

## Great Master 99

Chapter 99 Bait!

The candlesticks on the wall lit up the entire corridor, allowing Marinda to clearly see what was written on the paper,

suddenly, the lady blinked her attractive blue eyes, her face showing a fleeting expression of surprise.

Then came...

Excitement galore!

The lady crossed her fingers behind her back, briskly shaking her wrists while rhythmically hopping on her feet.

She looked like a boxer warming up.

Clearly, the lady was prepared to carry out those two words seriously.

The candle flame on the candlestick seemed to leap with the lady's small hops, as if ready to cheer her on at any moment.

Arthur, without any hesitation, quickly pulled out another piece of paper he had prepared, on which was written in bold, enlarged font—

Slap to the face, leave a handprint.

Only one slap allowed.

Do not hit vital points.

... Experience tales with empire

As Marinda's gaze swept over the paper, disappointment immediately appeared in her eyes, and a sigh of regret filled her heart.

She had not anticipated Arthur would react so swiftly.

She had originally planned to take the opportunity to give Arthur a couple of tough hits—a groin kick would be excessive, but the Explosive Liver Punch was a must.

Not for any other reason, but because of Arthur's advance preparations at Oakwood Manor—she admired Arthur's cautious style, but that did not stop her from feeling resentful for being guarded against, and thinking of giving Arthur a few punches when the opportunity arose.

As for such behavior being unreasonable?

Talking reason with a woman, now that's folly.

Arthur knew this well, and that's why he had prepared in advance.

Fortunately, the lady wasn't inclined to cause unreasonable trouble, which gave Arthur a large sigh of relief—he was quite sure that once Albert, accompanied by four guards from Oakwood Manor, went to No. 6 White Bird Street, the lady would be able to roughly guess his plan.

Starting with the transformation of Arthur's identity, with the Golden Acorn as the point of conflict, a quarrel would erupt, possibly even coming to blows, and in the end, the two would part on unfriendly terms.

Of course, all of this was just a setup!

The real goal was to lure out the Mystic Assembly in Rat Tail Alley on Rat Street using the 'Golden Acorn'!

As for the appeal of the 'Golden Acorn,' Arthur was deeply confident—after all, in South Los, the 'Golden Acorn' was unique to Oakwood Manor!

What kind of business is the most profitable?

A monopoly!

Everyone knows this!

Arthur was especially aware of it!

If it had been an ordinary time, with his and Marinda's well-known 'lover' relationship, the people controlling the Mystic Assembly in Mouse Alley might have had some reservations, but once a 'conflict' arose between him and Marinda, those people would certainly come knocking—if they were suspicious, they would still investigate rather than ignore it.

And once they showed up, Arthur was confident he could hook them!

Because this was not just about the benefits brought by the 'Golden Acorn,' but also...

the competition with Marinda!

In South Los, there were only two Mystic Assemblies.

One was Marinda's 'Lady of the Long Night's Salon,' and the other was Mouse Alley on Rat Street.

Marinda wanted to monopolize Mouse Alley.

And Mouse Alley?

They likely harbored a similar idea.

Even, to compete for the Earl of South Los, the people controlling the Mystic Assembly in Mouse Alley would be even more aggressive—For them, it wasn't daunting that Marinda had the support of the Earl of South Los, as long as they could pay enough, the Earl could support them as well.

This was not an impossibility.

Because, everyone knows that the friendships among nobles are not solid.

To stabilize such alliances, one must offer substantial benefits.

Or...

Become a noble!

Once you become a noble, a whole new set of rules appears before you—though still mixed with benefits, power, and such, it gives you the last chance to stay alive.

This is enticing enough!

Not to mention the various intangible benefits brought by becoming a noble.

Otherwise, why would Marinda go to such lengths to seek the title of Baron Kemir?

As Arthur thought this, his gaze naturally fell on the lady.

And the lady?

She had already swung her arm widely!

Crack!

A crisp sound.

A slap landed solidly on Arthur's face.

Even Arthur's 'Physique' of 1.8 was staggered enough to see stars.

Undoubtedly, Marinda had not pulled her punches at all.

With one slap, the lady's face was lit up with glee.

The genuinely joyous expression infuriated Arthur, causing him to glare and flip the middle finger directly.

Marinda, however, didn't care and even stuck her tongue out at Arthur.

Then, the lady suddenly raised her voice and questioned loudly—

"Why? Why? Why do you have to be like this?"

In a flash, the lady was completely into her role!

Arthur adjusted his mood and glanced at his Skill tab.

The Lv3 "Eagle Eye" and "Insight" didn't flicker.

But the lady was indeed acting.

Clearly, these levels of "Eagle Eye" and "Insight" were not enough to see through the lady's performance, which made Arthur sigh softly. He then lowered his voice and said,

"Marinda, calm down!"

"How can you expect me to calm down?"

"What about your promises to me? What about your oaths?"

"Are you asking me to pretend I don't know anything?"

"Are you asking me to just ignore it?"

"Is this what you call love?"

The lady grew more and more agitated, even raising her hand again.

Arthur knew it was deliberate.

Without hesitating, he grabbed her wrist and held it against his recently slapped face, saying tenderly, "Do you believe in me?"

Marinda's hair stood on end, her misandry triggered instantaneously, and she began to feel nauseous.

She knew Arthur was doing this on purpose.

He was retaliating against her, just as she had just done—both keenly aware, their gazes met, both seeing the regret in each other's eyes for not being able to go 'further.'

As Marinda was about to really vomit, Arthur pulled out the last piece of paper.

This time it was in normal font, reading—

Cooperate!

Close cooperation!

...

Marinda, of course, knew what Arthur was emphasizing.

And it wasn't just for tonight, but for a considerable period to come.

Moreover, this time, there were even more spectators than the previous time at No. 6 White Bird Street.

The risk was much greater!

But, the risk was directly proportional to the rewards.

No!

To be precise, the rewards were exponentially greater!

With this in mind, Marinda nodded.

She didn't ask what Arthur would give up.

Because she trusted that Arthur would provide satisfying compensation.

Just like her compensation satisfied Arthur.

The two tacitly increased their distance, their eyes meeting before the heated words came out from the lady's mouth—

"I'm telling you!"

"Impossible!"

"We're done!"

After speaking, the lady opened the door and ran out, with Arthur naturally chasing after her, shouting as he ran, "Marinda! Marinda! Wait for me! Without you..."

Such shouting naturally attracted the attention of the surrounding neighbors.

Seeing Marinda departing in a carriage and Arthur with a slap mark on his face, the neighbors couldn't help but feel full of gossip.

Some were even gloating.

In the afternoon, when Arthur returned, his grandeur was seen by all on Cork Street.

While all from similar social strata, some people leaping ahead were hard for many to take.

Now seeing Arthur's misfortune, they naturally felt comforted.

And Arthur?

It seemed he only then realized he was being watched. Without greeting the neighbors, he walked quickly back to No. 2 Cork Street with his head down and his face covered.

As the door of No. 2 Cork Street closed, the whole Cork Street burst into chatter, with everyone discussing fervently.

Soon, the servants who returned home from work there relayed the news to their families, recounting it to their relatives.

The servants' relatives, in turn, spread the news throughout South Los the next day as they went to work.

Of course, some well-informed individuals knew everything half an hour after it happened.

Like...

Rat Tail Alley!