

Great Master 771

Chapter 771: Burning V

Inside the tent carriage pulled by two worn-out horses, Ainhars cradled his Twin Swords and was dozing off, while Oula opposite him was also napping. Both of them were covered in scrapes, but the wounds on Ainhars' back were especially deep and bone-deep, nearly severing the young Demon Hunter in half.

Similarly, Windsor and Elizabeth sat shoulder-to-shoulder at the front of the carriage, where the coachman would usually be.

Both of them were also injured.

But that did not stop them from whispering and chatting softly.

From time to time, a crisp bout of laughter erupted.

It was Elizabeth's laughter.

Under the moonlight, her skin was so pale it seemed to glow, like an elf beneath the moon, particularly when she lowered her head to smile, drawing Windsor's gaze irresistibly.

Of course, this was very cruel for the single men Ainhars and Oula.

"Hey, hey, hey, I'm severely injured here!

Is this right?"

Ainhars protested vehemently.

"Why don't you two just get married already?"

Oula rolled his eyes in dissatisfaction as well.

However, this time, they were not met with the usual shy cover-ups from Windsor and Elizabeth.

Windsor took Elizabeth by the hand, they gazed at each other with eyes brimming with tangible affection and focus, and their faces were filled with the smiles of bliss.

"Wait a second!"

"You can't be serious?!"

Ainhars and Oula immediately sat up straight.

Even though it hurt to move their injuries, causing them to grimace, Ainhars couldn't hide his surprise—

"You two? You two?"

"We are planning to get married!"

Windsor and Elizabeth said.

Ainhars was stunned.

Oula's mouth fell open in shock.

About a few seconds later, Oula lay back down.

"I knew there was something up with you two, from the first time I saw you!"

"Yeah!

Who blushes upon first meeting, huh?

Damn it!

So Windsor, who claimed he'd die alone, is getting married, while I'm still single!"

Ainhars grumbled.

But, in the next moment—

"Congratulations!"

Ainhars offered his sincere blessings.

Oula reached into his pocket and tossed his wallet to Windsor.

"Here's all my savings, should be enough for a wedding."

"You? With mine added, maybe!"

Ainhars said with disdain, and then threw his own wallet over as well.

The life of a Demon Hunter in those times wasn't considered wealthy, but it was certainly much better than that of the average civilian, at least for the four young Demon Hunters who had just completed an excellent campaign, money was not in short supply.

Therefore, the wedding was well-organized.

There were roast meats, honey, white bread, and barley beer.

There was also music, flowers, and dancing.

Of course, most importantly, there were the blessings of friends and elders.

At the Windsor family farm, everyone happily spent a week.

As friends and elders departed, the farm grew quiet, but Ainhars and Oula did not leave—

'We are lifelong friends, how could we part?'

'Your children will be my most beloved disciples.'

And so, with a phrase each, Ainhars and Oula set their future path.

At least, that was their belief at the time.

They thought that, like most Demon Hunter families, they would guard this land until old age, when they would sit in front of the fireplace and tell their descendants of their glorious youth.

Of course, a bit of boasting was necessary.

Otherwise, how could they highlight their greatness?

Oula had even concocted a story about battling the Abyssal Lord alone.

Everything was beautiful.

Until—

Ainhars, Oula, and Windsor had completed another campaign, and hurried back to the farm overnight, but as soon as they arrived, they sensed something was wrong.

The farm had been attacked.

Everywhere were severed limbs and shriveled corpses.

Elizabeth, who had just given birth, was missing.

The child was placed in their shelter.

When they opened the shelter, the child was still fast asleep.

But Elizabeth's figure was still nowhere to be seen.

Three anxious individuals began to search and inquire.

In the end, they confirmed that members of the Bloodline Clan had passed by that afternoon.

As masters of this land, members of the Bloodline Clan were arrogant.

And even more so...

cruel.

It was well-known that an occasional 'Bloody Rite' was not out of the ordinary. Through the inquiries of the three, it was further confirmed that the incident at the farm was indeed the handiwork of the Bloodline Clan.

At this moment, what more was there to say?

Revenge!

The Demon Hunters' revenge began!

The three Demon Hunters started their frenzied quest for revenge against the Bloodline Clan.

Not only was the member who treated the farm with a 'Bloody Rite' flayed by the three of them, but several direct descendants of the Bloodline Clan also underwent their impalement punishment.

However, Elizabeth was not found.

Viscount Windsor did not believe that Elizabeth was dead.

Ainhars and Oula didn't believe it either.

The three continued their search.

They would never give up.

Until—

She, Elizabeth, appeared before Windsor in the form of Haibo, a member of the Bloodline Clan, Windsor believed it was a deceit.

She, there was some deceit.

But when she transformed into him, there was none.

He faced Windsor with the utmost sincerity.

He wished for Windsor to continue living on with him.

For this, he could share his ritual.

Yet, what he received was Windsor's sword.

A sword smeared with the blood of his son.

This sword subjected him to unprecedented backlash.

The ignited Divine Fire was extinguished in an instant by a great deal.

The authority he wielded was shattered.

His rationality was obliterated by rage at that moment.

He struck back and killed Windsor.

With the death of Windsor, an important part of the ritual, the authority completely dissipated, but the soon to be extinguished Divine Fire was rekindled, assisting him in a different form to resist the backlash.

No!

More accurately, those backlashes were expected curses.

Since they were expected, naturally, he had his ways.

Moreover, he did not wish to die.

He still had unfinished business.

Therefore, he became it.

He resisted the curse in its form.

It became a stone statue.

In the ensuing years, while it accepted the worship and faith of those ignorant people, relying on the 'Power of Faith' to wear down the power of the curse, it also considered how to weaken or even eradicate its 'Deadly Peril' — it was clear to it that as long as it lived, the pursuit from certain individuals would never cease.

Therefore, it endured more of the 'Regicide Curse', yet narrowed the scope of 'Deadly Peril': from any weapon contaminated with the blood of its descendants causing it harm, to the blood of female descendants within five generations causing it fatal injury.

At the same time, any blood of non-female descendants would bring deadly injury to the blood's possessor.

Regarding such a distortion, it had no further certainty.

However, upon seeing this generation's Viscount Windsor, it knew it had succeeded.

The other was clearly a man, yet dressed in a bright red dress, this was a warning of his "Spirituality"!

That "Spirituality" offered him ample hints!

Unfortunately, he understood nothing at all!

He only knew to indulge in so-called love!

Just like an animal following its instincts!

Indeed—

Such ignorance!

With a sigh in his heart, the Blood Drinker Haibo started to speak with a smile.

"A bunch of fools as stupid as pigs!

How could I possibly be harmed by the same method a second time!"

The next moment, a scarlet explosion surged skywards.

The already 'Ascend Step' Viscount Windsor burst open instantly, turning into a sky full of scarlet.

Moreover, the Blood Drinker Haibo was utilizing this red tinge.

Chapter 772: Burning VI

Unexpected!

A shocking turn of events!

For the Marquess of Ainhars at this moment, that was exactly the case.

Harvest, joy, anticipation.

In an instant, all turned into...

Surprise!

When Viscount Windsor exploded into a mist of blood, the Marquess didn't even think before drawing his Twin Swords, as the fervent glow appeared once again.

Twin Sword Slash + Slash of Vanquishing Evil!

Layer upon layer.

Incessant empowerment.

Not aimed at 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

But at the falling mist of blood.

The Marquess was well aware of an 'Ascend Steper's' power.

Especially this type of 'Blood Burst' form, which was even more terrifying.

Because—

That was a secret technique of the Bloodline Clan.

A normal 'Blood Burst' was already difficult to guard against.

And with an 'Ascend Steper' as the trigger, it was simply fearsome.

Up to now, the Marquess had no idea how 'Blood Drinker' managed to detonate Viscount Windsor, but he knew that if he didn't stop the blood mist from descending, he was doomed.

"You all retreat!"

"Take that fool with you!"

The Marquess's Twin Swords brought forth one Slash of Vanquishing Evil after another as he spoke quickly.

Under an 'Ascend Steper's' 'Blood Burst,' the subordinates in front of him wouldn't be of any help, but rather a burden; once they were contaminated by the blood mist, these subordinates would become 'nourishment' for the blood mist, and thereafter, it would only amplify the blood mist.

This was something the Marquess of Ainhars definitely didn't want to see.

Especially that fool, Count Bernaken.

Once he became 'nourishment' for the blood mist.

He, would truly be doomed.

Hearing the words of the Marquis, three Barons and four Lords immediately took action.

The three Barons turned tail and ran, while the four Lords went to pick up Count Bernaken.

However, unexpectedly, the Old Earl, who was already like a flickering candle in the wind, managed to stand up again.

The Old Earl looked at the Marquess of Ainhars, a hint of perplexity appearing in his eyes—

'Master Zeppelin, why should we tolerate the Ainhars Family?'

'My master Oula was friends with the ancestors of the Ainhars Family.'

'But even so, the Ainhars Family has gone too far.'

'Yet, I trust Master Oula wouldn't choose friends poorly, even if the descendants of the Ainhars Family seem like scoundrels, I believe, since they have managed to cultivate the Demon Hunter techniques passed down to such an extent, they must have their own conviction.'

'But, Master...'

'Alright, alright, you're upset today, let's go have grilled fish, Master! Consider it a celebration of your completed trial!'

That conversation happened one afternoon after he had completed a trial.

He didn't understand his master's words at that time.

And didn't for decades afterward.

He thought his master was wrong.

The people of the Ainhars Family were talented alright, but they were all scoundrels.

Especially his friend, the current Marquess of Ainhars.

He was firm in his belief.

That's why he remained in Ainhars.

He was watching that scoundrel of the Ainhars, ready to strike him down directly if he ever did anything outrageous.

He thought that time would come soon.

But so much time had passed, and he hadn't noticed.

Until now—

He saw it.

Yet he was full of doubts.

"Why aren't you running?"

The Old Earl asked the Marquess of Ainhars.

With his strength and secret techniques, escaping wouldn't be difficult.

Perhaps some price would have to be paid, but it was bearable; to flee first and then plan, wasn't that the most common approach of the nobles?

Why wasn't this scoundrel from Ainhars fleeing?

The Old Earl was puzzled.

"Run?

This is Ainhars Territory!

I am the Marquess of Ainhars!

Why would I run?"

The Marquess of Ainhars kept swinging his sword, unleashing the Slash of Vanquishing Evil to consume the blood mist, all the while retorting with a question of his own.

The sword cut through the air with a thunderous roar.

The Marquess of Ainhars wore an expression of cold indifference, an attitude of it being the most natural thing in the world.

It also carried a habitual persistence.

Of course, the words still held contempt for the Old Earl.

This scorn, the Old Earl could hear it, and he could see it.

As always, the Old Earl also scorned the disdain belonging to the Marquess of Ainhars.

He looked down on him.

And he?

Despised him.

The extreme contempt at that moment, once again collided.

But it was not the same as the past disagreements that ended unhappily.

What was there was...

A glint of light.

The Old Earl saw it.

'Teacher, is this what you meant by enlightenment?

Indeed...

Everyone from the Ainhars Family turns out to be a bastard!'

Thinking quietly to himself, the Old Earl, who had already burned his own flesh to the point of looking inhuman, let out a hearty laugh.

"While alive, one has everything.

In death, one has nothing.

However, there are always some things more important than death."

The Old Earl said and ignited once more.

Previously, what burned was flesh and blood.

This time, what burned were his organs, bones, and even...

The soul!

Boom!

Flames shot up into the sky, and the power of the Old Earl's Slash of Vanquishing Evil was much greater than that of the Marquess of Ainhars, especially under the influence of Burning Soul, which dispelled much of the blood fog with a single strike.

And this was not the Old Earl's full-strength blow.

He had only used a third of his power in that moment.

The remaining two-thirds of his power?

A portion of it, the Old Earl slashed again at 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

The statue of 'Blood Drinker' Haibo shattered once more.

This infuriated 'Blood Drinker' Haibo, who considered himself to have a sure victory, and he roared in anger.

"Damn it! Bastard!"

You are the descendant of Oula!"

Feeling the familiar technique, 'Blood Drinker' Haibo confirmed the Old Earl's identity.

But the Old Earl did not bother with the mistake in the other's words.

His teacher, Zeppelin, was the one who was Oula Master's disciple.

He was merely the grand-disciple of Master Oula.

Although he bore the title of 'Master,' he...

Was not worthy at all!

Indecisive, greedy for wealth and pleasure, lazy and gluttonous.

How could he be worthy of the title of Master?

Sensing the last bit of power within him, the Old Earl appeared beside the Marquis of Ainhars and placed his hand on the noble's shoulder.

"This is my final power, all to you!

'Demon Hunter's Path,' I open it for you once again!

Now, you are the grandmaster of the South County Demon Hunters!"

As he spoke, the Old Earl's lips curled up.

As if he had discovered something most amusing.

The Marquis of Ainhars had tried to dodge when the Old Earl appeared beside him, but the Old Earl was too fast, leaving no chance to evade.

The Marquis distinctly felt the power unique to the Demon Hunter 'Ascend Steper' rapidly surging into his 'Sword Body.'

But it did not destroy his 'Sword Body.'

Instead, it pulled his 'Sword Body' back onto the path he once followed.

'Demon Hunter's Path'!

No!

It wasn't some convoluted return, but rather a leap off the current dead-end and onto the spacious 'Demon Hunter's Path,' and furthermore, it pushed him to take another step forward.

This was precisely what the Marquis of Ainhars had long yearned to achieve through the blood of 'Blood Drinker.'

And now, it was achieved.

However, the Marquis of Ainhars couldn't feel happy.

He did not need this kind of charity.

The Marquis glared at the Old Earl.

And the Old Earl was chuckling—

"Unsatisfied? Hit me then!"

But just as the words fell, the Old Earl vanished into thin air.

Left behind was only the Marquis of Ainhars, who had just raised his hand but had yet to swing it down.

Chapter 773 Master's Words I

Absurd!

As the Marquess of Ainhars raised his arm, intending to punch Count Bernaken, the other party evaporated into thin air, filling the Marquess's heart with a sense of absurdity.

He couldn't believe that his already failed plan had succeeded once more.

Nor could he believe that it had succeeded in this way.

His relationship with Bernaken was complex.

But overall, both parties were wary, alert, and strategizing against each other.

They could certainly be called enemies.

This, he was sure of.

He also believed that Bernaken could confirm this as well.

After all, over the years, both sides always found joy in each other's failures.

But...

Why would this bastard help him at this time?

The Marquess of Ainhars was puzzled.

The Marquis couldn't understand it.

Even less comprehensible to the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

Everything was supposed to go as it had planned.

It had already escaped successfully and entered the deeper woods to continue fighting against the 'Curse' with time until it fully recovered.

But why!

Why!

It shattered again!

This shattering, unexpected and outside the plan, was unacceptable to the proud 'Blood Drinker'.

Both psychologically unacceptable.

And physiologically unacceptable.

The former made it feel manipulated.

As for the latter?

Feeling the 'Curse' becoming powerful again due to its fracture, this 'Blood Drinker' was enraged.

If before it needed a hundred years to erode this 'Curse'.

Now, it needed more than just time!

It also needed to sacrifice some 'power'.

This was something the 'Blood Drinker' could not accept no matter what.

Its power, gained through untold hardships, was also key to its future plans, how could it give it up at this moment.

Thinking of this, the 'Blood Drinker' completely changed its plan.

It needed to ensure 'the integrity of its own power'.

Then it would sacrifice...

Its body!

The next moment, the fragments of the stone statue began to disperse.

"Be careful!"

The Marquess of Ainhars instantly noticed this change, shouting aloud while locking onto the 'Blood Drinker' with 'Sword Body'.

In just an instant, the Marquis had locked onto his opponent.

But, the Twin Swords couldn't be swung.

Because—

Darnel!

'Blood Drinker' Haibo appeared within the body of Lord Darnel.

This noble, who still stood at the upper string position during the retreat, acting as the rear guard, was the closest to the battlefield.

Naturally, he was also the first target of the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

In the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo's mind, a character who hadn't even reached the 'Ascend Step' would be the easiest to control.

It wouldn't need much time, just a moment, and it could become Darnel.

But, contrary to the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo's expectations.

The not-strong Darnel unexpectedly had a resilience far beyond imagination.

'I am Darnel!'

'I am a knight!'

'I am a lord!'

'I possess true honor!'

'I am one of the Four Heroes of Ainhars Territory!'

A series of messages, which seemed utterly ridiculous to the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo, actually continuously assaulted its will—though it seemed like a futile effort in its eyes.

But it did block it a bit.

Causing what was supposed to be a moment of control, to become two moments.

The Marquess of Ainhars had made a discovery.

However, when the Marquess of Ainhars did not instantly execute the Twin Sword Slash, the "Blood Drinker," using Darnel's voice, laughed—

"Hahaha, Marquess of Ainhars, my dear Marquis, why has your sword become so weak?

Where is the noble composure that befits you?

As a noble, at this moment, you must consider the bigger picture!

Or is it that?

You have embraced the 'Legacy of the Demon Hunter' and become like the Demon Hunters once again?

Turning tiresome and always on the verge of tears?"

Lord Darnel's face turned pale at this moment.

It could even be described as grim.

His words were filled with venom.

Upon sensing the Marquess of Ainhars' hesitation, it suddenly conceived a bold idea.

It, wanted the Marquess of Ainhars' body.

It had abandoned its original body to ensure the 'integrity of the power,' but the 'power' was infinitely weakened, only capable of reaching the level of the possessor.

Simply put, if it resided within a person of Arcana Level, it would be of Arcana Level.

If it was Entry Level, then it would be Entry Level.

But if it was an 'Ascend Steper'...

Then it would be an 'Ascend Stepper'!

Although the 'power' could grow strong again, the time required was quite bothersome for this 'Blood Drinker.'

If it could save some time, the 'Blood Drinker' would naturally be pleased.

However, it was well aware of the strength of the 'Ascend Stepper.'

It certainly would not choose lightly.

But...

What if the 'Ascend Stepper's' mind showed a flaw?

That would be a heaven-sent opportunity!

At this thought, a sinister smile appeared on the face of the 'Blood Drinker.'

The next moment this sneer appeared—

Bang bang bang bang!

Yakaz, Lalia, Leondsey, along with Darnel controlled by the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo, all exploded simultaneously.

There was no effective resistance.

The difference in strength was too great.

Compared to the control through possession that could at least delay them for a moment by their will,

The four under the 'Ascend Step Level Descendant Blood Mist,' facing an extremely close, tenfold amplified 'Blood Burst,' had no way to withstand it and were turned into blood mist with a series of explosions, merging into the prior 'Descendant Blood Mist.'

The four champions of Ainhars Territory, all killed in combat.

Just like the previous generation of champions.

But such deaths were far from over.

Baron Tami, who was about to escape out of the range of the blood mist, suddenly turned pale and grim.

This baron forcefully grabbed Kama and Baron Harlan.

Blood Reversal!

Controlling the blood flow of the two barons in reverse using the secret technique of the Bloodline Clan, he rendered them powerless to resist. While perusing Baron Tami's memories, the 'Blood Drinker' suddenly stumbled upon some shocking revelations.

And these revelations were exactly what it was looking for.

Having had the earlier idea of 'wanting the Marquis of Ainhars' body,' it firmly believed it could find something in the noble's closest attendants that would truly shake him.

Indeed, it did.

Therefore, it did not hesitate to feign surprise—

"Eh?!"

So, it's like that?

Your two sons aren't actually yours by birth?

But secretly adopted by you?"

The tone of astonishment was filled with exaggerated amazement.

"Shut up!"

The Marquis of Ainhars shouted loudly.

The Marquis used this to mask the secret in his heart.

But the more he did so, the less the 'Blood Drinker' was going to let the Marquis have his way.

The exclamation continued—

"In your youth, to further advance the 'Sword Body' Awakening, you recklessly sought to improve the 'Twin Sword Slash,' and then...

You actually lost a man's essential capability!"

Chapter 774 Master's Words II

Piercing!

The Baron Tami's cry of surprise was so piercing!

The Marquess of Ainhars instinctively executed a Twin Sword Slash.

But—

The blades stopped one inch away from Baron Tami's head.

The receding sword wind rustled the Baron's hair and clothes.

In that whistling sound, the 'Blood Drinker' laughed with unrestrained glee, it knew it had won again this time.

Humans have weaknesses.

Once you grasp those weaknesses...

You are sure to win!

Without the slightest pause, the 'Blood Drinker' forced Baron Tami's arms to thrust forward powerfully.

Thud, thud!

Kama and Baron Harlan's bodies were impaled on the Marquis's Twin Swords.

The two Barons' eyes were wide open, filled with disbelief.

Clearly, these two had contemplated their own deaths.

Only, they never imagined that they would die at the hands of the Marquess of Ainhars.

Instinctively, the two men opened their mouths wanting to say something, but with a twist of the 'Blood Drinker's' arms behind them, their bodies were split in two, leaving no last words.

Watching this scene, the Marquess of Ainhars's facial muscles twitched.

And the 'Blood Drinker' laughed even more joyously—

"Death always brings me pleasure.

But meaningless death is irritating.

Only death that comes with the suffering of the living excites me!

Marquis of Ainhars, do you know?

Your ancestors also once faced a choice as painful as yours."

The 'Blood Drinker's' voice began to take on a playful tone.

The Marquis's pupils shook violently.

The Marquis wanted to swing his sword down and stop such words.

But looking at Tami's face, the Marquis found his sword couldn't swing down—he hesitated like any normal person would.

Just like his despised father.

In his view, it was because his father's sword wasn't fast enough, nor ruthless enough, that he lost to the Old Lion of Inner Bay's father.

Therefore, his sword had to be faster and more ruthless than his father's.

And indeed, he had achieved that.

Though it came at a cost.

But what's that in comparison to the result?

Children?

It's the same if they come from a collateral adoption.

They are all of the Ainhars bloodline.

As long as he doesn't fall.

Everything can continue.

Besides, he had succeeded.

Only...

Why couldn't his sword, now fast and ruthless enough, not swing down?

"Bernaken, is it you?

Are you the one behind this?

Come out!

Take back your power!

I have my own power!

I don't want yours!"

The Marquis of Ainhars roared.

In response to such a roar, the 'Blood Drinker', using Baron Tami's body, revealed a smiling face, and the voice was even softer—

"My dear Marquis, have you ever heard a saying?

Power can change a person!

Don't deny it, it's true!"

Standing before the Marquis of Ainhars's sword blade, the 'Blood Drinker' spoke leisurely.

"Every kind of power has its own traits.

And when these traits reach their pinnacle, they become the path."

Only those whose traits are highly compatible can qualify to walk the path represented by that power.

So, what about the opposite?

Having accepted the "Demon Hunter's Path", have you...

...been influenced by the "Demon Hunter's Path"?"

"Blood Drinker" said half-truthfully.

Compatibility does indeed make things easier.

The choice of power can truly influence one's personality.

But,

The essence will not change!

So-called change?

It is merely an excuse.

And now, "Blood Drinker" was giving the Marquess of Ainhars an excuse—an excuse that would allow it to successfully seize the other's body.

"Blood Drinker" sensed the chaos within the Marquess of Ainhars' spirituality, the abnormal beating of his heart, and a smile crept into its heart.

Although compared with those bizarre beings that peep from the shadows into the depths of fear in others' hearts to disturb their spirituality and achieve their predatory goals, its methods were certainly inferior, but compared to those bizarre beings that follow their instincts, it knew how to choose better.

It knew which words could better breach the opponent's mental defenses.

Rather than relying on luck.

After all, the things people fear the most vary from moment to moment.

Some people have a strong love for various horror stories and can calmly comb through the logical points while being too scared to walk at night, turning pale and screaming at any little noise.

There are also those who are well-built, able to bench press 100kg, yet fall to their knees at the mention of "I'm the boss of Shu Road" in fear.

At that moment, in that instant, what they fear is truly different.

The former might still be somewhat effective.

But what about the latter?

To those bizarre beings from the shadows, it is incomprehensible why, even as they punch and kick, their prey's fear rapidly diminishes—a abnormality.

But "Blood Drinker" doesn't need such things.

It captures everything.

It confirms its opportunity.

Then it crashed directly onto the sword of the Marquess of Ainhars.

"Do you feel like even breathing has become difficult now?

Is your heart hurting?

Your 'Sword Body' has stopped, right?"

Baron Tami, hanging on the blade, was spitting fresh blood, but this did not stop "Blood Drinker" from using this fact to add insult to injury to the Marquess of Ainhars' psyche.

"I..."

"My Lord, save me."

The Marquess of Ainhars' instinctive rebuttal was interrupted by Baron Tami's words.

At this moment, Baron Tami's face was pale from blood loss, but the gloominess was gone.

This time, Baron Tami was truly Baron Tami.

Having confirmed this, the Marquess of Ainhars immediately attempted to lay Baron Tami down, intending to turn him on his side and plug the wound with a healing potion.

But "Blood Drinker" would not allow his wishes to be fulfilled.

Just as Baron Tami had been laid down—

Bang!

Baron Tami's body burst open.

Amidst the spray of blood that splattered the face of the Marquess of Ainhars,

the warm touch was accompanied by the voice of "Blood Drinker" echoing by the Marquis' ear.

"You can't save anything!"

"You can't change anything!"

The two sentences stabbed into the heart of the Marquess of Ainhars like knives.

The opportunity "Blood Drinker" was waiting for had arrived.

Without hesitation, "Blood Drinker" entered the body of the Marquess of Ainhars and launched an attack on his consciousness.

"Blood Drinker" was confident that with its proficiency, even fighting on an away ground, it could still kill the Marquis' consciousness.

However, what it did not realize was that while it was waiting for an opportunity,

someone else was also waiting for an opportunity.

It regarded the Marquess of Ainhars as its prey.

Yet that person considered it the prey.

Arthur emerged from the shadows from one side, looking at the Marquess of Ainhars who was frozen in place, and touched his own throat.

The next moment, the highest-level "Noise Technique" perfectly imitated the voice of Lord Darnel—

"My Lord, it is my honor to follow you!"

Chapter 775: The Secret of Blood III

Darnel's voice was clear and sincere.

Even though it was emitted by Arthur through the "Noise Technique," a Level 5 "Noise Technique" was already perfect at mimicking this lord.

Of course, not just this lord.

There were also Yakaz, Lalia, and Leondsey—three lords—

"My lord, to die on the battlefield is my long-cherished wish."

"My lord, the fault is not yours."

"My lord, please grasp the sword in your hand."

The voices of these three lords appeared one by one.

Though a Level 5 "Noise Technique" has a limit of three recorded voices, Arthur did not believe it impacted the current situation, as eliminating one after use was possible.

In fact, when he saw the immobilized Marquess of Ainhars, Arthur had to hold himself back from acting rashly.

He was all too eager to have Kalal, who had sworn loyalty to him, inherit the Ainhars Territory.

Both sons of the marquis had already died.

If this marquis also died, then Kalal, as his nephew, would face no obstruction.

However, Arthur's reason told him to be cautious.

The temptation was great, but so was the danger.

Watching everything through the eyes of a crow, the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium was subconsciously concerned about Count Bernaken.

Undoubtedly, this old earl was admirable.

He had burned his flesh and then his soul.

Even using his soul as guidance, he had returned the Marquess of Ainhars to the 'Demon Hunter's Path' and had made him the 'Master Demon Hunter' of South County.

All of these were commendable.

Arthur could tell that the old earl might have been a bit impulsive.

But this did not hinder the old earl from being thoroughly prepared—simply put, the old earl's initial target was probably not the Marquess of Ainhars but someone like the marquis's disciples or apprentices. However, the sudden appearance of the 'Blood Drinker' had disrupted all plans, forcing the old earl to choose the Marquess of Ainhars.

As his strength increased and his understanding of the mystic side deepened, Arthur did not believe that such 'guidance by the soul' could be easily achieved.

It certainly required long-term preparation and many conditions.

So, the recent scene was this: the target had changed, but the previous preparations had not!

And within those preparations, could there be contingency plans?

For example: protective measures just in case.

After all, the old earl wouldn't want his heir to perish halfway, would he?

Therefore, Arthur was exceedingly cautious.

He chose an extremely 'flexible role' for his entrance.

In fact, the next moment, Arthur's caution proved its necessity—

A faint light appeared on the Marquess of Ainhars.

An illusory figure of the old earl, only the size of a palm, appeared.

"Southern Lost Spirit Medium?"

The figure confirmed Arthur's identity.

"Yes, Count."

Arthur responded with a smile.

The old earl's face immediately showed a hint of helplessness.

Because in Arthur's smile, the old earl saw that distinct cunning and greed typical of 'merchants.'

Clearly, this was not a young man who could be easily persuaded.

"I need some help,"

the old earl said candidly.

"I can see that.

Marquis..."

As Arthur spoke, he pointed at the Marquess of Ainhars, seeking confirmation from the old earl through his gaze regarding the marquis's current situation, to which the old earl promptly replied.

"Don't worry, Ainhars, that bastard, is tougher than you think when facing enemies. Especially since the concept of time inside is different from our understanding, allowing us a bit more leeway.

After all...

You gave him enough encouragement!"

With that, the old earl's look towards Arthur grew more complex.

Having brought the Marquis of Ainhars back to the "Demon Hunter's Path," the fallback plan that The Old Earl had prepared was activated—a tiny soul fragment.

Everything was as Arthur had speculated!

Just to be safe, The Old Earl had indeed made preparations!

This Elder Earl, infusing his own will into the "Slash of Vanquishing Evil," mixed with the soul secret techniques of the "Tower of Mist," concealed a safeguard on the "Demon Hunter's Path."

This was a special power.

When the heir, unharmed, stepped onto the "Fourth Order," he would appear, imparting more of the core knowledge of the "Demon Hunter" to him.

Next, he would help the heir advance further, swiftly moving onto the "Fifth Order."

If danger was encountered, the knowledge would be preserved, and this power would become a shield.

The Old Earl hoped his heir could safely continue to grow.

After all, his initial choice was Lynn.

This apprentice who had followed him for thirty years was truly a concern.

And when the target changed to the Marquis of Ainhars, such defensive measures naturally remained.

What The Old Earl did not expect, however, was that this defensive measure would be triggered so soon, and in such a perilous manner too.

The evil and cunning of the "Blood Drinker," Haibo, had once again exceeded his expectations.

Just like Arthur's arrival.

This Elder Earl had never thought that the Southern Lost Spirit Medium would appear here.

Although, he had already heard that the other party's ship had reached the vicinity of Port Pult.

Originally, he had planned to use his preserved strength to help the Marquis of Ainhars through the crisis, but Arthur's appearance gave The Old Earl a new idea.

It seemed possible to leverage Arthur's strength.

And his remaining power could better enable the Marquis of Ainhars to reach the "Fifth Order," a level he himself had never achieved.

After all, only upon reaching the "Fifth Order" could one be truly called a "Demigod"—not the shortcut-taking, hollow sham type, but the genuinely meaningful "Demigod."

A Demigod, sufficient to ensure the legacy of the "Demon Hunter" did not perish.

Thinking in his heart, The Old Earl glanced toward Arthur, who was displaying a humble smile—

"This is within my capabilities,

just some minor tricks of a 'Spirit Medium.'

If possible, I would very much like to assist you and the Marquis of Ainhars—in the 'Spirit Medium's fair way'!"

Arthur said, bowing slightly, continuing to exhibit his humility.

"'Spirit Medium's fair way'?"

The Old Earl inquired.

"Yes, a fair way—it means a fair trade!"

Arthur's smile grew even brighter.

And The Old Earl felt a headache coming on, if he had a head at this point.

Demon Hunters despise fair trades.

Even though they've been exchanging their work for wages all along.

It's known—

Only demons believe in fair trades.

Although this is an ancient saying from the Holy Era, as the sole Master Demon Hunter of South County, The Old Earl naturally knew it.

And maybe it was just an illusion, but looking at the cheerful Southern Lost Spirit Medium, it almost seemed like horns were growing on his head.

Almost subconsciously, The Old Earl detected evil.

No red appeared.

The Old Earl breathed a sigh of relief.

Good, it was not so.

But what The Old Earl didn't see was that in the viewpoint only Arthur could see, an active "Bluff" was faintly flickering.

That color...

dark red!

However, as a young, righteous, simple, and kind Southern Lost Spirit Medium, Arthur would never admit these things; he simply said softly.

"I am a Spirit Medium, so—

fair, fair, and still fair!"

Chapter 776: Secret of Blood IV

Facing Arthur's repeated emphasis, Count Bernaken became increasingly helpless.

It seemed to the old count as if he was looking at a lion with a big open mouth.

No!

To be precise, it was a lion with a fox's tail and a wide-open mouth.

Yet still, the old count proactively said—

"There are my twin swords!

They are both fine arcane weapons!

The steel sword can become blazing hot, infused with flames!

The silver sword can cause effective damage to ghosts and intangible bizarre things!"

The old count pointed with a gesture.

That was where his warhorse Carrot had lain.

But now, Carrot had long since vanished.

Clearly, the demon hunter's Carrot had escaped the category of normal creatures.

Arthur looked at the twin swords illuminated by the scarlet blood mist and felt no inner turmoil.

He was not short of sword-like weapons.

Especially just arcane level.

If they were hero level or of a higher grade, he might consider it, but for arcane level, he truly didn't need any.

His 'hands', although numerous, only 'Tyr's Caress' could truly complement the Hand of Void to be effective.

That was his "Sectumsempra" after all!

As for more?

It would be more appropriate to keep them displayed there.

"I do like weapons.

But I do not wish to change my sword.

It has accompanied me too much.

And you wouldn't want your sword to become just an exhibit in my study, right?"

Arthur tactfully declined.

"Take them, go find my apprentice Lynn, tell him everything that happened here, he will teach you 'Demon Hunter Swordsmanship' in my place, and if you wish, you can also learn the demon hunter's Secret Technique, even the core Mystical Arts."

The old count continued.

To this, Arthur was even less interested.

What he most lacked for a quick 'Ascend Step' was XP, and he didn't have spare XP to learn an additional swordsmanship.

A brand-new swordsmanship, to catch up with the current stage of Swift Bird Swordsmanship, would be a huge sum of XP.

Moreover, Arthur did not believe that swordsmanship taught by others could compare with his own Swift Bird Swordsmanship which had broken through level restrictions.

Unless it was the most core legacy of an organization or power.

But to learn such a core legacy is definitely not as simple as just talking about it.

Just like now, even with the Old Earl's backing, Arthur was quite certain that after meeting Lynn, wanting to learn the Demon Hunter's Core Mystical Arts would definitely bring many challenges.

Of course, aside from that.

Whether his ritual would conflict with the demon hunter's ritual was also unknown.

But even if it didn't, he no longer had enough XP.

The problem returned to the starting point.

And within this, there was another issue—

What would his identity become after learning an organization's core legacy?

The answer was obvious.

To become a member of that organization.

Even if you don't acknowledge it, it's useless.

Anyone who uses 'Salt Brick Oil Sword', waves a 'Slash of Vanquishing Evil', or raises a Curse Mark will be regarded as a Demon Hunter by others.

Power is the best marker.

Arthur looked at the illusory Old Earl and had already discerned that this Old Earl was not someone who played by the rules.

And now, Arthur was even more certain of the Old Earl's 'cunning'.

'To ensure the demon hunter's legacy is passed on, does he want me to become a demon hunter?'

Arthur speculated in his heart.

Regrettably.

He was a Spirit Medium.

And, for now, he did not intend to change this identity.

Therefore, Arthur smiled and said—

"The swordsmanship and secret techniques of the Kledos Family are like a vast galaxy; what I have learned is but one or two percent of the family's knowledge, even my talented uncles and aunts grasp no more than that.

"Only my grandfather, Old Charlie, was able to grasp a mere one or two tenths of it."

"Before I fully comprehend and integrate the swordsmanship and Secret Techniques passed down through our family, I will not learn others."

Arthur declined once more, his refusal gentle but firm.

This time, disappointment was clear upon the Old Earl's face.

Clearly, the inability to lure such a talented young man into becoming a Demon Hunter was a source of regret for the Old Earl.

At the same time, the Old Earl's curiosity about the Kledos Family was piqued.

'Is it truly as the rumors say, a "Millennial Family"?' he wondered.

'Could only a family with secretive heritage since the Imperial Age amass such an exaggerated number of swordsmanship and Secret Techniques, and only such a family could make a young man with splendid Talent like Arthur lament learning but one or two percent of it, right?'

The Kledos Family?

'I truly wish to witness it for myself!' the Old Earl thought with a sigh, but he quickly spoke out loud—

"Though I bear the title of Earl, I am but an impoverished Noble, owning no more wealth within Ainhars Territory."

"My most valuable asset is my knowledge."

"And yet you have rejected my knowledge. Do you desire that dilapidated estate instead?"

Knowledge had failed to move Arthur.

The Old Earl began to use wealth as leverage.

And of course, the so-called dilapidated estate was but an understatement.

Anyone with an estate in Port Pult was certainly not shabby.

It might not compare with those outside South Los, but it was enough to make anyone envious.

Thus, after making his offer, the Old Earl fixed his gaze on Arthur.

The Old Earl hoped to see more.

But to his disappointment, the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium merely sighed—

"What the Kledos Family has passed down is as vast as the galaxy itself.

"And wealth?

"Even without deliberately accumulating it, the wealth we possess is more than enough to live comfortably."

"In fact, I have no interest in money."

Arthur's words rang with conviction, his demeanor entirely unmoved by wealth.

The disdain in his eyes, the scorn at the corner of his mouth, convinced the Old Earl it was so.

The Old Earl was at a loss.

In the end, he straightforwardly turned the question back to Arthur—

"What exactly do you want?"

"What I truly want? Are you sure you want to hear it?"

Faced with this question, Arthur immediately appeared eager to respond.

The Old Earl immediately sensed a bad feeling arising within.

Right away, he sought to interrupt.

But Arthur had already beaten him to the punch and spoke first.

"You have apprentices, don't you?"

"Aside from the recently mentioned Sir Lynn, you must have other apprentices, right?"

"If possible, could you summon them for me?"

"I need to borrow their strength..."

As he spoke, Arthur paused, but the expectation and excitement in his eyes gave the Old Earl a jolt.

The Old Earl's apprentice Lynn already had sixteen apprentices, and naturally, he had even more—following the relationships and traditions of Demon Hunters.

But considering Arthur's eagerness, the Old Earl dared not let his own apprentices step into a potential fire pit.

Even though Arthur hadn't specified anything yet, the Old Earl instinctively resisted the idea.

"Their strength is not sufficient to aid you, we can negotiate something else..."

The Old Earl rejected the proposal outright.

Then, he began to rapidly recall what Arthur might need.

He decided he couldn't let Arthur take the initiative to ask.

God knows what exaggerated demands Arthur might make.

But since Arthur, backed by the Kledos Family, lacked neither a legacy in Secret Technique nor money, what else might he be missing...

Hold on!

Arthur lacks nothing!

But what about the people around Arthur?

Suddenly, the Old Earl thought of someone—

Kalal!

Chapter 777: The Blood Secret V

For the Count of Bernaken, there was a considerable understanding of Kalal.

Ever since the other party had appeared at Port Pult in the Ainhars Territory, the Old Earl had observed the young man in secret more than once.

And he was very pleased.

Because Kalal's Talent was the best he had seen in the past several decades.

Even that bastard Ainhars and he himself couldn't compare.

As for arrogance?

In the eyes of the Old Earl, it was hardly a matter of concern.

On the contrary, for a Demon Hunter, the arrogance of youth was a 'positive' effect.

However, as time went on, the Old Earl hesitated as he discovered Kalal was developing his own forces in secret—not in an acceptable way within bounds, but in the vigorous manner of an 'ambitious person.'

Eventually, the Old Earl chose to give up.

It wasn't just that he no longer had the energy to 'correct' a young man with much ambition, but also because since entering the 'Pioneer Era,' Demon Hunters had been increasingly struggling—Demon Hunters at this moment couldn't afford any setbacks or disasters.

If there were any accidents, they would be more than the Old Earl could bear, and something he was unwilling to accept.

Therefore, even though it was regrettable, he would not take him as an apprentice.

The initial decision was abandoned.

Yet the Old Earl's attention remained.

He even devoted some extra manpower to what other Demon Hunters saw as inconsequential matters.

As a result, hardly any of Kalal's actions could escape the Old Earl's notice.

The Old Earl's original intention was simply not to let Kalal influence the Demon Hunters of the Ainhars Territory.

But who would have thought that the Old Earl would unexpectedly discover the relationship between Kalal, Jimte, and Hayes?

Jimte, the son-in-law of the second daughter of the Marquess of West Berlin.

Hayes, the nephew of Count Bert.

Ultimately, as time passed, in the eyes of the Old Earl, Kalal had completed the formation of his own forces, and he even believed that soon, a civil war would break out within the Ainhars Territory—after the Little Lion of Inner Bay had contacted Kalal in secret, the Old Earl became even more convinced of this.

Exactly because of this, the Old Earl was prepared to nip the danger in the bud.

However...

Following an unexpected journey, everything changed.

When Kalal returned from the Mount Gale Region, admitting openly his arrogant ignorance, and bringing shame upon his family.

Even facing expulsion from the Marquess of Ainhars, he showed no resistance and went straight to Inner Bay.

Others saw this as 'just deserts' for Kalal.

It was also seen as proof of Kalal's façade of competence.

Many would even say that Kalal was a complete farce.

But the Old Earl knew that was not the case.

If Kalal was all façade, then every young person within the Ainhars Territory was a failure.

The Old Earl was curious about what Kalal experienced in the Mount Gale Region.

But it was beyond his reach.

The power of the Demon Hunters had not developed that far.

The information he could gather was only partial.

However, even with just partial information, the Old Earl noticed a name—

Arthur Kledos!

The unique intuition of the Demon Hunter informed the Old Earl that there was a problem with the owner of this name.

Later, deeper investigations proved this point.

Especially when rumors surfaced that the Kledos Family might be a secretive family hidden for a millennium, the Old Earl's caution towards Arthur Kledos reached its peak.

In the Old Earl's view, the Southern Lost Spirit Medium, Arthur Kledos, was an even greater ambitious person than Kalal, and moreover...

He was far better prepared!

It was only thus that he could subdue Kalal, making this young man charge into battle.

Indeed!

Charge into battle!

The Old Earl, based on some of the specific changes made by the Old Lion of Inner Bay to the 'South County Swordsmanship Competition,' had sniffed out a different scent.

He was certain that the 'South County Swordsmanship Competition' was the stage that the Southern Lost Spirit Medium sought to attain.

The events that transpired in West Berlin the other day further convinced the Old Earl that the ambitions of the Southern Lost Spirit Medium far exceeded expectations—having just left South Los, such momentum had built up, and by the time they reached Inner Bay, what terrifying form it might take.

Therefore, The Old Earl worked hard to keep Ainhars Territory out of the fray.

For this reason, the old nobleman had made numerous arrangements.

However, the sudden appearance of 'Blood Drinker' Haibo disrupted these arrangements.

"Could the appearance of 'Blood Drinker' Haibo be this guy's doing?"

The Old Earl scrutinized Arthur before him.

It was just too coincidental.

So coincidental that it aroused suspicion.

Yet, the very next moment, The Old Earl dismissed such suspicions from his mind.

He did not believe that Arthur could command 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

After all, 'Blood Drinker' Haibo was deemed a divine spirit by common understanding, and even if he were a mere diluted 'demigod', he was not someone the current Arthur could command.

Furthermore, 'Blood Drinker' Haibo was notoriously rebellious.

Thinking someone could command him?

Impossible.

Unless a true deity descended.

And it would have to be a High God of the 'Blood Rank' at that.

Evidently, Arthur was not one.

As it was well known, to acquire a 'Blood Rank', at the very least one needed the status of the Bloodline Clan.

With this in mind, the old nobleman discreetly cast the secret technique 'Detect Bloodline'.

After another confirmation, The Old Earl, maintaining the smile on his face, continued to say—

"Arthur, you don't mind me calling you Arthur, do you?"

"Of course not."

Arthur responded with an amicable smile.

"Then, what is your relationship with Kalal like?" the Earl continued to inquire.

"Not bad."

Arthur's smile did not wane.

Keeping the fact that Kalal had sworn fealty to him through the 'Lionheart Ceremony' a secret was naturally necessary, but Arthur would not hide his relationship with Kalal—the principle of hiding a leaf in a forest was something Arthur knew well.

He needed to hide the fact that Kalal had sworn loyalty to him with the 'Lionheart Ceremony,' so he had to reveal his good relationship with Kalal.

Of course, the latter was not something everyone could be privy to.

It could only be known by a select few.

Only then could it draw people's attention.

Only then could the fact of the 'Lionheart Ceremony' be concealed.

Observing Arthur's smile, The Old Earl, with his guess confirmed in his heart, did not hesitate to declare directly.

"What if Kalal returns to Ainhars Territory to become the primary Heir?"

The secret of the Marquess of Ainhars had been exposed by 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

The Old Earl knew it.

Arthur knew it too.

Therefore, The Old Earl had the confidence to persuade the Marquess of Ainhars to do so.

And Arthur?

He couldn't have wished for a better outcome.

In the absence of a way to eliminate the Marquess of Ainhars, having Kalal become the primary heir was indeed a very good option.

Of course, Arthur, as a young, upright, naive, and kind-hearted Spirit Medium, even though he yearned for such a result deep down, still showed the 'humility' befitting a Spirit Medium.

He said—

"As for me?

My relationship with Kalal is indeed good.

We have also engaged in some private cooperation.

But this does not mean that, should Kalal become the first Heir to Ainhars Territory, I would be able to truly gain anything substantial.

On the contrary, it might backfire, affecting our previous cooperation.

After all, human greed can be quite terrifying."

Chapter 778

Hearing Arthur's statement, the Old Earl was not surprised.

Arthur and Kalal definitely had some kind of cooperation.

Otherwise, how could Kalal have charged into battle for Arthur?

Moreover, the Old Earl was very confident that Arthur had promised something like "helping Kalal become the heir to the Ainhars Territory" to Kalal.

Perhaps, it was even "directly obtaining the Ainhars Territory."

These were all things that Kalal sought after.

Only by fulfilling what Kalal sought would he choose to cooperate with Arthur.

This was basic logic.

Surely Kalal wasn't just charmed by the present Southern Lost Spirit Medium's charisma and decided to throw himself into the fray with his own provisions, right?

How could that be possible?!

Arthur Kredos was just a Southern Lost Spirit Medium, not one from the Inner Bay Golden Lion Family.

Moreover, even in the Inner Bay Golden Lion Family, aside from the Old Lion, not a single person showed a Talent similar to the "Lion Group."

Arthur, an outsider?

That was even less likely!

With these thoughts swirling in his mind, the Old Earl sensed Marquess of Ainhars's resolve beginning to waver under Blood Drinker Haibo's assault. Thus, the Old Earl decided not to beat around the bush anymore—

"I can assure you that even if Kalal becomes the first heir to the Ainhars Territory, it won't affect your previous cooperation with him.

Similarly, I will grant you the most tangible benefits: the private treasury of that bastard Ainhars.

Inside, there are many rare items.

Perhaps there is even something you desire."

"His situation has become dangerous?"

Arthur's gaze shifted to the Marquess of Ainhars.

Although the Marquis showed no signs, the Old Earl's promises were enough to suggest that the Marquis's predicament was not optimistic.

It was only under such circumstances that the Old Earl would dare to make such promises.

As for making promises on behalf of the Marquess of Ainhars?

How could that be possible!

The two must have communicated.

In a way unknown to Arthur.

With the premise of "Burning Soul" guiding the Marquess of Ainhars, the Old Earl and the Marquis having some secret technique unknown to others was not surprising to Arthur at all.

"Hmm, he's almost at his limit.

'Blood Drinker' Haibo is a disgusting guy."

The Old Earl nodded, not bothering to hide it.

He knew that with someone as perceptive as Arthur, there was no hiding it.

Better to frankly admit it, to lay the foundation for cooperation moving forward.

Meanwhile, the Old Earl couldn't help but sigh internally.

Why were his disciples all such foolish lot?

Even Lynn, the disciple he valued most, was not even half as sharp as the Spirit Medium before him.

"Then let's sign two contracts.

One to guarantee my safety.

One to ensure my rightful benefits afterwards.

Of course, the contracts must specifically state that I will absolutely not enter the consciousness of Marquis Ainhars, nor any mental realm; I'm just here to assist you.

If there are any of the above actions, you must suffer the most severe backlash, and even your relatives and friends must encounter misfortune."

Arthur said with a smile.

The dangers of the mind, the mental realm, were well known to Arthur.

He was not about to risk entering them.

Suddenly, the Old Earl felt an even deeper sense of reflection.

If it had been his disciples, they probably would have started action impatiently after signing the contracts.

As for considering more?

There would be none.

Isn't there a contract?

They couldn't possibly think further ahead.

But they always forget that contracts can be circumvented.

Without added insurance, how could one be at ease?

"Fine, but you must also ensure that when I force the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo out, it cannot re-enter the body of that bastard Ainhars,"

The Old Earl did not make demands such as having to kill the 'Blood Drinker.'

Because, in the Old Earl's view, that was far beyond what Arthur could achieve.

The 'Blood Drinker' Haibo was a demigod, after all!

Even if it was somewhat diluted.

Even if it was severely injured.

Even if it had no body.

It still wasn't something that Arthur, the likes of a little fellow, could handle.

Therefore, temporary expulsion was the best choice.

As long as Arthur could delay even for a moment, he had a way to severely injure that bastard, the 'Blood Drinker.'

Just to injure severely!

As for killing?

He had no way to do it too.

The 'Blood Drinker' was not in good shape.

Neither was he.

Indeed, to some extent, he was even worse off than the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo—the 'Blood Drinker' could recover through time, Secret Medicine, blood sacrifices, and so on, but his power was truly dwindling bit by bit.

To make sure that bastard Ainhars firmly stepped onto the 'Fifth Order,' he had to be very calculating.

Moreover, the Old Earl suspected that the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo had something up his sleeve.

The craftiness of that guy was fresh in the Old Earl's memory.

Therefore, waiting for that bastard Ainhars to reach the 'Fifth Order' before going to kill the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo was the best plan.

At least, in the Old Earl's opinion, it was so.

The contract was signed.

The Old Earl's spectral image disappeared.

But the spectral image did not vanish; instead, it showed the Marquis of Ainhars and the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo, or to be precise, the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo forcing the Marquis of Ainhars to kill his own three Barons and four Lords over and over again.

"Marquis, what about the promise you gave me?

Why did you kill me?"

The spectral image of Baron Tami lunged at the Marquis of Ainhars, but was struck down by the sword of the Marquis's spectral image.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I didn't want it to be like this,"

The spectral image of the Marquis of Ainhars murmured quietly.

"Marquis, I never thought I would die at your hand.

I thought I would die in a charge,"

The spectral image of Darnel wore a bitter expression, while the Machiavellian Marquis of Ainhars, holding a longsword, was full of pain, and his murmurs were unceasing.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry!"

It wasn't just those two; the scenes of Kama, Baron Harlan, Yakaz, Lalia, and Lord Leondsey being slain by the spectral images were also unfolding at the same time.

That's right!

Unfolding simultaneously!

The real Marquis of Ainhars, watching the scene of his spectral image relentlessly killing his subordinates, began to swing his sword.

He charged at his own spectral image.

"Stop!"

Everyone stop!"

This scene made the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo laugh out loud.

"Truly despicable."

Arthur, watching the scene, commented.

Similarly, Arthur naturally understood why the Old Earl had shown him these scenes.

Not, of course, to watch the Marquis of Ainhars in his miserable state.

But to let him better grasp the timing.

For this, Arthur would certainly not waste the opportunity.

Moreover, to show his sincerity as a collaborator, he was prepared to first inflict a heavy blow on the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

The next moment—

The young Southern Lost Spirit Medium lifted his head to look at the lingering blood mist, the corners of his mouth lifting slightly, and he whispered softly.

"Action!"

Chapter 779: Secret of Blood VII

Blood fog blanketed the sky, coalescing and glittering like snowflakes, drifting and sprinkling down.

Atop this fog of blood, the 'Blood Descendant' stood on the back of the 'Blood Bat,' pulling out that precious orb of the 'Bloodline Clan': [Blood of the Night].

Instantly, the blood fog began to be absorbed, transformed into the purest vitality reserve within [Blood of the Night].

The process was very smooth; after Viscount Windsor himself had died and the manipulator 'Blood Drinker' Haibo was too preoccupied to pay attention, this fresh blood was just blood. Apart from being more spiritual than that of an ordinary person, greatly enhancing the vitality value stored, it had no way to resist the absorption power of [Blood of the Night].

In less than ten seconds, the blood fog had dissipated.

And this brought [Blood of the Night] a reserve of 1000 vitality points.

'An 'Ascend Steper' is only equivalent to 1000 vitality points?'

Arthur was somewhat surprised.

This number was much lower than he had imagined.

In the notes for [Blood of the Night], it was clearly stated that 'the fresh blood of an adult could be converted into 4-5 vitality points.'

And at this moment, the vitality value obtained from an 'Ascend Steper,' calculated at the highest value of 5 for an adult, was the equivalent of 200 adults.

Even considering some loss due to the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo creating the blood fog, the number couldn't be far off.

And this...

Was too little!

Not to mention that for an 'Ascend Steper,' killing 200 ordinary people would be a trivial task; even in Arthur's estimation, this number should start at 5000 or even higher.

'Blood? Blood!

It's just blood!'

Arthur was slightly taken aback and then came to a realization.

In his previous scientific understanding, a person's composition was extremely complex, a combination of various elements and cells, but on the mystic side, a person is composed of only two things: flesh and soul.

At the moment, the flesh was far from reaching the power of an 'Ascend Steper' as expected.

Naturally, that left only one thing.

That is to say—

'The soul of an 'Ascend Steper' is more important?'

Arthur mused to himself, yet his heart was filled with sighs.

Although the death of Viscount Windsor was caused by someone else, making his [Soul Ritual: Soul Binding] useless, and less than an hour had passed since Viscount Windsor's death, his [Soul Extraction Technique] could still be used—if there was no one around paying attention, Arthur wouldn't hesitate to use the [Soul Extraction Technique].

After all, the soul of an 'Ascend Steper' was quite valuable.

But unfortunately, more than one person was paying attention here.

Not to mention those whom he didn't care about.

Just the presence of The Old Earl and 'Blood Drinker' Haibo alone made it impossible for Arthur to freely cast his spells.

As for the 'Devourer' Imola?

Facing a 'Demigod,' Arthur wouldn't dare to touch their soul unless he had truly 'Ascended,' because in the knowledge Arthur had learned and his understanding of the mystic side, the soul of 'Divine Spirits' was definitely different from that of ordinary people.

Even if Arthur's [Soul Ritual: Soul Binding] and the [Soul Extraction Technique] explained by the Half Lich were extraordinary, it was the same.

Since he already had an absolute advantage, he mustn't be careless.

This was Arthur's most basic understanding.

So, although Arthur felt it was a pity, he would not truly mind.

Therefore, the next moment, Arthur co-operated by revealing a smile.

The young Southern Lost Spirit Medium spoke directly—

"Well done, Auburn!"

"It's just cooperation."

The 'Blood Descendant' replied in such a manner.

Then, the 'Blood Descendant,' with a very complex look in his eyes after glancing at the apparition that was 'Blood Drinker,' turned and walked away.

The whole process took less than a second.

However, Arthur was certain that although their conversation was not loud, those nearby could definitely hear it clearly.

And the 'Blood Descendant' who had just been in midair would have been clearly visible to those nearby as well.

The Nobles' Hidden Guards, servants, and attendants of the Ainhars Territory, Arthur needed them to be the best witnesses, so that more people could truly separate him from the 'Blood Descendant.'

'This is the second time!'

Just two or three more times, and it should be about right!

After that, no one will ever doubt my true relationship with the 'Blood Descendants'!

Thinking of the perfect performance back at Port Pult on the Inland River, and the performance that was now halfway through, Arthur's gaze shifted to the phantom emerging from the body of the Marquess of Ainhars—

The ever-smiling 'Blood Drinker' Haibo suddenly furrowed his brows.

"My blood mist?!"

The 'Blood Drinker' murmured to himself, his crimson eyes flickering.

It was evident that the 'Blood Drinker' had sensed the dissipation of the blood mist.

But Arthur saw more!

It was not only the dissipation of the blood mist that the other party had noticed but also, along with it, the arrival of Arthur and the 'Blood Descendants'.

Undoubtedly, such muttering was meant to be a performance for Arthur and the 'Blood Descendants'!

The other party wanted to paralyze the two of them!

For...

Better escape!

Yes!

Escape!

Arthur was certain that as the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo noticed his appearance and the departure of the 'Blood Descendants', the other had already given up on the idea of continuing to shatter the Marquess of Ainhars's consciousness to achieve control over the body—with the other's cunning, he would definitely not put his own safety in the hands of someone else's hesitation and indecision.

Especially not someone with an unclear relationship to the Marquess of Ainhars.

And this was exactly what Count Bernaken wanted to see.

Only under such a situation could the Old Earl make the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo retreat with minimal consumption.

Arthur was well aware of this.

That's why he made such an ambitious request.

Otherwise, how could he possibly have gained access to the Marquess of Ainhars's private treasury?

Do they really think a centuries-old marquess's treasure house is a vegetable market?

And what about Kalal's first heir in line?

That was merely incidental!

Both the Old Earl and the Marquess of Ainhars thought so.

But this, this is what Arthur truly wanted.

'To hide one's real purpose within what others believe to be the purpose, and to accomplish it smoothly, achieving a win-win—that is the true way of Spirit Medium trade.

It's fair, isn't it?'

Arthur thought to himself.

This wasn't something Old Charlie had said, but rather something that Arthur had concluded based on his own experiences as a Spirit Medium.

It resonated deeply with Arthur's heart.

It was enough to bring Arthur pleasure.

So, the young Spirit Medium took out the "Spider's Claw."

The all-black, standard-issue short sword looked even more profound under the moonlit night.

Arthur twisted off the counterweight and wiped the blade with the poison hidden inside.

The entire action was neither hurried nor slow, much like an executioner sharpening his blade before the execution.

And the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo, who had just been murmuring within the phantom, disappeared in an instant.

The next moment—

A smear of crimson appeared in front of the Marquess of Ainhars.

Without any hesitation, Arthur lunged with his sword.

Thrust!

The blade pierced through the crimson.

A sound akin to entering flesh was heard.

Then came the taunting voice of the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

"Don't you know that I have an Undying Body?"

Chapter 780: The Secret of Blood VIII

Beneath the night sky, mocking words echoed.

The "Blood Drinker" Haibo emerged gradually in the crimson hue, becoming real—a young man of extremely handsome appearance, his pale complexion and crimson eyes did not detract from his allure; instead, they contributed a sense of eeriness.

However, below his thighs, he was still an illusion.

Everyone could see that this was a kind of shadowy figure.

But this shadowy figure possessed a physical form.

At least...

the "Spider's Claw" was plunged into his chest.

A more bizarre feeling permeated the air.

Enough to send chills down one's spine.

"Do you know about the Undying Body?"

Once again, the "Blood Drinker" Haibo spoke.

His voice was cold, and his tone carried a hint of nonchalance.

It made everyone who heard these words believe that he had the upper hand.

But the next moment—

"I know.

The Kledos Family possesses three secret techniques that can achieve the effect of undying.

If combined with a certain prop, one can become truly undying, but it requires a significant sacrifice,"

Arthur nodded and said straightforwardly.

His forthright response almost made the "Blood Drinker" Haibo lose control of his expression.

Wait, what? There's really an Undying Body?

I was just trying to use 'verbal tricks' to break down your defenses!

Then, try to take over your body!

Why are you answering so earnestly?

This script is not what it imagined!

The "Blood Drinker" Haibo was befuddled at heart.

The other party suddenly paused, not speaking.

But Arthur didn't.

Arthur knew what the "Blood Drinker" wanted to do.

He simply wanted to find another host.

If the Marquess of Ainhars wouldn't work,

then he might as well try with him.

'Does he need a body, being separated from his own?'

Arthur guessed to himself, but outwardly, he began to spout nonsense seriously—

"Of the three mystical arts of the Kledos family, the first is to completely abandon the flesh and allow the soul to absorb the moon's power, reaching a certain extreme, then absorbing the sun's power to achieve a balance between yin and yang.

The second is the selfless training of the flesh and blood body, reaching an extreme and nourishing the soul with the power released from one's flesh and blood, thus again achieving a balance between yin and yang.

As for the third?

It requires some accidents to happen.

Regardless, none resemble your current form.

So, your 'Undying Body' is false.

It must be some kind of special state's disguise,"

Arthur rambled on, captivating the "Blood Drinker" Haibo.

Balance between yin and yang, these were words it heard for the first time.

Yet, it inexplicably felt they made sense.

Balance!

Always seeking balance, it mastered 'distortion.'

That balance alone could sustain 'distortion'.

Watching the captivated "Blood Drinker" Haibo, Arthur just smiled slightly.

His words were complete nonsense, but they were crafted by combining some knowledge from his homeland with the knowledge of the mystical world before him.

Even though they were false,

they sounded quite reasonable.

However, Arthur didn't linger on this subject but rather began to shift the topic.

After all, if he continued, he was bound to be exposed.

A qualified Spirit Medium wouldn't let himself be in such an awkward and dangerous situation,

especially while trying to buy time!

Arthur was waiting for the 'poison on the blade' to take effect!

It was Lady Windsor's blood!

Also, it was what Arthur had just used the "Spider's Claw" to smear-the original poison had long since turned into a way to mask the blood's color and scent.

After the mixture, Lady Windsor's blood became slightly diluted.

And this pushed back the time it took for the blood to take effect a little bit.

So—

"You haven't sensed the change?"

Arthur asked, his brow furrowing.

He did not beat around the bush but asked directly.

But was this not the most correct way to delay?

No words could change the changes occurring within the body of the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

Instead of letting the other party sense it and thus changing the situation,

it was better to make the adversary believe everything was under their control.

Arthur didn't believe that the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo, who had just had his "script altered" by him, could ignore him—though he seemed slightly surprised; Arthur saw the other's cunning.

But more so, it was pride.

In fact, it was indeed the case.

Facing Arthur's question, the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo chuckled lightly—

"You will never know what you are facing.

Do you think those rumors appeared by accident?

I spread them intentionally!

It was to lure fools like you!"

Just as Arthur had anticipated, the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo wore a look of having everything under control, launching a new verbal assault.

And Arthur's brow furrowed even tighter.

He said this.

"There are many rumors about the 'Blood Drinker', many of which are absurd, but the rumor that the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo was severely wounded and sealed by his own bloodline is true!

Because it appears in the records of the Kledos Family.

That...

can't be wrong!"

As he spoke, Arthur raised his head to face the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

His voice was firm, his eyes unshakeable.

Arthur observed the scene that just unfolded.

He also heard words like 'how could I possibly be harmed by the same method a second time.'

Of course, Arthur also saw the 'outcome' of the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo—if the rumor wasn't true, how could the other possibly turn into a stone statue, and stay away from the mundane world?

Thus, the information held by the Marquess of Ainhars was true.

But just as the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo had said, 'how could I possibly be harmed by the same method a second time'—the other had somehow avoided that damage.

For example: Distortion!

Arthur had also received this core mystical art of 'Theofact Psychic Cultivation Association'.

He even had plans to study it.

Therefore, Arthur could confirm that if 'Distortion' truly reached a very high level, it really could 'twist' certain fatal damages.

But this kind of 'distortion' inevitably came with very strict limitations.

After all, it was just a twisting process, not a complete change.

Then, combined with the changes in Viscount Windsor, a bold speculation surfaced in Arthur's mind.

The 'Blood Drinker' Haibo couldn't change the result of being harmed by his progeny but had managed to 'twist' it to a degree.

For instance: only the fresh blood of female progeny could truly harm it.

Otherwise, the alteration in Viscount Windsor seemed too abrupt—in a viscount's family, the choice of an heir is taken very seriously; if Viscount Windsor had such a unique preference, then his father definitely would not have chosen him as the heir initially.

Even breeding another heir and retraining won't let the Windsor family fall into decline.

Thus, Viscount Windsor was normal initially, only to become abnormal later.

But within the Ainhars Territory, who else could influence Viscount Windsor?

Almost none.

Except...

the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo, as a source of the bloodline.

'The change in oneself, that's a reminder from my own "spirituality," but Viscount Windsor did not notice this!

Most likely...

He thought he had found true love, and that's why he changed, right?

How self-absorbed and greedy.'

Arthur thought to himself, his hand rotating the "Spider's Claw."

However, the fatal damage had still not appeared on the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo.

Moreover, more importantly, the face of the 'Blood Drinker' Haibo displayed a hint of recognition—as if certain memories had suddenly emerged, recalling something with clarity.

Even, the next moment, Arthur heard his adversary's words—

"So that's how it is!"