

Great Master 841

Chapter 841: Monsters, Monsters, and Monsters III

The fervor in Little Lion's eyes was filled with a greed that was almost tangible and...

bewildering.

Greed stems from the truest desires of the heart.

He had waited too long.

He wanted to uncover Count Bert's 'undying' secret. Upon learning of this from his father, he harbored this thought.

As a king, he deemed it only fitting to be undying.

And as a king, while waiting for an opportunity, he was also preparing himself.

He didn't mind using Arthur as a stepping stone, and he was ready to step in himself if necessary.

Therefore—

Ever since he first laid eyes on Count Bert, everything was aimed at probing this moment. The shock, disbelief, mixed fear displayed in his emotions, and the endless stream of secret techniques were all tests.

Fortunately, he succeeded in probing.

"Time!

It was actually time!

Hahaha!"

Unable to hold back, Little Lion laughed happily, his laughter loud and unrestrained.

If 'flesh compensation' was the lowest tier, the limit of Little Lion's patience, then 'time' was what Little Lion desired most and welcomed most willingly.

He had pursued 'time' countless times.

But to no avail.

Though the Golden Lion Family had records of the 'Time Dragon' and 'Helk's Twenty-Seven Tools. Time Sword,' the Time Dragon vanished during an unknown great war in the Age of the Gods.

As for the 'Time Sword,' the foremost of 'Helk's Twenty-Seven Tools'?

It was Helk's personal sword, which required finding the master to obtain it.

This was nearly impossible, even harder than finding the vanished Time Dragon.

After all, the master's whereabouts were always elusive.

Their character defies precise description by words.

And their strength was known as 'godlike.'

Thus, Little Lion set his eyes on the 'Time Dragon'—the living 'Time Dragon' had disappeared. Dead ones?

Highly likely they still existed.

Even obtaining a scale, or some blood, would be good.

However, this too was fraught with difficulty.

Even after spending innumerable manpower and resources, he only gathered a few words a decade ago.

Possibly in Bert Territory.

Just possible.

Not accurate enough.

Even biased sometimes.

Nevertheless, Little Lion continued attempting in that direction, speculating whether it was connected with Count Bert.

Now!

It finally proved true!

It was Count Bert!

He didn't know whether Count Bert had obtained a scale, blood, or some other more precious materials from the 'Time Dragon.'

He only knew that now these were his—

"Hand it over!"

A whisper, the fervor in Little Lion's right eye transformed into layers upon layers of unclear [Glyphic Language], which eventually turned pitch black.

This pitch blackness did not only fill Little Lion's right eye but also turned the entire secret chamber dark.

When the layered [Glyphic Language] appeared in Little Lion's right eye, Count Bert's face for the first time showed surprise and panic.

His whole body retreated swiftly.

A speed long beyond ordinary comprehension.

But, the darkness was swifter.

As if, upon appearance, it enveloped the surroundings.

"Count Bert, have you ever heard of the 'Thief's Door'?"

Little Lion's voice carried a hint of pride.

"Of course.

The 'Thief's Door,' a tool crafted with his path as an anchor point by the 'Gentleman Thief' Carmen, implanted into his right eye, alongside 'Fearless Thief' in his left eye, was key to his 'ascending step,' always advancing. However, in the Silver Era of year 160, when the Gentleman Thief was 151 years old, due to dissatisfaction with the 'Blood Marquis's' kin for their unrestrained 'Blood Hunting,' this 'Gentleman Thief' went to the Blood Marquis realm.

The result?

The Gentle Thief lost!

Unusually lost!

It was a disastrous failure, nearly costing his life, not only was he severely injured, but his right eye was plucked by the 'Blood Marquis' and placed in the 'Bloodline Clan's' collection.

After that?

With the Blood Marquis's son massacring the Bloodline Clan, everything vanished without a trace.

Until it reappeared here."

Count Bert replied.

His voice was clear, maintaining a calm demeanor even more.

Gone was his previous panic.

This surprised Little Lion.

Immediately, a sense of unease arose in his heart.

But Count Bert's words continued.

"Indeed...

The massacre of the Bloodline Clan was the doing of the Golden Lion Family, and your family should have been aware of that incident back then, thus getting furious, right?"

Count Bert countered.

"Ha, aren't you angry?"

We were all played like monkeys!"

Little Lion coldly laughed and then began probing Count Bert, hinting at a similar 'same camp'.

Of course, the 'Thief's Door' continued operating.

"Don't be like that.

A loss is a loss.

When facing the victor, one must show the humility of the defeated."

Count Bert denied it.

With the assistance of the 'Thief's Door', Little Lion could clearly 'see' the Count nodding slightly, with the corners of his mouth...

a sneer.

Little Lion knew well that the sneer from Count Bert was certainly not directed at the victor 'Blood Marquis'.

It was aimed at him!

He didn't get what he wanted.

The 'Thief's Door' did not steal the ability he wanted.

Count Bert's 'undying' was not sourced from time.

He was deceived.

Almost instantly, this heir of the Inner Bay thought of the information he accidentally obtained a decade ago regarding some 'Time Dragon' materials appearing in an ancient tomb.

Seemingly perceiving Little Lion's thought, Count Bert nodded generously.

"Correct.

It was news I deliberately released."

"To lure me in?"

Little Lion frowned tightly.

Before, he had more than once overestimated Count Bert.

But now it appeared, he still underestimated this count.

If indeed the other party started laying plans a decade ago, then how deep and meticulous must the opponent's calculation be?

The mere thought of it was terrifying.

Fortunately, Count Bert shook his head.

"Impossible!

I am not one for scheming; the information I spread was for self-protection!"

"Self-protection?

To hide your true abilities?!"

In a moment, Little Lion guessed Count Bert's aim before him.

"You see, I prefer talking to intelligent people.

Because it always saves me time and effort.

So, could you keep being clever?

After all—

I never imagined that the serendipitous layout back then would eventually confirm the murderer of the Bloodline Clan massacre, then, Glesia Hamlet, could you reveal the truth of that incident to me?"

As he spoke, Count Bert raised his hand and gouged out Little Lion's right eye.

Chapter 842: Monsters, Monsters, and Monsters IV

The action of Count Bert extracting the eye came without any warning.

Suddenly, it appeared right before Little Lion, completely pulling Little Lion's right eye out of its socket, with the nerves and blood vessels still slightly trembling.

"'Thief's Door' is not only capable of stealing items and abilities from others, but it can also steal their experiences.

And my experiences?

That's a secret."

Count Bert said this as he winked with his right eye at Little Lion.

As he winked, Count Bert's right thumb and forefinger were still holding Little Lion's former right eye.

Inexplicably, this scene was full of mockery.

However, the Little Lion, who should have burst into anger, couldn't even care about these things.

Because——

Backlash!

The backlash of using the 'Thief's Door' and losing the 'Thief's Door' came together.

Count Bert looked at the rapidly aging Little Lion and couldn't help but click his tongue——

"The theft comes at the cost of lifespan.

If you haven't drunk from the 'Fountain of Youth', I wouldn't recommend using it.

Of course, there's still..."

Before finishing his words, Count Bert flicked the 'Thief's Door' in his hand away.

However, this did not prevent the nerves connected to the 'Thief's Door' from flying toward him.

Only at this moment did Count Bert see clearly that these were not blood vessels or nerves, but two small snakes disguised as optic nerves and blood vessels.

No!

To be precise, it was: 'Snake Sect Secret Technique. Medusa's Arrow'!

Unlike the old 'Medusa's Arrow', the new 'Medusa's Arrow' is faster in casting, though it lost its power to slaughter 'demigods', it still put Count Bert in a predicament at this moment.

Count Bert dodged the straight shots from the two small snakes but couldn't avoid the eye contact with the Serpent's Gaze of the two snakes.

Immediately, petrification began.

Starting from the eyes and the triangular area of the head, the petrification quickly spread.

This scene made Little Lion smile coldly.

"You think I wouldn't have safeguards for such a precious prop?"

The aged Little Lion watched the petrification spreading on Count Bert.

Without any hesitation, raised his hand and struck with a palm.

This palm wasn't aimed at Count Bert.

Instead, it struck his own forehead.

Bang!

Little Lion's skull shattered, and brain matter splattered.

But there wasn't a true sense of death.

The useful secret technique [Parasitic Revival] was something Little Lion had prepared more than once.

And just at the moment Little Lion's body fell and turned into a pool of blood, Count Bert's body also completely entered a state of petrification.

However, all of this was temporary.

When [Parasitic Revival] is completed once more, Little Lion will come back to life, and Count Bert's 'Undying' will only be temporarily petrified, soon able to regain freedom.

Both were momentarily in a state of false death.

When they resurrect, it will inevitably be an intense battle.

In a moment, too short.

No one cared about it.

But in that instant, enough for a Crow to fly in and swallow [Thief's Door] into its belly.

Also, in that moment, Little Lion came back to life, and Count Bert regained freedom.

The two looked at the pitch-black Crow and shouted simultaneously——

"Stop!"

For Little Lion, [Thief's Door] was his most important trump card.

There is no other!

Many of his plans depended on [Thief's Door] to be completed; losing [Thief's Door] would cause many of his plans to fail entirely.

And for Count Bert, [Thief's Door] was his trophy.

He had quite a few ideas about [Thief's Door].

For instance: to steal the 'secret technique' of the Little Lion in front of him.

Upon seeing him, Little Lion had already performed seven different sects' core mystical arts.

The rich heritage of the Golden Lion Family was evident.

But more importantly, why could Little Lion perform the core mystical arts of seven vastly different sects, knowing that these seven sects' rituals couldn't all have harmonized?

Such a secret piqued Count Bert's curiosity, and he harbored a strong desire to covet it.

Of course, besides these, there was also the hidden information about the Golden Lion Family known by Little Lion.

Count Bert was even more curious about the truth of 'that event from the past'.

After all, before the 'Blood Marquis' died, he always thought the other party was the victor.

Besides these?

Little Lion surely knew even more secrets.

In Count Bert's eyes, the current Little Lion was entirely a treasure trove, and [Thief's Door] was the key to opening this treasure trove.

As for the cost of using [Thief's Door]?

Count Bert asked himself if he could bear it.

After all, he was 'Undying'.

No matter...

There were limitations!

Compared to asking Little Lion directly which had limitations, Count Bert didn't believe he could pry open Little Lion's mouth.

He didn't believe everything Little Lion said either.

Especially the latter, making Count Bert unable to lose [Thief's Door].

So, without hesitation, both made their move simultaneously——

Little Lion raised his hand, the palm traversing space, and reached straight for Fujin.

Count Bert, with a flick of his finger, struck Little Lion's palm, causing Little Lion's hand to recoil in pain, and his entire person lunged towards Fujin.

But immediately, Count Bert's ankle was grabbed by Little Lion.

The speed of the forward lunge halted.

It was this pause that allowed Fujin to once again spread its wings and fly up.

Seeing this scene, Little Lion and Count Bert raised their hands once more.

A throwing knife flew from Little Lion's hand, with such speed infused in it that its power was comparable to a gunshot bullet, while the thick acid liquid was shot from Count Bert's fingers.

Both aimed to prevent Fujin from flying away.

So both controlled the force.

But both ignored one thing.

Both controlled their own force but didn't control the other's.

Simply put, whether it's Little Lion's throwing knife or Count Lord Beiyue's acid liquid, both could easily kill Fujin, leaving [Thief's Door] intact.

But when the two attacks were superimposed, Fujin was doomed, and [Thief's Door] would also be damaged.

In fact, they both realized right at the moment they acted.

Not good!

Both exclaimed in their hearts.

But it was too late.

The throwing knife, infused with speed, pierced through Fujin's body.

The tremendous force further ripped Fujin's body apart.

The acid liquid from Count Bert that followed thoroughly dissolved Fujin's body and [Thief's Door].

This scene left both of them dumbfounded.

Then, came the anger.

Unparalleled anger.

"It's all your fault!"

Little Lion and Count Bert glared at each other furiously.

Subsequently, Little Lion drew a Longsword and thrust it directly at Count Bert.

Count Bert easily dodged, and as more acid liquid gathered in his palm, he pressed it against Little Lion's face.

Hiss, hiss, hiss!

In the sound of the acid liquid corroding, Little Lion's Longsword also pierced through Count Bert's body.

But they didn't care.

The two fought like monsters, seeming to bet on which one would fall first.

Meanwhile, they didn't notice the changes happening to Fujin's corpse—

It transformed into a mass of death qi.

This pure mass of death qi tightly wrapped around [Thief's Door].

Chapter 843: Monsters, Monsters, and Monsters V

Why could Alvis's people avoid the ambush set by Gleisa's subordinates?

Of course, it was because Arthur stepped in.

Arthur blocked part of the attack, allowing one of Alvis's death warriors to successfully reach Count Bert. Then, the young Southern Lost Spirit Medium dispatched his crows and dogs to quietly wait.

Fujin focused on Alvis.

Kuliqui focused on Suke Street.

Kiri focused on the docks.

As for Wuni?

It circled high above, filling in any gaps.

As Arthur's eyes and ears, the two crows and two dogs completed their tasks quite well.

In fact, they overachieved.

For example: Fujin.

Through Fujin's eyes, when the "Thief's Door" appeared, Arthur's "Spirituality" quickly became active—it was the flickering of the "Lockpicking Technique" and the trembling of the two props, "Bracelet of Carmen" and "Carmen's Leap."

Arthur's intuition told him that the "Thief's Door" was of great significance to him.

Arthur trusted his intuition.

Therefore, when the opportunity arose, Arthur had Fujin act directly.

The moment Fujin swallowed the "Thief's Door," Arthur's intuition was confirmed—

Suddenly, standing a hundred meters away in the shadows, Arthur's view transformed.

In front of him appeared a step.

Arthur looked up.

Magnificent, huge.

These two words instantly appeared in his mind.

'The step of the Ascend Steper!'

Having seen a "step" once, Arthur quickly confirmed.

'Is this Carmen's test?'

Arthur speculated, stepping toward the step ahead.

From a distance, the step appeared magnificent and huge.

Upon closer inspection, it resembled a city wall supporting the heavens and the earth.

Unlike the "Fourteenth Rank" he had seen before, here there was only one step, with the rest concealed in the mist. Evidently, one must climb this step to possibly see the others.

But this appearance made the step seem all the more like a city wall.

It also caused more people who saw it to feel the urge to retreat.

And this is the essence of the test.

Most people would shrink away.

A few would forge ahead fearlessly.

As for Arthur?

He was neither of the former nor the latter.

Because, when Arthur saw 'this step', he sensed something was off.

Instinctively, Arthur pondered.

Arthur was someone who thrived on thought.

He thought to avoid unnecessary effort, but not at the cost of foolishness, such as compensating for laziness with unnecessary exertion. Arthur would never do that—the image of his friend, a fat guy who ate ice cream while dressing because he was too lazy to wash dishes, only to hurt his teeth from the cold and spit the ice cream out, dirtying his clothes and the floor, was still fresh in his mind.

At the moment, Arthur contemplated Carmen Huntington's life.

With an increasingly rich collection of books, Arthur had specifically sought out the "Gentleman Thief's" life story.

The person was not a truly "righteous man" in people's eyes.

Strictly speaking, the person straddled the line between good and evil.

Would such a person test others' "endurance" or "willpower"?

Perhaps "willpower."

Definitely not "endurance."

Carmen Huntington preferred clever individuals, not those who were as diligent and industrious as an old ox; otherwise, his disciples wouldn't have included so many misfits.

Although he was dubbed the "Gentleman Thief," his "chivalry" often stemmed from finding certain people unpleasant.

In a biography written in "Glyphic Language," there were Carmen Huntington's own words.

'A partner of justice?

I'm no partner of justice.

I'm just a thief driven by interest.'

With those words in mind, Arthur squinted slightly.

A ruse!

The "one step" before him was a ruse.

It was a trap to lure him into climbing it.

Once climbed, success would also mean failure.

Success would undoubtedly entail gaining partial usage rights of the "Thief's Door."

Failure would mean losing the real method to use the "Thief's Door."

Faced with such a person, the "Gentleman Thief" would surely laugh heartily, with his laughter full of ridicule for the blindly foolish and self-righteous.

Thinking of this, Arthur turned to walk away.

He needed to find the true "way out."

However, after taking just two steps.

Arthur doubled back.

Young Southern Lost Spirit Medium did not particularly like Carmen Huntington, who couldn't be defined by common sense. So he picked up a stone and wrote on the "one step"—

Arthur Kredos was here for a visit.

After writing, Arthur felt something was still missing.

Then, he unclipped his belt.

Whoosh!

With a splashing sound, Arthur looked content.

Then, satisfied, he pulled his pants up.

This was the Spirit Medium's retort.

The force wasn't particularly strong.

But it was full of flavor.

'Hope you like it.'

Arthur thought to himself.

And then—

Hahaha!

A burst of laughter rang out.

Within the laughter, the phantom of a one-eyed old man appeared before Arthur. The man was tall, with a head of white hair and beard. He laughed and slapped his leg, and even with only one eye, his joy was evident.

'Arthur Kredos?

Boy, you see through fast.'

With those words, the one-eyed old man vanished.

"The step" also disappeared.

In its place appeared a series of words.

[Name: Thief's Door (Right Eye)]

[Type: Organ]

[Quality: Mythical. Secondary]

[Requirements: 1, Lockpicking Technique; 2, Carmen's Test]

[Attributes: 1, Stealing; 2, Transplant; 3, Immortal]

[Remarks: In the Silver Era of 89, at the age of 80, the "Gentleman Thief" Carmen successfully promoted to Master Alchemist and became a member of the Ascend Steper in the truest sense. In that era, the significance of being an Ascend Steper was exceptional, and all factions extended invitations to this "Gentleman Thief."

Of course, with the invitation came various temptations.

The Master Alchemist allowed this "Gentleman Thief" to become an Ascend Steper without the aid of the "Stairway of Ascension," but the subsequent "Path to Tenth Rank" was shrouded in mist, fraught with difficulties.

All factions used the "Path to Tenth Rank" as leverage to tempt this "Gentleman Thief."

In response, Carmen Huntington paid no heed.

This "Gentleman Thief" believed he could do it.

He could cross the "Stairway of Ascension" and naturally pass the "Path to Tenth Rank."

Yet the "Path of Ascension" was more challenging than imagined. Despite his extraordinary talent, the "Gentleman Thief" was stuck on the Fourth Order after much toil.

Thus, the "Gentleman Thief" sought an alternative path!

And the "Thief's Door" is the fruit of his wisdom and power!

Of course, you need to truly own it!]

...

The text paused here slightly.

Then, more related attributes appeared.

Seeing these words, surprise flashed in Arthur's eyes—

This is possible?!

Chapter 844: Monsters, Monsters, and Monsters VI

Arthur is not a person who makes a fuss.

This was true back in his hometown.

Upon arriving in this world, he was further tempered by the profession of 'Spirit Medium,' developing an instinct to conceal his emotions.

However, when he saw the attributes of the "Thief's Door," Arthur could not suppress his surprise—

[Stealing: Consumes one's lifespan to steal the other's items, skills, experiences, existence. Both parties need to undergo a 'Spirituality' judgment. When one's 'Spirituality' exceeds the other's, the judgment passes, and the stealing is successful. If the judgment fails, the target will become alert]

[Transplant: The Thief's Door can be transplanted anywhere you deem suitable]

[Immortal: The Thief's Door possesses divinity, and the transplantee will gradually acquire a hint of the immortality within the divinity, thereby stimulating their bloodline]

(Note 1: When fully mastered, the lifespan loss consumed when stealing the target's items, skills, experiences is greatly reduced)

(Note 2: When fully mastered, you can steal the target's 'existence.' If successful, you replace the target, and their 'existence' becomes yours. The memories of their relatives and friends will center on you, but the target will not disappear. When the target and you appear simultaneously, people's memories about 'you' may become partially skewed or confused)

(Note 3: Successfully stealing the target's 'existence' consumes immense lifespan. However, when you become the target, their lifespan, items, skills, experiences are inherited by you)

(Note 4: Inheriting the target's items, lost items cannot be inherited)

(Note 5: When inheriting the target's skills, the maximum limit of inherited skills will be determined by you)

(Note 6: When inheriting the target's experiences, you need to remain conscious; otherwise, you will lose yourself)

(Note 7: When fully grasped, you can transplant it to any suitable location, including but not limited to oneself, others, animals, plants, bricks, furniture, etc.)

(Note 8: Triggering the Immortal trait requires time, and differs between items. If the item lacks a bloodline, it will manifest a trait. After triggering immortality, the Thief's Door cannot further stimulate bloodline or traits shortly. Moonlight or Gold can restore the Thief's Door faster)

(Note 9: Once the Thief's Door is truly controlled, every successful 'theft' will intensify its divinity a bit more)

...

Gasp!

Arthur inhaled sharply.

The young Southern Lost Spirit Medium could never have imagined that the Thief's Door would have such heaven-defying attributes—to completely replace a person. This ability alone instigates fear in anyone who sees it.

Even if it consumes lifespan.

Even if a 'Spirituality' judgment is required.

If he knew of its existence, he would surely find a way to destroy or acquire it.

As for precaution?

There's no reason to guard against theft a thousand days.

'Wait!

Could it be that the 'Blood Marquis' thought of this back then?

Thus, this 'Gentleman Thief' experienced failure.

Even, a humiliating and desperate escape.'

Arthur thought of the "Bracelet of Carmen" and "Carmen's Leap," two props.

Especially the latter!

'Is Glast related to the 'Blood Marquis'?' Arthur couldn't help but ponder in his heart.

But the soon flashing "Death Intuition" quickly pulled Arthur back to his thoughts.

However, deep down, Arthur once again sentenced the Blood Marquis to death.

'Wait and see!

Soon, a big surprise is waiting for you!' Arthur thought internally, while his gaze swept over Note 9.

Clearly, the Thief's Door can still grow.

And this was a genuine pleasant surprise for Arthur.

If the Thief's Door continued to grow, what level could it reach? Arthur wondered internally, his gaze quickly retracting.

Of course, with Arthur's caution, he still remained on guard.

Thus, he wouldn't transplant it directly onto himself.

Fujin is a good choice.

Similarly, right now is an excellent opportunity to test various attributes of the Thief's Door—

Under the cover of Fujin's body dissolving, the Thief's Door was completely transplanted into the fragmentary floor beneath Fujin.

This time, the transplant wasn't superficial but truly within the floor.

Therefore, it wasn't seen by Count Bert or Little Lion.

Under normal circumstances, if both parties examined carefully, they would surely notice the discrepancy; however, under preconceived grounds and dual confrontations, Arthur successfully deceived them.

Then came Fujin's resurrection.

Different from other creatures.

Through the promotions brought on by Arthur's Talent and Bloodline, Fujin and Wuni not only broke free from the "Feast of Crows," but also acquired near 'undying' traits.

Even more, as long as there's enough 'Death Qi,' Fujin and Wuni would be truly eternal and unbreakable.

As for Arthur, what is 'Death Qi'?

'Death Qi' is nothing.

Standing still, 'Death Qi' plentifully rose.

More common than air.

More effortless than eating or drinking.

Thus, Fujin's resurrection presented no difficulty.

With Arthur's desire, Fujin resurrected.

Moreover, the 'Aura of Death' generated during death slightly compensated for the 'Aura of Death' consumed in resurrection.

Almost just a bit short of becoming a perpetual motion machine.

The resurrected Fujin was distinctly different.

Overall size remained the same.

Feather color did not change, remaining ominously black.

Only in the center of the forehead, an extra eye appeared.

The crow previously seeming ominous now transformed into something bizarre, as if making eye contact would summon calamity. Especially when the eye rotates, anxiety almost turns tangible; any witness's hair would stand on end.

However, this did not include Count Bert and Little Lion.

When Fujin reappeared, their battle ceased.

In this 'undying' warfare, it was evident Count Bert was stronger; Little Lion had used "Parasitic Revival," resurrecting six times, coupled with a previous time, reaching the seventh.

And Count Bert?

He had fully resurrected twice, plus once with "Medusa's Arrow," totaling three times.

Three to seven.

Count Bert decisively won.

However, this kind of 'undying' should not merely consider numbers.

Prior planning and arrangement were crucial.

In this aspect, Little Lion undoubtedly surpassed.

Arthur contemplated internally, viewing the two through Fujin's eyes.

"Who are you?"

"That death warrior just now was deliberately placed before me?"

Little Lion and Count Bert spoke simultaneously.

Facing such an inquiry, Arthur didn't conceal but nod directly—

"Yes!"

Distinctive intonation, Count Bert didn't respond, but Little Lion bristled.

"Is it you?!"

Undoubtedly, Little Lion still recalled Arthur's voice.

Perhaps, he even recorded Arthur's voice in a Messenger Stone.

"It's me."

To this, Arthur helplessly shrugged.

Fujin cooperatively shook its feathers.

Then—

The Thief's Door began to flicker.

Chapter 845: Monsters, Monsters, and Monsters VII

The eye on the crow's forehead flickered, colored lights flowing as if tangible.

The Little Lion immediately shouted loudly—

"Go!

Stop him!

We can't let him complete the theft!"

The voice was high-pitched, and his upper body was already leaning forward, ready to charge, as was Count Bert beside him.

The middle-aged count looked solemn, apprehension flickering in his eyes, as acid began to gather in his palms. His whole body was like a fully drawn bowstring, as if he was ready to spring out at any moment.

But the next moment—

Neither of them moved!

They held their positions but remained still.

Both frowned simultaneously and then looked at each other.

"Let's go together!"

This time, Count Bert spoke.

And as he did, he moved.

However, instead of charging forward, he moved toward the Little Lion's back.

Regarding the [Thief's Door], the Earl had never experienced it, but his [Spirituality] told him that hiding from the crow's sight was the best choice.

Count Bert could know this through [Spirituality].

As a temporary user of the [Thief's Door], the Inner Bay heir also knew it.

So, when Count Bert moved, this heir of Inner Bay also moved, aiming for the back of Count Bert just like the Earl wanted to hide behind him.

Because their targets were the same, both moving for each other's back almost simultaneously.

As a result, they pursued each other's backs in a dizzying manner, creating a spectacle—

Human spinning tops!

Arthur, witnessing this, couldn't help but burst into laughter.

He couldn't help it, though he was supposed to be professional, he really couldn't hold back.

To facilitate the smooth execution of [Thief's Door], he had even prepared some contingencies.

Unexpectedly, they were entirely unnecessary.

After spinning three rounds, the [Thief's Door] was completed.

[Target character 'Gleisa Hamlet', in judgment...]

[Judgment passed!]

[Five years of lifespan consumed, gained target skill: Parasitic Recovery Lv5]

[Parasitic Recovery Lv5: One of the core mystical arts of the Pain Church, rumored to be a combination of the Talents of Miha and Yiluo along with some legacy from the 'Tower of Mist' to create this secret technique. However, it was actually that 'Lady of Sorrow' who borrowed the talents of Miha and Yiluo and part of the core legacy from the 'Tower of Mist' branch to create this secret technique, unbeknownst to the trapped Miha and Yiluo. 'It' did not feel obligated to inform Miha and Yiluo, and longed to become 'Her' again, so 'It' chose to keep it a secret.

However, in its arrogance, 'It' designated it as a core secret technique of the church, giving every High Priest a chance to access it.

This gave the Golden Lion Family an opportunity to take advantage.

Although 'Parasitic Recovery' doesn't require a ritual, the initial preparation stage is too complex, and the learning process is extremely painful, especially the latter, which is particularly daunting.

Among the entire Golden Lion Family, only the Little Lion has cultivated it to the peak.

In the primary stage of this secret technique, Parasitic Recovery is similar to 'Mikhail's Strong Touch', but it requires some of one's own fresh blood, placed in a unique cultivation vessel with gold as the base material for nurturing.

Once the nurturing is complete, it can become the base material for recovery.

When the base material is ready, it's necessary to carve the corresponding [Glyphic Language] into the viscera, and always keep in mind 'Pain', thus condensing one's own 'Pain' to complete it.

Effect: At the peak of this secret technique, you can perfectly resurrect 9 times instantaneously.]

(Note 1: After using up the 9 resurrections, you will completely lose the ability to revive)

(Note 2: Each creation of a resurrection base material requires a unique vessel)

(Note 3: Each resurrection base material requires the consumption of 30000 grams of gold)

(Note 4: There is no weakness period after each resurrection)

...

After observing the battle between the Little Lion and Count Bert, Arthur was quite envious of the Little Lion's 'resurrection'.

Other secret techniques didn't matter.

A secret technique that can revive has an unparalleled attraction for Arthur, who has died once and is naturally cautious.

So, he directly chose to steal the Little Lion's [Parasitic Recovery].

Moreover, Arthur was absolutely confident about this theft.

After all, although the Little Lion had many secret techniques, the Little Lion himself was still an 'Entrant'.

Maybe with various endless secret techniques and props, enough to contend against an 'Ascend Steper', but the essence of 'Entry' had not changed.

As long as it was 'Entry', Arthur was confident in surpassing the opponent in the [Spirituality] judgment.

And indeed, that's how it was.

The [Stealing] of [Thief's Door] was completed very smoothly.

Arthur could clearly feel the 'activity' of [Thief's Door] becoming rich.

As for lifespan?

With the bloodline of the [Serpent of Death], Arthur's normal lifespan had long reached 666 years, consuming 5 years was really not a problem.

Moreover, Arthur already had a way to replenish his lifespan.

Therefore, this kind of loss didn't bother Arthur at all.

What truly concerned Arthur was Count Bert—

[Target character 'Rondo Hart Bet', in judgment...]

[Judgment passed!]

[One year of lifespan consumed, target selection mistake, theft failed!]

...

Regarding Count Bert, when Arthur cast [Stealing], it was entirely with the mindset of might as well, catching one sheep is as good as letting two go.

After all, judging by Arthur's assessment, this Count is likely an 'Ascend Steper'.

His [Spirituality] was unique among 'Entrants', but probably not enough to look at among the 'Ascend Stepers'.

Therefore, Arthur wasn't really hoping for success.

But he didn't hope for success, yet succeeded.

This surprised Arthur.

But more surprising was the fact that the judgment was successful, yet the theft failed!

This puzzled Arthur.

Like the Little Lion, Arthur was quite curious about Count Bert's 'Undying', so he chose the other party's secret technique 'Undying'.

'Judgment success should naturally mean theft success.

If the judgment succeeds, yet the theft fails...

I chose the wrong target!' Arthur's eyes lit up.

He realized—

'Count Bert's 'Undying' is not a secret technique, but a prop!'

As for bloodline talent?

The Bert family had been managing the Bert Territory for a hundred years, but there were no rumors of any outstanding 'bloodline talent'.

Arthur's eyes squinted as he thought of this, ready to start [Stealing] again.

At the same time, he instructed Fujin to feign a listless appearance—

The black crow, initially standing on the windowsill, suddenly staggered its body. Although it quickly stabilized, its breath was unsteady.

Having been [Stolen] of [Parasitic Recovery], causing the Little Lion to fall into weakness, he burst into laughter.

"Did you think the lifespan consumed by [Thief's Door] was little?"

In the laughter, the Little Lion's gaze turned cold.

He whispered—

"Now, tell me, how much lifespan do you have left?"

Chapter 846: Monsters, Monsters, and Monsters VIII

The Little Lion really didn't expect Arthur to pass by Rondohart Port without entering.

Therefore, Arthur's sudden return was also unexpected for the Little Lion.

Not to mention, Arthur let a crow snatch the [Thief's Door].

All of this was beyond the Little Lion's expectations.

However, unlike most people.

Most people faced with such matters would have already panicked.

And the Little Lion?

He adjusts his strategy.

He is well aware of the allure of [Thief's Door].

Once someone has obtained [Thief's Door], how could they not use it?

Especially when faced with a 'treasure trove' like him, they simply cannot resist.

This is human nature!

Thus, the Little Lion 'provided the chance' for Arthur to use [Thief's Door] — without a doubt, that seemingly farcical scene with Count Bert was intentional on the part of the Little Lion.

The Little Lion wants Arthur to feel the weight of age.

The Little Lion wants Arthur to regret deeply.

The Little Lion wants Arthur to understand that provoking him is like hitting an iron wall.

So, at this moment, the Little Lion begins to use words to attack the mind —

"I have used [Thief's Door] three times in the past.

In each case, I stole others' secret techniques, and depending on the level of mastery, it consumes approximately 20-100 years.

But what you stole was my perfected [Parasitic Revival], so you have already lost at least 100 years of your life.

You were 17 years old before.

That means you are now 117 years old.

Tsk tsk.

Truly terrifying.

Lost 100 years of life in an instant, wouldn't you start losing all your teeth?

Of course, if you lied about your age before, you could be 120? 130? Or even older?

You might not even be able to walk now, would you?"

Saying this, the Little Lion laughed again.

And before Arthur could reply, the Little Lion spoke once more.

"In fact, I'm surprised you didn't die of old age on the spot!

You ask me why I'm fine?

Of course, it's the 'Fountain of Youth'!

You wouldn't think that I, as Inner Bay's first heir, wouldn't possess the 'Fountain of Youth,' which is essential for using [Thief's Door]?

Of course, you can have it too!

It's right here!"

With sarcasm-filled words, the Little Lion raised his palm, revealing an ancient ring shining brightly in the candlelight.

"Give it to me!"

Arthur's voice echoed from the crow's mouth.

Fujin surged forward in cooperation.

Unfortunately, perhaps due to the overwhelming old age, Fujin's leap turned into a fall off the windowsill.

Even flapping its wings twice failed to let it stand.

This scene made the Little Lion laugh heartily.

"Come on! Come on!"

The Little Lion enjoyed the exhilaration of being the victor.

Of course, the Little Lion hadn't forgotten Count Bert.

In fact, the Little Lion constantly kept an eye on the Earl out of the corner of his eye.

As for Arthur?

Merely a clown who accidentally appeared.

He may have a stroke of luck, but good fortune always runs out!

Especially when faced with a 'Child of Destiny' like him; it's the moment of the opponent's death!

Compared to such a clown, Count Bert is truly worth attention.

And Count Bert is the same!

When the Little Lion shouted 'Now,' the Earl immediately guessed the Little Lion's intent — because upon acquiring [Thief's Door], he couldn't help but want to take something from the Little Lion, who seemed like a 'treasure trove.'

This guy is no exception.

However, this guy clearly didn't realize the terrifying consumption of [Thief's Door], thus finding himself in such an embarrassing predicament.

"What an idiot."

Count Bert said arrogantly.

Of course, he was still determined to get [Thief's Door].

Lifespan?

For him, it truly wasn't an issue.

But that's a matter for later.

Now, he needs to eliminate the Little Lion.

Similarly, the Little Lion intends the same.

The two confronted each other.

The second round was clearly about to begin.

At this moment, the black crow finally stood back up, the eye on its forehead radiating vivid, substantive multicolored light.

Seeing this, both the Little Lion and Count Bert simultaneously smiled.

They didn't even dodge, choosing to merely watch the crow.

Count Bert sneered and curled his lip disdainfully.

"I misspoke.

You're not an idiot.

You're foolish!"

The middle-aged Earl said, ignoring Arthur entirely — believing there was still a slim chance for Arthur.

Once either he or the Little Lion triumphs, Arthur could beg for mercy.

Then, there'd still be a chance to live.

Even if both the Little Lion and he were brutally injured, Arthur might actually become the final victor.

But no matter how you choose.

Such reckless behavior right now is not an option.

It's extremely foolish.

For this, the Little Lion agreed.

This first heir of Inner Bay continually lamented —

"Poor thing! Anger and resentment have consumed your reason.

Now, you?

You're worse than a beast."

The Little Lion began to speak with a noble accent.

However, before his words fell, the Little Lion tilted his head.

An acid arrow grazed the tips of his hair.

The acid slightly stained his hair, the nauseating smell causing the Little Lion to frown.

"Earl, ambushes are not a noble behavior."

"Really?"

Count Bert sneered, raising his hand to pull out a dagger from his back.

This was naturally the Little Lion's handiwork.

When he was lamenting earlier, the Little Lion had already launched an ambush.

Seeing the dagger in Count Bert's hand, the Little Lion wasn't embarrassed at all.

He smiled and said —

"How can you steal my dagger?

But, if you like it...

Consider it a gift to you."

Boom!

Upon the fall of his words, the dagger in Count Bert's hand exploded.

With gunpowder added, metal fragments scattered everywhere, like a shrapnel mine.

Count Bert was riddled with holes.

The Little Lion rolled and dodged, ready to pull out the next prop.

But at that moment, the Little Lion froze.

The ring on his hand was gone.

Instinctively, the Little Lion looked towards Count Bert.

At this moment, Inner Bay's first heir thought it was Count Bert's doing, but meeting his gaze was the equally puzzled Earl.

They exchanged glances.

In the next moment, they simultaneously turned their heads.

They looked at the black crow.

The earlier feeble crow, seeming ready to die, now stood calmly, its beady eyes moving, the whole crow looking spirited with no sign of aging.

Moreover, upon seeing their gaze, Fujin opened its mouth and cried.

Ka, ka, ka!

The loud crow cries resonated throughout the chamber, no need for a bird language expert's translation; both the Little Lion and Count Bert understood what Fujin said.

Fools! Fools!

Two big fools!

And accompanying Fujin's cries, Arthur's voice emerged —

"Come on, let's play a game!"

Instantly, their expressions changed drastically.

Chapter 847: Monsters, Monsters, and Monsters IX

[Target character 'Gleisa Hamlet', determination in progress...]

[Determination passed!]

[Consume 10 years of lifespan, obtain target item!]

...

[Target character 'Rondo Hart Bet', determination in progress...]

[Determination passed!]

[Consume 10 years of lifespan, obtain target item!]

...

The flickering words in front announced Arthur's successful theft.

However, Arthur looked at the ancient ring in his hand, and surprise appeared in his eyes—

[Name: Abdul's Tribute]

[Type: Ring]

[Quality: Legend]

[Attributes: 1, Space; 2, Vitality; 3, Fire Affinity]

[Remarks: When Abdul, as a student, packed his bags, bid farewell to his teacher and friends, and embarked on his journey across the continent with a mix of apprehension and excitement, Hercules had already gained fame.

In response, Abdul wished his friend, who was both a mentor and friend, well and reminisced about the times they played beast chess together.

At the same time, he was more determined to find a path forward for 'Fire Control Technique'.

In the first year of leaving, Abdul went to the empire's warm south, where he saw a small fishing village called 'South Los' that was peaceful and joyful, and Abdul stayed there for 6 weeks.

In the second year, Abdul set forth towards the empire's north.

The cold winds and bandits made him increasingly resilient.

This journey lasted a full three years, during which Abdul's fire control technique became increasingly proficient but still without direction, until he received a letter from Hercules—why can't humans transform into flames?

That hint gave Abdul a thought.

He found not only the next step of thought.

But also the step after next.

At the same time, his alchemy also broke through.

To commemorate his friend, Abdul crafted this ring and inscribed a message on the inner band—My friend, your wisdom is unmatched.]

...

[Space: This is a space measuring 10m x 10m x 10m]

[Vitality: You still can't store truly living beings, but you can keep some objects lively]

[Fire Affinity: Abdul's insights into fire have unconsciously been added to it, by wearing this ring, you cannot be harmed by blaze]

(Annotation 1: Space cannot contain space items)

(Annotation 2: Fresh vegetables can stay fresh here forever)

(Annotation 3: Abdul's Tribute maintains consistently at 3.33g; currently holds 9 full sets of Parasitic Revival vessels, props, 300kg of gold, 10ml of Fountain of Youth, Elena's Compassion X1, Elena's Healing Scroll X3, Elena's Healing Potion X10, Snake Shadow Staff X1, Shadow Stab X1, Selderlon's Fist. Right Hand X1)

...

Arthur had never thought he would encounter the name Abdul at a time like this.

Regarding [Abdul's Pyrokinesis], Arthur had a deep impression.

However, Arthur hadn't expected this 'Abdul' would become a master, and his creativity far exceeded that of a regular master.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have endowed space equipment with the ability to maintain the vitality of stored items.

Understand that, even Lady Abel could only use [Constant Temperature] to maintain the potency of potions at its maximum, not this type of targeted approach.

As for the [Parasitic Revival] complete set with vessels and props stored inside?

Arthur wasn't surprised.

He 'witnessed' Little Lion's 'resurgence', and naturally guessed these items would be inside.

Or rather, he was inherently heading for these items.

Otherwise, he couldn't have procured these things in such a short time.

The 300 kilograms of gold within also allowed him to achieve [Parasitic Revival] in one go, with some still remaining.

The 10ml of Fountain of Youth was a pleasant surprise.

Arthur knew clearly he could enhance his secret technique [Distortion] as part of his learning agenda.

Concerning Elena's Compassion X1, Elena's Healing Scroll X3, Elena's Healing Potion X10?

When Little Lion began to deliberately reveal his trump card and used that [Elena's Compassion] scroll, Arthur had some suspicions.

[Elena's Healing] was less effective than [Elena's Compassion], but it was still sufficient to heal someone with a fatal wound.

[Elena's Healing Potion] was weaker by a margin but still a potent potion for treating severe injuries.

Other pleasant surprises included: [Snake Shadow Staff], [Shadow Stab], [Selderlon's Fist. Right Hand]!

The three props were all disposable items.

[Snake Shadow Staff] originated from the initial Serpent Sect and can summon a Third Order giant snake shadow lasting one minute to serve its user.

[Shadow Stab] is a long-lost tool with 'Shadowflow', capable of launching a Fourth Order attack using the power of shadows.

[Selderlon's Fist] was the power left by the Archbishop Selderlon from mid Holy Era. During the 'Shadow War', this Archbishop faced consecutive defeats but was still respected because he always charged ahead and covered the retreat for most people until he met Death.

This Archbishop injected his will into his two fist gauntlets before dying; Arthur has the right hand, capable of delivering a demigod blow filled with conviction.

Upon seeing these items, Arthur couldn't help but grin.

These could serve as trump card props, which is why he acted as Little Lion—the first heir to Inner Bay, who knows how many items unattainable by common people he could use as his trump card?

Thus, without confirming how many trump cards Little Lion had, Arthur absolutely wouldn't assume he already had victory in his grasp.

In fact, that was indeed the case.

If it weren't for utilizing the opponent's 'Prophetic Vision' and pulling one over them once, he might already be fleeing with his tail between his legs.

Of course, none of this really surprised Arthur.

The real surprise this time was [Abdul's Pyrokinesis]!

'Lv5 allows one to transform into flames?

Then what about Lv6?

Really makes one look forward to it!

Arthur thought quietly to himself.

In the remarks, it's clear at a glance that Abdul didn't just advance his fire control technique from Lv4 to Lv5. Lv6 probably was advanced as well.

He might even achieve Lv7!

This was naturally great news to Arthur.

However, Arthur wasn't blinded.

He recalled everything he knew about 'Abdul'.

Aside from the secret technique [Abdul's Pyrokinesis], he knew very little about this name, but based on the opponent's talent and effort, elevating [Abdul's Pyrokinesis] to the height of Lv6 or Lv7 couldn't render him unnoticed.

Even without a title like 'Fierce Flame King', he should at least have a name like 'Fire Controller', right?

Yet why does he not?

'Did an accident occur?

Or...

'Shadow War'?

Arthur pondered while turning his gaze toward another prop at hand.

It was stolen from Count Bet.

Previously, upon discovering Count Bet's 'Undying' wasn't a secret technique, Arthur promptly realized the Count was relying on a prop.

Thus, during the second theft attempt, Arthur chose to steal a prop.

But as for this prop, Arthur's surprise grew more dense.

There was even a touch of astonishment—

'There's actually such a thing?!'

Chapter 848: Monsters, Monsters, and Monsters X

What surprised and shocked Arthur was a painting.

To be precise, it was a portrait with an oak wood frame, yet the frame was broken and half a person high.

The painting depicted Count Bert.

Just like Count Bert now standing before Arthur.

Of course, these are not the main points.

The main point is—

[Name: Hallward's Masterpiece (Damaged)]

[Type: Other Items]

[Quality: V]

[Attributes: 1, Imprint, 2, Undying]

[Remarks: Hallward was an obscure painter, but he possessed an unimaginable obsession, an obsession with beauty. He believed in recording the most beautiful things in the world.

For this, Hallward's friend, Lord Henry, greatly approved.

So, Lord Henry found a young man of remarkable beauty for Hallward.

Upon seeing this young man, Hallward decided to start painting.

This painter took the pigments prepared by his friend Lord Henry and entered a countryside studio specially prepared by his friend for what would be his peak and final creation.

What this painter did not know was that his friend's pigments contained a vial of 'Time Dragon' blood.

Nor did this painter know that the countryside studio was filled with rituals and distortions.

This painter believed he was painting the beautiful young man, but the final result was Lord Henry.

This lord sought to achieve immortality through the painter's brush.

The lord succeeded, but also failed.

The plan succeeded.

But the lord underestimated the painter's obsession with his work. At the last moment, the painter sensed something was wrong.

The painter could not destroy the ritual but could destroy his own painting, even at the cost of his life!

Both the painter and the lord died.

The young man took the painting and fled far away, burying the secret forever until a grave robber named Bet stumbled across the strange tombs in the young man's hometown]

...

[Imprint: Attach your own portrait to the masterpiece and enjoy the 'undying' gift]

[Undying: Time remains forever at that moment]

(Note 1: The masterpiece suffered irreversible damage at birth, causing the permanent loss of some original capabilities, and moreover, adding a curse. When the masterpiece is damaged, the one with the imprint will suffer irreversible harm, and when the masterpiece is completely destroyed, the one with the imprint will permanently die, including the soul dissipating)

(Note 2: During imprinting, professional painting, carving, or printing skills are required)

(Note 3: The Time Dragon's blood stopped the time of the 'masterpiece' imprinted, thus granting a similar 'undying' power, but also forfeiting all potential, unable to further develop strength)

(Note 4: The masterpiece can be damaged by supernatural power, but only 'demigod'-level power can truly destroy the masterpiece)

...

Arthur stared at [Hallward's Masterpiece], his eyes fixed.

The young Southern Lost Spirit Medium admitted his youth for the first time.

Such an item as [Hallward's Masterpiece] actually existed.

More importantly, this was still a damaged item, yet even so, it fulfilled in some way the concept of 'undying'.

If it were perfect, not damaged, Arthur couldn't imagine its power.

'Time Dragon?'

Arthur pondered the long-vanished dragon.

Then, through Fujin's vision, he looked towards the Little Lion and Count Bert——

"Come, let's play a game!"

Arthur's tone was filled with amusement.

Arthur did not hide this at all.

Upon hearing these words, both the Little Lion and Count Bert changed color.

The Little Lion sensed Arthur's malice.

Count Bert looked even more unpleasant.

His trump card was taken away.

It was a matter of life and death.

More importantly, the Lord Count confirmed that Arthur had already mastered the origins of that item.

Mastered its origins.

Naturally aware of its use.

At this thought, the Lord Count could barely breathe.

This was his first time feeling so troubled.

And it was his last time feeling freedom.

Without a doubt, the Lord Count already knew what game Arthur wanted to play.

In fact?

It was indeed like this!

"Count Bert, shall we play a game of eliminating Gleisa within one minute, how about that?"

The Crow's mouth uttered words of calamity.

Count Bert said nothing, immediately taking action.

Life pinched in Arthur's hand, Count Bert knew exactly what to do at this moment.

As for betting on whether Arthur could truly destroy that painting?

Count Bert dared not bet.

Therefore, Count Bert's offensive exceeded before.

The acid sprayed out like a burst fire hydrant.

In almost an instant, the house was no more.

The Little Lion in the house was utterly corroded.

The Little Lion did not want to escape.

But couldn't.

Previously, seeing Count Bert, he had tried to flee using his powers, but clearly, the nearby area had been set up with a ritual targeting him, making his powers ineffective.

Now?

The Three-Eyed Crow was there too, along with the Southern Lost Spirit Medium standing behind it.

The Little Lion knew he couldn't escape.

So—

"I am the Heir of the Inner Bay, Gleisa Hamlet!

The one who kills me..."

Poof!

The Little Lion shouted aloud.

He wanted to announce the culprit's identity.

He died.

But the Golden Lion Family still existed.

As long as the Golden Lion Family existed, he wouldn't die in vain.

His father would surely avenge him.

However, the Little Lion's words had not finished before Count Bert's acid covered his face.

Under the corrosive acid, the Little Lion's face and mouth dissolved instantly.

Next, his entire body.

In moments, the Little Lion vanished without a trace.

Leaving only a crystal the size of a fingertip.

Count Bert picked up the crystal, his face stern, body slightly stiff as he walked towards Fujin.

Then, the Lord Count knelt on one knee, presenting the crystal with both hands——

[Name: Key]

[Type: Other Items]

[Quality: Hero]

[Attributes: Open]

[Remarks: This was the flagship young Lion crafted at great expense, comparable to the four legendary battleships, intending to ride the Lion through the coastal areas and venture into the high seas. But an unexpected encounter with you made him sink without a trace]

...

[Open: Holding the key, approaching the Lion, can open the 'Lion']

...

Through Fujin's eyes, Arthur looked at this key, and then, the Crow's eyes locked onto Count Bert.

The invisible pressure made the Count's cheek twitch slightly.

But soon, the Lord Count took a deep breath and shouted loudly——

"The murderer of Gleisa Hamlet, Rondo Hart Bet!"

Chapter 849 Declaration of War

Count Bert's words echoed in the night sky.

The nearby streets all heard them.

Not only heard them, but heard them clearly.

The people hiding in their homes looked at each other.

The foolish were fearful and uneasy.

The clever ones began to ponder the meaning behind it.

However, this had nothing to do with Suke Street, where fighting continued.

The narrow streets rendered the warhorses useless, and the soldiers could only slash their targets with the longswords in their hands.

Every moment, someone fell.

Every moment, there were cries of anguish.

Especially at the point where three sides converged, it was like a meat grinder.

Layers of corpses covered the ground, forming small streams of fresh blood, which splashed up scarlet when stepped on by a boot.

Huff, huff.

Depro panted heavily, but his steps continued forward.

Opposite, Diliven and Peigi shouted in unison.

"Kill!"

The battle of the three brothers Depro, Diliven, and Peigi had reached an intense heat.

After their initial engagements, Diliven and Peigi had formed an alliance — it was out of necessity, as Depro displayed strength beyond their wildest imagination.

The two had always believed Depro's combat power was merely at the Great Arcana Level, but who knew Depro had already touched the edge of the 'Entry' level.

Seeing the featherless, tumor-headed strange bird behind Depro, Diliven and Peigi gripped their swords and launched a new offensive.

Even though he had touched the edge of 'Entry', Depro still wasn't truly 'Entry'.

Under the attack of his two brothers, the breathing of this Eldest Son of the Count grew increasingly heavy.

However, his moves remained nimble.

With a quick step, he dodged the thrust of the sword.

This scene nearly made Peigi grind his teeth to dust.

He always regarded himself as the most talented of the three brothers.

But who knew Depro was hiding so deeply.

"Damn it!"

Peigi roared, no longer holding back with his sword.

He used his trump card!

A swordsmanship move he had practiced for many years!

This move was not the commonly seen [Swift Bird Swordsmanship] of South County but a rarer and more skillful, sinister sword technique.

Whoosh!

He thrust his sword, seemingly aimed at Depro's throat, but when Depro raised his sword to defend, the sword tip wavered, sweeping toward Depro's eyes. Just completing the defensive posture, Depro couldn't retract his sword in time and could only lean back to evade. However, this sword was still a feint, and the longsword sweeping towards his eyes suddenly slashed down, aiming for the heart coming in sideways.

Depro's sword was held horizontally before his throat.

And his upper body leaned backward even more.

This downward diagonal thrust was something no ordinary person could evade.

But Depro did evade it.

No!

To be precise, he evaded it by counterattacking.

Depro lifted his right leg, kicking towards the spine of the sword.

This kick was executed with full force.

If it hit, Peigi's longsword would definitely be knocked out of his hand.

But this kick missed again.

Peigi exerted force with one ankle, twisting his lower leg, thigh, and then warping his torso into rotation, moving his arm and the sword along with the spin.

Whoosh!

In an instant, the sword that was originally aimed at the heart turned into a sword aimed at the groin.

Moreover, because of the body's rotation, this sword was faster, more vicious, and more bizarre than before.

Peigi's face was filled with a vicious sneer.

"I've practiced this sword move for ten years!

Can you withstand it?

Uh!"

Poof!

Before he could finish his sentence, it halted abruptly.

The vicious sneer froze on Peigi's face.

The third son of the count looked down in disbelief.

A longsword had pierced into his back, through the chest, with fresh blood dripping from the sword tip.

It was Diliven.

Peigi's eyes were filled with confusion.

He couldn't understand why Diliven did this.

But the next moment, Peigi understood.

A phantom rose behind Diliven.

A strange bird with feathers all over yet bare neck and head appeared behind Diliven.

Feeling the faint intimidating aura, Peigi realized Diliven, too, had reached the edge of 'Entry'.

Among the three, only he lagged behind?!

But he was clearly the most talented and diligent one!

Especially that sword move, he practiced it for ten years!

That was his trump card to overcome the strong with the weak!

Peigi's eyes were filled with unwillingness.

But as Diliven moved his wrist, Peigi's heart was shattered.

Immediately, Depro stepped forward and decapitated Peigi with a single slash.

Poof!

Peigi's head flew into the air.

Then—

Clang!

After 'cooperating' to take down Peigi, Depro and Diliven's swords clashed, colliding with such force that both longswords seemed glued together, emitting a creaking sound.

And at that moment, Peigi's headless body fell heavily to the ground.

Thump!

Followed by the fallen head.

The head, mixed with fresh blood, bounced upon hitting the ground and rolled several times until it reached the foot of a person by the wall.

Peigi's wide-eyed head stared firmly at that person.

And that person's eyes reddened slightly, picking up the head and cradling it.

Unable to suppress it, the person began to sob.

Immediately, this scene attracted those fighting around.

"Lord Count?!"

With a shout of surprise, a series of exclamations followed.

"Lord Count!"

"Lord Count!"

"It's Lord Count!"

The soldiers stopped fighting, turning their gaze towards the middle-aged man who walked into the field.

At this moment, the handsome face of the middle-aged man showed anger, disappointment, and grief—

"You not only collaborated with outsiders but also killed your own brother, I'm extremely disappointed in you both."

Count Bert growled lowly.

"Father!"

Diliven tried to explain.

But Depro was straightforward.

"Kill him!

He is a counterfeit!

My father died long ago!"

Before the words finished, Depro charged forward with his sword, intending to kill Count Bert—the Eldest Son of the Count knew things were going bad the moment he saw Count Bert appear.

For this Eldest Son of the Count, there was no retreat at this point.

Only by killing the Count Bert before him could he survive and live better.

And after a moment's hesitation, Diliven also shouted, joining the attack—

"Kill him! He isn't my father!"

The two longswords mercilessly struck downward.

To Count Bert, his three sons held no more of his affections.

Being 'Undying',

He naturally cared little for so-called 'descendants'.

Especially those 'descendants' produced unnaturally.

Facing the two sons daring to attack him, the Count was still furious.

Without hesitation, he sprayed acid liquid.

Depro and Diliven screamed and fell.

Then, they dissolved into liquid.

Having done all this, Count Bert spoke coldly, enunciating each word—

"Everything that happened tonight was incited by Gleisa Hamlet!

Inner Bay has torn apart the noble alliance we once had!

That Old Lion has made a move against me!

Therefore, I declare war on Inner Bay—

Declare war!"

Chapter 850: Arcane Ship

A declaration of war rang out, and the entire venue fell silent.

The whole of Suke Street became eerily quiet.

All the soldiers were stunned.

They looked at each other in bewilderment.

Declare war on Inner Bay?

That's the Inner Bay of the Golden Lion Family!

Do they stand a chance?

All the soldiers could see the unease on each other's faces, yet as soldiers loyal to the Bert Family, they could not speak out against it.

More importantly, if they opposed now, they would likely be killed as a warning to others, right?

The soldiers who had just fought their way through and were bloodied fell into silence.

Count Bert squinted his eyes.

At this moment, the Earl realized he had been away from the soldiers' "sight" for too long, so long that they had forgotten his temperament.

Just as the Earl was preparing to remind the soldiers before him—

"War declared!"

A voice of war declaration rang out from the crowd.

Soon after, more voices followed.

"War declared! War declared!"

Each voice came from a different place, but all originated from one person.

Arthur!

Using the Noise Technique, Arthur spread his voice.

And the supernatural Bluff filled the voice with fervor.

Almost instantly, some soldiers were stirred up.

"War declared! War declared!"

The soldiers shouted boldly.

People tend to follow blindly.

Just like dominoes, when the first one falls, a chain reaction follows.

In just a few seconds, the entire Suke Street was filled with the sound of "war declared."

Count Bert struck while the iron was hot—

"Go notify the Bert Territory's fleet that I want them gathered at the port by sunrise!

Inform the lords under my domain to send troops!

I want to see them at Rondohart Port in three days!"

"Yes, Lord Count!"

The deputies of Depro, Diliven, and Peigi responded in unison.

Then, some people cleaned the battlefield, some went to the port, while others rode out of Rondohart Port toward other towns in the Bert Territory.

But falcons were even faster.

As for communication crystals?

Some places had them.

However, most areas did not.

They could only rely on horseback, carrier pigeons, or falcons.

And after accomplishing all of this, a fine oak carriage drawn by four high-quality horses slowly appeared on the street—this was not the latest model Char Carriage, but one popular during the Silver Age. Its complex and expensive craftsmanship far exceeded ordinary Char Carriages, often costing as much as a mansion, which made it popular among the "true nobles."

The coachman cracked his whip.

Crack!

With a crisp sound, the carriage headed straight for Count Bert's mansion.

Since war had been declared on Inner Bay, returning to the suburban estate was naturally impossible.

A unit of soldiers followed neatly behind.

Every soldier's face was filled with excitement.

War is dangerous.

But during war, there are also opportunities.

Especially for these soldiers, it was the best chance to turn their fate around.

When ambition overcomes apprehension, everything changes.

Furthermore, they had Count Bert!

A person as great as the Old Lion!

At least, that's how the soldiers saw it!

What these soldiers didn't know was that the person they revered was kneeling on one knee inside the carriage—

"Master, your orders have been fulfilled."

Count Bert respectfully lowered his head.

Arthur, while admiring the Char Carriage's spaciousness and comfort, adjusted himself to a more comfortable position before speaking.

"Well done."

After speaking, Arthur tossed out seven contracts.

"Sign them."

Count Bert's mouth twitched slightly as he looked at the seven contracts, which seemed like indenture contracts.

It wasn't because of signing the contracts.

In fact, the Lord Count didn't oppose signing contracts.

Ever since Arthur obtained Hallward's Mastery, the Earl had willingly submitted, genuinely and willingly.

Choosing "defy and lose your life" was not for Count Bert.

But seven contracts seemed a bit excessive.

It's too cautious.

Count Bert thought to himself, but quickly signed his name on the seven contracts.

Then, the Earl eagerly asked—

"Master, what's our next step?"

"According to plan, head toward Inner Bay.

If anything happens, I'll contact you."

As Arthur spoke, he examined the seven contracts closely.

With Hallward's Mastery in hand, he had indeed grasped Count Bert's lifeline, but ever since encountering the special prop Thief's Door, Arthur couldn't be sure that just Hallward's Mastery would ensure Count Bert's loyalty.

Who knew if Count Bert would hold something back?

Thus, the need for contracts to ensure things.

This was beneficial for both him and the other party.

After all, moving forward, he wouldn't have extra effort to deal with the other party.

Seeing Arthur's cautious demeanor, Count Bert couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

He understood that his small tricks were better not to be played.

Otherwise, it would backfire.

"Excellent!

Maintain your current mindset!"

After storing away the seven contracts, Arthur verbally encouraged Count Bert.

Then, without noticing Count Bert's changing expression, Arthur disappeared with a swift move, leaving Count Bert in the carriage with furrowed brows, looking troubled.

'I underestimated!'

Count Bert was quite surprised at having his thoughts exposed.

He hadn't expected Arthur to possess such sharp insight.

Or...

He'd become sluggish.

Because of the "Undying," he'd become too sluggish.

Fortunately, discovering it now wasn't too late.

He still had a chance.

A chance to change this sluggishness.

And a chance to correct the "small error" he just made.

He was convinced that his inherent value would surely make Arthur forgive him.

As long as he didn't make such mistakes in the future, he could definitely become Arthur's most capable subordinate.

And now?

This Earl suddenly thought of something.

'If I accomplish this...

Not only can I correct the small error, but I might also gain more recognition from the Master, right?'

Thinking of this, the Earl's lips curled as he lightly tapped the carriage barrier, signaling the coachman to speed up.

As for Arthur, who moved far away, just as Count Bert suspected, he didn't "keep this matter in mind" — for Arthur, Count Bert's value allowed him to tolerate some mistakes that hadn't truly happened.

If they did happen?

He'd see how using supernatural power to imprint Hallward's Mastery might affect Count Bert.

However, nothing happened.

Everything was well.

And now?

Arthur stood on the riverside, bringing out the Key.

With a silent activation in his mind.

In the next moment—

Arthur's Spirit Medium broke through the river surface and appeared directly.

Accompanying its appearance were written introductions.

After a detailed examination, Arthur's eyes lit up brightly.