

Great Master 451

Chapter 451: The Man Hidden by the Mosaic!

Facing the sales pitch of Swordsmanship Master Julie, Marinda's gaze revealed a trace of strangeness. "Why on earth would you bring something like that?" Marinda did not attempt to hide the meaning in her eyes. However, the Swordsmanship Chief sighed. "You know that I have Giant Tribe bloodline, right?" "Yes, the Swordsmanship Chief of the Earl of South Los, descendent of the Giants, heir of Garden Island, known for being able to drag a sailboat ashore with one hand and the only person speculated to be able to compete in strength with the 'War Elephant' under the Old Lion." Marinda spoke of what she knew. But the Female Swordmaster showed no joy, instead her expression grew heavy. "Do you know the traits of the Giant Tribe?" The Female Swordmaster continued to ask. "Immense size, tremendous power, extraordinary defense, and long lifespan." Marinda said, envy appearing in her eyes. It was not feigned. But genuine envy. Even the descendants of the Giant Tribe on Garden Island, with only a trace of the original Giant bloodline, had already exceeded common people's imagination. Even without deliberate training, merely by following the natural course of growth, they would possess Arcana Level strength upon reaching adulthood. If it weren't for the fact that since the Age of the Holy Empire, the number of their people on Garden Island never exceeded 20 and were almost all females, the Giant Tribe would have unified the world long ago. "Yes, we possess racial traits beyond the imagination of ordinary people, but it's precisely because of such traits that we find it difficult to procreate — this is what they call the fairness of destiny." A look of desolation appeared on the face of the Female Swordsmanship Master. "So, is that why you sought the Potion Master 'Quin' to concoct this potion?" A hint of understanding appeared on Marinda's face. If it was for the sake of propagating their race, it was understandable. As Marinda was thinking about how to continue consoling the Female Swordsmanship Chief, the latter began to scratch her head and laugh heartily— "No, that's not it! I don't actually know Master Quin. It was my mother who sought the Master to treat my father's fractured pelvis. The Master, taking pity on my father, agreed to make this potion." Marinda: ... Fractured pelvis? She felt as though she had caught wind of some alarming information. And to what extent would one have to be pitiable for the famously indifferent Master Quin to render aid by concocting such a special magic potion? Could it be completely broken? Or already shattered? A myriad of mosaic images flashed through Marinda's mind. However, another question arose. Without any pretense, the lady directly asked— "Since there is such an 'assuredly effective' potion, why is the population of Giants on Garden Island still so small?" "Still that scarce, right? Because the potion is only effective the first time it is taken. Moreover, after taking this potion, a woman may conceive but will fall into weakness, especially after childbirth. My mother took three years to recover. That was already the ideal state having had my father slay and bring back a Pseudo-Dragon from 'Dragon Island' for my mother to bolster her health. If it were an ordinary situation, even with my mother's physical condition, it would likely take about ten years to recover." "However, Marinda, let me tell you, that dragon heart stew is quite delicious. Especially with my father's culinary skills, it's absolutely sublime." The Female Swordmaster's topic drifted accidentally. Marinda, meanwhile, took in the information. 'No wonder the aloof Master Quin intervened; there must be a test in this. Who is Julie's father? Even a Pseudo-Dragon isn't something just anyone could slay, let alone venture onto Dragon Island... At the very least, he must be an Entrant. Such a man cannot be one without a name. Who could he be?' While Marinda guessed silently in her heart, she put away the 'assuredly effective' magic potion. She wouldn't use it. She was merely curious. She, is the collection. Yes, just like that. And at most, that would be... to reassure the Countess. Although not knowing the

difficulty of concocting the "One-Hit" Magic Potion, with Master Quin in action, it must be extraordinary and exceedingly expensive. In addition to its importance to the Giant Tribe, its value must surely double. But such a precious potion was casually taken out by the Female Swordsmanship Chief. Marinda could already imagine how wary the Countess must be of her right now. She is the Countess's purse. But when a purse becomes too heavy, it can also crush someone. She had noticed before but had no real confirmation. However, that bastard must have found out, and that's what led to the current plan: to make her temporarily weak and seem "harmless." And the "One-Hit" Magic Potion? Consider it an unexpected surprise! "Hmph, you bad guy, always one step ahead." Thinking this at the bottom of her heart, a joyful smile appeared on Marinda's face, also filled with a touch of motherly love. Watching Marinda carefully put away the "One-Hit" Magic Potion with a beaming smile, Swordsmanship Master Julie also showed a hint of a smile on her face. This Swordsmanship Chief had no ill intentions. Merely the appearance of a monkey in a melon field. Yes, the giant kind of monkey. "Sister Julie, please cooperate with me in a moment—I've decided to let the facts be known to everyone." Marinda was making her original request. "No problem! Leave it to me!" The Female Swordsmanship Chief's chest pounded with a thumping sound. Downstairs, Linda, who was quietly conversing with Arthur, suddenly became absent-minded. "What's wrong?" Having had similar experiences, Arthur immediately looked at his little aunt expectantly. He was eager to know what his talented little aunt had seen this time. "A giant! A giant running across a grassland under the sunset! And... Naked. Chased by a group of female giants." As Linda spoke, her face turned red. The sunset run, is that my bygone youth? Arthur couldn't help but comment internally. But what connection could he have with a giant? Apart from that Swordsmanship Chief of the Countess, he hadn't seen any other female giants. "Prophecy is like that, hard to say exactly what it signifies; it could be reality, but more often it's an unspoken symbolism." Arthur was comforting. "Yeah, I know. My ability might not compare to yours, Arthur, but it far surpasses that of other so-called noble families!" Linda nodded, her face alight with absolute confidence. Behind her, the image of a golden warrior flickered and disappeared. This time, Arthur truly saw the warrior clearly—the body was immensely buff, wearing a headdress that covered the nose and most of the face, somewhat like an alternative crown, but the armor on the elbows and knees was branded with... A cat's head?! The black and white image of a cat's head, Arthur recognized at a glance, was one of Linda's three cats named 'Haha.' 'Such a sturdy body, majestic armor, stern expression, yet adorned with something so cute... huh, it's just like you, Linda.' Arthur thought to himself, his gaze returning once more to the upstairs— Marinda and Julie side by side, descending the stairs. The inheritance ceremony for the title was about to begin.

Chapter 452: Everything Is for the Child!

The noon sun shone through the skylight of the hall, illuminating the interior of the building. The ancient and luxurious architecture immediately became bright. The lingering scent of decay was swept away. Even the slight damage was shielded by the sunlight. What remained was only solemnity and reverence— Marinda knelt on one knee right in the center of the sunlight, while the Female Swordmaster approached from a distance, holding a gold tray. On the tray were a seal, a badge, and a flag. The seal was engraved with "Glyphic Language," using Marinda's own "Spirituality" as a primer, thereby acquiring a unique trait. The badge was that of the Star of the Dark Night, where the rich black represented night, and the bright point represented the stars. According to legend, it was the morning star where the 'Lady of the Long Night' resided. The flag matched the badge, only it was several times larger. With these items in hand, the Female Swordmaster stood before Marinda. The Female

Swordmaster, with a solemn face, immediately took on a different air; paired with her towering height of 2.5 meters, she truly looked imposing and unforgettable. "The Kemir Family, with their own virtues and tenacious nature, has perpetuated for three hundred years, from the battles of the Holy Era to the Pioneer Era's glory. They've guarded this land with their power, ensuring that honor is not tainted and brightness remains eternal! Now— They welcome Nirvana! The Kemir Family is reborn as the Caesar Family!" The words of the Female Swordmaster echoed throughout the hall. These words were, of course, grandiloquently phrased. It would be impossible to simply say that the Kemir Family had perished. Nirvana! It had to be Nirvana! Only such 'Nirvana' could save face for the noble lords. Arthur glanced at the corner where the merchants were gathered. There, many eyes shone with aspiration. Clearly, they had corresponding 'ambitions.' And this was exactly what the Countess liked to see. As long as the South Los House didn't experience 'Nirvana,' it was all fine. As for the other nobles? Whatever. Wasn't the 'Viscount Primo' family the same? In life, they were the backbone of South Los. In death, they were devoured. Arthur knew this very clearly in his heart, but when he thought about it, he simply murmured inside— 'The charm of words.' As Arthur thought this, he looked at the people around him. Malz and Bob wore smirks of irony. Goodrian Ernest, Erwin Dibwa, and Zhukov Bas had disdain in their eyes. Little Lisop, Fengter, Kuke, Scott, Wiggins, and Haywood were indifferent, simply adopting an attitude of participation. However, Desa from Barny was different. This servant of the Selina Family frequently glanced at the distant dining area, swallowing his saliva constantly. Yet remembering the orders of his mistress, he could only suppress his urge. Then, a roast chicken leg mysteriously floated before him. Desa was stunned, and as he looked up, he saw Arthur with his cheeks bulging, giving him a thumbs up. Without hesitating, Desa from Barny stuffed the roast chicken leg into his mouth. At the same time, he grew even more appreciative of Arthur. 'Truly worthy of being the heir chosen by Miss Selina, unlike the other pretentious folks.' Desa thought to himself. And after Arthur had eaten two roast chicken legs, four slices of beer ham, a roasted goose, sixteen pies, the lengthy speech of the Female Swordmaster finally reached its end— "The Caesar Family will surely endure for eternity!" With these words, the Female Swordmaster handed the tray to Marinda and then helped her to stand up. Watching this scene, the Swordsmanship Chief from Baron Korol and Baron Hausman narrowed their eyes. They sensed something different. Both were filled with apprehension. As for the old butler of the Bern Family? After vomiting from being force-fed manure, he was currently unconscious. As Marinda stood up once more, the inheritance ceremony came to a close. The guests in attendance each came forward to offer their congratulations. Accompanied by the band's performance, Arthur and Marinda stood shoulder to shoulder expressing their gratitude to the guests and, with the help of the servants, guided them toward the dining area. Although it wasn't the formal dinner of the evening, with the help of the cook, Mary, and others, sausages, roast chicken, roast duck, roast goose, roast deer, baked potatoes, baked apples, pan-fried fish, salads, stews, and pies were served in a continuous stream. Light beer was served in waist-high walnut barrels on one side. Beverages made from lychee and pear juice were on the other side. The lychees, hard to come by in this season, were unanimously praised by the ladies. Arthur brought a cup of it to Marinda, watching with a smile as she sipped it gently. Next to them stood an elder, capturing these moments. Indeed, ever since the beginning, this elder had appeared from time to time at the side of Arthur and Marinda. This was the Earl of South Los Family's official portrait painter. It was brought by the Female Swordmaster to paint bust portraits for Arthur and Marinda—it was ultimately to hang in the great hall of Caesar Manor, at the highest position. "If possible, I would like to paint a portrait of the two of you together. It would be more fitting to hang at the highest spot." The painter offered his opinion. Arthur looked at Marinda, giving an impression that

Marinda was the decision-maker. Without hesitation, Marinda nodded immediately. "Okay!" Afterward, they shared a smile. Marinda lifted her hand and placed her palm in Arthur's, while he adeptly placed his hand on Marinda's waist. Their intimacy made any onlooker think they were a young married couple. However, the painter slightly furrowed his brow. He felt something was off. It seemed... Forced? The expressions, the demeanor, there was no issue with those. But he just felt it wasn't quite real. It was as if Miss Caesar had an aversion to Lord Kledos. But that couldn't be right, could it? The painter grew even more puzzled. But the next moment— "Ugh!" Marinda frowned, her dry heaving to the side made the painter's body jolt. "Yes, yes, that's right! That's exactly it!" The sudden bout of nausea, Lady of the Long Night's slightly furrowed brow, the way one hand was placed on her abdomen, struck the artist in an instant. He vividly felt that maternal glow. And the aversion from a moment ago? No! That wasn't aversion! It was protection! The protection of an unborn child by its mother! The painter, unconcerned about others, immediately took out his pencil and began sketching drafts. And everyone in the hall was surprised by Marinda. That sound of heaving, many heard it. Even a lot of them saw it. But Marinda, without any further explanation and with the Female Swordmaster, who had been waiting by the side, immediately lending support, headed upstairs. As Marinda and the Female Swordmaster's figures disappeared behind the door, the gazes of the crowd unconsciously shifted to Arthur. Under everyone's gaze, Arthur's face displayed confusion, followed by speculation, then incredulous joy. And then? He rushed upstairs, taking two steps at a time. With the departure of the two protagonists, the hall downstairs erupted into commotion, buzzing with discussion. Even after the Female Swordmaster stepped out of the room, a number of people braved up to ask. "I don't know," the Female Swordmaster replied with a smile. The deliberate ambiguity of her expression immediately led to more speculation. Meanwhile, in the room— Arthur loosened the button at his collar. Marinda took out her pipe. Whoosh! A thick plume of smoke was exhaled and Marinda's face was one of sheer satisfaction, while Arthur, after lifting up Pendragon, relaxed completely as well. Everyone has their own way of decompressing, Marinda through smoking her pipe, and Arthur by petting a cat. However, Arthur wasn't fond of Marinda smoking her pipe. Previously, he couldn't say much about it. But now it was different— "Smoking is bad for the baby," Arthur said seriously while holding Pendragon. Marinda was taken aback, looked at the pipe in her hand and then at the stern-faced Arthur. In the end, the lady extinguished her pipe. Because she understood the importance of their plan. But the resulting irritation made the lady pace back and forth in the room. After several turns, just when the lady glared at Arthur, ready to growl, something was tossed to her by Arthur. The lady caught it subconsciously— "Hmm, what's this?"

Chapter 453: Night and Prelude!

Marinda certainly recognized the bracelet in Arthur's hand. It was the very bracelet that Baron Hausman's Swordsmanship Chief had given up under pressure. Thus, Marinda never considered it hers. Including another ring and those ten chests of gold coins, Marinda had already assumed all belonged to Arthur. And now, Arthur suddenly tossed it to her. This lady certainly didn't regard it as any 'extra gift.' "Did 'Pale Hand' Glast come for this item?" Marinda asked directly. "Yes, the information I got is as such," Arthur nodded in confirmation. Immediately, the lady scrutinized the bracelet in her hand with even greater seriousness. "It has inscriptions that grant lightness... It's a passable arcane artifact. But it's hardly worth such a fuss from the likes of him, is it?" Marinda frowned, arriving at a similar conclusion as Arthur. "That's for you to investigate," Pretending to know 'nothing,' Arthur shrugged and then shifted his position to make his half-reclined figure in the chair more comfortable. Marinda, looking at Arthur, instinctively felt that this guy was setting a trap for her. But... She was a bit curious! Why not conduct a

covert investigation. Marinda thought to herself, leaning back into another chair. Arthur was sleep-deprived. Marinda was exhausted. For this day, the lady had prepared too much, gone through too much, holding a mindset of absolute success, and now finally, after it was all over, an irresistible wave of fatigue washed over her. Even with secret techniques for adjustment, it couldn't change the fact that the lady's breathing became even within seconds of closing her eyes. Arthur opened one eye, glancing at Marinda. Coincidentally, at that moment, Marinda also opened one eye. After exchanging looks, both simultaneously gestured the middle finger at one another, their faces revealing an 'I knew you were pretending to sleep' expression. "One should be more sincere in dealing with others," Arthur began to take the initiative. "Hmm, I'm just wary of certain spirit mediums," Marinda retorted, insinuating that Arthur was no longer human. "If one does nothing wrong, there's no need to be wary of others. Only the petty are overly worried like that," Arthur's thick-skinned and unruffled reaction. "Hmm, my biggest wrongdoing is knowing you," Marinda addressed Arthur again with an even tone. But seeing Arthur's indifferent smile, the lady inwardly sighed. Too thick-skinned, no way to break through. The lady began to feel disinterested and asked directly, "What's the next plan?" Arthur's face turned serious, and he said straightforwardly, "Wait for nightfall!" With that, Arthur closed his eye. Marinda also closed her eyes and succumbed to sleep. This time, neither opened their eyes again. But wisps of smoke seemed to linger in the room. The corner hound was even more vigilant. Time ticked away second by second. Lunch, afternoon tea, and dinner at Caesar Manor merged into one, with music and singing never ceasing, people emboldened by alcohol started to speak freely, probing each other. When exhausted, the guest rooms allowed for quick rejuvenation. Returning to the fray, a cup of lemon tea invigorated one tremendously. Groups formed one after another. However, the most eye-catching group was centered around Arthur. Even with Arthur absent, people's gazes incessantly swept over the group. And the people in this group? Nobody cared about the gazes of others. Malz and Bob, who had been through battlefields, regarded others' gazes as a slight breeze. Kuke, Scott, Wiggins, Little Lisop, Fengter, Goodrian Ernest, Erwin Dibwa, Zhukov Bas, although young, all came from different standings and were accustomed to attention. Desa from Barny was content as long as there was food. And Haywood? This unscrupulous landlord had the thickest skin of all. "Wiggins, fetch me a glass of orange juice. Although light beer is tasty, I can hardly take any more!" Scott signaled Wiggins, then promptly wrapped his arm around Fengter's shoulder, toasting Goodrian Ernest, Erwin Dibwa, and Zhukov Bas. Scott, Wiggins, and Fengter were old acquaintances, familiar with one another since being used by the now-deceased Dockler. Goodrian Ernest, Erwin Dibwa, and Zhukov Bas? Scott knew them from the 'Swordsmanship Competition' interviews. Therefore, under Malz's indication, the young chief editor stood out to act as a social lubricant for everyone. The result? The occasional burst of laughter said it all. Bob clinked his light beer with Little Lisop's. "I hear there are quite a few desperadoes in South Town?" Bob inquired. "Yes, there are many. They hide among the miners, posing a security risk to South Town, but some of the work in the mines does need such fellows," Little Lisop nodded, very candidly. Because these were men approved by 'Kind Father.' But also precisely because these were men approved by 'Kind Father,' Little Lisop's subsequent gaze carried a probing question. Bob did not conceal anything. "I need more hands, to expand the reliable manpower for the big boss—you've seen it too, the boss's strength is indeed powerful, yet his influence has waned due to the previous 'Concealment.' I believe that if the boss had another hundred or two hundred 'Death Warriors,' it would effectively solve the problem." Wiggins had always been selecting trustworthy people from Mouse Alley. Bob did not deny the effectiveness of this approach. But the captain of the Daredevil Team still felt the need for more speed—It didn't matter before, but after witnessing the 'energy' that Arthur possessed, the former captain's mindset underwent

a complete change. He acknowledged the words of his old friend and became wholeheartedly convinced. Therefore, he hoped he could prove his worth as well as ensure that everything Arthur possessed was impenetrable. Bob, who had seen the dirty tricks among the Nobles, was clear that eventually the Earl of South Los would become restless as Arthur continued to display his 'energy.' Therefore, a hundred Death Warriors became the insurance. With these hundred Death Warriors spread across South Los, Arthur would be absolutely safe, and they would be too. Unless the Earl of South Los didn't want to keep the South Los Territory and was willing to go down with it. Of course, what if a hundred Death Warriors weren't enough? Then two hundred! Little Lisop immediately understood what Bob meant. The young Lord nodded solemnly. "Leave it to me." Bob was aware of the Nobles' treachery. Little Lisop knew it even better. Meanwhile, Kuke, who sat to the side, picked up his lemon tea and called over Scott, Wiggins, and Haywood— "My father used to be a Bounty Hunter; he had some methods for training people. As long as one grits their teeth and endures, just four weeks of persistence can greatly improve one's strength." The new Police Chief of Dort District cut straight to the point. Immediately, Scott, Wiggins, and Haywood's eyes lit up. They were all too aware of their own weaknesses. Strength! With an opportunity to improve, they certainly wouldn't pass it up. "What about you, Kuke?" Scott expressed appropriate skepticism. "I'm afraid of pain, so I didn't dare try it at the time." Kuke's cheeks turned a little red. Then, looking at the three men in front of him with an increasingly serious expression, he said, "So, the four of us have to persist. Whoever drops out first will be a lifetime coward!" The three immediately nodded. Especially Haywood, who murmured to himself. "A bit of pain is better than losing one's life, right? I'm in! I want to follow the Lord and see a broader horizon. Moreover, when the young master is born, he'll need knights like me to guard him." Haywood's previous words were resolute. The latter sentence, however, was met with a series of eye rolls. "When Arthur's child is born, as Arthur's good friend, I believe I can be the child's mentor!" Scott declared his position. "Well, I can teach the child the ways of street survival." This was Wiggins. "I'm not too knowledgeable about these things, but I think my father still has some collection, and I feel I could give some to Arthur's future child as a gift." Kuke was quite modest. This conversation wasn't hidden from the others. Even Malz, who had been quietly observing with a smile, was moved. Arthur's child! Unconsciously, everyone's already united hearts were twisted even tighter. It seemed like they had a larger, more distant goal to strive for. Arthur, who had used the excuse of looking after Marinda to hide in his room, stretched lazily and stood up from his chair, looking towards Marinda who had long been ready. "It's the first time I've seen someone who can sleep soundly even while sitting in a chair." Marinda muttered. "That's because you haven't seen enough! There's a girl who can sleep on a rope!" Arthur countered seriously. "Sleeping on a rope? That must be the practice of some Secret Technique! Such a technique would surely make one's body lighter and more agile, with a great sense of balance, transforming swordsmanship into something deceptive and unpredictable, and wielding weapons like the Soft Whip becomes even more difficult to defend against!" After pondering, Marinda said. "Yeah, something like that." Arthur said, and he put down Pendragon. He didn't want to bring a cat along to explore the ruins, especially not Pendragon. Even if he felt he already knew enough about that place. "It's not that I don't want to take you there. But, Pan, you have a more important task! Stay here and wait for me to return! This is a mission critical to daddy's life and death, understand?" Arthur spoke softly, raising his hand to comfort Pendragon, who wanted to accompany him. "Meow!" Pendragon's eyes shone, and he immediately jumped onto the table, puffing his chest out proudly. "Good kitty!" Arthur chuckled, stretching out his right index finger and rubbing Pendragon's forehead. Watching Arthur carefully instructing Pendragon, Marinda suddenly understood why Pendragon was so fond of

Arthur. Of course, understanding was one thing. Yet, there was still a hint of sourness. 'Hmph, think you're great just because you have a cat?' Marinda huffed coldly, igniting her pipe. After taking a deep draw of smoke, she blew it out— Poof! A large ring of smoke appeared in the room, and Marinda took Arthur's hand and stepped forward. Instantly, the two vanished.

Chapter 454: Spirit Medium Speeds Through the Ruins as a 'Shaman'!

South Los, Docklands, underground ruins. When thick rings of smoke appeared out of thin air, Urs and his subordinates immediately stood up. They were all too familiar with their lord's abilities. And the "Storm Sword" party followed closely behind. However, this exploration team, including "Storm Sword" Deljo, all felt some trepidation. Messing up on their first assignment could easily lead to doubts about their abilities. If it had been before, the "Storm Sword" party wouldn't have cared, but after Arthur's promise, they really were worried. It was simply because Arthur had offered enough. So, don't complain about your employees not working hard enough or being idle. If there are such complaints, it proves that what you're offering isn't enough. As long as you offer enough, employees will always bring you even more in return. Just like Deljo at this moment— 'No! We can't continue like this! Perhaps... I should be able to tell the lord about those two ruins!' Thinking this, Deljo's gaze turned to his deputy. Adi instantly understood what his captain meant. After a moment's thought, the deputy nodded. The situation was already unfavourable to them; if they didn't show some value soon, they would only fall further behind. After all, it was they who needed Arthur, not the other way around. In the midst of the smoke, two figures appeared hand in hand. "My lord!" "My lord!" On both sides of the smoke, Arthur's and Marinda's people bowed and greeted them. Marinda nodded in acknowledgment. She didn't want to say more; the sensation of an upset stomach was just too uncomfortable, while Arthur looked at Marinda with a bit of surprise. He had expected Marinda to retch at least once. 'Is she getting used to it?' The young Spirit Medium thought to herself, her gaze then shifting to "Storm Sword" Deljo. "My lord, I'm sorry, I..." "Deljo, this has nothing to do with you. After all, nobody could have imagined that the owner of these ruins would come up with something as exaggerated as the Gate of Life and Death 3000." Arthur said with a smile and a wave of his hand, his eyes gentle, his tone mild. This caused all members of the "Storm Sword" exploration team to breathe a sigh of relief. Especially Little Winna, who patted her chest with a look of having narrowly passed through. Edwina looked at Arthur with apologies filled in her eyes. Arthur's smile remained, his expression unchanged. Suddenly, the "Storm Sword" exploration team's favorability began to rise rapidly. Who wouldn't like a kind-hearted boss? Especially when that boss was powerful, influential, and generous. As Marinda walked towards Urs to report the specifics, Deljo also approached Arthur immediately— "My lord, I have information on two ruins." The "Storm Sword" spoke in a lowered voice. Immediately, Arthur understood the intention behind his words. There was no doubt that the big promise he had made was working. "Leave everything to you; these two missions will still count as part of the three in the contract. If you need it, inform me in advance, and I will dispatch people to assist you." Arthur didn't inquire further, showing a trust in his use of others. In fact, what Arthur valued most was the XP the "Storm Sword" team generated for him while exploring the ruins. As for the items inside the ruins? If there were any, all the better. If not, it didn't matter. Therefore, Arthur didn't mind appearing more like a qualified, excellent, and lovable boss. "Your kindness is as admirable as your power! Thank you for your trust in us! Please rest assured, this time we will complete the mission perfectly!" "Storm Sword" Deljo made his pledge. The exploration team behind him nodded in agreement. And Marinda, watching from a distance, secretly curled her lip at Arthur. This lady knew that Arthur, the scoundrel, was trying to buy people's hearts. Yet, such kindness

was indeed unexpected. Why be so petty with me? Could it be... 'Using the profits obtained by haggling over every penny with me to subsidize his own team?' When this thought emerged at the bottom of Marinda's heart, the lady narrowed her eyes. Because she felt it was true. Subconsciously, the lady started feeling agitated and instinctively reached for her pipe. But when it was almost at her lips, she restrained herself. Even if it's an act! It must be genuine! With this thought, the lady began to adjust her emotions with her breath. Urs, who was standing by, was stunned. As Marinda's earliest subordinate, this Head Hunter was well aware of what temper his superior had, she was clearly angry with Lord Kledos just a moment ago. But she held back? Shouldn't she have gone up and struck with her knife? How could she hold back? And she even refrained from smoking her pipe! It was simply incredible! Could this be love? Urs pondered this in his heart, but he didn't dare to ask. His superior might spare Lord Kledos because of love, but when it came to stabbing him, she would certainly not hesitate. Thus, the Head Hunter shrank his neck and stood there, doing his best to reduce his presence. That was until the smiling Arthur came over and greeted him— "Hello, are you Urs? Marinda said you have strong archery skills, and you're good at tracking. I have wanted to have such talent since I was little. At one point years ago, I even dreamed of becoming an outstanding Hunter." Arthur's amicable words quickly won over the Head Hunter's favor. "With your Talent, whatever you wish to achieve, you can easily reach it. If you want to learn archery, we can go out together when the Hunting season starts." Urs responded. "Of course! I'm looking forward to it!" Arthur immediately nodded, his face growing more eager. It seemed he was truly looking forward to the start of the Hunting season. Marinda gave Arthur a stare. It meant you've done enough. If you keep this act up, it'll be daylight soon. After giving Marinda a slight smile in return, Arthur did not waste words and headed straight into the corridor that leads to the Gate of Life and Death 3000. Immediately, whether it was Urs and the others, or the 'Storm Sword' squad, including Marinda, everyone's gaze followed him. They all wanted to know how Arthur would solve the Gate of Life and Death 3000. It should be Divination, right? Many people thought so. Because Arthur's identity as a Spirit Medium had taken deep root in people's hearts. Thus, many were waiting for Arthur to bring out the Crystal Ball and begin the Divination. About such Divination, everyone was curious. Divinations by others were naturally fake. But Arthur's would certainly be different. It would be a Divination with real power. All thought so, Marinda included. The lady widened her eyes, not wanting to miss a tiny bit of the process—she believed that observing Arthur's Divination would benefit her own bone Divination. But the next moment, everyone was dumbfounded. Because— Arthur did not perform Divination, nor did he bring out any Crystal Ball; instead, he simply stood the staff with a carving of Pendragon's head upright before him. The next moment, as Arthur's palm left, the staff fell straight down, the head pointing in a direction. Arthur glanced at the direction the staff head was pointing and raised his hand to point. "This way!"

Chapter 455 My name, Arthur Kredos!

Everyone stared dumbfounded in the direction Arthur was pointing. It was a wooden door that was only half the height of a man. A child could enter with ease, but an adult would have to bend down. Of course, that wasn't the point. The point was that everyone present was astounded by Arthur's seemingly frivolous method. Even the greenest rookies had heard of people tossing twigs to decide which way to go when lost in the wilderness. But veterans knew that was wrong. The correct method was to set up a stick, lock in the position of its shadow, and then determine the east and west directions based on the trajectory of the shadow's movement with the sun. But what was the principle behind using a walking stick to find your way? Could it be, leaving it to destiny? Almost subconsciously, many thought of the

charlatans in the 'Spirit Medium' circles. However, with Arthur's reputation and strength, he shouldn't be a swindler, right? Could it be that we fail to see the mystery in it? A group of people standing in the passageway began to doubt their lives, especially the 'Storm Sword' group of professional Relic Hunters, who felt as if their entire worldview had been shattered. Is this really possible?! They screamed internally in self-questioning, much like a group of prairie dogs popping up all at once. 'Of course, this is possible!' After registering the stupefied looks of everyone, Arthur silently said to himself. This was the result of 3000 rats scouting the way. How could it not be successful? Of course, Arthur would certainly not reveal the truth to the others. "One of the Kledos Family's secret techniques: the Pathfinding Technique!" With these words, he pushed open the door and bent down to enter. Marinda was the second to enter. This lady wasn't sure what the 'Pathfinding Technique' that Arthur mentioned was, but she believed that Arthur wouldn't joke about such a thing. Marinda was proved right. After she passed the narrow corridor, a bright space opened up before her. Nine doors appeared before her. Clearly, that challenge was over. Now, here lays another. However, compared to the Gate of Life and Death 3000, these nine doors were naturally much easier. A sense of relaxation appeared in Marinda's eyes. Then, the lady couldn't help but ask softly— "Is that all the 'Pathfinding Technique' does? Can it lead us to the path of 'the item we desire in our hearts'?" Arthur rolled his eyes secretly. If he really had such a secret technique, he would first seek a 'safe shelter' for himself. However, the young 'Spirit Medium' said aloud, "The 'Pathfinding Technique' was invented by my grandpa, Old Charlie, based on the trait of our 'Spirit Medium' bloodline. For now, it can only pinpoint the correct paths in a maze. If you're looking to use it to find the path to the item in your heart? I'd recommend asking a certain captain for that compass." Asking would credit it to my grandpa. Asking again would attribute it to the trait of the Kledos bloodline. After all, unless Old Charlie is found, no one can poke holes in Arthur's lies. But 'Storm Sword' and his group, who had just emerged from the corridor, were rather crestfallen. After confirming that the 'Pathfinding Technique' worked, including 'Storm Sword' Deljo himself, they were prepared to accumulate enough Meritorious Service to exchange for this secret technique. No! It was a Miracle Technique! For these Relic Explorers, such a secret technique was nothing short of a Miracle Technique. But the fact that this kind of secret technique required the support of a bloodline, very soon, 'Storm Sword' and the others adjusted their mindset. In their view, it was normal for a technique that could be considered a Miracle Technique to be supported by a bloodline; otherwise, it wouldn't be possible to be so miraculous. However, being able to create such a secret technique was enough to show what kind of foundation the Kledos Family had. To follow such a family was to have a tremendous future. Meanwhile, Marinda quietly took note of the 'Pathfinding Technique' while her mind began to linger on that compass. Although she had not heard of any captain possessing such a compass, it did not stop her from investigating later. Of course, this lady was certain that Arthur intentionally spoke in half-truths. For what purpose? Naturally, it was to dig for benefits from her. 'That bastard, seventeen new ships aren't enough?' Marinda muttered to herself, yet her gaze followed Arthur's movements. She wanted to see the 'Pathfinding Technique' in action again. Arthur did not disappoint her, and the next moment, he raised his hand again. Then— Clack! The walking stick toppled to one side, and the tip pointed to—the wall! The wall?! Everyone gasped in surprise. It was the 'Door of Concealment'! Who would have expected the owner of the relic to use a 'Door of Concealment' to hide the true path once, and then use it again after the Gate of Life and Death 3000? If it weren't for the 'Pathfinding Technique', there would have been casualties that should not have occurred. Instantly, Urs and 'Storm Sword' Deljo looked at Arthur with gratitude in their eyes. Because the task of exploring the way would certainly fall to their subordinates. "Such a handy technique, he would definitely not use it just once!" Arthur uttered, picked

up the walking stick, and tapped the wall lightly. Immediately, the 'Door of Concealment' opened, and a spacious, smooth path appeared. But everyone frowned upon seeing this passage. An indescribable sense of danger arose in everyone's hearts. "It's a trap-laden passage! Everybody, be careful..." 'Storm Sword' Deljo warned everyone, but before he could finish his sentence, he saw Arthur already stepping forward. "Sir!" 'Storm Sword' Deljo exclaimed in alarm. Although he knew Arthur was incredibly powerful, this kind of brute-force approach was ill-advised. His power might protect him personally, but the relic could be damaged. Some Relic Explorers from the North County had a penchant for such reckless actions. It was only after being buried alive as a group that they learned to be more restrained, choosing a much more cautious approach. In the midst of 'Storm Sword' Deljo's terrified gaze, Arthur, however, strolled through the trap-laden corridor as if he were walking in a leisurely garden, mumbling to himself— "To find the dragon, divide the gold, look at the coiled mountains, a layer of coils is a layer of gates..." Arthur simply couldn't help himself. Although it was all thanks to the little mice, walking through a corridor that seemed like a tomb passage, Arthur couldn't help but reminisce about his younger days. Subconsciously, Arthur looked down at his index and middle fingers. 'Pity they're not the usual length. Tsk, still lacking the Ancient Ingot Knife and Qilin Blood! Uh... Did I just mix up the scenes? Did I get it confused? Haha, can't tell, can't tell.' Thinking to himself, Arthur quickened his pace, passing through the trap corridor under the incredulous gazes of everyone. "Follow the floor tiles I just walked on," he said. Immediately, the team sprang into action. Only 'Storm Sword' Deljo seemed a bit dazed. "To find the dragon, divide the gold, look at the coiled mountains, a layer of coils is a layer of gates... Is that some kind of incantation? Did my lord rely on this incantation to get through the trap corridor? How should I use this incantation?" Deljo mumbled to himself. And he decided right there and then, that once he had enough merit, he would exchange for it. So useful! It's indeed so useful! Many in the 'Storm Sword' squad had similar thoughts. Marinda's gaze towards Arthur changed once more. Secret Technique! Yet another new Secret Technique! This lady marveled at the depth of the Kledos Family's legacy, all the while admiring Arthur's exceptional talent. You see, without Arthur's talent, even the multitude of Secret Techniques would be useless. 'Such talent, is it fitting to say it befits the one chosen as the present 'Black Cat'? Of course, a scoundrel remains a scoundrel!' This lady sighed at Arthur's talent, but quickly 'corrected her attitude.' Humph, she would not praise a scoundrel. Thereafter, the lady watched with an even more focused gaze towards the depths of the ruins—Just now, the previous glance-back of the relic's master was enough to prove that this was not a person easy to deal with. Door of Concealment. Gate of Life and Death 3000. A mix and match with the Door of Concealment. And the trap corridor. This lady didn't know what was going to happen next, but she knew it was time to be more vigilant. Others felt the same way. They inexplicably sensed danger. Especially those with enough Spirituality, right now they were truly panicked. Little Winna had already tightened her grip on her sister's clothes. About 20 minutes into their silent march— Hiss, hiss. A low hissing sound emerged. Suddenly, everyone instinctively tightened their grip on their weapons. After another 3 minutes of walking, the scene before them made most of the team gasp in cold breath. Snakes! Hundreds of snakes blocked their path forward. These snakes slithered and twisted in the darkness, flicking their tongues. Their cold, unblinking eyes were fixed on the intruders. But that wasn't the most terrifying thing. Most horrifying was, behind the swarm of snakes, a gargantuan snake was coiled in formation, its head hanging low in slumber. But as the footsteps of the team approached, those tightly closed Serpent's Gaze eyes opened— Wham! An intangible momentum burst forth, and aside from Arthur, Marinda, and Deljo, the rest of the team started to stagger, even the Head Hunter Urs of Marinda's team was gritting his teeth to endure. "Ferocious Beast!" 'Storm Sword' felt his scalp tingle. In his many years of

exploration, this was the first time he had actually encountered a Ferocious Beast. Although he had encountered Arcane Creatures before, Ferocious Beasts were different. Only those who had reached the 'Entry' level could be called Ferocious Beasts. Clang! 'Storm Sword' Deljo's Longsword was drawn from its sheath. Marinda also dared not be careless; she drew out her pipe once again. Across from them, the group of snakes also raised their heads, hissing. Hiss, hiss, hiss! Amidst the collective hissing, the giant snake moved its body, its thickness comparable to a carriage, bringing an unimaginable sense of oppression to everyone. Many clenched their teeth in fear. Yet, amidst them all, Arthur was different. "Ah," he sighed. The young Spirit Medium exhaled and, holding his staff, calmly proceeded forward. The venomous snakes, which were previously tensed and threatening, parted ways for Arthur, not only clearing a wide path for him but also bowing their heads in respect as he passed. They allowed Arthur to walk right up to their king... No, right in front of that giant snake. In their eyes at this moment, the king had already changed. It was Arthur, Not the giant serpent! The giant serpent roared angrily, its body undulating and sending tremors through the corridor, but as Arthur approached, confusion flickered in its eyes. Then disbelief. And then shock. And after that, joy. That deep sense of joy welling up from the depths of its soul made the giant snake's tail wag back and forth. In front of everyone's astonished eyes, Arthur stood before the giant snake, and the young Spirit Medium softly said— "My name is Arthur Kredos. Will you follow me?"

Chapter 456 Giant Snake. Nidhogg!

The young 'Spirit Medium's' soft inquiry. Fell on the ears of the surrounding people like a clap of thunder. Since the Empire Era, whether Nobles or Mystic Side Persons, it has been customary to raise Arcane Creatures. Not only do Arcane Creatures showcase one's status, but they also become invaluable assistants to their owners. Even, they could form a complementarity. In the early times of the Empire Era, there rose a hunter in South County who wielded dual scimitars and was accompanied by a female panther. Not to mention that during the middle and late Empire Era, Arcane Creatures became indispensable partners of hunters until the start of the Holy Era, when hunters were gradually incorporated into The Holy Court and this phenomenon slowly disappeared. However, no matter the era, acquiring an Arcane Creature always required raising it from a young age. Like this, directly taming one? Apart from that hunter with a female panther and dual scimitars, there had never been word of anyone accomplishing such a feat. And that panther was just an Arcane Creature. But the Giant Snake before them? A Ferocious Beast! It was only after reaching the Entry-level that one could be termed 'Ferocious Beast'! Impossible! It absolutely couldn't be tamed! That's what everyone present thought. Marinda and 'Storm Sword' Deljo were even ready for combat. Smoke swirled around this lady, within which lurked rich, deep shadows, the flickering Soul Fire marking the eyes of these Lost Souls. Any creature that met their gaze would shiver from head to toe as though plunged into an ice cellar. Deljo, on the other hand, was more straightforward. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! The wind, one gust following another. Sharpness, and swiftness. With these two as a reminder, everyone else also began adjusting their state of readiness. Then— The Giant Snake lowered its head, as large as a house, and issued a low hiss. As if it were... Acting coquettishly? Marinda blinked, wanting to confirm whether she was experiencing an illusion, but her intuition told her there was no illusion, and certainly no phantasm. Everything was real. The Giant Snake had truly submitted to Arthur. Even though she could hardly believe it, it had truly happened. Almost unconsciously, the lady began to sing softly— "Eternal Monster, inheritor of the Rebellious Bloodline, creator of Twilight of the Gods, reverer of the Northern Gods, wielder of the Blade of Chaos, possessor of Leviathan's Axe, Kredos..." Previously, the lady hadn't really

taken Arthur's introduction of his family's words to heart. But now? The lady began to re-evaluate. She started paying attention to each word, each term. She whispered to herself. "Monster? Kledos? Twilight of the Gods?" Her Spirituality told her she was on the verge of grasping the crux of the matter, but there was still something missing. If she could just grasp that particular thing, she would understand the truth. Was it the Blade of Chaos? Or Leviathan's Axe? The lady wished she could perform a Divination right then and there. But she knew it wasn't appropriate. Right now, as Arthur's 'beloved,' all she needed to do was smile. The lady took a deep breath at the bottom of her heart and a smile that said everything was as expected appeared on her face. But the others around her were not so calm. 'Storm Sword' Deljo now wished he could kneel down and kiss the shoes of his lord. Time and again, Deljo found himself underestimating his lord's strength, but each and every time, his lord would rapidly shatter his perceptions, elevating his power to an unimaginable level. Once, twice, thrice... By this moment, Deljo's heart had become completely numb. The 'Storm Sword' even believed deep down that the lord he followed was omnipotent. After all, even an entry-level ferocious beast had submitted to a single casual command. What else could be impossible? Everyone's gaze towards Arthur changed again and again, from shock and horror to complete willing submission. But Little Winna was different. The lady with an injured mind opened her mouth and asked— "Can I touch it?" "Of course! Nidhogg... no, Yemeng is quite willing to let you touch it." Arthur casually named the black giant snake before him. And with that naming, text began to flicker before Arthur's eyes— [Nidhogg (Mutated Titan Python): Nidhogg was originally just an ordinary jungle snake, but after being discovered by Geppetto, it fortuitously or unfortunately became the test subject of this mad master. It was injected with the blood of several ancient serpent species, among them the titan python's bloodline sparked the faint power of Nidhogg's own bloodline, enabling it to begin evolving. In the course of this evolution, Geppetto continuously added various bloodline samples, eventually not limiting to serpent species but also including some dragon species. This caused Nidhogg great pain, but it dared not resist the master, even if the mad master ordered it to sever its own tail, it did not dare to rebel! Luckily, Nidhogg's first task was to guard this place, and in the hundreds of years that followed, Nidhogg's bloodline became increasingly intense and ascended. Its size grew madly, but it still remembered the command of the mad master, until it met you. The bloodlines of several ancient snakes within sensed the greatness and eternity of the 'Serpent of Death,' causing it to see you as kin, a fatherly or brotherly figure.] [Effects: 1, Mutated Body; 2, Dragon Armor; 3, Serpent's Breath; 4, Command] [Mutated Body: Nidhogg has a body far beyond the imagination of ordinary people and continues to grow non-stop. Its colossal size grants it immense strength, making it fearless in the face of fire, frost, poison, and illusions. However, it appears vulnerable to thunder, and in seawater, Nidhogg will be doubly effective; Current stage: 40 meters long, 4 meters thick] [Dragon Armor: The blood of dragons gave Nidhogg a special scale armor that not only ignores most physical attacks but also handles attacks from fire, frost, and poison with ease. Even facing direct hits from large caliber cannons will leave it unharmed, and it can activate a shield that envelops its entire body capable of withstanding 3 attacks at 'entry-level.'] [Serpent's Breath: It can exhale a conical cloud of poison with a 30-degree angle reaching up to 300 meters or expel fireballs and iceballs with a diameter matching its body, but cannot breathe lightning. Its attack power does not exceed entry-level.] [Command: Can command snake swarms within a 50-kilometer radius.] (Note 1: Nidhogg has a remarkable appetite, needing to consume large amounts of food; gold can substitute food, and moonlight also gives it a feeling of satiety.) (Note 2: After Nidhogg consumes a large quantity of food, its body will grow rapidly.) (Note 3: Dragon Armor and Serpent's Breath grow stronger as Nidhogg's body increases in size.) (Note 4: The exhaled conical poison cloud can become what is commonly known as

miasma, covering certain areas or moving with the wind.) (Note 5: The snakes commanded by Nidhogg, as long as their rank does not surpass Nidhogg, will be unable to resist it.) ... Arthur gazed at the text before him, his mouth curving into a slight smile. Clearly, his fleet was going to be much safer. Only... 'Is thunder the natural nemesis of snakes?' Arthur pondered, stroking his chin. Meanwhile, Little Winna was shouting excitedly— "Sister! Sister! Look, it has horns!" Upon hearing Little Winna's shout, everyone looked closely and indeed discovered two small horns on top of Nidhogg's head. These two small horns were only the size of a fist, and on the head of Nidhogg, they looked like two little bumps, hardly noticeable. If not for Little Winna, no one would have noticed. However, people quickly averted their gaze. Because they sensed Nidhogg's displeasure. In the eyes of a figure like a father or brother like Arthur, Nidhogg was docile, but towards others? They were nothing but insects. On this, Arthur had no intention of correcting. The young 'Spirit Medium' simply patted Nidhogg gently. Immediately, the black giant snake twisted its body and completely cleared the path behind it. Suddenly, an open-plan house came into everyone's view. A large number of books and experimental equipment were organized by category. But what caught the eye the most was a display cabinet. The cabinet was divided into upper and lower sections. On the top was a mask. On the bottom was a dagger. Arthur skimmed over the rest of the items. But upon seeing that very familiar mask, the young 'Spirit Medium' grew tense inside— He had to have that mask!

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The masks on the top shelf of the display cabinet were all too familiar to Arthur. Their overall appearance resembled a human face, pure white in color without any patterns or decorations, save for two hollow spaces at the eyes—those could only be vessels meant to contain a "Death Hound". Having acquired one Death Hound already, Arthur didn't mind getting another. After all, Pendragon would probably like to have another dog to ride, wouldn't he? Besides, Pendragon didn't have any pants to worry about getting ruined. With these thoughts in mind, Arthur didn't rush but instead lifted his right hand and stroked his chin. "What's wrong?" Marinda, who was constantly watching Arthur, immediately noticed this gesture. After spending a considerable amount of time together, the lady had come to recognize some of Arthur's habits. Such as rubbing his brow when thinking, tapping fingers on the table or chair armrests. And when he discovered something interesting, he would stroke his chin. "Nothing much. Just found something interesting." As Arthur spoke, he didn't leave Marinda in suspense like she would have done but instead asked softly— "Do you know Geppetto?" "Geppetto? The crazy master alchemist?" Marinda blurted out almost without thinking. The Master Alchemist Geppetto had an enormous reputation on the Mystic Side, but it was all negative. Anytime his name came up, people immediately thought of madness. Moreover, most people believe that the Holy Court made the right choice in burning the Master Alchemist and his creation 'Pinocchio' at the stake. At least, compared to the eleven masters who were burned afterward, it was the right decision. After all, among those eleven masters burned later, there was one accused of 'being unable to create the sun at night'. "Yeah. This is one of his laboratories. I'm a bit surprised to find it here in South Los, according to the records this mad alchemist was more active in Seberlin." Arthur nodded in agreement. Marinda's brows furrowed in response. "This place is Geppetto's laboratory?" The lady murmured to herself, her eyes betraying an undisguised sense of loss. 'As I thought, he has grand ambitions; even a master alchemist's laboratory isn't enough to satisfy him! Then... Where did she think this place was before?' Arthur speculated silently. Without a doubt, Marinda placed great value on this place. Her vigilant stance was such that, if not for the accidental cooperation of the 'Storm Sword' squad, he would never have managed to trick

her. So, upon seeing that "Nidhogg" was a pet and experimental creation of the mad master alchemist, Arthur was curious if it was really worth it for Marinda for this mad alchemist. It wasn't that a master alchemist wasn't worth Marinda's efforts. But this mad master alchemist wasn't worth it. You have to understand, this particular mad master alchemist was one who was burnt by the Holy Court in the past. Simply put, most of his wealth had been 'confiscated'. Even if there was some property left, it couldn't have been much. With this in mind, Marinda's guardedness seemed rather superfluous. Unless Marinda had misunderstood something, mistaking it for a place left by another important figure. And that was exactly what Arthur needed. Not the misunderstanding itself. But to make Marinda realize the truth about this place. Arthur wanted Marinda to understand that this wasn't the place she was looking for. Only then could he take the lead in making a selection. According to the previous agreement, they would split this place sixty-forty. Marinda, forty. Arthur, sixty. However, there was no agreement on who would choose first. So, for that priority in choosing, Arthur opted for 'honesty'—given his own performance just now, he was quite certain that with Marinda's personality, once she confirmed that this wasn't her intended target, she would generously give up the right to choose first. The lies of a 'Spirit Medium' are not to be feared. For they are the skills they have to survive. The honesty of a 'Spirit Medium' is what's truly terrifying. Because it suggests they have an ulterior motive. And faced with an honest 'Spirit Medium', few would 'refuse' them. In fact, that's how it was. The lady had already gestured with her hand. The meaning couldn't be more apparent. You go first. Arthur shrugged and walked straight toward the display cabinet. There was no point in pretending. Anyone with eyes could see that this was the most valuable part of the entire ruins. Arthur didn't immediately pick up the container mask that held the "Death Hound," but first looked at the dagger below; he was a bit curious about this dagger— [Name: Bone Dagger] [Type: Weapon Type] [Quality: Epic] [Attributes: 1. Skeleton Summoning; 2. Wail of the Dead] [Remarks: At the end of the Empire, when the 13th Squad of the 13th Legion went to explore the land covered by Shadows, they were besieged by Shadow monsters. The captain 'Dallas' chose to lure the monsters away to give his teammates a chance to survive. In the end, all members of the 13th Squad, except for the captain, safely evacuated. They remembered their captain, and then they saw him, transformed into a Corpse Ghoul on the battlefield—The 13th Squad, at the cost of their annihilation, killed their own captain, believing that their captain needed rest, but their bones ended up in the hands of the Tower of Mist...] ... [Skeleton Summoning: Summon a 25-man Skeleton Squad led by 'Dallas' to fight for you; Captain 'Dallas' is of Arcana Level, with the remaining 24 members comprising 12 strong archers, 4 Scout Cavalry, 4 pikemen, and 4 greatsword fighters. All of them possess their own skeletal warhorses, and besides their own proficiency, are skilled with various cavalry weapons] [Wail of the Dead: When resolved to battle to the death, the 25-man Skeleton Squad can choose to burn themselves to significantly boost their attack and defense, or pour all their power into their captain, at the cost of their own deaths, to temporarily promote Captain 'Dallas' to Great Arcana Level] (Note 1: When the Skeleton Squad 'dies', they can be resurrected with Gold Coins, regular members for 200 Gold Coins each, and Captain 'Dallas' for 2000 Gold Coins) (Note 2: After resurrection, the Skeleton Squad needs to bask in Moonlight once to fight in their prime condition) (Note 3: When possessing the Bone Dagger, the Skeleton Squad will completely obey orders) ... 'This item isn't bad at all!' Arthur praised inwardly, then, without hesitation, picked up the "Death Hound." The Skeleton Squad was indeed impressive, especially when activating "Wail of the Dead," which would suddenly bring a Great Arcana Level ally—it could have the effect of a surprise weapon. But compared to this large number of skeletons, having a 'highly loyal, unbetraying, with a physique like an Arcane Creature, extremely balanced in attack and defense, tireless, with unparalleled keenness of smell, able to live

without air, somewhat immune against sulfur and flames, feeding on the 'Aura of Death', and able to spit 'Deathly Fire', and automatically becoming invisible in darkness and shadows' Death Hound was more suitable for Arthur. Just as Arthur picked up the mask that contained the "Death Hound," unexpectedly, more text appeared. Arthur's eyes narrowed slightly, and a glint of pleasure flashed across them.

Chapter 458: The Most Valuable Thing!

The text that appeared before Arthur was the introduction to the "Death Hound," sharing the same attributes and traits as Kuliqi. But the text that followed was different— "[Swarm: When you possess two or more 'Death Hounds,' they will receive an inspiration effect, and their attack and defense will increase.] [Gluttony: In a swarm state, the 'Death Hounds' will have better digestion, 'Hunting' prey and consuming 'Aura of Death' can achieve better and faster growth.] [Symbiosis: In a swarm state, the 'Death Hounds' will share each other's 'Death Seed.' When one of the 'Death Hounds' dies, you can use 'Death Qi' to nurture the 'Death Seed' and let it choose resurrection.] (Note 1: After the 'Death Seed' is consumed, it takes three natural days to be born again.) (Note 2: When the 'Death Hound' is resurrected, the growth gained from 'Hunting' and consuming 'Aura of Death' will be reset.) (Note 3: When the 'Death Hounds' die at the same time, symbiosis becomes ineffective.) ... Seeing the text before him, Arthur felt joyful. The "Death Hound" is useful. But, Arthur was always worried about loss. Even Arthur couldn't always account for every contingency; he knew unexpected events could happen at any time. However, now with the emergence of [Symbiosis], he felt somewhat relieved. And [Swarm] further strengthened the "Death Hounds"! As for [Gluttony]? In Arthur's view, it was nearly as valuable a trait as [Symbiosis]. He, Arthur, Death's Child! The one thing he never lacked was 'Death Qi.' Even now, doing nothing in the midst of these ruins, his Death Qi Value was skyrocketing. Before, he was worried about Kuliqi suffering from indigestion. Now? 'Kuliqi and... Kiri! Yes, you shall be called Kiri! Kuliqi, Kiri, accept the 'Food's Baptism'!' After naming his second "Death Hound," Arthur was full of anticipation. Arcane creatures corresponded to Arcana Level, and he had no idea how much Death Qi it would take to grow Kuliqi and Kiri to Great Arcana Level. As for Ascend Step? Arthur had considered it. But his intuition told him it wasn't a simple matter; besides Death Qi, it required more 'Hunting.' Therefore, Arthur wasn't in a hurry. He planned to wait until Kuliqi and Kiri reached Great Arcana Level. Suo, hidden within the shadows, looked at the black and white companion that suddenly appeared beside him, with flames above its forehead and blue eyes filled with wisdom, and its smiling face stiffened slightly. When this companion came over with its tongue hanging out and drooling, Suo showed a look of disdain on its canine face. Although essentially both were "Death Hounds," Suo felt that this companion was a bit... not very smart, no, it was silly! The aura of silliness was so strong that Suo felt it could be contagious just by being close. 'Silly Hound, huh? It's okay, it's okay. If you dare to wreck the house, I'll stew you.' Arthur chuckled inwardly, his gaze towards Kiri filled with warning. Kiri, lurking within the shadows, seemed to feel its master's gaze but surmised it might be imagination and after looking around bewilderedly, began wagging its tail non-stop at Kuliqi. When Kiri realized Kuliqi was ignoring it, it started showing great interest in the abundance of books in the room. However, upon noticing that its master's gaze had turned sharp, it immediately sat upright within the shadows and did not move. Seeing this scene, Arthur was completely reassured. Kiri was only acting foolish, and perhaps pretending to be foolish at that. As long as it wasn't truly foolish, there was hope. Feeling relieved, Arthur turned to look at Marinda, who had already picked up the "Bone Dagger"—selecting one first and then choosing another was a rule the two of them abided by. In the lady's eyes, Arthur saw joy. This unexpected delight diluted the original

sense of loss. Clearly, the "Bone Dagger" was immensely suitable for the lady. Arthur already imagined the scene where Marinda, on a clear night, would use her wealth to create her own 'Undead Army' and overwhelm the enemy. `` Perhaps this "Undead Army" was only 25 strong, but in this particular state, they were endless. Arthur called it— "Infinite Under the Moon"! After fiddling with the Bone Dagger for a while, Marinda exhaled a puff of smoke and placed the Bone Dagger into her storage space. Then, she saw Arthur's smiling face. And with the shape of his mouth, he mimed two words: Congratulations. Marinda was taken aback. This lady almost subconsciously recalled the recent scene. Arthur first picked up the Bone Dagger then set it down, seemingly choosing another prop. 'Did he deliberately leave this thing for me?' The lady couldn't help but think. Although instinct told her it was impossible, she had indeed received the dagger. This contradiction made the lady feel somewhat uncomfortable. After hesitating on the spot for several seconds, the lady gestured for Arthur to head towards a corner— "I originally thought this was the laboratory of the 'Red Robe' from the 'Tower of Mist.' This 'Red Robe' invented gunpowder and created the first firearm. And that gun, known as 'The First Gun,' could kill an 'Ascend Steper' with a single shot; it's also the prop I wanted to find. I thought it was here. I didn't expect this place to be the laboratory of that mad Master Alchemist." The awkward feeling in her heart made the lady think she should say more to Arthur. At least, she needed to feel like she didn't owe anything to Arthur. But she no longer had any new boats. As for old boats, she needed those too. So, only information remained. And what could be more appropriate than her original objective in this situation? She believed that this rascal in front of her must have already guessed why she was making such a big fuss about the mad Master Alchemist. So she decided to come clean. After all, some things could certainly be uncovered with enough investigation. It was better to tell him proactively and return the favor. "A prop that can kill an 'Ascend Steper' with one shot? That's terrifying." Arthur exclaimed. But Marinda glared. The lady thought Arthur was being sarcastically odd. However, Arthur's next words startled the lady. "Who says this place is entirely the laboratory of that mad Master Alchemist?" Arthur retorted. The clever Marinda immediately caught on. "Are you saying this place was originally the laboratory of the 'Red Robe,' but it was taken over by that mad Master Alchemist?" "I didn't say that. I just feel the presence of the 'Tower of Mist' here," Arthur replied, shaking his head and speaking in vague terms. His conclusion stemmed from the Bone Dagger. The suspicion in his heart was similar to Marinda's, but as a 'Spirit Medium,' how could he give a definite answer? The answer, of course, was for Marinda to find herself! Of course, he would help. Thinking this, Arthur's gaze turned to the extensive collection of books. In the eyes of the 'Spirit Medium' at that moment, a strange light flickered. Whether there were clues about 'The First Gun,' he didn't know. But he was quite certain that there must be something in there that interested him greatly— For example... Puppet Resurrection! ``

Chapter 459: When You Own Living Things...

This laboratory that belonged to the mad Master Alchemist Geppetto contained one hundred and sixteen books and thirty-three scrolls, as well as five hundred and ninety-two pages of assorted transcriptions. These items were all scattered haphazardly throughout the entire laboratory. Clearly, Master Geppetto had no habit of organizing his collection of books. This gave Arthur and Marinda quite a hard time as they sorted through them. After all, those five hundred and ninety-two transcribed pages were not of uniform size. Some were even just little scraps of paper. However, soon enough, Arthur and Marinda found something. They discovered a diary. No! To be precise, an experimental notebook— Nobles cannot be trusted! They enjoy the successes of my experiments yet report me to the Religious Tribunal for using living people as subjects! Damn it, was it really such a big deal that I transplanted his

son's head onto a pig's body? I think it suited his son perfectly, what with him being as stupid as a pig anyway! Today's experiment was completely meaningless! ... Who would have thought someone in a fishing village like South Los would understand firearms? Interesting, it's much more interesting than today's pointless experiment. ... Aha, look what I've discovered? The laboratory of that 'Red Robe' from the Tower of Mist. Could this be the place where he created 'The First Gun'? Hmm, very good, today's experiment shall be to try transplanting firearms onto a person. ... Damn it! Damn it! Damn it! Why is there a 'Contractual Lock'? Why does the 'Contractual Lock' prevent me from touching the things in the display case! ... Hmph! I'm not coveting your things! I am the genius Alchemist Geppetto! ... Aha, look what I've found again! The items in the display case were gifts from 'Black Robe' to 'Red Robe', thanking him for their brotherly love. Brotherly love? Hmm, today I'll experiment by stitching those two real brothers together from the fishing village, I want to see their brotherly love. ... Confirmed, this place was just a temporary stop for 'Red Robe' before going to sea. There is no 'The First Gun' here, nor anything of real value. But this place can become my laboratory. After those brothers were stitched together, they actually agreed to live as one, the experiment can carry on, I want to make them use a single heart. ... Hmm? The apprentice of 'Black Robe' actually appeared nearby, he even thought I was an apprentice of 'Red Robe'? Damn it, I am the genius Alchemist Geppetto! But, in light of his personal experimental notes, I'll forgive him, hoping his flesh can make that stupid serpent grow a bit, after all, one does not often encounter a member of the original Serpent Sect. Just didn't expect that 'Black Robe' would get mixed up with those lunatics. The physical burden has greatly increased after those stitched-together brothers shared a single heart, they won't last long, tsk. ... 'Black Robe' really is a genius! What flesh! Spirituality is the best experimental material! Excellent! To be able to do this! ... Great breakthrough! My most anticipated experiment has made a major breakthrough! Hey, the younger brother of that pair begged me to kill him so that his older brother could live, as long as his brother survives. Hahahaha, he doesn't know that two days ago, his brother said the same thing. So... I let them die together. Their souls must be very interesting. ... Why did it fail? The chair and desk that had previously housed those brothers' souls came to life, didn't they? Why doesn't metal work? ... Is the emotion not intense enough? Or is it for some other reason? It doesn't matter! There are plenty of materials for experimentation! ... Ouch! It hurts so much! I never thought that cutting my own soul would be this painful! But Pinocchio succeeded! He is perfect. And only the perfect him can become my son. ... Why do my memories feel so disordered? My "Spirituality" has also become chaotic! Pinocchio has become unstable as well! No! I can't let my most perfect experiment be destroyed just like that! Maybe, I should try going back to Seberlin. After all, there are more people there to serve as experimental subjects and materials, and besides, I still have some scores to settle with the nobles there! ... The experimental notes end abruptly here. What to say? After reading it, Arthur felt that Geppetto deserved to be put on the burning stake. The man could no longer be described as merely mad. He was a complete lunatic. As for how a lunatic became a Master Alchemist? Clearly, the man was mad but not stupid. Marinda, who was also puffing on a pipe, frowned as well. Without a doubt, this lady too felt considerable displeasure towards Geppetto. Normal people simply could not agree with Geppetto's method of experimenting on other normal people, let alone the kind of mocking tone that accompanied it. Just like with the brothers mentioned in these notes. What did they do wrong? Nothing. Their biggest mistake was probably running into Geppetto. Simply put... The sorrow of the weak. Arthur and Marinda exchanged a look, both seeing such sentiments in each other's eyes. Then, they put down this notebook and started to continue sifting through the remaining books. Marinda needed to check if there was any information on 'The First Gun.' Arthur's task was much simpler. He wanted to see how talented that 'Black Robe' was.

As for the difficulty of 'soul' techniques? For him, who as Death's Child had instantly mastered the core legacy 'Rite of Souls' of the 'Black Robe' from the Tower of Mist, such difficulty should not amount to much. In fact, that was the case— [Soul Charging: Due to your Talent and Bloodline, the original 'Rite of Souls' evolved and advanced, granting you more methods to deal with souls. You can 'Soul Bind' your enemies' souls, or you can use those souls as material to feed your Specters, Evil Spirits, Fierce Spirits, or Evil Spirits that have advanced through your 'Soul Bind.' Of course, you can also 'Whip Thrash' them, attaching them to certain objects to animate them, giving them 'Soul Properties'] [Soul Tailoring: Souls possess memories from before, but as time passes and they are affected by your 'Death Qi,' the memories become disordered and fade. At this point, you can easily tailor their memories and learn everything you want to know] (Note 1: When attaching souls to objects, choosing wooden items will have a significantly higher success rate, but when attaching to metal items, the success rate drops considerably) (Note 2: After successful attachment, the attached souls still maintain reverence towards you) (Note 3: If the attached object breaks, the soul dissipates irreversibly) (Note 4: The attached object cannot be a living being) (Note 5: Memories excised by tailoring will still be disordered and lost) (Note 6: After having their memories tailored, a soul cannot advance to become a Specter, Evil Spirit, Fierce Spirit, or Evil Spirit) (Note 7: After having their memories tailored, souls can also be attached to objects, but without any memories, and regardless of what object they are attached to, the success rate is significantly lower) ... 'Why do I feel like I'm becoming more and more evil?' Arthur looked at the new traits [Soul Charging] and [Soul Tailoring] that appeared under 'Rite of Souls.' He was somewhat looking forward to carrying 'alive' swords and firearms. Of course, he was even more looking forward to Ms. Anna's free movement. But that would come later. Right now? Arthur had to prepare to verify the most important gain of his journey. He took a slight breath in his heart, looked towards everyone, and whispered— "At this point, the 'relic' exploration is considered complete, isn't it?"

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Facing Arthur's query, the group led by "Storm Sword" Deljo naturally nodded vigorously. They had already acquired the relevant items, and the accompanying recorder had completed the documentation; this marked the end of the ruin exploration. As for the subsequent disposition of the ruins? It's mostly taken over by the local Nobles. Of course, that's after they are disclosed. More often than not, the cleared-out ruins remain in a state unknown to anyone. Urs and his party turned to look at Marinda and followed suit in nodding when they saw their liege had no objections. With everyone's agreement, the text before Arthur began to flicker— [Ruin exploration, judging...] [You or your contracted have achieved 80% of the exploration in Geppetto's laboratory!] [Judgment for full exploration experience granted!] [You receive XP: 1000] ... 'Enough!' A thrill of joy surged through Arthur's heart. With the 1000 XP from the ruin exploration now in his account, he finally had enough experience points to upgrade his [Swift Bird Swordsmanship] to Lv5. However, it was clearly not the right time to choose an upgrade. He steadied his racing emotions; the young Spirit Medium still maintained a composed demeanor, walking over to Marinda, who was still searching through the books, scrolls, and transcribed pages— "Don't forget the time," Arthur reminded her. After all, they were not free to do as they pleased at this moment. There were still hundreds of people inside Caesar Manor. Although they had escaped the opening dance under the guise of 'pregnancy,' it would be best to make a brief appearance during the event if possible. Marinda, of course, understood this rationale. She placed the unlit pipe in her mouth and pointed at the books, scrolls, and transcribed pages next to her with a raised hand. "I'll take these with me. After transcribing them all, I'll give you the originals— I'll draft a new contract for these," she

said. To this, Arthur merely shrugged. He trusted that Marinda wouldn't be sneaky in this matter. Of course, he was more acutely aware of Marinda's valuation of "The First Gun." 'Can it really kill an Entrant with one shot?' he wondered silently, just as Marinda had packed all the books, scrolls, and transcribed pages into her 'smoke ring.' Afterward, the lady proceeded to the tables and chairs of the laboratory. It was quite clear that the lady remembered the notes about those brothers penned by Geppetto. Unfortunately, it wasn't this set of table and chairs. Arthur watched as Marinda tried unsuccessfully and then let out a resigned sigh. Without a doubt, a pair of living tables and chairs were enticing. Not just out of curiosity, but also for their research value. Arthur, on the other hand, approached [Nidhogg]. The young Spirit Medium reached out to touch near the nostrils of the large black serpent, harboring the idea that with [Nidhogg], stillness was preferable to movement for the time being. [Nidhogg] was simply too large. Appearing anywhere would be extremely conspicuous. Unless it was... A deserted island! And, conveniently enough, Arthur was quite interested in some pirates' treasures hidden on deserted islands. However, it wasn't yet time to act. Because of Bloody John! He was very interested in the secrets concerning the Pirate King's treasure that the man carried. He was worried about startling the snake in the grass! Although their encounters had not been formal, the brief glimpse was enough for Arthur to understand his elusive nature, much like that of an old eel with teeth. And true to nature, at the slightest hint of trouble, the man would surely retreat to the depths of the sea. By then, finding him would indeed be like looking for a needle in a haystack. In addition to that, Bloody John had ties with Glast of the "Pale Hand." Compared to Bloody John, Glast was of more concern to Arthur. Because—The man lurked in the shadows! Arthur was a man accustomed to lingering in the shadows, and he was all too aware of how deadly a dagger from the darkness could be. So, he hoped to drag the other party out into the light. And for that, "Bloody John" was needed! Luckily, he had already cast out the "bait"! And the other party? It seemed they were about to bite! ... Whoo! After the water in the pot came to a boil, it let out a unique humming sound. Eli quickly picked up the teapot and brought the hot water to the room. Then, following the doctor's orders, he kept handing over gauze, fishing line, catgut line, and alcohol. "Your friend is lucky; he was a hair's breadth from death. He needs to rest in bed for the next few days. His wounds must not get wet." The doctor, who had just finished the surgery, instructed gently as he washed his hands. "Mhm, mhm, Doctor Lindster, your medical skills are as superb as ever. My friend is so fortunate to have encountered such an outstanding doctor like you. Otherwise, he would have been a goner for sure." Eli, a stalker who dabbled in trading intelligence, said with a face full of flattery. Doctor Lindster, who was washing his hands, stiffened for a moment. Although he soon recovered, Eli saw it clear as day. Immediately, the stalker turned intelligence trafficker sighed. Of course, he knew why. This Doctor Lindster had quite a reputation in Dort District, not just for his exceptional medical skills but also for his charitable nature. He and some hopeless cases had received help from Doctor Lindster more than once. But in these troubled times, good people don't always receive their due rewards, and someone as kind as Mrs. Lindster ended up having an accident. If it were any other time, Eli, with his emotional intelligence, would have been very cautious about discussing life and death in front of Doctor Lindster. Maybe he had spent too much time with the Bandage Swordsman recently. It made the usually careful Eli grow detached from the reality of life and death. 'It's not like the boss hasn't returned from the dead before. Um... If the boss can resurrect, then perhaps Mrs. Lindster can too?' Eli thought to himself. For the stalker turned intelligence trafficker, he would be very willing to help Doctor Lindster. If he could resurrect Mrs. Lindster, he would be even more willing. But the price to be paid left him hesitant. Resurrection, just the sound of it, implied that the cost would be enormous. 'No! I can't be the only one, Those guys need to chip in as well. If we all share the burden... It should be

quite minor, right? I won't die outright; I swap an arm for an arm, the others contribute some arms, legs, that should suffice, shouldn't it?' The stalker turned intelligence trafficker thought to himself. His gaze subconsciously drifted towards the direction of the cabinet—after carrying Walsh back to South Los and confirming that he required real treatment instead of just applying some herbs, he took the initiative to seek a trustworthy doctor, which was Doctor Lindster. However, before Doctor Lindster entered the room, the "Bandage Swordsman" had gone into the wardrobe. To this, Eli expressed understanding. After all, his boss's aura of dignity was indeed frightening. In fact, Eli was certain his boss was aware of this as well. Therefore, aside from when it was essential to act, his boss spent most of his time inside a wardrobe. 'Should I ask the boss?' Eli thought to himself, and as Doctor Lindster finished washing his hands, the doctor sat down on the bench opposite to Eli and, after a bit of hesitation, directly asked. "Eli, do you know about 'Spirit Medium' Kledos?" Clang! The stalker turned intelligence trafficker leaped to his feet, exclaiming in his mouth— "Are you talking about the one born under a shroud of secrecy, the Child of Misfortune favored by the Grim Reaper, the present-day 'Black Cat,' the Champion of the South Los Swordsmanship Competition, 'Spirit Medium' Kledos?"