

Great Master 75

Chapter 75: Late Night Invitation

In the dead of night, the doorbell at No. 2 Cork Street was rung.

Ding-dong!

The crisp sound roused Pendragon, who had just eaten four small dried fish, a basin of chicken baked feed, and drank a bowl of water, lifting his head from the cat's nest.

However, soon under Arthur's caress, he began to purr contentedly and buried his head again to continue his deep slumber.

Just as Amanda had said, orange cats really are suitable for novice cat owners.

At least when Pendragon returned home, he didn't go bouncing around. He simply ate, ate, ate, and then slept.

Of course, could it be because his hind leg hadn't fully healed?

But whatever the reason, Arthur was now experiencing considerable joy in raising a cat.

And what could be more delightful than stroking a cat?

Naturally, it's when the stroked cat has a good temper and is affectionate.

With a faint smile playing at the corners of his mouth, Arthur went to the door.

Outside, stood Marinda.

Wearing a deerstalker cap, clenching a smoking pipe between her teeth, and dressed in a khaki trench coat, Marinda said directly upon seeing Arthur, "You better have a cat that can do somersaults, or else, hmph."

Her voice was neither loud nor low.

Loud enough for the neighbors awoken by the doorbell to hear.

After hearing this somewhat coquettish statement, these disturbed neighbors grumbled and immediately turned over to continue their sleep.

When Marinda entered No. 2 Cork Street and the door closed behind her, the lady's expression returned to normal as she made her way straight to the Spirit Medium Parlor.

"Eh?"

"You really got a cat?"

The lady looked at Pendragon with surprise, then her eyes filled with anticipation, but it soon turned to disappointment.

Because she saw Pendragon's injured hind leg.

"Did you really expect a cat to do somersaults?"

Arthur sat down behind the desk, asking in surprise.

To think Marinda didn't dislike cats was quite a surprise to Arthur, and now she genuinely hoped the cat could do somersaults?

If he hadn't seen that the coachman outside was Edwin, Arthur would have thought her an imposter.

After all, in Arthur's mind, Marinda's desire for control was inherently in conflict with the unpredictability of cats.

"Seeing a cat do a somersault brings good luck, my mother always said that," Marinda played with Pendragon a bit, then, after being ignored by the deeply asleep Pendragon, she couldn't help but sigh.

Then, the lady took a seat opposite Arthur—on the same chair she occupied the first time she was in the parlor—and continued to ask.

"Is it because of what happened to Anxi and Jesse?"

"Yes."

Arthur wasn't surprised that Marinda knew of the afternoon's events at 'Amanda's Cat's Best Friend Home.'

With her dealings in South Los, it would be hard to keep such a death a secret from her.

On the contrary, it would have been odd if she hadn't known.

Arthur detailed the events of the afternoon to Marinda as thoroughly as possible.

The lady nodded, her eyes fixed on Arthur, waiting for him to state his ultimate purpose.

Without beating around the bush, Arthur spoke—

"Anxi and Jesse attended your salon, didn't they?"

"Their parents are wealthy merchants, naturally, they qualify for an invitation!"

"Ilena is a maid in your salon, isn't she?"

"Yes."

"If I'm not mistaken, Litter also attended your salon, along with a coach named Dexi."

"Correct, as the third-place winner of the previous Swordsmanship Competition, Litter was invited and qualified to bring someone along to the salon."

"What about Police Chief Lauke? Given his status, he's surely a regular at your salon, right?"

"Yes!"

As Arthur and Marinda conversed, with each question and answer, Arthur's most concerning issue came to light.

As this exchange unfolded, Marinda took out her pipe, lit it, tucked it into her mouth, and continued to watch Arthur.

She knew Arthur hadn't finished speaking.

Indeed, he had not.

Arthur continued to ask.

"None of the people hunted down by Police Chief Lauke under the guise of the 'Axe Murderer' were people you disliked or directly your competitors, right?"

Saying this, Arthur also looked at Marinda.

Their eyes met, and with the candlelight flickering, they both smiled.

Marinda took a deep puff of smoke and exhaled forcefully.

"No."

"If I wanted to kill someone, I would be more direct," the lady said, speaking in a way that was eerily calm.

Arthur nodded in agreement.

The 'Axe Murderer's style was too crude, far from Marinda's finesse.

Of course, it also lacked the necessary planning.

It was precisely because Arthur recognized this point that he invited Marinda over tonight, and, without any hesitation, asked about the words spoken just moments ago.

"Thank you for your honesty."

Arthur sat there, leaning forward slightly.

Witnessing the utterly insincere bow from her partner, Marinda rudely rolled her eyes, muttering under her breath, "After killing Lauke, I helped you clean up quite a mess. Shouldn't you be a bit more sincere?"

Hearing these words, Arthur laughed.

Because he knew this was Marinda's way of bargaining.

From the string of conversations just now, Marinda had realized that someone was causing trouble in her salon.

And from the current bargaining, he had come to understand Marinda's 'dire straits.'

'The Countess is asking for more than I anticipated!'

There were not many things that could put Marinda in 'dire straits.'

Managing Baron Kemir's title was one of them.

But what did that have to do with him, a so-called 'poor Spirit Medium'?

Faced with Marinda, a 'wealthy tycoon,' naturally he could not afford what was called generosity.

So—

"Helping me is helping you!"

"But a 'Spirit Medium's' money cannot be owed."

Arthur said with utmost seriousness.

He would not deny the help Marinda had given him, just as he wouldn't deny the benefits Marinda had gained from it, as well as the corresponding reward he expected to receive.

"Fine, what do you want?"

"Would items from the Mystic Side do?"

Without an alternative, Marinda nodded her head reluctantly.

"Of course!"

"I want Sunflower, Moon Grass, Golden Acorn, Vampire Fang—the kind you're thinking of."

Arthur began listing off a string of item names.

Aside from concocting 'Talin's Potion,' Moon Grass could also be used in a variety of rituals, Sunflower was essential for the incomplete 'Griffin Training Method,' and Vampire Fangs were necessary for learning the secret technique 'Touch of the Vampire.'

Of course, none of that mattered.

These items from the Mystic Side were all just to 'Hide' the Golden Acorn—a cover that would ultimately be seen through by Marinda.

When Marinda finally confirmed that he truly desired the Golden Acorn, with the proof from Pendragon, she would naturally guess that it had something to do with 'the Cat.'

Or Pendragon might lead her to think even more.

But either way, this was a handle he was giving to Marinda.

A handle that could temporarily set Marinda's mind at ease.

A handle that would enable him to continually acquire knowledge about the 'Cat's Nest,' while also concealing what he truly wanted to hide.

And what he truly wanted to hide was—

'The Serpent'!

It was the Talent 'Dark Serpent. Cripple'!

Faced with Marinda, Arthur's reason and intuition split into the factions of the radical and the conservative.

His reason, as the radical, advised Arthur to hold back.

Intuition?

Intuition thought reason was too conservative.

Therefore, Arthur believed he needed to keep a card up his sleeve.

And what could be more suitable than 'The Serpent'?

After all, a serpent in the Shadows is the most lethal!

"Hah, why don't you just rob someone?"

"Do you know how much Sunflower and Moon Grass cost on the market right now?"

Marinda let out a cold laugh, smoke billowing out of her nostrils.

The lady used this manner to express her anger, but then, the lady continued, "There's nothing I can do about the Golden Acorns, they're in Lord Doyle's Oak Manor, his unique property, but I can give you a Vampire Fang—that's also commensurate with the corresponding reward, you know its worth isn't low."

Arthur did not argue.

With Graham's diary in hand, he was well aware of the value of these items from the Mystic Side.

And in his heart, Arthur took note of Lord Doyle and Oak Manor.

In the memories of his predecessor, there was also some information about Lord Doyle and Oak Manor—the Noble who had declared his entire family's Secrecy in order to please the Earl of South Los.

So, Arthur did not believe for a moment that Marinda could not get the Golden Acorn.

It was simply a matter of insufficient leverage.

And in the next moment—

The lady continued to speak.

"However, if you're willing to do me a favor, Sunflower, Moon Grass, Golden Acorn, Vampire Fang, I can give them all to you as a reward!"

With that, the lady looked at Arthur with a smile brimming with ill intent.

That sinister smile immediately made Arthur guess what the other party wanted to do.

Suddenly, Arthur curled his lip.

"Not enough. You'll have to add money!"