

Great Master 551

Chapter 551 three big gray wolves, one little sheep!

Jimte despised trouble, so he refused trouble.

Kalal despised trouble, so he became trouble.

Hayes despised trouble, so he stayed away from trouble.

But, the three of them had one thing in common, that was when trouble really became unavoidable, they would not fear trouble, let alone flee from it.

After all...

If I cannot solve trouble, can I not solve the person who causes trouble?

Bang! Bang! Bang!

On the deck, the sailors began firing under the captain's command.

There were bullets as well as crossbow arrows.

But, before these bullets and arrows could get close, Kalal stepped forward and drew his twin swords—

Clang!

The twin swords were unsheathed.

As if with a single sound.

The blade of the swords brought about a series of sharp gusts.

Both bullets and arrows were sliced into two amidst this sharp wind.

The sailors on the deck were dumbfounded.

The captain was even more pale with shock.

Clearly, the captain hadn't expected to encounter such a situation.

"Raise the mainsail!

Quick! Quick!

All of you go row the boat!"

The swordsmanship that Kalal displayed made the captain realize that they had no way to confront Kalal head-on.

Naturally, the only option was to run!

But before the sailors could take action, Jimte, standing on the shore, gave a bashful smile—

Crack!

The heavy anchor seemed to be attracted by something, as the winch was snapped straight off.

The anchor smashed directly into the inland river.

The next moment, the iron chain connecting the ship and anchor was taut.

Squeak! Squeak!

Amidst the teeth-grinding sound, the ship that was previously moving slowly was now pulled to a stop and began to spin and tilt.

"What a bloodline to envy!"

Hayes said this, his eyes already searching the inland river and spotting the bobbing Alvis Hamlet, the nephew of Count Bert, who then raised his palm.

Immediately, the unconscious members of the Golden Lion Family were lifted from the river out of nowhere and flew towards Hayes.

When Jimte, Kalal, and Hayes saw Alvis's eye-catching golden hair, they all narrowed their eyes in unison.

The three of them clearly thought of something.

Although the answer needed to be confirmed, that was not difficult.

Kalal, who had never intended to let those on the ship go, let out a ferocious laugh—

"This is really something to look forward to!

Don't disappoint me!"

With that, Kalal swung his sword, and a tree large enough to require a two-person embrace fell straight down.

As the tree was about to hit the ground, Kalal turned around and kicked the cross-section where the blade had cut.

Bang!

The tree flew straight towards that ship.

And Kalal himself leaped onto the flying tree.

This noble scion grinned, laughing loudly.

"You guys, give me some fun!"

Boom!

The tree crashed into the spinning ship, breaking the deck apart, but the sailors on board didn't care about that anymore; they stared in horror at Kalal who was walking out from deep inside the ship's hold, their weapons trembling with their own fears.

As ordinary people, at most they would be river pirates under the captain's orders.

They had never encountered a non-human like Kalal.

Watching Kalal approach, the sailors lost all fighting spirit and immediately turned to jump overboard.

"Escaping isn't very gentlemanly."

Hayes spoke such words, his gaze sweeping over the sailors who had jumped ship.

Ka, ka!

With each crisp sound, the necks of the sailors who had jumped were twisted and broken.

Meanwhile, Jimte had already begun checking Alvis Hamlet's wounds.

"A blow to the back, he instinctively dodged the fatal wound.

This guy really lacks experience.

However, this poison is quite interesting, it's actually a mix of Fangting Grass and Night Orchid."

Jimte said this, his lips curling into a smile.

This kind of mixed poison was not ordinary.

Fangting Grass is a high-end spice that can effectively remove fishy smells while providing the human body with plenty of beneficial substances.

And Night Orchid was an ingredient highly sought after by ladies of the high society during the 'Silver Age' for making perfume.

It wasn't until the 'Gentleman Thief' Carmen discovered that a mixture of the two was a highly effective paralysis potion, that they gradually disappeared from the high society parties.

But their already expensive prices became even more so.

After all, they were really effective.

So much so that many pharmacists of the time would switch professions to search for Fangting Grass and Night Orchid.

These pharmacists hoped to cultivate the two plants, but the growing conditions were too demanding, requiring not only special topographical environments but also irrigation with Arcane Creature saliva for Fangting Grass, and Arcane Creature feces as fertilizer for Night Orchid, with the slightest deviation resulting in failure.

Added to that was the uncontrollability of Arcane Creatures.

Pharmacists quickly gave up on cultivating Fangting Grass and Night Orchid.

And the wild Fangting Grass and Night Orchid began to rapidly disappear.

Only a few powerful forces were left cultivating strains!

Therefore, Jimte was certain that the blond man before him was likely as they had speculated—he came from Inner Bay and must be a person from the Golden Lion Family.

Jimte kept bandaging Alvis Hamlet while pondering.

At that moment, Kalal walked over, carrying the body of the captain.

Hayes nonchalantly pried open the mouth of the dead.

"Tsk, chose the double-layer fish bladder, it's Inner Bay craftsmanship," Hayes stated with certainty.

To be on the safe side, he had studied such knowledge beforehand.

Like in Bert Territory, they preferred to use pine resin.

In Seberlin, the poison's shell was also a fish bladder, but the poison had changed to that of a certain blue dart frog, unlike the mineral toxins more commonly chosen by Bert Territory and Inner Bay.

Hayes then turned his gaze to Jimte and Kalal.

"Who's first?" asked the nephew of Count Bert.

"I'm not suitable," Kalal volunteered, stepping back.

"You're more suitable," Hayes said, looking at Jimte, also choosing to step back.

Then the two of them took the body and vanished into concealment.

Jimte shrugged helplessly.

He took out a small vial, waved it under the nose of the man before him.

"Ah!"

Alvis Hamlet, who had been unconscious, took a breath and instantly woke up. He instinctively tried to get up, but as soon as he moved, the pain in his lower back made the young man let out a scream.

"Don't move, your injuries are severe, and you've been poisoned," Jimte immediately turned to support Alvis, his shy face showing a hint of worry and a trace of guilt.

The young member of the Golden Lion Family looked at the shy young man's worried face, especially after seeing that trace of guilt, and immediately felt a sense of fondness.

And so, about an hour later, Arthur received the news that Alvis Hamlet had been set up by the first son of the Old Lion.

'This seems like a good opportunity...

A too united Golden Lion Family is not good.'

Arthur thought to himself, his lips curling into a smile.

As for the 'safe trip to Inner Bay,' Arthur's confidence grew.

Of course, Arthur wouldn't mind a bit more assurance.

So, his gaze fell on the words before him.

Chapter 552: Abdul's Pyrokinesis!

The sun rose as usual, and XP arrived as promised—

[Kill a Mystic Side Person: XP+150]

[The strength Baron Harold exhibited in the battle against the 'Blood Descendants' was surprising, and his entrusting of his final wishes was even more unexpected. Your name once again spread within the Mystic Side of South Los: XP+350]

[More people heard your name: XP+180]

...

Clearly, after another day's fermentation, the aftermath of the 'South Los Swordsmanship Competition' continued to spread, and more people learned the name Arthur Kredos.

The XP gained from slaying the Mystic Side Person and the incident at Harold Manor were within Arthur's expectations.

His vest, the pursued 'Blood Descendant', spared another of his vests, the 'Bandage Swordsman', but had also meticulously selected two fish that escaped the net.

One was a scout of the Earl of South Los.

The other was truly a lucky survivor.

The former, Arthur didn't want any conflict with the Earl of South Los just yet.

The latter?

Was truly needed for spreading his name.

After all, compared to 'daily XP', incidents related to the Mystic Side would yield much more XP, and how could Arthur pass up such an opportunity?

With today's XP credited to his account, combined with the remaining 420 points from last time, Arthur's XP quickly returned to about 1100 points.

Without hesitation, Arthur's gaze turned to [Abdel's Pyrokinesis].

Previously, he had lacked the 'Fire Lizard's Pouch', but now that he had it, naturally, he wanted to enrich his arsenal.

[Abdel's Pyrokinesis Lv1: The Empire's court jester 'Harrington' invented this secret technique for his fire-breathing act, but it was very unstable and frequently caused explosions. Every time 'Harrington' ended up covered in soot and dirt, the Imperial Court Mage 'Xarlico' would laugh heartily, and the Court Lady 'Lith' would smile. Hence, 'Harrington' did not continue his research on this technique, believing it to be the best as it was, for after all, who could refuse the laughter of friends and loved ones? However,

'Harrington's disciple, Abdul, saw the potential in this secret technique, and after several years of research, he made it more effective, safe, and powerful.

For this, 'Harrington' encouraged him and made 'Fire Control Technique' his research subject, entrusting it entirely to Abdul.

As a result, Abdul began a research that lasted 50 years.

You have now come into contact with the basic part of this master.]

[Effect: 1, Fire Control; 2, Ignition]

[Fire Control: When there's a flame within a 2-meter radius of you, no bigger than 1CM in radius, you can manipulate it as you wish and shoot it out like an arrow]

[Ignition: When you touch dry paper, you can ignite it]

(Note 1: The distance you can control the flame cannot exceed a radius of 2 meters with you at the center.)

(Note 2: The fire shot out is currently at the power of a soft bow.)

(Note 3: When igniting, besides dry paper, hair can also be ignited, but it cannot be set alight, and the temperature can't be transmitted.)

...

Abdul was actually a disciple of the court jester 'Harrington'?

Arthur was somewhat astonished.

He had fresh memories of the court jester 'Harrington', Court Mage 'Xarlico', and Court Lady 'Lith'.

In particular, he vividly remembered when Xarlico's Noise Technique reached Lv5 and he used 'Harrington's voice to successfully confess to 'Lith', and Xarlico's pensive question afterward, 'Why? Why did this happen? Marriage? Are you joking? Women only slow down your research.'

Of course, Arthur was more grateful than anything else.

[Noise Technique] had helped him a lot.

It had before, and it still did now.

And [Abdel's Pyrokinesis]?

As Arthur read the description of 'Abdul began a research that lasted 50 years; you have now come into contact with the basic part of this master.', he knew he had made a good investment.

Abdul could be called a master, so naturally, he wasn't mediocre.

And 50 years of research...

It was highly likely another skill that started off unremarkable but would explode in effect at later stages—the Wand Combat Technique!

So Arthur didn't hesitate; he directly tested the limits of Abdul's Pyrokinesis with his own XP.

At Lv1, it was 50 XP.

At Lv2, it was 100 XP.

At Lv3, it was 200 XP.

At Lv4, it was 400 XP.

With an additional 700 XP, Arthur brought Abdul's Pyrokinesis to its current limit—

[Abdul's Pyrokinesis Lv4: In the 10th year following his teacher, the court jester 'Harrington', Abdul found himself at a bottleneck with his 'Fire Control Technique' research topic. No matter what, he couldn't break through the existing phase, and he couldn't even find the direction to move forward anymore.

At this time, 'Harrington' indicated to Abdul that it was time for him to travel.

Immediately, the apprentice began packing his bags, bidding farewell to his teacher and friends. Carrying a mix of trepidation and excitement, he began a journey across the continent.]

[Effect: 1. Fire Control; 2. Ignition]

[Fire Control: When there is a flame with a radius of no more than 2 meters within a 25-meter radius of where you stand, you can freely manipulate it, turning it into various shapes, or using it as a projectile to shoot it out.]

[Ignition: When you touch hard and moist wood, you can ignite it.]

(Note 1: The distance of fire manipulation cannot exceed a radius of 25 meters with you as the center.)

(Note 2: When the flame begins to change, the transformed object cannot exceed the original volume of the flame.)

(Note 3: The fired flame currently has the power of a 12-pound solid shot from an Emperor Cannon. You can hit a target within 200 meters in your line of sight as you wish. When it hits the target, the flame

projectile will explode again, forming nine Flame Arrows, covering a target within a 6-meter radius. If there is only one target, they must bear all nine Flame Arrows. If there are multiple targets, they can be allocated as you wish.)

(Note 3: When igniting, moist wood is possible, and objects of the same level can also be ignited. Even if you can't ignite, you can still transmit high temperatures.)

...

Arthur stroked his chin as he looked at the Lv4 Abdul's Pyrokinesis.

Just the ability to shoot out 12-pound solid tracking explosive shells justified his total investment of 750 XP, but what made Arthur even happier was the Ignition effect.

This was definitely not just about not having to worry about starting a fire for cooking outdoors on a rainy day.

It was quite a useful offensive technique.

Any normal creature, as long as he touched it.

They would have to prepare to become a 'torch'.

Of course, these were not important.

The important thing was the Lv5 of Abdul's Pyrokinesis—

50,000!

Just like the Wand Combat Technique.

Upgrading Abdul's Pyrokinesis to Lv5 would require 50,000 XP points.

Although Arthur had previously guessed that Abdul's Pyrokinesis would undergo a qualitative change at Lv5, the identical XP value to the Wand Combat Technique caught him by surprise.

'The same 50,000 XP?

Could it be that after being raised to Lv5 with 50,000 XP, one would possess an attack power equivalent to that of an Ascend Steper with this secret technique?'

Arthur speculated, his gaze unintentionally shifting to another secret technique in his skill bar—

Arrow Guiding Technique!

Chapter 533: Speak Without Thinking!

It was not difficult to verify whether 50,000 XP had some special significance.

Arthur still had the Arrow Guiding Technique!

Compared to Abdel's Pyrokinesis, the Arrow Guiding Technique was also created by the Empire's court jester, Harrington, and later improved by several scholars of Mystery.

Without hesitation, Arthur began to allocate points.

A richer arsenal was the theme of Arthur's point allocation this time.

And besides that?

The Arrow Guiding Technique was cheap enough.

Learning Level 1 only cost 5 XP.

According to the scale, Level 2 cost 10 XP, then Level 3 was 20 XP, Level 4 was 40 XP, and Level 5 was...

200 XP.

'Hmm?'

As Arthur allocated points, he paused slightly after seeing the 200 XP required for Level 5.

Then, he chose to upgrade again—

Arrow Guiding Technique Lv5: After research by several scholars of Mystery, this secret technique has become more stable and sharp, and has acquired additional effects; they felt satisfied with this and considered themselves worthy of praise

Effect: 1, Arrow Drawing; 2, Rapid Shooting

Arrow Drawing: Based on Spirituality, consuming a bit of physical strength, chanting the Glyphic Language "xiu" can control arrows flying towards or shooting arrows from nearby

Rapid Shooting: Capable of catching a continuous stream of arrows and shooting multiple arrows simultaneously

(Note 1: Can control 20 arrows flying towards and likewise can shoot out 20 arrows)

(Note 2: Can make arrows flying towards immediately fly back, with no additional movement needed)

(Note 3: The shot arrows are equivalent to long Firearm bullets)

...

"Just ordinary?"

Arthur muttered to himself.

Despite the same conditions, a different result had appeared.

Naturally, this was because—

People!

Abdel's Pyrokinesis could become different because of Abdul.

Wand Combat Technique could become different because of Lady Abel.

And the Arrow Guiding Technique?

Arthur looked towards the note 'research by several scholars of Mystery,' and then at words like 'felt satisfied' and 'worthy of praise.'

"Does a Master need an apprentice's heart?"

Arthur said to himself.

Of course, Arthur would never look down on those nameless researchers.

After all, compared to these nameless researchers, what standing or reason did he, someone who reaped the benefits, have to look down on others?

As for the speculation about 50,000 XP?

There would still be chances later!

Moreover, the Arrow Guiding Technique in itself was strong enough.

As long as his mouth's 'xiu' was fast enough and his physical strength ample, he could really face a barrage of arrows.

Of course, if possible, Arthur would certainly not hope to face such a situation.

But then...

Who could really explain the workings of this world?

The so-called trump card, isn't it just for such just-in-case moments?

"Pan, you must remember, never reveal your last trump card.

Or rather...

When everyone thinks you have it, you don't necessarily need it.

But when only one person thinks you have it, you must have it."

Arthur said softly to Pendragon, who was leaning against a pillow.

'Meow?'

Pendragon's feline face looked puzzled.

Shouldn't it be that when more people think you have it, you must have it?

Why does it become that when one person thinks you have it, you must have it?

"People are complex.

And human hearts?

"It's elusive," Arthur said, feigning depth.

The kitten couldn't comprehend such words and annoyed, broke free from Arthur's grasp, walking straight to the bowl of cat food and took a big bite.

Unlike other kittens, Pendragon opened his mouth and swallowed as if he were a bulldozer.

Arthur didn't mind this.

Is there anything happier than raising a kitten that eats well?

Naturally, the kitten isn't picky.

A cat that eats tomatoes, sweet potatoes, zucchini, and eggplants is definitely the perfect meal companion.

Of course, a surge in weight was inevitable.

As Arthur watched Pendragon, he silently counted down in his mind—

3, 2, 1!

When he silently reached one, a large ring of smoke appeared, and Marinda reappeared in the Spirit Medium Parlor at No. 2 Cork Street.

Upon appearing, this lady first glanced at Pendragon, who was eating heartily.

Then, she turned her attention to Arthur, who was lying on the bed.

"The matter with Baron Harold, I wasn't the one who orchestrated it," said Arthur, without waiting for Marinda to speak.

Given that Marinda had run here from Caesar Manor again, Arthur could think of no other matter than the recent incident with Baron Harold.

And that was precisely what Arthur had wanted.

"Hmm," Marinda scoffed coldly, obviously not believing him.

Others might think it was an accident.

However, Marinda, who knew well the deep connection between Arthur and the 'Blood Descendants,' certainly didn't believe it.

In her estimation, Arthur's agenda wasn't just calculated against the Lady Glast; he had long had his sights on everything that belonged to the Harold Family.

That included the title as well as the manor.

Just like she had once targeted Baron Harold.

Although she ultimately chose to plunder everything from Baron Kemir, that didn't mean the Harold Family's assets were valueless.

On the contrary, the Harold Family, her first choice, had considerable assets.

Although they were intangible assets, they were still enough to attract many.

Just for that reason, she, having just inherited the title, did not press her advantage.

She was not only waiting for a more suitable opportunity but also for the dust to settle!

Marinda believed that with the character of Baron Korol and Baron Haus, they would definitely not let the Harold Family off the hook. Once the former attacked the latter, it would be her time to reap the benefits.

And by then, she could take the "Caesar" surname to a new level.

However, Arthur's intervention had thwarted her plans.

Yet, Marinda wasn't irritated by Arthur's intervention.

Her irritation stemmed from not seeing through Arthur's scheme and...

She was mystified about what Arthur really wanted!

This was indeed why this lady was irritated!

Marinda found that, at some point, she had always been outmatched by Arthur.

Be it in strength or scheming.

For the immensely proud Marinda, this was a significant blow.

Indeed, had Marinda not been mentally resilient and determined, she would have broken down long ago.

And now?

Marinda had somewhat gotten used to it.

But, this didn't mean she wasn't curious.

This lady didn't believe Arthur was unaware of the current situation in South Los, where he could just wait a little longer to gain greater benefits.

Thus, this kind of 'sacrifice' must be for even greater benefits.

What could it be?

Marinda couldn't help but speculate.

Leaning on the pillow, Arthur glanced at the lady's expression, shrugged helplessly, and the young 'Spirit Medium' sighed softly.

"Marinda, haven't you realized, you always seem to guess what I'm planning to do?"

Saying this, Arthur looked at the lady and earnestly said—

"100,000 gold coins!"

Chapter 554

100,000 Gold Coins is not a small amount,

for anyone.

And that included Marinda as well.

But unlike others, when Marinda heard this figure, she wouldn't instantly rage nor assume that what Arthur had said was nonsensical.

Instead, Marinda would think.

And Arthur liked people who thought.

Especially when Marinda thought, she looked exceptionally enchanting.

Even when she stood motionless, it was as if she radiated a golden light.

Marinda firmly believed that Arthur had planned ahead with precision and purpose.

And Arthur was willing to let Marinda continue to believe that.

Therefore, he planned to say a name—

Dorn!

The Dorn who was an alias for Alvis Hamlet!

And that alias was worth 100,000.

Indeed, this price was truly a friendly rate.

After all...

Once Marinda investigated this alias, she would surely uncover Alvis Hamlet.

At the same time, it was highly likely she would discover some clues concerning him, thus learning more about the secrets of his mother, a member of the Golden Lion Family.

Therefore, this price was truly reasonable.

It was absolutely not because Arthur had given all the money to Bob to rush the production of the Death Soldier Potion, and was financially strapped, that he thought of tricking Marinda out of some money.

Absolutely not!

Arthur emphasized this to himself.

Meanwhile, he headed towards the kitchen.

Marinda had instructed him to retrieve the dishes and utensils.

And about last time's dishes and utensils?

Ms. Anna had washed them.

Arthur had even seen them afterwards, neatly and cleanly arranged inside a basket.

"Here, your dishes and utensils.

I've cleaned them well, haven't I?"

Arthur placed the basket in front of Marinda.

Ms. Anna, who was browsing through "Modern Pastry Cooking," didn't even lift her head, just quietly flipping through it—Ms. Anna viewed Arthur's 'kind lie' as akin to a younger brother's endearing whimper.

It wasn't just unimportant to her; rather, it was somewhat cute.

Of course, only applicable to members of the Kledos family.

Strangers?

Ms. Anna would show them what horror means.

Marinda glanced at the basket, rolled her eyes at Arthur, and then looked towards Ms. Anna—

"Thank you for your help."

Marinda sincerely thanked her.

Although she could roughly guess Ms. Anna's background, if Arthur considered Ms. Anna as family, she also needed to show the respective respect.

Not for any other reason.

Just for his current status.

"Not at all, Marinda,"

Ms. Anna answered with a smile.

That smile, savage and terrifying to outsiders, seemed much milder to Marinda, certainly better than a certain someone who only talked about money, deeply calculating and conniving at heart.

After thinking a bit about the finances on record to ensure it wouldn't affect her business, Marinda nodded at Arthur.

"Speak!"

"Dorn, the Dorn from Inner Bay!"

Arthur declared.

Marinda narrowed her eyes.

"Inner Bay?"

The lady emphasized.

"Yes."

Arthur nodded firmly.

Without any hesitation, Marinda blew out a large smoke ring and plunged right through it.

Whew!

Finally, she was gone.

Arthur breathed a sigh of relief, greeted Ms. Anna, and then returned to the floor of the Spirit Medium Parlor, quickly falling into deep sleep.

Meanwhile, Marinda began to get busy.

First, she instructed her subordinates to inquire about and look for a person named Dorn.

It could quite possibly be from Inner Bay, of course, even more likely it claimed to be from elsewhere.

Regardless, Marinda needed to know everything about this person named Dorn before sunset.

Afterward?

The lady began to sort out her attire.

She changed into a pair of khaki trousers, brown high-waisted boots, and a white shirt adorned with a vest—though still in men's style, the cuffs and collar had lace decorations, and the trousers were slightly modified at the waist and hips to accentuate the curves, making it look more like a lady's hunting outfit.

The lady was not attempting to change anything.

It was simply necessary.

Because...

Madam Susan's visit.

Facing the chief steward of the Earl of South Los, Marinda would never let her guard down.

However, Marinda would never 'dress up' like this on a normal day, even though she knew the other party disliked her usual attire.

In recent years, having played the role of the Earl of South Los's purse, Marinda had some confidence facing Madam Susan, without needing such careful treatment.

The reason she changed into an outfit the other party liked.

Naturally, it had nothing to do with will.

It had nothing to do with trying to please either.

It was because Marinda hoped to learn some useful information from Madam Susan's mouth.

And then?

Of course, to use it as a 'chip' for her negotiations with Arthur!

Think about it, every time she negotiated with Arthur, wasn't it always her who provided various bargaining chips? Wasn't it always Arthur who had the upper hand?

This made the always strong-willed lady unable to swallow her pride.

Therefore, just now Marinda did not inform Madam Susan of her visit.

All for the sake of winning against Arthur once!

At least!

At least—

She, Marinda, also wanted to gain some initiative this time!

Thus Marinda unconsciously took Madam Susan's visit more seriously.

"Mary, prepare some light Food.

However, meat should be well-prepared.

Be cautious with the spices, and there needs to be a soup substantial enough to be considered the main course," Marinda commanded.

"Yes, my lord,"

The part-time housekeeper and cook, Mary, immediately headed to the kitchen herself.

And when Edwin came to report, Marinda walked to the main entrance of Caesar Manor, watching as an unmarked carriage slowly entered through the front gate.

Driving the carriage was a guard from the Earl of South Los Family, familiar yet unnameable.

Beyond this, there were no companions.

Marinda frowned in secret.

Although, with Madam Susan's capabilities, she did not need more guards, but as the chief steward of the Earl of South Los, she deserved better treatment.

Or rather...

Noble etiquette, demeanor.

In any case, there should be a cavalry troop of no less than 20 surrounding the carriage.

And now, there was only one possibility.

Madam Susan had not come on behalf of the Earl of South Los, but in her own name.

Such a situation required extremely close personal relations.

And her relationship with Madam Susan?

They did not have such a closeness.

But what really puzzled Marinda was Madam Susan's attitude—

After the carriage stopped at the entrance of the main building, without waiting for the guard to open the door, and seeing Marinda standing at the entrance, Madam Susan directly pushed the door and stepped down from the carriage.

"Why have you come out?"

Winter in South Los is not so friendly."

The slightly reproaching words of an elder stunned Marinda.

What followed was even more baffling as Madam Susan took off her rabbit fur cloak and draped it over Marinda.

And before Marinda could react, she took Marinda's arm, nearly half-supporting her as she led Marinda back inside the main building.

Marinda was dumbstruck.

This 'Lady of the Eternal Night' stared blankly at Madam Susan.

While the lady meticulously examined Marinda, whispering softly—

"Old Charlie would be very happy if he knew he was going to be a great-grandfather."

Marinda was shocked.

Then, her pupils dilated in surprise.

What?!

Chapter 555: Pull!

What's with this tone?

And this nostalgic voice?

Had Arthur's grandfather, Old Charlie, had an affair with Madam Susan here?

When Marinda decided to cooperate with Arthur, she naturally investigated the members of the Kledos Family—although it turned out that all that was a disguise.

What adventurous uncle.

What sharp-tongued aunt.

What grandfather, upright yet extremely popular with the ladies.

All of these were false.

Even the appearance of Linda Camille did not change Marinda's impression.

After all, emotions are something that can't be accurately measured.

Who can ensure that unexpected events won't happen?

But the unexpected should not happen over and over!

So, was Arthur's grandfather really that popular with the ladies?

Marinda guessed inwardly, yet her face showed just the right amount of surprise.

"You and Arthur's grandfather?"

Marinda did not hide her curiosity.

Madam Susan's intimate demeanor at this time had already signaled a 'private gathering', so naturally, some things could be asked, and some boundaries could be slightly crossed.

"If possible, I would hope Arthur could call me grandma."

Madam Susan said bluntly.

This lady knew well that for Arthur to 'Ascend Step' more smoothly, she must occupy a pivotal and justified position.

Only then would she be eligible to scheme something.

Marinda, of course, did not know the lady's schemes.

But Marinda's intuition told her that this matter was not simple.

Almost instinctively, an expression of apology appeared on Marinda's face.

"I'm sorry, Madam Susan.

Arthur has never discussed these matters with me."

Marinda said, her face and eyes both showing apology.

Of course, this was all a facade.

You say Arthur needs to call you grandma, so he must call you grandma?

Impossible.

Arthur has never mentioned you to me.

Although I can't directly prove what Arthur's attitude towards you is, this ambiguous attitude is enough for me not to have any more scruples.

At least...

I won't be dominated by you.

With her own thoughts, Marinda was about to bow after saying this.

What you think inside is one thing.

What you do is another.

As long as it doesn't hurt my fundamental interests, I don't care about these things.

Of course, Marinda was not a person who just played defense.

In her words, there were also traps hidden.

Arthur and I haven't mentioned you, but you are so passionate, something must have happened between you and Old Charlie, Arthur's grandfather, right?

Please do tell.

As soon as you open your mouth, you will no longer have the status of an elder.

After all, given what happened between you and Arthur's grandfather, how could I possibly call you grandma?

Moreover, Marinda believed that Madam Susan wouldn't truly accept her bow.

In fact, that was the case.

Just as Marinda made her move, she was stopped by Madam Susan.

"There's no need for that between us—could you tell me about your dealings with Arthur?"

Madam Susan lightly reprimanded by tapping Marinda's arm, beginning to subtly shift the topic.

This lady wouldn't willingly step into Marinda's verbal trap and directly lament her helpless situation with Old Charlie.

Once she lamented, she truly couldn't solidify the title of 'grandma'.

So, Madam Susan cleverly chose another angle to approach.

"It started just as some cooperation.

You know, my business hasn't been as smooth as imagined, so I had to seek some external power to make it succeed.

And during this time, I met Arthur.

Do you know?

The first time I saw Arthur, the wariness in his eyes was almost palpable.

And afterward, he told me that this was a warning from Grandfather Charlie, something to be wary of.

Since his childhood, he had been trained in various ways by Grandfather Charlie.

"Old Charlie must have gone through something, right?"

"Otherwise, he wouldn't have done it."

Marinda said, sighing.

However, after speaking, she shifted the topic back to Old Charlie.

What did she and Arthur have to talk about?

Could it be that every time she "dealt" with Arthur, she was passive?

Or is this so-called 'pregnancy' just a mutually beneficial arrangement between them?

Or perhaps, are they aiming to gain even more?

Not suitable.

None of these topics are suitable.

So, it's better to bring it back to Old Charlie.

Because Marinda found out that Madam Susan is very sensitive about Old Charlie.

And this?

It will become her advantage.

As for an advantage in her hands, Marinda would not give it up.

When you hit someone, you aim for where it hurts.

In conversation, you naturally exploit the other person's discomfort.

"What could that old bastard endure?

"It was just that one time when he went camping with some twins, and I found out about it."

Madam Susan snorted.

"He didn't deceive you with excuses like being busy at work, did he?"

Marinda asked, seizing the opportunity.

"Not really.

He was originally camping with a woman, but something urgent came up at her home, and she had to leave early.

I felt sorry for Old Charlie being left alone at the campsite, so I hurried over during the night.

Then, I saw him discussing the origins of life with the twins he had just met at the campsite."

Madam Susan said, clearly annoyed.

Marinda: ...

'Is this thing I can hear for free?

Were your times this wild and straightforward?

Wasn't your era supposed to be conservative?

Also, what's the deal with Arthur's grandfather, Old Charlie?

A human succubus?'

Marinda began to lose control and started to ramble.

Madam Susan seemed to notice Marinda's thoughts as she sighed.

"Actually, I'm used to it.

When I saw those twins, I wasn't really angry ..."

Madam Susan's words aroused even more curiosity in Marinda.

"So, you?"

Marinda asked.

"It was the next day when I left the campsite, that old bastard was saying goodbye to every lady in the campsite—he had already memorized the faces, names, and hobbies of all twenty-five ladies there.

That old bastard!"

Madam Susan couldn't help but snort again.

Marinda was truly stunned.

Remembering the names and faces of twenty-five ladies in a short time, she could do that too.

Asking about hobbies is a bit challenging, but not impossible.

But ...

Why was it on the second day when leaving the campsite?

The second day!

The previous night, wasn't Old Charlie with the twins?

What were you doing there?

Weren't you supposed to slap Old Charlie and leave?

How did it become the next day?

Marinda felt her understanding shattering.

And at this moment, Madam Susan gently took hold of Marinda's arm, speaking softly—

"So, you should understand how difficult it is for Arthur, right?"

Subconsciously, Marinda nodded.

But just as she nodded, Marinda suddenly became alert.

That's not right!

Chapter 556: Dream!

How did Madam Susan seize control of the conversation!

Realizing this, Marinda was about to take control again, but before she could open her mouth, Madam Susan had already pulled her towards the study.

Marinda was given no chance at all.

Marinda found this lady to be more troublesome than she had imagined.

Since the beginning, although the lady occasionally sighed and snorted, upon closer reflection, she always maintained an elegant smile.

That sighing and snorting seemed more like a verbal accessory to her speech.

Yet, it captivated her.

Marinda admitted that the love stories of the older generation were indeed pleasing to hear.

But she reminded herself, she could not be captivated again later.

However, the next scene was something Marinda could never have anticipated—

"Why is there an ashtray here?"

"Why are tobacco leaves soaking in this barrel?"

"Why are there stimulants in the little bottle on this bookshelf?"

"And—

Why are there tulips here?"

As soon as she entered the study, Madam Susan's expression darkened after a brief survey.

Then the lady took several deep breaths, and when she looked at Marinda again, her expression was grave.

"Marinda, perhaps you do not understand the significance of this child.

But for most of us, the first fourth-generation of the Kledos Family holds an extraordinary significance.

He or she will be our legacy.

Therefore, we must be extremely careful with him or her."

Madam Susan's gravity... no.

More precisely, Madam Susan's 'we' really made Marinda's scalp tingle.

With the previous context, Marinda roughly understood what this 'we' specifically referred to.

The woman who left early due to family matters.

That pair of twins.

And Madam Susan.

I wonder if Ms. Camille is included?

She probably is, isn't she?

Could there be other ladies involved?

Most likely, yes.

So...

Have I already been surreptitiously observed by many?

The feeling of being stealthily watched is definitely not a pleasant thing.

At least, Marinda was already finding it hard to breathe at this moment.

She unconsciously pulled out her pipe, planning to smoke and calm herself down.

But before she could light it, Madam Susan snatched the pipe away.

Marinda did not notice Madam Susan's movement, and the pipe was gone from her hand.

Huh?!!

Marinda looked at Madam Susan with great surprise.

And Madam Susan merely smiled faintly.

"Marinda, you don't think that I became the chief steward of the South Los House just because I'm good at managing things, do you?

Rest assured, I know you chose 'Smoke.'"

"But there is always an alternative at any time."

With that, Madam Susan pulled out a packet of tobacco from her bosom.

"I got this tobacco from someone; rest assured, the taste is nearly the same, but it has no side effects, and it will definitely not affect the fetus.

Moreover, it will enhance your power a little."

Even through the bag, Marinda could feel the spirituality on the tobacco.

Clearly, this was the work of a Potion Master.

Using a Potion Master to make tobacco...

Isn't that too extravagant?

As a seasoned pipe enthusiast, Marinda had not thought of inviting a Potion Master to make some specially functioned tobacco for her.

But without exception, they had all refused.

It wasn't a matter of money, it was a matter of dignity.

Those Potion Masters thought Marinda was challenging their dignity.

Thus, the matter was dropped.

But now...

This matter just happened?

Looking at the tobacco in her hands, Marinda felt even more acutely the power of the older generation.

Of course, it wasn't the end.

After Madam Susan had walked around the study, she looked toward several secret sentries within the manor—

"Their placement is good, but their strength isn't up to par.

Somebody is adept at training people. I will have her send someone over.

Also, there must be spies from other powers here, right?

I know you want to fish, but there are still dangers. I will have someone clean them up for you. I can explain everything about their backing forces, except for the one from the Inner Bay.

Whether you want their properties or direct cash compensation, either is possible."

Madam Susan's words carried a tone of negotiation.

But they inexplicably pressured Marinda.

The invisible pressure made Marinda feel breathless.

Then, after having a lunch that Marinda found difficult, the lady, seeing that Madam Susan had no plans to leave, said straightforwardly—

"Madam Susan, I want to find Arthur.

I miss him."

Marinda's face turned slightly red as she said this.

It wasn't a facade.

It was genuinely red.

Because Marinda felt ashamed of her own desire to flee from the battlefield.

At the moment, she did not want to face Madam Susan.

It wasn't that Madam Susan was bad.

On the contrary, Madam Susan had been too kind to her.

So kind that she almost felt as if she was under an illusion technique.

This extreme kindness, unreal to her experience, was something Marinda had never encountered before, even though she was exceptionally skilled and extraordinarily talented.

At this moment, she didn't know how to face it.

So, she could only retreat temporarily.

"Yes, go ahead.

Arthur surely misses you, too."

Madam Susan smiled and nodded.

Without any hesitation, Marinda had Edwin prepare the carriage.

As for a more convenient method?

Just now, Madam Susan had taken away all the tobacco leaves except for that one special packet.

And that packet specially treated by the Potion Master?

Without confirming it was absolutely safe, Marinda wouldn't try it.

Madam Susan also left.

However, she did not enter Cork Street.

The two parted ways on West Mok Avenue.

Marinda watched the plain carriage leave, unconsciously letting out a sigh of relief.

Afterward, she looked towards No. 2 Cork Street, immediately gritting her teeth.

"Hiss!"

Arthur was awoken from a dream.

He had just dreamed that he stood inside a two-story building, holding a cup of hot tea, leaning against a window, watching the storm outside, when suddenly, a figure appeared in his view.

The figure held up a white umbrella, dressed in a dazzling wedding dress,

More importantly, even though her face was covered, Arthur could recognize that it was Marinda.

Marinda also recognized him, then, she revealed a charming smile and softly said to someone behind her—

'Look, that's your father.

Go, call him dad.'

Upon hearing this voice, Arthur subconsciously looked behind Marinda.

Then, he saw two children rushing towards him.

And then, he awoke.

"What kind of crap dream is this?"

Arthur murmured, wiping the cold sweat from his forehead.

His relationship with Marinda was purely a business partnership.

Anything more?

It was merely brotherly love.

How could there be children?

Joking!

As he thought thus, Arthur picked up a cup of hot tea.

But for some reason, his hand holding the teacup wouldn't stop trembling.

Ms. Anna, seeing Arthur's constantly trembling teacup, sighed helplessly and asked—

"Do you need me to answer the door?"

Chapter 557 Arthur's Complement!

Arthur did not stop Ms. Anna from going to open the door.

Marinda's arrival was imminent, and given the relationship between the two that was known to the outside world, there was absolutely no way she would be turned away at this time.

And what reason did he have to refuse?

None!

It was just a dream a moment ago.

He, Arthur, the 'Spirit Medium' of South Los, scared by a dream?

Impossible!

It wasn't any kind of premonition dream!

Arthur was well aware of the thinness of his 'Spirit Medium Bloodline.'

He simply could not, and definitely would not have a premonition dream.

As for the one in ten thousand chance that it was a premonition dream...

No way!

Arthur was very certain because—

Marinda!

Marinda's distorted orientation would never allow such a thing to happen!

"Good afternoon, Ms. Anna,"

Marinda greeted as Ms. Anna opened the door.

"Good afternoon, Marinda,"

Ms. Anna responded with a smile.

Following behind Marinda, Edwin who had packed today's paperwork for Marinda into two large boxes also swiftly moved them aside, nodding respectfully.

To this Ms. Anna, no prompting was needed for Edwin to know exactly which attitude to take.

Not only because Arthur stood behind Ms. Anna, but also because Ms. Anna herself deserved everyone's awe.

"Edwin, would you like a cup of hot tea?"

Arthur called out to Marinda's carriage driver.

"Thank you, Young Master Arthur,

However, I need to make a trip to the docks — the Cold Winter Festival is coming up—I need to get everything sorted before the long holiday.

Especially the household items and bonuses that need to be distributed as soon as possible.

Otherwise, those fellows get uneasy!"

After setting the boxes down on the desk in the Spirit Medium Parlor, Edwin said with a smile, bowed, and left No. 2 Cork Street.

Arthur did not stop him.

Arthur knew that as Marinda's confidant, Edwin had far more important tasks to attend to than an average carriage driver.

The door closed once again.

Immediately after, with only their own people left inside No. 2 Cork Street, Arthur turned and headed to the kitchen. Moments later, he returned from the kitchen with a cup of hot tea and placed it in front of Marinda.

The whole process was very natural.

But as he withdrew his arm, it slightly approached Marinda.

The kind of subtlety that left no trace.

And when he saw the hair on the back of Marinda's neck instantly stand up, Arthur breathed a long sigh of relief deep inside.

He knew it!

Everything was fine! All good!

What kind of nonsense premonition dream?

How could that dreadful image possibly occur with Marinda in this state?

What a joke!

Immediately, Arthur dismissed his inner worries.

Then, a touch of schadenfreude appeared in his tone—

"We've just met, and here you are at my place again. There's no need to take your acting to such an extent, is there?"

As he spoke, Arthur brought out some biscuits from the kitchen.

After pulling out a chair nearby, he sat down with the air of someone about to enjoy a good show.

A busy person like Marinda wouldn't visit twice in one day for no reason.

Unless something significant had happened.

But if it were a 'truly important matter,' Marinda would not show up so 'casually.' She would definitely appear directly inside No. 2 Cork Street to explain the situation and discuss solutions together.

This kind of 'casual' appearance,

It meant that something definitely had happened.

But it wasn't anything truly critical.

It was probably just a nuisance,

And one that was giving Marinda a headache.

Combining some recent events, Arthur could more or less guess what was going on.

It must have been that Madam Susan who paid a visit.

Only Madam Susan could make Marinda take notice and feel a headache—because of Madam Susan's status, which would tie Marinda's hands and prevent her from using her usual tactics, causing her to be on the losing end during their showdown and forcing her to seek refuge here at his place.

Arthur expressed regret for not having witnessed the confrontation between Marinda and Madam Susan firsthand.

He guessed that the scene must have been quite spectacular.

Indeed, one might have been able to hear some explosive news.

For Madam Susan to want to take the lead in her conversation with Marinda was no easy task, of course, she needed to leak something to get Marinda's attention.

However, he didn't see it at the time.

Arthur wouldn't mind getting a recap afterward.

Didn't he even bring out his cookies?

These cookies were baked by Ms. Anna while he was asleep.

Although she was just learning, the taste turned out surprisingly good.

Having tasted one as soon as they were out of the kitchen, Arthur had already savored a piece.

After throwing two cookies that looked like Kuliqi and Kiri into his mouth, Arthur gave Ms. Anna a thumbs-up, appreciating the flavor.

After tasting one, Marinda was also surprised by the flavor and immediately nodded appreciatively to Ms. Anna.

Then, the lady's gaze returned to Arthur.

Her expression became less friendly in an instant.

"What happened?

I haven't provoked you!"

Arthur had an innocent look, but deep down, he was certain that Marinda must have been extremely embarrassed in front of Madam Susan.

"The ashtray I carved myself is gone.

The tobacco steeped in fine 20-year-old whiskey is gone.

The tulips I planted myself are also gone.

And all these were taken by your dear Grandma Susan—I can call her Grandma Susan with no problem, right? In front of me, she clearly thinks of you as her grandson.

That caring look, if she said you were her own grandson, I would believe it.

Moreover, I now suspect that your Grandma Susan became the head housekeeper of the Earl of South Los just to prepare to seize South Los for you.

Perhaps one day she'll just package up the earl and send him to your bed.

If the earl ever becomes pregnant, that would be just perfect.

Without any effort, South Los would belong to the Kledos family."

Marinda launched a sarcastic barrage at Arthur.

And Arthur?

He watched Marinda's current state with a cheerful smile.

Moreover, he firmly memorized how Marinda looked at that moment.

Because Arthur was well aware.

He might not see a Marinda looking like that again for a long time, or maybe, this might be the only time in his life.

How could he not cherish it?

And, if he didn't firmly remember Marinda looking angry and flustered, wouldn't all his previous anxiety have been in vain?

This wasn't about revenge.

It was simply...

Compensation!

Yes, compensation!

Arthur's compensation!

Marinda was no fool; seeing Arthur's expression, she immediately understood.

"You knew all along?!"

Marinda's voice rose and her fists clenched.

Arthur did not deny it.

Denying it at this point, Marinda would definitely not believe it.

Furthermore, it would be too uninteresting.

Of course, Arthur didn't want to really affect his relationship with Marinda.

So, before enjoying the drama, Arthur had already prepared.

Arthur first pointed to a document on the side, then finally smiled and said—

"Let's deal with work first, afterwards I'll take you to play a game as compensation.

Trust me...

You'll definitely be satisfied."

Chapter 558 Arthur's Game!

Play a game with me?

Marinda looked at Arthur with suspicion.

This lady's face was full of doubt.

Moreover, she was quite forthright about her skepticism—

"I feel like you're up to no good.

And, a game as a form of compensation...

Do you think I'm a child?"

Marinda crossed her arms in front of her chest, leaning back in her chair, her deep blue eyes unblinkingly fixed on Arthur.

Immediately, Arthur burst into laughter.

"You can't play adult games, can you?

I am doing this to take care of you!

Get to work, woman.

I'm going back to catch some more sleep."

Without giving Marinda another chance to speak, Arthur picked up the small cookies in front of him and lay back down on the floor mattress.

In recent days, he had been severely sleep-deprived.

His "Rituals" and "Bloodline" were notifying him of it.

Arthur had no desire for any accidents to occur.

Of course, catching up on sleep was necessary.

Before drifting into dreamland, it was indeed a pleasure to watch Marinda busy herself and to munch on some snacks.

As Arthur lay there, he thought about how the northwest wind howled outside, the heavy snow twirling midair, while poor Marinda swept the streets in her thin clothes.

And him, Arthur?

He would naturally be sitting by a warm fire, with a copper pot for hotpotting mutton.

It had to be mutton hotpot!

Not hotpotting that mutton would be an insult to Marinda's frozen body.

Just thinking about it felt wonderful.

"I suspect you're thinking about something indecent."

Marinda put down her pen, her gaze shifting to Arthur.

It wasn't that she wasn't focused, but Arthur's smile was just too distracting for her.

Especially the corners of his mouth, that barely-there smile, was simply asking for a slap.

She really wanted to smack him across the face.

"Not at all.

I was just recalling some childhood memories—back then, my grandfather used to write something here too, while my parents, uncles, and aunts were busy around him. I would play here.

Time flies so fast."

Arthur pointed to where he used to play, then after a sigh, he turned over.

The cookies were finished.

It was time to sleep.

As for the words just spoken?

'Spirit Medium' words, do you believe them?

Marinda never believed in the words of 'Spirit Mediums', but when Arthur spoke those words, Marinda still hesitated.

This lady couldn't discern the truth from lies.

But a moment later, she was certain Arthur was tricking her.

Because—

Huh-huh!

Mixed within the long breaths were snoring sounds.

No person could let out such a sigh, and then fall into deep sleep so instantly.

Click!

The pen in the lady's hand snapped.

Ink splattered, the table a mess.

Even Marinda got some on her.

But the lady simply cleaned up the mess with an indifferent expression.

She was waiting for the game Arthur talked about.

If she wasn't satisfied...

That would be the time to settle the total account.

Thinking this, the lady smiled and declined Ms. Anna's offer of help, beginning to tidy up the messy table.

Meanwhile, Arthur opened one eye.

'Tsk!

I need to think of a new game.

The last one won't work.'

A philosopher once said if she's naïve, show her the world's splendors; if she's already heart-weary, just a merry-go-round.

Marinda was clearly the latter.

And it was the reinforced, toughened, upgraded version.

So Arthur planned to use the "Did you smile at the stove front, asking if the porridge is warm?" approach.

However, the scene that just unfolded told Arthur that wasn't going to work.

Arthur was certain that if he dared to ask Marinda if the porridge was warm, she would slam the bowl of porridge onto his face and then ask HIM if it was warm.

Even worse...

It would be asking if the blood was warm.

Arthur definitely didn't want to experience any of that.

Therefore, he came up with a whole new plan.

What's the most important thing for a Spirit Medium?

Is it the charm in their words?

Or the personal skills that come with a variety of hidden machinery?

None of the above!

It is, adaptability!

Adaptability is the most important quality of a "Spirit Medium." A "Spirit Medium" that doesn't have three sets of contingency plans isn't a qualified "Spirit Medium."

And to become an excellent "Spirit Medium"?

You need at least five sets of contingency plans!

At that time, Arthur asked Old Charlie, who had spoken these words, how many plans he had prepared?

Old Charlie replied with a mysterious expression.

$N+1$!

At first, Arthur didn't know what N represented.

But lately, he's come to understand a bit.

Of course, he couldn't reach Old Charlie's level, but as an excellent "Spirit Medium," he still had five standard contingency plans.

As for a "Spirit Medium" needing necromancy abilities?

What era are we in? Who still needs that kind of traditional Spirit Medium?

People need to look ahead.

The future is where things get exciting.

After all, everyone shows their behinds in the past.

The world is like a huge makeshift theater troupe.

Everything and everyone needs to be seen from the front because from the front, it all looks shiny and beautiful, all is well. If you insist on looking from behind, then you need to be prepared mentally.

Because—

The world won't spare those who pry into its affairs.

It will crush anyone who tries to scrutinize it, bit by bit, inch by inch, until the person softly says, "Living, isn't that how everyone does it?" before it will let them go.

If the person says, "This is life, isn't it?" then the world will treat them kindly.

Because this is a kind person, deserving of gentle and kind treatment.

Unfortunately, Arthur wasn't a traditionally good man.

He was just a tiny bit too sharp around the edges.

So Arthur chose the lifestyle he liked: although sometimes there might be a tiny bit of hardship for others, most of the time, he was happy.

"May this happiness continue!"

With a simple and steady thought, Arthur's breathing became long and even once again.

In front of her desk, Marinda continued to work hard, her head buried in her tasks.

The sound of the fountain pen scratching across the pages and the deep breathing ebbed and flowed.

The two didn't interfere with each other but instead complemented one another.

Whenever the pen's scratching on the pages became too frequent, the snoring would involuntarily rise in pitch.

And when there was a pause in the scratching, the snoring would stop.

Anyway, Arthur tried his best to accommodate Marinda.

At first, Marinda suspected that Arthur was doing it on purpose, but after two deliberate tests, she discovered that Arthur was truly asleep.

'Asleep... They're all like this when they sleep.

What a rascal!' Marinda thought as she picked up the box and documents and headed to the hallway.

Arthur opened one eye again, his mouth curving into a smirk.

Then he truly fell asleep.

Time passes quickly when you're asleep.

When Arthur opened his eyes again, it was already evening.

Marinda, who had finished her work, sat in a high-backed chair with a cup of hot tea in one hand and the other hand resting on her raised knee, her posture exuding aggressiveness. Her deep blue eyes stared intently at Arthur, yet her voice was full of tenderness—

"What about your game?

I can't wait." she said, as she placed her teacup down on the table beside her.

Arthur grinned and shrugged, then went straight to describing the game.

Marinda was taken aback and asked instinctively—

"Are you sure?!"

Chapter 559: Bored people are always looking for fun games!

At this moment, Marinda looked at Arthur as if staring at a madman.

There was no disdain meant.

If anyone suggested a game like "We don't know what to eat tonight, so let's just follow a random person on the street to see what he or she eats and then eat whatever they eat," Marinda would consider them insane.

What kind of mindset would one need to come up with such a game?

And...

Why did she find it interesting?

Thinking about it, the sense of anticipation within the unknown yet within a safe range was indeed intriguing.

Of course, Marinda would not admit it.

"Just how bored were you to come up with such a game?"

Marinda sighed and asked.

As the lady posed the question, she went to grab her coat.

"It was clear how bored I was when I could count that the plum blossoms were seventeen in number," Arthur said.

His words baffled Marinda.

Plum blossoms exist in the world before her eyes.

Yet, in South Los, they are quite rare.

Mostly found in Inner Bay, and even more so in North County during winter.

Was he hinting at something about plum blossoms?

Inner Bay?

Or North County?

Hmm, should she combine it with the keyword of seventeen?

Seventeen plum blossoms?

What does that mean?

Marinda began to ponder.

Arthur noticed, but he wouldn't remind Marinda that he had merely spoken on a whim; after all, watching Marinda in thought was another part of the game.

After donning their coats and greeting Ms. Anna, who was making the bed, Arthur and Marinda headed out.

"Be careful, stay safe, and come back early!"

Ms. Anna called out loudly to the two running out.

Then she let out a sigh, similar to that of an older sister's exasperation.

"The food outside isn't clean," she said, wandering into the kitchen.

Arthur and Marinda resolved their dinner outside.

But for the late-night snack, they still relied on her cooking.

Arthur and Marinda swiftly left No. 2 Cork Street behind, heading straight into West Mok Avenue.

As the Cold Winter Festival drew near, the whole of West Mok Avenue was decorated, and most businesses hung banners that showcased their own logos.

The brightly colored banners flapped in the cold wind like flags, adding a festive atmosphere to the people of South Los.

Those walking on the street all wore smiles, dressed appropriately, either alone or in groups, venturing in and out of every shop in sight, searching for gifts for themselves or their families as the festival approached.

Marinda turned her head, raising an eyebrow at Arthur, signaling to start.

Arthur just laughed.

"No way, no way.

Does our Lady of the Long Night really want to play this game?

The ones who appear on West Mok Avenue two days before 'Cold Winter Festival' are those who are too rich and too bored. Do you really just want to try a different restaurant?

If that's the case, I would rather go back and eat at Grandma Andor's Kitchen.

Chances are, many of them are heading there for a meal."

Arthur chuckled and waved his finger at Marinda.

"So, do you want to go to Rat Street?"

Marinda asked with interest.

She admitted that what Arthur said made sense.

Those who appeared on West Mok Avenue during 'Cold Winter Festival' were wealthy and idle folks; following them to eat would just be a change of restaurants.

Not interesting at all.

And Marinda didn't mind going to Rat Street.

Unlike Arthur's covert infiltration into Rat Street,

With the fall of the Rat Club, Marinda's power had technically become open and aboveboard in Rat Street.

Why technically open and aboveboard?

Because in South Los, the only one who could truly operate openly and aboveboard was the Countess of South Los.

She was the true master of South Los!

"If Wiggins were here, I wouldn't mind,

but the current Wiggins is undergoing special training at Rick Farm.

Believe it or not, if we show up, it might cause a bigger commotion than West Mok Avenue?"

Arthur rejected Marinda's suggestion.

"What about you?"

Marinda looked toward Arthur.

When Arthur pulled out a piece of paper filled with the names of places from his pocket, a bright light flashed in the lady's deep blue eyes.

"You want to draw lots?"

"Of course!

Since it's random, let's go all out with randomness!"

Arthur nodded and handed all the pieces of paper to Marinda.

This was to demonstrate the fairness of the game.

He had proposed the game.

So naturally, the destination of the game should be decided by Marinda.

Marinda didn't hesitate, crumpling all the slips of paper, and then put them in her coat pocket before opening it wide.

It meant for Arthur to pick one.

Arthur demonstrated fairness.

Naturally, the lady wouldn't be left behind.

As for picking one from the hand or tossing one out?

Don't be ridiculous.

With their eyesight, they could easily discern what was written on each paper.

Marinda had not held back before.

Naturally, Arthur wouldn't act coy either.

He reached into the pocket of Marinda's coat, and once again, the hairs on Marinda's neck stood on end—Arthur saw them clearly and even took the time to count how many there were.

As a young, kind, and upright 'Spirit Medium', Arthur deliberately took his time, and just before Marinda was about to feel genuine discomfort, he pulled out a slip of paper—

Old Town!

"Shall we go?"

Arthur asked.

"Let's go!"

Marinda nodded.

With a wave of their hands, a carriage by West Mok Avenue immediately came over to them.

And when Arthur announced their destination, the coachman looked at them in surprise.

South Los might be the wealthiest place in South County,

but this did not mean there were no poor areas in South Los.

Old Town was the poorest area in South Los.

And Arthur and Marinda's attire didn't at all seem like the kind for Old Town, where there are impoverished families whose greatest wish is to support a store apprentice at all costs, to escape their original station, and to allow their children to rise to a higher position and achieve social mobility.

However, the coachman said nothing more.

Moreover, he quickly regained his composure.

Because there were too many wealthy people in South Los.

It was not strange for some wealthy people to do anything when they were bored.

Like Arthur and Marinda visiting Old Town out of curiosity wasn't unprecedented; after all, one glance and they would retreat.

By then, he would be able to earn double the wages.

Thinking this, the coachman snapped his whip and set the carriage in motion.

Crack!

The sound was crisp.

The wheels rolled on.

Meanwhile—

In some part of Old Town, Alvin's face was brutally struck by a whip.

Crack!

Pain spread across his cheek, but before Alvin could react, a kick that followed knocked the bakery apprentice from Cork Street down to the ground.

Chapter 560 Arthur: Am I sneaky and deceptive?

Old Town in South Los was even more dilapidated and cramped than imagined.

The uneven rooftops, the pockmarked roads, all in all, it was more than twice as bad as Mule Street in Dort District, where at least Arthur could still sense a shred of decency.

But in Old Town?

All the streets gave off one feeling—

Decay!

It was the kind of decay that had seen splendor, then complete desolation, and was then truly shattered in the real sense of the word.

One might even say it was...

Shattered to pieces!

Before the 'Seven Years' War' began, Old Town in South Los, apart from Shire District, was the most affluent area and, moreover, it had the largest population.

But with the start of the 'Seven Years' War,' a large number of men from Old Town were conscripted, and everything changed.

Especially after The Old Earl of South Los suffered a defeat on the battlefield and Old Town had to conscript a large number of men again, the decline became unstoppable.

During those seven years, every household in Old Town of South Los sent at least two men to the battlefield.

Sometimes, an entire family of men would go to war.

And after the war ended, how many could return to South Los?

Less than thirty percent.

Therefore, to maintain the prosperity of South Los as before, The Old Earl began to accept a large number of people left homeless after the war.

This was a necessity.

But it was also something that was absolutely criticized.

The influx of a large number of outsiders naturally led to conflicts with the original inhabitants.

Especially in Old Town, where there was a shortage of men, the conflicts were particularly common.

To address this, The Old Earl then established New Town.

New Town was originally created to accommodate newcomers, but the better living conditions also attracted people from Old Town.

Then, Dort District, filled with factories, emerged.

Its attraction was even greater.

As a result, Old Town was drained of the last bit of vitality.

Those who stayed in Old Town were, apart from the elderly, helpless families, and people with special circumstances.

Although it was slightly better than other places, the somber atmosphere was enough to make Marinda frown.

"I came here during this year's 'Summer Celebration Day.'

Back then, it was still much more vibrant than now."

The lady said.

"It's winter now, too cold, vitality is all hidden away."

Arthur said this as he stood up his walking stick.

Marinda saw Arthur's posture and knew what he wanted to do.

Staff positioning!

When you're lost, you can stand up your own staff!

The head of the staff will guide you in the direction you desire!

In South Los, Inner Bay, many novice adventure enthusiasts liked to do this.

And the final outcome?

Those with money and power continued their adventurous lives.

Those without money and power became the purest of fertilizers, nourishing nature and those who told them about the benefits of adventuring.

Of course, the existence of survivorship bias, in fact, made staff positioning quite popular to some extent.

Lucky people are always enviable, aren't they?

However, this does not include Marinda.

The lady watched Arthur and couldn't help but hold her forehead, looking very regretful,

"Regretting it?"

Heh heh heh, too late!"

Arthur looked at Marinda with a strange laugh, then released his palm.

As he let go of his palm, the staff carved with Pendragon's cat head fell straight in one direction—of course, it didn't fall completely.

Just before the staff was about to touch the ground completely, Arthur caught it.

He certainly didn't wish for his staff to roll into the sewage.

Marinda glanced over.

"Doing that will greatly reduce the 'accuracy'!"

The lady said, striding forth.

"'Accuracy'?"

Do you really believe in that kind of thing?

"It's never 100%, not even 99%. It's inaccurate—just like justice that arrives late."

Arthur shrugged his shoulders and followed.

"Can justice that arrives late still be called justice?"

If justice can be delayed, then revenge is justified.

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!

A blood debt must be paid with blood!"

Marinda frowned, and then, she let out a cold snort.

Clearly, with this lady's character, she was destined not to approve of such an argument.

And Arthur?

He was clapping softly at the side.

However, what he said was,

"You're wrong."

"Hm?"

Marinda looked at Arthur, curiosity flickering in her eyes.

She knew Arthur well enough to understand that he was not a 'kind' person; angering him and hoping for peaceful days was out of the question.

Therefore, Marinda was somewhat looking forward to Arthur's opinion.

"A blood debt must be paid with blood!

And what's more, you need to—

Eradicate them root and branch!"

Arthur said with a smile on his face.

Bright lights appeared in Marinda's deep blue eyes; she agreed with Arthur's words, of course, that was internally. Outwardly?

The lady feigned disdain and retorted,

"Heh, eradicating root and branch is easy to say but hard to do.

At the simplest, what would you do when facing a child?"

"Simple, give him a knife and a piece of candy."

Arthur laughed.

A knife and candy?

Even with Marinda's intelligence, she was momentarily caught off guard.

Arthur continued—

"Give him a choice between the knife and candy.

If he chooses the knife, it proves he has a murderous intent, and such a child cannot be spared!

If he chooses the candy, it proves he is cunning, and such a child cannot be spared!

If he chooses both, it proves he is extremely greedy, and such a child cannot be spared!

If he chooses neither, it proves he is utterly rebellious, and such a child cannot be spared!"

Marinda was startled.

Afterward, the lady looked at Arthur and made her assessment.

"To kill is to kill; yet you find so many excuses.

You really are a sinister and hypocritical person!"

As for Arthur, he was still smiling.

"Am I sinister and hypocritical?"

If I were sinister, I'd pretend to leave, come back in disguise, and as soon as I enter, I'd cry out loudly, 'Too late! Too late! I'm still one step behind!'

Then, pretending to be shocked upon discovering him, I'd joyously prepare to take him away.

If he had brothers or sisters, they would surely emerge from some secret chamber or passageway I didn't know about.

At that time, I would take care of all of them.

After that?

Of course, I'd come back in disguise again, extremely grief-stricken, to collect my friend's body, bury him, and check for any that slipped through the net."

It was evening, but the dim light shining on Arthur's smiling face was chilling.

The coachman who had brought Arthur and Marinda just now had been planning to take a return fare, but after hearing Arthur's words, he turned the carriage around without a second thought, whipped up the horses, and ran off directly.

The coachman was scared.

Probably to the point of having nightmares.

Yet Marinda was contemplating seriously.

After a while, she nodded in apparent approval.

"Good idea!"

Marinda exclaimed, then asked curiously—

"And what if it's hypocrisy?"