

Great Master 561

Chapter 561: The Sweetness of Returning Home!

Arthur, faced with Marinda's question, did not respond directly.

Instead, he took two quick steps forward.

As he walked, he said,

"If I were being dishonest, I would graciously say that I'll let you off this time, but remember my face, the next time we meet, I won't be merciful."

Then, I turned and walked away.

Suddenly, I turned back.

"Hee hee hee, my dear child, we meet again!"

As Arthur spoke, he suddenly spun around and gave Marinda a bizarre laugh.

Marinda immediately rolled her eyes.

"Childish!"

The lady judged.

"Isn't that considered dishonest?"

Do you really want me to add another line: I can live with guilt all my life, but I cannot live in constant fear, huh?

Isn't that a bit redundant?

It would be better to say: I hid much better than you back then, that's why I survived."

Arthur spread his hands, a look of helplessness on his face.

"That's not good either.

If it were me, I would change my identity, adopt this child, and as a father, provide him with love and care, painstakingly teach him all kinds of knowledge, and ensure he has a childhood sweetheart and kind neighbors. Then, when he comes of age, have a mighty 'enemy' kill me, his sweetheart kidnapped, and the kind neighbor's family eradicated for trying to inform him.

He would avenge me.

And that is what I would most like to see."

Marinda said earnestly.

"That's too long, too many variables.

And, people, they are complex.

You never know how terrifying the power of habit can be.

Just like you don't know how terrifying the power of emotions can be.

Of course, you also missed one point."

Arthur shook his head, disagreeing.

"Which point?"

Marinda grew curious.

"I do not allow an enemy more powerful than myself to live."

Arthur paused, whispering into Marinda's ear.

Arthur's sudden closeness made Marinda's hair stand on end.

The visceral rejection her body felt was about to make the lady nauseous.

But at that moment, this lady was captivated by Arthur's words, she turned her head and looked at Arthur's face, so close at hand.

Especially that mischievous smile curling his lips.

For the first time, she realized how much she resonated with Arthur.

What he thought was the same as what she thought.

He and she...

Ugh!

The exclamations in her mind did not stop her body's visceral reaction.

Marinda immediately turned her head and vomited.

"Are you alright?"

Arthur asked with feigned concern, suppressing a smile at the corner of his mouth.

He was clearly doing it on purpose.

Marinda knew that Arthur was doing it on purpose.

Thus, the lady glared at Arthur.

And at this moment—

"Are you alright?"

A crisp voice rang out.

A girl dressed in a cloth dress with a washed-out linen cloth as her headscarf approached—about fourteen or fifteen years old, her face was gaunt but her eyes were clean and clear and her palms were also clean. Her voice was very pleasing when she spoke.

In her hand was a basket.

From the wax residue on the edge of the basket, it was clear she was a girl delivering candles.

Definitely not from Old Town.

People in Old Town could not afford candles.

Most of these candles would end up at grocery stores in the Shire District or at pre-ordered households.

If they were the top-grade beeswax candles, they would be delivered to special stores, which then contact buyers of considerable standing.

But the candles in this little girl's basket, judging by the residue, must be Shire District's mainstream candles: animal fat candles.

Like at No. 2 Cork Street, where candles added with pine nut oil are used.

The smell is pleasant and they burn brighter.

Marinda had noticed this little girl earlier.

But she hadn't expected her to come over and show concern.

The girl was clearly struggling herself.

"It's nothing, my wife is just pregnant.

Thank you for your concern, if you don't mind..."

"This one's for you."

Arthur, standing nearby, smiled and waved his hand while pulling out a candy wrapped in waterproof paper.

This was a byproduct of the Mint Elixir Arthur usually concocted: mint candy.

It wasn't adjusted by "Spirituality".

It was just purely sweet and cool.

The little girl was evidently frightened by Arthur's enthusiasm.

Candy was not cheap.

Especially in Old Town, you wouldn't get one all year long.

And the little girl was certain, this candy was expensive.

Because, even though it was wrapped in waterproof paper, she could still smell the sweet scent mixed with mint.

So, the little girl shook her head repeatedly.

"It's okay, I was just asking casually.

If there's nothing else, I'll be leaving."

With that, the little girl turned around and left.

No!

To be more accurate, she turned and ran.

Watching her fleeing figure, Arthur rubbed his nose, looking embarrassed.

This brought about Marinda's merciless teasing.

"That little girl was scared by you.

Did you know?

Your presence just now was like those maimed traffickers."

As Marinda spoke, she took out her handkerchief and wiped her mouth.

Arthur looked surprised.

"Traffickers get maimed?"

"I thought it was the Burning Stake."

"The stake wastes firewood.

Do you think just anyone gets burned at the stake?"

Marinda said irritably.

"True.

So, could we find a group of traffickers and use the small fries as firewood, while the ringleader gets burned?"

Arthur suggested.

Marinda instinctively wanted to object.

However, she then considered it feasible.

Then, just as she was about to discuss with Arthur how to better recycle, she noticed Arthur was looking in the direction the little girl had gone.

"What do you think her family will eat tonight?"

Arthur asked softly.

Marinda immediately understood that the little girl was the person Arthur had chosen.

Regarding this, Marinda did not object.

"Probably not very good,"

Marinda said.

The girl's clothing doomed her family's dinner to be meager, even when the Cold Winter Festival was near.

But what of it?

For just this once, Marinda wouldn't mind.

Because—

This was part of the game.

The two exchanged a smile then followed her.

...

Alma ran out two steps in panic, her face flushed.

Having grown up in Old Town, Alma had learned to discern people early on; that gentleman with the gentle smile was obviously not a bad person and truly wanted to thank her.

But she couldn't accept the candy.

She didn't think a subconscious inquiry deserved such a piece of candy.

To accept it would be too much.

But to refuse it would make her seem disrespectful.

So, Alma ran.

However, Alma still recalled that young gentleman's smile.

It was really kind.

And that young gentleman's wife.

She was really beautiful.

They must be a truly kind-hearted couple, a match made in heaven!

Thinking this, Alma quickened her pace.

Because today was the day her brother Alvin was coming back.

And when he had left last time, her brother had promised her, saying on the day he came back for the Cold Winter Festival, he would bring her candy—

"Maybe not as exquisite as the gentleman's, but it will definitely be sweet.

Yes, surely!"

Chapter 562: Acker's Concession and Patience!

Docklands— —

"Acker! Acker!"

The foreman's shout immediately made Acker stand out from the crowd that had been waiting for a long time.

"Here! Here!"

The graying Acker loudly responded.

Almost sprinting, Alka rushed to the warehouse door.

Edwin glanced at the porter in front of him.

Like the other porters, his skin was darkened, his face full of creases, his body involuntarily bent, and his hands covered in calluses.

Clothes?

There wasn't really anything to speak of as clothes.

They were just rags.

Even though it was winter, there wasn't a proper coat in sight.

Seeing Edwin's examining gaze, Acker immediately revealed a simple smile.

As for starting a conversation?

Acker didn't dare.

He knew his place was just a mere porter, while the sitting Edwin was a big shot—hadn't he seen how the usually proud foreman was nodding and bowing?

Acker would not bring trouble upon himself and his children.

Thinking of his children, Acker felt an unprecedented sense of security at heart.

His son Alvin had already become an apprentice in a bakery.

His daughter Alma had also been able to take odd jobs.

Moreover, the old lady from the candle shop took a liking to Alma, maybe she could send her there to learn the candle-making trade.

Acker lacked worldly knowledge, nor did he comprehend great principles, but he understood that for families like theirs to rise above their station was immensely difficult, so difficult it felt impossible even in dreams.

However, learning a trade meant a way to survive.

That's why, a year ago, he borrowed 100 Suo, and, using his own saved 200 Suo, secured the opportunity for his son Alvin to apprentice in the Cork Street bakery in Shire District.

Only needing to endure for three years, once he mastered the trade, better days would come.

As for his daughter...

Acker had inquired about it at the candle shop.

Although the old lady liked Alma, she required at least 250 Suo, otherwise...

she'd have to marry her son.

Thinking of the old lady's son, Acker frowned secretly.

The son was not a good man.

He had a bad reputation in Old Town.

He was even previously involved in the 'Haite Furniture Store' case.

Although he was inexplicably released in the end, he absolutely could not become his daughter's husband.

'I need to find a different candle shop.

Otherwise, trouble will arise.'

Acker thought anxiously, yet when he saw Edwin flipping through the work register, he immediately collected himself and stood as straight as possible.

When Edwin saw the name Acker under "full attendance for the year," his eyes showed surprise.

Fulfilling full attendance for the year was not easy.

It was not about just clocking in every day but about completing a corresponding amount of work daily!

Like Acker, being a loader, handling two hundred bags a day was considered normal attendance.

Each bag's weight was calculated such that an adult could barely walk a dozen meters with one without gasping for breath.

And that was just the beginning; from morning till afternoon, most people were so exhausted they could hardly walk, and the next day upon waking, they felt like their body fell apart, with no desire to move at all.

To achieve full attendance for the year, Physique aside, required absolutely astounding willpower.

Considering this, Edwin smiled—

"Acker, full attendance for the year.

An extra reward of 30 Suo, two pounds of meat, ten eggs, and ten pounds of fine flour."

Edwin announced loudly.

He didn't set these rewards, but his boss, the great Marinda, did.

Moreover, in addition to these rewards, if the person who completed the task had no misconduct, they could be promoted to a small leader in their field of work, and it would be checked whether there was anything special about them.

Unfortunately, for more than two years, no one had been able to complete it.

Acker was the first.

So when Edwin handed over the money and the meat and eggs to Acker, he also patted Acker's shoulder.

"Keep up the good work."

A single word of encouragement made Acker feel greatly honored.

"O-okay."

Acker began to stutter.

Edwin said nothing more, that one sentence had been enough.

What about the future?

That would naturally be discussed after the 'Cold Winter Festival'.

Afterward, Edwin waved to Acker and returned to his desk to continue distributing benefits to the guild workers—these items had to be distributed before nightfall.

The 'Cold Winter Festival' was in just two days.

According to the rules, there should be a rest three days before the 'Cold Winter Festival'.

Simply put, today was a day off.

However, because the benefits were being distributed, everyone had come and there were no complaints; but if it were delayed by another day, there definitely would be discontent.

As for why not a day earlier and not take up a rest day?

Owners would certainly never ask that question.

The extra rewards, when others around looked toward Acker, their eyes filled with envy and admiration.

These rewards, Marinda had not announced in advance.

The normal benefit was just a pound of meat, five eggs, and two pounds of flour.

There wasn't any money involved.

Clutching what amounted to his full attendance wages for a month, along with the substantial weight of meat, eggs, and flour in his hands, Acker couldn't suppress the smile on his face.

Acker knew he shouldn't be so showy and should keep a low profile, but when he thought about using the money to pay off his loans early, and being able to provide a good meal for his son and daughter during the 'Cold Winter Festival', and that the remaining meat, eggs, and flour could be exchanged for a

good amount of coarse flour and potatoes, which if sparingly used, would be enough for three months' food supply, he really couldn't help himself.

Acker felt his days were increasingly looking hopeful.

Immediately, he hastened toward home in Old Town, carrying his goods.

As for a carriage?

Acker had never ridden in one.

But he had 'ridden in a donkey cart'.

That was during the Seven Years' War, when he was just a teenager. Because he was frail, he couldn't go to the battlefield but only served in logistics, using a donkey cart to help his lord carry corpses.

His three brothers were brought back by him.

It was exactly because of the sacrifice of his three brothers that he was able to stay in logistics until the war ended.

Thus, Acker treasured the present days very much.

Whatever happens, just endure a little and it would pass.

Acker always reminded himself of this.

So when he noticed someone following him, Acker didn't look back but instead sped up his pace to flee, wanting to protect the money and the meat, eggs, and flour in his arms.

As long as he got home, everything would be fine.

Acker reminded himself of this.

But the person behind him kept up relentlessly.

All the way to Old Town, Acker couldn't shake them off.

Especially when he noticed that the person seemed very familiar with the streets of Old Town, a chill ran down Acker's spine.

It's not the theft itself but the thief's lingering attention that is worrying.

If it were someone from outside, he could just avoid them.

But if it was someone from Old Town, who knew where he lived...

Acker's heart sank involuntarily, and when two people appeared in the alley ahead, blocking the way, Acker was full of lament in his heart.

He didn't blame others, just that he hadn't been careful enough.

He took out half of the money from his bosom, looked at the meat, eggs, and flour he was carrying, and said reluctantly—

"Could you leave me a little? The 'Cold Winter Festival' is coming, I want to give my children something good to eat."

Chapter 563 Acker's 'Spider Silk

Acker's pleading words made the guy following him and the two blocking his way burst out laughing in unison.

"Leave a bit?

"I'll leave you a bit!"

The man following behind Acker sneered and kicked him in the lower back.

Instantly, Acker fell to the ground.

The money slipped from his hand, flour scattered everywhere, meat rolled in the mud, and eggs broke all over the ground.

Acker looked at this scene with pain, but the ensuing punches and kicks only forced the honest father to protect his head and curl up his body.

Fists fell like raindrops.

Feet stomped down hard.

The pursuer soon began to gasp for breath from exertion.

"Damn it, this old man can run fast. If I hadn't grown up in Old Town, I would have definitely lost him," the pursuer cursed angrily.

As he cursed, he stomped on Acker again.

"That's enough, don't kill him here.

The boss said, we have to use him to threaten his son and daughter.

This old guy still has value."

The leader of the three said, and after checking that the honest father had been beaten unconscious, he nonchalantly waved his hand, signaling his men to pick up the coins scattered on the ground.

The two underlings immediately bent down to pick up the money.

They had been coveting the money for a long time.

If their boss hadn't spoken, they would have picked it up already.

Now that the boss had spoken, of course they wouldn't refuse.

To know what has changed, with the 'Haite Furniture Store' being seized, those in charge of supplying goods got involved too. But luckily, when their boss sensed something was wrong, he abandoned everything, allowing them to avoid disaster. Otherwise, by now, they would be hanging dead like those fools.

However, giving up everything also meant that life became difficult.

So even a tiny bit of money was needed.

Therefore, not only the two underlings coveted that money, the leader did too, and he had already made a mental plan to divide the loot 80-20.

As the boss, taking eighty percent was no problem.

That was the rule.

The remaining twenty percent?

Of course, it was for the two underlings to split.

The three men, whose attention was wholly captivated by the coins on the ground, didn't notice that Acker, who was lying unconscious behind them, had opened his eyes and silently stood up.

A long, thin object that looked like Iron Wire slid from his hair into his hand.

Then—

Stab!

Without any sound, the Iron Wire pierced through the back of the head of the gang's leader like a sword.

It did not break the skull, but bored in along a seam.

Then, a gentle stir.

It was not until this moment that the group's leader realized something was amiss, his eyes widened in shock, about to shout, but no sound could come out.

His brain was already mush, and he stood there, dazed.

Acker stood behind him, while his two henchmen had no clue of what had just happened.

Acker's eyes brimmed with blood.

Why?

Why did you force me?

I just wanted to raise Alvin and Alma peacefully, see them grow up, get married, and have children!

Why did you force my hand?

Why did you hurt my children?

The blood in his eyes grew denser.

Acker's aged face, full of wrinkles, remained unchanged, but those who saw those eyes would feel a chill in their hearts, as if they had glimpsed a mountain of corpses and a sea of blood.

In the blink of an eye when the other two underlings weren't paying attention, Acker flashed behind another one of them.

The same method was applied.

That underling also froze in place.

Only the guy who had hit and kicked Acker remained.

He was still enthusiastically picking up money.

Completely unaware that a hand was reaching out from behind him.

The next moment—

A palm covered the guy's mouth, while the iron wire broke all the tendons in his hands and feet.

"Who's your boss?"

The somber voice filled the guy's widened eyes with disbelief.

Though the voice was grim, the guy recognized it as Acker's.

But the recognition made it all the more incredible.

How could a plain and hard-working laborer dare to kill?

The guy had already seen his boss and another guy bleeding from their eyes, nostrils, and mouths.

They must be dead, for sure.

And they had died silently.

Why?

Who was this guy?

The doubts in his heart did not make him speak immediately.

Then, the iron wire burrowed into the guy's belly button.

Following that...

Pain!

Excruciating pain!

The guy wanted to howl in agony, but even though Acker had let go of his mouth, he couldn't make a sound.

The pain lasted for ten seconds.

But to the guy, it felt as long as ten years.

"Speak, who is it?"

Acker asked coldly.

"It's Boss Tisai, and the son of the candle shop's mother.

Boss Tisai fancied the bakery where Alvin worked and wanted to set up a new operation there.

The son of the candle shop's mother fancied Alma and wanted to..."

The guy's words were cut short as his body jerked spasmodically.

The iron wire burrowed out of his belly button again.

At the same moment, the guy's internal organs turned into thick blood, spraying out from the belly button like a small fountain.

But the blood didn't hit the floor.

It was directly absorbed by the iron wire.

Not just from this body, but from the other two as well.

In just three breaths, aside from three skins clothed, there was nothing left.

Acker rolled up the skins.

Afterward, he vanished.

As for the clothes and sundry items on the ground?

This was Old Town, someone would pick them up.

Acker was gone.

But only a minute later, Acker reappeared.

The father furrowed his brow slightly.

He had just sensed a faint gaze, thinking someone was observing everything from the shadows, but now he couldn't find it.

Of course, it wasn't paranoia.

Assassins never second-guess.

Assassins simply cast aside everything and strike with their swords.

So—

"Have I regressed?"

Muttering to himself, Acker vanished once again from the spot.

But two minutes later, Acker reappeared in the alleyway.

This time, however, Acker's gaze turned towards a corner.

There was a shadow there.

Under Acker's scrutiny, a portly figure in a clean chef's uniform stepped out with a smile.

It was Eivor.

Eivor, the owner of the moving snack cart.

The affable, chubby cook now had a smile tinged with a touch of helplessness—

"What if I said I was just passing by, would you believe me?"

Chapter 564: Lady Bana's Torment!

Acker did not speak, but the "Iron Wire" in his hand seemed to come to life, not only revolving around him but occasionally raising its head like a serpent.

Watching this scene, Eivor's plump face grew more helpless.

"Can you put away your 'Spider Silk'?"

I really am just passing by!

Our grudges were completely settled in that duel twenty years ago!

Neither 'Bloodflow' nor 'Shadowflow' has anything to do with us any longer!

You have your children.

I have my children.

We are just ordinary fathers."

Eivor spread his hands.

Then, he glanced at the scattered debris on the ground and after a moment's contemplation, the enthusiastic fat cook said—

"You are a father who takes action for his children.

Have you decided to come clean to Alvin and Alma?"

In response to Elvo's inquiry, Acker still did not reply, but he put away the 'Spider Silk'.

The whole process involved only a slight movement of his fingers, and the iron wire disappeared.

It was not a spatial tool.

But a secret of 'Assassin. Blood Flow'.

Even Eivor, who came from 'Assassin. Shadowstream,' did not know where it had gone.

Both sides had secrets.

Indeed, as he had just said, both sides, now married with children, wanted nothing more than to live peacefully and not to be disturbed.

Of course, if they were indeed disturbed...

Then they would kill.

Assassins have a creed.

Fathers also have a bottom line.

And that is their children.

When their children are threatened, these two creeds converge into one: kill to prevent killing.

Kill until there is no one left on the other side.

Giving up? Such a notion does not exist.

Both Acker and Eivor understood this.

What it meant to have a thief's heart that never dies.

What it meant for dead embers to flare up again.

So the only way was to annihilate completely.

"Let's go. I'll take out those guys for you, then I'll help you and Alvin and Alma leave South Los—sigh, I should never have been curious about why such bastard-looking men appeared on Cork Street, so coincidentally passing by my stall and targeting Alvin.

I'm just a simple mobile snack stall owner!

My food is well-received; even the 'Spirit Medium' of South Los couldn't stop praising it after eating!

Why should I get involved in something so dangerous?

Sigh!"

Eivor grumbled on and on.

This too was a kind of enthusiasm.

After quietly listening, Acker said in a low voice.

"Thank you."

At this thanks, Eivor immediately showed a look of surprise.

"Thank you? You're actually saying thank you?

The former captain of 'Hidden Blade' under The Old Earl of South Los is saying thanks?

To me, a 'Shadowstream' men?

I suddenly realize, our mutual defeat twenty years ago wasn't such a bad thing after all, not only did it lead us to our respective wives and children, but it even made you thank me...

Hmm, after this is over, I'll definitely have you try my cooking.

I'll make you my best horse mame sauce sandwich and cupcake, along with two glasses of orange juice—don't be discontent, that's the same deal I gave the 'Spirit Medium'."

With his exaggerated tone, Eivor became even more talkative.

And Acker, the man who had played the part of an honest person for decades, barely moved his lips.

In the end, he said nothing at all.

They walked out of the alley, one after the other.

Even with assumed names and hidden identities, some things never change.

Their delicate relationship made them choose to trust each other while being cautious of one another.

"As the inheritor of 'Bloodflow', you can't go to Inner Bay anymore. If you did, that 'Blood Shadow's Thorn' by Old Lion's side, your cheap senior brother, would probably go mad."

"So, set sail!

"The vast sea is a man's dream!

"Before you set sail, take the orange juice I gave you. It will make you appreciate the wonders of the world!"

Eivor said as he walked.

This time, even Acker couldn't hold back.

"Shut up!"

His usually mild-mannered father growled.

"Alright, alright, I'll shut up!

"But before I do, can I ask you one more thing—

"Where do you keep your 'Spider Silk'? I haven't smelled anything odd!"

Eivor raised his hands in surrender and stopped in his tracks, tilting his upper body to one side.

The iron wire-like 'Spider Silk' whizzed past the ear of the self-proclaimed chef assassin.

"Next time, it will be your mouth.

"I'll have 'Spider Silk' seal it up."

Alk said coldly.

Eivor immediately lowered his right hand to the left side of his mouth, then dragged it across to the right.

The portly chef could feel that Alk was truly angry now.

So, the words 'what exactly was the promise you made to your wife Bana' that were on the tip of his tongue, he swallowed back down.

Eivor knew about Alk's late wife.

And he was quite curious about her.

As far as he knew, Lady Bana's father was once a target of Alk.

Simply put, Alk killed Lady Bana's father, then stumbled upon the young Lady Bana and ultimately, decided to spare her.

The result?

Twenty years ago, when he and Alk had dueled over the conflict between 'Bloodflow' and 'Shadowflow' to mutual ruin, Lady Bana had appeared.

He could tell that Alk had experienced a shock back then, but he didn't regret it; instead, he seemed resigned to death.

But who would have thought that Lady Bana would save Alk?

And she even bandaged him as a bonus.

All in all, she was a decent lady.

But truly not suited for Acker.

When Eivor learned that Lady Bana had married Acker, he had marveled at the terrifying unpredictability of life—Eivor swore by his assassin's intuition that Lady Bana was up to no good, even if she was a good person.

He harbored suspicions and made guesses.

But he couldn't talk to Acker about them.

Or perhaps...

Did Acker also know?

Eivor couldn't be sure.

The last time he had heard news of Acker was when Lady Bana died in childbirth after giving birth to Alma.

Regarding 'death in childbirth', Eivor was skeptical.

'Torture, huh?

'You plan to torture Acker for a lifetime?

'But are not Alvin and Alma your children?

'Or are you using your own children as tools for revenge?'

Eivor looked at Acker walking ahead.

The once upright figure was now bent with age.

Under the evening sun, his grizzled temples seemed even more weathered.

Anyone seeing Acker now would never guess that he was once the dashing captain of 'Hidden Blade', a covert unit under the Old Earl of South Los.

That captain was dead, for sure.

Now, only a guilt-wracked old father remained.

'Lady Bana, your heart is truly cruel.'

Eivor shook his head lightly.

Then, he quickened his pace.

About five minutes after the two assassins had left, a Siberian Husky suddenly poked its head out from a corner of the alley, its face bearing a lofty coldness, its eyes filled with wisdom.

Then, it disappeared back into the shadows.

Chapter 565: He's Still a Child!

Sherik Candle Store—or rather, the Sherek Candle Workshop—had quite a reputation in the Old Town.

Not only were the candles of good quality, but they also boasted a proprietary secret formula—

Smokeless Candles!

A type of candle without any smoke or scent, rather bearing a faint, clean fragrance.

Of course, the people of Old Town had only heard of these things.

To use them?

Don't make me laugh.

One candle cost half a month's salary for the residents of Old Town; how could they possibly use them?

In fact, Old Town residents were reluctant to use even ordinary candles, let alone those fragrant smokeless ones during burning.

Most households resorted to oil lamps.

And even with kerosene lamps, they had to be economical.

Therefore, many Old Town residents deeply envied the Sherik Candle Workshop.

They treated Granny Sherik, the wife of Old Sherik, with utmost respect.

Because she was a kind woman who enjoyed helping those around her.

Of course, this didn't stop everyone from despising Little Sherik.

He was a good-for-nothing.

If it weren't for Granny Sherik stepping in every time, Little Sherik would have been bagged long ago.

Little Sherik was, of course, fully aware of these rumors.

Before, he pretended not to hear them.

Now?

It was different!

Little Sherik carefully sized up the man beside him, an ordinary-looking, thin man who definitely should not be taken lightly by Little Sherik.

Little Sherik knew the man only as 'Hardy.'

Besides this name, Little Sherik also knew Hardy was associated with Haite Furniture Store.

Rumor had it that the underworld of Old Town was managed by the esteemed Mr. Hardy.

Even the notorious Rat Street was said to have some connections with him.

The reason he could forge relations with such a big figure was all thanks to the late Flake.

Without Frank's introduction, it would have been impossible for him to meet such an important person at the gambling table.

Of course, Little Sherik didn't care about Frank's death.

He still owed Frank 5 Suo.

So, Frank's death was just that—Frank's death.

As for the rumors that Frank had made a fortune in Shire District before being offed?

Little Sherik expressed regret.

Then, he knew he would never do such a thing himself.

He wasn't that stupid.

He would find someone with clout to back him, and then?

Naturally, he would advance under that person's protection.

Just like the current Hardy.

"Boss Hardy, please believe me, I will be loyal to you!" Little Sherik almost begged.

And Hardy was all smiles.

He had heard such words too many times.

Even Little Sherik's expressions like this one, he had seen countless times.

So, Hardy was well aware of the result every single time.

Coming for money.

Leaving for money.

Murder, betrayal, strife.

All were normal.

Therefore, Hardy spoke softly—

"I need proof!"

As he said this, the thin middle-aged man looked towards the room beyond, where the sounds of Granny Sherik busily preparing dinner could be heard. Listening to such sounds, a chilling smile crept on the middle-aged man's face, and his eyes turned even fiercer and sharper.

Little Sherik was terrified.

All he wanted was to make money and to flaunt his power.

He had no intention of killing his own mother.

Suddenly, Little Sherik began to struggle.

Hardy, still seated nonchalantly, no longer spoke.

His being there was a sign that the Sherik Candle Store could not remain.

Both Little Sherik and Granny Sherik had to die.

However, before the two of them died, enjoying their struggle was permissible,

He loved this kind of struggle.

But what Hardy did not expect was that in less than three seconds, Little Sherik had left the room.

Listening to the brief, urgent cry from outside the room,

He then smelled the spreading Scent of Blood.

Hardy was stunned.

He had seen murderers before.

He had seen those who killed their own parents.

But he had never seen someone act as decisively as Little Sherik.

That ruthless?

Indeed, gamblers are not human!

Recalling the first time he saw Little Sherik in desperation at the gambling table, Hardy slightly withdrew his hand back into his sleeve.

About a few minutes later, Little Sherik returned, his body still smeared with Fresh Blood.

"Boss Hardy, I did it!"

Little Sherik spoke hastily, his face twisted with a grimace.

The moment he committed fratricide, Little Sherik's heart was completely warped.

Money, power, they shattered the last bits of goodness in Little Sherik's heart like a bulldozer.

Or rather...

Little Sherik had embraced what he believed was better.

"Well done!"

Hardy praised, patting Little Sherik on the shoulder as he lifted his hand.

Faced with Hardy's gesture of closeness, Little Sherik certainly wouldn't refuse.

Feeling the touch of Hardy's palm against his shoulder, Little Sherik felt as if his body lightened considerably, and then...

There was pain in his neck!

Spurt!

The blade hidden between the fingers swept across Little Sherik's neck, and fresh blood spouted out like a fountain.

Little Sherik died with his eyes wide open.

"Don't look at me, I may be a scumbag, but compared to you, I'm a bit better," Hardy declared confidently, ready to head to the kitchen.

He had just smelled the aroma of food.

Perfect, this dinner would serve as a reward for avenging Granny Sherik.

As for the fact that he had incited Little Sherik to kill his own mother?

What did that have to do with him?

Little Sherik could have ignored him.

He just mentioned it, and Little Sherik listened.

Whose fault was that?

Humming a tune from South Los, Hardy opened the door, only to be stabbed in the eye with a piece of iron wire.

His eyeball was pierced through.

Then his brain.

The iron wire churned rapidly.

Hardy felt an unprecedented pain.

Indescribable, unspeakable.

But it hurt.

And it wouldn't go numb.

Because within the pain, there was...

Itching!

A chubby figure appeared before Hardy, his typically warm face now cold and stern.

"Tsk, when is there ever not scum like you around? Don't worry, you'll be in pain for ten hours. Feel the 'Bloodflow's torment.'

As he spoke, Eivor turned to look at Acker.

The latter put away his 'Spider Silk,' and turned to leave.

Eivor understood the haste of this friend-foe 'Hidden Blade' squad leader.

For scum like Hardy, any action taken would surely be swift.

Dispatch someone to intercept Acker.

Then eliminate the future threats.

Of course, it was also necessary to take action against Alvin and Alma.

However, for future interests, Alvin and Alma wouldn't really be harmed, but they couldn't avoid suffering some physical pain.

"Consider it the first lesson in fleeing?"

Eivor mused to himself.

The escape route was fraught with difficulties.

It was good to suffer a bit first.

After all, one could get used to it after eating enough bitterness.

The two retired assassins left Sherik Candle Workshop.

Passing by the kitchen, neither of them paused.

Granny Sherik appeared shocked and perplexed to the end.

Perhaps she couldn't understand why her doting son would turn his hand against her.

In her eyes, her son...

Was still a child!

"Pathetic fellow," Eivor remarked, paying no heed to Alk walking away.

He had offered all the help he could.

Now?

Of course, it was time to go home.

'Cold Winter Festival' was upon them, and he needed to buy more ingredients to let his beloved wife and daughter taste his cooking skills—his improved skills!

'Goodbye, you fellow, and good luck!' Eivor silently wished in his heart.

Then he turned and left.

Sensing the receding footsteps behind him, Alk's pace slightly faltered.

'Thank you.'

After silently expressing his gratitude, the retired assassin flickered a few strides and appeared at his own front door.

Then, an uncontrollable look of astonishment spread across his face—

"What?!!"

Chapter 569: 566 'Spirit Medium' speeches, can't be trusted. Up!

Alk hadn't yet reached home when he saw a crowd gathered at his front door.

Immediately, the retired assassin's heart tightened.

Although he had left certain precautions in place at home, what if something had happened?

With this thought, Alk's figure once again became nearly invisible, appearing instantaneously beside the front door in a bizarre manner that ordinary people couldn't capture.

Then, the retired assassin saw his own son and daughter—

Alvin's face bore the mark of a whip, still bleeding.

Alma was bandaging her brother.

The siblings were whispering to each other.

All this was very normal.

Or, rather, it was within Alk's expectations.

But apart from the siblings, the rest was baffling to the retired assassin.

For example: the hanging corpse in the yard.

For example: Old Town's Police Chief standing in the yard.

For example: the man and woman in the yard who seemed to be a perfect match.

What had happened?

The retired assassin asked himself.

And finally, when the 'main character' Arthur entered the scene, his lips curled up.

Did he really think he was free enough to play games with Marinda?

The game was just a pretext.

The real purpose was to recruit talent.

Noticing something off about Alk, it was, of course, because Fujin and Wuni always glanced at Alvin—given Arthur's personality, anyone who appeared around him was worth paying attention to.

Even if the person seemed normal, it was the same.

As long as it was within reach, they needed to be checked 3-5 times a day.

Paranoid?

No!

Arthur called it caution.

Just like with Alvin here.

If he hadn't been watching the other party, how could he have discovered Alk?

In fact, Alk hadn't exposed anything.

The role he played was as real as it gets.

Just like a truly ordinary dockworker.

For this, Arthur expressed admiration.

He truly couldn't imagine how a powerful assassin could actually force themselves to 'forget' their instincts and skills.

Even concealing his own Spirituality.

If it weren't for some 'small mechanisms' in the other's house, Arthur wouldn't have been able to discover him.

Clearly, those 'small mechanisms' were left there by the other as a precaution.

They were probably some 'residual habits' that the other hadn't completely adapted to after deciding to retire.

And the fact that they hadn't been dismantled by now was because he had long since regarded those 'residual habits' as a form of mourning—for his wife Bana.

Every time night fell and it was quiet around, Alk would talk to himself in front of those small mechanisms.

And through several days of observation, Arthur marveled at how terrifying the 'Avenger' Bana was.

An ordinary avenger made people wary.

A powerful avenger incited fear.

But an avenger who was beautiful, sincerely genuine to you, and truly loved you from the bottom of her heart, was utterly hair-raising.

Bana was such a person.

Arthur vowed that he never wanted to encounter such an avenger 'in the name of love' in this life, the next life, or the life after that.

It was truly terrifying.

Just look at Alk!

What had he been reduced to!

Even though he knew Bana was tormenting him, he was still willing to endure such torment!

'Indeed, love is toxic.

I, an ordinary person, don't deserve to have it.

And in the future...

I must definitely eradicate the roots thoroughly, even breaking the egg yolks.'

The frightened Arthur, though outwardly calm, was watching the Old Town's Police Chief Rechelier in front of him.

The police chief was dressed in the recently popular four-piece formal suit, holding a walnut cane in his hand, the head of which was fashioned in the shape of a mermaid.

Each time he moved forward, a liquid sloshing sound entered Arthur's ears.

The faint smell of alcohol, the reddened nose, the body that still swayed side to side despite efforts to stand straight, all told Arthur what the Old Town's police chief had been doing before.

Drinking.

Or rather, heavy drinking.

With the 'Cold Winter Festival' approaching, an increase in social obligations is inevitable.

Arthur was not surprised by this.

Like other district police chiefs, Rechelier too was quietly making money, preparing to climb up the ranks.

Even if he couldn't climb higher, Rechelier hoped to be transferred to another district.

Old Town...

Was just too poor.

And really too rundown.

In fact, this police chief never lived in Old Town.

In Shire District's upscale neighborhood, the police chief had his own house, wife, and children.

In Shire District's mid-to-upscale neighborhood, the police chief also had his house, mistress, and children.

Only during routine monthly visits did Rechelier return to Old Town, make a quick appearance, and then swiftly leave again.

Therefore, do not expect this police chief to know anything about Old Town.

As long as the monthly payments were in place, the police chief wouldn't interfere with anything.

As for why he still could hold his position as the police chief?

Because—

This police chief and Baron Hausman were relatives.

The influence of nobility maintained his position.

However, even so, this police chief began to sweat from his forehead under Arthur's gaze.

Rechelier was very aware of the man standing before him.

The mysteriously birthed Child of Misfortune, the Grim Reaper's Favor, the contemporary 'Black Cat,' the 'Leader of the Cat Sect,' the champion of the South Los Swordsmanship Competition, the master of Caesar Manor, 'Spirit Medium' Arthur Kredos.

Rechelier had heard countless rumors and mysteries about this great man.

Unlike those who scoffed, being a relative of Baron Hausman, Rechelier indeed knew a few hidden details.

For example: the hidden world beneath this world.

For example: the scene that took place inside Caesar Manor.

His nominal uncle, the Swordsmanship Chief, who was usually so proud and arrogant.

When meeting him, it was all haughtiness and disdain.

And the result?

Before this man, he became as lowly as a dog not to mention that he secluded himself right after returning to his uncle's manor.

That very man secluded himself.

Him?

Being a bit humble, that shouldn't matter, right?

Thinking in his heart, Rechelier's waist bent lower.

Anyway, he didn't know what had happened, but as long as he kept a good attitude, there should be no problem.

Thinking this, the police chief looked at Arthur's face, a sycophantic and ingratiating smile appearing.

As for that lady?

Rechelier wasn't looking down on women.

It was just that the corpse was indeed Marinda hanged.

Confronting such a lady, Rechelier really dared not approach her.

As for arresting?

What arresting?

The other party was a noble!

A true noble!

What did it matter if she killed a few people?

It's not like she had committed any atrocious crime inciting the wrath of heaven and men!

"Good evening, Mr. Kredos, Miss Caesar,"

Rechelier tried his best to maintain his elegance.

Marinda furrowed her brows slightly, ignoring the fellow.

Arthur then smiled and said—

"Good evening, Chief Rechelier, the matter at hand relates to the previous 'Haite Furniture Store' case. I hope you could inform Chief Malz to bring his men here to help you resolve all the subsequent troubles? You wouldn't want to waste valuable time, both yours and mine, on some criminals who decidedly deserve death, would you?"

Chapter 567 "Don't Trust the Words of the 'Spirit Medium'." Next!

After hearing Arthur's words, Rechelier nodded repeatedly.

"Of course, of course!

Such a criminal isn't worth wasting our precious time!"

The lack of dissenting echoes brought an additional smile to Arthur's face.

And seeing that smile, Rechelier breathed a sigh of relief.

Lord Kredos in front of him wasn't angry.

That was good! That was very good!

As for Lord Kledos's words?

This case was originally handled by the Shire District Police Station, the continuation of the Haite Furniture Store incident, and it had nothing to do with his Old Town!

Right!

It had absolutely nothing to do with it!

Having Chief Malz take over was naturally no problem at all.

And bringing some manpower?

How could one handle a case without manpower?

That too was reasonable.

'So this is Lord Kledos?

He seems much kinder than I imagined.

Not at all like those guys said, not as terrifying at all.

Indeed, it must all be rumors!'

Rechelien thought to himself, and the smile on his face grew even wider.

For Rechelien, who had just been playing a blindfold chasing game with a few beloved little ones, the sudden event had already left him completely baffled.

Moreover, alcohol was still doing its job within the police chief's system.

Under these circumstances, the police chief was utterly unable to assess the severity of the situation.

But Marinda understood.

This Lady of the Eternal Night was biting her teeth and glaring fiercely at Arthur's back—

'You bastard, using me like this!'

She had been wondering why Arthur had suddenly proposed playing a 'game' to make it up to her.

Only now had she realized.

That bastard Arthur was eyeing Old Town.

The bad guy was expanding his sphere of influence.

She had been curious about how she happened to encounter that little girl and how, following her, there just happened to be a scene where the bad guys were bullying the girl's brother.

All of this!

It was all that bastard's arrangement!

Even she had been a part of his schemes!

What lottery draw!

What direction the cane pointed!

It was all prepared in advance by that bastard!

That bastard knew her personality, she would definitely doubt an address given outright, but she wouldn't refuse a lottery draw, especially when it was in her own pocket.

Fine, fine, fine, so this is how you want to play, huh!

You just wait and see!

Marinda thought to herself, but the smile on her face never faded.

In fact, it even brightened.

Even Chief Malz, who had arrived with Dico, Andy, Looney, Simon, and twenty-six patrol officers, took an unexpected glance at Marinda—this chief had never seen Marinda with such a smile.

In Chief Malz's recollection, Marinda was always maintaining a sort of detached friendliness.

Simply put, she was polite but unapproachable.

She would smile at everyone she met, but that smile was always formal, completely devoid of any warmth.

But now it was different.

The current smile was full of warmth.

'So happy?

Is this how ladies change after they have a child?

Truly miraculous!'

The police chief wondered in amazement.

Then, he greeted Rechelier first.

"Good evening, Chief Rechelier."

"Good evening, Chief Malz."

Rechelier immediately responded.

Their relationship wasn't very close, merely one of acquaintance and having met before without any deep interaction.

Therefore, Malz had no psychological burdens regarding the upcoming actions.

On receiving Arthur's message, the old sheriff Malz immediately understood what Arthur was planning—although Arthur had never explicitly stated it, the old sheriff had seen some of Arthur's arrangements.

That kind of setup was definitely not just for a Shire District!

The additions of Rat Street and Dort District later on confirmed the old sheriff's thoughts.

And now?

That was Old Town.

The old sheriff had not the slightest resistance to it.

On the contrary, the old sheriff was somewhat excited.

Because—

In his old friend, the old sheriff saw the hope of achieving the miracle he had long been longing for.

It was very faint.

But it truly existed.

Therefore, he wanted to help his friend with all he could.

Malz turned and looked at Arthur.

Seeing Arthur nod slightly, the old sheriff smiled and waved to Dico, Andy, Looney, and Simon.

Immediately, the four men, along with twenty-six patrol officers, sprang into action.

The hanging body was put down.

Then came the door-to-door questioning.

Next?

Naturally, evidence was found on the body concerning the collusion of Old Town Level 2 and 3 police officers with gang members, foul play, and malfeasance.

Definitely not framing!

These guys must have done it!

After confirming it...

Clean out the internal staff of the Old Town Police Station completely and replace them with one's own people.

Malz believed Dico could stand on his own, and that it was no problem for him to rise to a Level 3 officer in Old Town, as well as being the deputy chief there.

Of course, it wouldn't work without reliable manpower.

Hunter and Newt could be taken over.

Simon could go over and help out too.

But once Old Town was stable, he had to be called back.

After all, besides Shire District, Dort District, and Old Town, South Los still had New Town and the Docklands!

Especially the latter!

It was of utmost importance!

Thinking this, Malz prepared to discuss the follow-up plan in detail with Arthur.

Turning his head, the old sheriff found that Arthur, who had been standing by his side, had already walked over to Marinda with a smile.

Seeing this scene, the old sheriff immediately smiled.

Not only did he not go over himself, but he also signaled to those around him not to disturb them.

As a father, the old sheriff understood the excitement of just becoming a father all too well.

It was a desire to be with one's wife and child at every moment.

Especially after the birth of the child, one must get close to the child whenever there was a free moment.

While complaining that the child wouldn't sleep and was troublesome, the corners of the mouth would involuntarily curl up.

Boasting!

It was just boasting!

Even a cat knows to boast to its owner after having kittens.

When one's wife has a child, one really wishes to announce to the entire world, "I've become a dad."

"The young father...

is truly filled with hope."

The old sheriff muttered to himself.

The people around, looking at Arthur and Marinda, also showed smiles.

But these people couldn't see the cold smile that emerged on Marinda's face behind the cover of Arthur.

A radiant smile, tinged with a hint of coldness.

Nobody likes to be used.

Marinda was no exception.

Especially since the one using her was Arthur, whom she considered a friend.

At this moment, if it weren't for the consideration of their cooperation, Marinda would have turned hostile already.

And when Arthur saw the cold smiling Marinda, he was dumbfounded.

"You don't like this kind of game?"

"Game, huh?"

Marinda asked coldly.

The look of astonishment on Arthur's face grew, and he walked over to Marinda's side, raised his hand to point around them, and said in a voice that only the two of them could hear—

"Of course it's a game!

Is there a better game than treating an entire district as a mere side dish at dinner?

You don't think I'd be so bored as to have you follow someone and then go eat, do you?

Hurry up, have Urs bring people over to clear out the gangs hiding in the shadows of Old Town, and take their place. Urs is a new face, perfect for this job.

After that, we split fifty-fifty.

If it weren't for the fact that I was being watched too closely, do you think you'd come across such good fortune?"

As he spoke, Arthur rolled his eyes.

Marinda was taken aback.

Chapter 568 Arthur: I Never Deceive the Poor!

Arthur's voice was very low, audible only to the two of them, yet his enunciation was clear.

Marinda confirmed that she hadn't heard wrong.

The game Arthur was playing turned out to be 'ownership of Old Town'!

What about 'eating the same meal following someone'?

A joke, right?

Was the surprise to come?

Marinda was still pondering.

A smile had begun to curve the corners of Arthur's mouth.

"You can't be serious, you can't be serious~

Dear, did you really believe I was doing this just for a meal? You believe the Spirit Medium? Now, I'm beginning to regret working with you, and even more regretting giving you half of the 'Old Town ownership.'

After all, I thought you'd guessed it already."

As he said this, Arthur's gaze fixed on Marinda.

It seemed as if he was observing whether Marinda had truly failed to discern his real intentions.

Marinda, who had been deep in thought, immediately scoffed at his scrutinizing gaze—

"Of course I knew what you wanted to do.

Moreover, if I'm the candidate, it's because only I will do, not because you're willing to split it fifty-fifty with me.

You're not that generous!

No doubt, with Madam Susan stepping forward, you must have been marked by that person.

But I'm different!

Although I'm also being watched by that person, I still have room to maneuver, and just as you said, Urs is a fresh face.

He's very suitable!" The lady asserted with certainty.

Undoubtedly, this lady trusted Arthur's argument.

No!

It should be what she believed to be Arthur's argument.

To this, Arthur showed no surprise.

If he dared to bring Marinda along, dared to use Marinda's manpower to manage the underground world of Old Town, he naturally had ample confidence.

He was not one to lose the greater for the less.

Merely Old Town!

Not worth turning against Marinda!

Therefore, at the very beginning of the plan, Arthur had been prepared to give half of the underground world's profits of Old Town to Marinda.

And that was enough to make Marinda believe that he, Arthur, had long been strategizing.

Wasn't that so?

Fujin and Wuni.

Kuliqi and Kiri.

His two crows and two dogs had all put in the effort.

And him?

He was orchestrating the whole game.

Wasn't that worth half of Old Town's underground world profits?

Although he didn't manage it personally, only took the money, he had used his brain.

Yes.

He had also moved his mouth.

Moreover, he had taken out an insurance policy for himself.

The Old Town Police Station!

Once Malz's confidants began to replace the staff of the Old Town Police Station, the entirety of Old Town was bound to become yet another backyard of his.

As for actually having the corresponding manpower to manage Old Town?

Ha, who is Marinda?

Is she related to him, Arthur?

Thinking this way in his heart, Arthur cast a slightly suspicious glance at Marinda.

Marinda felt a flicker of unease.

She had lied.

She truly had not discerned Arthur's real intentions.

Though she had just acted as if she had guessed, she really hadn't before.

Because of this, Marinda privately chastised herself for her lack of keen observation and for misjudging the relationship between them.

That's right!

Now her power and Arthur's were intertwined, completely like interlocking teeth, the one flourishing with the other's flourishing, and suffering with the other's suffering.

With such a premise, how could Arthur possibly 'play' with her.

'I must remember this! I absolutely cannot make the same mistake again! I must trust Arthur!' Marinda thought to herself.

Arthur swept a glance over Marinda's expression and chuckled inwardly.

She passed the test! Not that Marinda was too naive, but the price Arthur offered was high enough.

The human world is just that realistic.

Not just 'the highest bidder wins.'

But also 'the highest bidder sleeps'!

And 'the highest bidder sleeps again'!

As long as there are enough benefits, even the most obviously fake lie can seem real, and even the usually clever-minded will become dull in the face of immense benefits, doubting their judgment, not to mention the 'herd effect' that comes with more people joining.

A little inducement can attract a crowd.

Or rather...

A million can leverage a billion.

Some games are just like passing the parcel.

Everyone knows this.

But no one thinks they will be the last to hold it.

Of course, Arthur was different.

Arthur never exploited the poor.

The poor barely have any money

Arthur also wouldn't extensively exploit the "rich".

It wasn't that he didn't want to.

It was that he couldn't handle it.

And Marinda was just right.

He and Marinda had a "fairly solid foundation of trust"; as long as he "maintained it well", it would be an unending supply.

Arthur was optimistic about Marinda's present and future.

Come on, Marinda!

For my future!

You must work hard!' thought Arthur, his gaze already shifting to the corner of the room.

He saw Acker, who had reappeared there.

At this moment, Acker had once again taken on that honest and simple appearance.

"Father!"

Upon seeing Acker, Alvin and Alma immediately ran over.

The attentive Alma immediately noticed the stains on Acker's clothes.

"Did those bad guys also make a move on you, Father?"

Upon hearing his sister's words, Alvin then noticed the shoeprints on their father's clothes—despite being brushed off, the faint traces were still there.

"Damn bastards!"

Alvin cursed.

Rechelier, standing nearby, stepped forward.

Not only because Malz had begun investigating the case and had no time to pay him any mind, but also because this Old Town Police Chief spotted the reporters from Shire District.

"Are you all right?"

Did you suffer any losses?

Please let me know and I will compensate you," said the Old Town Police Chief courteously.

No--it's unnecessary," stammered Acker, looking frightened.

Rechelier was pleased with this reaction.

In Old Town, the civilians always looked at him with that same expression.

This greatly satisfied his vanity.

If it weren't so filthy and dirty here, he would definitely visit more often each month.

Of course, he would never initiate a conversation with any of the civilians.

They just needed to look at him with reverence.

However, the current situation was different.

There was Lord Kledos watching.

And there were the surrounding reporters.

Therefore, the Old Town Police Chief once again smiled and said---

"Thirty Suo, two pounds of meat, ten eggs, ten pounds of fine flour."

Acker still spoke with a stammer.

Without any hesitation, Rechelier pulled out five gold notes and placed them in Acker's hands.

The Old Town Police Chief wouldn't care about five gold notes.

Similarly, this Old Town Police Chief also believed that Acker, who looked so honest and upright, would not deceive him.

"That's too much! You don't need to give so much!"

Acker continued to protest.

This made Rechelier even more certain that he hadn't been deceived.

Then, the Old Town Police Chief turned to Arthur, flashing a humble smile.

"You should thank this gentleman!

He is the one who truly saved your life!" Rechelier said loudly.

Look, Rechelier is not worthless.

At the very least, he knew how to use this opportunity to curry favor with Kledos, which would showcase his own virtues and gain the favor of the Kledos Family.

He was indeed brilliant.

Thinking this, the distant relative of Baron Hausman couldn't help a self-satisfied smile.

Meanwhile, Acker had already approached Arthur nervously, hands shaking and mouth stumbling over words—

"Thank you, I am so grateful!

I don't know how to properly thank you!"

"You want to repay me?" asked Arthur with a smile.

The performing Acker was taken aback, but quickly nodded.

"Yes!

Is there anything you need me to do?

Please tell me!

I will do my utmost!" said Acker.

Hearing these words, Arthur's smile grew even brighter.

Then the young Spirit Medium, observing the disguised assassin, slowly began to speak.

Chapter 569: Important Repayment. Up!

"Food!"

Arthur said so.

The young 'Spirit Medium' spoke while stepping back to stand beside Marinda, revealing a smile, "Food is important at any time.

Many times, it's a matter of life and death.

So...

I hope to receive such an important reward from you!"

Arthur's voice wasn't deliberately raised.

But as Acker approached Arthur, every reporter around widened their eyes and perked up their ears.

The reporters were all too familiar with Arthur.

Why did the 'Horn Report' sales skyrocket in such a short time?

Wasn't it because they continuously reported on the present 'Spirit Medium', Arthur Kredos?

Even some secret interviews managed to push the sales of the 'Horn Report', which was only slightly better than a tabloid, close to that of the 'South Los Daily'!

You must understand, that's the 'South Los Daily'!

South Los's number one newspaper in sales!

Moreover, they heard that Scott, who was originally just an ordinary reporter, was promoted to the chief editor of the 'Horn Report' because of this!

Chief editor, no less!

Which of these ordinary reporters wouldn't be envious?

Now they had the chance, so naturally, they clung onto it tightly.

When Acker spoke, the reporters' attention immediately heightened to an unprecedented level.

They guessed that Acker would express gratitude.

But they were more eager for Arthur's reply.

Would he be noncommittal?

Or would he show false modesty?

If it was the former, they would write that the 'Spirit Medium' Arthur Kredos had become unbearably arrogant after winning the 'South Los Swordsmanship Competition', and that he looked down on everyone.

If it was the latter, they would write that the 'Spirit Medium' Arthur Kredos had become incredibly fake after winning the 'South Los Swordsmanship Competition', and that he needed to use some minor tricks to maintain his reputation.

As for the truth?

Who knows?

Or rather...

Who cares?

Didn't they just write what everyone loved to read?

What was wrong with that?

As for the pursuit of 'Spirit Medium' Arthur Kredos?

They could simply apologize if it came down to it.

By then, they would have gained both fame and fortune. What's the big deal about apologizing?

Of course, they had heard some rumors about 'Spirit Medium' Arthur Kredos.

But they considered those to be just rumors.

After all, it could have been just one of those young reporter Scott's 'little tricks'.

Just like what they were doing now.

But when Arthur spoke, all the reporters were stunned.

A meal?

Could a meal be considered a token of thanks?

You have to understand, that was a life-saving grace!

Although they also acknowledged the importance of food, to return a life-saving favor—no, saving the whole family's favor—with just a meal, wasn't that too childish?

Many reporters filled with anticipation felt disappointed.

And upon their disappointment, some reporters started to think quickly.

Their gazes turned toward Alma.

Then, they looked at Arthur and Marinda.

Especially Marinda.

It was rumored that the 'Lady of the Long Night' appeared to be pregnant. Surely, 'Spirit Medium' Arthur Kredos must be feeling lonely, right?

Otherwise, why would he appear in a place like Old Town, where he ordinarily should not be found?

It must have been for Alma!

Perhaps 'Spirit Medium' Arthur Kredos had known Alma for a long time!

After all, Alvin was apprenticing at the bakery on Cork Street!

In just that short span of time, these reporters had already grasped the situation of Acker's family—giving a few Zeroes to the neighbors around could get you to know a lot more than an ordinary person would.

...

Even language can be used to guide events, turning mere rumors into perceived truths.

This method is proven to work time after time!

These journalists, eyeing Alma's delicate features, had already made up their minds to spread their narratives around.

Marinda's brows furrowed slightly.

This lady only needed a glance to know what these fellows were up to.

After all, she had personally experienced their 'persecution'.

Otherwise, Anna wouldn't have had to take refuge in Inner Bay.

Thus, having learned her lesson, this lady had prepared well in advance—

Suddenly, a group of burly men with agile figures and fierce faces burst out from a corner, quickly dragging the journalists into an alley.

The sound of punches and kicks followed immediately.

Loud screams broke out but quickly turned into whimpers.

Clearly, their mouths had been gagged.

The entrance to the alley was also blocked off.

Two intimidating brutes stood guard facing outwards.

However, when they looked at Marinda, they simultaneously bowed deeply in respect.

And Marinda?

She gestured to her subordinates guarding the alleyway with a raise of her hand.

Immediately, the two brutes nodded.

Afterward, one continued to stand guard while the other pulled out a dagger from his back waist, walking into the alley with a sinister grin.

Many people witnessed this scene.

Especially the police officer Malz, as well as Dico, Andy, Looney, Simon, and the twenty-six patrol officers.

They all saw it.

So...

Dico pulled out a cigarette and offered it to the brute at the entrance of the alley.

The brute chuckled and took out a match, lighting Dico's cigarette for him.

As they puffed clouds of smoke, Dico occasionally glanced into the alley.

Not out of genuine concern for those guys, but because a dead body would be troublesome to deal with.

After all, there were outsiders present.

Rechelier, considering himself an 'outsider,' immediately declared his stance—

"Lord Kledos, do you need me to send someone to caution them?"

Rechelier, still not completely sober from the alcohol, hadn't fully grasped the situation, but this Police Chief of Old Town knew what he was supposed to do.

Idealised by the journalists, he desired that recognition.

But the goodwill of Lord Arthur Kredos was far more important.

Arthur smiled and waved his hand dismissively.

"No need, they are merely temporarily blinded by fame and gain."

While saying this, Arthur continuously cast "Minor Curse Technique".

Blinded by fame and gain, Arthur understood.

But that didn't mean he chose to forgive them.

If punishment did not come swiftly, it would only embolden such individuals, and in the end, even tragedy might ensue.

Arthur, kind-hearted, could not tolerate this.

Therefore, the punishment had to be intensified.

"Your leniency is truly admirable!"

Rechelier exclaimed with admiration.

This time, the Police Chief of Old Town meant his praise sincerely.

He knew he could never be as magnanimous as Arthur.

Had he been in a similar situation, he would have taught those scoundrels a thorough lesson.

Arthur smiled benignly once again.

Then, the gaze of the young 'Spirit Medium' shifted warmly to Acker's family.

Alvin and Alma were not frightened by the abrupt turn of events.

Alvin's experiences over the past year as a bakery apprentice enabled him to understand certain realities of their world.

And Alma?

Beyond her innate intelligence, she also had a preconceived affinity for Arthur and Marinda.

The young girl tugged gently at Acker's sleeve and whispered—

"Father, shall we start preparing dinner?"

...

Chapter 570: Important Recompense, Part 2!

The dinner at Acker's House was far simpler than imagined.

The main course was a meat porridge made with cured meat and fine rice, accompanied by pickled radish skin and pickled melon, as well as pan-fried fish and coarse bread mixed with wheat bran.

And this was already a significant upgrade in meal standard for Acker.

On regular days, when Acker and his daughter Alma were at home, they basically had porridge mixed with brown rice, radish skin, and black bread.

Acker originally wanted to prepare more, better food, but was stopped by Arthur.

"It's already enough!

I want to receive your thanks, your sincere thanks, not something given reluctantly.

So, it's enough."

Arthur's words left Alvin and Alma, who were helping on the side, puzzled.

Because they noticed that their father was slightly stunned when Arthur spoke those words.

But the next moment, he was back to normal.

Their father still had that simple and honest look, that simple and honest expression on his face.

Nothing was different.

He must have seen it wrong!

Thinking this, Alvin took out the bread he brought back from the bakery—

"This is what master allowed me to bake with the shop's oven and ingredients and then bring home, Lord Kledos, Miss Caesar, if you don't mind, please have a taste."

Alvin's face wore a hint of shyness and anxiety.

At this moment, Alvin was like a new online writer asking others to read his work.

Eager to show it, yet worried about receiving harsh criticism.

Arthur and Marinda, of course, understood Alvin's feelings.

Both of them picked up a piece of bread and after tasting it, gave a fair assessment.

"Not bad, not much different from the usual bread.

If you pay a bit more attention to the fermentation of the dough, it would be even better."

This was Arthur's assessment, as a neighbor on Cork Street, the Kledos family always got their bread delivered from the bakery where Alvin worked.

He could tell the difference with just one bite.

Especially for someone with a sensitive palate like Arthur.

However, Marinda did not express more opinions about the food itself.

This lady was more concerned with what Alvin had said before.

"Your master let you use the oven and the store's ingredients?"

The lady asked.

"Yes, I paid for the ingredients,"

Alvin nodded, then quickly added.

"Good!

It seems you have talent in bread-making."

Marinda knew a bit about the rules of the bakery because her cook, Lady Mary, would talk about it to relax when she had a day off.

So, the lady knew Alvin was highly regarded by his master.

Otherwise, there wouldn't be such preferential treatment.

According to the normal process, apprentices don't get to touch the bakery's oven until their third year.

The first two years?

The first year is just running errands, doing odd jobs, and delivering bread.

The second year is about kneading dough, washing dishes, and watching the master bake bread.

The whole process is very long, a life that middle-class and wealthy families simply cannot endure.

Of course, it's much better than the seven-year towel-washing and wringing rumor from some island nation.

In that case, it's uncertain whether the craft could even be learned.

The quality of the towel would probably be known by just touching it with one's hand.

Seven years, enough time to make one itch.

How many towels would have to be wrung to pieces?

Facing Marinda's praise, Alvin scratched the back of his head and smiled simply—the smile, just like Acker's, was unmistakable at this moment.

Just seeing this smile was enough to confirm the father-son relationship between Acker and Alvin.

So, does Alma look more like that 'Bana' lady?

Arthur thought to himself as his gaze turned toward the stove—Acker's House had only two rooms, an inner room that was the bedroom, and an outer room that combined the functions of a kitchen, living room, hallway, storage room, and more. Outside the door was also part of Acker's property, where various items and firewood were piled up.

It wasn't a privilege unique to the Acker Family.

In the Old Town, it was the same for every household.

It was kind of an unspoken community rule.

Of course, valuable coal would be kept inside the home.

This too was an unspoken rule.

Alma swiftly shoveled a scoop of coal into the stove.

Originally, this coal was intended for use during the coldest days of the 'Cold Winter Festival', but at this time, to serve food to the guests more quickly,

the only woman of the house naturally wouldn't skimp.

She scooped a spoon of milky-white lard from a small jar beside her and placed it at the bottom of the pan. As the fat instantly melted, fresh little fish were laid on top.

Sizzle!

Within the unique sound of sizzling fat, the tender little fish quickly changed color.

Alma skillfully arranged the little fish into a circular shape, almost like a fishcake.

After flipping it twice, she placed it on a clay plate alongside radish peels and sliced pickles, while rough bread mixed with bran was set on a larger plate—these pieces of coarse bread had been specially prepared by Alma a few days in advance for the 'Cold Winter Festival'.

"Thank you for the hospitality."

Arthur and Marinda said as they sat on one side of the table.

The two of them were also the only guests.

Malz and the others were busy with the investigation.

Rechelier?

The Police Chief had only glanced at the kitchen of Acker's House before stating he needed to return 'to work'—everyone saw that the Police Chief's carriage was headed toward Shire District.

But no one said anything.

It was well known that the Police Chief had several female secretaries.

Working with female secretaries obviously made for extremely high efficiency.

"We're the ones who should be saying thank you.

Thank you both for saving our lives."

Alvin said earnestly.

Alvin knew all too well what would have become of him if Arthur and Marinda hadn't arrived in time, and what would have happened to his sister who happened to return.

Therefore, the bakery apprentice was not only serious with his words but also in his expression.

At the same time, he secretly vowed in his heart to leave the Old Town with his family and go to the safer Shire District.

Arthur glanced over and immediately said—

"If you truly want to thank me, then you need to study hard on how to bake bread and make pastries—I love food, especially delicious food, and sweets are my irresistible weakness!

If you can make pastries that satisfy me,

I might consider investing in you to open a pastry shop on West Mok Avenue."

Arthur's words made Alvin stand up abruptly.

The young apprentice was so excited he didn't know what to do with himself.

Which apprentice wouldn't dream of owning their own shop?

Having a shop of his own was Alvin's goal.

As for owning a shop on West Mok Avenue?

That was truly the ultimate life goal!

And, once he really got a foothold on West Mok Avenue, he would certainly be able to leave the Old Town with his father and sister!

Life goals and dreams intertwined, leaving the apprentice's cheeks flushed, knowing he should say something to express his determination.

But when the words reached his lips, only one sentence remained.

"I will work hard!

I will do my best!

I will not let you down!"

The young bakery apprentice's voice was loud and clear, like a solemn vow.

Arthur nodded with a smile.

Then, his gaze subtly turned to the silent Acker sitting there—

'What about you?'