

Great Master 681

Chapter 681: True or False. The End

Marinda looked at Yula, her deep blue eyes brimming with coldness.

Yula seemed startled and immediately stepped back, hiding behind Arthur, her face turning pale, and from her mouth came a faint whimper.

"Sister Caesar, you couldn't have misunderstood, right?"

With those words, the color drained from Yula's face, and her eyes reddened.

But Yula got no response.

Marinda had retracted her gaze before Yula could speak and took a seat in the cabin, raising her hand to cradle Pendragon in her arms and gently stroked him.

And Arthur, who was supposed to stand in front of her, quickly walked back into the cabin.

"What took you so long?"

I had the chef prepare dinner specially, including your favorite clay pot crispy beef pastry.

Or perhaps you'd like to go ashore at Xilongde? The Old Baron said the Hunter bagged a wild boar; Xilongde's roast wild boar also tastes very good."

Arthur wore a smile, his demeanor unruffled, and his eyes held nothing but Marinda.

That focus made Yula's breathing quicken.

What's going on?

He was just having a pleasant conversation with me!

Why is he now acting like I don't exist?

Yula felt indignant.

Right away, Yula spoke again—

"Lord Kledos, we..."

"A satisfactory answer at dawn?

I remember.

Still, if possible, please make it a bit later, I hope my lover can rest a little longer.

Thank you again, Ms. Yula.

I am honored to work with you and wish you a good night.

May you have a wonderful evening."

Arthur cut off Yula's words, speaking in a lighthearted manner, and even during this exchange, his gaze never left Marinda, his lips unconsciously curling up, as if Marinda was the only person in the world for him.

No!

It was as if Marinda was the only person who could attract Arthur's attention in the whole world.

Yula clenched her fists.

She was being ignored.

This feeling was unprecedented for Yula, who had always been the center of attention due to her exceptional looks since she was young.

Only she could outshine everyone else.

Never had anyone been able to steal her limelight.

But Marinda had done it.

And not just once.

This was the second time!

Reflecting on how this lady had boarded the ship with such confidence at the South Los docks and was now treating her as if she was invisible, jealousy began to rise uncontrollably within Yula.

And then it turned into hatred.

'Just you wait!'

Yula roared inwardly.

If before, her motive was to deepen the collaboration, now she wanted to taste the flavor of South Los' 'Spirit Medium'.

Preferably right in front of Marinda!

She was determined to retaliate against Marinda fiercely!

"Alright, goodnight to you too."

Yula forced a smile, turning to walk towards the stairs.

What Yula didn't realize was that right after she turned around, Marinda, who had seemed to ignore her, subtly glanced at her.

The deep blue of her eyes was still cold.

Now, with an added sharpness.

Very faint.

Or rather, very well hidden.

As Yula's footsteps faded away, Arthur came over with a cup of orange tea augmented with mint leaves and honey, a relieved expression on his face.

"Thank you for your timely arrival."

"Is she difficult to deal with?"

Marinda accepted the tea, and now that there were only two of them, the lady's tone seemed slightly off.

Of course, Arthur noticed.

After all, the recent scene was tinged with a bit of his deliberate intention.

Facing a Marinda who seemed to be entering a 'desensitization' phase, how could he not intensify the treatment, given his profession as a 'Spirit Medium'?

So, when Yula arrived, he made sure to inform Marinda.

And Marinda's reaction?

Marinda's almost instantaneous arrival gave Arthur an extra degree of confidence.

But it was not enough.

Therefore, Arthur took a deep breath, leaned into Marinda's ear, and lowered his voice—

"It's harder than you imagine, after all, this is someone who even the Marquess of West Berlin had to make elaborate plans for."

As Arthur's words sounded, his warm breath brushed past Marinda's earlobe.

Arthur clearly saw the fine hairs on the lady's neck stand on end.

Immediately, the 'Spirit Medium's' mouth curled into a smile.

Then, Arthur's eyes suddenly hardened, his speech quickened, and his voice lowered even more.

"Hold me tight."

Marinda did not hesitate and immediately wrapped her arms around Arthur.

She knew there must be a Peeping Tom around.

She hadn't noticed?

Of course, she wasn't strong enough.

Or maybe, Arthur's "Spirituality", "Bloodline" were simply better at these things.

Would Arthur deceive her on such a matter?

Impossible.

Arthur was not that kind of unreliable person.

Having worked with Arthur more than a dozen times, she knew him too well.

Just like just now, using Wuni to send a message!

If Arthur wasn't truly unable to cope, he would never send out a plea for help to her.

And indeed, all of this was proven.

Facing that 'scheming' collaborator, Arthur simply couldn't manage, but she was just right to step in.

And now?

That woman's thieving heart would not die!

That woman deserved to die!

To be someone the Marquess of West Berlin had to make elaborate plans against?

Very well!

Marinda's thoughts cleared in an instant, and when she looked at Arthur again, she found him wearing a smile and leading her in an elegant dance.

It was not any formal dance from a ball.

It was neither intense, but rather a gentle dance with moving steps.

It was a bit like the steps taken when one is first learning to dance.

And from Arthur's mouth came—

"One two, one two three four, one two."

Following this rhythm, Arthur led Marinda from the dining area of the cabin to the terrace above.

The "Hand of Void" extinguished the candles on the terrace, leaving only the bright moonlight.

And with their vision, they certainly wouldn't be at a loss in the dim light.

On the contrary, their coordination improved.

Moreover, Marinda went from cooperating to taking the initiative.

Immediately, the beginner-like dance steps intensified.

Sleeves flew, shoes tapped continuously, and the beats were clear and continuous.

With a turn, Arthur took Marinda's left hand in his right, supporting her entire weight, allowing her body to fully extend.

Her golden hair leaped with the dance, as if she were an elf dancing under the moonlight.

Arthur enjoyed watching this lively movement.

According to the original dance tempo, this would be the time when Arthur should pull Marinda back with force, but the young 'Spirit Medium' did not do so.

He gazed at Marinda.

And just as a look of confusion flashed in the lady's eyes, Arthur spoke again.

"Three, two, one!"

A soft countdown.

When the count reached zero—

Bang!

A large, splendid firework bloomed over Xilongde Wharf.

Arthur, with Fujin's eyes watching over everything, of course, knew this was a firework prepared by Sir Outer of West Seberlin for the feast.

But it didn't prevent Arthur from 'borrowing' it for a moment.

The young 'Spirit Medium' looked at Marinda, his face naturally breaking into a smile, and his voice became involuntarily softer—

"Even after millions of gazes, you continue to dazzle me; even the brightest firework doesn't compare to a thousandth of your allure."

Chapter 682: True or False. Next!

Arthur's gentle whispering caused Marinda's face to turn red.

It was a mix of shyness and even more so of embarrassment.

Because—

She had once deceived Anna in the same way.

Poor Anna was so moved to tears that she was tricked into bed with her that very night.

But Marinda had never imagined that she herself would be deceived one day.

No, not deceived!

It was about deceiving someone else together!

Suddenly, both the shyness and the embarrassment disappeared, leaving only an excitement-laden anticipation—Marinda certainly didn't mind deceiving that woman.

Marinda even hoped the other party would lose miserably because of the wrong information.

So, Marinda put her arms around him with force and leaned into Arthur's embrace.

Together, they watched the fireworks constantly rising on the shore.

Bang, bang, bang!

One after another, the fireworks soared.

Boom, boom, boom!

Their heartbeats gradually synchronized.

Arthur could clearly sense Marinda's cooperation.

And this was what he wanted.

'Ms. Yula, thank you for your sacrifice, I wish you a most unpleasant death.'

Arthur thought silently to himself, tilting his head down slightly as his lips approached Marinda's ear.

A woody fragrance mixed with the smell of smoke and mint, a bit like a campfire doused after the rain— not only was it not unpleasant, there was instead a sense of thriving vitality.

Arthur controlled his breathing.

"Tonight's moonlight is truly beautiful."

A soft whisper in the ear, just as a breeze from the river arrived.

The departure of winter's chill had already robbed the river wind of its coldness, but it wasn't yet the scorching heat of midsummer; it had only the right amount of softness.

Subconsciously, Marinda nodded slightly.

"The wind is very gentle too."

Arthur was taken aback.

Then, he laughed.

"Yes, the wind is very gentle as well."

The two stood on the deck of the 'Oriental,' watching the fireworks of Xilongde and listening to the music coming from there, and the crew members left on the ship naturally saw the two standing by the terrace ladder.

Unconsciously, everyone showed a smile that conveyed understanding.

They had just been wondering why the big boss had not attended Sir Outer's banquet.

It turns out he was waiting for the lady boss, ah!

Well then, no worries.

Wishing the big boss and the lady boss a delightful night.

Old John, one of those remaining on board, raised his glass of meticulously brewed honey wine—the gentle shaking of the cup released a faint sweetness and aroma of the wine.

Just like the pure moonlight of the night and the quietly flowing Inland River.

But there was a discordant scene.

For instance, Yula.

This lady, witnessing the scene, wanted to grind her teeth to dust.

Not only was her heart becoming increasingly enraged, but her face also began to contort.

Not a distortion of rage.

But a true distortion.

A spiral of nose, eyes, and facial features.

Fortunately, most people on the 'Oriental' had gone to the shore to attend Sir Outer's banquet at this moment, otherwise anyone seeing this scene would be scared stiff on the spot.

However, Yula seemed entirely oblivious.

Or rather...

The current Yula had no idea what was happening.

A tiny tentacle wriggled out from Yula's earhole.

On yet another occasion, this tiny tentacle began to spin its thread.

Unlike before, this time after finishing its spinning, this tiny tentacle did not immediately retreat back into Yula's earhole, but rather tore itself apart in the middle.

It was as if a sausage had been broken in half.

Only, one piece was long, and the other was short.

The shorter piece continued to burrow into Ms. Yula's ear.

The longer piece, however, detached from Ms. Yula's shoulder and fell directly onto the deck, crawling into the first-class cabin where Ms. Yula was, like a caterpillar.

Inside the cabin, Lucius was still cursing his own powerlessness.

This young Avenger did not notice the appearance of the tentacle segment at all.

He was even less aware of the tentacle passing behind him and entering the washroom.

There, the fourteenth son of the 'Reepira. Qiao Commerce Association' president, Qiao Zheng, lay in the bathtub with vacant eyes, muttering incessantly.

"Yula, I love you."

"Yula, without your support, I can't accomplish any of this."

"Yula, what should we name our child?"

The continuous muttering was enough to illustrate Qiao Zheng was trapped in some sort of delusion.

And the smile on his face suggested that this delusion was making him extremely happy.

Perhaps...

This was the happiest moment in Qiao's life.

The tentacle segment easily climbed onto the tub and slipped into Qiao's ear.

The mumbling Qiao suddenly shuddered all over.

Afterward, his vacant eyes changed.

A trace of indifference, completely inhuman, emerged.

But it was fleeting!

After that, Qiao's eyes became vacant once more, and his muttering resounded again, becoming even more intense.

"No, it's not like this, Yula!"

"Yula, don't be like this!"

After the urgent low cries, Qiao's voice quickly lowered and became monotone, continuing to declare his love for Yula as before.

However, his face no longer bore a trace of a smile.

The entire process was brief, and aside from Qiao's muttering, it could be described as completely silent, managing to escape the notice of most on the 'Oriental'.

But Arthur was an exception.

Arthur's 'eyes' were everywhere.

Watching the scene unfold before him, the young 'Spirit Medium' lowered his head and softly said to Marinda—

"Time for food?"

"Yes!"

Marinda nodded, instinctively placing the pipe in her mouth.

However, just as the lady was about to take a puff, she immediately remembered Arthur's previous complaints—tobacco flavor would affect the taste of the food.

The next moment, the lady simply held the pipe in her mouth without lighting the tobacco.

When the chef came to the terrace with the food, Arthur conveyed the night's events to Marinda using a secret language combined with writing in the palm of his hand.

Marinda, feeling the itch in her palm, kept her mind clear nonetheless.

'You bad fellow, not only are you planning to let the Marquess of West Berlin take the lead, but you also want me to be your insurance?'

Arthur smiled and wrote again in Marinda's palm.

'One can never be too cautious with such beings.'

Marinda nodded in agreement.

She had never encountered such beings before.

But in the books left by Marinda's mother, there were bits and pieces of information about them.

Even these fragments were enough to reveal the power and the Bizarre nature of the 'Lady of Sorrow.'

Especially that Undying state, which truly made her heart tremble.

Therefore, she was agreeable to making as many contingency plans as possible.

Also, she wasn't going to inquire further.

For she feared being perceived by the 'Lady of Sorrow'—it was not unnecessary worry but prudent caution.

Immediately after, the lady became somewhat contemplative.

After hesitating for about a second, she raised Arthur's palm and wrote in it—

'Do you want West Berlin?'

Feeling the words that Marinda had written, Arthur immediately smiled.

Then, he gently wrote four words

Chapter 683: How Could I Bear to See You Lose if You Bet with Me!

Under Marinda's gaze, Arthur's fingers swiftly wrote down—.

Adapt to circumstances.

If it were anyone else, Marinda would certainly think she had been played.

But if it was Arthur, there must be a reason.

Almost instantly, the lady thought of something.

'You've crossed swords with the Marquess of Seberlin?'

Marinda quickly wrote.

The current situation had already become quite clear, with the Marquess of Seberlin wanting to kill two birds with one stone, opposing both the Old Lion of Inner Bay and laying out plans for that 'Lady of Sorrow'.

And that 'Lady of Sorrow,' naturally unwilling to succumb without a fight, had started to create the current situation.

As for the 'Inland River Cult'?

Even if that Old Lion had great ambition, he would also show restraint.

After all, they were Nobles.

Even if beneath their splendid exterior lay a bandit's savagery.

However,

Even bandits have rules.

Once the rules are broken, that would be no good at all.

With such a premise, despite Arthur stirring up the situation, his indecisive response must be due to concerns about the Marquess of Seberlin's strength.

Even, he had personally experienced it.

Under Marinda's gaze, Arthur nodded his head.

'Very strong, with more than one ace up his sleeve.'

Arthur wrote.

This was a fact, within the 'Array of Cannons' hidden deadly threats loomed, not just one.

Marinda subconsciously took a puff of her pipe.

When thinking, the lady always had the habit of smoking tobacco.

However, after taking a puff, she realized it wasn't even lit.

The awkward sensation made the lady's eyebrows furrow slightly.

She didn't want to affect Arthur's appetite.

But when thinking, she indeed had habits.

While the lady was still wrestling with this, Arthur raised a hand, and the flame from a candlestick leapt into Marinda's pipe.

"Some habits are hard to break, but they can be controlled."

Arthur let out a sigh, his face showing an expression of resignation.

Marinda immediately turned up the corner of her mouth.

"You light my pipe, and then you advise me to quit smoking?"

The lady was a bit confused by Arthur's maneuvering.

"Because, I don't want you to be uncomfortable, awkward.

But I know that controlling tobacco would be good for you.

So, I've chosen a better solution—how about we make a bet?"

Arthur explained, and proposed.

Immediately, Marinda became interested.

"A quit-smoking game?"

The lady astutely guessed what Arthur was up to, and as a result, she became even more curious about how Arthur would make the bet.

"Yes, the quit-smoking game."

Arthur nodded, then pointed towards the wharf of Xilongde on the shore.

"We'll bet—

whether or not there will be fireworks in the next half-hour.

Since I'm suggesting the bet, you get to choose first."

Marinda didn't hurry to choose, instead she asked.

"If I lose, I promise you, I won't smoke tobacco unless it's absolutely necessary.

But what if you lose?"

Her azure eyes twinkled, full of curiosity and anticipation.

"If I lose...

Do you remember the pipe and tobacco you gave me?

They will be in my hands every moment!"

Arthur responded in this way.

The azure eyes lit up.

Marinda knew that Arthur maintained etiquette when it came to others smoking pipes, but he himself would absolutely never touch one, and now he was willing to hold it in his hand...

That was enough!

After all, it was a gift from her.

With this in mind, the lady spoke.

"Good!

But I want to give you another pipe as a gift."

To this, Arthur raised no objections.

"Then I bet...

within half an hour, there will still be fireworks going off!"

Marinda declared.

"Alright, then I bet there won't be any fireworks—Marinda, are you sure you don't want to change your mind?

Keep in mind, there have just been a lot of fireworks set off.

Even if that Old Baron doesn't mind having a mid-show performance, the chances are very, very slim."

Arthur reminded Marinda.

"No!

The smaller the probability, the greater the payout, especially when betting against a guy like you. I've always believed that conventional wisdom doesn't apply.

You have to do the exact opposite!"

Marinda spoke with conviction.

What else could Arthur say to that?

He shrugged and pushed the beef in puff pastry pot toward Marinda.

"Try it, the chef you recommended is really quite good."

"Of course!"

The lady smiled proudly.

She took the 'Oriental' very seriously.

From its construction to its decoration and the staffing, the lady had managed it all single-handedly.

The chefs had had to pass a taste test before they could set foot on the 'Oriental'.

Marinda lifted an entire golden piece of puff pastry with a fork, then scooped out diced beef from the pot, drained off the broth, and placed it onto the puff pastry, deftly wrapping it with the fork—this was Marinda's favorite way to eat it, perfectly combining the flavor of the beef with the texture of the pastry.

However, this time Marinda didn't put it into her mouth right away.

Instead, she passed it to Arthur.

That caught Arthur by surprise.

"There's only one piece of puff pastry!"

Arthur reminded her.

"But I can have the chef make another one, and I believe the kitchen must have some prepared in advance."

Marinda said, glancing toward the nearby chef.

Instantaneously, the chef nodded with a beaming smile.

"Of course."

Having said that, the chef tactfully left.

Suddenly, it was just Arthur and Marinda left in the cabin; Arthur didn't refuse the food in front of him, and Marinda scooped up the broth, sipping it gently, her eyes occasionally drifting to the opposite shore.

Without a doubt, Marinda was more concerned about this bet than Arthur had thought.

At that, Arthur sighed and used the contract to contact Pendragon.

...

On the shore, Pendragon stood in front of a bollard.

It was the last piece of workable fireworks from that Old Baron's warehouse, which he had borrowed.

The rest?

He had 'marked' them.

The fuses were dampened, so they definitely couldn't be used for a while.

Pendragon had a newfound appreciation for his old man's cunning.

For this, he silently mourned for the lady.

A sure-lose bet was just too tragic.

While he was lamenting, the contract in Pendragon's heart trembled.

Meow-whoo!

Pendragon immediately called out.

A silly-looking Kiri suddenly sprang out of the shadows, mouth opening to spit out a box of matches.

Pendragon used Airflow to pull out a match coated in phosphorus and struck it directly on Kiri's nose—

Hiss!

With a unique sound, the match caught fire.

The next moment, the fireworks shot into the sky.

Whoosh!

Bang!

Under the splendid fireworks, a cat and a dog looked up.

The cat face was smug, Old Man is sure to win.

The dog face was wise, sulfur smells so good.

And on the 'Oriental,' Marinda's lips uncontrollably curled upward.

"I won!"

The lady pumped her fist.

Then, without waiting for Arthur to speak, she lit a tobacco and blew out a smoke ring.

No sooner had the thick smoke ring formed than the lady dived through it.

And before the smoke ring dispersed, the lady emerged again, holding a wooden box and placing it directly in front of Arthur—

"You said it would appear in your hands every moment of every day!"

Chapter 684 Port I

Arthur nodded his head.

"Of course!"

As he spoke, Arthur unlocked the brass lock of the black wooden box.

Inside was a long-stemmed curved pipe.

The bowl was made of briar root, and the extended stem was of black metal.

Of course, these were not the main focus, the important part was the row of small characters engraved on the extended stem, wrapped in a wave pattern.

Or more precisely, a name—

Marinda.

Seeing this name, Arthur raised his hand and gently touched it, feeling the traces within.

Unlike the beauty of a scripted name.

The engraved traces were even sharper.

Just like Marinda herself.

"Did you engrave this?"

Arthur looked up and asked.

Marinda, who had been watching Arthur touch the pipe stem, nodded calmly.

"How is it?"

Then, the lady inquired about his opinion.

"I really like it,"

Arthur said, taking out a small bag of tobacco from the Atos's Box that he had previously placed inside.

As soon as the bag was opened, a faint sweetness emerged, a blend of mint and apple, with a hint of honey—this was previously given to Arthur by Marinda.

Upon seeing this, Marinda's smile grew even broader.

"For a beginner like you, two grams is plenty,"

she said, rising to her feet.

"We will arrive at Port Doldot tomorrow; I need to prepare.

Both the Marquis and that lady require my earnest attention."

Having finished speaking, the lady did not linger and promptly left.

Passing through the smoke to return to South Los, Marinda's smile was even more radiant than before.

She had seen Pendragon's departure.

She also saw the silhouettes of a cat and a dog as the fireworks rose across the river.

Therefore, she was happy.

"You...

You really are a bad guy!"

Marinda whispered softly to herself.

Then, taking a deep breath and sharpening her gaze, the lady contemplated the scenarios that might occur the next day.

She knew well that her current strength was somewhat lacking.

Even though she had tried her best to catch up, that bad guy was moving faster and faster.

"Indeed...

I was complacent before,"

Marinda muttered to herself and headed straight for the basement of 6 White Bird Street.

This basement was the entrance to a hidden room.

And that room was known only to Marinda.

After complex machinery and a series of Glyphic Language, Marinda descended the stairs, traversed a corridor one hundred and thirty-three meters long, and continued downward.

This was a spiral staircase.

At the head of this staircase, there were four doors.

Marinda chose the correct one and walked in.

Inside were—

Coffins!

Two coffins!

One held her father, the Grand Knight of the West Coast Knights Templar.

The other held her mother, the previous heir of the 'Blood Crow Family' of the West Coast.

Marinda walked between the two coffins and placed her hands on top of them.

"Father, Mother,"

the lady called out softly.

Immediately, faint sounds came from within the two coffins.

Like soft knocking, tapping.

It sounded even more like...

Breathing!

Feeling such sounds, Marinda's eyes filled with unprecedented memories.

She remembered her mother, and she remembered her father.

She also remembered the hatred.

Therefore, she wanted her parents to take revenge with their own hands.

Similarly, this was the path she had chosen.

It was also her biggest trump card.

And now?

She was ready to borrow a little of her parents' power.

The next moment, a power unique to the Undead rose from within the two coffins, but unlike the pure Undead, one of these powers exuded a sense of holiness while the other was even more sinister.

They temporarily converged inside Marinda.

Hum!

All along, the world's blockade against "Entrants" was directly shattered.

And behind Marinda, two shadowy figures flickered in and out of existence.

...

After Arthur added two grams of tobacco into his pipe, his gaze turned toward the XP information that had come in this morning—

[The reputation of the master of the Inland River God has made everyone start to doubt and wonder, some believe, while others are skeptical, but regardless, more people are beginning to take you seriously; XP+800]

[Even more people have heard your name: XP+600]

...

Clearly, following the recent uproar, the daily XP value had once again returned to its former peak.

And the title of the master of the "God of the Inland River"?

Arthur was determined to establish it.

He believed that it would bring him a huge amount of XP.

After all, unlike ordinary people who just watch the fun,

within the "Inland River Cult" there certainly are many fervent believers, and these people are definitely the best sources of XP, as long as they acknowledge you, that's a big income.

There might even be unexpected surprises.

Can fanatical believers generate XP consistently?

Arthur had been pondering this question.

After all, according to the current understanding of XP, it is about people knowing his name.

The word "know" is quite intriguing.

To know and to remember, that's one category.

To know and to forget, that's another.

The latter, when remembering, provide new XP.

So would the former, in remembering you and continually deepening their impression, provide more XP?

Arthur didn't know.

But he was willing to try.

It's not that Arthur especially liked deceiving people or anything.

It's really because XP was too scarce.

5200XP.

That was all Arthur had now.

And how much did he need?

99999 points!

The Seventeen Order's entry threshold is 99999 XP points!

Having experienced the limit once, Arthur certainly knew the benefits, and he definitely needed to reach the limit to truly step onto the "Seventeen Order"—this was Arthur's intuition.

He had absolute trust in this.

He trusted his intuition.

He trusted even more that with the XP requirement dropping by 1-2 points every day, he could not complete it in a short period of time with conventional methods.

"Sigh, it's all because you forced me," Arthur lamented in his heart.

Then, he lay back on his bed with his pipe in his mouth.

The food on the dining table?

What food.

The plates had been licked clean.

The same went for the food the cook brought later.

Clean as a whistle, not a crumb left.

The night grew deeper still.

The party on the shores of Xilongde continued, and the noise persisted until late into the night.

As a result, the departure of the "Oriental" was delayed somewhat, and even with the current in their favor, it wasn't until the evening of the next day that the passengers on the "Oriental" saw the bustling Port Doldot.

Arthur stored away the second [Mikhail's Strong Touch (Fragmentary)] that Yula had brought him at noon today.

Throughout the process, the fragmentary Abel protested in bursts.

The fragmentary Bloodsucking Ancestor Worm declared it would not be parasitized, nor would it be resurrected.

But to that, Arthur chose to ignore.

These two pieces were precious bargaining chips!

Now was far from the time to throw them out!

Arthur, while mulling over a new plan in his heart, looked at the approaching Port Doldot, his lips curving into a natural smile.

The young Spirit Medium murmured to himself—

"The wonderful night... begins!"

Chapter 685 Port II

By ten o'clock in the morning, Port Doldot had been scrubbed clean.

Not only was rubbish swept away, but the entire port was thoroughly washed down.

Even the most remote corners were inspected one by one by the port's city defense forces.

Of course, this inspection was more of a warning.

It warned those who eked out a living in the gray and black areas not to be blind to their surroundings.

And, of course, this welcomed the curiosity of the port's people.

Many speculated that such an honor was due to the arrival of some important personage.

Some even said that the Marquess of Seberlin would personally receive this dignitary.

The speculation was endless, but the crowd was dispersed.

To ensure safety and cleanliness, Port Doldot went into martial law by noon.

Time ticked by, second by second.

Just past five in the afternoon, the clop-clop of hooves attracted the attention of the residents inside Port Doldot.

Those who had been strictly ordered to stay at home watched as a cavalry troop of a hundred men appeared, saw the Eagle Banner with its blue background fluttering in the wind as the cavalry advanced, and everyone gasped in astonishment.

As Seberliners, no one failed to recognize the Eagle Banner of the West Berlin Marquis House.

Without a doubt, this cavalry was the Marquis's personal troops.

Everyone's curiosity reached its peak.

Although there had been guesses before, now that the moment was nearly upon them, the people still couldn't conceal their curiosity and the residents of Port Doldot envied those who were able to go to the docks.

At least, they would be able to see for themselves who exactly the dignitary was.

However, this certainly did not include Catherine.

The youngest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin was currently complaining to her sister—

"Why does Father want me to welcome that guy?"

"What pact did that guy sign with Father?"

The complaints were uttered softly; the Marquis's youngest daughter was no fool and had long since sensed the uniqueness of this reception, especially her father's repeated instructions which unnerved Catherine in an unprecedented way.

"Ah."

Jacqueline glanced at her sister and let out a sigh, a hint of self-mockery flashing through her emerald eyes.

Without any response, it surpassed all responses.

Though Jacqueline was a twin to Catherine and only a few minutes older, she possessed an uncommon maturity.

Therefore, Jacqueline knew more.

For instance, their father planned to offer her and her sister as gifts to that Spirit Medium from South Los.

For another, in order for the Spirit Medium to accept, their father was even planning to open up the West Berlin Family's library.

And, for yet another...

The moment they became pregnant, they had to return to Seberlin at the first opportunity to visit relatives.

Jacqueline knew whatever her father intended to do.

But Jacqueline did not resist.

Or rather, she did not dare to.

Because Jacqueline was well aware that she and Catherine were just daughters in name to their father.

Even with a blood relation, their father never treated them as daughters.

"Sister, don't sigh!

Don't forget, we still have..."

Catherine was about to say something when Jacqueline covered her mouth.

The Marquess of West Berlin's third daughter shook her head solemnly.

'Catherine, silence!'

Jacqueline's voice echoed in her heart.

This was a Talent that only twins could possess; the two had discovered this ability at a very young age and kept it as a little secret between them.

As they grew older, this ability became an indispensable method of communication for them, especially in public situations like this, it was extraordinarily convenient.

'Understood, sister.'

Catherine nodded.

'Deer are hunted because of their antlers; we are similar—the one is our last resort and could also become the death warrant against me if our father finds out...

We would die without a place to be buried.'

Jacqueline warned her sister once again.

"I know! I know!"

Catherine repeated, her voice continuous.

Compared to her mature sister Jacqueline, Catherine might be slightly naive, but she was no fool. She was very clear about her own situation, it's just...

She was not convinced!

Why was she born a tool, a bargaining chip?

When some others could reap the benefits without effort?

Both were daughters of the Marquess of West Berlin!

Jacqueline glanced at her sister and sighed deeply again in her heart.

"It's not the same."

"But I'm not content!"

Catherine exclaimed.

"There's still a chance."

Jacqueline hinted.

Immediately, Catherine's eyes lit up.

"Sister, are you saying...?"

Jacqueline didn't answer, but simply nodded slightly.

Following that, Catherine became excited.

And the time that followed was spent in anticipation by the youngest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin.

Filled with the same anticipation was...

Achisto!

As the High Priest of the Inland River Cult, Achisto had almost traveled night and day to reach Dortot Head Port.

For Achisto, such times demanded his presence as the High Priest.

Otherwise, how could he receive his reward from that prominent figure?

Of course, this was the time to proclaim the will of the gods—

"Tonight, is the time to shine Your Crown's divine glory on Port Doldot!"

Achisto, in his pale blue priestly robes, spoke with a voice that seemed ever more sacred at this moment.

The Deacons of the Inland River Cult at Port Doldot, their faces flushed, eyes fervent.

No shouts.

And no oaths.

Because they were already prepared for the holy war.

Although those present were only a part of the cult's force at Port Doldot, Achisto believed the others would be even more fervent.

Because, well...

They hoped to stand closer to the gods.

Thinking this, the High Priest's gaze wandered to a corner.

There, a handsome young man watched the scene before him with a smile.

The grey-blue robes indicated his status as Priest.

Delpock, the Inland River Cult's leader at Port Doldot.

It was his presence that allowed the Inland River Cult to thrive smoothly in Port Doldot.

Of course, these details were not of particular importance.

What mattered was that he was a trusted confidant of that high-profile individual.

The eldest son sent specifically by the Old Lion of Inner Bay.

Therefore, Achisto, well aware of his own limits, naturally knew what to do.

The High Priest of the Inland River Cult first smiled and then spoke softly—

"Priest Delpock, are you ready to deliver a fatal blow to the Pain Cult?"

"Of course!

I have been impatiently waiting!"

The young Priest replied with great respect.

In saying so, the young Priest also bowed deeply.

Achisto was extremely pleased with this.

However, what Achisto failed to notice was the sneer on Delpock's face as he bowed, and the deep disdain in his eyes.

Chapter 686: Port III

For Delpock, the scorn he felt for Achisto was etched deep in his bones.

In Delpock's eyes, Achisto was just a guy with a stroke of good luck.

Without any abilities, his strength was extremely low, and his talent was nothing special. If it weren't for Lord Gleisa Hamlet taking an interest in him,

he would have spent his entire life as nothing more than a rural lord.

No!

Even calling him a rural lord was overestimating him.

At best, he was just a rural knight.

One with a shabby estate and a mill that had to be shared with the peasants.

Delpock couldn't bear the thought of such a man riding roughshod over him.

His abilities were stronger than Achisto's. If not for him, how could the "Inland River Cult" possibility have gained a foothold in Port Doldot?

His strength was greater as well—he didn't need to go all out; with one hand, he could take down Achisto.

As for talent?

Although his talent was somewhat inferior compared to his older brother, Joel Colman,

what did that matter?

Keep in mind, his brother Joel Colman was hailed as a once-in-a-century prodigy of Inner Bay, recognized as the foremost among Inner Bay's youths.

Being slightly inferior to his brother was not a problem.

Even so, his talent was still among the top tier.

Therefore, he knew what he lacked was merely an opportunity.

And this time...

The opportunity had arrived!

He wanted to shine brilliantly in the upcoming battle against the "Pain Church".

Only by doing so could he secure the position of High Priest of the "Inland River Cult".

To this end, Delpock was determined.

After all, in Delpock's point of view, the position of High Priest of the "Inland River Cult" rightfully belonged to him.

Achisto?

Just as he described.

Merely a guy with a bit of luck.

Thinking this, Delpock straightened his back, his face and eyes cleared of any odd expression, leaving only the utmost respect.

"Just give the order, and I and the 'Rapids Squad' will strike immediately," Delpock said solemnly.

As he spoke, a fully armed troop of twelve emerged from one side.

Their movements were uniform and precise.

Their gazes were unwaveringly resolute.

Most importantly, their momentum.

Each one's presence was as fearsome as that of a battle-hardened veteran.

Upon witnessing the emergence of the 'Rapids Squad', the attending deacons of the "Inland River Cult" exclaimed in surprise.

"It's the 'Rapids Squad'!"

"The 'Rapids Squad' is also part of our congregation?"

"This is great!"

"Victory is certain!"

Voices like these rose and fell in sequence, pumping up the already high-spirited deacons of the "Inland River Cult" even more.

Watching this scene unfold, Delpock felt even prouder.

The 'Rapids Squad' was his creation.

The Secret Assembly established beside Ateil Trail was also his work.

And it was he who had kept all these a secret.

He had done all this for this very moment.

Why should he rely on Achisto, that failure?

The more disdain he felt inside, the more solemn Delpock's face became.

Achisto, completely oblivious, looked at the 'Rapids Squad' before him, his excitement no less than that of any other deacon present.

Victory was assured!

With the 'Rapids Squad' here, they could hold back the high-end forces of the 'Pain Church'!

Plus the people I've brought with me...

Victory is certain!

With a heart full of excitement, Achisto forcefully maintained his composure and said—

"At this moment, Your Crown's gaze is turning towards us..."

In the drawn-out tone, Achisto's voice was somewhat trembling, barely able to maintain the deep voice he had always deliberately preserved.

Especially when—

Tat tat tat!

Rapid footsteps sounded.

With the aid of a 'Miracle', reaching Doldot Port instantly, Toran, who had been monitoring the dock's movements, hurried in with quick steps.

The priest first made a bow, then said swiftly.

"The 'Oriental' has arrived!"

...

"Miss, the 'Oriental' has arrived!"

At the dock, the trusted aide of the West Berlin Marquis House, standing outside the carriage, reported.

The sisters Jacqueline and Catherine, who had been secretly conversing with a telepathy-like ability, immediately ceased their conversation, and it was the younger sister Catherine who spoke.

"Understood."

Having said this, the youngest daughter of the Marquis of West Berlin stepped out of the carriage.

Jacqueline followed a step behind.

The third daughter of the Marquis of West Berlin, the High Priestess of the Pain Church, gazed at the white ship on the distant river.

Although she had already heard about the 'Oriental' from her sister, she still couldn't help but marvel at the beauty of the 'Oriental' when she saw it with her own eyes.

The 'Oriental', proposed by Arthur and implemented by Marinda, was unique on the basis of people's current cognition and aesthetic values.

This uniqueness, coupled with the rare white color of this era, immediately drew people's attention, especially at dusk when the 'Oriental' became even more eye-catching.

Jacqueline waved her hand to the side.

The West Berlin Family's music ensemble immediately began to play.

As the brisk and raucous music started, the 'Oriental' just happened to dock.

The folding gangplank extended from the deck.

Arthur, dressed in black hunting attire and leaning on a cane, descended slowly.

Catherine and Jacqueline scrutinized Arthur intently, surprise flickering in their emerald-green eyes.

The twins were astonished by Arthur's youth.

Even more surprising was the pipe in Arthur's other hand.

The engraving 'Marinda' on the long stem of the pipe was clear to them.

Having heard the rumors about Arthur's relationship with Miss Caesar, they believed a portion of them upon seeing the pipe.

At the same time, they felt more confident about their own plans.

Arthur stepped down.

The twins stepped forward.

As Arthur's feet touched the soil of Port Doldot, the twins had already approached him.

"Lord Kledos, welcome to the West Berlin Territory."

"I am Jacqueline, and this is my sister Catherine."

The twins introduced themselves.

"Good evening, ladies,"

Arthur politely responded.

To the twins before him, Arthur expressed considerable surprise. Although the two had different styles to distinguish themselves—the younger sister with her golden twin ponytails and the elder with her hair pinned up—in Arthur's eyes, they were extremely consistent.

It was a consistency of spirituality.

There are no two leaves exactly the same in this world.

There are also no two identical people.

Unless...

The two were originally one entity.

Subconsciously, Arthur thought of 'Miha and Yiluo'.

Suddenly, Arthur's perception of the cold-blooded Marquis of West Berlin deepened.

However, this did not prevent Arthur from smiling warmly at the twins before him.

"Lord Kledos, please come with me.

Inside the castle, a banquet has already been prepared.

My father is already there, awaiting you."

Jacqueline, without any faux pas, immediately led Arthur to the specially prepared carriage.

Arthur nodded his thanks before boarding the carriage.

Watching the still-open carriage door, Jacqueline exchanged a glance with her sister Catherine as they prepared to act.

Chapter 687: Port IV

At the moment when the carriage door of Arthur's coach was about to close, Jacqueline's figure flashed and she darted into the carriage, while another Jacqueline appeared beside Catherine again.

Although her expression was wooden, nobody doubted that this was a mere illusion.

Not only because Jacqueline was usually not one to smile and chat, but also because she was in sync with Catherine.

However, Arthur couldn't help but sigh as he watched the West Berlin family's third daughter, who had appeared in the carriage and elegantly took a seat opposite him.

"You shouldn't have come."

"But I still came."

"I knew you would come."

"Of course, I would come, and of course, you knew..."

After all, you are 'Spirit Medium' of South Los."

Jacqueline let out such a sigh, and the carriage started moving, the wheels rolling over the gravel road, emitting a unique sound. The lady of great noble birth sat even more upright, her knees together, hands properly placed on her knees, the upper body straight, lips tightly shut.

In this lady, there was an air of rigidity and obstinacy.

However, none of that mattered.

What was important was that, merely three seconds later, the lady began to undo the buttons of her blouse.

Arthur sighed again.

"Can't we change the approach?"

"We can."

The lady took her hand away from the buttons of her blouse and reached toward her skirt.

Arthur immediately rolled his eyes.

Afterward, he became silent and said nothing.

The lady also stopped her actions, a slight smile curling the corners of her mouth, her voice carrying a hint of mockery—

"You really aren't a humorous man, are you?"

"Humorous?"

This kind of humor isn't something to be happy about.

Hell always welcomes such people, but I'm not eager to go."

Arthur looked helplessly resigned.

"So can't we cooperate a little?"

I don't want to go to hell either, but my father always pushes me to go.

Therefore, I want to resist a little."

The smile on the great noble-born lady's face grew even brighter.

"Resistance is fine, but starting this direct probe at me could bring me considerable trouble. After all, Marinda is not someone with a good temper.

If she finds out about your actions, I'm most likely to be kicked.

And you?"

You're most likely to die without a place to be buried."

Arthur let out a soft sigh.

"Is Miss Caesar that fierce?

Worthy of being the 'Lady of the Eternal Night'."

Saying this, envy appeared on Jacqueline's face, and then the lady continued.

"Would you like to have Seberlin?"

Her voice was very low.

But the content was explosive enough.

Arthur looked at the third daughter of the West Berlin family in surprise and sighed once more.

"You've come a little too late.

If it had been a day ago, I would have been very interested.

Of course, that's not to say I'm not interested now.

However, as a 'Spirit Medium,' the first principle of my life is to honor promises."

Arthur's face was very serious.

Jacqueline, however, began to laugh.

"What if your collaborator has died?"

In her inquiry, her emerald eyes shone with an unusual light.

Arthur didn't answer, merely spreading his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"Understood!

I hope you really can keep your promise!"

Having said this, the lady pushed open the door of the moving carriage, slipped out, and didn't forget to close the door behind her.

The whole process was silent.

Just as silent as when she had appeared.

Arthur fingered his pipe, looking increasingly helpless.

Deep down, however, he was clapping vigorously—

Beautiful!

Well done!

"Truly a family of filial piety!"

Concerning Jacqueline's desire to kill her own father, Arthur was noncommittal; after all, the Marquess of West Berlin had never treated Jacqueline as his daughter.

In addition, there was a true Heir at the side of the Marquess of West Berlin; the simultaneous presence of favoritism and neglect is more than anyone can bear.

Not to mention, there was the contamination of the 'Lady of Sorrow.'

It was as if more chilies were added to an already spicy hotpot.

The flavor was enough to cause Distortion.

The emergence of this situation seemed quite natural to Arthur.

What Arthur needed to consider was how he could make use of this situation.

A lady who could casually disrobe to test others...

she would not be easy to deal with.

Even so, Arthur could imagine that if he truly did not stop her, she would definitely give him a major blow.

The moment she got on the carriage, she was ready.

And he?

He had prepared three primary plans and three contingency plans.

Unfortunately, they were not needed.

To put it simply, the lady was still somewhat inhibited.

'The first time?

How green!

However, the attitude I gave should have been sufficient.'

Arthur shrugged again and began to lean back in the chair, closing his eyes to rest.

As Jacqueline stepped out of the carriage, her face uncontrollably blushed, but when she returned to her own carriage, the third daughter of the West Berlin Family regained her composure.

'Sister, how did it go?'

Upon seeing Jacqueline, Catherine immediately began to inquire.

They still shared a kind of 'mind-to-mind' power.

'Not optimistic.

Father has already collaborated with South Los's 'Spirit Medium.'

And most likely, they will act tonight.'

As she pondered over the hints Arthur had given—although he provided no clear words, his attitude was sufficient for this Noble-born lady to understand what was going on.

'Tonight?

Then we...'

Catherine looked at her sister.

'We wait!

Wait for the result!

If father wins, we are daughters.

If he wins, we are Believers.'

Jacqueline smiled.

That smile carried unspoken words.

Behind those words was another thought—

If both suffer, we stand alone.

But such a thought, Jacqueline did not voice.

However, Catherine understood.

The twins shared a knowing smile.

It wasn't that they did not want to speak, but that they could not.

Such emotionally charged words, once spoken, could possibly be overheard by him, despite all the precautions they took, they still needed to be vigilant.

After all, they too were believers.

Of course, they were grateful to that lady and their father.

That lady gave them power and opportunities for advancement.

And their father?

Though he treated them as tools, it was their father's presence that restrained the lady from going too far.

It enabled them to walk a tightrope-like, precarious path.

Despite the danger, there was still a sliver of hope.

And now?

It was time to repay their father.

Pity they could not join the battle directly.

Otherwise, they really wanted to rip out their father's heart to take a look.

The twins communicated with just their gazes within the coach.

The carriage, guarded by the Marquess of West Berlin's guards, continued on its way, not stopping until it entered the Marquess's Castle, then the twins ceased their silent communication.

Arthur, who had feigned sleep with his eyes closed, also opened them now.

At the same time, Yula on board the 'Oriental' was using the 'Messenger Stone' to summon all the Priests of the 'Pain Church'—in the name of the High Priest, Her Holiness the Saintess.

Chapter 688: Port V

Having the title alone is not enough.

Special communication channels are needed, as well as a voice!

The former, Yula had already decoded over the years as a member of the congregation.

And the latter?

Yula was imitating.

Every conversation with the High Priest, Her Holiness the Saintess, Yula would commit to memory.

Then, she would learn it bit by bit.

Though there might be slight flaws when speaking face-to-face, if using the Messenger Stone, Yula was completely confident.

After all, not every priest, deacon had seen those two in person, or heard their voices firsthand.

However, to be safe, Yula did not summon those who had seen and heard them.

It wasn't just because those people were unstable elements.

It was also because...

She needed time!

The Pain Church also needed to rebel!

Only by distracting the people of the Inland Church could the rest be put under enough pressure to ascend smoothly.

Thinking of her own schemes, Yula couldn't help but smile smugly.

She was surely going to succeed!

Despite the significant price paid, she would definitely succeed!

As long as she succeeded, everything would be worth it.

But, every time she thought about the two portions of Divine Grace she had given to that South Los 'Spirit Medium' to distract the High Priest and the Saintess, Yula still felt a painful pinch.

If she could use those two portions of Divine Grace, improving her strength further would be no problem.

'That South Los 'Spirit Medium' couldn't have used up both portions of Divine Grace so quickly, right?

Such Divine Grace-endowed items must have been carefully chosen.

So...

I still have a chance!'

Faced with tremendous success, Yula's thoughts shifted towards maximizing benefits.

What about the contract?

While it exists, it's certainly worth honoring.

Once the contract is fulfilled, everything naturally needs to be re-strategized.

Lucius stood by, with a look of wanting to say something yet holding back.

This young avenger did not see what Yula was plotting in her mind, but he did witness with his own eyes Yula contacting the church's priests and deacons in the names, voices, and private channels of the High Priest and Her Holiness the Saintess. The young avenger was moved by Yula's trust, yet instinctively felt it was improper, wrong.

Conflict, turmoil.

Then, he fell into pain once again.

Yula saw it.

She felt it even more clearly.

The lady whispered—

"Lucius, I hope you will stand behind me.

I can only trust you unconditionally.

Others?

I'm not reassured."

The lady handled Lucius very well.

In fact, as these words were spoken, Lucius's agony deepened.

And under such intense pain, Yula felt a slight increase in power again.

'Good! Very good!

Keep it up!'

Yula cheered inwardly while maintaining a solemn gaze outwardly. Even when she stretched out her hand to caress Lucius's cheek, her eyes revealed deep affection.

As convincing as reality.

No!

For Lucius, it was the reality.

"Okay!"

Lucius responded like that.

His answer was firm, but the pain inside deepened.

Yula was very satisfied with this.

The lady turned and walked out of the cabin.

With the arrival of the "Oriental," martial law at the Dortot Head Port docks had been lifted, and the guests from the "Orient" had already disembarked.

Yula and Lucius did not stand out.

And in the washroom?

Joe was still murmuring.

As always.

...

"The Castle of the West Berlin Family was started at the end of the Holy Era, took 10 years to reach its initial scale, but it only had one main tower acting as the sole defense facility, resembling a mill converted tower, and the rest was all made of wood, including the most important walls, all like this.

Even the so-called barracks could only accommodate 20 people.

Besides that, there were only three horses in the entire castle.

When war broke out at that time, our ancestor wept bitterly over the death of one horse."

Standing in the glittering Castle, the Marquess of West Berlin narrated the glorious past of his ancestors to Arthur.

After more than two hundred years of development, the West Berlin Family was no longer in its sorry state; not only had the entire Castle become luxurious and sturdy, but the secret techniques within made the entire Castle warm and bright. The 12-meter-high walls were patrolled by a swarm of guards, seriously inspecting the perimeter, and the cannons facing outward made Peeping Toms quiver in fear.

"Come, let me show you the Core of the Castle."

The Marquess of West Berlin said with a showy generosity.

Just like a true host welcoming his most honored guest.

However, both knew that this was just a part of their cooperation—

For only in the most core part of the Castle could they find enough secrecy.

"Jacqueline, you go supervise the dinner.

Catherine, have the orchestra start playing South Los's music."

The Marquess of West Berlin instructed his two daughters.

Then, he did not forget to explain to Arthur.

"My eldest daughter, due to her fiancé's Death, is temporarily unable to meet guests, while my second daughter has temporarily moved out of the Castle, because of her fiancé's reason."

The lord of West Berlin said, continuing to walk forward.

Jacqueline and Catherine gave Arthur a slight curtsy before turning to leave.

The twins behaved as usual, without A Tiny Bit of oddity.

Just like the Marquess himself.

Arthur, on the other hand, was appreciating the performance of this family.

How should I put it?

To call them Oscar-winning actors would be an understatement for this family.

Following behind the Marquess of West Berlin, Arthur proceeded straight to the deepest part of the Castle.

A tower hidden right in the middle of the Castle.

Looking at the mill-like tower, Arthur subconsciously thought of the West Berlin Family's initial Castle, and the Marquess beside him nodded in agreement.

"Yes, this is the original Castle.

The current Castle has been expanded around it as its Core.

And this?

It has become indestructible after generations of my ancestors' renovations!"

The Marquess of West Berlin said with pride.

Then, the lord of West Berlin headed straight into the interior.

[Death Intuition] did not flicker.

Arthur continued to sense carefully, confirming there was no danger before entering.

The space inside the tower was smaller than imagined, and the arrangement was simple.

Bed, chairs, desk, and bookshelves.

When Arthur's gaze swept over the bookshelf filled with books, it lingered momentarily before he looked at the Marquess sitting relaxed in the chair.

"People need to rest.

Only with rest can one be wiser.

Thanks to the gifts of our ancestors."

The lord of West Berlin said with a smile, and directly lifted his foot, ready to take off his shoes—this was a completely subconscious action, a habit the Marquis had developed after resting thousands of times.

So, when his palm touched the shoe, the Marquis finally realised he was not alone.

"Ahem, my apologies, that was rude of me."

The Marquis candidly admitted his mistake and immediately changed the subject—

"Now, can you tell me the whereabouts of that person?"

Chapter 689: Port VI

Arthur took out the note he had written earlier.

The note was folded twice and the ink marks couldn't be seen.

The Marquis of West Berlin expressed his appreciation for Arthur's cautious approach.

"Rest assured, in this place, nothing can peep through."

The Marquis gave his guarantee as he casually took the note.

Then, he disappeared on the spot.

Leaving behind only a trace of his voice—

"It is very safe here, I hope you can rest for a while, after all, being able to completely relax in such a safe place is a rare delight, isn't it?

By the way, Jacqueline and Catherine will be coming shortly."

There was a faint note of pride in his voice.

Nobles are not to be trusted!

The master of West Berlin perfectly embodied this saying with his own actions.

As for the contract?

The contract certainly had not been invalidated.

The power of the contract was still present.

However, the lord of West Berlin had circumvented 'the power of the contract'.

Because—

The master of West Berlin was 'protecting' Arthur.

He never intended to harm Arthur.

Especially the specifics listed in the contract, the master of West Berlin would also fulfill them one by one.

But...

While doing so, the master of West Berlin wanted more.

Or rather, the master of West Berlin wanted to have leverage over Arthur in some way.

For example: A grandchild bearing the Kledos Family bloodline.

Of course, two or even more would be even better.

The West Berlin Family needed such fresh bloodline.

Arthur, on the other hand, narrowed his eyes, sensing the clear power of the contract.

He sensed the slight backlash against the Marquis from this power—clearly, the Marquis was trying hard to circumvent the backlash of the contract, but had not fully succeeded.

He still suffered a tiny bit of harm.

Not serious.

But it wouldn't be too light either.

The power of the contract was absolute.

And upon confirming this, the young 'Spirit Medium' stretched, yawned, and lay down on the bed in the room.

The soft and slightly gritty texture allowed the young 'Spirit Medium's' body to sink into the bed, yet didn't feel unsupported.

Overall, it was extremely comfortable.

Especially upon seeing the returning Marquis of West Berlin, that feeling of comfort made Arthur contentedly close his eyes.

That note, a blank sheet of paper.

Not to mention a name, there wasn't even a tiny bit of writing on it.

The Marquis of West Berlin was stunned the moment he unfolded the note.

The Marquis truly hadn't expected Arthur to do such a thing.

No!

It was caution!

How could a person be so cautious of others?

What about trust between people?

Of course, what mattered most was the sense of frustration.

Just like when he heard that Old Charlie had broken his own leg, and climbed up to a lady's window ledge, the Marquis thought he had performed flawlessly, even arranging a grand welcoming ceremony and the safe core of West Berlin Castle as a backdrop, especially with Jacqueline and Catherine who would surely play some tricks, he should have easily earned Arthur's trust.

Unfortunately!

The Marquis sighed.

Then, he said earnestly.

"If I said it was a misunderstanding just now, would you believe me?"

The Marquis looked at Arthur as he spoke.

Since just now, Arthur had closed his eyes, breathing evenly, appearing to be asleep.

And now, even though the Marquis spoke, Arthur remained unchanged.

But then, Arthur's arm lifted.

And, he raised a finger.

Not the middle finger.

It was the index finger.

Instantly, the Marquis understood.

"I believe that 10,000 gold coins could indeed convince you that everything just now was a misunderstanding."

Saying this, the Marquis looked at Arthur.

But Arthur was still lying there with his eyes closed.

Suddenly, the Marquis laughed and immediately added as if supplementing.

"Although 100,000 gold coins is a lot, I am still willing to earn your friendship."

But Arthur remained unmoved.

This time, the Marquis frowned.

10w Gold Coins don't work?

Then 100w?

Impossible!

What does 100w Gold Coins even mean?

That's nearly equivalent to a year's revenue from Doldot Port!

The Marquis believed Arthur would not propose such an "inhumane" condition, yet he hoped Arthur would do just that.

Because compared to such an "inhumane" condition, what Arthur wanted was undoubtedly harder for him to accept, yet accept he must—he was wounded, and even if he still felt confident about that certain entity, he found himself inadequate in other matters.

He needed Arthur's help.

Otherwise, Port Doldot would become ruins.

And that was something the Marquis could not accept.

Port Doldot is the West Berlin Family's cornerstone, absolutely indispensable...

'Wait a minute!

Could this guy be deliberately baiting me?'

Suddenly, the Marquis had this thought.

Immediately, the smirk that had been on the Marquis's face grew somewhat stiff.

But quickly, that smirk became even more brilliant.

At this juncture, the Marquis didn't have many options.

The Marquis needed Arthur's help, but he still wanted to struggle a bit.

So, the Marquis prepared to offer 100w Gold Coins.

The Marquis hoped to use this offer to offset Arthur's subsequent conditions.

Even then, the Marquis naively told himself, maybe Arthur was just greedy?

But before such words could be spoken, Arthur opened one eye.

His profound gaze held a hint of amusement.

There was no sarcasm, nor contempt.

But rather...

Anticipation!

A smile full of anticipation!

Seeing the smidgen of smile hidden in Arthur's eyes, the Marquess of West Berlin couldn't speak.

Because the Marquis knew, if he spoke now, he would fulfill Arthur's expectation, and he would truly become...

A joke!

This was something the Marquess of West Berlin would never allow.

As the master of West Berlin, the Marquis had his "honor."

Though not much, it was enough for the Marquis to listen to what Arthur's exact conditions were.

"Please, speak."

The Marquis sighed, looking like a lamb to the slaughter.

"A promise."

Arthur said softly.

"Impossible!"

The Marquess of West Berlin shook his head firmly.

For the Marquis, promises were too vague, and even if they were specific, they would still be vehemently resisted.

After all, he was a noble.

The promise of a contract was too disadvantageous.

Just as the Marquis prepared to gently steer the negotiation back to a normal scope, Arthur quipped,

"What if it's concerning Inner Bay?"

Suddenly, the Marquess of West Berlin narrowed his eyes, his green pupils glowing with an unnameable light.

That was anger.

And hatred.

As well as...

Greed.

"Could you be more specific?"

The Marquis asked.

"We have a common enemy!"

Arthur replied.

"More specific?"

The Marquis inquired.

"The Golden Lion."

Arthur continued to reply.

"Can you be even more specific?"

The Marquis wanted to know more, but Arthur did not speak again; instead, he extended his right hand.

Without hesitation, the Marquess of West Berlin clasped that right hand—

"A pleasure to collaborate!"

Chapter 690: Port VII

As Arthur and the Marquess of Seberlin were discussing the details for a new collaboration, the sky had already turned completely dark, and the light from the lighthouse outside Doldot Port began shining nearby.

Meanwhile, the laborers were still busy at work.

Although everyone was drenched in sweat, smiles appeared on everyone's face.

Although martial law had been in effect for most of the day, it hadn't hindered the laborers from earning money, and in fact, they had earned even more today.

The merchants had increased their wages to ensure the freshness and timely arrival of the goods.

"Thank Divine Lord for the 'Oriental'!"

"If only it could come like this once a month!"

Many of the laborers were saying this.

Most of these were young people.

The older ones were silent.

They had long since abandoned any illusions, only hoping to carry more goods, earn more wages, to provide a little more for their wives, children, and parents.

But Chette was different.

As the second son in his family, Chette had lost his father early, his elder brother was seriously ill, his sister had left home, and his mother...

Whenever he thought of his mother, Chette clenched his fists.

His mother was no longer the mother he remembered.

Ever since she had come into contact with Inland Church, she had completely changed.

Not only had all the family's property been sold off, but there was also no money left for his brother's medical treatment, his sister had left home, and she had become a stranger to him.

It seemed he wasn't family at all.

The followers of the Inland Church were.

He had tried countless times to advise his mother, but it was of no use.

He had repeatedly been met with cold indifference.

Because of this, he had even thought of dying.

But after being discovered, he was saved and brought back.

Faced with the pity of those around him, Chette felt immensely uncomfortable and sorrowful.

He...

He shouldn't have to live like this.

So, he came to the docks and became a laborer.

He was waiting for an opportunity.

...

Beileitz's face was already deeply furrowed, and these wrinkles tightened as the tax official furrowed his brow.

"Ah!"

The tax official sighed, his eyes full of regret.

An unprecedented meeting had been held in the church tonight.

Even the High Priest had attended.

He could have participated, but, as the tax official on the docks, he needed to manage the lockdown caused by the arrival of the 'Oriental.'

Therefore, he had to regretfully miss it.

This feeling of regret made Beileitz feel as if Divine Grace was moving away from him.

Standing in his private office at the docks, the tax official watched the busy laborers and sailors and couldn't help but curse under his breath.

"Damn lowlives, do you know what I've given up for you?"

Damn! Damn!"

In a stream of curses, the tax official's eyes turned to the white passenger ship at the docks, and immediately, jealousy filled his gaze.

"A lucky guy!"

You won't last long!

Divine Lord will definitely bestow Divine Punishment upon you!"

Jealousy turned into resentment.

And the resentment made the tax official even more discontent.

Especially when he thought about how the South Los Spirit Medium had unexpectedly received Noble status, the tax official's jealousy almost exploded.

A noble!

That was a status he longed for but couldn't attain!

And without the appearance of the Divine Lord, he would never achieve it in his lifetime!

"Divine Lord, please hurry!"

Quickly bestow your Grace upon me!

I have already waited three years!"

The tax official prayed softly.

And just then—

Knock, knock knock!

A rhythmic knocking suddenly sounded.

Beileitz immediately turned around and saw a note slipped through the door crack. The tax officer immediately ran over to pick it up.

As for the person outside the door?

The tax officer did not care.

Or rather, at the beginning, the tax officer did care, but after several unnoticed knocks, he gave up.

And he attributed it to a miracle.

Upon opening the note, joy appeared on the tax officer's face.

"It has begun!

It has truly begun!

The Divine Lord has heard my prayers!"

The tax officer murmured to himself and then sprang into action.

Following the divine command, he needed to gather the stewards at the dock.

Then, create an explosion.

This explosion would proclaim the resurgence of the 'Church'.

Afterward?

It was no longer his concern.

Priest Delpock would handle everything.

And he only needed to wait!

Wait for his reward!

Just like the Divine Grace he received during their first meeting — that 'Holy Water' had revitalized him, bringing him back to the peak of his manhood, although not forever, but to receive 'Holy Water' periodically, what difference did it make from forever?

Especially those female devotees who were willing to offer themselves.

That made the tax officer linger fondly.

But, no amount of female devotees was enough to stop the tax officer's ambition.

He wanted Doldot Port.

He collected taxes here.

However, the taxes were not his.

This feeling was too unbearable!

"But this time, it's different!

Not just Divine Grace!

Even Doldot Port will be mine!"

Beileitz muttered to himself, quickening his pace.

The tax officer left his office and walked to the small square on the dock. He was too eager to wait, so he did not wait for the two guards outside his office—unlike the soldiers patrolling the dock, these two guards were hired by Beileitz himself.

Although dressed in military uniforms, they were essentially bodyguards, an additional draft.

Therefore, this tax officer, who believed he had saved these two people's lives, only paid them half the salary of the other soldiers.

The other half?

The tax officer put it in his own pocket.

The two guards understood this.

Just like at this moment, not seeing their stingy employer greet them, the two guards were happy to relax.

And with the square right in front of them, what could possibly go wrong?

Impossible!

The two guards were quite confident, leaning against the wall, folding their arms, and watching their employer, who stood on a wooden crate and rang the bell on the dock—

Ding Ding Ding!

Amid the continuous striking sounds, the tax officer shouted loudly.

"Stewards, come here for a meeting!"

Three times in a row, making sure all the stewards could hear, a smile unconsciously appeared on the tax officer's face.

His good days were finally coming.

Bang!

Suddenly, a gunshot sounded.

Beileitz felt a searing heat graze past his ear.

A gun!

Someone is trying to assassinate me!

This thought surfaced in the depths of his mind, but Beileitz's body instinctively turned to see what was happening, while his mind told him to dodge.

Instinct and mind collided at this moment.

Instantly, Beileitz's body froze.

And at that moment—

Bang!

The second gunshot sounded.

And this shot hit its target.