

Great Master 731

Chapter 731: Divine Arrival I

Beneath the night sky, in the moonlight.

The giant snake Nidhogg stretched its 40-meter-long body.

Toran, Mr. Gwen, and Mrs. Gwen knelt down immediately, their faces etched with devotion, the kind filled with utter fervor.

Yet, this fervor was not the same.

Having endured the betrayal of the former High Priest Achisto, Toran had been heartbroken, and if it weren't for Grindelwald's words to "seek the true god," this young priest would have sought death long ago.

Thus, the "God of the Inland River" had already become the last straw saving this young priest's life.

In the name of "faith," there was hope to live on.

Therefore, looking at the giant snake Nidhogg, the young priest's fervor was the most pure.

So pure it shone as brilliantly as life itself.

Mr. Gwen's fervor, on the other hand, was more of a scholarly practice.

It was the ecstatic joy of seeing what he sought in books become reality.

This joy too was fervent.

Because, it brought Mr. Gwen an unprecedented sense of satisfaction.

Moreover, this feeling of satisfaction continued to spread—

"It's true! Everything is true!

My guesses were indeed right!"

Mr. Gwen murmured to himself in a low voice.

The fervor in his eyes intensified with such murmurs.

It was as if this gentleman had found the meaning of his life.

As for Mrs. Gwen, it was much simpler.

She loved Mr. Gwen.

She supported the research done by Mr. Gwen.

And...

Children!

Having no children with her husband had always been their greatest regret.

She had consulted doctors, who were helpless.

Just when she was about to give up, someone told her that the Divine Spirits could help her.

That was why she joined the Inland River Cult.

Despite her education and upbringing, Mrs. Gwen always held a bit of resistance toward the church—she could not accept some of its practices—yet over time, she grew accustomed to them.

Fortunately, everything that happened at Port Doldot woke Mrs. Gwen up again.

Especially after learning from Toran that Achisto had betrayed the church, she realized all the abnormalities were caused by that traitor and the despicable Nobles.

The teachings of the Inland Church had been altered by them.

Honestly, upon hearing this news, Mrs. Gwen was surprised and relieved simultaneously.

Mrs. Gwen blamed all the initial oddities of the Inland Church on that traitor and the Nobles.

Afterward?

Mrs. Gwen firmly stood by Toran's side.

To Mrs. Gwen, the Inland Church, back on the right track, represented her hope.

Even if faced with numerous dangers, Mrs. Gwen would not back down.

Because, in her view, all of this was a test.

And now?

Having passed one test, she had seen the true face of the Divine Spirits.

If she could pass several more tests, could she truly have children with her husband?

She could, right?

Yes, she could!

Mrs. Gwen's expression grew more resolute, her frenzy becoming visibly more intense than that of her husband and Toran beside her.

There are two things in the world that can drive a person to recklessness.

One is the sudden onset of love.

The other is motherly love.

Moreover, unlike the sudden onset of love, which may encounter various demons and Devils as obstacles, when a mother decides to do something for her child, no force exists that can stop her; heaven and earth will lend their power.

Even if there are obstacles, they will be instantly nullified.

Because...

Everyone has a mother.

Grindelwald's gaze lingered briefly on the three—as the first officially established peripheral organization of the Black Cat Faction, Grindelwald naturally had to be cautious in screening, especially the leaders. Fortunately, the three of them passed the test.

As for the rest?

Grindelwald looked towards the previously neutral crowd.

These were the most numerous.

Similarly, they were also the most terrified at this moment.

Not that these people were cowards.

It was simply because the sudden appearance of a snake as tall as a 14-story building, beginning to stretch its immense body, was enough to shock anyone.

Especially since these people had offended such an existence to some extent.

The ensuing terror was indescribable.

It spread like a plague.

Thump!

Someone in the crowd knelt down.

After the first one, there came a second, and then a whole swath of them.

Seeing this scene, Arthur, who was controlling Grindelwald, felt satisfied.

Why had he let the Giant Snake Nidhogg appear here?

Was it not for this very scene?

He wanted the entire Inland Church.

He needed the organization that belonged to the eldest son of the Old Lion of Inner Bay to completely belong to him.

He intended to act as a Spirit Medium in the name of God.

Thus, the entire Inland Church needed to have a loyal upper echelon, an efficient middle tier, and expendable lower ranks.

"Your Crown!

Please forgive their ignorance!

They have just been deceived!"

Grindelwald bowed slightly.

Those neutrals who knelt immediately looked toward Grindelwald with gratitude, even though they had been contemplating just moments before what benefits they might reap should Grindelwald die.

Facing the threat of death, they had long forgotten everything else.

But in the next moment, these people became even more terrified.

Because—

Hiss!

A snake's hiss that was unusual, but each person could sense the anger in it.

The backs of the neutrals were drenched with sweat.

Even Toran and Mr. and Mrs. Gwen felt unease rising in their hearts.

And Grindelwald's brows furrowed slightly.

Then, as everyone watched, this leader of the Black Cat Faction straightened his back and said in a more formal voice—

"This is not my request.

It is the Divine Lord's demand.

Your Crown, surely you don't want the Divine Lord to discuss this with you personally?"

Every word, clear and distinct.

The hissing stopped with these words.

On that enormous snake face, all believers of the Inland Church saw a trace of reverence.

Reverence?

Whom does the Divine Lord revere?

What existence is worthy of the Divine Lord's reverence?

Many believers found it unbelievable.

But precisely because it was unbelievable, no one doubted the authenticity of this event.

And some well-informed believers had already unconsciously begun whispering that name in their hearts—

Spirit Medium Arthur Kredos from South Los!

Their hearts' whispers made them incredibly devout at that moment.

Especially Mr. Gwen, who couldn't help but mutter to himself.

"I truly wish to see His Excellency in person."

Suddenly feeling it was inappropriate, Mr. Gwen immediately began praying softly.

His soft prayer quickly resonated with everyone.

They chanted together—

"The God has a form, serpent-like, immensely long and thick.

The Breath of God is venomous.

The Command of God, all snakes obey!

You are the King of Ten Thousand Snakes.

You are the Lord of the Inland River.

Your hiss is the roaring waves.

Your gaze is the path of the Inland River..."

In such prayers, the Giant Snake Nidhogg calmed down, looked at the believers before it, nodded slightly, and then slowly submerged into the Inland River.

The Divine Lord... has accepted us?

The congregation of the Inland Church looked at each other.

Then, in the next moment, everyone's eyes turned toward Grindelwald.

Chapter 732: Descent of the Gods II

Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, Grindelwald smiled.

Beneath the veil of night, a warm smile emerged on his pale face.

Feeling this warmth, the congregants present unconsciously drew closer to the leader of the Black Cat Faction.

"Your Crown has readmitted you.

You too were deceived.

Therefore, you are innocent,"

Grindelwald said with a smile.

Immediately, cheers erupted.

"That's wonderful!"

"We are innocent!"

"It really is great!"

Many were on the verge of tears at this moment.

Grindelwald maintained his smile, scanned the surroundings, and then spoke again—

"Your Crown has pardoned your sins.

But what about the sins of our brothers and sisters?

They are still deceived, and we should rescue them.

Your Crown may be magnanimous, but we cannot turn a blind eye,"

These words immediately drew a deep resonance.

"That's right!"

"Too many of our brothers and sisters are still blinded by that despicable scoundrel, we need to inform them of the truth!"

"Yes, only this way can we prevent Your Crown from being disgraced,"

"If Your Crown is disgraced, it will be our shame,"

One by one, the atmosphere grew increasingly fervent.

Grindelwald, seeing this, smoothly said,

"Toran, your devotion has caught the attention of Your Crown, Who now sees you as His closest confidant, and you shall right all wrongs as the High Priest.

And I?

I will give you ample support,"

Immediately, Toran knelt on one knee in the direction where the Giant Snake Nidhogg had vanished.

"I am grateful for everything you have done for me, Your Crown.

I swear by my life and soul that I will bring the church back under Your command.

No one shall stand in my way!"

After the devoted, fervent words fell, Toran stood again.

The young High Priest turned around and directed his gaze at the congregants.

His burning eyes made everyone dare not meet his gaze, and they all lowered their heads.

"Your Crown has forgiven you all.

But Your Crown is watching over us.

Let us advance in the light of Your Crown!

We need to set out right now—Ainhars Territory, Bert Territory, Inner Bay, Sidon Fortress, all need us to spread the light of Your Crown anew,"

Having said that, Toran bowed to Grindelwald.

Then, without looking back, he walked towards the outside of Doldot Port.

Everyone followed.

Meanwhile, Arthur, manipulating Grindelwald, nodded in satisfaction at this scene.

This was the result he wanted!

That's why he turned down Marinda's Escort Fleet.

Because he had a better escort fleet.

Whether the Inland Church could be the best was not of concern to Arthur at all.

Do not forget that before it became a church, it was known as the 'Inland Waterway Mutual Aid Association.'

It gathered too many people who made their living along the bank of the Inland River.

Perhaps there were no high-end combat forces, but there were certainly enough people.

And that was what Arthur needed.

Due to the short development time, there was some deviation in the organizational structure of Arthur's organization; as the mid-to-high-end combat force began to make up for it, the middle managers and lower-level personnel were too sparse, unable to control more territory.

Therefore, upon understanding the organizational structure of the Inland Church, Arthur made up his mind.

The Lord of the Inland River could only be his pet serpent, Nidhogg.

Feeling the affectionate thoughts coming from Nidhogg in the Inland River, Arthur smiled and soothed his little snake.

Immediately, Nidhogg excitedly shook its body.

The next moment, a huge undertow appeared in the ceaselessly flowing Inland River.

As a result, Arthur had to tell Nidhogg to stop right away.

Instantly, the little snake sent Arthur a thought filled with grievance.

'Good snake, this here is the Inland River, broad though it may be, it isn't the true sea. If you thrash about, my ship will sink.

I promise you.

In at most three days, I'll let you make a big fuss.

How about that?'

Arthur assured the little snake.

Afterward, the little snake excitedly nodded again and again.

For Nidhogg, who sees Arthur as the closest of kin, like a father or brother, just being able to spend more time with Arthur was happiness itself.

As for Arthur's promise?

It believed unconditionally.

Sensing the emotions coming from Nidhogg, Arthur smiled faintly.

'I wonder how your preparations are going up front?

I have a big surprise planned for you here.

And it's really big!'

Arthur said with a certain teasing tone.

Then, the Southern Lost Spirit Medium continued to manipulate Grindelwald.

The task of this Black Cat Faction leader was far from over.

After returning to Port Doldot, the Black Cat Faction leader bought some food from the snack stalls on the docks—last night's incident had destroyed quite a bit of the dock, but it hadn't become desolate.

On the contrary, due to the dock's rebuilding, it buzzed even more with activity.

The Marquess of West Berlin offered double the usual wages, striving to restore Port Doldot to its original state in the shortest time.

Double wages were attractive enough for most people.

With more people working, food stalls that followed the crowd became more numerous.

Even if the worksite provided food, under the premise that it wasn't free, the food stalls were more popular.

Sausage and bread, which Grindelwald purchased, were counted among the most popular items.

Two sausages and two generous loaves of bread were held in the left hand of the Black Cat Faction leader, while in the right hand were two leather water flasks.

One contained clear water with a bit of salt added.

The other was filled with pure wheat beer.

With these foods, Grindelwald turned left and right to enter an inn.

Familiar with the path, Grindelwald pushed open the door and entered his own room.

The sound of the door opening and closing didn't draw the attention of the person inside the room.

Or rather...

Currently, nothing could catch Lucius's interest.

A fellow who can't even distinguish the real from the fake in his own memories, what else is there to care about?

Even life and death wouldn't matter anymore.

Grindelwald looked at Lucius, who was sitting there dazed, and didn't speak immediately. Instead, he placed the food and drink he was holding onto the table beside him—since he had left, Lucius had been sitting there, and now upon his return, Lucius was still there, obviously having not moved.

"Have something to eat," Grindelwald said.

Lucius, as if hearing nothing, remained unresponsive.

Immediately, the Black Cat Faction leader raised an eyebrow.

"You've been sitting here all this time, didn't pee your pants, did you?"

As he spoke, the Black Cat Faction leader flared his nostrils.

The bewildered Lucius turned his head woodenly to look at the man with the pale hair and complexion, instinctually wanting to make a retort out of embarrassment.

But then again, Lucius felt there was no need.

He couldn't be sure whether his memories were real or false; even the name Lucius, he wasn't sure if it was truly his.

It was unnecessary.

Immediately, Lucius was about to sink back into his stupor.

At that moment, Grindelwald spoke up again—

"Do you want to get your real memories back?"

Chapter 733 Arrival of the God III

Lucius suddenly looked up, a glint of sharpness blossoming in his blank eyes.

Grindelwald looked at Lucius and spoke slowly,

"Your memories have only been confused, not erased.

So what you need to do now is to sift through them, bit by bit.

It is an extremely slow and difficult process.

And I?

I can give you some guidance."

A smile surfaced on the pale face of Grindelwald.

In that moment, an inexplicable charisma sparkled on this leader of the Black Cat Faction, one that could attract the attention of many who were either mentally immature or mature yet troubled.

From where did it stem?

Perhaps it was the uncommon paleness.

In the dead of night at the window, only the crescent moon shone.

Its brilliance made the pale hair and face seem to bloom at that moment, and the dust in the air floated around Grindelwald, persuading Lucius to choose to believe in an instant.

As long as he could find his true memories, Lucius was willing to believe.

And when one is willing, everything becomes much easier.

"What guidance?"

Lucius asked further.

"Godslayer!"

Grindelwald said softly.

His tone and expression were unusually relaxed.

But Lucius was utterly astonished.

"What, scared? Unwilling?"

Grindelwald looked down at Lucius, amusement flickering in his eyes.

"Scared.

But, willing."

Lucius nodded his head, then shook it.

The young Avenger naturally knew how terrifying the Divine Spirits were.

But...

What did a young Avenger have to lose?

Nothing anymore.

He had lost everything.

Even his memories were gone.

A life so utterly devoid of value, he had no idea of the meaning of his existence, so...

Regaining his memories might make his life a bit more meaningful, right?

Perhaps less empty!

No!

At least, it proved he was not nothingness!

The blankness in Lucius's eyes had completely dissipated, leaving only resolve.

And Grindelwald felt satisfied.

The leader of the Black Cat Faction clapped his hands with a light tap—

Clap, clap!

Two crisp sounds later, two figures emerged from the shadows.

Lucius was taken aback.

Ever since he completed the Blood Ritual, he had not only gained astonishing reflexes and speed, but his perception was also extremely acute.

Even Grindelwald's footsteps could not escape him.

But he could not sense the presence of these two people who had just appeared.

Even when they were right in front of him, his perception still failed to detect them as if at that moment, he had become both blind and deaf.

But a blind man cannot see.

Yet he could see.

This sensation was awful.

So uncomfortable that Lucius felt dizzy, nauseous, and the urge to vomit.

In fact, the next moment, Lucius started to retch.

The fat man who stepped out from the shadows saw this scene and couldn't help but purse his lips,

"Rookie!

In every way, just a rookie.

Rookie in terms of Ritual completion.

A big rookie when it comes to skills.

And the most rookie of them all in terms of combat experience."

As he spoke, the fat man pursed his lips again.

"Eivor, your expectations are too high.

Everyone needs to learn as they grow.

You did, I did, and this young man as well."

With a somewhat hoarse voice, Lucius lifted his head.

The young Avenger saw a man with an exceedingly ordinary face, full of wrinkles, and white at the temples.

This man stood there stooped, resembling those prematurely aged porters the young Avenger had seen on the docks.

Yet a porter could not have escaped his perception.

And moreover...

For some reason, in the presence of this man, the young Avenger always felt a sense of oppression.

Despite the man merely standing there, neither imposing nor Sharpness, the young Avenger felt his breath constricted as if he wanted to kneel before him.

On the contrary, the impolite fat man appeared affable and approachable.

"Ah, right, right, right.

Considering you're from 'Bloodflow,' of course you'd be magnanimous.

But this kid looks rather dim-witted, are you sure you want to instruct him?"

Eivor, with his arms folded, looked at Lucius as if he were eyeing the fried fish at his snack stall.

To put it simply...

He was just a dish.

"Hmm.

I think he's quite good.

He's about the same age as Alvin and Alma,"

Acker said quite leniently.

Grindelwald added beside him—

"If you want to retrieve your memories, you will need power, and power doesn't come by chance, it requires relentless training and battle.

Currently, you are an apprentice member of the Black Cat Faction.

If you can successfully graduate from the hands of the two Masters...

I'll consider offering you a full position."

After speaking to Lucius, Grindelwald turned and walked out.

"Hey, hey, hey, I never said I'd train him!"

Eivor shouted loudly.

"It's an order from the big boss; if you don't want to train him, please talk to the big boss."

Without turning back, Grindelwald waved his hand and his figure quickly vanished.

"I'll definitely bring it up next time I see the big boss!"

Eivor muttered, but the look in his eyes as he faced Lucius was brimming with excitement, a 'you're in luck, kid' expression, yet Lucius still approached Eivor rather than the more amicable Acker.

Lucius's instinct told him that Eivor, who seemed unreliable and was grumbling, was safer than Acker.

No!

He was absolutely safe!

In fact, the next moment, Lucius's instinct proved correct.

Shick!

A faint scar appeared on Lucius's neck.

The scar was shallow, but blood had been drawn.

Yet, Lucius had no idea how he got hurt.

"Real combat is the best training.

There are 6 hours until dawn.

In that time, you need to find out where the attacks are coming from.

If you do, you'll have passed the test.

If you don't, you will die here."

Acker said amiably, but while he spoke, another scar appeared on the other side of Lucius's neck.

The young Avenger instinctively wanted to crash through the window and escape, but before his body could react, a thick murderous intent locked onto him.

A bone-chilling coldness!

Instantly, Lucius froze!

"The venue is only this room.

Also—

My attacks include, but are not limited to, your eyes, ears, kidneys, heart, and so forth. You better be on your guard."

Acker added.

Lucius, however, couldn't hear any of this anymore.

The young Avenger had begun to roll around the room.

He wanted to dodge the attacks, to find out where they were coming from.

But it was no use.

"Rookie!"

Eivor puckered his lips again, and then, he walked out of the room.

The entrance procedure for 'Bloodflow,' he certainly knew it.

So, he wasn't interested.

Moreover, compared to that, the 'Master of Shadowflow' was more concerned with what made this kid different, so he chose to observe in secret.

After all, if it weren't for some extraordinary Talent, why would the big boss go through all this trouble?

It couldn't possibly be...

Pity, could it?

Chapter 734: The Descent of the Gods IV

Impossible!

How could it be sympathy!

Eivor shook his head repeatedly.

Eivor did not deny Arthur's pity.

That pity had brought about an unprecedented tolerance.

But he definitely wouldn't feel sympathy for Lucius!

After all—

The first condition for sympathy was: to feel as the other does!

But whether it was family, the environment one grew up in, or the series of events that followed, Eivor saw no common ground between Arthur and Lucius.

So, it definitely wasn't sympathy.

"Could the big boss have a different life experience?" Eivor thought to himself, somewhat unexpectedly.

But immediately, the "Master of Shadowflow" dismissed this unreliable thought from his mind.

Then, he began to think more seriously.

"What does the big boss want to do?"

...

Pendragon sat at the side of his desk, pawing at a chess piece.

It was a piece from the game of Beast Chess—a game that mainly involved animal pieces like tigers, bears, dogs, rabbits, and rats, with the objective being to reach the finish or collide with other pieces to win.

In South Los, not only children but also some adults loved this game.

There were even special clubs for it.

The piece under Pendragon's paw right now was one such piece.

A rat.

Maybe it was a cat's natural sensitivity to mice; in a variant of Beast Chess, Pendragon had chosen this piece.

The cat's claw toyed back and forth.

The piece flipped over and over.

The piece was utterly beyond control; everything was at the whim of the Cat Claw.

In the end, when Pendragon tired of playing with it, he flicked it towards the edge of the desk, and then, uncontrollably, the piece plummeted to the floor.

Snap!

An invisible hand caught the piece.

Then, the piece fell into Arthur's hands.

Pendragon, seeing this, immediately controlled the airflow to glide away, but the next moment, Arthur caught him by the scruff of his neck.

"Pendragon, how many times have I told you!"

"No playing with the chess pieces, and don't touch the cups!"

"And..."

"Don't sneak food in the kitchen!"

Arthur scolded his cat loudly.

Meow meow meow~

Pendragon looked utterly clueless.

As if he was just a little kitten who knew nothing at all.

Without a doubt, Pendragon hoped to bluff his way through with this act.

But Arthur was not deceived by his cat.

As punishment, two wet Hands of Void started wiping Pendragon, and for that extra intensity, the water was lemon water.

Pendragon, his fur soaked, instinctively tried to lick himself dry.

And then came the retching of a cat.

"Haha, feel the fatherly love, Pendragon!" Arthur laughed heartily.

Then, the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium put the chess piece back into the box, and also arranged the rest of the pieces neatly.

But this scene made the "Lady of Sorrow" hidden inside the Lead Box Coffin sneer—

"Heh, hypocrite."

The sharp comment did not make Arthur uncomfortable.

He himself thought he was a bit of a hypocrite.

But a rescue was a rescue.

If he saved someone, he should save them thoroughly.

Hypocrite, sure, but once started, might as well do it well from start to finish.

As for more?

Maybe it was the destiny of the chess piece.

Maybe it was pity for the Avenger.

Maybe it was that moment Arthur saw himself.

Who knows?

Certainly, Arthur didn't.

And to use lies to trick Lucius into recovering his real memories, to make Lucius a bit more normal?

Arthur had no sense of guilt at all.

He was a hypocrite.

So what if a spirit medium was a little hypocritical?

No problem at all!

"You call placing chess pieces an act of kindness?"

Even if it's hypocrisy...

The moral standards of you divine spirits are truly low enough to be appalling!"

Arthur checked the chess pieces in the box one more time, ensuring they were all fine, then closed the box and turned to look at the lead box coffin.

Facing Arthur's outright denial, the 'Lady of Sorrow' just sneered even more.

"You know what I'm talking about!"

"Of course!

I was just testing to see what you could still do while bound by this prison—but truth be told, I'm a bit disappointed!

I gave you a chance!

I exposed my leaders of the Black Cat Faction right before you, and you?

You remained unmoved!

No!

You were not unmoved; you simply couldn't move!"

Arthur said with a smile.

"Damn ant!

You dare to toy with me?

This is blasphemy!"

The 'Lady of Sorrow' paused briefly, then furious, she roared out loud.

In the heart of this lady with the title of a divine spirit, Arthur was sly and always full of conspiracies, which is why she called him hypocritical.

Because she did not believe at all that Arthur was trying to save Lucius.

Therefore, she completely believed what Arthur was saying now.

What made her even angrier was that she hadn't noticed this before.

However, what infuriated the lady even more was yet to come—

"Ant?

What are you, being stepped on by an ant?

A mayfly, perhaps?

Also, please be more precise with your words, toying with you?

That's simply not happening.

I truly have no interest in your dignity, and I implore you to seriously consider your own appearance, so as not to give my fiancée Marinda the wrong impression.

As for blasphemy?"

A smile as innocent as a child's suddenly appeared on Arthur's face.

Even within the lead box coffin, the 'Lady of Sorrow' shuddered deep down.

"What are you going to do?"

The 'Lady of Sorrow' demanded in a low shout.

"What can I do?"

Of course, it's to blaspheme you a bit!

Kiri!"

At Arthur's call, the dumb-looking Death Hound emerged from the shadows and went straight to the front of the lead box coffin, lifting its hind leg—

Hiss!

Hot, yellow liquid completely drenched the top.

"Aaaaah!"

Dumb dog! Get off! Get away!

I will kill you! Arthur Kredos, I will kill you!

I will make the Kredos family vanish completely!

Aaaaah!"

The 'Lady of Sorrow' shrieked in sharp, uncontrollable howls, and the entire lead box coffin trembled with her cries.

The startled Dumb Cyril halted his release.

But as soon as Dumb Cyril realized the 'Lady of Sorrow' was just blustering, a wise smile appeared on the dog's face.

Following that, an even more abundant stream of water gushed forth.

This time, the 'Lady of Sorrow's' words were already jumbled.

No longer just common language, they featured Glyphic Language, and even included some medieval language from hundreds of years ago, all mixed together and roaring out with her howls.

Unfortunately, no one was listening.

Dumb Cyril was a dog, not a human.

The only person in the chamber above was Arthur.

But the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium had already taken orange tea and stepped out of the cabin.

After setting the orange tea on the small table, the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium lay back on the chair, gazing up at the starry sky above, and murmured softly to himself—

It should be about time!

Chapter 735: Descent of the Gods V

Outside Xilongde Shoal Port, on a certain hill.

'Silver Hand' Emote and his team were performing the final tasks of relic exploration—all Machinery had been dismantled, and valuables had already been loaded onto the horse-drawn carts. However, there were bound to be oversights.

Thus, out of the eleven-person team, aside from the deputy leader who stayed above with three others to guard the horses, luggage, and loot, the remaining six people were conducting the last check under the lead of 'Silver Hand' Emote.

Looking at the tightly fitted rock walls adorned with murals and winged wall sconces, Emote couldn't help but sigh—

"Although the Holy Era is often criticized, the birth of some works of art really takes one's breath away."

"Yeah, like the 'Paladin Relics' we found in Bert Territory before, the treasures there, even thinking about them now, are truly astounding.

If it weren't for that bastard 'Storm Sword' Deljo's interference, we could have retired already!"

The pathfinder acting as a scout in the team couldn't help but grumble.

This kind of talk led to nods from two others nearby.

"Exactly!

That guy really is a fool, daring to kill a Noble!"

One of them said.

The other responded with laughter.

"Moreover, in trying to make up for his mistake, he only faced greater failure—hearing that our old rival 'Storm Sword' Deljo got severely knocked by the South Los Spirit Medium, he announced he's no longer accepting any hires and plans to retire back home."

The sarcastic tone immediately elicited laughter from those around.

Even 'Silver Hand' Emote was no exception.

Towards 'Storm Sword' Deljo, Emote's heart was full of disdain and constant vigilance.

The two were competitors.

Moreover, in Bert Territory and even the surrounding lands, the reputation of the two Adventurers was closely matched.

And humans, being creatures with a strong competitive spirit, naturally had to contend.

Indeed, after several contests, Emote had realized he couldn't surpass the other, but as it seemed he was in luck, his rival had retired early.

Well then...

The title of Bert Territory's number one Adventurer was his for the taking.

Unconsciously, the corner of 'Silver Hand's' lips curled upward.

And it was at this moment—

"Captain, there's a discovery!"

The pathfinder suddenly exclaimed.

Immediately, everyone around became excited.

After all, this relic was an unvisited, perfectly sealed one with plenty of valuable items, and now they had found a hidden chamber.

It was well known that the most valuable things were kept in hidden chambers.

Emote, already feeling lucky, now believed even more that he was a Child of Destiny.

One good thing after another!

Such a feeling was really delightful!

Thinking this in his heart, Emote didn't forget to remind his subordinates.

"Be careful!"

"Got it, Captain!"

The pathfinder replied.

Then, after about five minutes of waiting, with a 'click' of a spring, the tightly fitted wall sank downwards.

The next moment—

Clatter!

An uncountable number of Gold Coins surged out like a torrential tide.

Seeing this scene, the breath of 'Silver Hand' and the others quickened.

How many Gold Coins was this?

Nobody could say for sure!

But one thing they were certain of!

They had struck it rich!

This time, with just this one job, they could retire!

Excitement surged within the seven people, but their movements were swift. They swiftly retreated, dodging the onrush of Gold Coins.

With the skills of the seven, such an action would normally be simple and easy, but this time it was different, because—

Suction!

An enormous and Bizarre suction force suddenly appeared from nowhere!

"Caref..."

Before 'Silver Hand' Emote could warn his team, he was stiffened in midair, then overwhelmed by Gold Coins.

Emote, with quite a reputation, lost his life as helplessly as a rookie.

The secret techniques, props, and skills branded deep into the soul seemed as if they didn't exist at all.

As for the other six team members, they had been overwhelmed long ago.

On the ground, the expedition's deputy heard the commotion and immediately brought people down.

"Captain? Capi... Hiss!"

The deputy called out, but the next moment his voice abruptly halted.

Gold Coin!

Staring at the gold coins filling his vision, the deputy was stunned.

The three people with the deputy were just as stunned.

And that determined their destiny.

A Big Mouth silently appeared behind them.

Then, in one gulp, it swallowed them whole!

Without the slightest resistance!

Or perhaps...

It was simply impossible to resist!

The owner of the gigantic mouth kept flicking its tongue, seemingly savoring the taste, then, with a sudden wide opening, the coins on the ground along with the corpses buried in gold were sucked into the belly of the immense maw.

Of course, that included the horses, luggage and other items on the ground; all were ingested by this being's stomach.

It appeared as if nothing could stop this entity's ravenous appetite.

After doing all this, the being disappeared into the darkness.

This entity did not choose to wait here for more unsuspecting victims but instead headed toward the white passenger ship the woman had described— the woman who had promised him great benefits.

He couldn't wait any longer.

...

Outside Ainhars Territory, deep in the dense forest.

A bound traveler whimpered with a gag in his mouth.

"Mmm, mmmm!"

But the traveler, gagged, couldn't utter a single word.

He could only be carried overhead by a group of people in cloaks, taking slow steps.

The forest grew denser.

The night sky was shielded by the leaves.

Suddenly, the cloak-clad person in the lead stopped in his tracks.

The leader removed his hood, knelt devoutly, and faced what lay before him.

There, a half-human-sized stone statue seemed to stand and squat at the same time.

The marks of years were scattered all over the statue.

The original Gorgeous Decorations had vanished, leaving only a rough outline that hinted at facial features and limbs.

However, facing the Stone Statue, the leader was filled with an intense zeal—

"Your Crown, I have brought you a Sacrifice!"

As the leader spoke, the cloaked figures placed the innocent traveler in front of the statue, where the leader slit the traveler's throat.

Gurgle, gurgle.

Fresh Blood surged out, yet it didn't scatter but instead flowed toward the statue.

A sucking sensation emerged at the wound on the traveler's neck.

Almost instantly, the traveler was drained dry.

But it didn't end there!

The next moment—

Bang!

The traveler, drained of Fresh Blood, exploded, and his bones scattered, piercing through all the people in Black Robes, including the leader. Each of them gaped incredulously at the statue as they watched their own lifeblood being drained.

With a great amount of Fresh Blood absorbed, a faint luminescence appeared on the statue.

It was extremely ravenous.

It craved more Food.

But it understood all too well that it had been exposed.

Especially since the woman had contacted it, it had become unsafe.

Thus, it eliminated all witnesses.

It was unfortunate, but it had to be exceedingly careful.

The stone statue, enveloped in that luminescent glow, moved deeper into the dense forest.

It had to hurry up!

It absolutely could not let that person catch it!

Chapter 736: Descent of the Gods VI

Bert Territory, Bert City.

Smith Tavern, having seen off the last guest, began to close up as the owners started their end-of-day routine.

The bartender, Mrs. Smith, was a slender, not short woman, adeptly tying her hair back into a ponytail, revealing her broad forehead.

"Smith, set the chairs right, and after wiping the tables, come upstairs quickly—I think my brewed fruit wine is ready for a taste test."

Confronted with his wife's call, Mr. Smith, who was busy, stiffened.

Unlike his wife's slender build, Mr. Smith was both tall and fat, his thick arms and broad shoulders enough to intimidate anyone.

In fact, when Smith Tavern first opened, the local thugs had learned the hard taste of being knocked out cold with his punch.

After Mr. Smith managed to fight off ten by himself, Smith Tavern became quite peaceful.

Yet, even the formidable Mr. Smith felt a twinge in his lower back at his wife's insinuation.

Was it about the fruit wine?

It was about making me kneel!

Just as Mr. Smith used the lame excuse of "I'm too tired today, consider this a raincheck" to placate his wife, a vision suddenly flashed before his eyes.

The vision was fleeting.

Yet Mr. Smith had seen clearly that one of his few remaining followers, no, believers from this era, had died.

To be precise, he had been sacrificed.

Sacrificed to another entity.

That entity was very cautious, shielding his vision, preventing him from seeing clearly.

However, this didn't prevent him from feeling relieved.

The other did not want to be discovered.

Neither did he.

He too had resisted this era, but after being crushed by the wheels of destiny under the guise of 'gunpowder', he gave up.

Especially after being picked up by his wife, he utterly surrendered.

As his believers dwindled, he came to his senses.

Thus, he knew what he wanted.

All he wanted was to spend the rest of his life with his wife.

The quiet kind of life.

Of course, if someone tried to disrupt this peace, he would crush their skull.

"Should we leave Bert?

But Rachel loves it here.

Moreover, this tavern is her pride and joy...

Damn it!

I've given up everything, why must someone provoke me!"

Instinctively, Mr. Smith clenched his fist.

However, just as the real wooden stool in his hand was about to splinter, Mr. Smith came back to his senses in a very subtle manner. Three years of marriage had already made Mrs. Smith sensitive to the signs.

"Smith?"

Mrs. Smith inquired.

"It's nothing. I was just saying, if I could owe you one..."

Mr. Smith's voice tapered off.

Because of the smile on Mrs. Smith's face.

That smile was very formal, unemotional.

This made Mr. Smith understand that it was his wife's way of saying no; if he did not want something unexpected in his food for the next few days, it was best to agree.

"Alright, alright, I'll try your fruit wine in a minute!"

Mr. Smith gave the impression he was resigned to his fate.

Mrs. Smith immediately beamed with joy.

The formal smile vanished.

"Alright, I'll wait for you, dear!"

As Mrs. Smith said this, she walked upstairs.

Once she entered the bedroom and confirmed her husband was still downstairs, Mrs. Smith's expression darkened.

Just then, her former 'friend,' known as the Lady of Sorrow, Mikhail, had reached out to her asking for help, promising many benefits.

If it were three years ago...

No!

Had it been six years ago, before she met Smith, she would have agreed without hesitation.

But now?

Impossible!

She had Smith, her own estate, and was striving to conceive their next generation—though the chances were slim due to her unique constitution, she believed, with Smith's robust health, their child would definitely be born successfully.

She hadn't expected the man she picked up casually to be so strong.

The moment she thought of her husband, Mrs. Smith couldn't help but smile.

But immediately, her brows furrowed deeply.

As a friend of the "Lady of Sorrow," she knew well the other's way of doing things.

If she didn't help out, she might end up as a bargaining chip for the other party.

No!

Even if she went, it would still be the same!

"I can't stay in Bert any longer!

Must leave!

Leave quickly!"

With that thought, Mrs. Smith peeked out of the bedroom and yelled down to her husband, who was dawdling —

"Ruishiu, if you don't finish what you're doing in five minutes, you're getting up fifty minutes later tomorrow morning!"

"Okay, right away!"

Listening to her husband's flustered voice, Mrs. Smith immediately spoke again.

"By the way, I heard that Inner Bay is hosting the 'South County Swordsmanship Competition.' Shall we go see it?

I've heard about it many times before.

But I've never had the chance to go."

Mrs. Smith knew exactly how to persuade her husband.

Indeed, it was so.

Mr. Smith, who was thinking about how to lay low, immediately seized the opportunity.

"Of course!

I've never seen a real swordsmanship competition!

And, we've never really explored Inner Bay.

How about we leave early and treat it as a vacation for ourselves?"

Mr. Smith took the opportunity to say.

"Yes!

My dear, you've got three more minutes!"

After nodding repeatedly, Mrs. Smith reminded her husband.

Mr. Smith smiled bitterly.

However, his expression soon became resolute, as if making a solemn pledge.

He too hoped for a child.

Not just as a continuation of theirs and his wife's bloodline.

But also...

To protect his wife!

He was always worried that, at least his wife would be safe in case of any mishap.

Unfortunately, his bloodline was too unique, greatly reducing the chance of pregnancy.

But...

It would definitely work!

Thinking this, Mr. Smith locked the door and hurried upstairs.

The night deepened further.

As the sunrise appeared once more, the captain and first mate of the 'Oriental' began to inspect the vessel again, while Old John, the chief sailor, directed sailors to load up supplies.

As the owner of the 'Oriental,' Arthur was exchanging pleasantries with Yekaterina Otto von West Berlin, who had come to see him off.

By the side of the eldest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin stood the Guard Commander of the Marquis, maintaining a distance of two meters, providing constant protection.

"Thank you for seeing me off."

Arthur said politely as he looked at Yekaterina, dressed splendidly for the occasion—he was very aware that after the recent incidents, the Marquess of West Berlin was using this opportunity to elevate his eldest daughter onto the stage of West Berlin Territory.

Of course, that included announcing to the world the alliance between the West Berlin Family and the Kledos Family.

Arthur was well aware of this.

Similarly, so was Yekaterina.

Therefore, the lady was somewhat reluctant but, for her family, her father, and herself, she still chose to approach Arthur with a disguised smile.

But the scene that unfolded next caught her completely off guard.

She stood, stunned.

Chapter 737: The Descent of the God VII

Reason and emotion are like a pair of rebellious twins.

They argue with each other, shout insults, and occasionally come to blows.

But,

when the stakes are high enough, emotion will always give way.

Because—

Emotion: Reason is right!

Of course, that's not without exceptions.

There are, many times over.

For example: Love and affection!

The love between men and women!

The love of parents!

The affection between friends!

These can all make reason crumble and admit defeat to emotion.

Unfortunately for Yekaterina, there's none of this when it comes to Arthur.

Similarly, Arthur has none of this for Yekaterina.

In Yekaterina's eyes, Arthur is nothing more than a business partner who maintains the dignity and interests of the West Berlin Family.

And in Arthur's eyes?

Yekaterina is even more direct—a pawn!

Not just Yekaterina, but also her father, the Marquess of West Berlin, is a pawn!

So, when Yekaterina approached him with a forced smile, Arthur instinctively stepped back—one step that left Yekaterina stunned.

The eldest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin stood there, dumbfounded, as she caught a flash of discomfort and...

Reluctance?!

Arthur is reluctant?!

The Marquess of West Berlin's eldest daughter was first taken aback, then angry.

Taken aback, because of Arthur's attitude.

She had imagined a lot of scenarios, but never did she think that Arthur would step back.

Angry, also because of Arthur's attitude.

She was fully prepared to be bitten by a dog, but what happened?

The dog seemed to find her distasteful!

What's the meaning of this?

Am I that unattractive?

Or is Marinda so beautiful that she astonishes the world?

Impossible?!

I've seen her portrait.

It's just...

Average!

Yes, average!

The turbulent emotions inside Yekaterina started to assert themselves, and then the Marquess of West Berlin's eldest daughter found herself feeling rather absurd.

Even a smile surfaced on the lady's face.

She found herself laughable.

As the eldest daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin, Yekaterina had been exposed to far too many noble machinations from a young age and understood all too well the meaning of "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

She was well aware that as she officially took to the stage of the West Berlin Territory, her father's 'protection' would start to wane.

Although he would still be her strongest support, there were times when she could only rely on herself.

Otherwise...

Whispers of 'lack of decorum, breach of etiquette, inability to discern right from wrong, a confused fool' and the like would spread.

Even if her father was determined to let her inherit West Berlin, it would become fraught with difficulty.

Therefore, she had to work hard to exclude these things.

But facing Arthur, she wasn't sure of herself.

Last night, Arthur had made too deep an impression on the lady.

Not just his indifferent demeanor, but also that confidence of having everything under control.

And...

His overwhelming strength!

As layer upon layer unfolded, the lady had already started to imagine the worst-case scenario!

But when the time came, she suddenly realized that she had thought too much.

Isn't that funny?

Of course not.

It's not funny at all that the Southern Lost Spirit Medium would step back in the face of a lady!

Especially against the backdrop of last night's demeanor, confidence, and strength, this sudden retreat was such a contrast that Yekaterina could hardly believe her own eyes.

But, her eyes told her it was real!

Subconsciously, the lady took another step forward.

Instinctively, Arthur took another step back, his brows also slightly furrowed.

Ha!

Yekaterina laughed out loud.

However, her noble upbringing caused the lady to cover her mouth and nose with a folding fan, revealing only her emerald eyes, which were intently fixed on Arthur—

"Are you afraid of something?"

As she spoke, the lady took another step forward.

This time, Arthur did not retreat.

It wasn't that he didn't want to, but that he couldn't retreat any further.

Behind him was the Inland River, and another step back would mean falling into the Inland River.

"Not afraid."

Arthur first shook his head, then said very plainly,

"I'm allergic to women."

Yekaterina's eyes widened in surprise.

Clearly, the lady had not anticipated Arthur would use such an excuse.

Although it was preposterous, the lady felt a bit envious.

"Miss Caesar is very good, isn't she?"

"Hmm."

Arthur nodded slightly, the corners of his mouth turning up.

Seeing that smile, Yekaterina suddenly understood what 'happiness' meant—previously, she could not imagine what happiness looked like, but upon seeing this smile, the lady knew.

When you mention Marinda, and Arthur smiles, that's what happiness is.

Yekaterina, who had intended only to make a courtesy visit, suddenly found herself envying the 'Lady of the Eternal Night' a bit.

"The ship is leaving soon.

Thank you for seeing me off."

Arthur said his farewells and prepared to leave hastily.

This eager-to-leave-her presence made Yekaterina's envy grow stronger.

The lady knew well why Arthur acted this way.

It was the love for the 'Lady of the Eternal Night'.

Unreserved.

His actions were a declaration of his unreserved love.

Unconsciously, Yekaterina's breathing became hurried.

Even though she grew up in a Great Noble family full of intrigues, Yekaterina had not been ignorant of true love.

Her father and mother were an example of it.

But her mother was dead now.

Only her father remained, hiding in a place unseen by the common eye, shedding quiet tears—though in public, the Marquess of West Berlin was cunning and overbearing, when alone, her father was really just an old man who rambled on, not only recounting past anecdotes with her mother but also sharing advice on how to handle certain matters.

Just like an annoying little old man.

But, very real.

She had thought her father and mother were unique.

Yet, there were others!

Arthur, Marinda!

'When will I encounter a man like my father?' the lady pondered, her eyes unconsciously drifting toward Arthur.

Arthur, yes.

But not for her.

She was too late.

When such thoughts suddenly surfaced, Yekaterina was startled, then she blurted out—

"The 'Red Knights' have set up many men and traps in the Inland River area of Ainhars Territory, they've been summoned by the 'Little Lion'.

Also!

There are a variety of other fellows who have joined them with the support of the local nobility in Ainhars Territory."

The Red Knights, the biggest river pirates along the Inland River shore of Ainhars Territory.

They harassed not just Ainhars Territory but Bert and West Berlin Territory as well.

The eldest son of the Old Lion had indeed summoned them, and now, with the addition of various other fellows...

It was perfect!

At this moment, Arthur wasn't worried about having too many enemies, but that the scene wouldn't be grand enough!

All the preceding events were for this moment, weren't they?

Whew!

Arthur let out a small breath, his deep eyes sparkling, and the young face of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium was full of bright smiles—

He was going to cause a stir!

He was going to make it known to the world!

Chapter 738: Descent of the Gods VIII

Yekaterina had never imagined that someone's smile could be so radiant.

This lady looked at Arthur's radiant smile, her eyes full of confusion.

Shouldn't she be worried?

Shouldn't she feel anxious?

Why was he so full of confidence?

"The 'Red Knights' have many members, including numerous individuals wanted in various places, especially the leader who became an Entrant ten years ago.

My father chased him twice.

Both times, he escaped."

Yekaterina reminded Arthur.

"Hmm."

Arthur nodded again.

His radiant smile remained unchanged, but as he turned around, his voice rose again—

"There will be no more 'Red Knights' after this."

His figure gradually receded.

Yekaterina stood in her original position.

This lady seemed to see the Southern Lost Spirit Medium from the previous night once again.

At that moment, this lady swallowed back more words, merely raising her arm to wave goodbye until that figure disappeared into the cabin. Only then did she turn to the Guard Commander beside her to ask.

"Gergis, do you think Lord Kledos can safely reach Inner Bay?"

Though it was phrased as a question to another, the words were filled with self-inquiry.

Gergis distinctly sensed his mistress's real emotions.

Immediately, the Guard Commander of the West Berlin Family said directly—

"Yes."

The crisp answer made Yekaterina turn back in astonishment.

"Why?"

Gergis:

How would I know why?

Lady, aren't I just agreeing with you?

But facing his mistress's questioning gaze, the Guard Commander of the Marquis had no choice but to stiffen his resolve and say.

"Because, he is Arthur Kledos!"

A statement lacking real substance, yet it brightened Yekaterina's eyes.

"Right!

He is Arthur Kredos!

Isn't that how all Spirit Mediums are?"

Yekaterina looked at the white passenger ship, wanting to shout something loudly, but then she suddenly thought of the Lady of the Long Night.

Instantly, her heart stuttered.

That suppressed, sour feeling was very uncomfortable.

So—

"I'm looking forward to it!"

Yekaterina shouted with the loudest voice she could muster in the direction of the 'Oriental'.

Her voice startled the people of the West Berlin Family on the dock.

Her voice made the people on the 'Oriental' look around.

And after shouting, Yekaterina walked briskly toward the carriage.

She had shouted.

She felt exhilarated.

About those who were not exhilarated?

What did it matter to her?

The nearby Gergis was simply dumbfounded.

As a traditional noble servant, the Guard Commander of the Marquess of West Berlin couldn't understand the reason for what had just happened.

Was it his fault?

Impossible!

He was just complying with his young mistress's wishes!

How could that be wrong?

Impossible!

So what exactly happened?

While the Guard Commander of the Marquess of West Berlin was pondering this, one of his underlings, a spy, approached and delivered a secretive piece of intelligence—this was intelligence about Arthur Kredos and the Kledos Family, unlike any surfaced information gathered in the past, this intelligence was deeply dug up through covert channels and cost a lot of money, therefore, this time the intelligence was far more profound.

The Guard Commander of the Marquess of West Berlin did not think there was anything impolite about this investigation.

On the contrary, in the view of the Guard Commander of the West Berlin Family, they were doing this for better cooperation in the future.

However, the facial expression of the undercover subordinate seemed a bit off.

It was a look of wanting to say something yet stopping short.

With a heart filled with doubts, the Guard Commander of the Marquess of West Berlin looked at the report.

The first page contained some information about Charlie, the eldest of the Kledos Family.

After reading the text, the face of the Marquess of West Berlin turned green.

"How could this be?

Not only does he have twenty-six mistresses, but among them are noble ladies?!

Moreover, did a lady actually attempt suicide over him?

He would rather grab a dagger with his bare hands, slashing his palm, in order to prevent that lady from fighting over the dagger, and then he plunged it into his own abdomen...

Me?!

This?!

Where did this Casanova come from?!"

The extremely traditional Gergis's entire face seemed distorted.

To the Guard Commander, the incidents recorded seemed impossible.

Things like severing one's own legs to climb through a window.

Or taking a sword for a lover and yet smiling to keep the lover from crying.

Or giving one's all to a lover, preferring to beg rather than see the lover suffer.

This was beyond the Guard Commander's imagination.

But the Guard Commander did not think it was false.

Firstly, their channels could not possibly produce fake reports.

Secondly...

Sincerity!

Even if the information was transcribed, the Guard Commander saw sincerity in it!

It was at this moment that the Guard Commander thought of his own lady's face, and alarm bells started to ring wildly in his mind.

Now! Immediately! Without delay!

He must inform the Marquess!

Otherwise, the legacy of the West Berlin Family would be endangered!

The Guard Commander immediately chased after Yekaterina's carriage, while covertly speaking through a communication crystal.

This scene was witnessed by many people.

The stalkers, already harboring suspicions, immediately speculated even more.

They swiftly relayed the scene back.

Afterward, they watched as the 'Oriental' gradually moved away, their eyes hiding a ferocious glare.

Meanwhile, in the 'Oriental's' top cabin, Arthur picked up a cup of orange tea doubled with honey, and after sipping it, he added two more teaspoons of sugar.

Upon tasting its sweetness, he nodded in satisfaction.

'After a thorough investigation by the Marquess of West Berlin, it's likely that he will discover Grandfather's great achievements, eh?

Tsk, maybe he already knows but pretends not to.'

Arthur was very aware of certain traits in people's hearts.

People always like to be ostriches.

Pretend not to know, and it hasn't happened.

"Humans, truly complicated," Arthur said as he picked up Pendragon, who had just wandered back from the kitchen with sauce smeared around his mouth. While wiping the kitty, he spoke,

"You can never be like a little kitty, even getting caught when sneaking a treat."

Pan: ?

For some reason, Pendragon felt that Arthur was mocking himself.

Yet upon further thought, it didn't seem so.

Before Pendragon could figure it out, Arthur continued—

"Pan, you must remember!

Sincerity + Wealth, looks, capabilities, or even potential can be deadly.

But if it's only sincerity...

Then it's a certain loss!"

Pendragon became even more confused.

The little kitty couldn't understand such complex matters.

And Arthur did not explain further.

Because the communication stone placed beside the table flickered.

Arthur's lips curled, and he connected the communication stone, and a deep voice came through—

"It's done, boss!"

Chapter 739: The Descent of God IX

Ainhars Territory, Port Pult.

As the highest quality deepwater port in Ainhars Territory, its prosperity was in no way inferior to that of Doldot Port in Seberlin. Moreover, it had an even larger population, particularly famous for the production of quality leather, which brought vigorous vitality to this port.

Consequently, there were hundreds of ranches outside of Port Pult.

Not only fur, but also meat, especially beef, was warmly welcomed throughout South County.

There was even a saying, "The richest food is in South Los, but the best beef is definitely in Port Pult."

And at this moment, Old Maha of Maha Farm, along with his son Little Maha and a dozen hands, was driving a donkey cart filled with beef, drinks, vegetables, and fruits toward a hidden location outside of Port Pult.

"Father, has His Excellency really come?"

Little Maha whispered to his father.

Old Maha didn't answer immediately; instead, he glanced back at his hands to make sure no one would overhear and then nodded slightly.

"He has.

This time, I will formally introduce you to His Excellency.

Remember—

keep everything low-key."

Old Maha gestured towards the hands behind him and cautioned his son.

Although they were all old hands from the farm, some things were destined to be shared only with those closest, and indeed, if it weren't for wanting his son to take over, Old Maha wouldn't have confided anything about his dealings with the 'Red Knights' to his son, as supplying information and selling stolen goods were not honorable deeds.

But without doing so, how could a country boy like him have amassed such a large estate?

"Fantastic!

I'm finally going to meet His Excellency!

'Red Knights,' 'Red Knights'!"

Little Maha cheered softly, repeatedly muttering to himself.

Old Maha looked at his son and opened his mouth to say something, but ultimately, he remained silent—Old Maha understood why his son was like this.

In fact, not a few young people in Ainhars Territory were the same when they heard the name 'Red Knight.'

Although the 'Red Knights' were river pirates, the young people of Ainhars Territory preferred to see the 'Red Knights' as gentlemen thieves.

Indeed!

Just like those gentlemen thieves in picture books!

Many young people would rather believe that the 'Red Knight' earned his title because of his acts of chivalry.

Even in plundering merchant ships, they saw it as a noble act of robbing the rich to help the poor.

And the people who had been killed?

They were naturally wicked men!

But in reality?

As one of the 'Red Knights' fence, Old Maha knew too well that the 'Red Knights' were not the true gentlemen thieves in any sense of the term, their acts of plunder were not so-called noble deeds, and those they killed were not always bad people.

Yet these words, Old Maha didn't speak as he looked at his son's yearning expression—he chose not to say them right away.

'Let him dream a little longer.'

That's what Old Maha thought.

Why had he become a fence for river pirates?

Wasn't it to make life a little better for his family?

Now was no exception.

He hoped their wealth would continue.

As for his son's fantasies?

Think of it as the last lesson.

With these thoughts, Old Maha quickened his pace.

The five donkey carts zigzagged into a narrow lane.

Then, a person holding a torch appeared before the lane.

Seeing the person with the torch, Old Maha was startled.

It was not a stranger.

On the contrary, the person was someone familiar.

Sadi, one of the captains under the 'Red Knights.'

However, Sadi's men had always operated separately from the main force, acting as a sort of wild card.
What was he doing here?

What was this operation?

Knowing very well that the 'Red Knights' would not casually convene their captains, Old Maha's heart tightened.

Nevertheless, the farm owner who knew the 'Red Knights' methods soon called out—

"It's me!"

The farm owner certainly did not want to become a porcupine, pierced by arrows shot from both sides of the high ground.

Moreover, the farm owner was certain they had been followed for some time, with torchbearers appearing up ahead, those behind must have crept closer.

Indeed, the farm owner's guess was not wrong.

As the farm owner stood up with his hands raised high, a series of footsteps sounded from behind, and his companion, Little Maha, had already been subdued.

Faced with the glinting longswords and daggers at their necks, their faces turned pale—when they had seen the 'Red Knights' before, it had always been Old Maha alone.

These companions had not seen such grand scenes before.

Although Little Maha's face was also slightly pale, his eyes were filled with excitement.

The same!

It was just as he had imagined!

Just as the farm owner's son was eagerly anticipating the next scene, he suddenly felt a pain at the back of his head, and his vision went dark.

"Don't worry, he's just passed out."

The person holding a torch said immediately upon spotting Old Maha's bending figure, offering an explanation.

"Captain Sadi, that's my son,"

Old Maha raised his voice.

"Mhm, that's why he's still alive."

The big, dirty-faced man with a bushy beard holding a torch said so.

Old Maha was stunned, then turned his head abruptly.

He saw that the dozens of companions who had come with him had already had their throats pierced by sharp weapons.

"This?!"

Old Maha's voice got stuck in his throat.

But Captain Sadi just shrugged unconcernedly.

"This time, it's a really big deal. After this job, we're retiring—not just me, Danny and Kmar are back too.

Kmar suggested we kill you too because if we want to retire peacefully, we can't leave someone like you as a lingering concern.

But the boss thinks you're reliable, so...

Now you have to retire with us!"

Sadi laughed as he clapped Old Maha on the shoulder.

The farm owner was, however, in a daze.

Retire together?

What about his farm?

Was he to just abandon the farm he had struggled with for twenty years?

And was the 'Red Knights' operation this time really that large?

Not only their main force, but Sadi's force too, and the other two captains had returned?

As the fence for the 'Red Knights,' Old Maha had some understanding of the 'Red Knights' composition.

The 'Red Knights' were made up of roughly two hundred men, but these two hundred were just the main force, what the public knew as the 'Red Knights.'

Beyond that, the 'Red Knights' had an additional three teams.

Each team consisted of anywhere between one hundred and two hundred men.

And each team's leader was an infamous 'River Pirate' on the Inland River.

Like Sadi, known as the 'Skull Splitter.'

Danny was called the 'Blood Axe.'

And the most famous was Kmar.

'Slaughterer' Kmar, a figure on the Inland River to be feared, had a ferocity to rival 'Blazing Wind' Greta from the time of the Seven Years' War.

It was the presence of 'Slaughterer' Kmar that made Old Maha doubtful that the 'Red Knights' were true knights in any real sense.

After all, true knights would not commit acts of slaughter.

"Let's go, meet the boss.

Then, live here quietly.

After tomorrow, we really retire—remember, you and your companions encountered the River Pirates, and you all died, and your farm will soon be 'plundered by the River Pirates.'

So now, you might want to consider what you'll take with you."

Sadi said with a smile.

What could Old Maha say?

The farm owner was left with only a bitter smile—

"Where are we going?

It's not to South Los, is it?"

Chapter 740: Descent of the Divine X

Hearing Old Maha's words, Sadi gave a mysterious smile.

Such a smile made Old Maha's heart skip a beat.

This farmer felt a bad premonition rising from the bottom of his heart—

'It couldn't be that our target is from South Los, could it?

Who could it be?

It couldn't possibly be that Countess, right?'

The thought alone was nearly suffocating the farmer.

As a fence for the 'Red Knights', Old Maha was no fool; he had sensed years ago that there were people behind the 'Red Knights'.

But as a smart man, Old Maha had never asked too many questions or pried into matters, focusing solely on his job instead.

He had no desire to get involved in any accidents.

And at this moment, it was no different.

Seeing Old Maha walking with his head down, Sadi said with a smile,

"Let's go, you'll find out in a moment!"

Old Maha was escorted to the 'Red Knights' camp with Sadi's arm around his shoulder.

Along the way, the sight of those murderous river pirates made the farmer increasingly uneasy.

Not only were there many of them,

but there were far too many new faces as well.

'Definitely not just the 'Red Knights' people!

Others have gotten involved too!

Damn it!

They wouldn't really make a move on that Countess, would they?!

Old Maha bowed his head even lower.

If there were a crack in the ground, the farmer would have dived into it right away.

Nobles!

Robbing a noble was a grave crime!

Nobles from all over would surely investigate to the end!

Even if the 'Red Knights' had backers, who knew whether they would be thrown out as a sacrificial pawn?

And if the 'Red Knights' were thrown out...

What about him?

Thinking about his own fate, the farmer's legs shook with fright, his heart praying non-stop.

At the same time, within the largest tent of the camp, Hazlitt was over and over again mentally rehearsing the plan.

The one known as 'Red Knight', Hazlitt, possessed a height and physique far above average. Dressed in red iron armor, his body appeared even more imposing. With a square face and a bald head adorned with a thick beard stubble, a scar running from the left corner of his eye to the right corner of his mouth crossed his entire face, adding ferocity and authority to the 'Red Knight'.

'As long as I don't personally get in the water and face the anomaly of the Inner Bay's waters, using the cannons hidden in the hills along the shore in combination with those explosives on the river, it should be possible to sink the 'Oriental'!

It should be possible!'

The 'Red Knight' felt immensely fortunate for his everyday preparations at this moment.

If he hadn't hidden twenty 12-pound guns in several hills along the river and stored two hundred explosives for use on the water, he might have been unable to fulfill the 'request' from the Little Lion of Inner Bay at this critical time.

After all, that was the Southern Lost Spirit Medium who could manipulate the Inland River.

In just a few days, the anomalies that occurred when the 'Oriental' set sail were already known to those with vested interests.

This included the river pirates, for one.

It wasn't that the river pirates were particularly interested in Arthur.

It was that the river pirates were focused on the 'Inland River Cult'.

After all—

Many river pirates already worshipped the God of the Inland River.

Therefore, when it was heard that the Southern Lost Spirit Medium was the owner of the God of the Inland River, those who worshipped were filled with rage, and it was for this reason that the 'Red Knight' planned to let these men serve as the vanguard.

'You guys better fight with all your might!

Only if you fight with all your might will we have a chance to escape!'

The 'Red Knight' thought silently to himself.

Escape!

After the Little Lion of Inner Bay issued the 'request' and paid a portion of the fee, the 'Red Knight' was already planning to escape.

As one of the Mystic Side Persons, he was very clear about the power of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium.

He knew, and the Little Lion of Inner Bay surely knew as well.

Yet with this understanding, the Little Lion of Inner Bay still wanted him to intercept the Southern Lost Spirit Medium.

Clearly, he was using his death to buy time.

He had no desire to become such a sacrificial pawn.

Yet he dared not defy the Little Lion of Inner Bay.

So, the only option was to run.

'Sadi, Danny, Kmar, and Old Maha can be trusted.

He must take them into retirement as well.

Apart from them...

"Red Knights" Hazlitt thought about the escape list.

The number of people couldn't be too many.

But it couldn't be too few either.

There must be enough self-preservation ability.

And enough wealth must be taken.

Then, go directly to South Los, buy a ship and set out to sea, or hijack one.

Of course, they weren't going to become pirates, but were heading to North County.

Although the climate was cold, as long as one had enough money, life could be very comfortable anywhere, right?

While he was thinking, suddenly the tent flap was lifted.

Hazlitt unexpectedly saw one of his loyal subordinates, Danny.

Danny was holding a box with a smile on his face.

"Boss, I've got something great to show you!"

Danny hurried over, excited to present his find.

Looking at the box in front of him, Hazlitt smelled a faint scent of blood and immediately understood—his subordinate had found a deserter or a spy.

Such incidents had occurred before.

Hazlitt was no stranger to them.

As for cutting off deserters or spies?

Impossible!

Even the regular armies couldn't achieve it.

Let alone river pirates like him.

Therefore, the "Red Knight" casually opened the box, saying as he did so—

"Who did you catch this time?

Let me see...

Hmm?!"

His words were cut off abruptly.

The "Red Knight" stared at the head inside the box, his eyes wide.

Because what was inside the box was the head of Kmar.

"Slaughterer" Kmar, his other loyal subordinate.

Also, the sharpest longsword in his hands.

He was dead?!

The "Red Knight" looking at Kmar's eyes that died unaccepting, could totally imagine what Kmar looked like, unbelieving until the end.

Just like himself now.

He too could hardly believe it.

But the Red Knight didn't move at all.

Not that he couldn't.

But that he didn't dare to.

A dagger had silently been placed against his throat.

In the moment he was stunned, the dagger had appeared.

Even though he grasped at nothing, it was enough to demonstrate the comer's strength.

"Friend, we can talk," Hazlitt said, without looking at Danny, but to the person behind him.

The person behind him, however, responded with something unrelated—

"Black Cat Faction's Sean sends you the regards from the modern Black Cat."

Sean, truly a Cat Faction Born Black, spoke softly.

"Black Cat Faction?

Southern Lost Spirit Medium?!

When did Danny and South Los come together?!" Hazlitt shuddered inwardly.

This "Red Knight" didn't want to face Arthur.

But the "Red Knight" hadn't expected Arthur to send someone so soon.

What baffled the "Red Knight" even more was that his own subordinate had been turned by the other side.

Sensing the "Red Knight's" confusion, "Blood Axe" Danny said fervently—

"Your Crown has come!

Your Crown has descended!

This is, the arrival of the divine!"