm just simply keeping this 'Aura of Death' away from me!

Most importantly, I don't want my luck to turn bad!"

Lady of the Long Night said this while vigorously sprinkling salt.

The half-human high bag rapidly deflated.

And the entire campsite was coated with a layer of Coarse Salt.

Especially Simon, after being covered with Coarse Salt, his increasingly feeble breathing unexpectedly began to recover slowly.

When Lady of the Long Night lifted her hand and moved him to the other side, a flush of color began returning to his previously pale face.

"Look, what a dreadful demon!"

Lady of the Long Night exclaimed.

The young 'Spirit Medium' gave Lady of the Long Night the middle finger.

Then, the remaining blessed Coarse Salt was unceremoniously dumped down.

Shh!

Unlike the Coarse Salt that hit the ground and turned to charred earth,

the grains falling on Arthur suddenly began to burn—nearly an inch away from Arthur's body, the blessed Coarse Salt spontaneously ignited.

It wasn't a bright flame.

But an eerie, dim 'Deathly Fire.'

With a distinct sound, the Deathly Fire surged towards Lady of the Long Night like the water of the underworld.

Seeing this, Lady of the Long Night's pupils shrunk.

Things were much more serious than she had anticipated.

However, Lady of the Long Night did not panic.

With a raise of her hand, two human-height sacks appeared beside her.

Inside were all blessed Coarse Salt.

The quantity astonished onlookers.

Anyone would suspect that Lady of the Long Night had plundered three 'Hunter Families' of over thirty years standing.

That's exactly what the young 'Spirit Medium' thought.

"Heh, this I got through trading—'Hunter' families too need to live, especially after getting married and having children.

Those married 'Hunters' with kids are the best trading partners.

So long as it doesn't contradict their principles, they'll give up anything for their wives and children.

And if there are multiple children, that's even better!"

As Lady of the Long Night said this, hundreds of kilos of blessed Coarse Salt from the two sacks were all dumped over Arthur.

Suddenly, Arthur appeared as though he had been buried in snow.

The wisps of Deathly Fire were still present, but slightly suppressed.

It was only a momentary suppression. The dim Deathly Fire violently surged.

Behind Arthur, a shadow began to emerge.

A ragged, black cloak, a sharp long-handled sickle, carrying a silent wail, raised high, aimed directly at Lady of the Long Night

The next moment—

The long-handled sickle swung down heavily!

Chapter 254: Useful, But Not Fully Effective!

Whoo!

The howling of the long-handled sickle, like the screams of the undead, was filled with death.

Death is merciless.

Death is swift.

No one can dodge the strike of death.

Unless...

It is the dead.

Whoo!

Smoke billowed as the Lady of the Eternal Night was covered in grey from head to toe, her golden short hair and deep blue eyes completely losing their luster, and her rosy cheeks turned to ash white.

It seemed death had already visited this lady!

The shadowy long-handled sickle paused slightly.

Just after a pause, it was about to chop down again.

But this pause was enough.

A pair of gloves had been slipped onto the young 'Spirit Medium's' hands by the Lady of the Eternal Night.

Suddenly, the young 'Spirit Medium' dispersed into the wind.

Silently, everything returned to normal.

Watching this scene, Marinda breathed a sigh of relief.

Fortunately, Arthur had informed her that the backfire of constant suppression and consumption might run amok!

Otherwise, she could have suffered a great loss.

"Well done!"

Arthur glanced at the Breath of Death, which after being depleted by the Coarse Salt, still had a reading of 1.0, and was full of praise for the lady before him.

This is the benefit of having a strong collaborator.

Otherwise, no matter how often he reminded her along the way, it would have been barely effective.

In fact, it might have backfired.

"Hmm, are you talking about me?"

"Or are you talking about these gloves?"

Marinda asked, holding her pipe.

Arthur, without raising his head, meticulously examined the leather gloves in his hand, but his mouth kept moving.

"Of course, it's you!"

Before Arthur, information about the gloves had already appeared—

Name: Daniel's Hope (Left)

Type: Protective Gear

Quality: Hero

Attributes: 1, Guardianship; 2, Shielding; 3, Exorcism; 4, Healing

Remarks: In the Holy Era of the Black Plague, Paladin Daniel, in search of a cure for the plague, set out for the legendary ruins. He left a trail of fallen attendants behind him. Even as a Paladin, Daniel lost an arm but truly found a cure for the 'Black Plague' within those legendary ruins, even though it cost him an eye. Yet, when he brought the cure back to The Holy Court, he was slandered as a deserter and a heretic. Instead of honor, flowers, and applause, what awaited the Paladin was a burning stake—As the flames scorched him, facing the numb, shouting, excited populace, the Paladin only hoped The Holy Court would treat these innocents, he cried out to all: Believe in the Light!

...

Guardianship: When the wearer encounters a negative secret technique, automatically forms a Willpower Shield to resist the negative secret technique

Shielding: Isolates the wearer from the Aura of Death or the misfortune brought by the Aura of Death

Exorcism: Exorcises toxins and diseases from the wearer's body; 1 time/day

Healing: Heals intermediate-level injuries 1 time/day

(Remark 1: Guardianship cannot resist an 'Arcana Level' negative secret technique, but it can effectively weaken it. When the Willpower Shield shatters, it requires three days of basking in sunlight to recharge)

(Remark 2: The Shielding isolation of Aura of Death or the misfortunes brought by Aura of Death has a certain limit; exceeding this limit will render it ineffective)

(Remark 3: After using Exorcism and Healing, it requires one day of basking in sunlight to recharge)

...

Name: Daniel's Hope (Right)

Type: Protective Gear

Quality: Hero

Attributes: 1, Brightness; 2, Recharge; 3, Resonance

Remarks: Brief — Support from the left and right is crucial for forward movement!

...

Brightness: Raising the right hand can illuminate the surroundings

Recharge: Recharges the left-hand glove

[Resonance: When two gloves are worn on the same person's hands, it will enhance the effects of 'Guardianship', 'Shielding', 'Exorcism', 'Healing', 'Brightness']

(Remarks 1: Brightness can produce about 60-watt light for 1 hour, and it is effective against supernatural darkness and shadows.)

(Remarks 2: Recharging can recharge 'Guardianship' once, or 'Exorcism', 'Healing', 'Brightness' three times each; once depleted, requires three days in sunlight to recover.)

(Remarks 3: When both gloves are bathed in sunlight together, it will shorten the required time.)

...

"I'm really glad my hands are intact!"

After looking over the gloves in detail, Arthur said this.

As for the Paladin Daniel and The Holy Court's evaluation?

The latter already had their verdict: crap.

And the former?

Arthur looked at the [Quality] of the gloves, which clearly read—

Hero!

The young 'Spirit Medium' asked himself if he could sacrifice himself for others or face death with composure.

Moreover, just by briefly putting himself in Paladin Daniel's shoes, images began seeping into Arthur's mind, of him relentlessly attacking with the Aura of Death, repeatedly resetting the [Breath of Death] and frantically ravaging nearby lives.

A city slaughter?

No, no, no.

Simply reducing everything to silence.

He was definitely not some magnanimous guy.

Thus, he expressed his respect toward Paladin Daniel.

Couldn't do it, but wouldn't criticize.

After all, as humans, we must cling to something.

Marinda didn't mind the distasteful joke Arthur had uttered but went straight to ask,

"Are you continuing towards Mount Gale Region's Yumir Manor?"

"Of course!

A person must see things through to the end,"

Arthur asserted firmly.

"Then wish you a safe journey,"

She said, stepping up into the carriage. However, just as she was about to close the door, Arthur had Wuni follow her.

"You wouldn't mind my crow hitching a ride, would you?"

Arthur asked with a smile.

Marinda responded with a middle finger before the carriage, guarded by numerous specters, disappeared quickly from Arthur's sight.

It was at this moment that Arthur slightly frowned in secret.

'Injured, aren't you?'

Although Marinda tried her best to hide it, Arthur still keenly noticed something was off.

Clearly, that action was far from being as effortless as Marinda had portrayed.

Arthur silently noted this in his heart.

Then, almost subconsciously, Arthur looked towards the [Breath of Death].

Under the young 'Spirit Medium's' gaze, the initially 1.0 value suddenly jumped to 1.1.

'Fuck!'

Arthur cursed out loud.

[Daniel's Hope] remained intact, and its various effects were still in place, but these seemed only partially effective.

It seemed that the [Breath of Death] was of a higher level!

[Daniel's Hope] couldn't fully block the absorption of Death Qi.

However, the Curse brought about by the 'Death Qi' was much weakened; it should be stronger than before... right?

At least people won't die the moment they step out, right?

Arthur thought to himself, glancing over at the lively Pendragon and then at Simon, who was unconscious but showed no anomalies.

Eventually, the young 'Spirit Medium' couldn't help but let out a long sigh.

"People, ultimately, have to rely on themselves!"

Yet, before he even finished speaking, the corner of Arthur's mouth was already turning up involuntarily.

Because—

His favorite scene was coming up!

Chapter 255: Six Hands!

The flames within the fire pit danced ceaselessly, dispelling the chill and darkness of the early autumn night. The ground, like scorched earth covered in coarse salt, had been cleansed by Arthur using the "Hand of Void." The unconscious Simon had been carried back to his original position, and Pendragon was once again held in Arthur's arms.

Having done all this, the young 'Spirit Medium' sat back on the log, his gaze fixed on the text before him—

[The name 'Arthur Kredos' once again entered the vision of the Mystic Side Persons of South Los. They were shocked because of the 'Entrant,' but there was more questioning, disbelief, and doubt. However, there was no doubt that they all remembered you; XP+200]

[When the name 'Arthur Kredos' appeared along with 'Blood Descendants,' more speculations arose. Some cautious Mystic Side Persons had already begun considering leaving South Los, while others laughed out loud, and some ambitious fellows kept muttering your name; XP+100]

[The name 'Arthur Kredos' began to be spread by the Mystic Side Persons of South Los in all directions, XP+50]

[More people heard your name; XP+20]

...

Far surpassing any previous XP gains.

Undoubtedly, in this world filled with 'Mystery,' Mystic Side Persons have far more influence than ordinary people. Having one hundred ordinary people know your name is not as beneficial as having one Mystic Side Person know it, and there's another point—

The speed of information spread among Mystic Side Persons is faster!

It could even make ordinary people aware of his name faster.

'Servants of the Mystic Side Persons?'

Arthur pondered as he read the last entry.

Soon after, more speculations appeared.

Firstly, naturally, it was good news, as he would quickly accumulate a wave of XP.

Secondly, the bad news, he would attract more attention.

Especially those with malicious intents and those craving fame would pay more attention to him, and if he handled it poorly, he would have to face continuously emerging 'Challengers.'

This would exhaust him from constant running.

And even, a slight mistake could lead to disastrous failure.

After all, human energy is limited.

Even if one slept with their eyes open, they could still be beheaded, let alone someone like him who needed at least six hours of sleep every day.

But that was not the key issue or the most troublesome one.

The vital issue was that he could not "solve the problem once and for all!"

Because, he needed XP, a lot of XP.

With this prerequisite, to some extent, he was quite eager for troublemakers to stir things up.

'Greedy me, lazy me, always hovering on the edge of death...

Alas, the mistake isn't mine; it's the world's.'

thought the young 'Spirit Medium,' as he threw a few logs into the fire pit.

Crack, crack!

The already dancing flames surged higher, and in that unique sound, the bright firelight illuminated Arthur's youthful face.

Beneath the calmness, his eyes were resolute.

The reach of the firelight was upward.

Yet, in the places the firelight could not illuminate—in that young 'Spirit Medium's' heart—lurked demons and a chilling intent to kill.

That heart, like the roots of a great tree.

Constantly going deeper, continuously absorbing various nutrients.

Only for...

The young 'Spirit Medium' to grow robustly.

The young 'Spirit Medium,' aware of all this, harbored no resistance, nor any aversion.

Because, he knew that the him who appeared before the world was him.

The him hidden in the darkness, unseen, was also him.

He didn't need to feel ashamed of it.

Nor did he need to blame himself.

Because—

Humans are just that contradictory.

If someone were to blame him, curse him, threaten him, slander him,

then, that person would no longer be 'human'.

He had both the responsibility and the duty to drive out and purify those who are not 'human'.

After all, he was a young, upright, simple, and kind 'Spirit Medium'.

And to achieve these, one must have strength.

So—

'Upgrade the "Hand of Void" level!'

[Consuming 100XP, Hand of Void Lv4→Lv5]

[Hand of Void Lv5: Your "Hand of Void" had already broken through the cage, something no one could have imagined reaching this extent—this was Hercules' little joke. Someone had once accused this master of being maliciously mysterious. Others had given many suggestions to this master, who listened to such accusations and suggestions, and found them good, but he just didn't accept them and, moreover, laughed saying it was all 'Destiny,' even if such 'Destiny' wasn't real. But now your 'Hand of Void's' power, speed, and range have increased again, and they have become six; Effect: Based on Spirituality, consumes physical strength, uses Glyphic Language Ei a ro to create six hands of void to serve you.]

(Note 1: The Hand of Void will resemble the creator's own palms with flexible fingers and retaining part of the wrists and one third of the forearm, and will always be visible to the creator)

(Note 2: The Hand of Void is invisible but can be touched and will take damage. When it reaches its damage limit, the Hand of Void disappears. When any of the six Hands of Void disappear, you can individually replenish them, consuming physical strength equivalent to one Hand of Void)

(Note 3: The current level of the Hand of Void can pick up items not heavier than 50kg, with a movement speed comparable to an adult running swiftly, and can be a maximum of 20 meters away from the creator)

(Note 4: After creating the Hand of Void, the creator will continuously consume physical strength, which will accelerate when the Hands of Void pick up an item. When all six Hands of Void are present, the physical strength consumption will double.)

(Note 5: When releasing the Hand of Void, the Hand of Void disappears but the dissipated physical strength does not return)

(Note 6: At the current stage, you do not need to fully recite the Glyphic Language Ei a ro to create the Hand of Void, just silently recite it in your mind)

(Note 7: The secret technique has reached its current limit.)

...

[Spirituality +0.3]

...

A stronger synchronization of body and knowledge began.

A chill directly appeared over Arthur's heart, soaking into the detailed appearance of his palms—thumbs, index fingers, middle fingers, ring fingers, and pinky joints, which had already appeared and now seemed more lifelike. Arthur could clearly see the fingerprints on his fingers and the palm lines were also beginning to emerge.

Although he had anticipated it, the joy Arthur felt when another pair of "Hand of Void" was added was still hard to contain.

What could six "Hand of Void" do with one more pair?

Not only did it add variability in combat, but the convenience in daily life also increased exponentially.

No one understood the convenience better than Arthur.

For this reason, Arthur primarily chose "Hand of Void," and considering physical strength, he would opt for "Cat's Grace.Orange" to complement it.

Glancing at the remaining 392 XP points, Arthur keenly sensed the changes in his body due to the increase in Spirituality.

There were no significant changes, unlike the balancing sensation brought by the "Ring of Equilibrium Blood." After the "Cat's Grace.Orange" Ritual was completed, and his capacity for Spirituality had greatly increased, the increase in Spirituality was no longer as intense but became mild and silent.

'Strength brings all changes.'

Arthur felt a sigh of reflection within him as his gaze swept over the "Ring of Equilibrium Blood," which had greatly helped him. Although somewhat reluctant, he knew that the "Ring of Equilibrium Blood" should be retired.

However, Arthur was not in a hurry to take off the "Ring of Equilibrium Blood" or immediately learn "Cat's Grace.Orange." His gaze lingered on the remarks and notes of Lv5 "Hand of Void."

'Is everything 'Destiny'?

That sounds just like Old Charlie hoodwinking people!

And 'The secret technique has reached its current limit!' '

Arthur stroked his chin, his eyes narrowing slightly.

He suddenly had a guess in his heart.

Chapter 259: 256

...

What kind of person was Hercules?

Most people who knew this master would definitely place prefixes such as great, genius, and inconceivable before his name.

A smaller group of people even insisted that this master was the 'God of Potions,' the 'God of Alchemy.'

Either way, with the legendary deeds of this master, his status would continue to soar over time.

However, Arthur was different from others.

Having read through three pages of the other party's diary, Arthur discovered another side of this master—a penchant for playfulness and even pranks!

After all, one who could create the [Stone Bullet Technique] to play stone bullets and [Gliding Technique] to glide on ice must be extremely fond of play.

Similarly, the adaptation of the [Hand of Void] was likely due to this master wanting to escape the tedious work at the library and have more time to play, thus 'growing a few extra hands.'

Then, to make the whole thing more interesting, he concealed a great deal of key information, leaving it to others to guess.

If you guessed it, this master would be pleased, considering it an interesting game.

If you failed to guess, this master would be even more pleased, considering himself the winner of the game.

In any case, would such a master leave a 'trick up his sleeve' in the seemingly perfected [Hand of Void], as a key to breakthrough?

Yes!

The likelihood was extremely high!

Thinking thus, Arthur directly took out the master's diary—the page that recorded [Hand of Void].

He examined it closely.

There were no clues whatsoever.

Then, he let the [Hand of Void] touch it.

There was no reaction whatsoever.

Next, he had six [Hands of Void] pick up the diary page together.

Immediately, the diary page reacted.

The [Glyphic Language] on the paper came alive at that moment, rapidly rearranging themselves—

Finally, a map appeared before Arthur.

It was a map of an unfamiliar terrain, not one that Arthur recognized.

And on that map, there was only one place name.

Rainbow Island!

Looking at this place name, Arthur's eyebrows furrowed slightly.

He had never heard of this island, at least not near South Los.

'Could it be near Sidon Fortress?

Or maybe it's not in South County at all, but North County?

Or even...

Is this name from the era of the Empire?'

Arthur speculated, with an involuntary wry smile in his eyes.

If it were just Sidon Fortress, that would be fine; even being far in North County wouldn't be an issue, but if 'Rainbow Island' was a name from the time of the Empire, then his search for this place would be much more complicated.

As for following the map to find the place?

Even more unlikely!

The several wars in the late Empire completely altered the landscape.

There are even rumors in records that there was a wide tract of land between the East and West Coasts, which then sank entirely due to those massive battles.

However, most historians believe this to be sheer fabrication.

Because, in the remaining records of the Empire, there was no mention of this landmass.

Arthur was not interested in this.

...

He just hoped it would be easier to know where "Rainbow Island" was.

And...

The page of the diary that recorded the "Hand of Void" underwent such changes, so did that mean "Stone Bullet Technique" and "Gliding Technique" could as well?

If it were an ordinary person, Arthur was fairly certain of it.

After all, such useful methods, it wasn't possible to use only once.

But when it came to this Master, Arthur wasn't sure.

He couldn't confirm whether this could be another trick by the Master—just imagine, after going through so much trouble, elevating the "Stone Bullet Technique" and "Gliding Technique" to their limits, and then nothing happens, the Master would surely laugh heartily.

After all, enhancing the "Stone Bullet Technique" and "Gliding Technique" was no simple task.

"Stone Bullet Technique" required 100 XP starting from Lv2.

And "Gliding Technique" started at 500 XP from the beginning.

These were just two secret techniques at Lv1, Lv2, and raising them further consumed so much XP that it gave Arthur a headache, not to mention the energy and time it would take for ordinary people.

It would probably take a lifetime indeed!

'This old codger!' he thought.

Just picturing that scenario made Arthur involuntarily add a title of respect for the Master.

Afterward, the young 'Spirit Medium' shook his head, set aside the matter of "Rainbow Island" for the time being, and proceeded with the planned learning of 'Silent Successive Steps' and 'Cat's Grace.Orange'!

The former required 100 XP, the latter 30 XP.

And from "Extreme Illusory Shadow Technique (Fragmentary)," it was slightly pushed back, placed at the front of the second tier.

No other reason.

One, there wasn't enough XP!

Two, Arthur needed 'Silent Successive Steps' and 'Cat's Grace.Orange' to consolidate his identity as part of the 'Cat Faction.'

[Silent Successive Steps Lv1: Once one of the core mystical arts of the 'Cat Hole,' it is the most favored and mandatory mystical art for all 'Cat Hole' members. Not only does it enhance the learner's physique, but it greatly improves the learner's coordination. However, it must be preceded by the 'Cat Hole' ritual. Otherwise, irreversible mutations will occur]

[Effect: 1, Silence Lv1; 2, Tread Combo Lv1]

[Silence Lv1: When moving slowly and cautiously, you can achieve true silence]

[Tread Combo Lv1: When running or leaping, any protruding object can become a support for you to push off and jump from]

[Physique +0.2]

...

[Cat's Grace.Orange Lv1: As the 'Cat Hole' split into four factions, the original core mystical art 'Cat's Grace' was divided as well, and each cat faction infused their understanding and style into it, resulting in the current variation. Especially 'Cat's Grace.Orange,' deeply influenced by that 'Golden Lion Cat' Aeolia, puts more emphasis on physique and recovery on top of the original basis—in the eyes of an Orange Cat, the ability to eat and sleep is the source of all that is good. To protect this happiness, they need to keep growing and getting bigger, using their massive size and tremendous strength to press their opponents]

[Effect: 1, Force of Orange; 2, Sleep of Orange]

[Force of Orange Lv1: Quickly digested food converts energy to strengthen internal organs, bones, and muscles, enhancing one's physique; Physique +0.1]

[Sleep of Orange Lv1: While sleeping, you can enter a fast rehabilitation and recovery state,]

(Note 1: Force of Orange and Sleep of Orange will be enhanced by the ritual 'Cat's Grace.Orange,' and they will in turn enhance 'Cat's Grace.Orange')

(Note 2: More food will accelerate the healing and recovery process)

...

Arthur's gaze swept over "Silent Successive Steps" and "Cat's Grace.Orange." It was clear that unlike the ritual "Cat's Grace.Orange," which grows over time, "Silent Successive Steps" and "Cat's Grace.Orange" did not have this trait, especially the latter, which seemed like a castrated and fragmentary version of "Cat's Grace.Orange."

However, what comforted Arthur was that "Cat's Grace.Orange" received an enhancement and feedback from "Cat's Grace.Orange."

'After 'Cat Hole' split into four, the potency of the 'Cat Faction' secret techniques clearly dropped by more than one level, but due to the continuity of lineage, there is the effect of feedback, which means that it can rapidly strengthen 'Cat Hole' members—tsk, the original split of 'Cat Hole' couldn't have been to rapidly grow stronger, and then because they all grew too strong, they simply couldn't go back, could it?' he thought.

With this thought in mind, Arthur glanced at the remaining 262 XP, and then made his decision.

This level was far from his limit—

'XP, add points!

Elevate me to the limit!'

Chapter 257: I Chose My Companion, Meow~

Continued to expend 180 XP, "Cat's Grace.Orange" leveled up twice.

Being promoted to Lv3, "Cat's Grace.Orange" not only provided more feedback to "Orange Cat," but "Force of Orange" also granted Arthur an extra 0.5 in Physique, Lv2+0.2, Lv3+0.3, and "Sleep of Orange" also granted the ability to fall asleep quickly.

To put it simply, if you want to sleep, you can doze off as soon as you lie down.

It's practically a blessing for insomniacs.

Also, along with the previous cumulative XP expenditure from learning "Silent Successive Steps" and "Cat's Grace.Orange," Arthur's Spirituality increased by another 0.3.

After glancing at his attributes, which had become "Physique: 2.6" and "Spirituality: 1.0," Arthur's gaze returned to the secret techniques he could master.

As for saving up XP?

That was out of the question!

Arthur was well aware that, for him at this stage, quickly converting all XP into strength was the optimal choice—increasingly loud fame and the potential arrival of a 'Challenger' at any moment. He surely couldn't get through each challenge with "Breath of Death," could he?

After all, this vast Mystic Side wasn't all about the 'Death Poetry Society'!

There were other people, other forces at play.

If he used "Breath of Death" too frequently, someone would eventually catch a glimpse of the secret, and it wouldn't take much; just a targeted preparation against the 'Aura of Death' would restrict his 'power' by ninety percent. When that time came, aside from the option of going berserk with "Breath of Death," he would have no other choice.

And if he chose to let "Breath of Death" run wild, it wouldn't matter in the wilderness, but any urban center, and he would certainly become public enemy number one for the city's ruler.

Nobody could tolerate the large-scale death of their civilians—even if they didn't care much for those civilians, they knew the importance of the populace.

If all the commoners died, who would farm their lands, tend their livestock, and provide services?

Thus, most lords opted to appease the commoners, encouraging them to work hard and reproduce abundantly.

And it wasn't for anyone else.

It was for themselves.

Not to mention anyone else, the Countess of South Los surely understood this logic.

So, if he were to go berserk with "Breath of Death" within South Los, he might as well wait for relentless thunderous pursuits.

Just thinking about the scene he had witnessed that day made Arthur's scalp tingle, even now.

The power of Thunder, the majesty of Heavenly Might!

Always inspiring fear!

Among all the recorded secret techniques, the one Arthur found most intriguing was "Memory Technique," but it required the brain of a Slote Territory goldfish.

Another secret technique, "Abdul's Fire Control Technique," was the same, lacking the 'Fire Lizard's Pouch.'

When he set aside those two techniques, Arthur's gaze shifted to "Noise Technique" and "Wand Combat Technique."

For the Spirit Medium profession, the convenience of "Noise Technique" was second only to "Hand of Void," while "Wand Combat Technique" was an additional boon in combat.

After pondering for a while, Arthur made his decision—

"Noise Technique Lv3: Although most people think it's only good for pranks or chasing away stray cats and dogs, the Court Mage 'Xarlico' from the Empire didn't find it amusing enough. After discovering this secret technique, the Court Mage, who was bored after his friend 'Harrington' declined an invitation to play cards, started to perfect the technique; however, most people aren't interested in the later parts of it; Effect: Based on Spirituality, and expending a tiny bit of physical strength, quietly chanting the Glyphic Language Hei allows the caster to create either a loud bang or two rustling noises within a 16-meter radius of the caster."

(Note 1: The loud bang is approximately 100 decibels)

(Note 2: The rustling noises can be the sound of wind blowing through a window, the rustling of leaves, footsteps, or the low cries of men, women, and children, as well as the sound of trousers tearing or farting)

...

Arthur, looking at the notes, couldn't help but stroke his chin.

Although that Empire's Court Mage was truly idle, the idea of sounds of trousers tearing and farting caught his interest.

With proper application, they could be very effective.

Just think, what would happen if someone's trousers tore while they were charging at you with a sword?

Even an 'Arcana Level' expert would have to look down at their trousers.

That would be his opportunity.

Simply put, this technique was divine against those concerned with their dignity!

As for the farting sound?

Even better!

From then on, he would be the king of balls and salons. Anyone who disagreed would have to hold it in, for as soon as they spoke, it was as if they had farted.

'It's a pity there's no sound for diarrhea!

And also...

Did this Master create a secret technique to cause 'agonizing diarrhea' or not?'

Arthur, full of anticipation, turned his attention to "Wand Combat Technique"—

[Wand Combat Technique Lv2: In the middle of the Silver Age, a Master Alchemist named Lady Abel created this secret technique. The initial purpose was merely to compensate for her lack of physical strength, ensuring safer journeys when she went out to gather materials. However, as time passed, she continuously perfected this technique, eventually reaching the current level: Effect: Consumes some physical strength and uses the Glyphic Language "Ga" to cast the secret technique, imbuing the wand with magical power, transforming it into a wand with combat abilities for 1 minute.]

(Note 1: The caster has and only has one "Magic Wand".)

(Note 2: When the "Magic Wand" in hand completely breaks, a new "Magic Wand" may then be chosen.)

(Note 3: The "Magic Wand" cannot leave a radius of 6 meters from the caster.)

(Note 4: The combat ability of a Lv2 "Magic Wand" is equivalent to an experienced combatant.)

...

There was nothing abrupt about it, unlike the Master Hercules and the Court Mage Xarlico, Lady Abel was consistently stable, steady and sure-footed, enhancing her technique step by step without allowing for a single error to surface.

Arthur acknowledged this.

While surprises were delightful, they were definitely not the norm!

Only gradual improvement was the norm.

And it was the most pleasing norm to witness.

Arthur's gaze swept over the remaining 22 XP, marking the end of this increase in strength.

He glanced regretfully at "Smoke Mirror Usurpation". Although it only required 20 XP to learn, his Spirituality did not meet the standard.

Clearly, it was a high-level secret technique for rapid initiation.

"Is it that Marinda has created the way in which she infused the Power of the Undead into the smoke, or is it achieved through the combination of a corresponding secret technique?"

Remembering how Marinda used the smoke to fight off enemies, travel, and store things, Arthur felt a bit of envy.

So versatile!

It was just too versatile!

Unfortunately, such a secret technique was not something he could acquire.

He didn't have the necessary bargaining chips.

Or rather...

He couldn't afford the price.

With that woman's character, unless he was willing to sign a contract to become her slave, there was no chance he would achieve her level of proficiency.

Just as she would want his six "Hands of Void".

Thinking this to himself, Arthur rose from the horizontal beam, stretched a big stretch facing the morning sun, and softly said—

"A beautiful day begins."

As soon as the words fell, Simon beside him woke up groggily.

"Advisor, why do I have a headache and feel so weak all over?"

The apprentice policeman stood up shakily, constantly shaking his head.

"Sleeping outdoors all night, that's normal. Just eat something and warm up by the fire, and you'll feel better," Arthur said calmly.

Of course, the apprentice policeman wouldn't call into question his advisor, while Pendragon looked at his master with a shocked cat face, seemingly not understanding why his own owner was so shameless.

Arthur, on the other hand, looked down indifferently at the Orange Cat in his arms, which had gone through twists and turns and was bound to have an extraordinary destiny.

An idea emerged in his heart.

He spoke in a voice that only he and Pendragon could hear—

"Pendragon, do you want to control your own destiny?

Pendragon, do you want to possess power?

To no longer be chased, no longer be beaten, to no longer face terrifying people or things powerless to resist, to no longer be senselessly spat upon and laughed at by those idle people.

Pendragon...

Are you willing to accompany me through the rest of my life, until I die?"

The young Spirit Medium set Pendragon down from his embrace and extended his right hand.

The Orange Cat sitting there tilted its head to look at the young Spirit Medium's hand.

After a moment, the Orange Cat placed its paw on it.

And softly meowed—

Meow~

Chapter 258 Outside Mount Gale Town a voice... such a fat cat!

The planned departure was delayed—

Even though the apprentice policeman kept insisting he was fine, but...

The horse was dead.

The horse that had been pulling the police cart had been bitten on the leg by a poisonous snake.

The poison had cost the horse its breath.

Therefore, Simon had to walk back to the town they had passed earlier to buy a new horse, and then ride back to this temporary camp.

It was already evening by the time he went there and back.

Traveling by night was not a wise choice, especially after finding out that the original cart-horse had been bitten by a poisonous snake, Simon was no longer insistent on departing overnight.

This time, a horse was bitten to death by the snake.

Who knew who would be bitten next.

Thus, Arthur, Simon, and the group had to rest an extra day at the camp before setting out again in the morning.

"It's really dangerous out here with so many poisonous snakes!"

In the morning while drawing water, the apprentice policeman murmured softly, having glimpsed the sight of poisonous snakes slithering through the dense forest.

At the same time, he continually applied snake repellent onto the cart—this was given for free by the horse owner from whom they had bought the horse yesterday.

'We do have some snakes here, but such poisonous ones are very rare.

You really have bad luck!'

The apprentice policeman could still recall how the horse owner had exclaimed when saying these words.

If they weren't in a hurry, he would really like to drag that person back here and have them open their eyes wide to see that what they called 'rare' was just nonsense.

Simon's muttering and the sound of applying the potion were heard clearly by Arthur.

In response, the young 'Spirit Medium' nodded approvingly; the poisonous snakes in this dense forest really were too many—there should have only been a few, yet just one day later, there was another group as if attracted by something.

'It must be those corpses that can be used as food!' Arthur told himself in his heart.

Besides food, he could think of no other reasonable explanation.

It couldn't possibly have been attracted by the "Dark Serpent. Crippled," could it?

Such a thing had never happened in South Los before.

As for the "Breath of Death"?

Arthur was certain, absolutely certain it wasn't possible.

The "Breath of Death" was capable of absorbing the 'Power of Death,' but what did it have to do with poisonous snakes?

Could snakes represent death?

As the cart moved slowly, Arthur turned around with a sense of awareness—through the carriage window, the young 'Spirit Medium' clearly saw a large group of poisonous snakes emerge from the dense forest, crawling over that temporary campsite and lifting their upper bodies, heads hanging down, and in their cold eyes seemed to be a mix of fondness and awe.

The young 'Spirit Medium' with the 'Dark Serpent. Crippled' bloodline could clearly read these emotions.

Instantly, the young 'Spirit Medium' covered his face.

Then, he waved his hand vigorously.

Seemingly sensing the young 'Spirit Medium's' embarrassment and displeasure, the large group of poisonous snakes quickly moved away, though they occasionally looked back at the cart with a reluctance to leave.

Pendragon and Arthur, like him, were both crowding at the window.

Orange Cat clearly saw this scene and then looked at its owner with a scornful gaze.

"Well, sometimes snakes really can represent death," Arthur said, spreading his hands in a helpless gesture.

It was clear that with the successful "Orange Cat" ritual, the already extraordinary destined Pendragon had become even smarter—this also made Arthur decide to bolster Pendragon.

Although Pendragon had an extraordinary destiny, Arthur was more aware of the fickleness of destiny.

He certainly didn't want Pendragon to be implicated by his and some people's battles, ending up as a cold corpse.

So—

"Griffin Training Method. Crippled" proved to be quite useful.

The tome detailed potion recipes that enhance physique, which were effective not only for Griffins but also for other animals, provided they were diluted before use.

Rumors had it that in North County, a squadron of 'Griffin Cavalry' was nurtured using similar methods, and it was because of such rumors that Arthur initially desired an excellent horse for transportation.

But that was before.

Now?

Pendragon was more important.

A dose of the 'Griffin Potion' would likely allow Pendragon to ignore most common dangers.

The rumored 'Griffin Cavalry' could disregard crossbow arrows and firearms, move with extreme speed, possess immense strength, and have extraordinarily long stamina; only a cannon could pose a threat.

If there wasn't an ocean between them, North County's 'Griffin Cavalry' would have already been galloping across the lands of South County.

Of course, there was another reason—

Expensive!

"Pan, do you know how much a Sunflower costs?

Ten Golden Acorns can be exchanged for a cluster of Moon Grass.

And three clusters of Moon Grass are needed to get a Sunflower—its rarity is such that if it weren't for Marinda as a collaborator, I'd have to rely on luck even with money."

Arthur said softly as he picked up Pendragon.

A single Golden Acorn was valued between 500-600 gold notes, a cluster of Moon Grass for 5000-6000 gold notes, whereas a Sunflower would need 15000-18000 gold notes; and more importantly, these secret technique ingredients and ritual base materials were hardly ever straightforward purchases, most of the time requiring barter or even fulfilling dangerous contracts.

Just like what Arthur had done.

If he hadn't completed Marinda's contract, he would never have obtained this Sunflower, Moon Grass, and the Vampire Fang.

Therefore, for such precious materials, even a financially robust Arthur needed to be careful with their usage.

He absolutely could not afford to waste any.

Otherwise, who knew how long it would be before he found another Sunflower.

"Once we return to South Los, I'll buy a complete set of magic potion brewing equipment and start producing simple, non-secret potions that are not majorly sensitive—no need for major success, but at least to get the hang of it.

Also, 'Raven Sect Alchemy. Crippled' contains some nice items, suitable for Pan...

Hmm, I wonder if my money will hold out!"

Arthur, while holding Pendragon and muttering, found his eyelids growing heavier.

Without resisting the sleepiness, he informed Fujin to stay alert; then Arthur simply leaned into the seat and fell asleep.

Sensing his master's deep breaths, Pendragon too found a comfortable position in Arthur's arms and drifted off to sleep.

The rest of the journey went in the same way.

Arthur and Simon traveled by day and hid by night; Simon drove during the day, while Arthur kept watch at night.

Two days later, they arrived at Mount Gale Region.

Adjacent to Mount Gale, Mount Gale Region was indeed on the edge of South Los Territory; thus, there were two sentry posts on the mountain and a 500-man military camp at the foot of the mountain.

This military camp essentially functioned as a checkpoint, screening anyone entering South Los Territory from the mountain base.

Arthur's destination, of course, was not the military camp.

It was Mount Gale Town, located just behind the military camp.

The coach didn't drive directly into Mount Gale Town.

About 5 kilometers from the town, the coach stopped, and Simon walked towards the town on foot to look for Hunter and Newt, who had gone ahead.

Meanwhile, Arthur waited inside the coach.

However, after the long journey, Arthur didn't sit inside the coach; he opened the coach door and paced along the side of the coach, easing the fatigue of the trip.

Next to him, Pendragon sat on top of the coach, yawning out of boredom.

And at that moment—

"Hey, that's a fat cat!"

Chapter 259: Strange Noises!

The voice was crisp and pleasing to the ear.

But it made Pendragon, who was yawning, freeze in his tracks.

The Orange Cat slowly closed its mouth, trying to look indifferent as it glanced in the direction of the sound. Four young people—three men and a woman—were approaching from the direction of Mount Gale Town. The two young men carried bows and hunting knives, and the woman was carrying a basket. The exclamation that had sprung up came from one of the women.

She was dressed in simple cloth, adorned with no jewelry, yet her face lacked any signs of tiredness or hunger. Clearly, she came from a wealthy farming family, possibly with some property to its name.

The three young men by her side had a similar air.

'Picking wild fruit and hunting in their spare time to supplement their family income?'

Arthur speculated about the group of four before him.

The woman who had spoken obviously felt embarrassed, her face turning red. She began bowing to Arthur repeatedly and, when Arthur waved his hand, she quickly left with her companions—

"Norma, don't be so presumptuous next time."

"Right, we're lucky that gentleman didn't take offense."

"Besides, that cat was clearly adorable. How could you call it fat? If anything, you should say it's plump!"

The voices of the four young people faded as they walked away, but their words reached Arthur's ears.

The young 'Spirit Medium' confirmed that his own Orange Cat had heard as well, and immediately lifted his hand, allowing the 'Hand of Void' to pick up the Orange Cat from the top of the wagon.

Then—

"Haha!

It really has gained quite a bit of weight!

Pan, you need to go on a diet!"

The young 'Spirit Medium' laughed heartily.

Any notion of 'if you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all' was completely absent!

To ensure that the Orange Cat grew up quickly, a bit of prodding was necessary.

Of course, with speed, there could be no happiness.

There's no such thing as having the best of both worlds, right?

Upset?

Arthur pulled out a strip of jerky and, after tearing it in half, stuffed one piece into his own mouth and the other into Pendragon's.

The Orange Cat, visibly upset just moments ago, immediately began to purr with joy.

It was just too easy!

Arthur reveled in the pleasure of a small skirmish with his pet, enjoying the upper hand.

And the feelings of joy lasted until two hours later—

Simon and Hunter arrived together on one mount, with Newt following behind; the three of them had returned.

Simon had a grave expression on his face.

Hunter and Newt looked terrified.

It was clear that they brought back troubling news.

In fact, that was the case—

"Advisor, before we arrived, 'Yumir Manor' had already been visited by three 'Spirit Mediums', who were also invited by the owner of 'Yumir Manor'.

And then, two days ago, almost on the same day, all three 'Spirit Mediums' died.

It was as if there really was a curse!

One died from breaking his neck falling down the stairs.

Another choked on a pie while having a midnight snack in the kitchen, and suffocated to death.

The last one was the most ridiculous, you know?

He drowned while bathing!

Drowned right in the bathtub!"

Hunter said this with increasing horror on his face.

Clearly, the officer was scared.

Meanwhile, Newt began to add more details.

"Ever since that distant nephew of the Yumirs died, the entire manor seemed to be under a curse. First the distant nephew died, and then every year people would disappear near the Mount Gale Region, both locals and visitors to the South Los Territory, especially three years ago on a foggy night. Since the inn in town was full, a caravan of twenty merchants had to camp outside the town, but the next day, it was discovered that the entire merchant group had vanished, leaving behind only their scattered goods outside the town."

Upon hearing this, something stirred in Arthur's mind.

"Who ended up with the goods in the end?"

The young 'Spirit Medium' asked.

"Of course, that was the Police Chief—the goods and horses were all sold by the Chief, with most of the money lining his own pockets, and the rest used to cover up the news.

Most of the people in the town are aware of this, but there aren't many who dare to talk about it.

I was drinking with the innkeeper and got him drunk before I managed to find out about it," Newt quickly replied.

Arthur nodded slightly in response.

For the Police Chief of Mount Gale Town to act in such a way, the young 'Spirit Medium' was not surprised, and even thought that the chief might have been tempted by the sight of riches and decided to commit murder and robbery.

There should be no doubt about whether the other party had the guts to do such a thing.

In South Los, and indeed most of the police chiefs in South County would dare to do this.

In fact, some police chiefs were originally doing this very thing.

Take, for example...

James!

Thinking about the actions of the Police Chief of Dort District, it seemed normal for the Police Chief of Mount Gale Town to do something out of line.

No!

To be serious, for these police chiefs, it's not out of line at all, but part of their duties.

Therefore, a chief like Malz who only had some 'minor faults' was actually a rare breed.

At least Malz wouldn't engage in violent robberies or murders.

As for greed?

Malz would at least take the money and do the job.

To everyone, that made him a 'model police chief'.

"To the police station!"

Arthur boarded the carriage.

There was something he urgently needed to verify.

Three 'Spirit Mediums' had died.

But their belongings would certainly be left behind.

If the three 'Spirit Mediums' were fake, it would not matter much.

But if the three were real, then their belongings might contain Arcane Artifacts, which would be an unexpected windfall.

Arthur would certainly not refuse such an unexpected windfall.

Clatter! Clatter!

The carriage specially used by South Los Police Station, along with Simon who had changed into his uniform, had just entered Mount Gale Town, capturing the attention of everyone.

A patrol officer from Mount Gale Town saw them and immediately turned and ran.

By the time the carriage carrying Arthur stopped at the entrance of the police station, the Police Chief of Mount Gale Town was already standing at the entrance of the police station with two officers and twelve patrolmen.

Unlike South Los.

The Police Chief of Mount Gale Town was only equivalent to a second-level police officer, and that was because of the proximity to Mount Gale Barracks; otherwise, a Third-Class Officer would have been sufficient.

Beyond that, there were two fourth-level police officers.

As for the patrolmen, twelve were the normal number.

Even that was a bit low.

According to the size of Mount Gale Town, there should be 4-6 additional patrolmen.

Of course, Arthur could guarantee that in the police station's records, the personnel of Mount Gale Town Police Station would be at full capacity—the vacancies?

They were at home resting due to illness or injury.

If one wished to see them, they could be seen immediately.

And sometimes, they might indeed be injured.

Smack!

"Westbron has seen your Excellency!"

As soon as the carriage door opened, the corpulent Westbron, along with all present, saluted Arthur. As Arthur disembarked, this portly police chief took a step forward as if to offer his assistance, and at the same time, two large denomination gold notes slipped from his palm into Arthur's pocket.

The movement was swift and light.

It was hard to believe it came from a police chief who wheezed even when walking.

In response, Arthur smiled and then asked directly.

"Where are the bodies and belongings of those three Spirit Mediums?"

The police chief led the way, speaking respectfully as he did so.

But before the police chief had said anything, a strange knocking sound came from inside the police station—

Thud! Thud!

Each knock was unusually heavy.

Each knock exerted full force.

The faces of the officers and patrolmen beside turned suddenly pale.

Because they recognized where the odd noise was coming from.

It was...

The morgue.

Chapter 260 'Spirit Medium' Expert at Manipulating People!

All members of the Mount Gale Town police station came outside to welcome Arthur and his party, including the Police Chief and a total of fifteen people.

Among them was a fourth-level police officer who also served as the coroner.

"No one, no one was inside when I left!"

This fourth-level officer stuttered.

The already frightened members of the Mount Gale Town police station started shivering when they heard what the fourth-level officer said.

And at that moment—

Thud! Thud!

Squeak! Squeak!

That heavy sound rang out again.

It was followed by a continuous, teeth-gritting noise.

The sound came one after another without pause.

In the minds of all the present members of the Mount Gale Town police station, they envisioned a corpse knocking on the morgue drawer, then with both arms propping up the top of the drawer, leveraging friction a little bit at a time to slide it open.

Instantly, a chill ran from the soles of their feet to the tops of their heads.

Especially the fourth-level officer who also served as the coroner; he collapsed onto the ground at this time.

Compared to others, this fourth-level officer was all too familiar with the sound of the decrepit morgue drawers opening and closing.

He was certain that it was the sound of a morgue drawer opening inside the morgue.

He had heard it countless times and couldn't be mistaken about it.

The people from the Mount Gale Town police station were all terrified, looking utterly perplexed.

But Arthur's expression remained indifferent.

After all...

He was the one who had arranged this.

As a young, upright, naive, and kind 'Spirit Medium,' Arthur believed it was necessary to find out whether the disappearance of a twenty-person merchant caravan and the 'Curse' of Yumir Manor were indeed related.

As for using traditional 'Spirit Medium' methods?

What's wrong with a 'Spirit Medium' using some traditional 'Spirit Medium' methods?

Is there a problem?

Arthur confidently walked towards the police station, Simon drew his longsword and followed with his firearm in hand, and Hunter and Newt exchanged glances, both seeing the pallor on each other's faces. They gritted their teeth and drew their weapons to follow—they had made mistakes and were still on probation. If something happened to Arthur who had come with them, and they weren't by his side, and were unharmed, then they wouldn't need to return to South Los.

If they dared to go back, the first to not let them off would be Malz, the Police Chief.

Arthur led the way with Simon and Hunter to his sides, Newt bringing up the rear.

Even though the three of them looked tense and fear was evident in their eyes, they all followed.

Arthur was satisfied with this.

The young 'Spirit Medium' knew not everyone could become experienced collaborators like Malz and Marinda, but he hoped the people around him could possess at least a tiny bit of basic trust.

Not too much was needed.

A tiny bit would suffice.

The Mount Gale Town police station wasn't large; it was a two-story building with a basement. The first floor held the office area and detention cells, while the second floor was the offices for the Police Chief, Deputy Chief, and coroner. The basement contained the morgue, evidence storage, and miscellaneous storage.

Arthur had already seen it through Fujin's eyes and explored the way with the "Hand of Void."

Therefore, at this moment, he confidently pushed open the door to the morgue.

A set of wooden morgue drawers was lined against the wall, facing three beds, and beyond that was a cabinet for storing coroner's tools.

The three beds were stained with many bloodstains that had already blackened.

The tool cabinet inside was also a mess, with no semblance of order.

Clearly, there had been no cleaning or organizing for a long time.

According to new regulations, the morgue should be cleaned daily, and the morgue drawers should be maintained every year.

Obviously, the people from the Mount Gale Town police station did not heed these protocols.

But Arthur was not surprised.

In fact, after leaving South Los, few adhered to the new regulations.

Even in South Los, the form often outweighed the substance.

Moreover, the fact that the morgue in the Mount Gale police station even had morgue drawers was a surprise to Arthur.

Arthur turned his gaze toward the morgue drawers or rather, the one that was opened.

Inside lay a corpse whose neck was twisted at a bizarre angle.

It must be the guy who had fallen down the stairs and broken his neck.

At this moment, he was lying naked inside.

There was no doubt that everything belonging to the corpse had been taken by the coroner, and after a series of allocations, the body would become worthless—it was highly likely to be discarded as a John Doe in a mass grave.

As for preserving the body or pursuing the murderer?

The police in South Los couldn't manage that, let alone in this town.

And the items that belonged to the corpse?

From the moment the body was discovered, it had to pass through the hands of the patrolling officers.

While they wouldn't go too far, who knew whether the items they desired—props from the Mystic Side—were hidden among them, sometimes quite unassuming in appearance.

Moreover, what was more important was that it was not easy to retrieve the items they had already pocketed.

After all, it involved matters of personal interest.

'Don't try to take things from other people's pockets; that will only make them despise and be wary of us, and it may even lead to fierce conflicts! What we need to do is: make them willingly take out the stuff, and place it in our hands with endless gratitude, and they'll be thankful for eternity!'

Arthur silently approved as he recalled Old Charlie's words in his mind.

Just as Old Charlie had said, perhaps he could use his status, his power, to force these fellows to hand things over, and indeed they wouldn't dare to refuse, but they would surely harbor resentment in secret.

And such resentment could easily lead to trouble—some people couldn't even offer you a tiny bit of help, but they could go to great lengths to mess things up for you.

That, precisely, was human nature.

Arthur was someone who loathed trouble.

So, after confirming that it wasn't feasible to 'permanently eliminate future trouble,' the young 'Spirit Medium' chose the 'gentler' approach.

"Let those men in—have they gone mad? Even daring to take things that have been tainted by the curse of Lost Souls!"

Arthur reprimanded in a low voice, waving his hand to signal.

Immediately, Hunter and Newt went to call people over.

Soon, the folks from Mount Gale Town's police station began to shuffle down reluctantly.

Police Chief Westbron walked at the front, unwillingly, while the two fourth-level police officers scrutinized every step they took; it was clear that at the slightest sign of trouble, these two were ready to bolt.

And the patrolling officers following behind?

They were even more so.

Indeed, two patrolling officers who entered the basement stopped at the entrance and didn't move any further.

However, for the young 'Spirit Medium,' this was enough—

With the assistance of the "Hand of Void," the corpse with the broken neck slowly sat up, and a low weeping sound echoed in the morgue.

"Good lord!"

Police Chief Westbron let out a sharp wail and turned to run.

The two fourth-level officers, who had made preparations but still reacted slower than their Chief, ended up becoming stumbling blocks.

Bang, bang!

The three collided into each other.

The remaining patrolling officers were in utter chaos.

Some collapsed on the ground, weeping bitterly.

Some used hands and feet, attempting to escape the basement.

But the next moment, a voice from the morgue made everyone stop in their tracks.

They instinctively looked towards the morgue.

Disbelief soon filled their eyes.

They saw the officer from South Los standing in front of the corpse, with a compassionate expression, quietly chanting—

"Stars scattered across the board, chariots five, horses six; a resplendent star from the white night traverses the earth, soothing restless spirits...

Whoever took their belongings, return them now!"

As he spoke, the young 'Spirit Medium' stepped aside.

The entire morgue and the hallway became silent.

Then, everyone began emptying their pockets.

Some even ran upwards, clearly indicating their belongings weren't with them at that moment.

There was no resistance, nor rebellion; all were so proactive.

Watching this scene, a faint smile appeared at the bottom of Arthur's heart.

Then, the young 'Spirit Medium' began to check whether there were items he was looking for among them.

Soon, after discarding most of the unnecessary items, three Mystic Tools appeared before Arthur's eyes.

However, looking at the three Mystic Tools before him, Arthur frowned—

'What a coincidence?!'