

Great Master 741

Chapter 741: Descent of the Gods XI

Your Crown?

Divine Spirits!

Hazlitt's heart skipped a beat.

As a river pirate who was also known as the 'Red Knight,' Hazlitt naturally possessed some secretive knowledge that ordinary people were unaware of, so he was cautious and on guard when it came to Divine Spirits.

And now, the fanaticism of his confidant 'Blood Axe' Danny heightened the 'Red Knight's' vigilance to an extreme.

Because—

Descend!

He distinctly heard Danny utter these two words!

But he didn't sense an overwhelmingly powerful presence.

'Are we going to become sacrifices for the one who descends?' he wondered subconsciously.

At the same time, footsteps approached from outside—

Step step step!

The rubbing sound of boots against the muddy ground jolted the 'Red Knight's' heart.

It was Sadi!

The other set of slightly heavier footsteps belonged to his liaison, Maha.

'If it's Sadi...'

The 'Red Knight' hoped that 'Skull Splitter' Sadi would create an opportunity for him.

He believed Sadi could do it.

In fact, if the Black Cat Faction had only sent Sean, then Sadi truly could have managed, but unfortunately, the real Cat Faction. Black had two people following Arthur.

Apart from Sean, there was another named Bonte.

Bonte was somewhat older than Sean.

More experienced.

And more skilled.

Perhaps not truly 'Initiated,' but with the addition of the Cat Faction. Black's secret techniques, Bonte was already infinitely close to that level—

The tent curtain was lifted.

Outside, the night wind blew past.

The candle flame flickered.

In the interplay of light and shadows, Sadi instinctively squinted, trying to adjust to the light more quickly.

But in that instant, 'Skull Splitter' Sadi experienced a minuscule blind spot in his vision.

Within this blind spot, a figure emerged silently from the shadows, appearing like a ghost behind Sadi and Old Maha, the tips of the Cat Claw weapon on their hands pointed directly at the napes of their necks—The Cat Claw is a unique weapon of the Cat Faction, a merger of iron gauntlet and blade.

The fingers of the iron gauntlet were replaced with specially-made slender blades.

Retaining the defense of the gauntlet while adding the sharpness of a longsword, it was a weapon suitable for both offense and defense, but it required extremely high skill to wield.

However, with the advent of the Pioneer Era, weapons like the 'Cat Claw' became scarce, not just because it took more time and effort than simple weapons like longswords, spears, or daggers, but also because with the disappearance of Cat Hole and the complete decline of the Cat Faction, such identity-defining weapons had nearly vanished.

Everyone was just trying to survive.

There were some things that had to be given up.

Bonte was no exception.

Although he spent ten years getting familiar with, and mastering, the Cat Claw, and eventually making it an extension of his body.

But Bonte never thought he would use this weapon.

Until that night Lady Amanda came knocking—

'A resurgence that will bring the Cat Faction.Black back into the world's sight...

No!

Not just a resurgence, but...

Revival!'

Bonte clearly remembered the sparkle in Lady Amanda's eyes when she spoke those words.

There was struggle, hesitation, and anticipation.

So, he didn't refuse.

As one of the strongest members of the remaining Cat Faction, Bonte didn't refuse.

Having witnessed the last traces of the Cat Faction.Black's glory, he wanted more members to experience that brilliance.

He put on the Cat Claws he thought he would take to his grave.

He donned his Cat Claws.

He wanted the world to know just what the Cat Faction. Black was like.

Therefore, he meticulously carried out Arthur's orders.

He felt the harsh coldness from the people behind him.

That blend of cold cruelty and steadfast resolve to kill made Sadi, known as 'Skull Splitter,' raise his hands high.

Sadi had no doubt that the slightest hesitation would get him killed.

As for Old Maha still holding his son?

He simply knelt down.

"I surrender! I surrender!

Don't kill my son!"

The kneeling Old Maha shielded his son beneath his body.

Watching this scene, Hazlitt felt his heart sink continuously.

The last support was now bound.

So he...

Could only rely on himself.

The River Pirate, known as the 'Red Knight,' naturally wouldn't be without a trick or two up his sleeve.

In fact, Hazlitt had tricks.

More than one.

However, each use came with a heavy cost.

Therefore, they were to be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

And now?

He was forced to use them.

Sean, who was sticking close to Hazlitt, sensed the 'Red Knight's' heart rate change and the subtle signs of his breathing—being one of only two Great Arcana Levels in the Cat Faction. Black, Sean, at 19 years old, was more than forty years younger than Bonte and was undoubtedly a person with absolute Talent. He was also seen by everyone as someone who could step up to the next level by the age of 30.

Sean's Spirituality was far more active than others.

So, at this moment, Sean immediately detected what Hazlitt wanted to do.

Immediately, the Black Cat Faction member spoke out—

"Your Excellency 'Red Knight,' we did not come for war.

On the contrary, we came for peace.

You should guess who His Crown is by now?"

The softness in his voice did not cause Hazlitt to lower his guard, especially feeling the Sharpness at his neck, the 'Red Knight' secretly sneered to himself.

However, the 'Red Knight's' thoughts involuntarily followed Sean's words.

Almost instantly, the 'Red Knight' blurted out—

"The God of the Inland River?!"

This was not difficult to guess.

Within the South County, there were numerous Divine Spirits, but only the God of the Inland River was associated with the Southern Lost Spirit Medium.

And the instant he gave this answer, the 'Red Knight's' heart eased slightly.

Because the 'Red Knight' was certain: he would not become a Sacrifice.

With the Inland Waterway Mutual Aid Association as its precursor, the God of the Inland River had quite a good reputation nearby, especially compared to some who would hastily call for living sacrifices.

But then, the 'Red Knight's' heart chilled.

He had been influenced.

Not his thoughts directly, but he had been led there.

Just like hearing a Cat's Meow and instinctively wanting to go see.

"I apologize.

For the sake of better cooperation.

I had to use some tricks—Cat Faction. Cat's Meow.

But, I can assure you, I have no ill intent."

Speaking thus, Sean immediately released Hazlitt.

Beside him, Bonte also let go of Sadi and Old Maha.

Hazlitt, newly freed, felt not the slightest joy.

On the contrary, the 'Red Knight's' heart began to beat fiercely—

Something's wrong! Something's very wrong!

Chapter 742 Red Knights I

When a person suddenly gives up the absolute advantage they had over you, do not think it's out of kindness or pity, for such thoughts will only leave you with no place to be buried.

Because when someone really does this, there is only one possibility.

That is—

The opponent has a sure win!

Hazlitt looked at Sean, who had sheathed his short blade.

Naive.

This was Hazlitt's first thought.

Especially that little round face, which gave Sean a kind of baby-faced appearance.

It made his already young age seem even younger.

At least, in everyone's eyes, it's difficult to associate this baby-faced youth with the person who had just taken the 'Red Knights' hostage.

"Good evening, 'Red Knight' Sir."

Sean bowed slightly in greeting.

"Hmm."

Hazlitt nodded, but the 'Red Knight's' gaze was directed toward the entrance of the tent—the tent flap had been lifted.

A figure cloaked in a cape appeared.

Crimson eyes, denoting the identity of the 'Bloodline Clan'.

""Blood Descendants'?!"

Hazlitt uttered a voice filled with shock and uncertainty.

Sadi, who had been unconsciously moving closer to Hazlitt, froze in place.

The 'Skull Splitter's' face became extremely stiff.

'It's over! It's all over!'

The 'Skull Splitter' was inwardly screaming.

He paid exceptional attention to the rumors about the 'Blood Descendants.'

Not only because of the rarity of 'Blood Descendants' and the power they exhibited on every appearance but also because they had a slight connection with this 'Blood Descendant.'

Absolutely just a slight connection!

They had just inadvertently discovered a 'Bloodline Clan's' tomb.

Absolutely unintentional!

They only took what they were supposed to take!

As for why the tomb was empty?

He didn't know!

It certainly wasn't his doing!

Deep down, the 'Skull Splitter' was desperately trying to exonerate himself.

So when the gaze of the 'Blood Descendant' swept over, his face revealed a smile uglier than crying.

In contrast to his trusted subordinate Sadi, Hazlitt wasn't any better off.

In fact, his body was even more rigid.

After all, most of the benefits from that tomb had been secured by him, including but not limited to secret techniques, props, and a large number of Gold Coins.

And those secret techniques and props had already become the trump card he relied upon.

But could a trump card that could deal a fatal blow to ordinary people be of any use against a true member of the 'Bloodline Clan'?

Very likely useless!

Because his trump card came from the 'Bloodline Clan.'

How could the power of the 'Bloodline Clan' be of any use against the 'Bloodline Clan'!

Thinking of the rumors about how higher-ups in the 'Bloodline Clan' had absolute control over their subordinates, for the first time, the 'Red Knight' felt a deep unease.

It was at this moment that the 'Red Knight' finally understood why the Southern Lost Spirit Medium appeared at such a perfect time.

Clearly, the other party had been targeting him all along.

As for being just in time?

It was simply that he had accepted a commission he shouldn't have, and the other party had closed the net ahead of schedule.

'Damn Gleisa Hamlet!'

Hazlitt cursed bitterly in his heart, but his actions were incredibly swift.

The 'Red Knight' bowed reverently.

"Lord Auburn."

With the 'Blood Descendants' appearing time after time, their real names had become known to everyone, who even unraveled some minute details.

All concerning 'Auburn.'

And because of such digging, everyone understood the 'Blood Descendant's' patience.

The person's behavior was completely in line with what was expected from someone of 'Auburn's' character.

Or rather...

It was a performance!

The other party was performing "Auburn."

Therefore, some speculated that the real name of this "Blood Descendant" was not Auburn at all.

Regardless, people became even more wary of this "Blood Descendant."

After all, most of the nobles had, to varying degrees, divided up the pie left by the "Bloodline Clan" — even at that time, it had been confirmed that the "Bloodline Clan" had no heirs.

But now, it was proven that this was a mistake.

The "Bloodline Clan" not only had an heir.

But in fact, there were two.

Thinking of the rumors once associated with the "Bloodline Clan," Hazlitt's respect grew even deeper.

And this demeanor made Arthur, who was manipulating the "Blood Descendant," instinctively feel that something was amiss.

Hazlitt's behavior before and after were too different.

When he had been held hostage before, he was passive but not panicked.

And now?

He seemed genuinely disconcerted.

'Could it be?!'

Arthur entertained a guess in his heart, but as a competent Spirit Medium, he immediately caught on to this but would not directly inquire.

He was controlling the "Blood Descendant" —

"Do you know why I have come?"

The icy voice seemed to lower the temperature inside the tent.

With the excuse of coming in place of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium, Arthur knew exactly how to probe the other party.

For this purpose, Arthur had prepared three plans.

However, Arthur clearly overestimated the courage of a River Pirate after his trump card had been nullified.

"I do know!

You have come because of the affairs of the ancestors' tombs, I swear I have never truly coveted it, I just stumbled upon it by accident.

Moreover, I only borrowed some props and secret techniques from it.

Those gold coins were invested on your behalf.

Now, they have earned you even more."

Hazlitt spoke rapidly, his face taking on a sycophantic expression.

Just then, Little Maha came to.

The youth was groggy as his father clutched his mouth and held him close in his arms without making any sound.

After a few breaths, the youth was able to clearly see everything inside the tent.

The young man saw the "Blood Descendant," saw Hazlitt, and also saw Sean, Bonte, and the shivering Sadi.

Ultimately, the youth's gaze locked onto the "Blood Descendant" and Hazlitt.

Because —

The two were standing in the very center of the tent.

And because —

At that moment, Hazlitt's bowing and scraping highlighted the "Blood Descendant."

The youth looked at the crimson eyes beneath the helmet and trembled with excitement.

He saw it!

He really saw it!

Almost subconsciously, the young man began to struggle.

The strength of youth allowed him to break free from his father's grip and charge straight towards the "Blood Descendant."

"Little Maha!"

Old Maha was terrified.

Watching his son's back, the Liaison scrambled to follow him.

Old Maha had decided that even if his son offended the "Blood Descendant," he would stand in front of his son.

He would use all means to ensure his son lived.

If he could not survive...

Then he would die in front of his son.

At least, he could not allow himself to watch his son die before his eyes.

The son raced ahead.

The father chased after him.

Finally, the son reached the "Blood Descendant," his face flushed with excitement, his voice trembling slightly, he asked —

"Are you the 'Red Knight'?"

Chapter 743 Red Knights II

Little Maha's trembling voice stirred Old Maha's trembling heart.

The old father, upon hearing his son's words, truly despaired.

As a Liaison for the 'Red Knights,' Old Maha was all too aware of Hazlitt's ruthlessness, especially towards those who dared to impersonate his name; he showed no mercy.

There was once a band of River Pirates who impersonated the 'Red Knights' to plunder merchant ships.

Even though they did it cleanly, they were still caught by Hazlitt.

In the end?

The entire group of over twenty River Pirates was skinned by Hazlitt and thrown into a boiling cauldron.

Old Maha had seen this with his own eyes.

He watched as those impostors turned to charred remains in an instant.

He certainly did not wish such a grim fate for his own son.

Even if Hazlitt didn't have time to deal with his son at the moment, what about afterwards?

River Pirates were not known for their generosity.

Retaliation after the fact was, indeed, the norm.

And it was retribution multiplied!

Therefore, without a second thought, the farmer blurted out loudly—

"Sir, Your Excellency, Little Maha, he..."

The words were not finished.

Or rather, it could be said that his words came to an abrupt halt.

Because—

Hazlitt knelt on one knee, performing the Attendant's Salute to the 'Blood Descendants,' and even said.

"Knight Sir, you have finally arrived!"

This scene left Old Maha stunned in place.

What happened?

What was going on?

This shouldn't be happening, right?

A series of questions arose in Old Maha's heart.

Old Maha had considered that Hazlitt might not be a match for the 'Blood Descendants' and thus would flee, only to return with a vengeance.

Old Maha had also thought it possible for Hazlitt to be killed directly by the 'Blood Descendants,' bringing an end to everything.

He had even contemplated that Hazlitt wouldn't confront the 'Blood Descendants' at all, and simply flee, but the farmer had imagined countless possibilities and had never considered the one unfolding before his eyes—

Direct submission!

This situation left the farmer dumbfounded in place.

You see, as a Liaison for Hazlitt, Old Maha was very clear about just how ferocious, cruel, steadfast, and indomitable the River Pirate with the moniker 'Red Knight' was.

In his memory, the 'Blood Knights' had faced more than one crisis.

The most dangerous encounter was under the ambush of the Marquess of Ainhars, where Hazlitt's group was almost completely annihilated, and Hazlitt himself was pursued by the Marquis for an entire month.

But in the end, Hazlitt survived.

At that time, Hazlitt was gravely injured, and everyone thought the 'Red Knight' was finished, yet just half a year later, an even stronger 'Red Knight' emerged.

It was this very battle that led to Hazlitt officially being called the 'Red Knight.'

And yet, such a 'Red Knight' was now kneeling before the 'Blood Descendants'...

What kind of charm did this 'Blood Descendant' possess?

No!

Was this 'Blood Descendant' really that powerful?

Old Maha cautiously observed the man shrouded in a hood and cape.

And Arthur, controlling the 'Blood Descendant,' instantly understood the cause and effect when Hazlitt knelt on one knee, performed the Attendant's Salute, and addressed him as 'Knight Sir.'

'A single tomb raid let the fellow in front of me obtain a part of the Bloodline Clan's inheritance.

And with that as their trump card, they forged the name 'Blood Knights.'

This trump card was certainly powerful, but against the true Bloodline Clan, it was practically useless, so this fellow submitted right away.'

Linking this with the prior conversation, Arthur made the most accurate deduction.

Afterwards, the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium, controlling the 'Blood Descendant,' adopted a thoughtful pose.

Seeing this hesitation, Hazlitt was overjoyed.

He had bet correctly!

The moment the 'Blood Descendants' appeared, Hazlitt knew he was doomed.

He had originally thought that the 'Blood Descendants' would not pay attention to someone so 'insignificant' as himself.

However, following the commission from Gleisa Hamlet, the 'Blood Descendants' appeared afterwards, which just showed how ludicrous his previous thought had been.

Indeed!

The 'Blood Descendants' might not have noticed him.

But what about that Southern Lost Spirit Medium?

And the 'Blood Descendants' were allies of that Southern Lost Spirit Medium, so if the 'Blood Descendants' really wanted to know something, it would be a breeze—as long as the right price was paid.

Hazlitt had also heard about the Southern Lost Spirit Medium's rule of 'fair trade'.

But this was enough to suggest that the appearance of the 'Blood Descendants' was normal and logical.

'Upon discovering she was targeted by Gleisa Hamlet, this Southern Lost Spirit Medium immediately brought in her ally and informed this ally about some information concerning the Bloodline Clan's legacy.'

And then?

Everything along the coast of Ainhars Territory naturally became safe and sound.

Not only was his own danger resolved without lifting a finger, but now the current 'Blood Descendants' probably owed him a huge favor!

Hiss!

This is the Southern Lost Spirit Medium?

With admiration rising in his heart, Hazlitt's demeanor became even more humble.

He bowed his head, and took a prop and a roll of secret techniques from his chest, holding them high above his head.

"These are items you lent me to arrange for this insignificant fellow to work for you.

Now, the task you have arranged for me has been completed, and naturally, they should be returned to their owner.

Please accept them.

Look, not a tiny bit of them is damaged!"

Hazlitt said as if swearing an oath, his resolute posture as if the 'Blood Descendants' had indeed instructed him to do so from the start.

However, Arthur remained indifferent.

Just as you can't expect loyalty from a pirate.

River pirates?

It's the same.

Moreover, at times, river pirates are more cunning than sea pirates.

Because without the wide sea to rely on, any river pirate that wasn't cunning enough would have been executed by the local lords a long time ago.

Thinking to himself, Arthur watched the river pirate in front of him without any expression, and his voice maintained its usual coldness—

"Anything else?"

Upon hearing such a question, Hazlitt became even more delighted.

He knew that he didn't have to die.

All that was needed was to satisfy the 'Blood Descendants' before him.

Without any hesitation, the river pirate then immediately spoke.

"The gold coins you invested in me, in addition to the properties I've acquired for you in Seberlin's Port Doldot, Ainhars's Port Pult, Bert's Lawrence Port, and in Inner Bay and South Los, I have also built for you a fleet named 'Whiskey and Anise'."

Arthur was astounded, not because the river pirate had a formal Inland River fleet, but rather because of the fleet named 'Whiskey and Anise'.

When his own fleets started trading, Arthur had indeed studied the river fleets in earnest—not to gain control through shady means, but in normal commercial competition.

Among them was the 'Whiskey and Anise' fleet.

An intermediate-sized fleet that primarily transported liquor and spices.

Always, their profits were substantial and enticing.

Rumored to be in murky relations with a certain big shot.

But Arthur had never expected it to belong to a notoriously well-known river pirate.

Arthur thought to himself while his words continued—

"Anything else?"

Chapter 744: Red Knights III

Never trust those who seek wealth through bloody and shady means.

Their words are half lies.

Especially when they relinquish their wealth, they will hide the most crucial parts.

Indeed, that was the case!

Facing the crimson eyes of the 'Blood Descendant,' Hazlitt's heart quivered—

"Right!

I've also built two safe houses in Inner Bay and South Los, each stocked with enough medicine and supplies."

When Hazlitt said this, his words halted.

Then, silence ensued.

As if he had finished speaking.

And Arthur, controlling the 'Blood Descendant,' spoke again.

"Continue!"

"Apart from the original safe houses in Inner Bay and South Los, I've also constructed additional ones, storing not only medicine and supplies but also some Mystic Side scrolls and props."

Upon saying this, Hazlitt looked up at the 'Blood Descendant,' his eyes full of pleading.

Unfortunately, the 'Blood Descendant' paid no heed, his words as cold as ever.

"Continue."

Hearing such a command, Hazlitt genuinely wanted to say that was all, that was everything he had.

But thinking of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium's attention towards him, this River Pirate dared not.

In the end, the River Pirate spoke as if he had lost a father, his words steeped in dejection.

"I've also built a third safe house in Inner Bay and South Los, which each contain 10,000 Gold Coins."

The insistence to 'continue' happened time and again.

Old Maha and Sadi, looking at Hazlitt, had surprise in their eyes.

Neither of them had guessed that Hazlitt had hidden away so much.

They knew about the real estate.

The fleet, too, they had some knowledge of.

But the subsequent safe houses, those they truly had no idea about.

Especially the fact that the third safe houses in Inner Bay and South Los each housed 10,000 Gold Coins, which was beyond their wildest expectations.

'Damn it, how much did he embezzle!' Old Maha and Sadi cursed in their hearts.

River Pirates, like Sea Pirates, were entitled to their regular salary and shares from each haul.

Depending on their role and merits, the loot from each raid was to be converted to gold and distributed among them.

Both Old Maha and Sadi were certain that what Hazlitt had received could not afford the purchase of those properties and then the assembly of a fleet.

Let alone six safe houses.

Especially Old Maha, who was convinced that, aside from him as the part-time black-market Liaison, Hazlitt must also have had a full-time fence.

Who could it be?

The two speculated.

Meanwhile, Sean and Bonte, who had been observing quietly since the beginning, were immensely impressed.

Not with the 'Blood Descendant.'

But with their boss: Arthur Kredos.

It was obvious that throughout, the 'Blood Knight' had been under the control of their young boss. Hence, they had been able to appear just at the right moment and invited the 'Blood Descendant' appropriately, capturing him without a struggle.

No!

Not capturing.

Rather, controlling him!

Seeing Hazlitt's pleading manner, they couldn't help but think of a donkey that had labored in the mill for a lifetime, receiving nothing, only to be slaughtered by its owner for meat.

Pitiable, too pitiable.

As they thought this, they exchanged a glance and felt immense relief.

If the 'Red Knights' far away in Ainhars Territory were under surveillance, then surely all their actions, so close to hand, were being watched.

They, however, had stuck to their roles, never committing any transgressions.

Thus, their boss was willing to invite them with a gentler approach.

Of course, if they had declined the invitation...

At this thought, they no longer wanted to continue such musings.

Pondering things that hadn't happened seemed pointless.

They wouldn't engage in such senseless acts.

And in the tent, the other two remained.

'Blood Axe' Danny was still fervent.

Facing the assistant sent by Your Crown, this Believer of the God of the Inland River trusted unconditionally.

And Little Maha?

"The 'Red Knight' is so powerful!"

"Truly worthy of the title 'Red Knight'!"

The adoration of the youth is really beyond words.

In the tent, everyone's expression was captured in the eyes of Arthur as he viewed them through the perspective of a 'Blood Descendant,' feeling the deep fear in the hearts of Sean and Bonte, actual members of the Cat Faction's Mystic Side.

Arthur was pleased.

He had originally planned to find an opportunity to discipline them a bit.

Now, it seemed there was no need.

Therefore, Arthur, controlling the 'Blood Descendant,' turned to look at Hazlitt in front of him.

Under the flashes of 'Eagle Eye' and 'Insight,' Arthur confirmed that the other party had nothing to hide, and immediately raised his hand to take out a crimson Treasure Bead.

"Good."

Before Hazlitt could react, a red light burst out from the bead, enveloping him.

"Ah!"

Amid the scream, Hazlitt fell to the ground, unable to rise.

And the red light was fleeting.

When the light dissipated, and everyone saw Hazlitt once more, they all gasped in shock.

The big man's body became shriveled, his thick beard even turned sparse, and he seemed to have withered away.

This, this, this!

Old Maha, Sadi, Sean, and Bonte were all rendered speechless.

Even 'Blood Axe' Danny and Little Maha were startled.

But what truly shocked them was just beginning—

"This is punishment, understand?"

The 'Blood Descendant' asked coldly.

"Understand!"

What else could Hazlitt, who felt on the verge of death, say?

Besides, apart from the word 'understand,' he could not utter any other words.

He was too tired.

He wanted to sleep.

But the next moment, the crimson light appeared again.

This time, however, it was different from the previous draining.

This time it was...

Bestowing vitality.

Hazlitt began to recover at a speed visible to the naked eye, and between breaths, this River Pirate regained his previous 'Red Knight' appearance.

No!

He was stronger than before!

His arms, thighs, and torso all swelled as if they had been inflated.

A faint crimson appeared in Hazlitt's eyes.

Of course, these were not the most important things.

The most important were youth and vitality!

Inside the tent, everyone could see that Hazlitt had become younger, from a middle-aged man to one who seemed like a youth.

Hazlitt incredulously looked down at his hands and then instinctively touched his face.

The wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and mouth were gone.

Feeling the vitality of his body at that moment, he nearly broke down in tears.

He had really become young again.

He no longer needed to shave his head to conceal his gray hair.

He no longer needed to shave daily, using a thick beard to hide his aging.

Why did he want to retire?

Naturally, it was because of his age!

His body, as he grew older, told him that it was time to retire.

But now?

No longer needed!

No need to hide!

He was truly young again!

And all this was bestowed by the 'Blood Descendant' before him.

Without a second thought, Hazlitt knelt down once more.

Only this time, Hazlitt's title changed.

He exclaimed—

"Master!"

Chapter 745 Red Knights IV

Carrots and sticks, the tried and true method to train a donkey.

Similarly, this was also effective with humans.

In fact, it worked even better on humans than on donkeys.

Because—

Most people were not as stubborn as donkeys, yet they were smarter.

Arthur knew this early on during his time at the orphanage.

The caregivers would reward well-behaved children with a piece of candy for napping on time, but noisy children received neither candy nor a slap on the wrist.

Arthur, of course, was well-behaved and often considered a good child.

So, he would take his naps obediently but would start a discussion beforehand to keep the excitable children arguing among themselves.

Then, he would reap a dozen or so pieces of candy.

Arthur would save half of them to savor the sweetness.

And the other half?

He naturally gave those to the children who were slapped on the wrist, earning their genuine defense and ensuring that he was always in a convenient position.

However, river pirates and naive children were not the same.

Children, once they felt and knew pain, remembered it.

River pirates?

They would never remember without experiencing a soul-searing agony.

Oh, Arthur was clever!

To ensure that Hazlitt had a good memory, the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium allowed Hazlitt to experience absolute pain—

[Name: Blood of the Night]

[Type: Jewel]

[Quality: Hero]

[Attributes: 1. Absorption; 2. Vitality]

[Requirements: None]

[Remarks: In the Holy Era, the Blood Duke personally crafted this prop for his thirteen descendants, hoping they could rely on it to evade the pursuit of The Holy Court. However, the young Bloodline Clan didn't see it that way; they saw it as a means to establish their merit and honor. In the following century, within the territories directly governed by The Holy Court, they initiated numerous 'bloody tides'...]

...

[Absorption: Within a 2000-meter radius with the bead holder at the center, creatures with a physique lower than 1 will have their fresh blood absorbed. Moreover, as the radius is decreased, the physique threshold increases. When targeting a single creature, a physique and spirituality roll of 10 is required to evade absorption. Only if both rolls are successful, can one escape the absorption]

[Vitality: The absorbed fresh blood is converted into pure vitality, healing injuries or nourishing the bead holder's physique. Current Vitality Value: 1024]

(Note 1: Using Absorption and Vitality consumes physical strength, and even with vitality replenishment, it will not cure the sense of fatigue—any spiritually endowed person can use this prop, but it only manifests its true power in the hands of the Blood Descendants. They can use stored vitality to counteract the physical strength they should consume, significantly reduce fatigue, greatly enhance absorption rate, and interrupt absorption or vitality at any time.)

(Note 2: During Absorption, the target will experience immense pain.)

(Note 3: The full blood of an adult can be converted into 4-5 points of vitality.)

(Note 4: The upper limit of vitality value is 99999.)

...

This Treasure Bead was incidentally obtained from Delpock at Port Doldot.

Naturally, it became one of the staple props of the Blood Descendants.

Arthur didn't want to refrain from using it.

The Vitality trait of the [Blood of the Night] bead was something Arthur coveted greatly.

With this bead in possession, it was akin to having several extra lives.

But with the Lady of Sorrow around, Arthur had to be cautious—at least until her death, he needed to maintain a clear distinction from the Blood Descendants.

But it wouldn't be long now.

Arthur estimated that the time would not be extensive.

The Lady of Sorrow was not one to endure.

She would definitely seek to escape her cage as quickly as possible.

Her helpers might even be close by now.

Thinking this, Arthur controlled the Blood Descendant to look at Hazlitt, who showed signs of submission.

Having become young again and obtained a more fundamental power, the figure was born from pain and harvest into obedience—Arthur was certain that just a few more times like this, and the other party would become utterly devoted.

Unfortunately...

He didn't have the time.

But, he had a more convenient method—

"This is the advance on your reward, understand?"

Exactly the same, still so cold.

But Hazlitt didn't care anymore.

His own master was just reticent, his sparing words fostering such a tone, but his master was absolutely clear in reward and punishment.

And that was enough.

"Understood!"

This time, Hazlitt responded with conviction.

Even though, deep down, this former river pirate was still wondering what task he had to perform.

The next moment, the once river pirate saw the contract.

A contract to serve the Southern Lost Spirit Medium.

"I owe him another favor, you need to help him, to repay the favor for me—and that is the task for which you've received an advance on your reward," said the 'Blood Descendant'.

Hazlitt picked up the contract and scrutinized it carefully; upon discovering there were no excessive terms, he immediately breathed a sigh of relief.

"It is my honor to serve my master," he said.

Without hesitation, Hazlitt signed his name on the document.

And just as Hazlitt signed his name, Arthur learned from the contract that this was the other party's first time signing such an agreement—this was a clause of the contract that Arthur had specifically added to avoid some loopholes.

Originally, it was for Abel.

But now, it made a lot of things easier.

At least, Arthur knew that the Hazlitt before him was more cautious than expected, having not engaged in any in-depth cooperation with the Little Lion.

'It must've been just a superficial mutual benefit partnership.

Or simply some sort of commission.'

Arthur thought to himself as he continued to control the 'Blood Descendant' and spoke.

"Once you complete the task on the contract, continue to operate in the Inland River as a 'Blood Knight'."

Hazlitt had no objections to such an order.

He had wanted to retire because he felt the marks of age forcing him into retirement.

But now?

He felt stronger than he did twenty years ago.

Under these circumstances, how could he possibly retire?

"Yes, master," he said.

Hazlitt bowed in response.

The 'Blood Descendant' nodded, glanced over Sean and Bonte, and then turned into a mist, dissipating directly within the tent—of course, the Southern Lost Spirit Medium did not forget to have the 'Blood Descendant' take the 'Bloodline Clan' props and secret technique contributed by Hazlitt.

When the 'Blood Descendant' swept his gaze over them, Sean and Bonte both felt a tightening in their hearts.

It was the psychological pressure created by a gap in strength.

However, the two qualified members of the Black Cat Faction didn't let this make them forget the most important thing.

Sean took out a Messenger Stone and handed it to Bonte—the Messenger Stone was guarded by Sean, but activating it required Bonte's 'Spirituality'.

This was a safety measure.

After all, they couldn't predict the unexpected.

Fortunately, the task was successfully completed this time.

Thinking this, Bonte didn't hesitate, he grabbed the Messenger Stone and said directly—

"It's done, boss!"

Chapter 746: Red Knights V

Arthur faced the facts he had long known, maintaining the joy of the unenlightened, the upturned corner of his mouth naturally performed for the one in the Lead Box Coffin.

As for the answer?

It was naturally—

"Yes, Bonte."

After the brief reply, the Messenger Stone extinguished.

This was just a confirmatory response.

The subsequent plan, of course, couldn't be discussed here.

However, that was enough.

"Kledos, I think we can have a talk," said the Lady of Sorrow from inside the Lead Box Coffin.

"Do you think it's possible?"

You are already in my hands now.

You have long lost the qualifications."

Arthur's words were filled with arrogance, aimed to paralyze and provoke the Lady of Sorrow—Arthur never believed such an existence could be without real allies, just as he firmly believed that if the price was right, the other party would definitely betray their own allies.

Upon learning in the shadows that the Lady of Sorrow's partners were the Old Lion and the Little Lion, Arthur believed this even more fervently.

After all, the performance of the Lady of Sorrow was rife with provocation and temptation.

Arthur knew well what the other party was up to.

Just like what they wanted to do at this moment.

For his own goals, Arthur didn't mind cooperating a bit.

"Do you know what you're about to encounter?"

"I do!

The 'Red Knights'!

I'm very clear about it!"

Arthur answered quite casually.

"And besides the 'Red Knights'?

What do you know about Inner Bay?

What do you know about Seberlin?

Or perhaps...

Would you like to know a bit more?"

The Lady of Sorrow began her speech—this kind of Shaman-like feeling, Arthur was all too familiar with it, of course, because he was a professional.

Arthur even guessed that the other party would next say some words that were partially true, or perhaps mostly true with a mix of falsehoods, aimed to provoke his nerves and directly pull him into a trap.

That trap was invisible; once stepped into, it was imperceptible.

Because the trap itself was meant to mask the real killing intent.

For example...

The real reinforcements of the Lady of Sorrow!

And this, was exactly what Arthur wanted.

The young Southern Lost Spirit Medium had always wanted to confirm this.

So, in the next moment, Arthur's words became gentle.

He was in professional mode—

"I know some things about Inner Bay, and certainly, things that you don't know.

I also know some things about Seberlin, likewise, things that you don't know.

Of course, most importantly...

Have you ever thought about why you failed?

Even, why you fell into my hands?"

Arthur moved a chair over and sat opposite the Lead Box Coffin, his face bearing a smugness that he wanted to mask, yet couldn't conceal at all.

[Bluff] flashed urgently.

Everything seemed as if it were true.

Looking at Arthur's smug demeanor, the Lady of Sorrow felt like tearing his skin off directly, but at the same time, she also started thinking.

Why did she fail?

Yes!

Why did she fail?

It shouldn't have been!

"Why?" the lady questioned.

"I am a Spirit Medium, and what I believe in is 'fair trade'. If you want to know the answer, then you need to offer something valuable.

Of course, information will do.

I'm an easy person to talk to."

Arthur said as he crossed his legs, radiating an air of having everything under control.

"I can give you a Seed of my power, the kind that has no side effects, to make your upcoming 'Ascend Step' smoother—with your strength, you must have already encountered difficulties with 'Ascend Step' right?

Trust me, it can help you!"

'Lady of Sorrow' once again peddled her own power.

And this made Arthur burst into laughter.

Such words, Arthur had heard before.

Gleisa's Little Lion had refused.

Just like the Little Lion, Arthur utterly did not believe that such power came without side effects.

However, unlike the Little Lion who had refused, Arthur would not.

He had someone worth nurturing!

"Oh?

Is that so?

Then, could you let me see your seed?

Not for me, but for the insect I'm nurturing—you know, it can't forget your scent, and it constantly tells me how it longs for you."

Arthur was quite frank.

'Lady of Sorrow' was even more frank—

"I have already fragmented a seed.

It's right beside me.

You can come and get it.

I swear, I cannot manipulate it right now."

As the lady spoke, she thought of the fragmentary insect nurtured by Arthur.

In her hundreds of years of memory, there was no trace of this insect, not even related knowledge; yet instinctively, she knew the insect was terribly frightening.

It even made her shiver.

Logically, she should not possibly feel this way.

But once the feeling emerged, she could not help but want to explore the other party.

Of course, if Arthur really opened the Lead Box Coffin, she would definitely flee.

"You are insincere, and you take me for a fool.

Do you think I would open your cage?"

Arthur retorted.

"Then what should I do?"

"Obviously, do your utmost to send that seed out—I believe you can achieve this since, according to the information I received from that one, you have managed it before."

Arthur stated as a matter of fact.

And Arthur's words caused a jolt in the heart of 'Lady of Sorrow'.

She had indeed done something similar before.

But apart from Him, nobody else knew of that incident.

'Did He betray me?'

The moment this thought emerged, 'Lady of Sorrow's emotions began to surge, even causing her body to shudder.

Bang!

The dull thud that arose from within the Lead Box Coffin made Arthur secretly smirk.

Arthur knew, he had guessed correctly.

When 'Lady of Sorrow' offered the seed as a bargaining chip, Arthur had been speculating that the other party must have some method to remove the seed from the Lead Box Coffin.

Otherwise, she wouldn't possibly use the seed as a bargaining chip.

She wasn't really foolish.

And now, her reaction told Arthur that there was more to the scenario.

Furthermore, it was an extremely crucial matter.

'Got the big fish!'

Immediately, the joy within Arthur's heart intensified.

Nothing was more delightful than an unexpected surprise.

To firmly seize this unexpected joy, Arthur did not cease his words—

"That one is a different price.

Let us discuss your initial curiosity: why you failed!

Believe me, that one has nothing to do with this!

What's related to this is another individual whom I extremely disdain!"

'That one' was clearly very important to 'Lady of Sorrow'.

Since she was important, naturally, she was familiar.

Knowing nothing, Arthur would not discuss this with her.

If there was to be a discussion, it had to be about an individual the other party knew nothing about, yet he was extremely familiar with.

There was none?

Then he would make one up.

Arthur thought so to himself.

And within the Lead Box Coffin, a voice full of hatred spoke—

"Is it her? I see now!"

Chapter 747: Red Knight VI

Lies, the reason they are believed, lies in their allure.

Just as when someone fulfills all your expectations, that person is either a god or a fraud.

And Arthur?

He was definitely not any kind of fraud.

Arthur was simply a Spirit Medium, nothing more.

After all, Arthur was all too aware of how to make a person...no, a 'Demigod' fit the bill.

Because the 'Lady of Sorrow' before him refused to accept her defeat.

People do not accept their failures, they subconsciously make excuses for themselves.

Divine Spirits are no different.

Even more so, Divine Spirits can be even more excessive.

After all—

They are gods!

Their arrogance is far beyond the imagination of ordinary people.

The 'Lady of Sorrow' in front of him, even if just a former Demigod, was no different.

Arthur truly said nothing.

He simply got the ball rolling.

After that?

The 'Lady of Sorrow' stepped right into the trap.

The voice that rose from the Lead Box Coffin, from low and somber to frantic—

"That bastard, meddling again!

Was the lesson from the 'Seven Years' Battle' not enough?

She deserves to die a thousand deaths!"

The appearance of the two keywords, 'Seven Years' War' and 'she', made Arthur subconsciously think of a person.

Glast!

Or better said, Glast known as the 'Witch' Cleaver.

To Arthur, this lady was indeed unforgettable.

Not just for her multiple identities, but because she continued to contribute even after death—given her role as the 'essential nutrient' in Glast's and Ms. Anna's affairs, Arthur could never forget her.

Of course, Arthur also could not confirm whether the 'Lady of Sorrow' at this moment was talking about her.

So—

"Heh, are you trying to trick me?"

I am a Spirit Medium.

You should tone down such little tricks a bit—you wouldn't know about her.

Of course, it might also be him.

Or it."

Arthur spoke with certainty, but it was exactly this excessive certainty that made his words seem somewhat different.

There was a flavor of...

a probing nature.

Almost instantly, the 'Lady of Sorrow' grasped this unusual sentiment.

From behind the Lead Box Coffin, she barely sensed Arthur's current state.

His facial expression had no issues.

His Spirituality also remained quite stable.

It seemed as if the earlier probing was just an illusion.

However, the 'Lady of Sorrow' would not think of it as an illusion.

Almost subconsciously, the lady began to ponder furiously.

Was Arthur's probe meant to confirm my relationship with that guy?

Why would he do that?

The two couldn't possibly have any connection, could they?

No, that's not right!

If there were no relationship between them, Arthur would not have acted that way.

What could their relationship be?

Unconsciously, the 'Lady of Sorrow' began to delve deeper into her thoughts, while her mouth rapidly fired questions—

"Do you think the name of the 'Witch' Cleaver isn't well-known?"

This question was both a delay tactic and a probe.

It was almost at this moment, the 'Lady of Sorrow' put all her effort into enveloping Arthur with her sensing.

As for Arthur noticing?

Impossible!

The 'Lady of Sorrow' was very firm on this point.

Her means at this moment had reached the level of a god.

Arthur was powerful, even surpassing the ordinary man's imagination, but he had not yet reached 'Their' level, and without attaining 'Their' level, he would not perceive these things.

But the 'Lady of Sorrow' would never comprehend what is meant by talent.

That very talent which brought calamity upon them, her, Them, it.

At the first moment, Arthur perceived this peeping.

The young Southern Lost Spirit Medium furrowed his brow in cooperation.

A shade of ...

Pain!

'Pain?'

The 'Lady of Sorrow' knew all too well the look of pain.

Though fleeting, the 'Lady of Sorrow' confirmed that Arthur was indeed in pain upon hearing the name 'Cleaver.'

Had Cleaver caused harm to the Southern Lost Spirit Medium?

Impossible!

This identity was merely for provoking war, just one among that person's many identities...

Wait a second!

Suddenly, the 'Lady of Sorrow' thought of another identity of that person: 'Gillgick'!

The knight who fled with an heir of the Golden Lion Family's bloodline in tow.

The knight who ensured the continuity of the bloodline for a member of the Golden Lion Family.

Of course, this was what the outside world knew.

Being one of the verbal loyalists who had once served that person, the 'Lady of Sorrow' knew far more, for instance, what that person was plotting back then.

That person's schemes were nothing short of fantastical.

But very tempting.

As a result, quite a few were drawn into it.

The outcome?

Naturally, it was a failure.

An utter failure, with not only the fruits of victory taken by others, but those involved dying or going mad.

Although that scheme failed.

Apparently, another scheme of that person seemed to have...

Succeeded!

Without any hesitation, the Lady of Sorrow uttered a name—

"Islan!"

Arthur's pupils contracted sharply.

This time, even without exerting all her power, the 'Lady of Sorrow' could sense the change in the Southern Lost Spirit Medium.

The accelerated heartbeat, the rapid breathing.

And...

The trembling of Spirituality!

All indicating the impact the name 'Islan' had on the young spirit medium.

And at that moment, the 'Lady of Sorrow' finally understood why the Southern Lost Spirit Medium had struck out at her.

Clearly, the Southern Lost Spirit Medium was looking for that bastard.

But she hit the wrong target by mistake.

No!

Not exactly the wrong target, rather, on the way to Inner Bay seeking answers, conveniently dealt with some nuisances.

Though saying this might wound the 'Lady of Sorrow's' pride a little, what did that matter compared to learning the secret of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium?

"Arthur Kredos, you actually possess the bloodline of the Golden Lion Family!"

"No!"

Arthur denied forcefully.

As he spoke, he stood up from his chair.

His reaction only made the 'Lady of Sorrow' laugh out loud.

"I never imagined that person would create a monster like you, and probably she didn't expect—her son Islan may have died in the Seven Years' Battle, but her granddaughter ended up in Southern Los, and even married your father.

It's really unexpected.

But more unexpected is you, Arthur Kredos!

I finally understand why you made such a big deal of going to Inner Bay!"

"Shut up!"

Arthur commanded.

But the 'Lady of Sorrow' simply could not stop; she even began to sing in a lamenting tone—

"You seek justice for your mother!

You want to reclaim everything that belongs to your mother in the most Open and Aboveboard way!

Am I right?"

Chapter 748: Red Knights VII

An inquiry was made, which did not garner a response.

To this, the 'Lady of Sorrow' felt no surprise.

The more silent the Southern Lost Spirit Medium, the more it proved her guess was correct.

At the same time, this lady had fully understood why she had failed.

It was because—

Arthur knew her too well!

Knowing him as she did, distortions had inevitably altered his memories, and in order to make himself function more normally, it was natural to document everything.

In which, she, once a client served, was of utmost importance.

So, Arthur understood her.

So, Arthur managed to defeat her.

But the diary had to be chaotic, some crucial parts missing.

Hence, even after Arthur cultivated that strange worm capable of causing her real harm, she was still alive; he hadn't fed her the worm.

Even, the appearance of that worm, devouring part of her body in front of her eyes, was to intimidate her.

It wanted her...

To reveal the truth about the past!

'So that's how it is!'

Upon comprehending the whole scenario, the 'Lady of Sorrow' fully relaxed.

She knew she wouldn't die.

Moreover, it seemed she could gain even greater benefits.

Right then, this once Demigod laughed—

"How about we make a deal!

Free me, and I'll tell you the truth about the past, what do you say?

You wouldn't want to leave your mother's fate unclear, would you?"

Arthur did not respond.

He, turned and walked away.

At that moment, the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium seemed to have made some resolve, no longer sparing 'The Lady of Sorrow' another glance.

Even, the earlier bargaining chip 'Seed' wasn't mentioned.

But that didn't matter anymore!

What mattered was, she held the absolute advantage!

This time, she would not lose!

Reminded of this, the 'Lady of Sorrow' hesitated no longer; she produced a Seed.

Of course, this Seed was not intended for Arthur.

But rather—

To gain more for herself!

The Seed glittered, its power penetrating the Lead Box Coffin.

Though it couldn't truly affect the Lead Box Coffin, it was enough to serve as a link.

Simultaneously, a layer of silence filled Barriers enveloped inside the Lead Box Coffin.

This time, the lady once again contacted that old lion.

However, unlike the frantic demeanor before.

This time, the 'Lady of Sorrow' held all the cards—

"Good morning, Lord Hamlet."

"Hmm?"

Faced with such a calm greeting, the Old Lion of Inner Bay was somewhat baffled.

In the understanding of this Old Lion, the 'Lady of Sorrow' was anything but mild-tempered.

Her entire body suffused with Distortion, her soul ever in search of pain, how could she be good-tempered?

Playing for pleasure, in the 'Pain Church' was beyond just talk.

"Good morning, Mikhail.

I thought our next communication would be many years later.

Perhaps at one of our funerals."

The Old Lion candidly expressed previous discontents.

After all, just a few hours had passed; such incidents couldn't be easily forgotten.

"If possible, I would have indeed wished to be at your funeral, but obviously— a delightful twist has broken this stalemate."

The 'Lady of Sorrow' began her verbal counter-strike.

Though, to her, such counters were mild; she much preferred extracting an opponent's heart.

But before that could happen, she didn't mind collecting some interest—

"Remember Islan?

You couldn't possibly forget your eldest son, could you?

Though nominally, he should have been Dorn Hamlet's child, your appearance shattered their original romance... that's right, according to your humans' way of putting it, it was after the girl engaged to Dorn Hamlet that she met the man she truly loved.

And you?

Thought you had found true love as well.

You met in secret, you roamed the streets of Inner Bay, and ultimately, as young as you were, you couldn't resist the temptation and you tasted the forbidden fruit.

The person you loved had your child.

You were excited, you were fearful, and you were at a loss.

You wanted that child, yet you didn't want to lose your status in the Golden Lion Family. You became indecisive, you hesitated.

Fortunately, your twin brother, Dorn, made the decision for you.

He killed that unfaithful woman.

However, the child was taken away.

The knight 'Gillgick' who acted on his behalf, after killing that girl, found himself at a loss with the suddenly premature child.

The knight's creed prevented him from harming an infant.

Yet, he was under orders from Dorn.

He too found himself caught in a dilemma at that moment.

In the end, he chose to leave with the premature infant and named him Islan.

The two hid in a secluded village. Islan never knew that his teacher was the man who killed his mother, and similarly, the knight Gillgick grew increasingly guilt-ridden.

The daily torment led this fairly strong knight to an early death.

And you?

My dear Old Lion, back then, you were overjoyed, thinking the excuse of 'wife and child' began to widely plan, and finally, when the Seven Years' War broke out, you completed your revenge, you killed your brother, that brother whose Talent far exceeded yours—Dorn Hamlet!

Only...

Did you know that your young son,

No!

More precisely, your adolescent son also died on the battlefield?

And...

Did you know he too had tasted forbidden fruit early with a girl from the same village and had a daughter?"

This 'Lady of Sorrow,' it seemed, was narrating a story.

Meanwhile, the Old Lion's breathing became rapid.

And this was exactly what the 'Lady of Sorrow' wanted.

She concealed the key point about Glast.

She was just narrating in her own way.

But it was enough!

She had provoked the Old Lion.

"What do you want to do?"

The Old Lion asked in a deep voice.

"Did you know that your granddaughter also has a son?

Did you know your granddaughter's son feels indignant about the injustice his mother faces?

Did you know what your granddaughter's son is planning to do?

You know nothing!

You only know to continue doing those disgraceful things in your palace!"

Upon these words, the 'Lady of Sorrow's voice abruptly stopped.

She voluntarily disconnected the communication.

She knew the Old Lion had taken the bait.

What next?

Just wait.

This time, she was sure to win!

Arthur stepped out of the cabin and along the terrace, he moved to the viewing platform that belonged only to him, watched the flowing river, and then brought his hands back to gather his shoulder-length hair, a mysterious smile formed on his face.

'He finally fell for it!'

A sigh from within, filled with Arthur's gratitude for the 'Lady of Sorrow.'

Right now, their opponent must be eagerly contacting the Old Lion of Inner Bay, right?

Such a contact was just perfect for Arthur.

It not only solidified his identity but also truly signaled his first strike into Inner Bay.

Of course, it was not enough yet.

He needed to wait a bit longer.

On this, Arthur showed great patience and benevolence.

After all—

The victor was definitely going to be him.

However, that was a matter for later.

Now?

Arthur looked at the text before him, his lips curling up.

Chapter 749 Foolish Touch I

In front of Arthur, characters known only to him were flickering rapidly—

[Having fermented overnight, your wisdom, agility, and kindness had spread throughout Seberlin, your name appearing even in the surrounding territories; and under the promotion of the Marquess of West Berlin's eldest daughter, the commoners and merchants at Port Doldot became increasingly grateful toward you; XP+6000]

[Even more people heard your name: XP+1100]

...

Just as Arthur had predicted, the acquisition of XP had remained efficient.

Looking at the XP which still stood at 18,300 points, Arthur was filled with anticipation.

He knew he was about to encounter an even greater surge of XP.

Even beyond what he had anticipated.

After all...

The Old Lion would not sit idly by!

'You better not disappoint me!'

The young Southern Lost Spirit Medium muttered to himself from the depths of his heart.

Meanwhile, thousands of miles away in the 'Lion Palace,' an old man with white hair and beard was rubbing his temples and forehead—his thumbs were on his temples, and his index fingers were side by side on his forehead, rhythmically kneading in a clockwise direction, muttering under his breath.

"I just knew it! I just knew it!"

While speaking these words, the old man with the white hair opened his eyes.

Hum!

The air trembled as the old man opened his eyes, as if a sharp long knife had cleaved through the air.

The guards stationed inside the bedroom of the Lion Palace felt the arrival of this knife, and despite being veterans, they instinctively wanted to dodge, but they simply could not.

Because—

It was too fast!

It was unimaginably fast!

Pu pu pu!

Amid the sounds of blades cutting through flesh, all the guards in the bedroom of the Lion Palace, including the Hidden Guards, were wiped out.

However, the rest of the guards at the Lion Palace showed no surprise or tension.

They only looked at their deceased comrades with a bit of pity.

Afterward, they were full of fervor!

They couldn't wait!

Everyone knew about the danger of serving as a guard in the bedroom.

But everyone also knew that serving in the bedroom was the best path to advancement, and after a three-year term, it meant absolute trust from the master of the Lion Palace.

From then on, their careers would be smooth sailing.

Just like—

Dilbark!

This spy, who held the positions of reporter and editor at the Moon Newspaper in Southern Lost, had served as a bedroom guard for the Old Lion, which allowed him to break away from the regular 'Spy' system and rise to become one of the 'Seven Golden Mane Advisors'!

At that moment, Dilbark was in hiding at Port Doldot, gazing at the departing 'Oriental,' and his Messenger Stone began to vibrate.

Feeling the vibration of the Messenger Stone, Dilbark became excited.

For this stone was none other than a connection to the master of Inner Bay.

Hurriedly finding a secure place, Dilbark knelt on one knee to activate the Messenger Stone—

"My Prince, good day!"

His excitement made his voice tremble.

"Long time no see, Dilbark."

That voice, as if branded upon his soul, stirred up emotions the moment it greeted him, making Dilbark's tears nearly overflow with excitement.

"All is well, my Prince.

At this moment, I am secretly protecting Arthur.

His strength is really far beyond imagination.

Do you know?

The night before last..."

Dilbark began to recount in detail everything that had happened at Port Doldot starting from two nights ago.

The Old Lion did not interrupt his advisor.

After all, this was exactly what he wanted.

He wanted to confirm some of his own speculations from the side.

About ten minutes later, Dilbark reported everything he had seen, the information collected by his subordinates, and some of his own conjectures to the Old Lion.

"Very good, Dilbark!

You have not failed my expectations!"

The Old Lion praised.

Dilbark grew even more excited.

"Everything is due to your guidance!"

The advisor to the Old Lion humbly responded.

"Dilbark, remember, you and your men must do everything possible to protect Arthur Kredos. Apart from me... no, from this moment forward, even my orders must be based on not harming Arthur Kredos. If it would harm Arthur Kredos, then everything should prioritize Arthur Kredos.

You must remember this!"

The Old Lion issued an order that felt exceptionally significant to Dilbark.

However, this loyally devoted advisor did not ask further questions.

"Yes, Your Highness."

With a firm and affirmative response, the conversation ended.

Dilbark immediately erased any traces of his presence there and began to board the carriage, chasing after the "Oriental."

Meanwhile, inside the Lion Palace, the Old Lion confirmed even more.

First and foremost, he confirmed that Arthur was safe.

The things he worried about the most, such as Arthur being kidnapped by the bastards of the Lady of Sorrow, had not happened; in fact, in the confrontation with the Lady of Sorrow, Arthur had gained a considerable upper hand.

Although he still could not understand the whole process, a fleeting glimpse with Marinda and some hidden information within the messages revealed this much.

Thinking of this, the Old Lion's mood immediately improved.

"Haha."

Amidst his laughter, the Old Lion stood up.

He pulled out a small Human Puppet from his pocket and tossed it onto the original chair.

The next moment, another Old Lion appeared.

This Human Puppet Old Lion rolled its eyes at the original Old Lion as soon as it appeared.

"What for?"

The blunt words were also tinged with a bit of disdain.

"I need to ask for your help with something."

The Old Lion said somewhat sheepishly.

"You're sneaking out again?"

Do you know that the last time you sneaked out, the entire Lion Palace almost exploded?

Also, is there a new store in Inner Bay?"

Initially, the Human Puppet Old Lion appeared quite righteous, but immediately became curious and eager.

"No!

I'm going to meet someone!

Someone I must see!"

The Old Lion shook his head, a bitter smile appearing on his face, causing the Human Puppet Old Lion's brow to furrow, knowing who he meant.

"Do you really have to go? We could..."

"I must go!"

The Old Lion cut off the Human Puppet Old Lion's words, his expression extremely serious, and the earnestness in his eyes even bore an aura of authority—a golden lion faintly appeared behind the Old Lion, and although it was sleeping with closed eyes, the entire Lion Palace trembled slightly.

"Alright! Alright!

You never listen to advice!

I'll try to buy you some time; you better go and come back quickly—I cannot guarantee what your precious sons might do if they find out you're gone."

Aware of the Old Lion's seriousness, the Human Puppet Old Lion immediately raised both hands.

But didn't forget to remind the Old Lion.

In response, the Old Lion smiled.

This master of Inner Bay spoke word by word—

"I'm looking forward to it!"

Chapter 750 Ignorant Touch II

Ainhars Territory, outside Port Pult.

A band of river pirates hid among the reeds by the riverbank, as Fizz chewed on dried loach and enviously gazed toward the concealed encampment in the distance—Fizz was well aware that it was the temporary camp of the 'Red Knights', which not only harbored many infamous river pirates but also an abundance of roasted meat and wine.

"I wonder if they spread honey on that roast meat?"

As Fizz spoke, he couldn't help but swallow his saliva.

Then, a chorus of swallowing sounds arose around him.

Many of the river pirates were crazily gulping down water while looking at the half-eaten piece of dried loach in Fizz's mouth, hoping the fullness brought by the water would temporarily make them forget their hunger.

This scene made the leader of the river pirates, Nisimi, frown.

Subconsciously, Nisimi wanted to scold his subordinates.

But then, the pirate leader immediately shut his mouth.

He thought about his current situation.

He was no longer the leader of a hundred river pirates.

The people he had at his disposal now barely amounted to the six in front of him.

Including himself, that was just seven people.

For river pirates, that was really as few as they come, but Nisimi was not disheartened. He believed that if this venture succeeded, he could quickly round up a new crew, and moreover, he would arm them all with muskets. By then, even if they encountered those nobles, they would stand a fighting chance.

As for the 'Slaughterer' Kmar, who led him to this sorry state?

'Just you wait!

I will sever your head!

You will not die, nor will I!

Every time he thought about that surprise ambush, Nisimi seethed with rage.

It was he who had targeted the prize first, and he had even abided by the rules, offering up a third of the cargo.

But what was the result?

That bastard 'Slaughterer' not only broke the rules but, after taking his goods, gave orders to shell his ship, sending it to the bottom of the river, slaughtering his men one by one, sparing not even those who surrendered.

If it hadn't been for good luck, Fizz and he would have died too.

However, an unexpected storm saved both him and Fizz.

Giving them the chance to start anew.

Even better, they stumbled upon a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity—

'Oriental'!

The Southern Lost Spirit Medium!

Rumors had it that the 'Oriental' was laden with countless treasures, any random ornament taken from it was made of pure gold, many even studded with gems.

If he got his hands on just one, he could rise again.

As for the Southern Lost Spirit Medium?

Although a big shot had offered a reward of 300,000 gold coins, Nisimi remained unmoved in the face of such a high bounty.

This pirate was all too aware of the terrifying creatures that lurked in a world unknown to common folk.

Waging battle against those monsters, no number of lives would be enough.

So, his plan was to fish in troubled waters.

Of course, he couldn't say that in front of his men.

"Since you all have agreed to acknowledge me as the boss, then I will definitely show you what is meant by..."

Pfft!

Amid the unique sound of a blade tearing through the air, a cold gleam swept across the pirate leader's neck.

His speech abruptly ended.

The pirates had no time to react before they saw their leader's head soaring into the sky.

The new members of the gang were scared stiff on the spot.

Fizz, however, shouted at the top of his lungs—

"He ambushed the boss!

Kill him, avenge the boss!"

The shout was thunderous, but his steps retreated.

It wasn't that Fizz lacked courage, but rather, Fizz had clearly seen who the attacker was...

No!

To put it precisely, Fizz had seen that the person was wielding twin swords.

In other territories, twin swords were merely a common type of weapon, but in Ainhars Territory, they held a different meaning.

It was well-known that the banner of the Marquess of Ainhars was a red background with twin swords.

Put simply, anyone using twin swords within Ainhars Territory was one of the Ainhars Family.

And outsiders?

Most were hanged for the offense of trespassing.

Fizz dared not confront a noble head-on.

However, the river pirate who had barely taken two strides immediately regretted it.

He saw a troop of horsemen.

The troop was not small in number, approximately thirty.

When had they appeared?

Fizz's mind was full of doubt, but he was soon drawn to the attire of the members of the troop.

Based on their clothing, the pirate could tell that most of them were soldiers, and the rest...

Nobles!

The extravagant accessories and the unique aura that set them apart from ordinary people allowed the pirate to confirm that the young people at the front of the group were nobles.

This river pirate did not know why these young nobles had appeared here, but instinctively, he cried out—

"Spare..."

Spurt!

A sword blade pierced through Fizz's neck and into his mouth, and then, with a twist of the longsword, half of Fizz's head fell to the ground.

Behind Fizz, a young noble with a youthful face sneered in disdain.

"Is this a river pirate?"

Not so impressive."

Afterward, the young noble looked towards the leading noble.

The similarity in their features, with a fifty percent resemblance, was enough to illustrate their blood relation.

Indeed, it was as such—

"Brother, is this the river pirate you spoke of?"

Lacking even a tiny bit of martial skill or secret techniques, and moreover, they are all cowards!"

While speaking, the youthful noble glanced over at Fizz's corpse.

"Burton, what you faced were merely the least of the river pirates, and yet, in a surprise attack, you almost let this man get away. Imagine what would happen if you faced river pirates like the 'Red Knights'.

Our father taught us to never be careless at any time."

The young noble said this while his gaze faintly swept across the lady riding beside him.

The lady had a beautiful face, but an outstanding figure that stood out remarkably. Even in loose hunting attire, her body shaped it as if it were a tight-fitting dress, especially when paired with her slightly squinted, slender eyes, which made Lori feel parched.

Then, the Marquis' Eldest Son of Ainhars thought about the dowry owned by the daughter of Viscount Windsor, and he vowed earnestly in his heart—

'This time, I must win over Windsor!'

Immediately, the Marquis' Eldest Son felt an even greater desire to show off.

However, the young noble told himself to be patient.

After all, that disgrace to the Ainhars Family, Kalal, was as good as exiled. Even if Windsor had some ties with him, she had already disassociated herself from those relations before.

No one else could pose a threat to him anymore.

So, he mustn't hurry.

He needed to take it slow.

Stick to the plan.

Feeling the gaze of everyone present converging on him after his recent words, the Marquis' Eldest Son continued to speak without delay—

"Do you know why I suddenly chose to go hunting today?"

As he spoke, the Marquis' Eldest Son flashed a mysterious smile.

This time, even Lady Windsor looked over.

Achieving his goal, the Marquis' Eldest Son, without any hesitation, immediately said.

"Because, I want to invite you to witness an exciting spectacle! 'Red Knight' versus the Southern Lost Spirit Medium!"

As soon as these words came out, the young nobility from the Ainhars Territory showed expressions of surprise.

The 'Red Knight' need not be mentioned, as being nobility within the Ainhars Territory, they were all too familiar with the name.

As for the Southern Lost Spirit Medium?

That had also been a frequent topic of conversation lately.

But how had the two come into contact and moreover were set to battle?

Seeing everyone's confusion, the Marquis' Eldest Son grew even more proud.

"All of this is, of course, thanks to my efforts—I had already arranged everything, for..."

As he elongated his speech, the surrounding crowd's confusion and curiosity turned into surprise and admiration, especially with Lady Windsor showing a trace of extraordinary interest in her eyes, which gave the Marquis' Eldest Son great satisfaction.

As for the admiration from his younger brother Burton?

The Marquis' Eldest Son did not see it.

The Marquis' Eldest Son surveyed the circle of young nobles from Ainhars Territory and continued to speak—

"For us to smoothly ascend to the stage of Ainhars!"