

Great Master 311

Chapter 311: The Justice Only a 'Spirit Medium' Would Have!

Linda Camille, dressed in a dark blue suit, white shirt, golden cropped hair, and even a pair of men's boots, revealed delight in her black eyes upon seeing Arthur.

Arthur, however, was taken aback by Linda's hair.

Not only had the color changed slightly, but it had been cut short too!

She looked rather like a tomboy.

But, these were all secondary matters.

What was important was that Arthur felt a 'Mystic Aura' emanating from Linda!

It was no longer faint but rather intense now.

'Hah, Muggle?

What Muggle?

It's a weak spot!

The weak spot in my family is me.'

Arthur was almost at a loss for words.

As for the 'Kledos Family's bloodline' and such?

Arthur didn't care.

By now, the young 'Spirit Medium' had grown accustomed, and he definitely wouldn't fuss over whether Linda's bloodline came from her mother or her grandfather Old Charlie.

It was all unimportant!

Really, not! Important! At! All!

"Good evening, Linda!"

Arthur greeted her with a smile.

For a direct blood relative of the 'Kledos Family', Arthur always showed considerable warmth—perhaps this was the power inherent in their bloodline.

Of course, it was also because Linda wasn't annoying.

If she had been annoying?

Then it would mean she didn't have the 'Kledos Family's bloodline.

She would be a fake.

'Spirit Mediums' most acknowledge that what benefits them is what's right.

The rest?

Mere trifle!

"Good evening, Arthur!"

Linda, excited, couldn't wait to share with Arthur the changes she had undergone in the past half month, but upon seeing Marinda next to him, she held back.

Although Marinda was close to Arthur, as a member of the 'Kledos Family,' she represented the 'Kledos Family'—the extraordinary Kledos Family!

Therefore, Linda immediately composed herself and politely greeted Marinda.

Behind Linda, the old butler Oer looked on with dotting eyes.

Even though the young mistress had her hair cut short and changed the color, ever since the 'Bloodline Awakening' of the 'Kledos Family' took place, not only had she become much more cheerful, but she was also full of vitality every day, especially in learning abilities which soared. Aside from her personal reading, she recently began seeking guidance in Longsword Technique, Dagger Assassination Technique, Firearm Shooting, Archery, Herbalism, Bandaging, Map Drawing, Stealth Entry, Poison Coating, Disguise, and more, from him and a few other elders.

The mistress would certainly be comforted to see such a young mistress upon her return.

Marinda, who was conversing with Linda, had her mind racing—

Sure enough, after Arthur and I candidly discussed our relationship with Camille's house, Linda Camille stopped pretending.

I always said that as the daughter of Ms. Camille, how could she seem so weak? Almost like she was using a cat as a shield!

It was all an act!

No, her love for cats must be real.

After all, she was influenced by 'Cat Faction. Hei.'

Dammit!

Why didn't I spot these anomalies earlier?

Isn't the cat clue obvious enough?

Feeling the intense 'Mystic Aura' now present on Linda, and thinking about how she took over the 'Secret Assembly' established by Edith, the daughter of the 'Bernice family,' Marinda fiercely glared at Arthur.

This lady was annoyed at being deceived by Linda's frail appearance and also regretted the organization that had an heir of more than thirty merchant houses.

Had it been in her hands, her power would have surely ascended to another level.

But now it was under Linda's control...

Wait a minute!

Was all this orchestrated by Arthur?!

The sudden thought stunned Marinda.

And at that moment, Arthur happened to reveal a well-timed smile.

Instantly, the lady clenched her teeth.

She understood!

She finally understood!

The roles of Kuke, Malz, Scott, Wiggins—they were the outer ring!

The web of relations formed by two Police Chiefs, a Horn Report editor, and a gang leader enveloped the outer core of influence controlled by Linda!

Then, driven by the outer core, they created unimaginable value, which fed back to the Kledos Family!

Upon this thought, the lady's eyes lit up.

But immediately, she shook her head.

'No! That's not right!

If Arthur dared to show this to me, it means he doesn't really care about these things, or rather... these things are hiding something!

What are they hiding exactly?'

The lady couldn't help but fall into deep thought.

Seeing Marinda like this, Arthur smiled secretly to himself.

Yes, that's right!

Marinda, use your imagination to add bricks and mortar to the history of the Kledos Family!

Leaving Marinda to speculate on her own in her seat, Arthur introduced Linda to everyone, some already familiar, some not, but upon seeing Arthur's treatment of Linda, everybody maintained the proper respect.

Ding, ding, ding!

The grand clock inside No. 44 White Bird Street struck eight o'clock.

Arthur didn't stand up with a drink in hand to make a lengthy speech; he simply tapped his soup spoon gently against his wine glass—

Ding!

A crisp sound, marking the start of the salon or, one could say, the dinner party.

Grandma Andor's two apprentices served one dish after another to the guests.

The old lady's culinary skill was verified by Arthur; naturally, it won over everyone, especially the fried and grilled platter, which received unanimous praise.

The platter consisted of black pepper sausages, chicken wings, diced beef, lamb shanks, large prawns, fish fillets with pumpkin, potatoes, and corn.

Wherein the black pepper sausages, large prawns, and fish fillets were fried, the chicken wings, diced beef, and lamb shanks were grilled.

As for the pumpkin, potatoes, and corn, half were fried and half grilled, served with various dipping sauces, making everyone's mouth water.

Serving after serving of food was cleared away as people finished eating.

Arthur, holding a glass of clear water, glanced at Malz and Scott.

Compared to the others, who ate wholeheartedly, the two seemed somewhat distracted.

They glanced over at him from time to time.

Clearly, both were keen to know the truth behind the death of the Patrick Bookstore owner and the death of the Horn Report editor.

Arthur, smiling slightly, looked at the two apprentices who were cleaning up the leftovers on the table, and said—

"Could we have the pleasure of thanking Grandma Andor in person?"

"Of course!"

The two apprentices nodded repeatedly.

Putting aside the fact that such a gesture of thanks was an honor for a chef, the people present were not ones they could refuse.

Look at these distinguished guests.

A district's Police Chief, a newspaper's editor, a big shot from Rat Street, a wealthy heiress, and a man whose identity was unknown yet appeared extremely astute.

Of course, the most important were the 'Spirit Medium' and 'Businesswoman' seated at the head of the table.

The two were the most discussed individuals in recent times in South Los.

The two apprentices turned and walked into the kitchen, and after a moment, a neatly dressed elderly woman walked out.

Surprise flickered in the eyes of the guests.

It wasn't that Grandma Andor's appearance was stunning—though she must have been a beauty in her youth, time had dimmed her beauty.

But her demeanor shone even brighter!

If it wasn't for the apron around her waist and the faint scent of food lingering on her, everyone would have mistaken her for a lady of high society, rather than a cook.

Particularly under the gaze of everyone, Grandma Andor still graciously curtsied.

The entire movement was neither rushed nor sluggish; afterward, she turned her gaze to Arthur.

"Lord Kledos, were you satisfied with the food?"

Grandma Andor asked like this.

This question left the others somewhat puzzled.

Under normal circumstances, Grandma Andor at this point should be expressing her thanks.

After all, inviting the chef out was in itself an acknowledgment of the food.

And with the attributes Grandma Andor exhibited, it wasn't likely due to nervousness that she asked the question inappropriately.

With doubt, the guests looked towards Arthur.

The young 'Spirit Medium' smiled and nodded.

"I am quite satisfied."

"Just that?"

Grandma Andor was taken aback, a look of surprise on her face.

"Just that, after all—

If we cannot prevent evil from happening, we have no reason to stop others from being the hand of justice!"

The young 'Spirit Medium' laughed, cradling Pendragon in his arms and leaning back in the chair, teasing the belly of the struggling Orange Cat while he chuckled and revealed another name of Grandma Andor—

"Right, Miss Nicole?"

Chapter 312: Past Events!

Nicole?!

Malz's eyes bulged, and he stood up uncontrollably from his chair, repeatedly asking—

"Nicole, are you Cotton's fiancée, Nicole?"

"Hmm."

Grandma Andor nodded, her eyes softening at the mention of 'Cotton's' name.

It was a radiance interwoven with longing and memories.

A light sigh filled with indescribable attachment.

In this sigh, Malz sat back down in his chair.

The old sheriff stared at the once comrade's fiancée and, after a full three to four seconds of silence, finally spoke.

"You killed the owner of 'Patrick Bookstore' and the editor-in-chief of 'Horn Report', Comms?"

"Hmm."

Grandma Andor nodded again, this time with a flicker of outrage in her eyes that even Linda could perceive, while the others fell into contemplative silence.

Especially the old sheriff, who furrowed his brows.

Everything was so evident.

He had already guessed the general situation.

However, there were still things the old sheriff needed to hear from Grandma Andor herself.

"Can you tell me exactly what happened?"

The old sheriff inquired.

"Revenge.

Do you still remember what happened when you returned to South Los at the end of the Seven Years' War, just as the war was about to end?"

Grandma Andor looked towards the old sheriff.

The latter's expression became stern as he said solemnly,

"Never forgotten!"

"Then do you know you were supposed to return to South Los by ship?"

Grandma Andor asked again.

Suddenly, the old sheriff's eyes narrowed dangerously—bringing up the past was something he always preferred not to do.

Because, in his view, it was an accident.

In fact, it had been officially deemed an accident.

It was his direct superior who had personally inspected and concluded the matter.

So, the old sheriff had never given it much thought.

But if they were supposed to return by ship and ended up returning on foot instead...

Everything was different!

It meant that someone had orchestrated that accident for them!

The accident was man-made!

The old sheriff stared intently at Grandma Andor and asked once more.

"By ship? Are you certain?"

"Certain!

According to the orders at the time, you were to return to South Los by ship, but someone altered that command—'Patrick Bookstore's owner was the person who forged the false orders back then, and the editor-in-chief of 'Horn Report'? His seal engraving skills were quite impressive, the seal came from his hands!"

Grandma Andor mentioned the two individuals, her eyes brimming with bitterness.

At the side of the dinner table, Scott's face turned pale.

He knew of Editor Comms's love for seal engraving and had even seen the old editor at work on seals.

But...

He had never imagined that the old editor would be involved in such matters.

Recalling the old editor's usual care for him, the young editor felt disbelief, as if seeing a completely disconnected person for the first time at that moment.

Scott, reeling from the shock of reality, bowed his head in silence.

Marinda, however, looked with great interest at the familiar figure of Grandma Andor.

"Can you tell me how you found out they had done these things?"

The lady asked in this manner.

As usual, she carried a probing tone.

Grandma Andor clearly felt this probing.

But the grandmother didn't care.

On the contrary, she generously admitted—

"Miss Caesar, it's just as you thought!"

The mastermind behind it all was none other than Baron Kemir, whom you are to inherit the title from!

He planned everything!

And I killed him!"

Having received the answer she wanted, Marinda nodded with a slight smile, yet her gaze returned to Arthur.

She knew that every step Arthur took was significant, even a salon like New House Salon had to serve his purpose.

And everything that happened just then confirmed her speculation.

So...

'Was it just about finding the "murderer"?''

No way!

That's not Arthur's style!

'This guy must be after something!'

Unable to confirm her suspicions, Marinda chose to watch from the sidelines.

And at the dinner table, everyone's eyes were on this lady, then on Grandma Andor, and finally, on Arthur.

Everyone was very surprised by such a coincidence.

But was it really a coincidence?

Looking at Arthur, holding Pendragon, everyone subconsciously shook their heads.

At that moment, everyone recalled what Arthur had just said—

'If we can't stop evil from happening, then we have no right to stop others from carrying out justice on heaven's behalf!'

So, it was not a coincidence!

Arthur had known all this for a long time!

But Arthur chose to be an observer!

Yes, with an Arthur, the 'Spirit Medium' present, how could it possibly be just coincidence?

If it really had to be called a coincidence, it would be better to call it 'Destiny'!

The 'Destiny' brought by a 'Spirit Medium'!

To Arthur's left, aside from Marinda, sat Linda in the place closest to Arthur, she was puzzled amid her surprise.

Not puzzled by Arthur knowing about this.

Linda firmly believed that with a stronger Bloodline and superior Talent than herself, Arthur could naturally know these things if he wished.

What perplexed and puzzled her was how Grandma Andor managed to kill a Noble.

Following her 'Bloodline Awakening,' Linda had learned part of the world's truth from Butler Oer's words. She understood why Nobles valued 'Bloodline' so much, and also why they could hold a position unattainable by the common man—all rooted in power!

That kind of power that towered above the average person!

Even for a 'Dud,' it was the same!

Because their ancestors had already planned everything out for the 'Dud.'

Maybe for a Lord, it would be difficult.

But at the level of a Baron, having one or two defensive props that could be normally used by the common people was necessary.

So, it's very hard for a commoner to harm a Noble.

With curiosity and doubts filling her mind, Linda looked towards Arthur and, after he nodded, the member of the Kledos Family immediately voiced her question—

"How did you kill a Noble?"

Faced with such an inquiry, Grandma Andor laughed.

However, her smile carried a touch of bitterness.

"Food and cooking.

Some delicious Food combined can form toxins, and while these toxins are not acute, long-term accumulation can still be lethal. My mother told me that as a wife and mother, it's my duty to ensure that my husband and children gain health from their meals.

I always worked hard towards this purpose.

But Cotton's death in the war left me utterly without an aim.

After the war ended, due to my mother, I pretended everything was fine and even applied for a job at Baron Kemir's estates.

I planned to take my own life after my mother passed away peacefully.

However, the 'thank-you banquet' hosted by Baron Kemir revealed everything to me.

They drank themselves into a stupor.

They boasted to each other.

And I?

I chose to use the only means I was proficient at, the only way I could, for revenge."

Linda nodded repeatedly as she listened but still harbored curiosity within—

One thing, in particular, drew her concern.

Chapter 313: Hidden!

...

Sitting beside Arthur, Linda asked in a low voice—

"Grandma, you didn't kill the other two first.

Because that would have alerted Baron Kemir.

Yet to kill Baron Kemir, you spent more than thirty years, even though it improved your cooking skills and your knife work became even better.

But according to Chief Malz's description, the cuts on the body required not only skill but also tremendous explosive strength.

Such explosive strength is something you do not possess."

Having just quietly asked the old sheriff about the incident, Linda found this point very strange.

Grandma Andor wasn't a physically strong person.

Moreover, she did not possess a 'mystic aura'.

And that kind of explosive power and skill required to neatly sever a human neck is definitely not something an elderly woman could have—on this point, Linda had the right to speak.

In these past days, when she consulted the old butler Oer and others about swordsmanship and dagger techniques, the first thing the old butlers told her to do was to slaughter pigs.

A whole live pig, a sharp longsword, hacking down with force, always getting stuck in the fat and bones, with gushing fresh blood obstructing the longsword's intended path.

After several attempts, she could avoid the bones effectively.

Again, after several attempts, she was able to use the blade's sharpness to execute a truly vital strike—for this, Camille's house had been eating pork products for half a month straight, and many were turned into sausages and smoked sausages by the old butler.

And this was only against pigs.

Against humans?

Linda was not confident.

So, it was extremely far-fetched to explain Grandma Andor's knife skills with 'years of cooking'—unless this grandma was a deeply hidden murderer with extremely sophisticated killing techniques, then using cooking as a cover in daily life.

Linda hoped this wasn't the case.

Therefore, this member of the 'Kledos Family' quietly watched Grandma Andor.

Facing Linda's gaze, Grandma Andor waved her hand.

"If it was just me alone, of course I couldn't make such a clean and decisive cut—in fact, my original plan was to continue waiting for the right moment and then poison those two men, but..."

He's back!"

As Grandma Andor said this, her eyes sparkled with surprise.

Such surprise was obvious to all.

Everyone saw it.

And in the next moment, everyone clearly saw a dark figure appearing behind the grandmother, a shadow as insubstantial as smoke and mist, its facial features completely indistinct.

But the originally warm hall became instantly cold with the appearance of this shadow.

At the same time, a deep roar sounded in everyone's ears, as if it were the frigid wind that continued to rage after blowing open the doors in the dead of winter.

Everyone felt this discomfort.

Everyone also had different reactions.

Haywood, Scott, and Wiggins instinctively reached into their bosoms—where they had a vial of concentrated sulfuric acid and one of kerosene.

Malz discreetly picked up the long box at his feet.

Kuke held onto a dagger given to him by his father.

Clearly, those accompanying Arthur were no strangers to evil spirits and had learned how to respond.

Marinda then looked at Linda, who was eager to try.

Indistinctly, this lady saw a figure that was somewhat visible and somewhat not behind Linda.

Unlike the bleakness of the dark shadow.

This figure was even more elusive.

And it had no sense of coldness.

'Is this...

a Guardian Spirit?

Perhaps the disguise was maintained for too long, and now he's too eager to wait?'

This lady speculated, as her pipe emitted sparks.

Never be careless at any time.

This was what this lady, taught from a young age, kept firmly in mind.

Only Arthur was different.

Holding Pendragon, Arthur kept lightly tapping the top of the Orange Cat's head, as if unconcerned about the situation unfolding before him.

...

And this appearance of Arthur attracted all the attention of the shadows behind Grandma Andor.

Or rather...

The original target of the adversary was Arthur.

When the deep growl became shrill, the temperature in the great hall dropped once more, an effect unique to the deceased upon the living world.

Similarly, based on this effect, one could gauge the strength of the deceased.

The apparition before them was doubtlessly strong—

Haywood, Scott, and Wiggins couldn't help but shiver.

It wasn't fear, just an instinctive reaction to the cold.

Malz exhaled visible breaths, yet his hands were firmly grasping the long case.

In Kuke's hands was the dagger given by his father, seemingly unaffected by the chilling presence.

The sparks in Marinda's pipe flared up once again.

But the lady's attention was more focused on Linda.

For behind the girl, a faint golden hue had tinged her shadow without notice, subtle yet undeniably there.

'A golden Guardian Spirit?

No, it's golden clothing!

What sort of Guardian Spirit could this be?'

The lady couldn't help but speculate.

Due to her connection with Arthur and the 'Kledos Family', she was always exceedingly cautious and her intuition was now alerting her that Linda's Guardian Spirit...

was very dangerous!

This sense of danger

prompted the mist-like black figure to not wait any longer and to charge straight at Arthur.

Its speed was beyond what ordinary people could imagine, akin to teleportation.

One moment, it was still.

The next, it had reached right in front of Arthur.

Aside from Marinda, almost no one present could react in time—Linda was the same, despite her wide-open eyes, a member of the 'Kledos Family' whose own reflexes still couldn't keep up; yet the gaze of Linda's phantom shadow remained fixed on the black mist from start to finish.

And sensing Linda's urgent mood, the illusory figure was ready to take action.

But someone was faster.

No!

To be precise...

A hound!

Kuliqui, lurking in the shadows at Arthur's feet, pounced on the black figure the moment it appeared, beginning to tear and bite ferociously.

The black mist's body, which should have been immune to conventional physical attacks, was utterly ineffective under the claws and teeth of Kuliqui.

"Aaaaah!"

The scream now was just as heartrending as the charge had been ferocious.

Watching the wailing shadow, Marinda narrowed her eyes slightly.

Of course, the lady recognized a 'Death Hound.'

For such a loyal and useful Arcane Creature, she too had sought after them but with no reward.

What she hadn't expected was that Arthur would be keeping a 'Death Hound.'

'It's just like the 'Kledos Family'!' she thought to herself.

Meanwhile, Grandma Andor was already begging for mercy.

"Lord Kledos, please forgive Cotton's insolence, he..."

"Cotton?"

Arthur cut off Grandma Andor's plea, looking at the black figure being torn apart on the ground, and couldn't help but shake his head—

"Deceiving a lady is not the act of a gentleman, nor that of a noble.

You agree, do you not?

Baron Kemir!"

Chapter 314: Get Out of the Way!

Baron Kemir?

Not Cotton?

Surprise emerged in the eyes of the people around the dining table, but not a single one doubted what Arthur had said.

There had been too many prior hints, leading them to fully believe in Arthur's words.

Even Marinda was no exception.

This lady believed Arthur would not lie about such a matter.

Just as she firmly believed that Arthur's target was Baron Kemir.

That's right!

It was Baron Kemir!

As Arthur uttered the baron's honorable title, this lady knew what Arthur intended to do!

Because...

This was also the reason she chose Baron Kemir!

You see, in South Los, aside from the irreplaceable Earl, the remaining four barons and seven lords scattered throughout the South Los Territory were not indispensable.

At any time, a small change could reduce these noble families to history.

Just like that "Viscount Primo."

This "Viscount Primo" was the only viscount within the South Los Territory, held considerable prestige, was adept at managing his own industries, and had three offspring who all successfully underwent the Awakening. However, with the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, the entire Primo Family was killed in battle, including the women, all dying on the front lines.

For this, the Earl of South Los specially erected a monument and wrote a biography on the estate of the former Viscount Primo, praising the viscount's achievements.

Then...

He annexed all of the Viscount Primo's land, servants, and ships into the South Los Family.

No one would say anything.

Because this was one of the traditional practices of nobility.

What existed was only envy.

What existed was that ever-growing...

Ambition!

And thus, Marinda found room to maneuver with the "baronial title"!

Among the four barons, aside from Kemir who was a dud, the current baron of the "Harold Family" was similar to Kemir, also a dud and similarly childless, but his territory was closer to South Los, and he was even more reclusive—this man was originally Marinda's target, but after in-depth investigation, she ultimately chose Baron Kemir.

Because it was only after her investigation that she discovered that Baron Kemir's house had a precious collection related to "Master Hercules' Diary"!

Marinda considered her investigation absolutely covert, convinced that even the remaining two barons, "Baron Korol" and "Baron Hausman," would be unable to detect anything amiss.

But now, Arthur had found out.

No!

It should be said that the "Kledos Family" had found out!

"I knew there was more to inviting me to the so-called New House Salon—Arthur, you've finally shown your true colors!"

Marinda was not angry.

In fact, she even felt a hint of relief.

Because after recalling the entire process of the investigation, she could confirm that she would not be discovered.

Even the "Kledos Family" would not be able to find out.

Unless there was a Divine Spirit within the "Kledos Family."

But how could that be possible?

Discarding that possibility, only one remained: the "Kledos Family" had long since discovered the precious collection related to "Master Hercules' Diary" in Baron Kemir's house, but due to their own family's need to keep a low profile, could not take action, and as a result...

She had gotten there first!

This made the "Kledos Family" very discontented... no, it should be said that it made Arthur very discontented. Therefore, Arthur created the current "New House Salon," intending to prove to her that "she was just lucky," nothing more.

"Heh, how naive!"

With this in mind, the look Marinda gave Arthur was filled with mockery and joy.

She, at last, had won a round!

Arthur immediately felt such a gaze.

"What is this woman thinking now?"

Arthur wondered, though his face remained impassive.

Why was he able to know these things?

Because he "saw" them!

Just today, when he came back to No. 2 Cork Street and was about to catch up on some sleep, he sensed a "distinctive Aura of Death" passing by the door, and without delay, Wuni followed it.

Then, he "saw" Grandma Andor with that shadow.

Saw Grandma Andor kill the proprietor of Patrick Bookstore.

Saw Grandma Andor kill the editor-in-chief of the Horn Report, Comms.

Arthur did not stop her.

Just as he did not stop the original sin that occurred, he believed he also had no right to stop revenge—the "justice" possessed by the young Spirit Medium was different from that of those "Great Detectives."

If things had reached this point, Arthur would have certainly continued his nap.

But what followed made Arthur think he should have held the "New House Salon" ahead of time.

It also led him to choose Grandma Andor as the chef for this salon.

She must have been on her guard, but she did not tamper with the food, which increased Arthur's favorable impression of her.

Watching Grandma Andor shake her head repeatedly, unwillingly to admit, Arthur gestured lightly—

"Baron Kemir, how much longer do you intend to hide in the shadows?"

At Arthur's words, Kuliqi spat a mouthful of "Deathly Fire" at the black figure, resulting in an immediate, loud wail that grew even louder.

Simultaneously, the black smoke veiling the figure's face dissipated under the deep blue flames.

Everyone saw a gaunt-faced old man.

The moment they saw him, Grandma Andor had already fallen to the ground, her eyes brimming with thick despair, and she kept repeating—

"Impossible! This is impossible!

I clearly saw Cotton!

It was Cotton!

Not Baron Kemir!"

The murmuring figure of Grandma Andor moved Linda to compassion.

This member of the Kledos Family walked over to help the old woman up.

"Grandma, some lost souls possess the ability to Transfigure," Linda explained.

Following the "Awakening of the Kledos Family Bloodline," the old butler Oer had told her more, including about the undead.

Most lost souls can't physically harm humans, fear sunlight, fire, and even a strong wind can scatter them.

But a few special lost souls exist like evil spirits.

They can affect temperature, move objects, pass through walls, possess bodies, alter others, and cause real harm to people.

Clearly, Baron Kemir was one such entity.

Grandma Andor heard Linda's explanation, but such an explanation only deepened the old woman's despair.

Meanwhile, Baron Kemir, under the scorching "Deathly Fire," shouted loudly—

"What's wrong with wanting to awaken my bloodline?

The mistake was just a slight miscalculation!

My 'resurrection from death' proves it!

Now!

What's wrong with continuing?

I am a noble!

I rightfully deserve these privileges!"

Such words disgusted Arthur.

Sensing his master's feelings, Kuliqi bit off the man's head in one go.

Instantly, Baron Kemir dissipated into a unique 'Aura of Death' that slowly gathered toward Arthur's hand.

The hall quieted down immediately.

The only sound was Grandma Andor's muttering—

"Cotton, Cotton."

Seeing Grandma Andor's state moved everyone's hearts, and Malz gave a solemn bow towards Marinda.

"Please let Nicole see the real Cotton!"

Marinda, known as the 'Lady of the Long Night,' a domain where the undead find eternal rest.

The old sheriff had seen Marinda command spirits.

Therefore, the old sheriff believed this lady could help his comrade's fiancée.

The sheriff's words at that moment reminded those present.

"Miss Caesar, if possible, please help Grandma Andor," said Scott, the first to speak, followed by a deep bow.

Haywood, Wiggins, and Kuke followed suit.

Linda also looked over with hopeful eyes.

As everyone spoke, new hope appeared in Grandma Andor's eyes, and the fallen old woman crawled toward Marinda, prostrating before her, raising her head and pleading—

"I know this is a lot to ask, but I am willing to give anything in exchange, my life, my soul, everything I have, it's all available!

Please let me see Cotton!"

As everyone watched and listened to Grandma Andor's words, Marinda was conflicted.

Because she couldn't do it.

She was known as the 'Lady of the Long Night.'

But only in name, she didn't have the powers of the 'Daughter of the Grim Reaper' as the rumors suggested.

At this moment, the lady didn't even dare to meet Grandma Andor's eyes.

While the lady was thinking of how to let Grandma Andor down as gently as possible without damaging her own reputation, the young Spirit Medium, with a calm expression, set down the Orange Cat at his feet and walked over. He glanced at Marinda and finally rested his eyes on Grandma Andor, saying softly—

"How about, I give it a try?"

Chapter 315 Love and Death!

The soft tone, the faint voice, yet it instantly drew the attention of everyone around the dining table.

Surprise spread across Malz's face.

He truly understood his partner.

If he spoke up, then it must be with certainty.

"Please, Arthur!"

The old sheriff spoke earnestly.

As Cotton's comrade-in-arms, the old sheriff walked up to Grandma Andor, helping his comrade's fiancée to her feet.

"Thank you!

I'm willing to give you everything I have!"

Grandma Andor looked at Arthur, her face full of gratitude.

People around breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing Arthur step forward.

Marinda's hesitation just now had them feeling uncertain.

Fortunately, they still had Arthur!

Linda, especially, was brimming with joy—

'Indeed, the "Kledos Family" really is extraordinary!

Although I can't compare with Arthur's talent, my own talent should surpass everyone else's!'

The girl thought to herself.

The shadow behind her immediately became more substantial, a completely golden headdress, covering down to the base of the nose, gradually began to appear, and her eyes gained an added brilliance.

Marinda noticed this change.

But at this moment, the lady did not observe closely; instead, she turned to look at Arthur who had approached her side, her eyes filled with surprise.

'Is he trying to bail me out?'

But then the lady narrowed her eyes.

Because—

Compensation!

Arthur signaled to her with the shape of his lips.

'Hah, I knew it, the greedy "Spirit Medium"!'

A sneer formed in her heart, but the lady ultimately nodded slightly.

She could ignore Grandma Andor's request, but she needed to consider her own reputation, plus...

She wanted to see the "Cat Faction.Hei's" "Communicate with Spirits" secret technique!

The latter was particularly important to her.

Once he received confirmation from Marinda, Arthur no longer hesitated. He walked up to Grandma Andor, raised his hand and gently touched her, while traces of the "Aura of Death" nourished a certain Lost Soul within her body, and his low chanting slowly rose—

"Emerge from one, two from one, two results in three, three opens all realms, free from obstacles, actions, and sins... Summon spirit!"

A call to the spirits and an invisible wind appeared in the hall.

The wind grew from soft to strong, blowing everyone's clothes.

People instinctively raised their hands to their faces, yet their eyes remained fixed on the space behind Grandma Andor—where a figure was slowly emerging.

Slightly outdated military attire, a bright and young face, eyes lost.

"Cotton!"

The old sheriff, seeing the comrade of his memories, immediately called out with joy.

Grandma Andor was speechless, unable to utter a word, as she looked at the man she had longed for day and night, tears streaming down her face.

The blank stare in his eyes gradually faded, and Cotton, somewhat puzzled, looked at the old sheriff.

"Malz?"

Cotton asked tentatively.

When the old sheriff nodded, Cotton was taken aback.

"How did you get so old..."

Cotton said these words, raising his hand to pat the old sheriff's shoulder as he used to, but his hand passed right through the old sheriff's body.

Immediately, the soldier who had long been dead was stunned.

Then, a flood of scattered memories began to surface.

"I'm dead... been dead for over thirty years..."

Cotton mumbled to himself, the air around him turning chilled in an instant, only to return to normal right after.

Because...

A pair of eyes were staring at him.

The indifferent eyes of the young 'Spirit Medium' were more effective than any verbal warning.

The Death Hound that crouched at his master's feet was pursing its lips, continuously licking them, appearing rather indifferent about getting an extra meal.

Cotton immediately woke up.

It was a bit scary... no, terrifying.

After bowing to Arthur with a wry smile, Cotton's gaze searched for the person who had haunted his dreams until the last moments of his life.

By now, Grandma Andor had hidden herself behind Linda, and the moment she saw Cotton, she felt content.

The rest?

Not needed anymore.

Cotton was still so young.

While she was already decrepit.

She didn't want Cotton to see her as she was now.

So, when Cotton's gaze came her way, not only did she hide, but she also covered her face.

But it was useless.

Time doesn't affect the gaze of a lover.

Death can't stop a lover's longing.

Cotton walked gently to Grandma Andor's side, his face full of guilt, and said —

"I'm sorry, Nicole.

I, I came back late.

Did you receive the book I mailed you?"

Sobs rose in the air, Grandma Andor went from low weeping to crying out loud, she could no longer hold back, and hugged Cotton tightly.

"You didn't mail me a book, it was a cookbook!

You know? A cookbook!

And there were so many mistakes in it!

Remember, you can't eat wood ear mushrooms that have been soaked for too long! Fresh daylilies are also not to be eaten! And you must throw away rotten ginger!

I wrote all these down."

Grandma Andor kept talking nonstop.

Watching this scene, everyone stepped aside, leaving room for the two who needed to pour out their hearts.

Marinda then approached Arthur and, after making sure she was at a 'safe distance' from them and giving one more glance at Grandma Andor embracing Cotton tightly, she asked quietly.

"Is this the reason you helped Grandma Andor?"

"No!

It's because of your reward!"

Arthur replied very promptly.

"Heh, I have promised that you can browse and copy Baron Kemir's treasured 'Hercules' Diary'—though, was that just the 'Cat Faction.Hei's' Communicate with Spirits technique?

It's a bit different from what I know."

Marinda didn't hesitate to give the corresponding reward.

In the lady's view, all Arthur did was merely because he couldn't bear the thought of someone else getting ahold of something that belonged to him first.

After getting what she wanted, she certainly didn't mind sharing some of it with Arthur.

Of course, the necessary probing was still there.

And Arthur?

'Indeed, you had your reasons for choosing Baron Kemir, it was for a copy of the treasured 'Hercules' Diary'!

Arthur thought to himself, although his face remained calm as still water.

"That's my unique ability."

The young Spirit Medium replied in this way.

He wasn't lying.

For the Breath of Death truly was unique to him.

As for the Cat Faction. Hei's secret technique of Communicating with Spirits, he really didn't know it, nor had he ever seen it.

The reason he was able to summon Cotton was because Cotton had always been with Grandma Andor—using Wuni's vision, Arthur saw not only the way Baron Kemir bewitched Grandma Andor, but also how the Baron secretly tried to devour Cotton while Grandma Andor was preparing food.

Wuni, enhanced by the Breath of Death, had a natural sharpness when faced with Lost Souls.

It saw clearly.

And so did Arthur.

However, Arthur wouldn't explain this to Marinda.

Just like how at this moment, he wouldn't reveal to anyone else what he perceived under the enhancement of the Breath of Death; he would only walk over to Cotton and Grandma Andor and softly say—

"Time is almost up!"

Chapter 316 'Spirit Medium's Blessing!

Arthur's words made Cotton and Grandma Andor tremble, and they looked at each other reluctantly.

"Cotton, it's so good to see you!"

"Me too!"

The two began to say their goodbyes to each other.

However, the young 'Spirit Medium' interjected quite abruptly—

"Have you two misunderstood something?"

Cotton and Grandma Andor turned to look at Arthur, confusion showing on their faces.

"What I said about time running out is not just about Mr. Cotton, but both of your time is almost up!"

The young 'Spirit Medium' pointed to Cotton and Grandma Andor's hands that were still tightly clasped.

Lost Souls and living humans can't touch each other.

Unless...

The human is about to die.

Haunted by the ghost of Baron Kemir, the elderly Grandma Andor had already unknowingly reached the end of her life.

"What?!"

Everyone who had been quietly watching suddenly realized, with Arthur's hint—They were all happy for this long-separated couple, yet they had overlooked the extraordinary scene that had just unfolded.

All at once, expressions became complicated.

They didn't know what kind of expression to use when facing Cotton and Grandma Andor.

However, Grandma Andor was very happy.

"We never have to be apart again!"

"Yes, no more separation!"

Cotton nodded, but his expression held a hint of regret.

"What's wrong, Cotton?"

Grandma Andor immediately noticed something amiss in her fiancé.

"I had wanted to give you a wedding... just as I promised when I left, that we would have a wedding when I returned!

I don't know if we can hold a wedding in The Eternal Resting Land?"

Cotton said as he awkwardly scratched his head.

Grandma Andor touched Cotton's cheek, smoothing away the embarrassment and the regret.

"It doesn't matter anymore!

We have already..."

"It matters!

Why wouldn't it matter?

How much time is left, Arthur?"

Just then, Linda interrupted the conversation between Cotton and Grandma Andor, and then looked towards Arthur.

"Ten minutes!"

Arthur, guessing what Linda wanted to do, said with a slight upward curve of his lips.

"Ten minutes?"

That's enough!

The wedding needs a lawn, No. 44 White Bird Street has one, and all your friends and family are here, plus we can find the necessary flowers and fireworks!

Don't forget, this is the most affluent district in South Los—White Bird Street!"

Linda said and then hurriedly ran outside.

Though she had awakened the Kledos Family's bloodline, her young age destined her to act impulsively for love at this moment.

Or perhaps...

Did she inherit this fearless love from Old Charlie's bloodline?

Arthur was uncertain.

Yet, watching the young girl's retreating back, Arthur's lips curved upwards—the young 'Spirit Medium' mentioned Cotton and Grandma Andor's time so they wouldn't leave with regrets.

Now?

It seemed quite right.

The crowd became busy at once.

Almost with utmost speed, they set up a simple wedding scene on the lawn of No. 44 White Bird Street, with a flower arch, a pure white carpet, rows of chairs along the carpet, and friends and family smiling as they watched the end of the carpet.

Including Grandma Andor's two apprentices, who were distant relatives of hers, now among the crowds, they secretly blessed their teacher and grandma—Grandma Andor had left her kitchen to them and informed them she had recorded all of her recipes for them to try and practice.

For this, they were endlessly grateful.

They had also completely shaken off their fear of the ghost, leaving only blessings.

At the end of the white carpet, Cotton was holding Grandma Andor's hand.

Even as a ghost, Cotton still felt his heart might leap out.

"My dear, I am a bit nervous," Cotton said softly.

"Don't worry, I'm here," Grandma Andor replied gently.

Although she was a bit nervous herself, her heart settled immediately as she held her lover's hand, her calmness infecting Cotton.

The two 'people' exchanged smiles.

Then their gazes shifted to the other end of the pure white carpet.

Arthur stood there.

The unanimous choice as the officiant, the young 'Spirit Medium' quickly tried to recall what he should do, or rather, how he should do it.

But after a long moment of reflection, he still had no effective memories.

Whether it was his own or his predecessor's memory, this area was a blank.

So, the young 'Spirit Medium' decided to do it his way—

"Come, left foot, left foot, right foot, right foot..."

Words slipped casually from his mouth.

Cotton and Grandma Andor looked baffled but followed the rhythm and moved forward.

The surrounding friends and family also felt their bodies wanting to join in the directive.

Therefore, when Linda was the first to jump forward, the rest followed suit, gathering around Cotton and Grandma Andor as they approached Arthur.

Marinda stood to one side, pipe in mouth.

She needed to maintain her identity— The commotion on the lawn had attracted quite a few stares, and she certainly didn't want to make the headlines the next day, especially not in a way that would subject her to scrutiny.

Journaled? She had killed two this year already.

Any more would be rather excessive.

This lady thought to herself, while her gaze swept across the crowd with mild envy.

She liked this joyous atmosphere.

Even if she couldn't partake in it.

But it was precisely for this reason that she loved it even more.

When Cotton and Grandma Andor reached Arthur, Arthur didn't hesitate and directly said—

"Groom, please kiss your bride!"

Cotton was even more straightforward, immediately kissing Grandma Andor.

And at the moment of their lips touching, a faint light emerged from Grandma Andor.

Under the glow, Grandma Andor's face instantly became youthful.

At that moment, Grandma Andor turned back into Nicole.

No, it was Miss Nicole who walked out of Grandma Andor's 'body'.

Not only that, but as Nicole walked out, a pristine white wedding dress appeared on this young lady, and Cotton's worn military uniform also became brand new.

The two 'people' looked at each other in astonishment.

Then, they embraced and kissed passionately again.

Whoosh, pop!

Linda ignited the fireworks she had gathered.

The fireworks flew into the sky, bursting into bright colors.

However, Linda still wore a look of regret on her face.

Because...

There were too few!

And the fireworks were too small!

In the girl's heart, there should be more and bigger fireworks at such a time.

But she had done her best.

Even in South Los's wealthiest district, White Bird Street, finding five firework cases on a non-celebration day was already the limit.

More?

There were simply no more.

Noticing the expression on the girl's face, Cotton and Nicole laughed—

"Linda, thank you."

"You've done your best."

"Yes, it's you who have given us this wedding."

The two 'people' comforted the girl.

Arthur smiled as he watched this scene, and as the officiant, he felt he needed to do something, so he gently tapped the ground with his staff.

Pop!

The staff collided with the pebble-paved ground on the lawn, and the crisp sound drew everyone's attention.

People looked curiously at Arthur.

Then—

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Bang, bang, bang!

Twelve rockets shot straight into the sky behind Arthur, and a hundred-meter diameter's 'Illusion Fireworks' exploded.

The bright, multicolored glow illuminated the night sky of South Los.

All of South Los watched this spectacle incredulously.

Then, there were sounds of surprise and admiration.

Especially the children, who let out the loudest cheers.

"Fireworks! Such big fireworks!"

"So beautiful!"

These voices carried with the night breeze, quickly spreading through the streets and alleys of South Los, reaching White Bird Street where the wedding attendees seemed to hear such voices.

Or rather...

They were the ones who cheered the loudest.

Encircled by the crowd, watching the fireworks burst, Cotton and Nicole the newly 'wed' were thrilled.

They turned to look for Arthur, intending to thank him.

But the young 'Spirit Medium' shook his head first and preemptively said—

"Happy wedding day!"

Chapter 317: Pseudo People Create Sincere Conclusions!

...

Under the glow of the Illusion Fireworks, everyone's faces were illuminated.

Cotton and Nicole, already radiating their soulmate's unique luminescence, now reflected a distinct spectrum of colors.

Linda watched the 'newlyweds' before her and offered her sincerest blessings from the bottom of her heart.

The girl's Talent was exceptional, but due to her age, she had not understood what happiness was before, nor did she know how to describe it.

But, at this moment.

The girl looked at Cotton and Nicole and thought happiness must be like this, right?

However, she definitely wouldn't want such happiness for herself.

Because...

The process was too painful!

The happiness that came from more than thirty years of parting and reunion became all the more precious, an indescribable feeling that was profoundly good.

But this was not what the girl wanted.

She wanted more, to be even happier.

So...

Strength!

She must have much stronger power!

So strong that if anyone dared to make me unhappy for even a moment, I would make them unhappy for a lifetime!

The girl thought to herself, her gaze unconsciously drifting towards Arthur and Marinda, the black double-breasted coat, the immaculate posture, the handsome appearance, though slightly rounder, did

not appear out of place. Rather, it revealed an even more stable presence, and the black eyes under the night sky were all the more profound, like unfathomable deep pools, tempting her to explore.

But there, the deep blue eyes were present.

Unlike the bottomless pools, the azure was like the crashing waves, not only tumultuous but also fierce and direct, just like the golden short hair and the hunter's attire, clean and crisp.

The two of them standing there were not only complementary but also resonated with one another, giving off an impression that no one else could interpose.

Once someone approached, they would either be dragged into the bottomless pool and silently drowned, or torn apart in the ferocious stormy waves.

But the girl unwittingly drew closer.

Not until she came to her senses, did Linda realize she had unconsciously positioned herself between Arthur and Marinda.

Immediately, her face turned red with embarrassment.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to intrude," she said.

Before she could bow her head and run away, Arthur raised his hand.

"No, you came at just the right time," he said.

Stunned, it wasn't until she regained her composure that Linda realized Arthur had taken her hand and pulled her to the spot initially between himself and Marinda.

The girl was somewhat confused and couldn't quite grasp what had happened.

However, both Arthur and Marinda let out a long breath of relief—

Thank goodness, no vomit!

Thank goodness, she didn't throw up on me!

Usually, before others, Arthur and Marinda could control the latter's aversion to men by slightly misaligning or maintaining a certain distance, but during moments of happiness like these, especially to bless the 'newlyweds' before them, they had to stay very close and smile.

Arthur could distinctly sense when Marinda was on the verge of exploding.

And he was sure, if Marinda were to throw up, she would definitely do so on him.

This woman would not waste such an opportunity for 'outright retaliation' against him!

As for the aftermath?

Arthur believed Marinda would have too many excuses.

But thankfully, there was Linda.

Looking at the somewhat baffled Linda, Arthur said earnestly.

"We will always be family!"

Family?

Family.

Linda felt a sense of loss inside, yet her face showed a smile, and at this time, Cotton and Nicole approached Arthur—

"Thank you, Lord Kledos!"

"And thank you, everyone!"

The overwhelming emotions that words could not describe turned into the most heartfelt thanks.

The 'newlyweds' bowed slightly to their friends and family.

Everyone returned the gesture with a smile and uttered genuine blessings once again.

They all watched as Cotton and Nicole's figures gently began to fade.

The countdown had begun.

Cotton and Nicole looked into each other's eyes, hands entwined.

...

...

Even as they headed toward death, the two were adamant never to part.

However, before leaving, Cotton turned to Arthur.

"I know you don't lack these, but this is all I can offer. I hope you won't disdain it—thank you again, Lord Kledos.

Your kindness is engraved in my heart.

Likewise, I am ready to heed your summons at any time!"

Cotton bowed deeply at ninety degrees to the young 'Spirit Medium.'

Immediately, a special 'Aura of Death' surged from this 'newcomer,' racing towards Arthur's palm. It fused with the special 'Aura of Death' from Baron Kemir earlier, turning into a small, finger-sized sphere, icy cold to the touch—

[Name: Evil Spirit Orb]

[Type: Jewel]

[Quality: Legend]

[Attributes: 1, Cold; 2, Shuttle; 3, Telekinesis; 4, Mirror Shadow; 5, Ring of Evil Spirits]

[Remarks: In an effort to awaken his Bloodline, Baron Kemir conducted multiple experiments during the Seven Years' War, all of which failed. However, it was not without its yields. His power did not awaken while he was alive, but it mutated after his death. Similarly, Cotton, who held his deepest obsessions, also underwent a mutation. He became an unconscious Specter that followed his lover, accompanying her in the purest form until the deceased Baron Kemir discovered it and sensed Cotton's allure. Knowing that by devouring Cotton, he would receive a unique Promotion, Kemir began his preparations. After you disrupted his plans, the powers of Cotton and Kemir fused into this orb, which looks like a sapphire, but because Cotton loathed Kemir's possession and transformation, which caused harm to Nicole, he deliberately discarded these two points. Instead, he enhanced the first four attributes and was very willing to be summoned by you, but you must find the correct way—Nicole, being able to see you again, I finally understand what a Miracle is!]

...

[Cold: You can create an invisible field of -196°C temperature to envelop a single target within your sight, not exceeding 30 meters from your current position, or you may choose to create a freezing zone of minus fifty degrees within a radius of 100 meters centered on your standing point; 3 times/day]

[Shuttle: Your body becomes intangible, passing through walls and other objects, or becoming immune to physical attacks; duration 1 second; 2 times/day]

[Telekinesis: Using telekinesis, move objects weighing up to 100 KG, duration 10 seconds; 3 times/day]

[Mirror Shadow: Show your reflection on a mirror within 100 meters, capable of normal speech and vision, and also borrow the mirror to peep within the mirror's range; duration 10 seconds; 1 time/day]

[Ring of Evil Spirits: Forsaking the powers brought by possession and transformation, you can enhance the effects of Cold, Shuttle, Telekinesis, and Mirror Shadow, and also recharge these abilities]

(Note 1: Cold, Shuttle, Telekinesis, and Mirror Shadow, after depletion, require recharging with 'Aura of Death')

(Note 2: The Ring of Evil Spirits can double the range of 'Cold,' extend the duration of 'Shuttle' by 1 second, increase 'Telekinesis' controllable weight to 200Kg, and expand 'Mirror Shadow's range by 50 meters)

(Note 3: During Shuttle, only the body will pass through, unable to take clothing with it)

(Note 4: Telekinesis cannot move multiple objects)

(Note 5: While using Mirror Shadow, the user cannot see or hear anything outside the mirror's range)

(Note 6: The Ring of Evil Spirits' recharging cannot surpass the inherent number of uses of Cold, Shuttle, Telekinesis, and Mirror Shadow)

...

'Is this what they call reaping the rewards of one's actions?'

Looking at the [Evil Spirit Orb], the young 'Spirit Medium' nodded slightly towards the couple of 'newlyweds.'

And under everyone's gaze, the figures of Cotton and Nicole began to rise slowly, eventually fading into the night sky as though an unseen guide had led them to another world.

This scene was witnessed by the people near White Bird Street.

Many of them changed color.

Thinking of the tales they had heard since childhood, a trace of fear appeared on their faces.

Many began to kneel and pray.

However, the people of Courtyard 44 remained composed.

Because...

They believed in Arthur.

"Eh, where's the body?"

Haywood looked down, only to realize Nicole's body was gone.

"She must have left together!"

Wiggins said with certainty.

Such words gained unanimous agreement from everyone present.

Even Marinda and Linda, who knew bodies don't just disappear, wouldn't say anything extra.

And as for Arthur, who had picked up the body?

'Let's make everything a bit more beautiful!'

The young Spirit Medium thought to himself.

Cotton and Nicole left together; such an ending was enough.

Everyone just needed to remember this ending.

As for the body?

He would choose a place to bury it.

'Tsk, what a hypocrite!'

The young 'Spirit Medium' mocked himself, his gaze turning to Marinda, who had come over once again.

The lady chuckled softly, speaking in a very low voice—

"Now, can we discuss our proper business?"

...

Chapter 318 Opportunity!

The young 'Spirit Medium' certainly knew what the Businesswoman was referring to — other than the fact that the prize for the 'Swordsmanship Competition' champion, the title of 'Knight', had finally been set, Arthur couldn't think of anything else.

And with this matter settled, Arthur finally breathed a sigh of relief.

The title of 'Knight' was critical to many of Arthur's future plans.

If something had gone wrong, although he could make up for it in other ways, the time and energy expended would have increased tenfold, which was something Arthur could not tolerate or accept — in any world, achieving a true leap in social status was exceedingly difficult, especially entering the privileged class.

Because...

Resources are limited!

These resources include traditional ones such as food, minerals, population, as well as non-traditional ones like relics, Secret Medicine, secret techniques, and particularly the latter, which in the current world, is of paramount importance — in order to better enjoy traditional resources, the few who control the non-traditional ones will guard them even more fiercely.

Will those already on the cart leave space for those below?

Such a thing does not exist!

Those already on the cart would only weld the doors shut, step hard on the gas, and speed forward, moving further and further away amid the cursing of those left behind, with a wild laugh.

This has nothing to do with morality or honor.

It's just human nature.

And the world rules that emerge from it.

Of course, there are those who can overturn such rules.

But that requires immense strength.

And...

The right timing, location, and support!

Arthur was well aware that he possessed neither the former nor the latter.

Therefore, he chose to integrate into the current rules, become one of the Nobles, gain access to the corresponding resources, gain the necessary qualifications, and then?

Wait for the opportune moment!

Arthur believed that day would not be too far off—

The lion is already getting old.

The tiger, on the other hand, has just reached adulthood.

And there are many wolves and vultures lurking in the shadows.

Therefore, Arthur felt a sense of urgency; he needed to have the corresponding strength and power before that day arrived to protect himself.

Otherwise, he could only wait to be torn apart by others.

Arthur certainly did not wish for others to dance on his corpse.

So...

He would strike first and eliminate anyone who dared to bare their fangs and claws at him.

Retreat?

One lesson from the 'Muck Cart' was profound enough!

Another similar incident?

Arthur would only think of himself as a fool!

"You must become the 'Champion' — that is the precondition for the Lord Count to honor this reward. If you fail, you must provide appropriate compensation to the Lord Count!

If you die.

Then the Kledos Family will have to pay this compensation!"

In the corner, Marinda took the pipe from her mouth and said very seriously.

Arthur had no objections to this.

Tickets are hard to come by!

Arthur could fully imagine how crazy the people of South Los eligible to participate in the 'Swordsmanship Competition' would be once the champion's prize was announced — not just the original competitors but even the Nobles who had always kept a conservative stance would surely take part.

It's a fact that the 'Knight' title is not hereditary.

But it's also true that 'Knights' have Noble Privileges.

Those who cannot inherit the family name, the second sons, the third sons, or later heirs, will surely flock to it.

They will definitely find a way to participate!

For them, this is yet another opportunity in life!

They absolutely will not give up!

Not to mention those merchants who possess vast wealth but lack the 'Noble' title.

Their pursuit of this title probably far exceeds that of the noble offspring.

Because, to those merchants, the 'Knight' title is seen as a true opportunity for a rise, a chance for their family to flourish for hundreds or thousands of years!

And this, is exactly what Arthur anticipated—

He wanted not just the Champion, but also to fish in troubled waters!

"Go mad!

Fight fiercely!

This is the 'Movement of Destiny'!"

Arthur whispered to himself.

Hearing such 'Shaman-like speech,' Marinda immediately rolled her eyes.

Afterwards, the lady loaded her pipe with enough mint-flavored tobacco and, while sticking the lit pipe in her mouth, continued to speak—

"I've already 'warmed up' for you; there's no need to become the target of public criticism before the Swordsmanship Competition even starts, at the time of registration. Among the four Barons, aside from the deceased Baron Kemir and the half-dead Baron Harold, the remaining 'Baron Korol' and 'Baron Hausman' will certainly send someone to participate, and they are definitely formidable contenders.

And the seven Lords?

Lord Doyle's heir, Fengter, surely will not participate, and you also own half of the Oakwood Manor, so you're one of our own.

But among the remaining six Lords, there are not a few who are 'determined to make progress.'

'Lord Lisop' owns South Town, which is the largest town nearest to South Los and usually the first stop for merchants leaving South Los. He himself participated in the Seven Years' War, was promoted to Knight because of his brave fighting, and then advanced to Lord through two Desperate Assaults.

'Lord Bern' has his own manor and was once a well-known mercenary in North County. He was knighted for saving The Old Earl and later followed The Old Earl into several battles, and for his loyalty, was knighted as a Lord. However, with the advancing age of the Lord himself, his three sons have already been in constant conflict.

'Lord Ernest,' 'Lord Dibwa,' and 'Lord Bass' own Spring Water Town, Grass Branch Town, and Bass Town respectively. All three are traditional Nobles of South Los, whose families have been passed down since the Silver Age, with unparalleled loyalty to the Earl, especially Lord Bass, who has served the South Los Family since the first generation.

And the last 'Lord Laurie'—

This Lord from Barny is not important; he is only a 'Noble' in name, as the place has always belonged to the 'Selina' family.

Although stripped of his noble status, what Lord Laurie is loyal to is this family, not the South Los Family.

Similarly, that 'Selina' family will have no interest in this 'Swordsmanship Competition.'

Listening to Marinda's introduction of the Nobles of South Los, Arthur was roughly able to discern the friends and foes of this 'Swordsmanship Competition.'

The competitors from the two Baron's Houses were undoubtedly on his opposing side and needed to be dealt with carefully.

The rest of the Lords, for the most part, need not be considered, as they were essentially his own people.

The only two worth paying attention to were Lord Lisop and Lord Bern!

For the former, Marinda's description did not mention 'loyalty.'

For the latter, Marinda's reference to the Old Lord's three sons spoke volumes.

And as for 'Lord Laurie'?

The situation was clearly complicated.

Unlike other South Los Nobles, who all had some fame, Arthur had never heard of the 'Selina' surname.

Yet, having been stripped of their noble status, this surname should have been 'infamous.'

'Is there some hidden story?'

Arthur contemplated, yet outwardly, he asked without any change in his demeanor.

"I'm more concerned about the arrangements you've made than about the opponents I might encounter.

Tell me about your 'warm-up'!"

Hearing Arthur's words, Marinda immediately narrowed her eyes and laughed—

"Guess!"

Chapter 319 Gaze in the Darkness!

'Detective' Truman had encountered an unprecedented crisis; he realized that he had been manipulated, no, more accurately, his entire life had been controlled.

Since his very first case, an invisible 'hand' had been manipulating everything.

Even his wife might have been arranged by someone....

As Garcia wrote this, he frowned and then sighed.

He found it hard to continue writing.

Although the corresponding plotlines were in his mind, the impact of reality was too overwhelming for him; every time he wrote about some crucial moments, those incidents would surge from the bottom of his heart—although his life had greatly improved since 'that adventure'.

But it also brought some hidden dangers.

Even though he tried hard to conceal it, he still appeared in the sight of some interested parties.

'Is it that famous 'Spirit Medium' Arthur Kredos again?'

Garcia did not know who the 'Spirit Medium' had offended or why he was so hated; the news about him had sold for far more than he could have imagined, and this time, someone even spent a significant sum to hire him to spread the news of the other's injury.

Regarding this, Garcia did not refuse.

He did not dare to refuse.

As a part-time Intelligence Trafficker, he was well aware that once he had come to the attention of others, his life was in their hands.

Just like the guy who had brought him into the business.

Not long ago, he saw the man's corpse.

The death was horrendous, as not only had his eyes been gouged out, but his tongue had also been cut off—rumor had it that the man had tried to rob or extort a lady from a club.

Then he was taken out by the club's security.

Of course, that was just an excuse to fool most people.

The real reason?

Settlement!

Garcia knew well that the man had been 'settled' by 'the organization.'

Those injuries after torture matched the characteristics of being 'settled': painful and enough to deter other organization members.

For that reason, Garcia felt relieved.

The guy had always invited him to join the organization, and he had promptly refused every time.

Because he knew the risks involved.

And more importantly...

He, Garcia, was a writer.

A writer who could definitely produce quality work.

It's just that now, due to financial pressures, he had to take a side job as an Intelligence Trafficker!

Whew! Whew!

Garcia took several deep breaths, ready to gather his thoughts and continue the story in his mind—the task given by that 'client'?

There was no rush; there was still a little bit of time!

Once he finished this chapter, he'd think about what to do next.

With the example of that 'client,' Garcia knew he needed to be even more careful!

At least, he couldn't go to the information pub he used to frequent anymore.

He must go to some new places.

And that increased the risk.

'Should I buy a Firearm?'

Of course, Garcia knew that, in special situations, even a Firearm wasn't much, but at least it would give him some sense of security.

So, whom should he buy from?

Walter's goods were good, but very expensive.

Old Harmon was cheap, but the Quality couldn't be guaranteed; he might even end up with stolen goods, and besides, Old Harmon's place in Dar Alley was too close to Cork Street, where the 'Spirit

Medium' lived. I was already rash to go there out of curiosity when he hadn't returned to South Los, and now that he's back, I absolutely cannot go there...wait, why am I even considering these things?

Damn it, I've been distracted again!

Writing!

I need to write!

Garcia paused for a moment and shook his head, preparing to continue focusing on his writing.

But just as he had written down the name 'Truman,' there was a knock on his room door.

Garcia immediately became alert.

After earning a substantial sum, he had moved away from his original residence to cover his tracks.

Nobody should know about this place now, apart from that 'client.'

Unless...

He had been tracked down by someone else!

With that thought, Garcia's face was full of turmoil and helplessness.

But he still chose to open the door.

Standing outside was a man whose balding head could not be hidden even by his hat.

Longbain!

Garcia had seen him on the original Clara Street, and they had even nodded to each other in acknowledgment.

"Mr. Longbain?"

"May we talk inside?"

Longbain, with his gloomy and artistic aura, asked softly.

"Of course!"

Tentatively, Garcia made way for him to enter. As Longbain took off his hat, Garcia moved a chair from underneath a pile of disheveled manuscripts.

"You like to write?"

Longbain looked at the manuscripts with surprise in his eyes.

"Hmm, this is my life."

When mentioning the manuscript, Garcia's face lit up with a smile.

Such a smile made Longbain do a double take.

The 'Cloak Society' leader in South Los seemed to see himself.

He reacted the same way when facing excellent paintings or sculptures.

Immediately, Longbain began to hesitate.

He had come here to clarify an earlier matter and then to report back.

Next, Garcia's death was to follow.

Some methods of the 'Cloak Society' he disliked, but he had to admit, they were sufficiently terrifying.

"Then why did you become an intelligence trafficker?"

Longbain asked directly.

This took Garcia by surprise.

After that, the part-time intelligence trafficker replied with a wry smile.

"To make a living!

As you can see, I've been striving, but the meager manuscript fee simply can't support my lifestyle. I had no choice but to moonlight as an intelligence trafficker.

I originally thought I could quickly extricate myself from such a plight, but who knew..."

When he said this, Garcia's face was full of shame.

He just mentioned 'meager manuscript fee,' but in fact, he had never received any manuscript payment.

However, he couldn't openly admit this to others.

It was too embarrassing.

Yet, after telling the lie, he felt somewhat guilty.

And watching Garcia's expression, Longbain reflected.

So similar!

Too similar!

Garcia was just like his younger self, striving for a dream to make a living, not a true intelligence trafficker.

Perhaps...

Should I give him a chance?

As this thought occurred to him, Longbain couldn't help but let it expand uncontrollably.

After staring at Garcia for a full 10 seconds, the 'Cloak Society' leader of South Los finally spoke.

"Would you like to join the 'Cloak Society'?"

Your recent actions have caught the attention of the 'Cloak Society.' Even with my cover, others will come to investigate—this is the constant style of the 'Cloak Society.' Only by joining can you prevent this from happening."

"Can I still write?"

Garcia asked hesitantly.

At that moment, Garcia had decided that if he couldn't write, he would go to the 'client' and sell out the 'Cloak Society.'

Doing so to secure a chance to live and still be able to write.

Hearing Garcia's question, Longbain smiled.

"Of course!

We could even discuss some writing techniques. I love writing as much as I do painting and sculpting."

The 'Cloak Society' leader in South Los looked at Garcia, whose eyes lit up, and was extremely pleased.

Compared to Garcia, who shared the same passion, the previous guy was crap.

"This is wonderful!"

Garcia cheered, and then he wanted to inform Longbain of the 'client's' plans.

However, after a moment's hesitation, Garcia chose to keep it hidden for the time being.

No malice intended.

Just a concealment for self-protection.

Temporary!

Garcia reassured himself.

But what Garcia didn't notice, outside the window, a pitch-black crow perched on a branch, silently observing everything, cloaked by the night.

Longbain hadn't noticed either.

The two men chatted amicably inside the room.

Fujin relayed all he saw and heard to Arthur.

Arthur watched Marinda, who looked slightly smug, in silence.

Feeling Arthur's gaze, Marinda started to feel uneasy.

"You don't really know, do you?"

Marinda looked at Arthur with doubt.

The lady suspected Arthur was deceiving her.

Arthur simply laughed softly and spread his hands.

"Don't forget, I'm a 'Spirit Medium.' When facing you, entangled by 'Destiny,' my inspiration always tends to erupt sporadically."

"Huh."

Marinda scoffed, not buying Arthur's talk about 'Destiny's Entanglement.'

Then, the lady pondered.

After about two or three seconds, when she raised her head to look at the young 'Spirit Medium' again, she was beaming with a smile—

"So that's how it is!"

Chapter 320 Sleep Well!

"Garcia is your man, isn't he?"

Long before you consciously approached Scott, you had noticed this intelligence officer with considerable potential.

Then, with the means of the 'Black Cat Faction,' you had already recruited him under your command.

And then...

At an appropriate time, you 'naturally' sold your information to attract more attention—including that of the 'Cloak Society.' You and your 'Black Cat Faction' needed a more comprehensive 'intelligence system,' and the 'Cloak Society' just happened to fit the bill!

Besides, you must have also tried to find the upper echelons of the 'Cloak Society,' but to no avail.

So, unable to make contact and forge a cooperation, you simply chose to let someone blend in and gradually become a high-ranking member of the 'Cloak Society.'

No wonder you're a 'Black Cat' hidden 'behind the scenes.'

You seem even more dangerous than a snake!"

Despite talking about danger, Marinda's eyes were filled with admiration, and she gently clapped her hands.

"Indeed, that's how it is."

Arthur looked at Marinda in front of him and nodded calmly.

Marinda's reasoning was sound, so what reason did he have to refute?

None!

However, Arthur couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

He had no idea what this woman had gone through, her paranoia was even stronger than his; he had only dug a few small pits in a row.

How could she make such unwarranted associations from every little thing?

Moreover, why did he, a young, honest, innocent, and kind 'Spirit Medium,' seem like a sinister villain in her description?

With these thoughts in his mind, Arthur continued to speak.

"So, you owe me one."

His offhand statement left Marinda without a comeback.

However, the lady still sneered twice.

"Without that contract, were you planning to take advantage of the Garcia matter and trap me severely?"

No!

With your snaky nature, you would surely keep digging pits for me and, even earlier, you had already set the stage.

If I hadn't offered enough benefits, by now you might have already secretly taken quite a few things from me.

Moreover, if it had not been confirmed by the contract, I would have thought you were one of the 'Death Poetry Society' members hiding in South Los."

The lady said this, angrily exhaling mint-scented smoke in Arthur's direction.

If she hadn't been clever and knew when to give and take, her losses would be even greater by now.

But the hurt was still there.

Especially thinking about owing Arthur once more made the lady's mood even worse.

'Damn hidden families, each as cunning as a fox and with the venomous spite of a snake. If a small merchant like me wasn't extremely careful, I would have been swallowed whole without a corpse left behind. Luckily, Arthur was wary of that Earl, and luckily I set up in advance, not letting him figure out my true trump card—otherwise, that contract would never have been signed.'

With this thought, the lady's mood improved immediately.

She believed she had bluffed Arthur.

This was a contemporary 'Black Cat,' from the hidden family of the Kledos Family!

This achievement filled Marinda with excitement.

'Hmph, it might have been false before, but soon it'll be real—then I'll give you a scare!'

Feeling smug inside, Marinda spoke up.

"What do you want, just say it!

Don't go too far!"

Marinda reminded him.

'Heh, what are you hiding from me?

Being so smug...

Do you think you've taken advantage of me?

Or are you preparing to set a trap for me?

I must be careful!"

Catching a glimpse of Marinda's emotions, Arthur became internally vigilant in a flash, though his speech did not falter.

"A coffin, a graveyard, a sacrifice."

Arthur listed three items.

Marinda was taken aback, looking at Arthur in disbelief.

Of course, the lady knew what Arthur wanted these things for, but it was precisely because she knew that she found it unbelievable—simply put, the lady had been ready to 'bleed a little.'

Or to put it more simply, the lady did not think of Arthur as a good person.

The intense contrast made the lady's pace of exhaling smoke slow down a bit.

The lady stared at the young 'Spirit Medium,' as if trying to see what evil thoughts were hidden behind his placid and unrippled face.

Unfortunately, this time she really couldn't perceive anything.

It seemed...

He was sincere?

Unable to judge, Marinda raised her hand and snapped her fingers.

Click!

...

The crisp sound was followed by two servants from Number 6 White Bird Street approaching quickly from one side.

...

Late at night, at Anthony's Cemetery.

Arthur and Marinda walked side by side, while four cemetery workers carried a casket made entirely of cypress wood behind them, in which Grandma Andor lay asleep.

Under the moonlight, all was quiet.

Aside from the sound of footsteps, there was only the noise of Marinda puffing on her pipe.

After advancing six hundred meters, the Tomb Guardian leading the way stopped upon reaching the core of the cemetery.

"I-101, the best burial plot currently available in the cemetery."

The Tomb Guardian said, glancing at Arthur and Marinda with profound reverence in his eyes.

He didn't recognize Arthur, but he had heard of his reputation.

He had not only heard of Marinda but also knew her personally.

The memory of her bloodthirsty methods was still fresh in his mind.

That's why, when the 'Lady of the Long Night' came knocking late at night, if it hadn't been for the speed with which those gold notes had been flashed, he would have definitely fled.

He couldn't help it; it was too terrifying.

It wasn't just the fear of the 'Lady of the Long Night'; there was also...

The Death Hound!

Seeing the Death Hound almost blending into the Spirit Medium's shadow, the Tomb Guardian who had been involved in some shady dealings was scared witless.

After all, according to legend, the Death Hound is the 'Grim Reaper's Bastard Child', bred by the 'Judgment Chief' of The Eternal Resting Land to chase down those who defile the dead.

And he...

He had indeed done it a couple of times.

Just twice!

To find some base materials, not out of greed.

Then, because the ritual had failed, he had reluctantly done it twice more.

Really, just twice!

No lies!

Who would have thought that while doing such things, a real Death Hound would come to his doorstep.

Moreover, this Death Hound was raised by someone.

The Tomb Guardian, who deeply believed in myths and legends, felt his entire worldview shattering.

However, compared to his shattered beliefs, his life was more important.

Immediately, he offered the best burial plot — the very one he had planned to sell to Baron Harold, who had no heirs.

It was definitely not to make an extra profit.

Nor was it to peep at the Baron's treasured secret techniques.

It was simply out of kindness, unwilling to let the Baron be forlorn and alone after a hundred years.

According to legend, a dead person who is not offered sacrifices will be exiled from The Eternal Resting Land and become a pitiful wandering soul.

But that was before.

Now?

After directing his subordinates to place the cypress casket into the burial chamber, the Tomb Guardian quickly moved aside, watching the Spirit Medium close the door of the chamber and place fresh flowers, lit incense candles, and food in front of it — the later of which he had never seen before.

But he wouldn't doubt the professionalism that a Spirit Medium who raises a Death Hound should have.

He had never seen it; it was just his own ignorance.

'Take note! Take note!

It might be some kind of ritual!'

The Tomb Guardian thought to himself.

While the Tomb Guardian's eyes widened in an attempt to see more clearly, Marinda turned around and looked at him with a smirk.

Instantly, the Tomb Guardian was so frightened that he hastily retreated.

Consequently, he prudently moved more than a hundred meters away.

"Anthony, the operator of this cemetery, a Mystic Side Person with an intense curiosity — I've dealt with him before... quite wealthy.

But don't worry, Grandma Andor won't be disturbed here," Marinda assured.

Marinda's assessment allowed Arthur to immediately understand what other jobs the Tomb Guardian might have.

However, he was currently in a good financial situation.

So, the man wasn't worth paying attention to.

After all, everyone has their own way of living, right?

As long as Grandma Andor was undisturbed, that was what mattered.

'I hope you and Cotton find happiness in The Eternal Resting Land.'

Arthur offered his prayers to Grandma Andor.

The soft blessing intertwined with the smoke from the incense candles, dancing and swirling into the night, as if truly delivering the blessings to the ears of the departed.

But as Arthur was offering his prayers, he narrowed his eyes —

Something was wrong!

The incense candles were burning too quickly!

...