

Great Master 711

Chapter 711 The Words of the Serpent V

The longsword pierced through his chest, and Achisto's voice choked in his throat.

The High Priest of the 'Inland River Cult' stared with wide eyes, looking down at the blood-stained longsword.

"No!

Lord Hamlet, no!

It's not like this!"

Achisto murmured.

But the outcome would not change.

Ripples stirred up once more behind him as the longsword was about to be withdrawn.

Achisto grasped the blade with one hand.

"Lord Hamlet, this is not my fault!

It's all Toran's fault!

I just naively believed the villain's slander!"

Achisto explained desperately.

However, the longsword had no hesitation.

The blade trembled slightly.

The next moment, fingers and palms flew into the air, and Achisto's chest was ripped open with a huge gash.

Pff!

Blood spurted out.

A figure fell to its knees.

"Lord Hamlet, you promised me, you had promised me!"

The kneeling Achisto's voice rose from a low to a high pitch.

Then, it abruptly stopped.

The longsword swept across the High Priest of the 'Inland River Cult's' neck, and the head flew high before crashing heavily to the ground, the eyes that had not closed in death staring straight at the Inland River.

Waves glittered, and the sound of waves rolled on.

Standing on the deck of his arcane ship, Gleisa Hamlet gave his sword a flick.

At once, the fresh blood clinging to the blade all fell upon the Inland River.

The crimson quickly faded.

Eventually, it disappeared completely.

The eldest son of the Old Lion slowly sheathed his sword, not sparing Port Doldot a glance.

For the eldest son of the Old Lion, Achisto's death had been predetermined.

Especially after Delpock, on whom he had expended great efforts to raise, had died, what reason did the dispensable Achisto have to live?

Die! Die!

Only with Achisto's death could the eldest son of the Old Lion feel a bit better.

At least, it would let him believe that it was because of Achisto that his plans had gone awry, not because of his own miscalculation.

'It's not me who was wrong, it's Achisto!'

Gleisa Hamlet convinced himself.

Afterward, the eldest son of the Old Lion's gaze turned towards the white passenger ship on the surface of the Inland River.

"Arthur Kredos, this round, you've won!

But that's just this round!

Later, when your 'Oriental' passes through Ainhars Territory and Bert Territory, I'll welcome you in an even warmer way.

Of course, if you can make it to Inner Bay.

Then I will give you a real opportunity to face me!"

In a declaration brimming with noble pride, the eldest son of the Old Lion turned and walked into the cabin.

His golden cape fluttered against the night sky.

The arcane ship disappeared on the river's surface.

As if it had never appeared at all.

It was only the head on the dock, eyes wide open in silence, that told the whole story.

Toran stood there, stunned, his eyes completely out of focus.

The belief of this 'Inland River Cult' priest had collapsed.

The words of Achisto.

The plight of Achisto.

Both chipped away bit by bit at his once impregnable faith.

And as the faith was destroyed, the priest's heart was dying too.

Soon, this priest would become a soulless husk, living like a walking corpse.

But the priest was fortunate.

Because—

The eyes of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium were watching this fortunate soul.

"Good evening, Mr. Toran."

In her pleasant voice, the pale yet composure Grindelwald emerged from the shadows, dressed in formal attire and holding a crown-shaped cane, looking as if she had just come from a leisurely salon.

Toran heard such a greeting. However, at this moment, the priest of the 'Inland River Cult' showed no reaction.

To this, Grindelwald didn't mind, but simply smiled faintly.

"People with fragile hearts are worthy of respect,"

because most of the time, they are good people.

But good people trust others too easily."

Grindelwald whispered softly.

This time, Toran responded.

The young priest looked towards the white-haired Grindelwald.

"Do you think what this guy said is true?"

Grindelwald pointed at the corpse on the ground.

"I... don't know!"

The young priest subconsciously wanted to admit that what Achisto said was true, after all, the corpse was right in front of him, was there anything more real than this?

But his long-held faith made him reluctant to believe it.

Even though, deep inside, he knew it might be false.

Faith enables rebirth.

Faith gives strength.

Faith brings happiness.

All sorts of positive guidance make faith extremely terrifying.

It can make people blind and unreasonable.

Grindelwald didn't need such people.

He needed followers.

But his followers couldn't break the rules.

"Let's go, gather all the 'Inland River Cult' followers you can, and I'll take you to see the most authentic side of things."

Saying this, Grindelwald started walking.

In the gentleman's mouth was a soft chant—

"God has form, like a snake, very long, and thick.

God's Breath, highly toxic.

God's Command, all snakes obey."

Under the cover of night, the chant lingered.

And Toran shuddered, the young priest finally remembered the recent rumor 'The Master of the God of the Inland River, Southern Lost Spirit Medium Arthur Kredos'!

Could it be! Could it be!

The feeling of his whole body trembling as if it were electrified appeared.

Before,

even half an hour ago, this young priest would not have acknowledged this rumor.

But, now!

This young priest wished from the bottom of his heart that the rumor was true!

Furthermore, this young priest had already started praying!

Anything can change.

Delicious food will spoil over time.

Sweet air will start to stink with continuous rain.

Complete disagreement a moment ago.

Wholehearted support the next.

In just an instant, everything reversed.

Because, the one manipulating it all was the Spirit Medium.

It was Southern Lost Spirit Medium, who turned the impossible into possible.

On the Oriental, in the upper cabin, on the terrace.

Marinda watched as Grindelwald walked away with Toran, and with a lift at the corner of her mouth, she turned to look at Jacqueline, who was uneasy beside her.

"Can you get the 'Pain Church' to leave for a while?"

Marinda asked.

"Of course!"

Jacqueline nodded and then gave orders via the Messenger Stone.

When she decided to come to the 'Oriental', Jacqueline had prepared to cooperate fully.

Requests like this, Jacqueline would not refuse.

But the following words from Marinda still stunned Jacqueline in place—

"Jacqueline, would you like to become my sworn sister?"

Marinda asked softly, her azure eyes shimmering with an appealing radiance.

Even Jacqueline, born into nobility, did not react immediately.

It was only after a full ten seconds that the elder twin sister snapped back to reality.

Subsequently, her eyes lit up.

Chapter 712 The Serpent's Speech VI

"Why come to the 'Oriental'?"

"To seek cooperation!"

"To save ourselves through cooperation!"

"Or rather..."

Struggle!"

Jacqueline was well aware of her purpose for being on the 'Oriental', so she kept her demeanor as humble as possible.

She not only prepared to cooperate with Marinda as much as possible, but she was also prepared to give up everything.

However, Jacqueline had never imagined that Marinda would use such a method.

She chose to resolve the deadlock between her and Catherine in such a formal manner.

If she became Marinda's sworn sister, then both she and Catherine could seek Marinda's protection, and Marinda could openly involve herself in some of Seberlin's affairs, unless...

Her father expelled her and Catherine.

And wasn't that what she wanted?

Nevertheless, this approach came with substantial risks.

First, there was her father's attitude to consider. Without enough strength, such a move would simply be suicide... hmm, with Lord Kledos present, was that not certain?

Then there were the manpower issues!

Even if Lord Kledos were formidable, he was still just one person!

Even if Lord Kledos could annihilate the entire Port Doldot, he certainly couldn't manage Port Doldot himself!

Seemingly perceiving what was on Jacqueline's mind, Marinda picked up the orange tea, and the flames ignited the pipe.

As the flames flickered, on the surface of the Inland River, near the 'Oriental', a fleet of ships appeared.

They were the escort fleet agreed upon between Marinda and Arthur.

Seeing the fully armed members on each ship, Jacqueline breathed a sigh of relief.

But there was a third point!

Her older biological sister!

The elder sister her father considered the true heir: Yekaterina Otto von West Berlin.

Marinda smiled, however.

"Do you trust Arthur?"

"Absolutely!"

"I completely trust Lord Kledos!

Otherwise, I wouldn't be here!"

Jacqueline said with certainty.

After speaking, the twin sister stood rooted to the spot.

If she had chosen to trust Arthur, what more was there to hesitate about?

What was she worried about now?

In that moment, Jacqueline figured it out.

"My dear sister!"

Without any hesitation, the twin sister immediately picked up the hem of her robe and bent over.

Marinda stood there, accepting this obsequious gesture.

If following the noble protocols, the process would be extremely complicated, even requiring preparations to start six months in advance and involving 5–20 various banquets, salons, and so forth.

Fortunately, neither Marinda nor Jacqueline required such red tape.

Marinda did not have the energy for it.

Jacqueline, meanwhile, wanted to leave West Berlin as soon as possible.

When Jacqueline straightened her back, Marinda had already signaled for the twin sister to follow.

A small boat docked beneath the 'Oriental'.

Old John served as the boatman.

Marinda stood at the bow, while Jacqueline took a step back, maintaining her respect for her sworn sister.

Behind them, the twenty ships of the escort fleet followed.

Under the cover of night, shortly thereafter, the special fleet docked at the pier.

By that time, the pier had already quieted down, but the scent of blood and gunpowder lingered in the air, occasionally punctuated by flashes of light.

Marinda walked towards a ruin.

When about two meters away from the ruin, the lady stopped, her azure eyes fixed on a shadow.

The discovered Miller emerged, wearing a look of resignation.

The Head Hunter of the Marquess of West Berlin was a middle-aged man of tall stature with a rather ordinary face, wearing a black hunting outfit streaked with gray, two black painted daggers hung on his chest, a hand crossbow strapped to his left arm, and what appeared to be an empty right hand was silently pulling on some nearly invisible strings.

Undoubtedly, this exceedingly skilled Head Hunter had set extremely dangerous traps around him.

And that was that reason Marinda had stopped.

The traps, under the lingering power of the "Holy Light," were undeniably revealed.

The remaining "Voodoo Power" even allowed Marinda to clearly perceive the caution, guard, and a hint of malice from the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin.

Although that hint of malice flashed by, Marinda had captured it.

About this, the lady surely knew why.

It was simply because of the current situation at Port Doldot.

Clearly, the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin attributed everything that happened tonight to her and Arthur, the outsiders.

Marinda did not explain much.

There was no need.

It was not possible anyway.

Apart from Arthur, no one could make her explain.

The lady simply looked indifferently at the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin and spoke without any fluctuation in her tone—

"Two guests from the 'Oriental' have disappeared at Port Doldot."

As her words fell,

Two hundred private soldiers... no, members of the Escort Fleet moved past the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin and stormed into Port Doldot.

Miller watched these fierce enemies with wide eyes, but the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin dared not make a rash move.

Because of Marinda standing before him.

Just by standing there, she gave Miller a suffocating sense of danger.

And his "Spirituality" even warned him to stay away.

But out of loyalty to the Marquess of Seberlin, the Head Hunter gritted his teeth, stood his ground, and his right hand started to tremble slightly.

"Are you sure?" Marinda asked.

Her voice still had no fluctuation.

"Loyalty!" the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin shouted, swinging his right hand abruptly.

Fourteen transparent threads were about to envelop Marinda.

But they were ineffective.

The threads cut through Marinda's body, but the moment they did, she turned into smoke and passed through them.

And when Marinda turned into smoke, her previously invisible aura suddenly filled with an oppressive power.

"Ascend Steper'!" the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin exclaimed.

Using the inheritance left by her parents to temporarily experience the strength of an 'Ascend Steper,' Marinda naturally did not explain anything. The lady simply willed it with her mind.

Bang!

The fist formed from smoke heavily struck the face of the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin.

Instantly, the Head Hunter of the Marquess of Seberlin passed out.

Jacqueline, who was nearby, breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing that Miller was only unconscious.

Although she was eager to flee Seberlin, this elder twin sister still hoped her future days could be a bit safer.

Thus, unnecessary killing was necessary.

"Don't worry, I am not a person who delights in killing," Marinda said.

Old John, standing nearby, twitched at the corner of his mouth.

This old pirate wanted to ask Marinda, if not a person who delights in killing, then how did she come by the title 'Lady of the Eternal Night'?

However, the old pirate did not dare at this moment.

'Ascend Steper'!

'Lady of the Eternal Night' is actually an 'Ascend Steper'!

Who could have expected this?

Marinda's glance swept over Old John, very satisfied with the effect of her strike.

Then, the lady looked towards a direction in Port Doldot, her heart filled with infinite emotion, followed by an unprecedented excitement—

'Is this your plan?

You clever devil!

Come, let me lend you a hand!

With a smile in her heart, Marinda once again exhaled a thick ring of smoke from her mouth.

The next moment, the thick smoke turned to mist.

Immediately after, the mist surged.

In an instant, countless Undead appeared faintly visible.

Chapter 713 Words of the Snake VII

Arthur followed behind Catherine as they walked within the West Berlin Castle.

Compared to the Marquess of West Berlin, who proudly explained the place, Catherine was more critical of the numerous rules within the castle—

"Arthur, do you know?

In the castle, you cannot run or jump, you cannot speak loudly, and walking side by side is not allowed.

When multiple people are present, everyone must line up according to their rank and status.

It feels terrible, just like a bunch of animals tied together."

The twin sister walking beside Arthur complained indignantly.

"Do you abide by them?"

Arthur asked with a smile.

"I have abided by them."

Catherine lifted her head proudly as she answered.

Having abided by them naturally means she mostly did not.

Obviously, in front of that Marquess of West Berlin, this twin sister behaved properly, but when not seen?

Then it certainly does not count as wrongdoing.

"So, that old butler must often tattle on you."

Arthur said with certainty.

Catherine's delight in misfortune was sufficient to explain everything.

"Not just that old butler, but also those gossiping maids, they have no idea that such tattling will only make them lose their chance for advancement—no one likes people who tattle, unless they themselves have such a mission, and especially my elder sister, who handles these matters with great ease."

Speaking of her elder sister, Catherine subconsciously frowned.

A solemn look was in the twin sister's green eyes.

"She has brought you quite a bit of pressure!"

Arthur sighed in agreement.

From Catherine's words, the young 'Spirit Medium' had already roughly sketched the basic information about the eldest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin.

She was neither pampered nor capriciously abusive of her power, but accomplished what she needed in a covert manner.

Simply put, this lady did not disappoint the expectations of the Marquess of West Berlin.

Or to put it another way—

It was because he saw traits fitting a noble in his eldest daughter that he had staked everything!

"Yes, my elder sister is terrifying.

She just stands there looking at me without saying a word, and that alone makes my heart tremble.

The last time she spoke was four months ago when I saw her in the castle garden. She initiated a greeting to me, said good morning, and then walked away slowly.

That manner...

She was just like a queen patrolling her domain.

And I?

I felt just like an insignificant court jester!"

Catherine spoke these words with an even tighter frown.

Obviously, this twin sister did not like the feeling.

However, the subtle expression indicated to Arthur that Catherine merely disliked the feeling but had never thought of resisting, much less considered more extreme actions.

At most, it was about avoidance.

That kind of avoidance, though shameful, really felt effective, as evidenced perfectly by this pair of twins.

'Controlled by the father, like a puppet on strings, only wishing to escape.

Seeing the elder sister, not knowing how to resist, only instinctively disliking.

Marquis, I really see you in a new light.'

Arthur silently marveled.

Undoubtedly, the scene before him was not the twins' inherent nature but deliberately 'cultivated' by that Marquess of West Berlin.

His favoritism towards the eldest daughter made it impossible for the Marquis to cause any trouble for her.

This Marquis, he would only leave behind a pair of useful tools for his eldest daughter.

Arthur, seeing how Catherine grew increasingly nervous as they approached their destination, became even more certain.

At that moment, Catherine had long lost her previous lively and hopping attitude, displaying only cautiousness, and even upon reaching the room at the end of the corridor, this twin sister did not dare to breathe heavily but stood in front of the door for a moment before daring to raise her hand and knock softly—

Knock, knock-knock!

"Sister?"

The gentle knocking and the soft call were like the sound of a little kitten.

Inside, there was no response.

Though the sound was subtle, it was enough for the person inside to hear.

This was something Catherine was certain of.

Arthur was even more certain now.

In his "spirituality," there was not a single person behind the door he was facing.

And that shouldn't be the case!

Therefore, without hesitation, Arthur pushed the door open.

The padlock on the door had been removed by the "Hand of Void."

The double doors were flung open in an instant.

"Wait..."

Catherine was startled and spoke instinctively, but the next moment, the twin sister froze.

The room before her was completely empty, not a single person in sight.

The only things present were books and a weapon rack.

The room was a large study of five hundred square meters, the floor bare of carpets, just the original stone floor of the castle, without much other decoration—only bookshelves and weapon racks.

The bookshelves and weapon racks started from the entrance, split to the left and right, lined up against the walls, all the way to the chair opposite the doorway.

The chair, made of metal, with a high back and armrests, was covered with a white bearskin, wide enough for the bearskin to be fully spread out with the bear's head facing the direction of the door.

What startled Catherine was certainly not the bearskin.

It was the weapon rack!

A completely empty weapon rack!

Arthur swept through the area, noticing three hundred empty weapon racks.

As for where they had gone?

Where could the weapons have gone?

Naturally, they had been equipped by someone.

"Smart lady,"

Arthur noted.

Question: How do you hide a leaf?

Answer: You place the leaf in a forest.

Clearly, the eldest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin understood this principle, so she had boldly placed the weapons right under everyone's noses, camouflaged by the overstated presence of books.

As for the people?

"These informers, after being summoned under your elder sister's wing, did they all start appearing less, or disappeared altogether?"

Arthur's sudden question brought Catherine back to reality.

The twin sister nodded.

"Yes, they..."

Catherine spoke subconsciously, but after speaking, this one of the twins sharply turned towards Arthur, her eyes filled with disbelief.

"Impossible?:

How could my sister hide so many people?"

Arthur did not answer but merely pointed toward the empty weapon racks on one side of the wall.

The empty weapon racks informed Catherine of the answer.

Weapons could be hidden right under your nose.

People?

Even easier to hide.

Port Doldot is quite large.

Is it not normal for a company focused on transportation and security to emerge?

Arthur walked towards the metal high-backed chair.

A slight breeze arose.

Thin.

Cool.

Arthur fumbled on the chair, and quickly, under the armrest covered by the bearskin, the young 'Spirit Medium' found a protrusion.

He pressed it gently.

Click!

As the mechanism rotated, the metal chair moved aside.

A secret passage appeared before Arthur, with gusts of nighttime wind still flowing into its entrance, accompanied by the high-pitched voice of a woman—

"Port Doldot is burning!

The cultists are running wild!

The foreign enemies are boldly looting!

Who is willing to charge with me!"

Chapter 714: Words of the Serpent VIII

Outside West Berlin Castle, beyond the winding moat, on an open field, Yekaterina Otto von West Berlin shed her usual long dress and donned the blue military uniform representing the West Berlin Family. She gripped the hilt of her longsword at her waist, her emerald eyes gazing at the three hundred people before her.

These were all the people she could muster.

They were also absolutely loyal to her.

Weapons and armor had already been distributed.

The battle horses had also been prepared early.

The huge rock behind her was not sealed, and the night wind poured in, creating a howling sound.

That sound—

was like the cry of an eagle.

Yekaterina liked such a sound.

The eldest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin, without any hesitation, stood on a rock beside her and loudly shouted—

"Port Doldot is burning!

Heretics are rampaging!

The external enemy is brazenly looting!

Who is willing to charge with me!"

As soon as she finished speaking, the lady's three personal maidservants stood out.

Just like the lady, these three maidservants had also exchanged their long dresses for military uniforms.

It was not just about looking heroic, there was also a murderous aura.

That was the real scent of killers.

Where did such a murderous aura come from?

Naturally, it was those who were not up to standards.

The unfit, were all eliminated.

And the fit ones, all stood here.

Thus, the troop of three hundred did not have a single dissenting voice, and they all stepped forward in unison.

Step!

The sound was uniform; the longswords and firearms at their waists shook, the horses beside them whinnied softly.

It was somber and focused.

Yekaterina looked on satisfactorily at this scene.

Her secret technique "Iron Blood Mutual Killing" began to boil at this moment.

She knew the real battlefield was the place to further enhance "Iron Blood Mutual Killing."

She also knew she needed to undergo such a hardening to be worthy of her own Bloodline.

She wanted to prove herself.

Huff!

The lady took a deep breath and walked towards her battle horse.

Everyone else held their breath in concentration.

They were waiting for the lady's command to depart.

But what they ended up hearing was an unexpected sound—

Duh!

Step!

The former sound was somewhat crisp, the latter emphasized steadiness.

Anyone who heard such sounds would envision a gentleman holding a walking stick, striding forward.

However, these sounds came from the secret passage behind them.

Yekaterina turned around at once.

The three personal maidservants drew their longswords.

The remaining three hundred also stared intently at the secret passage.

Under many gazes, the air seemed to solidify.

Yet that figure was not affected a tiny bit, still walking forward leisurely, the sound becoming clearer and clearer.

So clear that it seemed like—

a heartbeat!

Thump, thump, thump!

Duh, duh, duh!

Step, step, step!

With each step, it was as if stepping upon everyone's own heartbeat.

Unconsciously, everyone's gaze was drawn to this figure.

They saw that young face, those elongated eyebrows, the prominent nose, and those deep yet bright black pupils.

Contradictory, but immensely captivating.

The appearance was not strikingly handsome, but it was oddly moving.

It was as if a higher being was displaying the beauty of life, making people unconsciously gather, unconsciously want to worship.

It was like the arrival of a true king on earth, inciting trust, respect, and a desire to follow.

Arthur momentarily removed "Carmen's Stealth," not only fully displaying the "Physique" and "Spirituality" unique to Ascend Steppers but also activating the characteristic of the "Lionheart King."

He needed a more peaceful stage.

And what else is there that attracts ordinary people with higher life characteristics more appropriately than an "Ascend Steper"?

Of course, it is by adding the "Lionheart King."

That unique charm from the Golden Lion Family had already achieved an effect of $1+1>2$ under the aura of the "Ascend Steper"—

A team of 300 people looked astonished at the appearance of Arthur; in their haze, they seemed to see a knight, a lord, and even more, a king.

Because of different willpowers, they saw different things.

But whatever it was, they all felt it was disrespectful to remain seated on their horses.

Unconsciously, the weakest-willed among the 300 dismounted.

Like dominos, the dismounting of some influenced others.

People are followers by nature.

This group of 300 was no exception; upon seeing their companions dismount, they too dismounted.

Yekaterina's three personal maids did not stop them.

Because, when Arthur appeared, they were already stunned.

Even Yekaterina herself had a brief haze.

At that time, the murderous aura dissipated completely.

Leaving only the gentle night breeze and a soft greeting—

"Good evening, Lady West Berlin.

I am Arthur Kredos, an ally of the Marquess of West Berlin, with a contract as proof."

Arthur greeted and introduced himself.

At the same time, he raised his hand to display the contract's glow visible only to those possessing "Spirituality."

This glow greatly relieved Yekaterina's three maids, where initially there was resistance, now there was none, only bows of respect left.

Yet Yekaterina remained vigilant; she had noticed something was amiss, but could not interrupt Arthur's words—

"According to the contract, I will help your father eliminate the threats in West Berlin.

The 'Pain Church' has been expelled.

The most evil of the 'Inland Church', blinded by deception, have been punished.

As for the mastermind behind all these incidents, my fiancée is currently leading people to hunt down their whereabouts, and I believe results will soon be at hand."

Arthur explained softly.

Immediately, the solemn group of 300 exchanged looks.

They could see the surprise and smiles in each other's eyes.

They certainly knew the dangers of this journey.

Death could come at any moment.

And now, death would not come.

That was indeed wonderful.

If one moment ago, the morale of the 300 was crushed.

Then at this moment, their fighting spirit was also crushed.

Yekaterina noticed the change in her subordinates, and her eyes narrowed immediately—

"Is that so?

I highly doubt your fiancée can command such an operation effectively!"

As her words fell, a tangible murderous aura surged from her.

"Iron Blood Mutual Killing!"

Clearly, she was not going to give up so easily.

Although the appearance of Arthur unexpectedly wrested the initiative from her, she still chose to turn things around with her own strength.

She could certainly sense the gap between Arthur's strength and her own.

But, strength is not solely one's own.

There are potions.

There are props.

All these could compensate.

The grey murderous aura descended, and she waited for Arthur to make a move.

If Arthur made a move, she was confident of rousing her subordinates' fighting spirit again.

She, Yekaterina Otto von West Berlin, would not lose.

Arthur watched the grey aura, saw the warriors hidden within, watched the lady, and his eyes only conveyed calm notification—

Maybe you're talented, ambitious, and know how to wield power.

In the future, you could completely control West Berlin.

Even you could expand the territories of West Berlin.

But that is in the future.

You now?

Please cooperate with me.

Yekaterina sensed the meaning in Arthur's gaze, and she immediately frowned.

But before she could react,

The next moment—

Tens of thousands of undead, howling forth.

Chapter 715: Alliance I

Silence enveloped the air, and mist filled the scene.

The Soul Reaper flickered with Soulfire.

The excess "Voodoo Power" had been utilized by Marinda on her "Legion of the Dead," and almost instantaneously, the "Legion of the Dead" revealed its true form.

All-encompassing!

Endless!

Although it could only be maintained for a moment, but...

It was enough!

At least when she saw the "Legion of the Dead" that surrounded West Berlin Castle entirely, Yekaterina understood how she should choose.

Clash head-on?

No way.

If before, this lady still harbored such a thought, now she had completely abandoned the idea.

This lady wanted to inspire her subordinates' fighting spirits, not court destruction for herself.

And when inspiring the subordinates' fighting spirit, still could not avoid death...

It was time to compromise.

"I would like to apologize for my previous words.

I truly underestimated your fiancée's strength.

Miss Caesar, truly worthy of being 'Lady of the Eternal Night'."

Yekaterina said earnestly.

Everyone saw the sincere apology on this lady's face.

It was a feeling that came from the heart.

Arthur saw it too.

He saw the feeling of his kind.

Immediately, the young 'Spirit Medium' smiled.

He liked talking to intelligent people and enjoyed collaborating with them, not only because it could eliminate unnecessary trouble but also because it could yield unexpected gains.

For instance, at this moment—

"I hope 'Lady of the Eternal Night's' search bears fruit.

About this mastermind...

Lord Kledos, what do you think?"

Yekaterina asked.

"Very strong, not just in strength, but also in influence.

And, extremely cunning!

We need more manpower to contain the opponent."

The young 'Spirit Medium' was very frank.

Seeing this frankness, Yekaterina nodded slightly.

And the people around, including Yekaterina's three personal maidservants, were somewhat perplexed; they didn't know what their master and the Southern Lost Spirit Medium were talking about.

How come it seemed like the mastermind had already been revealed?

But how did they not know?

The three personal maidservants and 300 cavalry watched as Yekaterina invited Arthur to step aside, without further questions. Under the direction of the three personal maidservants, 300 cavalry began

deploying in batches, patrolling—although the Southern Lost Spirit Medium said that all hazards had been cleared, wasn't the mastermind still being apprehended?

"Very loyal subordinates."

Arthur, having stepped aside, turned to look at the cavalry and gave a positive assessment.

"If you speak of loyalty, they are the truly loyal ones.

I have never seen so many undead gathered together.

Your fiancée truly is astonishing."

Yekaterina watched the departing 'Legion of the Dead,' her mouth full of praise, while also carrying a hint of probing.

It was that kind of curiosity one lady has towards another.

Scheming, yet also genuine.

Mixed together, it was a more sincere form of probing.

At least ensuring that the probed would not retaliate.

How to put it?

It was very noble.

And in response, Arthur had already laid down a absolutely solid defense.

As the lady finished speaking, a smile appeared on Arthur's face.

"Having been born into a 'Spirit Medium' family, I dislike the undead and everything associated with them.

Even after I became a 'Spirit Medium,' this belief has never changed, until I met...

Marinda."

Arthur said softly, the smile growing on his lips.

"Was it Miss Caesar who changed your view on the undead?"

Yekaterina seized the opportunity to ask.

The eldest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin was curious about Arthur and Marinda, and naturally, she wanted to inquire more if the opportunity arose.

Any trivial details could become bargaining chips.

Yekaterina remembered her father's words well.

Thus, the lady quietly and intently watched Arthur.

"No.

I still don't like the undead.

I dislike anyone who associates with the undead, but if it's Marinda...

I can."

Arthur shook his head, speaking his true feelings.

Immediately, Yekaterina felt choked as if she had eaten something that made her stomach feel full.

More importantly, Arthur's words continued.

"What bothers me about Marinda doesn't bother me at all.

So, I know I like Marinda.

No!

It's love.

I love her."

Arthur's already deep eyes shone at that moment, and his entire demeanor brightened as though a beam of light had suddenly descended from the sky.

Yekaterina: ...

This lady could be sure, if she wanted to breach the defenses of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium, she could start directly with the 'Lady of the Eternal Night.'

Indeed, she could manipulate the Southern Lost Spirit Medium solely through the influence on the 'Lady of the Eternal Night.'

Such information was naturally extremely important.

However, for some reason, Yekaterina could not feel happy about it.

As Arthur spoke those words, this lady felt somewhat superfluous.

Catherine felt superfluous as well.

Out of fear of her elder sister, Catherine did not leave the secret passage but stood within it.

Although there was some distance, it was easy for this twin sister to clearly hear Arthur's unguarded words.

Subconsciously, this twin sister took a step back.

She felt she should not disturb Arthur and Marinda.

A telepathy-like ability conveyed this feeling directly to Jacqueline.

As the twin sister who had been with Marinda from the start, Jacqueline saw Marinda's dominance.

She saw Marinda's iciness.

She saw that uniquely authoritative posture Marinda held when commanding the 'Legion of the Dead.'

Not just filled with a sense of oppression.

But also a charisma that affected others.

But now—

She saw Marinda's smile.

Under the moonlight, those azure eyes curved, even her golden short hair swayed in a curve with the night wind.

The smile was beautiful.

Even Jacqueline found herself mesmerized by it.

Soon after, the twin sister understood, the words of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium had been heard by the 'Lady of the Eternal Night.'

Or rather...

It was meant for the 'Lady of the Eternal Night' to hear.

And her?

Superfluous.

'I really am superfluous!'

All three daughters of West Berlin inwardly shouted at the same time.

After a good ten seconds, Yekaterina was the first to snap back to reality.

"If we were to pursue them now, do we stand a chance?"

Instinctively, the lady changed the subject.

Clearly, this lady had also spotted the Arcane Ship.

As for the identity of the owner of that Arcane Ship?

She was naturally aware of it.

But this lady was unsure if Arthur really knew.

Or rather, this lady wanted to try her luck to see if she could gain an 'unexpected assistance'!

Undoubtedly, this was another nobly adventurous probe.

In response, Arthur did not answer directly, but counter-questioned—

"Has the Marquess of West Berlin prepared for an all-out war with the Old Lion?"

Chapter 716: Union II

Faced with Arthur's counter-question, Yekaterina didn't hesitate for a moment, nor did she show the slightest bit of expression on her face as she immediately responded—

"Of course!"

"Someone must be held responsible for the losses at Port Doldot!"

And moreover...

"The Inner Bay Golden Lion Family has already tarnished the glory of the West Berlin Family!"

As she spoke, anger emerged on Yekaterina's face, and the hatred in her eyes seemed almost tangible.

However, seeing Yekaterina's expression, Arthur's brow furrowed slightly.

This young 'Spirit Medium' didn't respond, but instead turned his head to look at Port Doldot.

The ancient castle of the West Berlin Family was built atop a mountain peak, from which one could completely overlook Port Doldot—a fact the Marquess of Seberlin had mentioned, claiming his ancestors had anticipated the rise of Port Doldot when they constructed the original castle.

Thus, they chose this location, not only to ensure the safety of Port Doldot but also to restrain the armies on land.

Although such statements seemed to be accepted by most people when looking at the results,

to Arthur, who had seen the original castle, it was nonsense.

The earliest castle was slightly larger than a mill, resembling a watchtower.

The initial military camp probably consisted of nothing more than a couple of tents.

Clearly, the early West Berlin Family was far poorer than imagined.

There's a saying in Arthur's hometown, 'Good money is spent on the blade,' and it applies in this world too. In short, if one truly recognized the potential of Port Doldot, those limited resources would have been invested there, not in constructing the castle here.

Therefore, the ancestors of the West Berlin Family didn't have such foresight.

Of course, it's possible they did have such vision, but the circumstances at the time didn't allow it, forcing the West Berlin Family's ancestors to settle here.

Who could say for sure?

After all, time is the most poisonous of poisons.

It not only ages people but also confuses everything.

Luckily, Arthur was young enough and had enough antidotes.

He didn't believe he could see into the future or peer into people's hearts.

But he could clearly see the remnants of the fire and the black smoke billowing from Port Doldot.

And he could make people think he saw the future or peered into their hearts.

Don't forget, he was a 'Spirit Medium'!

Arthur raised his right hand, a finger pressed against his furrowed brow, his eyes slightly narrowed, his gaze shifting.

Seeing this, Yekaterina felt an ominous sense rising within her.

'Did my expression reveal a flaw?

Impossible!

I certainly did not...

Wait a moment!'

Suddenly, the lady thought of something, but before she could organize her thoughts, Arthur took the lead and directly asked—

"Is the Marquess of Seberlin's injury serious?"

Yekaterina was stunned.

This lady looked at Arthur with an incredulous gaze.

'He knows?

He knows!

How could he possibly know!'

With her most guarded secret discovered, even Yekaterina showed a hint of panic, and to hide this panic, the lady quickly asked.

"Is it a divination of the Spirit Medium?"

"No.

It's your sudden arrival, Yekaterina.

And the decisiveness just now."

Arthur answered.

"Oh?

Can you explain in detail?"

Yekaterina furrowed her brow, waiting for Arthur's explanation.

The young 'Spirit Medium' didn't play mysterious, but simply answered.

"You are the designated heir by the Marquis himself, although it hasn't been made public, but everyone in this castle knows it.

Therefore, when a riot erupted in Port Doldot, you would surely be well protected.

Even the slightest hint of danger shouldn't bring you here.

Unless, the Marquis has given up on you.

But that's impossible.

So there's only one other possibility—

"The Marquess of West Berlin has encountered some issues, so much so that you had to prematurely step onto the stage as his successor to stabilize the situation,"

Yekaterina nodded slightly, acknowledging Arthur's words, then continued to ask.

"And just now?"

"Just now, your answer was too decisive, so decisive I almost mistakenly thought that between Inner Bay and West Berlin, it was West Berlin who had the upper hand.

But what is the reality?

Inner Bay holds the absolute advantage.

In such a situation, your decisiveness unavoidably leads one to speculate, and coupled with the first point, that's why I boldly asked, 'Is the Marquess of West Berlin seriously injured?'"

Arthur continued explaining.

Hearing this explanation, Yekaterina could not help but start clapping her hands.

Clap, clap, clap.

"I so wish you were here for divination.

Your intelligence is as if you truly saw everything with your own eyes."

In the crisp applause, a wariness emerged in Yekaterina's gaze towards Arthur.

This wariness was not hidden.

Arthur saw it clearly.

Immediately, the young 'Spirit Medium' laughed.

He said—

"Have you never suspected that this is indeed divination?

Have you never thought that it's your own thoughts that informed me of everything?"

Arthur's smile was full of warmth.

But Yekaterina subconsciously took a step back.

The lady was somewhat frightened by Arthur's words.

The lady originally intended to use her obvious 'wariness' to remind Arthur that she was not to be trifled with, but such a reminder led to more fright instead.

Although the lady was not genuinely scared, the pressure on her had doubled.

She found herself hampered at every turn when facing Arthur.

And that was exactly what Arthur wanted.

He needed to take the initiative in the upcoming negotiations.

The kind of—

Absolute initiative!

At that moment, he had achieved it.

"I was just kidding, don't mind me,"

Arthur said as he shrugged his shoulders, feigning an easy apology.

However, Yekaterina did not feel any relief.

The lady knew she was at a disadvantage.

Still not quite willing to concede, the lady immediately said—

"You did scare me a little.

But having such a capable partner like you is my honor—I think we should add a few clauses to the contract signed by my father and you,

regarding Jacqueline and Catherine, for instance."

Catherine was not present, but Yekaterina could sense her sister's 'weak' presence.

If the direct approach is impregnable, then try the flank, there might be unexpected effects.

This was the Marquis of West Berlin's teaching, and Yekaterina remembered it well.

And at this moment, she was attempting it.

"Jacqueline and Catherine have already acknowledged Marinda as their sworn sister.

It has nothing to do with our cooperation contract."

Arthur's smile remained unchanged.

However, Yekaterina's mind went 'boom' and exploded on the spot.

Truly an unexpected effect.

But it was negative!

The lady bit her lip in secret.

She knew that she had utterly failed.

The sense of defeat even prevented the lady from maintaining her composure.

Arthur watched this scene quietly.

It was not that Arthur had some perverse hobby in watching the downfall of a lady.

Rather, Arthur was waiting for the real person who could give him a 'definite answer' to appear.

The next moment, footsteps echoed from within the secret passageway.

Chapter 717 Union III

Yekaterina knew that the Marquess of Seberlin was injured.

Did the Marquess of Seberlin know of Yekaterina's subsequent actions?

Of course, he did.

Even, it could be considered that the Marquess of Seberlin tacitly consented to it.

This was the 'compensatory greed' exclusive to nobles.

The Marquess of Seberlin's thought was straightforward: If he was injured, he certainly couldn't just suffer the injury for nothing. There had to be something to compensate for his injuries, and he even aimed to maximize his benefits!

Therefore, under the premise of being 'tonight's patch for Port Doldot,' that Marquess of Seberlin did everything possible within the greatest extent to pave the way for his daughter.

To pave the way for Yekaterina to inherit Seberlin.

However, even with full preparation, the Marquess of Seberlin, to be on the safe side, would not leave things unattended.

There must be someone monitoring this place.

This was Arthur's guess.

But when footsteps sounded through the secret corridor, such a guess became a fact.

A figure in Knight's Armor, cradling a helm under his arm, Gergis, emerged from the secret passage—bowing respectfully to Catherine as he passed by her; the Marquess of Seberlin's Guard Commander.

Of course, the Guard Commander of the Marquess of Seberlin was aware of the rumors about the twins.

But as a vassal, he was bound to behave as one should.

He needed to bow to Catherine.

He needed to step forward when the Seberlin family faced crisis.

Gergis, holding extremely traditional concepts of loyalty, thought so, and acted accordingly.

Catherine immediately returned the greeting.

Then, she watched the guard commander of her father walk out of the secret passage.

The younger sister of the twins did not leave the passage, still standing within the shadows of the secret corridor.

She was unaccustomed.

Not to strangers or the fear of strangers.

But to the familiar Yekaterina and Gergis.

The former exerted too much pressure on her.

And the latter?

In a certain sense, the pressure was even greater.

After all, a white bear among a group of black bears was indeed too conspicuous.

Of course, Catherine was not that white bear; she was merely the one standing before the group of bears, being treated as prey.

The most helpless fact was, she also knew that bears preferred eating their prey alive.

Catherine huddled in the shadows, watching nervously—

"Good evening, Lord Kledos.

I am the Guard Commander of the Marquis, Gergis.

This is our first meeting. I apologize for not having visited in person before due to certain reasons."

Gergis inclined his body, his right hand forming a fist, and gently tapped his chest.

This was the standard Knight's salute of South County.

Especially when paired with his recent words, Gergis immediately seemed more at ease.

Using this ease as the opening for the conversation, in Gergis's view, was a good start.

At least, it could turn around the atmosphere between Miss Yekaterina and the Southern Lost Spirit Medium.

Next, he would have to draw the topic towards Miss Jacqueline and Miss Catherine, using the two as a breakthrough to minimize the price paid.

However, to this, Arthur just smiled.

The young Spirit Medium immediately recognized this as yet another 'conversation technique.'

Compared to Yekaterina's slightly awkward skills, Gergis, due to his age, appeared much more mature, but this did not mean Arthur would choose to accept.

"Good evening, Guard Commander Gergis.

I am glad to meet you, but the night is too deep.

If there's an opportunity, let's talk another time."

Having said that, Arthur turned and walked towards the secret corridor.

When you have the initiative, you must utilize it well to secure more benefits for yourself.

Otherwise, when you lose the initiative, you will definitely regret it.

Because—

Without more benefits as support, you wouldn't even have the chance to turn the situation around.

Arthur was very clear about this principle.

So, he didn't mind seeking out more for himself.

If it was before, this would have been difficult.

But now?

It was all too easy.

'Thank you, Old Lion.'

Arthur thought silently in his heart.

There was absolutely no intention of exacting revenge for Gergis's disrespectful refusal to cross the threshold.

Absolutely not!

As a young, kind, righteous, and innocent 'Spirit Medium,' Arthur asked himself if he was not so petty.

Seeing Arthur choose to leave without hesitation, both Yekaterina and Gergis's expressions changed; both knew that if they let Arthur leave like this, then they were truly doomed.

Not only would Port Doldot be doomed, but also the entire West Berlin Territory.

The fellows around them would surely pounce eagerly, biting off a chunk of flesh from the West Berlin Family, and even, if possible, these scoundrels would devour the entire West Berlin Family.

Thinking this, Gergis hesitated no longer.

The Guard Commander of the Marquess of West Berlin spoke directly—

"Lord Kledos, the Marquis would like to have a word with you."

Arthur stopped in his tracks.

The young Spirit Medium's lips quirked up slightly.

That was precisely the negotiating partner he needed.

The one Arthur needed to negotiate with, from the beginning to the end, was always the Marquess of West Berlin.

Because, within the West Berlin Territory, only the Marquis had the final say.

However, it was not a face-to-face meeting.

Looking at the Communication Crystal in Gergis's hand, Arthur's brow furrowed slightly.

"Lord Kledos, please forgive me.

The Marquis has suffered serious injuries and has no choice but to do this."

Seeing the obvious dissatisfaction on Arthur's face, Gergis became sincerely frightened.

The Guard Commander of the Marquess of West Berlin, while explaining, bowed deeply.

Compared to the previous Knight's courtesy, this bow was almost that of a Servant's.

Rather than the formal respect of the former, the latter was more humble, almost like the etiquette of a servant when facing someone of higher status.

Arthur's brows relaxed slightly.

He did not accept readily with joy.

It was only when a plea appeared on Gergis's face that he reluctantly nodded.

When Arthur took the Communication Crystal, Gergis immediately breathed a sigh of relief.

At the same time, the Guard Commander of the Marquess of West Berlin looked at Arthur with grateful eyes.

Resentment?

Why hold a grudge?

It was the kindness and gentleness of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium that accepted his apology, not some villain forcing him to apologize.

Arthur saw Gergis's gratitude.

The young Spirit Medium couldn't help but sigh in his heart—

'If you have wealth, you will acquire more wealth!

If you have love, you will gain more love!

The weak care about the well-being of the strong.

Humans!

That's humanity!

And me?

I too am human, a person very good at handling the 'degree.'

A person who was occasionally called a bad guy by Marinda.

Am I really bad?

No, not bad.

I just don't like praising a poor person for their frugality, nor do I like to glorify the suffering of the lower classes as a Spirit Medium.

I'm not that shameless.

I, well, I just like to catch those wealthy folks who bear ill will towards me and squeeze them dry.'

Arthur turned on the flickering Communication Crystal with a smile on his face.

That smile, like a child gleefully sharpening the knife for lambs and pigs.

An innocent knife can always bring in a harvest beyond imagination.

Just like, at this very moment.

Chapter 718: Unity IV

The communication crystal was connected.

But as if by tacit agreement, both parties kept silent.

After another three or four seconds, the Marquess of West Berlin was the first to speak—

"I'd like to speak with Lord Kledos in private."

With that statement, everyone around dispersed.

And Arthur seemed to walk to one side alone out of respect.

"I apologize, Lord Kledos.

The cooperation this time was my mistake.

I will compensate double for the loss I caused you."

The Marquess of West Berlin said very sincerely.

"I appreciate your generosity, but some things once done, cannot be undone.

Wrong is wrong.

How could a shattered mirror ever be restored to its original state?"

Arthur drew out his tone, with an appearance of regret.

"We can negotiate again, about the revenue from Port Doldot.

If a twenty percent revenue can't make the broken mirror whole again, then I think an additional ten percent might find a better craftsman to create an even better mirror."

The Marquess of West Berlin said with a smile.

"Of course.

If there are sufficiently good craftsmen, it's not impossible to replicate a mirror that's exactly the same.

But to find such a craftsman, ten percent won't be enough, will it?

I believe at least twenty percent is needed."

Arthur nodded in agreement with the Marquis's words, immediately smiling and responding.

"Forty percent of the revenue would indeed attract more buyers of mirrors to Port Doldot."

The Marquess of West Berlin's smile faded, and his tone deepened as he emphasized his point.

"Hmm, but among these buyers of mirrors, who could be more sincere than me?

We have a foundation of cooperation, and...

Our recent cooperation has naturally put us in the same boat.

At least, that fellow from Inner Bay hates me no less than he hates you.

But if it were someone else?

Marquis, are you certain you won't be bought by that person from Inner Bay?"

Arthur maintained his smile.

Why did he dare to demand forty percent of the revenue of Port Doldot?

Apart from the Marquess of West Berlin being seriously injured, it was the shared enemy they had.

And this enemy hated them both tremendously.

Perhaps Ainhars and the Bert Family could help West Berlin at a lower price, but who could guarantee that these families wouldn't be bought out?

After all, the Old Lion of Inner Bay was known to be quite generous.

The Marquess of West Berlin was clearly aware of this.

Therefore, the Marquis dared not gamble.

Eventually, after pondering for a moment, he agreed to Arthur's demand, but at the same time, he posed his own request—

"Since Jacqueline and Catherine recognize Miss Caesar as their sworn sister, it would only be natural for some members of the West Berlin Family to accompany them to South Los, right?"

"Of course."

Arthur didn't rebut, appearing readily agreeable.

But inwardly, Arthur felt a chill.

He had observed that sword strike.

It was most unexpected.

And extremely ruthless.

The poison on it could instantly kill an elephant.

And the curse?

It lingered like an infectious disease in the bone.

However...

With the resources of the Marquess of West Berlin, curing the injury, eliminating the poison, and dispelling the curse shouldn't be difficult, not even the most troublesome curse.

So, this was—

'Pacifying Inner Bay while also plotting for South Los?

This is indeed...

Perfect!'

Arthur liked having such ambitious collaborators.

Without such partners, how could he possibly stir up trouble?

As for the Countess's fury?

If it came to it, he could just give the Countess ten percent of the revenue from Port Doldot in exchange for her support.

Of course, in addition to the necessary support, some additional conditions would be required.

Two scheming fellows were conversing outside of West Berlin Castle.

The night wind had stopped at some point, as if it had been frightened away by these two individuals.

About half an hour later, the glow of the Messenger Stone faded away.

Arthur walked towards Gergis, handing over the Messenger Stone he held in his hand.

The Guard Commander of the Marquess of West Berlin respectfully received the Messenger Stone, while those around them had already started to head towards Port Doldot.

Clearly, the Marquis's means of communication were not limited to just this Messenger Stone.

"Lord Kledos, it was both a pleasure and an honor to meet you.

I will never forget our first encounter for as long as I live.

I look forward to our next meeting."

As Yekaterina rode past Arthur on her warhorse, the lady suddenly pulled on the reins, looked down at Arthur with earnestness in her emerald eyes.

Arthur, however, was completely indifferent.

"Hmm, okay, goodbye."

Arthur, full of perfunctory, walked into the secret passage.

Behind Arthur, Yekaterina, atop her warhorse, clenched her fists.

"Beware of my older sister, she has her sights set on you."

Catherine, following behind Arthur, quietly cautioned him.

"She's not after me.

She just can't stand to lose."

Arthur shrugged his shoulders, continuing to act unconcerned.

But deep down, the young Spirit Medium wished he could reach out his right hand towards Yekaterina, curl his fingers, and shout, "Come at me."

Given the depth of his cooperation with the Marquess of West Berlin, Arthur of course had to play the role of an Alert Line.

And who better suited for that than Yekaterina?

None!

As the designated Heir of the Marquess of West Berlin, Yekaterina was the most fitting.

As for underhanded?

This wasn't underhanded.

It was just a 'self-preservation method' a young, kind, righteous, and naive Spirit Medium had to adopt.

Catherine, of course, was unaware of all this.

Indeed, Arthur was not about to give his twin sister's younger counterpart any chance to ponder further.

"What does freedom taste like?" Arthur asked, turning his head.

The light was dim in the secret passage.

But even in such dimness, Catherine could still see the smile on the young Spirit Medium's face, filled with warmth and benevolence.

Of course, the words were even more important.

Only at this moment did the younger of the twins suddenly come to her senses.

Her longed-for wish was fulfilled!

Freedom!

She was free!

She had broken away from the West Berlin Family!

She was no longer bound by her family!

This, this...

Catherine was at a loss for words, halting in her steps, standing there with her lips slightly parted but unable to speak.

Arthur's steps, however, did not halt.

"I wish you a happy freedom.

Also!

You still have a little time to gather your personal belongings from your room—don't be shy, this is part of the contract I made with your father.

You're entitled to take your personal belongings.

I suggest you take the decorations from your room, especially any gold or silver.

After all, living expenses are high, especially in a city like South Los, where the cost is substantial.

Of course, I'm not saying you should strip the walls bare, mind you."

The young Spirit Medium said as he walked.

Catherine, standing where she was, had her eyes grow brighter.

By the time she heard the last sentence, the younger of the twins had already shouted out in cheer—

"I'll take all that's mine!

For my freedom!"

With that shout, Catherine chased after Arthur.

Hearing the footsteps behind him, Arthur's lips curved into a light smile.

Then, the young Spirit Medium took a deep breath, his eyes revealing a serious look—

The most critical moment had arrived!

Chapter 719: United V

The sun rose as usual, and life went on.

Even for Port Doldot, which had just experienced a hair-raising event, it was no exception.

Of course, some changes were inevitable—

"Extra! Extra!"

"Cultists attack Port Doldot, the Docklands suffer significant damage!"

"Southern Lost Spirit Medium lends a hand, the Marquis is immensely grateful!"

"It is understood that the weapon explosives supplier for the cultists is the docklands revenue officer Beileitz!"

...

True or false news began to spread among the cries of newspaper boys.

Like the special force of the Earl of South Los, Seberlin also had one, but yesterday's commotion was simply too loud.

So loud, in fact, that it could not be completely covered up.

Therefore, the only thing to do was to 'downplay' the incident, and swiftly define the entire event.

Then?

Naturally, the entire incident was concluded in a 'happy for all' manner.

Conveniently, there were too many people who could take the blame for last night's event.

Not just the cultists, but also officials from the Seberlin Territory.

The latter, in particular, aligned with the speculations of the civilians within Seberlin.

"Damn it!"

"Do these people care so little for their lives, all for the sake of money?"

To thoroughly divert everyone's attention, by noon, the local newspapers within Seberlin added a special edition dispatching an investigation on the family wealth of the docklands revenue officer Beileitz.

When an enormous sum of 30,000 gold coins was found in his house, curses towards the deceased tax official filled the entire Port Doldot.

"Good riddance!"

"If that guy hadn't been killed by that young fellow Chette, I would have finished him myself!"

"Well done, Chette!"

In contrast to Beileitz was the young man Chette.

Having eliminated Beileitz, Chette was viewed as a hero by everyone in Port Doldot, and several merchants' associations jointly petitioned, hoping that the dignified, benevolent lord would not punish this young man.

The Marquis of Seberlin naturally acquiesced.

Not only did he immediately release Chette, who had been detained just that morning, but he also appointed Chette as the new docklands revenue officer.

"I believe in Chette's integrity, which will make our docks thrive even more, and his bravery, which will better protect every civilian at the docks.

Perhaps his professional knowledge isn't sufficient, but I believe he can learn.

So, let's wait and see!"

The high-sounding words brought tears to Chette's eyes.

"I will guard this honour with my life!"

Chette vowed.

And immediately, he headed to the Docklands.

The young man couldn't wait to get started on the reconstruction of the docks.

At the same time, the young man kept praising the mercy of the Marquis of Seberlin.

And that was exactly what the Marquis wanted.

Once everything had settled down, what the Marquis wanted was a reputation—only a good reputation could allow him to govern the entire Seberlin Territory more effectively.

It's just that...

Even though the Marquis acted as well as he ever did,

the effect was still mediocre.

Because someone did even better—

"Those accompanying Miss Caesar have been telling stories in taverns, restaurants, and inns about the Southern Lost Spirit Medium's clever mind and swift reactions.

Moreover, the stories they tell are intriguing.

Now within Port Doldot, it's all about this Spirit Medium."

Gergis reported truthfully.

As the Marquis's Guard Commander spoke, he gauged his lord's expression.

Not noting any displeasure from his lord, Gergis let out a small sigh of relief.

After all, he had heard those stories too.

They were truly captivating—to the point where he couldn't help but want to applaud at the exciting parts.

Faced with such a complete and riveting story, Gergis was all too aware of his limitations.

Creating a similar story was an impossibility for him.

Fortunately, his lord had no such command.

Moreover, a smile appeared on the lord's face.

"Lord Kledos is a gentleman in the truest sense.

Spread the word to the outside—

Arthur Kredos is an indispensable secret friend of the West Berlin Family!"

The Marquess of West Berlin said.

Although the Marquis was extremely distressed when he had to give up four-tenths of the revenue from Doldot Port, he immediately felt content upon hearing such news.

Clearly, Arthur was diverting the attention of the Old Lion of Inner Bay and the surrounding jackals and wolves.

As for why?

He was obviously buying himself time to recover.

The Marquis was confident that his performance had convinced the Southern Lost Spirit Medium that he had sustained serious injuries and needed time to recuperate.

To better handle upcoming direct and insidious attacks, it was essential for the Southern Lost Spirit Medium to step forward during this time.

But in fact?

His injuries were far less severe than imagined.

For ordinary people, being stabbed through the heart with a sword is undoubtedly fatal, not to mention the blade being coated with poisons and curses.

But he was not an ordinary person.

He was the Marquis of West Berlin.

A true "Ascend Steper."

His heart was merely pierced by an ordinary blade, not shattered.

This little injury was hardly a challenge for an "Ascend Steper."

And what of the poisons, the curses?

For the wealthy West Berlin Family, they truly meant nothing.

In fact, by this moment, his injuries had already mostly healed.

Otherwise, how could he have summoned Gergis?

Even with the presence of the "Lionheart Ceremony," he could trust Gergis, but what about those beyond Gergis?

It's well known—

The more loyal a person is, the easier they can be exploited.

This was a truth many nobles understood.

The Marquis of West Berlin did not wish to be used by others in such a way.

So...

"Caution, that is the key to victory."

The Marquis of West Berlin thought to himself, his mind then turning to another of his loyal subordinates: Sweat.

The moment he thought of his Swordsmanship Chief, whom he had spent countless resources and time to cultivate, dying just like that, the Marquis's face darkened.

"Miller."

The Marquis of West Berlin called out softly.

"Present."

The Head Hunter stepped out from the shadows.

"How was Sweat killed?"

The Marquis of West Berlin inquired.

Even though Sweat was dead, the Marquis could not accept the result in confusion.

At the very least, the Marquis needed to understand how Sweat died.

"Sweat was slain by his own Sword Qi."

Miller reported his findings.

Suddenly, the Marquis of West Berlin and Gergis narrowed their eyes.

Gergis in particular was full of disbelief on his face.

But as the Guard Commander of the Marquis of West Berlin, even with all the surprise and curiosity inside, this knight who revered the ancient rites would not interrupt and waited for the Marquis of West Berlin to speak.

To the Guard Commander's surprise, his lord did not ask any questions but instead laughed coldly.

'Are you so cautious to this extent?

Not even willing to show your face in truth!

Humph!'

The Marquis of West Berlin already knew who had struck the killing blow on Sweat.

The Old Lion's eldest son!

As the first in line to inherit from the Old Lion, this figure was much watched by all territories, and the Marquis of West Berlin was no exception—even to the point of collecting some information about the other party at a great cost through extremely secretive channels.

It was because of this information that the Marquis of West Berlin made a true judgment—

'Using your own son as a chess piece, it seems like stirring up trouble, but in fact, it's a test against us!

Humph!

You could have killed me, but you spared me...

You don't really think I'm unaware of your true strength, do you?

How could you be so weak!

I won't be fooled!'

With that in mind, the Marquis of West Berlin clenched his fist tightly.

They are important!

But he is more important!

That is about his daughters, after all!

But now...

A strategy laid out over many years, gone in a single day.

'Damned Old Lion!'

The Marquis of West Berlin immediately gnashed his teeth in anger.

Meanwhile, Miller by his side suddenly appeared as if he wanted to say something but hesitated.

"What is it?"

The Marquis of West Berlin looked curiously at his Head Hunter.

He knew too well that his Head Hunter was not a person to hesitate.

"My Lord, please come with me to see for yourself," Miller replied with a wry smile.

Immediately, the curious Marquis followed his Head Hunter out of the hall.

And upon realizing their destination was the rooms of Jacqueline and Catherine, the Marquis grew more curious.

Hadn't his twin tools left?

What could have possibly happened?

About three minutes later, a roar from the Marquis echoed throughout West Berlin Castle—

"Who has stripped the plaster off my castle walls?!"

Chapter 720

Jacqueline stared incredulously at the pile of items accumulated beside Catherine.

Small things like spoons, cups, and plates.

Big things like tapestries, oil paintings, and armor.

There were also pillows, candlesticks, curtains, and other miscellaneous objects.

Brimming over, they filled the entire cabin.

"Did you move everything from the room here?"

When Jacqueline saw several jewelry boxes among the clutter, confirming that one of them had been long unused by Catherine and consigned to the attic, the elder twin finally realized that her sister had moved everything they owned from West Berlin Castle.

"Of course!

Arthur said he fought for this!

And he paid a price for it!"

Catherine lifted her head proudly.

"What was that just thrown into the Inland River?"

Jacqueline asked.

"Plaster!

My things, if I can take them, I will; if I can't, I won't leave them for that guy.

If it wouldn't lead to conflict, I would not even leave our rooms for him."

Catherine looked as if this were the most natural thing in the world.

Smack!

Jacqueline covered her face.

That was a mix of wanting to laugh but feeling embarrassed.

However, Catherine, who had let herself go completely, was fearless.

"Living in South Los is expensive.

These things should fetch us some living expenses.

Also...

That guy has ill-intentions of sending someone to South Los, I think we can get a job from our sister there."

Catherine said with a playful laugh, a hint of brightness twinkling in her green eyes.

The sister mentioned by this younger twin was naturally Marinda.

And that guy was the Marquess of Seberlin.

As for the job?

Of course, it was to monitor the people sent by the Marquess of Seberlin.

Jacqueline grew more and more resigned.

But Catherine was quite emphatic.

"Who else in South Los is more familiar with Seberlin than us?

Even the Countess's spies can't compare, can they?

So, we're undoubtedly the best for the job."

Faced with her sister's words, Jacqueline did not retort.

Because that was the truth.

Moreover, as the elder sister, Jacqueline had to think more.

Even though they had already acknowledged Marinda as their sworn sister and formed a connection, turning that connection into a deep bond still required time to forge, as well as...

Demonstrating value!

Without showing value, even with feelings, the bond is weak.

Only with true value can the bond grow stronger.

Therefore, before embarking, she ordered the Pain Church to abandon Doldot Port and commence dispersing throughout Seberlin to develop independently.

After all, her father knew the stronghold of Doldot Port better than her.

Only by scattering and rebuilding could this force become her bargaining chip.

It might take some time, but as long as it's there, that's enough.

With this in mind, Jacqueline's gaze became resolute.

The elder of the twins stroked her sister's head and said softly—

"From now on, it's our own life!"

"Yes!"

Catherine nodded, her eyes revealing a bit of trepidation but mostly anticipation.

And on the upper deck's terrace, Arthur tossed a contract to Marinda.

This contract represented ten percent of Port Doldot's revenue.

Marinda examined all the clauses carefully.

It was very lenient.

Not a trace of malice.

Immediately, the lady curled the corners of her mouth and signed her name.

The next moment, the brilliance of the contract burst forth.

"A pleasure doing business!"

The lady extended her hand.

Arthur shook hands with her, then discreetly let go—the young Spirit Medium picked up the long-stemmed curved pipe that Marinda had given to him.

It was packed with tobacco, but not lit.

However, Marinda didn't care about these things.

The lady was only concerned about whether Arthur would keep his promise.

Of course, seeing her own name engraved on the long stem of the pipe, the lady's smile grew even brighter.

Her eyes, too, narrowed in a smile.

"I have obtained forty percent of Port Doldot's revenues.

One-tenth of it is yours, and two-tenths I kept for myself," Arthur said.

As for the remaining one-tenth?

Marinda didn't ask further.

She knew who it was for.

Aside from her noble Cousin, the Earl, there was no second candidate.

The lady did not object.

Because they indeed needed someone to share the risk.

Of course, the lady wasn't about to let Arthur give it away for nothing.

"The number of times I have lost at Port Doldot is far less than that of my Cousin, the Earl, and she is also fixated on this place," Marinda said softly.

The lady said no more, trusting that Arthur was smart enough to catch her drift.

"Of course.

I will mark this revenue with a truly fair price," Arthur responded with a smile.

"And the eldest son of the Old Lion, he is not someone magnanimous. This defeat in Port Doldot will certainly provoke his fierce retaliation against you.

He will not allow you to safely reach Inner Bay.

My people have received information that, after that person left yesterday, the largest group of river pirates in Ainhars Territory, the 'Red Knights', have begun to move.

They are likely planning to ambush the 'Oriental' during the later part of your journey!" Marinda cautioned.

Upon receiving such a friendly warning, Arthur immediately stood up to pour Marinda a cup of orange tea.

You see, this is the benefit of cooperation.

A person can't possibly cover all bases.

A worthy collaborator always makes your efforts go twice as far with half the effort.

"I will leave these 200 men behind..."

"No need to leave anyone.

You just have them return to South Los.

Trust me, the eldest son of the Old Lion's hatred for you is no less than mine. Similarly, to strike at me, that fellow may likely take action against your property.

So, you need manpower even more than I do," Arthur said as he handed the orange tea to Marinda.

The lady perceptive to strong feelings sensed that Arthur wasn't telling the entire truth.

However, the lady did not expose it.

Instead, she took the orange tea and nodded in agreement.

"Mmhmm, I understand.

I will certainly protect our property," Marinda said softly.

"More important than those properties, you are paramount. If it ever comes to that point, you must forsake everything to ensure your safety— only when you are safe and sound can I forge ahead with courage," Arthur said earnestly.

Marinda knew Arthur was acting, but looking into those deep eyes, the lady couldn't help but feel her heartbeat quicken.

"Mmhmm."

Once again, Marinda nodded.

Afterward, Arthur led Marinda down toward the first-class cabins below.

Marinda was to return directly to South Los with the sisters Jacqueline and Catherine.

And just after Arthur and Marinda left, the lead box containing part of Mikhail's things on the table in the upper deck twitched slightly.

It didn't make a tiny bit of noise.

But the corner of Arthur's lips, as he went downstairs, couldn't help but quirk upwards—

Hooked!

