

I! CLEANER!

"Here for a job interview, right? What's your name?"

"Leon... Leon Laine."

Laine? Hearing this somewhat familiar surname, the bored female interviewer behind the desk raised an eyebrow. She looked at the thin young man with a weary complexion in front of her and asked in slight surprise,

"Laine... as in the Duke of Lionheart's Laine?"

"No..." The job-seeking young man seemed to be used to the question. He shook his head slightly and explained skillfully,

"Although the pronunciation is the same, the Lionheart's surname is derived from the golden lion 'Laine' on their family crest. My surname comes from

Laine County's 'Laine', where my ancestors were supposedly commoners from."

"Oh... I thought so." The red-haired woman nodded knowingly, amused by her own sensitivity.

That annoying family, so proud of their pure golden hair, hadn't had many members with different hair colors. How could they have a descendant with black hair and black eyes who had fallen to the point of seeking a job here?

She examined Leon's clothing, staring at his clean but frayed coat, and seemed to lose interest in him. The red-haired woman lowered her head again and, while marking something absent-mindedly on a list with a quill pen, said,

"Then fill in 'commoner' for family status, and report your education level, any faith, if you've undergone cybernetic modifications, whether you have a subcutaneous micro-differential engine implanted, and what specific crimes you've committed."

Huh? Wait! What specific crimes?

Leon was slightly stunned by the words, and he asked with some confusion,

"Excuse me, the last question you mentioned, you're asking if I have a 'criminal record', right?"

"?!"

Hearing Leon's question, the red-haired woman furrowed her brows, then knocked heavily on the table twice with her knuckles, sternly reprimanding,

"You'd better be honest! This is the Purification Bureau, not a court! If you haven't committed a major crime that requires going to the gallows, why would you come here for a job? Just say what you've done; don't try to play games with me!"

?!"

No... I'm just looking for a job, how did it end up related to going to the gallows?

Tch, so secretive; definitely up to no good!

Seeing Leon unable to answer immediately, the red-haired woman snorted disdainfully, then knocked on the table forcefully again, glaring at him sternly as if interrogating a criminal,

"I'll say it one last time, this is the Purification Bureau, not a court!

I'm neither able nor interested in judging you. The reason for asking what crime you've committed is to report your name and remove the Kingdom's wanted order on you, so you'd better be honest! Don't cause yourself trouble, understand?"

Wanted order?

Slightly stunned by the red-haired woman's words, Leon's pupils contracted slightly as he realized the misunderstanding. He cautiously asked, "Excuse me... is this the Capital City's First Cleaning Bureau?"

" ... "

Cleaning Bureau?

This time, it was the red-haired woman's turn to be taken aback. She thought for a moment, seeming to understand something.

After glancing at Leon's malnourished thin frame, her disdain faded, and she instructed while lowering her voice and frowning, pointing out the window,

"You came to the wrong place; this is the Sixth Abnormal Purification Bureau, a department affiliated with the Police Department. The Cleaning Bureau you want is under the Department of Road Administration. It's in the building diagonally opposite, with the long queue at the entrance."

"Oh, right!"

Realizing he had come to the wrong place, Leon breathed a sigh of relief.

Damn, that scared me. I wondered why becoming a street cleaner required being wanted. Turns out this isn't the Cleaning Bureau I was looking for.

Also, weren't they only hiring for ten positions this time? Why is the queue so long at the Cleaning Bureau? Are that many people aiming for a street cleaning job?

"Sorry to have disturbed you."

After apologizing politely, Leon glanced at the long queue outside through the window. Then, almost as if under a spell, he looked at the red-haired woman and asked softly, full of hope,

"Umm... if you need someone here as well."

"You're not suitable."

"..."

Seeing the young man, seemingly only sixteen or seventeen, with a suddenly dimmed expression, the red-haired woman hesitated before explaining,

"The Purification Bureau, although it has a decent income, with salaries higher than most municipal employees, has an approximate death rate of about 0.8%. So unless you're out of options, it's better if you don't work here."

0.8%?

Hearing the cold term "death rate," Leon wasn't scared. Instead, he showed a hint of joy.

Are you kidding me? That's not even 1%!

In my previous life, maybe that was one thing, but in this strange world with steam carriages running everywhere, workers doing jobs like furnace stoking, mining, magic infusion, and potion purification had an annual base death rate approaching 2%. The number of people disabled or poisoned due to machinery or potion vaporization was even several times higher than that.

And considering their average working "lifespan" of about thirty years, almost no one could work their entire life without any harm. A yearly death rate of less than 1% is completely...

"I might not have been clear just now."

Seeing Leon's somewhat interested expression, the red-haired woman shook her head and explained,

"The Purification Bureau's death rate isn't calculated annually; it's monthly."

"..."

Monthly? 0.8% a month... which means nearly 10% annually? This so-called Abnormal Purification Bureau loses almost a tenth of its employees every year?!?!

Seeing Leon's shock-filled eyes, the red-haired woman slightly shook her head, then motioned for him to leave,

"Now that you understand, please go. We only accept those who have committed capital crimes or those with controllable 'abnormalities'. Ordinary

people like you cannot handle the work at the Purification Bureau. It's not suitable for you."

"Then... sorry to have bothered you..."

With the red-haired woman's gentle but firm refusal, Leon felt a sharp pain in his head, followed by an ear-piercing buzz.

[Due to your twentieth job search failure, you have successfully activated the Black Iron Level Badge "Unemployed Youth."]

[Unemployed Youth: A young person temporarily unsuccessful in finding employment due to insufficient education, lack of experience, or a poor economy.]

[Wearing Effect: Your parents will trigger the special state "Vague Expression" and evade topics about you when talking with their peers.]

[Advancement Route: If you wear this badge for more than two months and still fail to find a job, under the condition of living with your parents, this badge will automatically advance to the bronze badge "Parasitic Child."]

[Hidden Trait (No need to wear): Upon activating the "Unemployed Youth" badge, if the total family assets are below 200 Gold Wheels, your chances of finding a romantic partner through matchmaking automatically decrease by 80%.]

" ... "