

Great Master 66

Chapter 66: Lionheart Ceremony!

What was torn apart?

Arthur knew in the next moment.

The hissing sound of the fuse burning beside his ear, he was all too familiar with it.

Without hesitation, he let his two "Hands of Void" toss the wicker box over, caught it in one go, and turned to run.

Of course, he did not forget to remind Wiggins.

In fact, this streetwise Golden Finger didn't need Arthur's reminder at all; as soon as he saw Arthur running, he took to his heels too.

Just as the two had run about twenty meters away—

Boom!

Flames engulfed everything, rising rapidly.

The building that the toad used as a foothold was utterly obliterated, and five or six nearby houses also suffered the consequences.

Wiggins looked back at the scene behind him, his face a mask of lingering fear.

He had tried to expect the greatest danger possible from travelling with Arthur.

But only now did he realize that his overestimate didn't even reach Arthur's lower limit.

Not to mention the current explosion, even the crossbow arrows from before were hard to come by in the streets; most street gangs still opted for scythes, pitchforks, now and then maybe a proper sword.

Crossbow arrows, firearms, those were things only the more powerful gangs possessed.

As for this kind of explosion?

No way!

As far as he knew, no street gang outside of Rat Street could possibly have this.

If they did, that gang wouldn't be around anymore.

"This is big trouble!"

As Wiggins muttered to himself, Arthur placed 150 gold notes into his hand.

"What is this?"

Wiggins looked at Arthur, puzzled.

"Compensation!"

Arthur pointed at the destroyed houses.

Houses in Dort District were undoubtedly a lot cheaper compared to those in Shire District; in Shire District, five or six houses would cost more than 150 gold notes, not to say 1500 gold notes.

But in Dort District, that sum was more than sufficient.

According to the previous occupant's memory, the better houses here in Dort District—those one-and-a-half-storey buildings with their own courtyards—were only about 100-120 gold notes. Even cheaper were the cubicles carved out from a single house on Mule Street, costing only about 20-30 gold notes.

But that was still unbearable for outsiders.

As for how the common folks in the Shire District afford to buy houses?

Houses could be rent, not just bought.

"Compensation?"

Wiggins was stupefied; he couldn't believe what he was hearing from Arthur.

He had never considered paying compensation—in his seventeen years, the concept had never crossed his mind. The people around him, his mentors, had always told him that if you cause trouble, you better run fast.

So, at the moment of the explosion, his first thought was to flee, then naturally, he would hide in Rat Street until things blew over.

"Mr. Kledos, do you pity them?"

A perplexed Wiggins inquired.

"Pity?"

"No, no, not at all!"

"I am simply not betraying my principles!"

Arthur smiled, casually placing the gold notes into Wiggins' hand.

He wasn't lying.

He was indeed not betraying his principles, sticking to what seemed to many an inconceivable bottom line, despite the scorn and ridicule of many.

But he still did it.

Because principles and bottom lines made him at least appear human.

"Principles?"

Wiggins didn't quite grasp the meaning behind Arthur's words, but he thought it might be worth understanding. Of course, this Golden Finger didn't forget what he should be doing right now.

"Why don't you rest up at the street corner, please leave this to me, it'll be sorted out quickly!"

Wiggins assured him.

No money meant you had to run.

With money, there were many options.

Standing at the back of the crowd, Arthur watched with interest as Wiggins leveraged his gang affiliation and bargained with the landlord who had hurried over because of the explosion.

That's right, all those rooms belonged to one person.

The landlord was clever enough to convert his old house into seven or eight units and rent them to young people who had just arrived in South Los.

And he himself took the rent and lived on the edge of Shire District.

It wasn't that he couldn't live in a better area, but the landlord was saving money, planning to buy a house on the outskirts of Shire District.

And then?

Naturally, he'd rent it out again.

Arthur noted how the shrewd, utilitarian landlord quickly put on a smile when Wiggins showed his gang affiliation, and reduced the compensation from 180 gold notes to 130 gold notes. Arthur made a mental note of the landlord's name: Haywood.

Thick-skinned and heartless, he was bound to have a future.

"If it weren't for your hurry to get to that transit station in Rat Street, I could have gotten him to drop the price even more!"

Wiggins sighed.

"Going to the transfer station on Rat Street was agreed upon before I arrived."

Although that toad's stuff is probably all on Mule Street, what if it isn't?

As for Wiggins's sigh, Arthur just smiled without a word.

He didn't mistrust, but rather trusted very much.

Although Wiggins always maintained a reverence in front of him, a Golden Finger who could come and go freely on Rat Street in the name of a gang was not someone ordinary citizens could provoke.

Even acting in the name of a gang, Wiggins also had to pay his dues.

"Your money."

Wiggins handed over the remaining 20 gold notes.

Arthur waved his hand.

In Wiggins's astonishment, Arthur said softly,

"Three gold notes are your reward, with the remaining seventeen, I need you to do some things."

Immediately, Wiggins tensed up.

Three gold notes as a reward were already quite high for a Golden Finger like him.

But what about the remaining seventeen?

It wasn't to kill someone, was it?

He was a Golden Finger, not an assassin.

Arthur saw Wiggins's tension and, while hailing a public carriage, spoke softly—

"Recruit assistants."

"I need you to have more trustworthy people."

"Rest assured, I'm only using these people to gather information."

Arthur didn't know how many subordinates Wiggins had.

But the ones who were presentable, he should have seen already; those were the four strapping lads.

During their first meeting, Wiggins would surely show his strength, naturally bringing out everyone he could.

But four was too few.

He needed more hands.

As much for gathering information as for covering his back.

It wasn't deceit, just not the whole truth.

As for the seventeen gold notes?

Arthur knew it wasn't a lot of money, but it wasn't that he was unwilling to give more; he himself wasn't wealthy. After all, after doling out 150 gold notes, he was left with just 12 gold, 12 Suo, and 13 Zeroes.

'I need to find ways to earn more gold notes!' Arthur thought to himself, his face still calm as he watched Wiggins.

Wiggins looked at Arthur for a long time and finally gritted his teeth and nodded.

"As you wish."

He wanted to refuse, but he dared not.

He had witnessed the means of the Spirit Medium before him, and if he refused, he would likely die without knowing how.

Moreover, following a powerful but principled Spirit Medium... might not be so bad?

As his thoughts churned, Wiggins quickly fell into role.

"Do you have any other requests?"

"Handle it your way, just like those four lads that day; they were very spirited."

Professional matters must be left to professionals.

Arthur understood this principle well; he wouldn't meddle unnecessarily.

Compared to Wiggins, who understood South Los and the streets, Arthur was an outsider, but to Wiggins, this showed Arthur's trust.

"Please be assured, I will do my best!"

Wiggins made a vow, even performing a convincing Lionheart Ceremony inside the carriage—a knightly ritual from the earliest times of the Empire, where knights would kneel on one knee, bow their heads, and place a clenched right fist over their heart as they pledged loyalty to their master.

However, during the Holy Empire Era, it was abolished by the Pope, but it came back into vogue during the Silver Age.

Up to the present, some people still chose to use it.

"I look forward to it."

Arthur responded accordingly, not just verbally, but he drew the longsword from his umbrella, tapped Wiggins's shoulder with it, sheathed his umbrella sword, and then reversed the hilt to hand it over to Wiggins.

Knightly allegiance.

A master's reward.

The contract established.

It was only natural.

Wiggins had not expected to truly receive a reward, thinking he might only get praised. In fact, the Lionheart Ceremony he just performed was something he had heard from a bard recently.

It was learning on the fly.

'Have I now signed a contract with the master?' Wiggins wondered when he suddenly noticed Arthur furrowing his brows. As he wondered if his doubt had displeased Arthur, he heard a commotion outside the carriage—

"Let me go! Let me go!"

"You don't even know Mr. Kledos!"

"This signature is a fake!"