

Great Master 471

Chapter 471: Arthur, Number One in South Los Swordsmanship!

Lady Glast was dumbfounded by a single phrase from Arthur.

In fact, not only Lady Glast but also Marinda and the Female Swordmaster stood frozen in their tracks.

Because when Marinda and the Female Swordmaster heard that phrase, they always felt an indescribable sense of mockery and ridicule permeating it.

And Lady Glast?

There was, in addition to mockery and ridicule, a sense of provocation.

Indeed!

Provocation!

A simple "You're quite saucy," once reaching this lady's ears, transformed into—

'You think by mimicking the mysterious ways of the woman I love, you can compare yourself to my beloved? Don't delude yourself; you're just an ordinary, ugly woman! Stop joking around in front of me, you're not even fit to carry her shoes, you're not a patch on her!'

These string of words slightly altered the lady's expression.

Arthur caught this subtle change.

Eagle Eye and Insight swiftly flickered into action.

Then—

"Do you think by mimicking Marinda's mysterious demeanor, I would be subconsciously attracted to you?"

You're mistaken!

Marinda is Marinda, she's unique!

Comparing yourself to her is utterly delusional and only makes me feel disgusted!

Similarly, you think by attracting my attention, you can arouse Marinda's competitive spirit and arrange a direct confrontation between you and her.

Then, you plan to exploit her vulnerability of being pregnant to defeat her and thus escape from here?

You're wrong again!

Marinda's trust in me surpasses your imagination!

She would never fall for such a trick.

As for why she cooperated with you?

That's your third mistake—

Did you not realize that instead, you fell into Marinda's trap?

Full of confidence, thinking you controlled everything, you never considered your own defeat, and with Marinda's cooperation, you finally emerged between us three from West Mok Avenue.

This place is the perfect spot for an ambush!"

Arthur declared loudly.

While speaking, the young 'Spirit Medium' cast an admiring glance at the 'Lady of the Eternal Night,' seemingly genuinely impressed by Marinda's intelligence and adaptability.

Marinda immediately responded with a 'you truly understand me' look.

Though she was inexplicably angry just moments ago, under Arthur's explanation, she wasn't angry at all; she was just luring the enemy deeper.

Yes, that's right.

Marinda thought to herself, her expression becoming ever more natural.

The Female Swordmaster, on the other hand, looked as if she suddenly understood.

"So that's what it was!

The understanding between you two, Arthur and Marinda, really embarrasses me.

I hadn't noticed any of this just now."

The Female Swordmaster's exclamation made Lady Glast feel even more dejected.

The lady looked at Arthur and asked softly.

"Am I not good enough?

Am I not beautiful enough?

Is my bloodline not excellent enough?

If I were carrying your child and gave birth to him, he would inherit both our looks and surely become a striking beauty once in a century, and his talents could even make him the King of South County!

I've already arranged everything!

Now, I just need your consent!"

The lady said, her emotions becoming somewhat agitated.

She raised her hand, pointing at herself and then at Marinda, continuing.

"Don't worry!

I can 'Distort' the fact that she is pregnant, making her child in her belly mine, Arthur you don't need to worry about the child's safety.

I have already prepared the 'Sacrifice.'

They will make our 'child' safe.

Like you, he will remain concealed among people until he truly needs to burst forth, then he will shine brilliantly."

Lady Glast said, her face distorted with excitement, her body trembling slightly.

The lady said this and stepped toward Arthur.

However, Arthur moved his feet slightly to the side and stood beside Marinda.

"Do you still not understand?"

Arthur asked softly after a sigh.

"Understand what?"

Lady Glast responded.

"You value my talents, bloodline, and strength, and you're even willing to bear my child because I'm excellent, and this child will be too.

But when Marinda first met me, I was...

I had nothing!"

Arthur said, turning his head to look at Marinda beside him.

The lady, as if telepathic, also turned to look at Arthur.

After sharing a smile, Marinda picked up an unlit pipe, her gaze at Lady Glast filled with undisguised disgust.

"Who do you think you are?"

How dare you arrange my child's life?

Even I don't have the right to restrain or arrange him—he will only grow under the protection of me and Arthur and then choose what he likes to do.

He could be a doctor, or a lawyer, or even become a Relic Explorer.

Or he might choose to be an explorer of the seas.

"We won't bind him, as parents, we will only lend our shoulders to him, let him see further, walk further," Marinda scolded.

Watching Lady Glast's face darken, Arthur almost wanted to applaud at her side.

She truly was the partner he valued; even if her words were filled with some 'unreasonableness,' the situation at hand was just right.

And Marinda's words continued—

"You think that by suddenly appearing, you will gain everything because you used your 'Distortion' to change it all.

The real you?

You have nothing at all!

You are but a scum, hidden in the shadows, who, upon seeing the beloved object of others, spares no effort and breaks all recognized boundaries to snatch it away!"

Marinda did not hide her swearing, much like the middle finger she raised.

And Lady Glast's face became increasingly embarrassed.

Because Marinda had hit the nail on the head.

In Lady Glast's original plan, there had been no place for Arthur, but as Arthur gradually displayed his extraordinary talents, she had some ideas, especially when Horton, the person she favored, had fallen powerless before Arthur; she had slightly altered her plans.

But she had never expected this change to make her so embarrassed.

She had not been so embarrassed in over a hundred years.

It wasn't just Arthur's disregard for her, but also Marinda exposing the deepest desires of her heart.

Her greatest pleasure was 'snatching.'

She loved this feeling.

Snatching everything precious to others, destroying everything cherished by others.

In the end, causing their death.

And her?

She would properly handle their funeral.

This feeling was too wonderful, each time, advancing her 'Ritual' further.

Each time, the thrill of increasing her strength, kept her addicted.

However, this failure made Lady Glast somewhat sober.

But only somewhat.

The next moment—

Lady Glast shook her sleeves.

An ancient parchment fell to the ground, spreading out and shining brightly.

"This is the Empire's Duel Contract, under the witness of this contract, I will have a fair duel in swordsmanship with Arthur Kredos.

No Bloodline, no secret techniques, props, and certainly no support!

All there will be is pure swordsmanship!"

As she spoke, a 'door' of illusion appeared behind Lady Glast.

She looked towards Arthur, smiling lightly.

"What do you say?"

Champion of South Los, do you dare to have a fair duel in swordsmanship with me?

If you don't dare, I will just leave—and after I leave, I swear I will use all my power and influence to target your child.

I will make you and that despicable woman watch as your child struggles helplessly, gasping for breath, living a life worse than death."

Lady Glast spoke these extremely malicious words.

Hearing such words, the Female Swordmaster couldn't help but grip her sword hilt tightly.

To the naive Female Swordmaster, the woman in front of her seemed like a lunatic, one who would transform into a 'Bizarre' existence even after death.

But she couldn't draw her sword.

Because of the Empire's Duel Contract.

The contract specified only the other party and Arthur.

This kind of contract surely had a time limit, or it would become invalid if Arthur didn't agree.

"Arthur, don't agree to this lunatic!

I will ask Lord Count to take action later!

As long as she is still in South Los, we can surely defeat her!" the Female Swordmaster turned her head and urged Arthur.

In the eyes of the Female Swordmaster, the crazy woman using this contract to 'restrict' swordsmanship must be extremely skilled in it.

Of course, Arthur's swordsmanship was also extremely skilled.

But comparing it with the unknown adversary was disconcerting.

However, what surprised the Female Swordmaster was that there was a strange look in Arthur's expression, and he directly nodded in agreement—

"Alright!"

After speaking, he stepped into the range of the contract.

His manner appeared eager, as if afraid that Lady Glast would change her mind.

The Female Swordmaster scratched her head again.

Although she was typically two and a half meters tall, she never considered herself a blunt and clumsy person; she thought of herself as cautious and somewhat cunning.

But somehow, after much contact with Arthur and Marinda, she felt herself to be reckless and stupid.

Just like now.

The Female Swordmaster couldn't understand what made Arthur accept the opponent's conditions so calmly.

Subconsciously, the Female Swordmaster looked towards Marinda.

In her heart, Marinda, who was 'closer than gold' to Arthur, must understand why Arthur did it.

But Marinda didn't know either.

She also thought Arthur was too eager.

However, she was sure of one thing, that Arthur, that troublesome fellow, was definitely not reckless.

The lady firmly believed that since Arthur did it, there must be a reason for Arthur.

Therefore, Marinda simply stated—

"Arthur, the number one swordsmanship of South Los!"

Chapter 472: Birds and Snakes, Fathers and Sons!

Arthur had heard the boasts that Marinda had made on his behalf.

But Arthur did not refute them.

Because—

Arthur had thick skin.

Of course, aside from his thick skin, Arthur also had a sliver of confidence.

He had just completed an upgrade upon his return to South Los.

Specifically for [Swift Bird Swordsmanship Lv5]!

The 3000 experience points he had obtained were entirely spent, but the change they brought was immense.

Even Arthur, recalling the scene he 'saw' when he had just upgraded, still felt an internal tremor—

Violent winds ravaged the earth.

The smooth ground was torn into thousands of ravines.

Flowers, plants, trees, along with pebbles were all swept into the sky.

This tempest, it brought despair.

This tempest, it severed all life.

But this tempest was merely the wind brought about by the flapping wings of a passing bird.

It was unconscious.

It had never paid attention to the earth.

It longed only for the sky.

It chased the sun and saw above it a three-legged creature of its kind.

It frolicked with the moon and saw a woman hugging the moon to sleep.

It soared through the starry sky, and it saw the uniqueness atop each star; a monster with a pig's head and a human body using countless stars as a bed, snoring loudly and mumbling in a dream, 'Cilan, Cilan.'

Some called stars their offspring, remorselessly playing chess but deeply grieved, continuously muttering, 'Oh vast heavens, why have you wronged me!'

Others feasted on stars, devouring heartily, incessantly mumbling, 'Delicious, this one is tasty, that one is also tasty!'

Yet others, like it, with sword shadows like lotuses, roamed among the stars, singing boldly and loudly proclaiming, 'The light boat has passed through thousands of mountains!'

It saw so much, so very much.

Sometime along the way, it felt lonely.

It hoped to find its own kind.

But it could not find its kin.

It wanted to find its kin.

Not the three-legged kind, but those identical to itself.

But there were none.

It had gone to many, many places.

And yet, it never found any of its kind, exactly like itself.

Until one day, it found an egg in the darkness.

Instinctively, it sheltered the egg under its body.

It did not know how to incubate an egg, but it had seen birds of a similar kind incubating eggs.

It learned to incubate the egg.

Time passed until the egg cracked open.

Inside was...

A serpent!

Golden eyes, confused, unknowing.

Black scales, hard, sharp.

A body that grew with the wind, just a day passed and it grew to 16,000 kilometers, another day passed, and the serpent grew to 125,765 kilometers.

It was thrilled, for its 'offspring' had finally grown fluffy down as fine as that on one of its feathers.

It traveled with its 'offspring' in the boundless stream of time.

Its 'offspring' was also growing rapidly.

When its 'offspring' had grown as long as one of its feathers, its 'offspring' wanted to venture into the world alone.

It thought its 'offspring' was still weak.

But, perhaps due to a rebellious phase, the obedient 'offspring' not only disregarded its advice but also ran away secretly.

It searched, but could not find.

Because its 'offspring' knew it all too well.

So, it plucked a feather and allowed it to transform into two trillion avatars to search for its 'offspring.'

It called these two trillion avatars 'Swift Birds.'

It hoped the 'Swift Birds' would bring good news.

And it chose to wait in a moment in time, the moment it landed, it heard a series of exclamations—

'Destiny Profound Bird!'

'Destiny Profound Bird!'

...

Those 'Swift Birds' are so annoying!

Father always lets these 'Swift Birds' disturb me!

I won't go back!

I want to, like my father, traverse the long river of time, trace back to the end of time!

After the Golden-eyed Black Snake devoured a 'Swift Bird,' a look of helplessness flashed in its eyes before it turned around and swam towards the end of that long river.

It wanted to figure out what exactly was there!

It didn't care about the blood left behind.

That was the blood shed when it devoured the 'Swift Bird,' both its own and that of the 'Swift Bird.'

Although it was only one of Father's two trillion incarnations, it was really strong, and the eight-year-old snake had to be somewhat serious to consume one.

The Golden-eyed Black Snake was gone.

But a small, unremarkable gray snake appeared here.

Its whole body hurt.

It didn't know why it was here.

It only remembered being pulled out of the river by a very kind old lady, and then it found itself here.

Memories from before?

Gone.

But it was so hungry!

It licked the drop of fresh blood.

It hoped to feel full.

Really full!

A bit sleepy!

Maybe sleep a bit!

Oblivious to its surroundings, the little gray snake succumbed to its instincts and fell into a deep sleep, its body began to grow rapidly, especially as fine fuzz started to emerge between its scales. Once that fuzz took shape, a pair of wings appeared on its body.

It was completely unaware of this.

It, so sleepy.

Unable to help himself, Arthur yawned widely.

Rubbing the tears from the corners of his eyes, the text before him blurred for a moment before becoming clear—

[Swift Bird Swordsmanship Lv5: The essence of swordsmanship lies in imitation. An ancestor of the nobles in South County, during the Empire Era, had once seen the divine 'Swift Bird.' Upon witnessing the 'Swift Bird' fly effortlessly through shadows, he was deeply shocked and marvelled at the impossibility, then began to emulate the 'Swift Bird's' movements to create the rudimentary form of this swordsmanship.

As time went by, this swordsmanship continued to be refined, but it was universally acknowledged that one would never reach the highest level. Even among millions of geniuses, none could take the final step, but everyone recognized its helpfulness to the bloodline. Therefore, the nobles of South County spared no effort to use the original sword techniques as a foundation to create a more suitable 'Swift Bird Swordsmanship.'

However, they underestimated the tenacity and awakening of their descendants. Most people, after starting, finding it useless, chose to give up—compared to endless hours of practicing swordsmanship, indulging in pleasure suited them better.

Time has already covered everything.

But you are not among them. With your diligence and hard work, you've brought it to a very high level, and your bloodline has started to bring out its unique effects]

[Effects: 1, Extreme Speed; 2, Quick Strike; 3, Blood Enhancement; 4, Bird-Snake Sword Intent]

[Extreme Speed: When you use the Swift Bird Sword Posture, your sword strike speed will be +5 on top of your inherent physique]

[Quick Strike: When you use the Swift Bird Sword Posture, your next sword strike's speed will be increased by +2.0, up to 3 consecutive times]

[Blood Enhancement: The power within your bloodline is being slowly awakened, it will become purer over time. This is a lengthy process, but you, who pursue the 'Swordsmanship Truth,' have accelerated this speed. However, during this period, your appetite will increase significantly, and your sleep quality will be enviable]

[Bird-Snake Sword Intent: 'Swift Bird' sword intent speeds you up while 'Dark Serpent' sword intent makes your attacks unpredictable. When you display sword intent, a corresponding physical reference will automatically appear behind you, adding +1 to your Intimidation Level. When you wield both sword intents at the same time, your physical strength will be greatly exhausted, but you will gain a +3 Intimidation Level and a faster, more bizarre method of attack]

...

[Physique, Spirituality +1.5 (0.3X5)]

...

(Note: You have reached the limit of this skill)

'Limit?'

How could Arthur, having seen the 'Mysterious Bird' and the 'Golden-eyed Black Snake,' ever believe in this so-called limit?

Without a doubt, this limit was merely his current stage limit.

Just that he...

Wasn't qualified yet.

Afterwards?

He would gradually make himself qualified.

And now?

Arthur looked towards Glast.

Arthur always maintained his confidence, not merely from the Lv5 'Swift Bird Swordsmanship.'

There was another more important factor—

'Death Intuition'!

Chapter 473: The Bird Spreads Its Wings in the North Wind!

After Glast appeared, Arthur's "Death Intuition" kept flashing.

The speed wasn't fast.

But it was continuous.

This flashing reminded Arthur that the woman in front of him was far more dangerous than he had imagined.

For someone who always hides in the background, you never know what kind of ace they might have up their sleeve, or rather, how many aces they might create for themselves for the sake of safety.

Regarding such people, Arthur was all too familiar.

Because—

he was that kind of person himself.

So, when this lady proposed a duel under the witness of an "Imperial Pact," Arthur knew that she knew more about him than he had thought.

Otherwise, she would never have proposed such a duel.

She must have glimpsed the "truth" about his swordsmanship.

Was it that insane beggar?

Or some unconscious gestures during the Swordsmanship Competition?

Arthur couldn't be sure.

However, there was one thing Arthur was quite certain of.

The world was big enough for one person like him.

Any more?

That would be impolite.

And it would make living too tiresome for him.

Thus, Glast had to die.

Because he wasn't ready to die yet.

Watching Arthur yawn and rub the tears from the corner of his eyes, Glast standing opposite him couldn't help but show an interested glint in her eyes.

"Is it the influence of bloodline?

Or the influence of some secret technique?

The 'Imperial Pact' really isn't about isolating or purging oneself from bloodline or secret techniques!

Alas."

Having said this, the lady sighed.

Then, without waiting for Arthur to speak, the lady continued,

"Although I had guessed it before, I'm still somewhat disappointed to see the results—Arthur, do you know?

This 'Imperial Pact' cost me a great deal of money to obtain.

I was always looking forward to what occasion it would turn up in.

I never expected it to be now."

Yet again, the lady looked at Arthur.

Her light green eyes showed a burning intensity.

The lady's words continued,

"Of course, that's not a bad thing, it's just a prop, and it was used at the right time.

I think it appearing in our first encounter is not bad at all.

What do you think, Arthur?"

"Hmm."

What could Arthur say facing such a crazed woman?

The young, kind, upright, and innocent 'Spirit Medium' could only nod his head.

However, the lady opposite misunderstood Arthur's gesture.

Or perhaps...

She had always been immersed in her own world.

The lady held her hands to her chest, looking at Arthur expectantly,

"Then, can you accept my proposal?

If you cannot accept 'Distortion's' child,

I can also bear one for you."

As she spoke, her face blushed,

Her bashful demeanor added a layer of allure, but Arthur remained unmoved because he knew full well not to trust a single punctuation mark in a crazed woman's words.

Yet, Arthur spoke up,

"You are so fixated on a child, yet you don't love this child.

You merely see him as a tool.

You need a tool that is bound by the name 'mother,' obedient and powerful.

Given how carefully you hide in the background, you must have gotten into some trouble, right?

Did you steal the 'Pale Hand's' secret technique?

Or the 'Theofact Psychic Cultivation Association's' secret technique?

Or maybe both were stolen by you?

Of course, with your looks, it wouldn't be difficult to steal these secret techniques, you might even steal more.

But...

You've made a mess of things."

Arthur's words were still laced with a hint of tact.

But the opposite Glast couldn't take it anymore.

Because it struck a nerve.

Initially, and for quite a long time after that, Glast relied on her beauty to gain advantages, just as Arthur had said.

For Glast, not using such beauty would have been a waste of heaven's gifts.

However, as her power increased, Glast's mindset changed.

She became 'proud of her honor'!

And she would not allow others to mention her past.

For this reason, she even changed her name.

In the entire South County, few people knew her true past, only that she was Glast of the 'Pale Hand.'

More than that?

It was concealed by her.

This lady thought she was doing well, but she didn't expect to be directly exposed by Arthur.

Immediately, the lady narrowed her eyes.

A hint of danger appeared in her pale green eyes.

"Arthur, even if it's you, you've said things that shouldn't be said.

I've decided to starve you for seven days and nights before soaking you in my dung pit.

I want you to taste my flavor," she said.

As she spoke, the lady even stuck out her tongue and licked her lips.

Disgust rose from the depths of Arthur's heart.

"Your taste is truly repulsive to me, but your living condition is really poor—the dung pit is only found in the latrines of commoners.

I thought at least you would pretend to be middle-class.

Let me guess, your current identity isn't that of a prostitute from Old Town, is it?"

You disgust me, so I'll disgust you.

With such a simple thought, Arthur's words were merciless.

However, Glast across him clearly misunderstood.

"Trying to anger me?

I admit, Arthur, you almost succeeded just now.

But only almost.

Now, I have calmed down—I've shown you too much favor, letting you become arrogant. Now, I will take back that favor,"

she said, her flirtatious demeanor fading away.

All that remained was a chilling coldness.

And her voice was like a bone-chilling wind.

"Arthur, your extraordinary talent and your astonishing bloodline, when combined, have made you an object of admiration.

But you've also developed a flaw common to all geniuses.

You are arrogant!

Your pride is etched into your very bones!

You think your talent and bloodline are invincible.

You believe the secret techniques of the Kledos family are unbeatable.

Thus, you merely glance over other secret techniques and swordsmanship.

Even now, you fail to grasp the seriousness of the situation,"

she said and flung a longsword from her sleeve.

This longsword was a rapier with an intricate guard and a slender blade, embodying the rich style of North County's Swift Sword.

"Regarding the Griffin Knight Order of North County, you must have heard of them, but Arthur, have you heard of the 'North Wind Swordsmen'?"

Feel the harshness of the north wind!"

The lady's words had barely left her mouth when Marinda, the Female Swordmaster's face drastically changed.

The North Wind Swordsmen, a noble military group active at the end of the Holy Era in North County.

Each one was a warrior selected from thousands, and each possessed 'Talent.'

Every member of the 'North Wind Swordsmen' could take on a hundred foes.

Thus, although they numbered only thirty, they were considered the strongest at the time.

Until the 'black' plague broke out.

The 'North Wind Swordsmen' suffered heavy casualties.

The survivors were nearly wiped out in a clash with The Holy Court's elite 'Combat Nun Squadron.'

It was rumored that the 'North Wind Swordsmen' left a reserve force that carried on the 'North Wind Sword Technique,' 'Polar Ritual,' and 'Aurora Arcanum.'

But it was all rumors.

Following the demise of the 'North Wind Swordsmen,' no one had seen these reserves.

However, no one could deny the strength of the 'North Wind Swordsmen.'

Glast's mastering of the 'North Wind Sword Technique,' unknown to Marinda, the Female Swordmaster, tilted the scales of the duel immensely.

"Arthur, be careful!"

The Female Swordmaster couldn't help but shout.

Marinda didn't speak, but her knuckles, clutching her pipe, had started to turn white.

Only Arthur remained indifferent.

The young 'Spirit Medium,' feeling the cold wind hit his face, merely asked softly—

"Have you heard the cry of a bird?"

Chapter 474: A Talent So Exceptional It's Called... a Monster!

Lady Glast laughed.

This lady had heard the chirping of birds.

Some chirped in the courtyard, some amid the woods, some by the riverbank, and others on... the battlefield!

Yes!

The battlefield!

In that world-altering 'Seven Years' War,' this lady had heard, more than once, the unique chirping native to South County on the battleground.

Those swordsmen of extraordinary talent relied on a simplified 'Swift Bird Sword Technique' and unleashed their ultimate performances time and again in the heat of battle.

Their swords struck like lightning, their blades quivering like birds.

Each time, they brought unprecedented brilliance.

Each time, they earned themselves unparalleled honors.

Even at the cost of their lives!

These South County swordsmen never retreated.

And this lady had heard such jovial chirps more than once, sometimes as an ally, sometimes as a foe, but regardless of which side, she couldn't help but express her admiration.

This lady admired those swordsmen who fought for honor.

Because—

She did too.

She, too, fought for honor.

At least, in her eyes, she held a certain honor of her own.

So, when Arthur 'exposed' her honor in an instant, the murderous intent that surged from the depths of her heart quickly infused into her 'North Wind Sword Technique.'

Whoosh!

The north wind blew, and snowflakes fluttered.

With the lady as the epicenter, the atmosphere within a dozen meters drastically changed.

Lady Glast's eyes fixed on Arthur, and upon seeing the young 'Spirit Medium' still unmoved, this woman couldn't help but sigh in admiration once again—

"Arthur, truly it is indeed you!

Even now, in such circumstances, you still maintain your composure.

You know some swordsmanship, but only just that. After all, Ferran himself is quite mad; how could he possibly teach you the true essence?

Your initial sword art mastery must have been deduced from marks on a door frame, right?"

As she spoke, the lady glanced towards the door frame of No. 2 Cork Street.

At this moment, the admiration in the lady's eyes grew even richer.

"I must say, Arthur, your talent is really astounding. The mere residual, ordinary marks of a sword allowed you to learn a simplified version of 'Swift Bird Swordsmanship.'

Even if you haven't grasped the essence of the simplified 'Swift Bird Swordsmanship,' it's surprising enough.

This is why I took an interest in you.

Initially, I considered you merely as a person with talent, but little did I know, it would lead me to unearth your true extraordinariness and the Kledos Family!"

Lady Glast said this with a confident expression on her face.

It seemed, everything was under control.

But Arthur remained indifferent.

Arthur knew that the other party was merely trying to pressure him with words.

Still, some information was worth noting.

'That beggar's name is Ferran, huh?'

Upon hearing the beggar's name for the first time, Arthur silently noted it down.

As he watched Arthur's silent demeanor, standing amid the north wind and snow, Lady Glast extended her left hand, palm down, and said softly—

"I'm willing to give you another chance.

Kiss the back of my hand and become my husband.

Become the father of my child."

Upon hearing this, Arthur finally reacted and shook his head, saying.

"Please do not mention the titles of husband, child, or father so casually, especially when such words come from your lips, I always feel it's a desecration."

"Ha!

You have refused my kindness once again.

Then repent in the north wind!

No bird can fly against the north wind!

In the north wind, birds only hush as if stricken and stay silent!

And you?

You will eventually become a plaything for me!"

With a cold laugh, Lady Glast withdrew her left hand while her right hand's Swift Sword stabbed straight forward.

The wind grew fiercer.

The snow grew heavier.

The wind enveloped the snow, swelling as if about to submerge the entirety of Cork Street.

Marinda's lips were tightly pressed, and a fleeting look of worry flashed across her deep blue eyes before returning to calmness.

Only a faint trace of smoke remained.

The smoke was faintly present all over Cork Street.

Inconspicuous, yet genuinely existent.

In the north wind, it was neither dispersed nor overwhelmed.

It merely hid in the shadows, preparing to deliver that fatal blow.

The Female Swordsmanship Chief gripped her sword hilt tightly, her eyes ferociously fixed on Lady Glast—she had already decided that as soon as Arthur was defeated, she would go up and chop down this woman with one sword strike.

But neither Marinda's smoke nor the Female Swordsmanship Chief's Plank Sword had the chance to be used.

Even the roaring wind and snow were suddenly sucked back the next moment.

Because...

Bird!

A gigantic white bird, large enough to envelop the entire street, appeared behind Arthur, flapping its wings in sync with his will.

Whoo!

A fierce wind abruptly arose.

Gale force winds reversed the incoming north wind and snowflakes, rolling them back!

This scene astonished both Marinda and the Female Swordsmanship Chief.

But what truly shocked them was the unique aura they felt from that ethereal figure!

It was the kind of presence only those at the 'Entry' level possessed!

Had Arthur reached the 'Entry' level just by relying on his swordsmanship?

Both were filled with doubts in their minds.

And Lady Glast shouted in disbelief—

"Impossible!

How can this be!

It's not possible to attain the 'Entry' level with just 'swordsmanship'; you only understood a simplified version of the 'Swift Bird Swordsmanship'!"

Arthur, however, looked calmly at the incredulous opponent, pity flickering in his eyes.

"Didn't you always say I have extraordinary talent?"

But from the look of things now, you still don't understand my talent well enough.

'Swift Bird Swordsmanship' alone, I learned it after watching it once.

Also—

When the north wind blows, no birds spread their wings, all birds fall silent?

That's just because you've never encountered someone like me."

Caw!

The sword drawn, the giant bird soared with the wind.

Fast!

Fast to the extreme!

It was as quick as teleportation!

The white giant bird, with Arthur in tow, appeared behind Lady Glast.

This lady's face was stiff, staring blankly ahead, her eyes filled with dullness and vacancy, yet her voice remained clear.

"Swift Bird Sword Intent?!"

'Entry' level Swift Bird Sword Intent?!"

You just watched it once, not only mastering the original 'Swift Bird Swordsmanship' but also elevating it by a level?"

The lady questioned.

She knew the 'Swift Bird Swordsmanship' too well, even if practiced to perfection, it was only at the Great Arcana Level.

It was impossible for the sword intent of the White Bird to display such prowess.

But the White Bird shadow behind Arthur was full of oppressive force.

There was only one answer left: After watching the 'Swift Bird Swordsmanship' once, Arthur had integrated and innovated it.

What an extraordinary talent!

Jealousy surged in Lady Glast's eyes.

She couldn't stand it!

Why did she have to encounter such a monster!

Monster?

In an instant, the lady thought of something, murmuring involuntarily—

"The Eternal Monster, heir to the Rebellious Bloodline, creator of the Twilight of the Gods, revered by the Northern Gods, ruler of the Blade of Chaos, possessor of Leviathan's Axe, Kledos...

Is this what a monster is?"

Facing Lady Glast's inquiry, Arthur turned and walked away.

As they brushed past each other, Arthur whispered—

"You did well, I almost broke a sweat."

Lady Glast was startled, seemingly reminded of something again, fear rose in her eyes, but there was no time left.

The next moment—

Thud!

Lady Glast was split in half, her body falling to the ground.

Chapter 475: Double Act!

The sound of the body hitting the ground was still echoing through Cork Street when text prompts appeared before Arthur's eyes—

[Slain 'Glast', XP+1000]

...

'He's really dead?!'

Arthur was taken aback and, involuntarily, his gaze once again fell upon Glast's corpse.

In Arthur's heart, he was sure that a behind-the-scenes pervert like this would have endless contingencies—that even in death, it was no more than a temporary retreat.

That they would inevitably return with a vengeance seemed the natural course of things.

Indeed, the reason he had been talking so much nonsense with Glast just now was to make preparations.

Using Fujin and Wuni as his eyes.

Using Kuliqi and Kiri as his nose.

With the assistance of hundreds of nearby rats.

Arthur had made all the arrangements to track his opponent.

And also, he had mentally prepared himself for the possibility of a failed pursuit.

Who would have thought the opponent would actually die.

Such a death was certainly a pleasant surprise, but even more so, it made Arthur vigilant, using Glast's death as a reminder not to be careless in the future.

'You thought you knew everything about me and thus came out to strike directly, but as a result, you've gambled your own life away.

Glast, you are the truly arrogant one!

Your surveillance of me wasn't thorough, but you thought your strength could cover for everything.

And your guesses about me?

They were nothing but the greed that arose in your heart, completely clouding your judgment.

You deserved to die.'

Arthur mused to himself, and before the Female Swordmaster arrived, the roots of the "Death Serpent Banyan" had already dragged Glast's body underground.

Glast was dead.

But Glast's corpse was still useful.

Simply put—

Death was just the beginning!

The corpse after death, belonged to Arthur.

The soul after death, belonged to Arthur.

The spoils of war after death, still belonged to Arthur.

Was suffering just beginning?

No, no, no!

Being the young, upright, simple, and kind 'Spirit Medium' that he was, Arthur wouldn't let Glast endure too much pain. After getting everything he wanted, he would edit the soul, making it forget unnecessary memories and, if possible, even give it a chance to start over.

'Ah, kind as I am, it's always difficult to live in this world.'

Arthur sighed to himself.

Afterward, the young 'Spirit Medium' looked back at the previous text—

[Slain Mystic Side Person, XP+100]

[Slain Mystic Side Person, XP+100]

[Slain Mystic Side Person, XP+200]

...

The first two messages appeared after the Vest "Bandage Swordsman" and the Pseudo "General Puppet" disguised as 'Horton' had slain two individuals who looked like middle-aged twins.

The third message had appeared after Arthur himself killed the guy who had been impersonating him.

'Indeed, it's a gold belt for murder and arson!'

Looking at the XP that rapidly accumulated to 1400, Arthur couldn't help but think.

Compared to the gains of meticulously laid plans, such direct and clean results were truly intoxicating.

Even Arthur had some thoughts about it.

However, Arthur was even clearer on the troubles of dealing with the aftermath.

In densely populated cities, there are far too many eyes!

And, the act of killing innocents indiscriminately was something he could never do.

Unless...

The circumstances were special!

For instance: pirates!

Or for example: islands teeming with pirates!

'Horton,' huh?

Arthur thought of 'Horton', who had already gone out to sea with 'Bloody John'.

The islands overseas couldn't be considered dense cities, could they?

Killing pirates carried no burden on one's conscience.

If an entire island were pirates, that would be perfect.

He had to let 'Horton' have a big kill.

No one was more suitable than 'Horton', the strength of the General Puppet and Horton's own experiences made for perfect excuses.

As for why Horton suddenly changed his hidden style and became irritable and crazed?

It was naturally because he had been repressed for too long while in hiding, and now he was in an expansion period after gaining strength.

Everything made perfect sense.

It was just like how the Vest 'Bandage Swordsman' was essentially a secret technique, and the General Puppet was fundamentally a prop. Using a secret technique or prop to kill a Mystic Side Person would, of course, yield XP.

'There's another way to get XP now.'

Arthur thought to himself as he glanced seemingly inadvertently to the side before turning his gaze to the Female Swordmaster.

"Julie, I need your help with something.

Please help me investigate the name 'Glast'."

Arthur spoke directly.

The Female Swordmaster blinked, then quickly understood.

"Is that name a pseudonym?

Yes!

It must be, given this guy's style. If 'Glast' were his real name, it's impossible that we wouldn't have heard it before.

She must have other names.

And certainly other identities!

Leave the investigation to me, Arthur. And the 'Pale Hand' within South Los territory, and the possible existence of 'Theofact Psychic Cultivation Association', I will investigate them all."

The Female Swordmaster, speaking to herself, gave a firm answer to Arthur.

At the same time, the Female Swordmaster's gaze shifted to the still unconscious bodies of Eli, Walsh, and Doctor Lindster on the ground.

Her intention could not have been clearer.

She was asking if Arthur wanted to deal with them together.

Arthur shook his head slightly, without concealment, and gestured quietly towards a shadow to the side before saying in a low voice—

"I owe that person a favor."

"Is that so?"

Then I'll leave it to you to handle, Arthur.

Of course, if you need anything, just let me know. As a friend, I am willing to help you deal with some matters you'd rather not face yourself."

Once again, the Female Swordmaster expressed her goodwill.

To this, Arthur was not surprised.

After all, his Talent was monstrous, his Bloodline was supreme, and now his swordsmanship had reached Entry-level. Such a talent with almost no weaknesses, it would be strange if the Female Swordmaster didn't try to recruit him.

Pity—

'You only see the surface, you never see my efforts!

Everything I have today, I've earned through my own efforts!'

Arthur emphasized in his heart, while outwardly, he nodded calmly.

"Of course, I understand.

Please send my regards to Lord Count.

We'll meet again tomorrow morning... no, this morning at Caesar Manor."

Arthur said with a smile.

The ceremony for Marinda to inherit the title had mostly been completed, with only the 'sending off guests' part left.

Compared to the previous tasks, the final wrap-up was almost insignificant, but as hosts, both he and Marinda still needed to make an appearance.

"Okay, see you this morning!"

The Female Swordmaster grinned, then turned to walk towards Dar Alley behind Cork Street—she planned to take a shortcut back to the Count's Mansion to report everything that had happened to the Lord Count.

And the events that would happen on Cork Street afterwards?

The Female Swordmaster believed Arthur would handle them well.

And she would not get involved anymore.

After all, to speak of 'owing a favor' was enough to suggest that it was a personal matter. Intervening in someone else's private affairs could cause discomfort.

Certainly, curiosity remained in her heart.

Somehow, the Female Swordmaster felt a bit envious of Marinda.

'Arthur is truly unreserved with Marinda.'

With such a sigh, the Female Swordmaster's figure disappeared into the night, and Arthur first signaled Marinda to wait a moment with his eyes before turning his gaze to the side.

The next moment,

The 'Bandage Swordsman' stepped forward, and with just one exposed eye, he stared fiercely at Arthur, practically bellowing—

"Tell me, who am I!"

Chapter 476 Kledos Family Motto: When acting, go all out!

A hoarse growl, like the mournful cry of an injured beast.

Paired with the unique appearance of the "Bandage Swordsman," it adds a bizarre sensation amid the chilling tone that would definitely make ordinary people burst into tears if they saw it.

Even individuals from the Mystic Side would frown upon seeing it.

When Arthur saw it, he would just remark on how good his own "acting" was.

The scene of the "Bandage Swordsman" appearing before his eyes was, of course, arranged by Arthur.

After slaying the middle-aged Mystic Side Person, Arthur manipulated the "Bandage Swordsman" to return to their temporary base, using the corpse of the middle-aged Mystic Side Person as the foundation and the "Pit of Death" hidden within the "bandages" as the base, once again activating the "Corpse Refinement Art" to resurrect the "Bandage Swordsman."

Only then did they come to Cork Street.

Although under Arthur's manipulation the "Bandage Swordsman" was quite covert, it still couldn't escape the notice of a small number of people.

That, of course, was intentional on Arthur's part.

From the moment Arthur had the "Bandage Swordsman" inform Eli to go to No. 2 Cork Street, he was laying out his plan.

The birth of the "Bandage Swordsman" was not a decision Arthur made randomly.

It was well-considered.

Firstly, Arthur needed everyone to speculate about the origins of the "Bandage Swordsman."

Once this speculation took root in the hearts of people, Arthur was ready for the next step.

For example, at this moment—

Arthur looked at the "Bandage Swordsman" with a touch of gentleness in his gaze.

A different kind of gentleness than usual.

His look was also tinged with dense anticipation.

This anticipation, when noticed by Marinda standing nearby, caused a moment of contemplation to flash through the lady's deep blue eyes.

'What is this bastard looking forward to?

No, that's not right!

With his self-control, he's actually letting his emotions show?!

Could it be about his dead parents?'

The lady instinctively thought as she looked at the "Bandage Swordsman".

It's not that she was too easily misled by others.

It was because the scene where Arthur "guided lost souls" and the origins of the "Bandage Swordsman" were deeply etched in people's minds, so much so that many would immediately guess Arthur's initial intent.

And now?

This speculation was merely being confirmed.

Arthur noticed the changes in Marinda's expression.

If Marinda was thinking this, then the rest of the worthless lot were likely thinking the same.

Suddenly, Arthur was certain in his heart.

He didn't shift his gaze from the "Bandage Swordsman," but instead chose to nod slightly and said,

"Fine."

Immediately, the "Bandage Swordsman" was taken aback, surprise filling the eyes visible outside the bandages – clearly, he hadn't expected it to be this easy.

While the "Bandage Swordsman" was still in shock, Arthur continued.

"However, you need to do something for me."

As he spoke, Arthur yawned.

A tired look started to emerge on his face, but the "Bandage Swordsman" paid no mind and let out a hoarse laugh.

"Truly worthy of being the 'Spirit Medium' from South Los!

Don't you believe in fairness?

Also, didn't you say before that you 'owe me a favor'?"

The "Bandage Swordsman" asked.

"Of course I believe in fairness — why else would I know your name?

To achieve that, I can assure you that it was not an easy task, and it is equivalent to the task I am entrusting you with!

As for owing you a favor?

Would saving them count as repaying you a favor?"

Arthur spoke earnestly and then raised his hand to point at Eli, Walsh, and Doctor Lindster lying on the ground.

The "Bandage Swordsman" was stumped once more.

After hesitating for about a few seconds, he nodded his head.

"Agreed!"

The voice of the "Bandage Swordsman" was almost squeezed through clenched teeth.

Everyone can sense the Bandage Swordsman's reluctance and discomfort with not wanting to go against the fact, but it was precisely because of such discomfort that everyone recognized the Bandage

Swordsman as a person worth associating with—at least to some extent, he was truly someone to be trusted.

And this was another point that Arthur wanted.

The Bandage Swordsman, he had a significant role to play.

Naturally, he needed to be active and accepted.

Thus, watching the Bandage Swordsman's uncomfortable expression, Arthur's face took on an additional smile, and his voice became even softer.

"Our meeting was accidental, but I think such an accident isn't too bad, at least you are quite likable at times."

"Hah, detestable Spirit Medium!

Speak, what is it?"

The Bandage Swordsman didn't plan to persist any further.

But Arthur shook his head.

"I can't tell you right now!

Your strength is too weak!

When your strength has advanced further, I will tell you everything—likewise, during this period, if you run into any troubles, you can also come to me.

I'll give you an assistance discount of 20% off!"

Having said this, Arthur turned around, walked over to Marinda, and with the gesture of offering support, he took Marinda back inside No. 2 Cork Street.

Watching the door of No. 2 Cork Street close, the Bandage Swordsman hesitated for a moment.

Clearly, the Bandage Swordsman intended to inquire further.

However, ultimately, the Bandage Swordsman still abandoned such thoughts.

He hoisted Eli onto his back, grabbed Walsh and Doctor Lindster with one hand each, and strode away from Cork Street—Arthur could be certain that Eli, Walsh, and Doctor Lindster were all awake.

But the three of them still maintained the appearance of being unconscious.

Beyond the expected embarrassment, Eli did so out of caution for the stalker, while Walsh did so out of wariness towards powerful figures.

As for Doctor Lindster?

He probably wanted to resurrect his wife.

The thoughts of these three were not complex.

The thoughts of some bystanders, on the other hand, were much more intricate.

Arthur could entirely guess that these individuals wouldn't be able to sleep in the coming days.

But what did it have to do with him?

He hadn't given these individuals a higher difficulty level!

It was just ordinary difficulty, that's all.

'Sigh, if only the timing were more mature, I'd definitely make you go through a 24-episode 'The Devil's Stepmother', a 40-episode 'Where Is My Birth Mother', an 80-episode 'Don't Cry Over Divorce', and a 160-episode 'When Daughters-in-law Endure to Become Mothers-in-law'!

Unfortunately, who would have thought my heart to be so kind!"

Arthur lamented in his heart, his gaze shifting to Marinda, who remained silent.

"What's wrong?"

Arthur asked directly.

"Arthur, just how much are you hiding?"

Marinda countered directly.

"Not much, just a little bit."

Arthur said, and to make his words more persuasive, the young Spirit Medium even raised his right hand and gestured a tiny gap with his thumb and index finger.

Marinda gave a cold snort looking at this tiny gap.

An appearance of a gap it seemed, yet a universe it actually was.

The sense of urgency in the lady's heart only intensified.

'My Ritual has entered the initial stage, but my secret technique, my swordsmanship are still far behind Arthur, not to mention that bastard Arthur's frightening Talent and Bloodline!

I must hasten my pace!'

The sense of urgency that had faded just two days earlier surged back.

However, the lady was not disheartened or fatigued in the least.

Contrarily, she was full of vigor.

She stared at Arthur—

"Come back on your own in the morning!"

After speaking, the lady exhaled a ring of smoke and disappeared.

Arthur immediately let out a wry smile.

But once he confirmed that Marinda had truly left, Arthur immediately withdrew his smile, rose from his chair—

It was time to get down to business!

Chapter 477: Spoils of War!

When Fujin and Wuni were off duty for shift breaks, and Kuliqi and Kiri were separately sprawled in the courtyard and corridor of No. 2 Cork Street, Arthur headed straight for the bedroom on the third sub-level—just now, the "Death Serpent Banyan" had brought in the bodies of the 'Counterfeit' and 'Glast'.

Having grown accustomed to laying out bedding in the 'Spirit Medium Parlor.'

Arthur had simply turned his bedroom on the third sub-level into a laboratory.

Of course, it could also serve as a temporary hideout at certain times.

Like this moment—

Arthur cast "Soul Bind" on the unrecognizably disfigured body of the 'Counterfeit.'

Suddenly, a bluish glow flickered over the corpse.

The soul of the 'Counterfeit' appeared before Arthur.

The soul's form was that of a man in his thirties, with clean features and deep-set eyes, seemingly to facilitate disguise; the man had neither eyebrows, beard, nor hair.

Upon seeing Arthur, the confusion on the man's face vanished.

Leaving only...

Fear!

"You, you, I, I!"

The man could hardly articulate his words.

Clearly, he was utterly terrified by the sight before him.

Arthur, sitting opposite, remained calm.

"Isn't there a saying?

'Death is only the beginning!'"

Arthur said with a smile, lifting his right index finger.

At once, an almost invisible whip descended, lashing fiercely upon the soul of the Counterfeit.

Crack!

With a crisp sound, the soul before him wailed.

Then, Arthur adjusted the intensity of the 'Whip of Death' with Death Qi, turning it to its strongest form, and lashed down again.

Crack!

This time, the effect was more direct, the soul of the man before him dissipated instantly.

'The power of "Whip Thrash" is even stronger than I imagined.'

Arthur thought to himself, beginning to examine the body of the Counterfeit.

Unfortunately, there was nothing of any significance.

'Truly poor.'

After giving an honest assessment, Arthur gestured with his hand, and the roots of the 'Death Serpent Banyan' standing by immediately dragged the body back to serve as fertilizer.

Afterward, Arthur turned his gaze to the body of 'Glast.'

As before, Arthur lifted his hand to "Soul Bind."

At the same time, he sensed the proportion of 'Spirituality' possessed.

Although convenient, "Soul Bind" would take up a certain amount of Arthur's 'Spirituality' each time, depending on the strength of the soul.

From 'Spirituality' 0.1 up to 3, and when exceeding 'Spirituality' 3, the 'Aura of Death' would automatically tailor the soul to fit the upper limit, but this would cause irreparable memory loss.

Arthur, of course, hoped for the integrity of 'Glast's' soul.

But, regrettably, things did not go as desired.

Almost the instant Arthur performed "Soul Bind," he sensed about 3 of his 'Spirituality' being occupied.

For Arthur, who currently had 7.6 safe 'Spirituality,' this was almost a quarter of the occupant rate.

If not for the increase in Talent, Bloodline, Ritual, and swordsmanship, he probably wouldn't have been able to "Soul Bind" 'Glast' at all.

And even though he had completed "Soul Bind," 'Glast' at this moment exhibited a kind of foolish reaction.

Seeing 'Glast's' reaction, Arthur laughed.

"All right, madam, your acting is not up to par."

Arthur spoke thus.

Instantly, the soul of 'Glast' became animated.

She... no, accurately speaking, it.

It glared at Arthur with fierce eyes as the temperature in the underground third-level laboratory began to drop slightly.

"Not a bad quality.

Continuing on, it would only be natural for you to be promoted to a Fierce Spirit, Evil Spirit afterward.

Even, perhaps you could become an Evil Spirit.

I look forward to it."

While Arthur uttered these words, he waved his hand and drowned 'Glast' in Death Qi.

There was no further conversation.

Arthur would not believe the words that came from 'Glast's' mouth.

He would only carry out Soul Tailoring on 'Glast's' soul after it had been eroded by the Death Qi, in order to obtain what he wanted from it.

Perhaps there would be little.

Even mixed with confusion.

But it would be sufficiently real.

As for the words that had just left Arthur's mouth?

Of course, it was a bluff!

Even if he used Soul Bind to confine the other's soul to serve him, Arthur would still use words to bluff the other's soul.

For no other reason, but simply for added safety.

Or perhaps...

It was just the habit of a 'Spirit Medium'.

Watching 'Glast' grow increasingly bewildered under the surge of Death Qi.

Arthur waited quietly for the other to lose himself.

Of course, during this period, Arthur was not doing nothing.

He was checking his loot.

Compared to that 'Counterfeit's' destitution, 'Glast' was simply rolling in wealth.

Arthur picked up the Swift Sword immediately, and the information appeared before his eyes—

Name: Song of the North Wind

Type: Sword Weapon

Quality: Secret Technique

Attributes: 1. Ice Wind; 2. Frost

Remarks: Only members of the North Wind Swordsmen who have been through a rigorous selection process can obtain such an exclusive 'standard longsword' belonging to the North Wind Swordsmen. It was forged by the Master Alchemist 'Yorksha' of North County, with a total of 36 swords. The leader's sword is the most special, with 5 remaining captain's swords also differing. The remaining 30 secret technique longswords are 'standard longswords'. This one is numbered 29, engraved on the inside of the hilt.

...

Ice Wind: When the longsword is swung, the strong wind it brings carries an ice wind that makes one shiver

Frost: When an enemy's flesh is cut by the blade of this longsword, frost will appear on the wound. Afterward, the frost will continue to spread through the blood into the body.

(Annotation 1: The temperature of the ice wind is usually minus 10 degrees Celsius.)

(Annotation 2: The spread of the frost can be resisted by a strong Physique, and can be resolved by appropriate Potions, Props.)

(Annotation 3: In the cold winter, amid ice and snow, the effects of ice wind and frost increase.)

(Annotation 4: During the hot summer, it can help you cool down.)

...

Arthur picked up the Song of the North Wind.

Instantly, a slight coolness spread from the hilt.

It wasn't irritating, somewhat like a carbonated drink taken out of a fridge's cold storage.

Out of curiosity, Arthur swung the longsword to one side—

Whoosh!

The icy sword wind immediately howled past, and a thin layer of frost quickly covered one side of the warm laboratory.

Such a commotion caught the attention of 'Glast's' soul.

The other lifted their head, their ethereal face full of bewilderment.

It seemed as if they thought of something, and just as they were about to open their mouth, the next moment, they became bewildered again amidst the surging Death Qi.

Arthur, who was constantly observing, naturally took note of this change.

Meanwhile, the action of stripping equipment did not stop.

When he had obtained another two pieces of equipment, Arthur's eyes lit up with surprise—

'This is...'

Chapter 478: Save Points, Never Waste!

With two items now in hand, the text before Arthur's eyes flickered—

[Name: Bracelet of Carmen]

[Type: Other Items]

[Quality: Hero]

[Attributes: 1. Space; 2. Concealment; 3. Absorption; 4. Dexterity]

[Remarks: In the year 89 of the Silver Era, the 80-year-old 'Gentleman Thief' Carmen accomplished another astonishing feat during his travels in North County—under the cover of night, he shaved off the hair of the local notorious lord, lady, and their daughter, warning the lord against engaging in the so-called 'land enclosure' practices. The terrified lord immediately canceled the order but secretly asked the Duke of Northern County to deploy elite guards to chase 'Gentleman Thief' Carmen. Foreseeing this, Carmen led these guards in circles across the vast snowy lands of North County—After the guards were chased by hibernating bears, Frost Snakes, and swarms of Death Bees, 'Gentleman Thief' Carmen laughed heartily, feeling refreshed, and had an inspired moment that led to the creation of this item, successfully earning the title of Master Alchemist!

To commemorate this, the master inscribed words of remembrance on the inside of the bracelet—"Carmen Huntington, your career has just begun, come, your journey is the stars and the sea!"

...

[Space: This is a 3mx3mx3m space]

[Concealment: It can not only hide itself but also grants the wearer Stealth+1 effect]

[Absorption: With you at the center, within a radius of 3 meters, as long as it is not touched by others and can be squeezed in, items can be absorbed into this space]

[Dexterity: When you're picking locks, you no longer need to pull hair, just a light tap with your hand will do, but for Secret Technique locks, you still need the help of hair; when retrieving items from within the bracelet, speed will increase, especially for scroll-type items, which will have an extra speed effect]

(Note 1: Space Items cannot be stored within this space)

(Note 2: Living creatures cannot be stored within this space)

(Note 3: Bracelet of Carmen constantly weighs 0.52kg, currently containing 500 Gold Coins, 1 Lightning Javelin scroll, 1 Healing Art for grievous wounds, 2 Frost Storm scrolls, 2 Searing Claws scrolls, 2 Chain Lightning scrolls, 2 Healing Arts for serious wounds, 2 Advanced Memory Techniques, 2 Advanced Feather Falling Spells, 2 Advanced Clone Technique scrolls, 6 Fireball Scrolls, 6 Frost Breath Scrolls, 6 Thunderfall Scrolls, 6 Phantom Scrolls, 6 Dense Fog Scrolls, 6 Poisonous Fog Scrolls, 6 Healing Arts for moderate wounds, 6 Memory Techniques, 6 Feather Falling Spells, 6 Clone Technique Scrolls, 99 Flame Arrows scrolls, 99 Ice Arrows scrolls, 99 Poisonous Smoke scrolls, 99 Knock Spell scrolls, 99 Flashing Spell scrolls, 999 Candle Flame Spell scrolls)

...

Arthur looked at the unremarkable, gray, stone-like bracelet, about two fingers wide, feeling rather complicated—not only had he encountered the 'Gentleman Thief' with a midlife balding issue again, but also because of the many scrolls stored within the bracelet.

Not to mention anything else, had 'Glast' not been so arrogant, their encounter would inevitably have been a fierce battle, even with Marinda and Julie on his side.

'A Lightning Javelin is an 'Entry-level' strike.

In a short time, it could hold off either Marinda or Julie.

Unless they encountered me...

Wait, did the other party conduct some sort of divination on my Bloodline and concluded that I have an abnormal resistance to 'Lightning', thus forgoing a direct battle and choosing a more tactical way of fighting?'

The more Arthur thought about it, the more likely it seemed.

Subconsciously, his gaze drifted towards 'Glast', who looked bewildered amid the Death Qi.

Then, Arthur increased the output of the Death Qi once again.

At the same time, he used a Candle Flame Spell scroll.

A light, like that of a candle flame, appeared not far from 'Glast', as if to pay tribute to the departed lady just like a real candle would.

After a glance at the remaining 998 Candle Flame Spell scrolls, Arthur turned his attention to the second item, a bronze cufflink of normal size—

[Name: Carmen's Leap]

[Type: Other Items]

[Quality: Hero]

[Attributes: Spatial Leap]

[Remarks: In the year 109 of the Silver Era, the 100-year-old 'Gentleman Thief' Carmen felt his agility was not as good as it was in his youth, so he set out to create an item to aid his movement. Then,

unexpectedly, this button was born—Wait a minute, I just wanted to restore the agility I had at 50 years old, so why did it result in Spatial Leap, where did I go wrong?]

...

[Spatial Leap: Instantly complete a directed Spatial Leap of 100 kilometers, 2/9]

(Note 1: This is an unintended item, and even its creator cannot recharge it)

(Note 2: Already has Spatial Leap coordinates)

(Note 3: New coordinates can be created using one's own Spirituality)

(Note 4: No other creatures can be carried during Spatial Leap)

(Note 5: Once Spatial Leap is initiated, it cannot be interrupted)

...

Looking at the [Carmen's Leap] before him, Arthur's eyelids began to twitch.

This young "Spirit Medium" set down the props in his hands, then turned to glance at "Glast," who was lost in a state of Death Qi, before finally walking over to a mirror. Staring at his own reflection, he spoke softly—

"Never be like 'Glast'!

She's an absolute idiot!"

Having said this, Arthur securely stored the bronze cufflink on his person.

As a space item, "Carmen's Leap" could not be stored within the "Bracelet of Carmen" or "Atos's Box."

As for sewing it onto the sleeve of his coat?

Forget it.

Too conspicuous, and far too unsafe.

Who knows whether someone might detect something amiss and then set a trap specifically for it,

Or simply target the sleeve where "Carmen's Leap" was sewn and attack it directly.

Although there was only a certain chance of that happening, Arthur absolutely wouldn't take that risk.

One shouldn't be too 'Glast'.

Because it would really be...

Very miserable.

Afterward, Arthur's gaze shifted to label 2 on "Carmen's Leap."

Clearly, that would be one of 'Glast's' strongholds.

'Could there be something valuable inside?'

Arthur thought almost instinctively.

Then, the young 'Spirit Medium' extracted a piece of the pinky bone from 'Glast's' corpse and roasted it with "Deathly Fire."

The eerie blue flames quickly consumed the fragment of the bone.

Immediately, ripples formed within the blue flames.

It seemed as though something was hindering the prediction of "Bone Divination."

However, after a few seconds, the obstruction was completely gone.

A mill appeared within the blue flames.

It was an utterly ordinary mill, with a small hill next to it.

Then the blue flame vanished.

For the sake of safety, the young 'Spirit Medium' took another piece of the finger bone and began a fresh session of "Bone Divination."

The same result slightly eased the young 'Spirit Medium's' concerns.

And then...

"Corpse Refinement Art"!

Arthur chose to repair the body of 'Glast.'

Even now, Arthur did not know 'Glast's' true identity, but he understood that given the other's pattern of behavior, they likely bred quite a number of minions.

And it would be such a waste if these minions simply dispersed.

His 'Black Cat Faction' was in need of people.

Once he gleaned more information from 'Glast's' soul through "Soul Tailoring," he could absolutely maintain 'Glast' at a certain level of activity.

'Tsk, not sparing even the dead?

No, no, no!

Young, kind, upright, and innocent I am simply upholding the traditional virtue of not wasting!

Arthur emphasized this in his heart.

Afterward, Arthur began a patient wait.

During this process, Arthur took out the 'Core Mystical Arts of the Selina Clan' from "Atos's Box."

Then, he frowned.

Chapter 479: Not Enough! Simply Not Enough!

Arthur frowned not because there was a problem with the "Selina Clan Core Mystical Arts", nor was it to say that the "Selina Clan Core Mystical Arts" were not good.

On the contrary, the "Selina Clan Core Mystical Arts" were simply too good—

[Mystical Art 'Barbarian King's Ritual (Cripple)' discovered, conducting Physique and Spirituality evaluation...]

[Evaluation passed!]

[Would you like to spend 3000 XP to learn this mystical art?]

...

3000 XP!

Arthur looked at the text in front of him, and the corners of his mouth began to twitch.

He found that no matter how hard he tried, it seemed like XP was becoming less and less sufficient.

Not to mention the Stone Bullet Technique requiring 100000 XP to reach Lv3 was an endless pitfall, the Extreme Illusory Shadow Technique that needed further enhancement according to the plan, and the Gliding Technique he wanted to try were all major consumers of XP.

Upgrading the Extreme Illusory Shadow Technique to Lv2 required 800 XP.

Gliding Technique Lv1 alone was 500 XP.

And now there was the entry-level Lv1 'Barbarian King's Ritual (Cripple)' needing 3000 XP.

And that was just the crippled version, if it were complete...

Arthur began to scratch his head.

Especially when he saw he only had 1400 XP now, he couldn't help but rub his throbbing temples.

'Even if the morning's report boosts my fame again by 500-600 XP, to save up 3000 XP, even if I maintain a steady daily income of 100 XP, it would still take 10 days...'

Arthur thought to himself, then simply shook his head.

Because, Arthur was very aware that his 'daily income' had surged to 100 XP a day due to the boost from being the 'South Los Swordsmanship Competition Champion'.

Once the excitement from the past few days of the Swordsmanship Competition died down, the 'daily income' would plummet.

Who knew how long it would take to save up 3000 XP.

Furthermore, he still needed to continue improving himself.

Perhaps saving up is pleasurable.

If it were safe enough, Arthur wouldn't mind saving up.

But in the present circumstance that seems steady yet is like walking on thin ice, Arthur wouldn't save up any XP.

For the current Arthur, if he had XP, he needed to use it. Just leaving it there to look at was useless; converting it into enhancing one's own power was the true path.

But surely, the more, the better!

'Horton, oh, Horton!

Hurry up and find a pirate island swarming with people from the Mystic Side!

Deljo, oh Deljo!

Continue exploring the ruins!

Arthur muttered to himself as he began to allocate points according to the original plan—

[Extreme Illusory Shadow Technique Lv2: You have gone beyond what Harris had mastered. Your unique Bloodline has already made the Extreme Illusory Shadow Technique different. Originating from the 'Tower of Mist's' 'Gray Robe's' Legacy, the Technique becomes even more forbidden in your hands—when 'Death' mixes with parts of the 'Shadows', its power becomes evident. Even if you only have a rudimentary understanding of this mystical art, it is the same!]

[Effect: 1. Shadow Stab; 2. Shadow Devour; 3. Shadow Flash]

[Shadow Stab: Mobilize the shadows within a 25-meter radius centered on you, forming 1-33 spear-like 'Shadow Spikes' to attack your opponent. When there are only 3 'Shadow Spikes', they will possess the attack power of the highest-level 'Arcana Level' of that time. As the number of 'Shadow Spikes' increases, their power decreases, and each 'Shadow Spike' cannot exceed 25 meters in length.]

[Shadow Devour: The unique corrosive energy of shadows will be present in each 'Shadow Spike'. When there are only 3 'Shadow Spikes', the corrosive energy will be of 'Arcana Level'.]

[Shadow Flash: You can use shadows to perform short-range teleports up to 10 meters, each teleport consuming a great deal of physical strength.]

...

After the synchronization of knowledge and body finished, Arthur's figure vanished from the spot.

The next moment, when he appeared, it was already outside the room.

Feeling the extent of his physical strength consumption, Arthur returned to the room.

It was still the original spot.

However, Arthur was now breathing heavily.

'I could probably use it 2 more times!

If I ignore everything, maybe 1-2 more times more!

Normally 4 uses of [Shadow Flash], 5-6 times when desperate...'

'My survival ability has been enhanced once again!'

Arthur thought to himself and then looked towards [Shadow Stab] and [Shadow Devour].

For now, 'Arcana Level' had not yet broken through, but the quantity had increased. The next level should be a breakthrough to 'Great Arcana Level'.

Consolidate at level 4.

Level 5 would be ready to Ascend Step.

...

And if I were to increase by a large margin to Level 5...

"There's a real possibility of 'Ascending Step'!"

Although Arthur had already guessed as much before,

the moment he realized there was a real hope, Arthur was still elated.

However, the thought of the XP that might be required immediately made Arthur take a deep breath.

"Save up slowly, there will come a day when I reach it."

Compared to the surprise of the Extreme Illusory Shadow Technique, the Gliding Technique had Arthur scratching his head—

[Gliding Technique Lv1: The winters in the Empire are long, but not without their delights. Ice skating was once an extremely popular activity, and Hercules loved it, especially after the children he used to play marbles with highly recommended it. The Library custodian fell in love with the sport right away and to better practice ice skating, he created this secret technique. To the delight of our Imperial Library custodians, we found that it even made walking take less effort.]

[Effect: Gliding]

[Gliding: You can glide on the ground as if you were ice skating, without moving your feet, quick and energy-efficient.]

(Note: When facing terrains like swamps, you can still glide, but you cannot skate on water surfaces. However, you can ignore the differences in slope and accomplish a gliding stance.)

...

Another case of synchronizing knowledge with the body.

When everything was done, Arthur started "drawing" circles around the experiment table right away.

Not too fast, but definitely not slow.

It was really as if the ground had turned into ice.

After a few continuous circles, Arthur saw the 'Glast' lost in the Death Qi and couldn't help but glide over and start circling around 'Glast'.

While circling, Arthur also softly chanted—

"Soul Transfer Technique... urgh!"

It wasn't actual vomiting, just a profound imitation.

And 'Glast'?

Still a face full of confusion.

Suddenly, Arthur felt bored.

But what really had Arthur scratching his head was the XP needed for the Gliding Technique Lv2.

It wasn't the 1000 XP he had predicted.

It was 2000 XP!

The already large gap had widened even further.

Even though Arthur didn't know what the next level of the Gliding Technique could do, the nature of XP made it clear to Arthur what value for money really was.

If it requires 2000 XP, then it is definitely worth the 2000 XP.

Even if it doesn't show now, the future will surely reveal its worth.

Glancing at the note 'can ignore different slopes to complete the gliding stance', Arthur declared: The Gliding Technique, I'm set on it!

He wanted to see what the Gliding Technique at Lv5 would look like.

After all...

It's breaking the rules to a certain extent!

At the current stage, it's just some inconspicuous, easily overlooked ability, but what about at Lv5?

At this moment, Arthur was full of anticipation.

But that's for later.

Now?

Looking at the remaining 100 XP, Arthur, who had temporarily finished allocating points, once again turned his gaze to the 'Glast' lost in the Death Qi.

The other party still had the same clueless expression and had not begun to lose their way.

"Do you need more time?"

Arthur murmured to himself.

He didn't linger any longer but walked towards the ground.

Dawn was about to break.

He needed to hurry back to Caesar Manor.

After Arthur left, the soul of 'Glast', which was in a confused state, showed struggle and fear on its face as it knew it had to save itself.

Otherwise, it was truly doomed.

But at the next moment, the soul of 'Glast' was filled with endless despair.

Because—

Quietly, with a gentle smile on his face, Arthur appeared in front of it again.

...

Chapter 480: Ripples Start to Emerge, Astonishing Change!

The soul of 'Glast,' filled with despair, howled at Arthur —

"Why did you know I was masquerading?

And how did you know about the defensive secret technique I concealed for my soul?

Why?

Why?"

In the midst of the howling, the soul of 'Glast' began to tremble, just like the distorted screen of an old television set with a poor signal.

Arthur: I didn't know just now, but I do now.

Of course, Arthur wasn't going to be so forthcoming; he looked at 'Glast' and maintained a smile.

"Of course, I know.

Because —

I am a 'Spirit Medium'!"

Arthur spoke frankly, his tone indifferent.

This caused the soul-state 'Glast' to fall into another kind of extreme frenzy.

"Impossible!

All spirit mediums are frauds!

A hopeless bunch of frauds!"

While howling, 'Glast' flailed his arms wildly.

But Arthur's smile remained, and his speech was even more calm and measured.

"What could be safer than hiding among a bunch of frauds?

My grandfather, Old Charlie, used to say, be thankful for those who treat us as frauds.

They will not only underestimate and despise us but also mislead others — you'll never know, what the expression of those who face death because they underestimated us looks like...

Oh, that's not right.

You do know, because you are such a person.

Can't see your own face?

No worries!

Come, look!"

As Arthur spoke, he used the "Hand of Void" to move a mirror from the laboratory in front of 'Glast.'

'Glast,' already driven to frenzy by Arthur's words, let out a wail of despair when he saw his own spirit form, bound and powerless, reflected in the mirror.

"No!

It shouldn't be like this!

I am the 'Witch' Cleaver!"

'Glast' screamed, as a rich Death Qi began to invade the other's soul.

But Arthur was taken aback.

Not because of the invasion of the Death Qi.

But because of what the other had just said.

'Witch' Cleaver!

The origins of the 'Seven Years' War' have always been a matter of great speculation, but there's no doubt about how it started.

Burning the 'Witch' Cleaver!

Everyone agrees on this point!

The incident began with the disappearance of the siblings Hansel and Greta in the West Berlin Territory of South County. That's what their parents claimed, but the passing 'Hunter' Winchester brothers didn't think so. After an investigation, they discovered that Hansel and Greta were abandoned!

More importantly, in the depths of the dense forest, they were tied up by a cannibalistic Witch.

The Winchester brothers immediately went to rescue the siblings.

Possessing the excellent qualities of the 'Winchester Family,' the brothers easily rescued the siblings, but the previous children weren't so fortunate.

Underneath that 'Candy House,' the Winchester brothers found the remains of at least a hundred children.

Naturally, the 'Witch' Cleaver of the Candy House was sent to the Burning Stake.

The parents who had lost their children laid all the blame on the 'Witch' Cleaver.

Subsequently, this 'blame' started to spread.

It became an accusation.

An accusation against anyone associated with the 'Mystic Side.'

Guilty or not, they were all sent to the Burning Stake.

There were rumors of instigating by remnants of 'The Holy Court.'

But regardless, the 'Seven Years' War' began after the burning of the 'Witch' Cleaver.

'Glast' is the 'Witch' Cleaver?!

Arthur was filled with a tumult of doubts and uncertainties.

However, on the surface, Arthur remained calm.

He smiled, his tone growing even gentler, and spoke in a voice only the two of them could hear—

"Then why don't you consider, why could you become 'Witch' Cleaver?"

'Glast' had the identity of 'Witch' Cleaver.

Or rather, 'Witch' Cleaver had the identity of 'Glast' would also do.

So besides these two identities, did the other party have any other new identities?

There should be!

Arthur was quite certain of this.

Therefore, acting on instinct, Arthur bluffed 'Glast'.

But to Arthur's surprise, after hearing his words, 'Glast' completely calmed down, no longer howling or wailing.

But the 'soul's distortion became even more severe.

Yet under such distortion of the soul's appearance, 'Glast's eyes were abnormally calm, as if they were the undisturbed surface of a lake.

"Indeed, it's you!

For whom does the death knell toll!

'Bell Tower'—the terrifying bell tower, once you're targeted by them, your destiny changes along with it, everything about you becomes closely linked with them.

But everything about you is of no consequence to them.

They disregard everything about you.

They will only ring your death knell."

As 'Glast' said this, his gaze shifted from calm to dead.

His voice developed an unprecedented hoarseness.

"If this is my destiny!

Then I accept it!

But...

I curse all members of 'Bell Tower'!"

The distortion of 'Glast's soul grew more severe, what used to be a distortion in appearance was now a distortion at the depth of the soul.

This kind of distortion even began to subtly affect the material world.

Even whispers started to emerge beside Arthur's ears.

'For peace, Romeo fired at me!'

'Liang Shanbo, my Zhu Yingtai's sword, is also sharp!'

'Brother, gobble, gobble!'

'Daiyu, slow down on the motorcycle, that's not how you ride it!'

'Ah, Diao Chan, put down the drumming golden hammer quickly, how did you manage to kill all the 18 warlords?'

'Er Zhu Rong, The Song of Everlasting Regret isn't written like this!'

'The Wala exchange program has begun, Zhu Qizhen, why haven't you set out yet?'

...

One by one, strings of bizarre shouts filled Arthur's mind with numerous images, yet the Spirit Medium's composure still maintained his calm.

He looked at 'Glast' and said softly.

"All right!"

After all, he wasn't a member of 'Bell Tower'.

Cursing the members of 'Bell Tower' was none of his business.

But this indifferent tone from Arthur thoroughly provoked 'Glast'.

"I curse all the members of 'Bell Tower'!

I curse you all!"

Carrying that bizarre distortion, 'Glast' cried out loudly.

Then, Death Qi surged in.

The formless Death Qi completely engulfed Miss 'Glast'.

At the same time, that Death Qi was also tainted with a hint of distorted curse.

Or rather, it was precisely because of this hint of Death Qi that the distorted curse became utterly different—because this Death Qi was never a talent of this world!

The essence was different.

And some changes began to unfold from it.

The existence of that essence, like a fuse, ignited the still-primed barrel of explosives.

A monumental change...

Started from here!