

I! Cleaner 101

Chapter 101 Skilled Hand and Care_1

"Heh heh, I knew I couldn't hide it from you."

Caught red-handed stealing, the short man didn't feel embarrassed; instead, he grinned cheekily,

"Don't be so serious, it's kind of scary. If I really wanted to steal from him, I'd have plenty of opportunities. Why would I do something so foolish, especially right in front of you? I just heard a newcomer has joined the bureau, and before even becoming permanent, he managed to take down a Holy Spirit. I got curious about him, so I just swiped it like that..."

"So where's the thing?"

Ignoring the short man's long-winded explanation, the Red-haired Director tapped the back of his hand on the table and then warned with narrowed eyes,

"Jerry, don't make me repeat myself a third time."

"Here, here it is!"

Noticing the Red-haired Director's fox-like eyes narrowing further, the short man couldn't help but tense up as well. Hastily, he pulled a photo from his pocket and obediently placed it on the table.

A photo?

After picking up the photo from the table, seeing the couple standing arm in arm and the little girl holding her parents' hands with a joyful smile, the Red-haired Director paused momentarily, surprised.

Apart from controlling animals, Jerry's most remarkable Anomalous Object was the Cunning Hand of Fate, which allowed him to forcibly steal an item that had the greatest impact on someone's past life, whether or not the item was on their person, or even if it had been destroyed.

So if his ability was correct, the most significant influence on Leon's past life was this photo on the table?

"Director, what can this thing do? Can you tell me?"

Seeing the contemplative look on the Red-haired Director's face, the short man, brimming with curiosity, started scratching his head impatiently. He couldn't hold back anymore and then plead with a fawning expression,

"For a newcomer who has only been in contact with Anomalous Objects for less than a month to possess the power to single-handedly cleanse a Holy Spirit, this Anomalous Object's ability must be quite powerful, right?"

Hmm? So this photo was an Anomalous Object? But why was the aura so faint? Could it have been destroyed multiple times before?

Hearing the short man's question, the Red-haired Director raised an eyebrow slightly and then shook his head decisively,

"I don't know about that. The perception-type Anomalous Object I used most often was that sheep, which I've already given to Leon. The new perception Anomalous Object hasn't been approved yet, so my perception ability is pretty average right now. If you truly want to know what this Anomalous Object can do, asking me won't help, but there's someone in our bureau who possesses an ability called Intelligence Acquisition. With just a touch, he can learn the intelligence of most Anomalous Objects. You can try asking him."

What? We have someone like that in our bureau?!

Hearing this, the short man's eyes lit up with excitement. This ability was a perfect match for him. Not to mention, he had secretly acquired quite a few things over the years, but either he couldn't activate them at all, or he didn't dare to use them rashly due to unknown rules and costs.

If he could get this Intelligence Acquisition to help him, even if only a third of the Anomalous Objects he stored over the years worked, it might just elevate his power to a whole new level, promoting him to a First Level disaster handler!

"Director, why didn't you say so earlier?"

Braving himself to complain to the Red-haired Director, the short man rubbed his hands excitedly and pressed further,

"Who is this person? Oh, and also, would he be willing to trade his Intelligence Acquisition Anomalous Object? If he's willing, he can pick anything from my collection over these years!"

"A trade is unlikely, as his ability is more like a talent residing in his soul. As for who this person is..."

Casting a teasing glance at the short man, the Red-haired Director picked up the photo and wagged it with a grin,

"It's the very person you just stole from."

"..."

"Uh... you know me..."

Seeing the mischievous look in the Red-haired Director's eyes and realizing he had been duped, the short man's face fell. With some embarrassment, he spoke,

"Although I've got a bit of a stealing habit, I really never go after people I know. I usually just take a look and return it right away, and even if it's a stranger, as long as they're not a bad person, I generally wouldn't take what they love. So... could you..."

"Are you thinking of getting this thing back and secretly returning it so Leon doesn't hold it against you and refuses to help?"

Seeing through the short man's thoughts instantly, the Red-haired Director shook a finger and said with a smile,

"Ah... that might be difficult, you know~ Little Leon may have only recently joined the Purification Bureau, but not only do we get along swimmingly, he even treated me to some good drinks. If I were to help you keep this a secret from him, how would I live up to our boozy camaraderie?"

"..."

Got it, you want a higher price, right?

Seeing the Red-haired Director's amused expression, the short man could only give up his wishful thinking, painfully offering,

"How about I treat you to a drink as well..."

"Ahem, there's no need to bring that up. I'm not that kind of person."

Stopping the short man just before hearing an irresistible offer, the Red-haired Director cleared his throat and said earnestly,

"If I'm not mistaken, you hope Leon can use his ability to help you identify the 'spoils' you've gathered over the years, right?"

"Right..."

"Then it's easy to handle."

The Red-haired Director rapped his knuckles on the table and said with a smile,

"Though I'm not sure how much stuff you've hoarded over the years, given your habits, it's probably quite a bit. Helping you identify so many items in one go would exhaust a lot of physical and mental energy. It's undoubtedly a tough job, so... allowing him to choose one as grind compensation is not too much, right?"

"Not too much, not too much."

Though still feeling a bit reluctant, knowing the nature of his boss, the short man understood that haggling would only result in being fleeced harder, so he promptly agreed.

"Alright then, leave the stuff with me; I'll put in a good word for you later on."

With a pleased nod, the Red-haired Director pulled out a strand of hair, bundled up the photo suspected of being an Anomalous Object, placed it into a drawer, and then smilingly said,

"However, the evaluation might have to wait. He has an important investigation task today and cannot be distracted. Once his investigation is done, I'll have him examine your collection."

"Okay, I'll wait right here in the bureau for him then."

Once he agreed enthusiastically, the short man's curiosity started bubbling up again as he looked at the cheerful Red-haired Director, cautiously asking,

"By the way, Director, is Leon... perhaps familiar with other branch directors? Or favored by a Director? Or... are you..."

"You want to ask why I'm taking such good care of him, don't you?"

Casting a meaningful look at the short man, the Red-haired Director replied, somewhat exasperated,

"Before you ask, I suggest you take a good look at the kind of people working in our bureau first."

Before the short man could reply, the Red-haired Director ticked off on his fingers as he listed them out one by one,

"Failed coup plotters, adulterers with the Prime Minister's wife, thieves who robbed from the royal family, gamblers who lost the Kingdom's reserve funds, grain officers who got lost on the battlefield and nearly starved thirty thousand people, pharmacists whose potion mishap submerged half a county in a sea of sh*t..."

Seeing the short man looking awkward, the Red-haired Director squinted as he concluded,

"If not for joining the Purification Bureau, you guys would be starting with a death sentence on average. Even now, you're constantly being watched, needing to report in advance even if leaving the Capital City for a task. As for Leon, with a clean background, good moral character, smart and vigilant, reliable and hardworking, and highly talented, having taken down a Holy Spirit during his probation period... You tell me, compared to you guys, who else should I look after if not him?"

Chapter 102 A hundred years to earn a passage on the same boat, ten years...

[Bronze Level Hidden Badge "Connected Party" activated, you received a support resource from within the organization. The resource can be obtained once the provider's conditions are met.]

Hearing the notification by his ear, Leon, holding a broom and shopping bag, and waiting for the carriage at the city district intersection to visit the Ryan Family, couldn't help but pause slightly.

Wow, this Hidden Badge really lived up to its name. How long has it been since I got it? And it's already scored me a resource support.

Although some conditions still needed to be met to obtain the resource support, since the resource was from the Purification Bureau, it most likely related to materials for an Anomalous Object, or maybe even an Anomalous Object itself.

According to Senior Emma, the bureau averaged three missions and spent three to four months to acquire one Anomalous Object, and even then, there was no guarantee it could be useful.

Compared with that, if the resource obtained was truly an Anomalous Object and the conditions weren't too harsh, this exchange was quite a bargain!

...

"Honk!!!"

Just as Leon hesitated whether to go back and ask about the so-called resource support, to see exactly what it was, he heard a slightly piercing whistle, as four robust horses slowly pulled a large carriage toward the platform.

Forget it, the carriage is here... And I don't know how long it will take to fulfill that condition, plus, the investigation of the Ryan Family has been delayed long enough, I'll deal with the resource issue after the investigation.

After making up his mind, Leon moved forward as the steam carriage's door stabilized in the boarding area, then bent low to squeeze into the carriage with about twenty positions and sat down in a rear seat.

Compared to the front rows near the carriage door, the rear position was closer to the boiler at the back of the carriage and was very noisy, a torment during the summer.

But with just a few days before winter, for Leon, whose coat was very old and not warm enough, it was undoubtedly the most comfortable position.

However, as Leon sat back on the chair with a pleased expression, feeling the comforting warmth on his back, he heard hurried footsteps outside the carriage and a rather familiar anxious shout.

"Wait a minute! We're getting on too!"

Oh damn, could I be so unlucky?

Recognizing whose voice it was, Leon, who didn't want to meet her, turned dark and instinctively shrunk down, hesitating whether to get off the carriage now.

But within that brief moment, the owner of the voice had already run from the back to the carriage door, leaping skillfully with a long stride, jumping into the carriage. It was the female detective from the Secret Investigation Bureau.

"What are you doing? Do you want to die?"

At this point, the carriage had slightly moved from the platform. Although one could still get on in one step, it was still somewhat dangerous. Facing the risky maneuver from the woman not in uniform, the ticket lady shouted angrily,

"If you don't want to live, find another carriage! Don't bring disaster to mine!"

"Ah! I apologize, I'm sorry!"

Finally getting on the carriage, the female detective sighed in relief, then hurriedly apologized repeatedly, explaining,

"We have an urgent matter, and this carriage comes only once every hour. I was afraid you wouldn't wait for us and leave directly, so I chased up a bit hastily. I promise it won't happen again... Could you move the carriage back a bit? There are others behind..."

"Hmph, the young ones today, all rushed and reckless... Move back a bit!"

Muttering a few unyielding words, the ticket lady, seeing the female detective continuously apologizing, didn't make things difficult for her but rather signaled the driver to stop again, allowing the other two people to get on.

However, as the two women and one man entered the carriage and prepared to walk to the back, the ticket lady stopped them with one arm, saying sourly,

"Only two seats are left, one of you has to get off!"

What?

Hearing her words, the three of them were stunned, and the female detective hesitated before speaking up,

"Then they can sit. I can stand in the aisle..."

"Are you making trouble?"

Interrupting her, while patting the sign on the carriage wall, the ticket lady said with glaring eyes,

"This is a fast long-carriage drawn by four horses! No standing passengers!"

"But..."

"But what? Pretty as you are, why are you talking nonsense?"

The ticket lady, with an impatient face, continued to hustle,

"Once more, this is a fast carriage, and it doesn't have handles for standing passengers!

If something happens requiring a sudden stop, standing in the middle of the aisle, you'll fly from the last row to the front! Your face will be scraped off!

So hurry up! One of you three has to get off! This trip is already quite late, if we don't depart now, we'll be off-schedule!"

Truly no options... What to do?

Hearing the ticket lady's words, the man among the other two immediately glanced at the female detective with an inquisitive look.

Should we wait for the next trip? Or wait for one of the bureau's official vehicles to return?

The female detective immediately understood her colleague's meaning and shook her head firmly.

The next carriage wouldn't come for over an hour, and being in the city district area, scattered carriages rarely came by. Missing the scheduled visit time with the Ryan Family would make it difficult to arrange another meeting.

"You should get off."

Signaling to her colleague, the female detective placed a hand on the third person's shoulder, speaking earnestly,

"It's fine, though it isn't ideal having one fewer person, I'm here."

"Well... okay."

Remembering her "glorious history," the male detective felt confident she could handle the escort of a frail female prisoner alone. With only slight hesitation, he nodded in agreement.

After handing something over to her, the male detective got off the carriage, and the female detective "kindly" draped an arm around the pale-faced woman's shoulders and half-pushed her towards the back of the carriage.

...

However, as the ticket lady had said, the four-horse long-carriage was fully packed, with only two empty spots in the noisy last row near the boiler.

Among the five seats in the last row, on the right was a whispering young couple, and on the left was a young man with his head covered by an old coat, sleeping soundly against the wall.

Perhaps... ask to swap seats?

Looking at the detained female prisoner, the female detective hesitated. She didn't mind the noise of the last row but worried whether the restrained prisoner might harm someone and hoped to move her to a seat beside the wall.

Though the prisoner had been compliant since her capture, with one less escorting officer, if she decided to escape... although confident in immediately subduing her, injuries would be problematic.

"Excuse me..."

"You two women at the back, what are you doing?"

After waiting a long while and seeing them not seated, preventing departure, the ticket lady shouted impatiently, scolding,

"If you're sitting, then sit quickly! If not, get off quickly! What nonsense are you spouting on my carriage?"

The female detective shrank her neck at the scolding and hurriedly sat with the prisoner before the lady tackled the expulsion.

"Honk!!!"

With the piercing whistle and horse's neigh, the steam carriage left the platform and gradually picked up speed. As the boiler and water tank at the back started emitting sharp noises, the female detective patted the person covered by the coat on the shoulder, inquiring politely and softly,

"Excuse me, sir, could you please help by swapping seats with my friend?"

Chapter 103 a bandage_1

"..."

Are you serious? I'm completely covered up, and you still manage to find me?

Although he had managed to get a rather decent badge off the policewoman, Leon had faced quite a few awkward situations and really didn't want to have a confrontation with her. Therefore, he tightened the edges of his coat and continued to feign sleep with gritted teeth.

After tapping a few times without a response, the policewoman intended to increase her strength but found it rather impolite. She hesitated, biting her lip and pondering whether to continue or not.

At this moment, the female prisoner, who had been coldly observing from the side, seemed to have guessed her intentions. After gently nudging her with her shoulder, she said expressionlessly,

"Don't bother, I won't run."

"..."

You say you won't run, but does that guarantee you won't? A man who declared all nobles were lice from the crotch still insisted he wasn't with the rebels!

Although sympathetic to the other party's plight, the policewoman wasn't foolish enough to believe the prisoner's assurances. Not only did she not give up on waking the pretending-to-sleep man, but she also increased her force.

After all, disturbing someone's sleep is just impolite, but if a prisoner indeed escaped and hurt someone, it wouldn't simply be a matter of manners.

"Sir? Sir? Wake up, please!"

"Sir?"

Watching her attempts go ignored, the policewoman persistently continued to "bother" the man beside her, amidst the noisy rumbling of the boiler. The female prisoner remained silent for a while, then couldn't resist asking,

"You don't believe me, do you? If you think I'd deceive you, why insist on investigating the Ryan Family based on my intel?"

"It's not a matter of believing you or not, but rather I must do my job well."

Turning back to check the prisoner's state and discovering her emotions seemed unstable, the policewoman had no choice but to turn around and respond seriously amidst the roar of the boiler,

"Although the nature of my work is somewhat special, I am still a police officer in the police department. I have the responsibility to do my job properly and try to prevent the general public's lives from being affected.

"Therefore, I can't relax my guarding of you just because I feel you won't hurt anyone, nor can I abandon investigating the case because I dislike your harming of ordinary people or worry it may offend the Ryan Family."

"..."

After listening earnestly to the policewoman's reply, the prisoner fell silent for a moment, then looked at her as if she were some kind of anomaly, eyes full of surprise as she continued to ask,

"Just because of this?"

"Huh? What's wrong?"

"Forget it... Pretend I never said anything..."

After observing the policewoman's bewildered expression, the female prisoner unexpectedly dropped her prior compliance, her expression tinged slightly with sarcasm, saying,

"Respected Miss Yisha, when I first knew your surname, I only had some slight suspicions, but now I am certain.

"You must have a very deep connection with the one who took office in the military department early this year. At worst, you should be some distant relative, or maybe even his direct family."

?!!!

"Did I guess right?"

"Ha, I should have thought of it earlier. After all, only a family like that could raise someone as naive and foolish as you."

Watching the policewoman beside her, whose expression revealed utmost astonishment as if something had shocked her, the female prisoner, around her late forties or early fifties, snickered coldly. Her face, graced with crow's feet and sunspots, displayed sincere disdain and mockery.

"Miss Yisha of illustrious origins, you probably have no idea what kind of outcome awaits someone taking on their duty to pursue 'justice' in this place!"

Before the policewoman could recover from the shock of her family background being exposed, the prisoner, seizing the moment, stretched out her right hand shackled in clothes she had used to conceal it. She prodded her chest firmly, a gloomy expression coming over her as she whispered,

"My husband used to be an auditor at the military department's readiness bureau. On the eve of the national war six years ago, he discovered companies under the Ryan Family's name were using low-cost black cotton instead of selected medicinal cotton to produce bandages, which easily led to wound infections after use.

"After several ineffective reports upwards due to concerns similar to your own, he insisted on bypassing levels to report. When he still received no feedback and was repeatedly condemned, he even wrote a report letter to the one in charge at the military department back then. So, can you guess what he got in return?"

"Was it... dismissal?"

"Of course not; it was a grand commendation!"

The female prisoner smiled after watching the policewoman's astonished face, then leaned over and said in a cold and indifferent manner amidst the ear-splitting rumble of the boiler,

"After receiving the letter, the one at the military department immediately ordered a thorough investigation, replacing all problematic bandages and receiving applause from top to bottom. My husband also received his deserved commendation for the credit, getting transferred from the readiness bureau to a more important confidential bureau. Meanwhile, I and our daughter also moved into the assigned housing.

"Unfortunately, not even two weeks later, as my serious and foolish husband had just completed handover barely, the man sent down to inspect promptly announced that the intelligence file my husband managed seemed to have been extensively rummaged through. He was then arrested for espionage, being interrogated for a solid seven months in your Secret Investigation Bureau!"

"..."

"Interesting, isn't it?"

Watching the silent policewoman, the female prisoner sneered,

"Taking over the file without careful checking inevitably led to traps left by the predecessor, but thorough verification and inventory meant inevitable espionage suspicion. Hence, from the moment he accepted the transfer, no matter how my husband chose, the end result was the same."

"The even more interesting part is the person investigating my husband at the Secret Investigation Bureau was his previous superior! Due to repeatedly obstructing him from proper reports, his superior was suspended and then transferred. The place he got transferred to was precisely the Secret Investigation Bureau, responsible for interrogating my husband. Ha, don't you find it quite the coincidence?"

Light chuckling escaped her lips, but there was no humor in the female prisoner's face as she continued,

"Luckily, my husband was not just tough-boned but also lucky. After being locked up for seven whole months, apart from losing forty pounds and 'accidentally' becoming lame in one leg, he managed to survive and come out without confessing guilt.

"Unfortunately, the military department had too many affairs, and couldn't wait for a suspected spy who was now crippled. His original position had long been taken by someone else, and not a single department was willing to 'accommodate' him. Our daughter and I had also been driven out of the assigned housing."

"Ha, during the national war period, prices in the Capital City surged up to fifty-fold. By the time he got out, our family's savings had nearly dried up, with only a few Silver Wheels left when added all together.

"In the end, in order for our daughter and myself to survive, and for the so-called just national war, he accepted a settlement bonus and enlisted only to get shot in another leg because his lameness made him run too slowly."

Listening with bated breath, the policewoman bit her lip, her face turning slightly pale as she said,

"Then your husband..."

"Dead, went from being a fool of a cripple to a dead cripple!"

With a calm face, after recounting her husband's fate, the female prisoner's lips slightly curled, speaking with a playful, soft voice,

"By the way, there's something even more interesting in this story. Do you want to hear it?"

"I..."

"If you don't object, I'll assume you do."

The female prisoner smiled and rolled up her sleeve slightly, revealing a wrist bandaged with a bloodstained, old wrapping. In the corner of rough seams, a clump of coarse cotton was tenaciously poking out, coagulated in dark, festered blood.

"When he was brought back home, his leg was conveniently wrapped with this bandage, with yellowish pus oozing beneath it, teeming with fat, white maggots!"

After slightly turning her wrist, the female prisoner gazed at the relic of her deceased husband on her wrist, her expression peaceful as she smiled,

"My cripple of a husband truly was of hard luck. He wasn't shot dead on the battlefield, managing to crawl back to safety. Unfortunately, he ultimately couldn't overcome infection in the wound.

"And what killed him in the end happened to be the very thing he risked everything to report—a substandard bandage pressed out from filthy black cotton. Isn't it just laughable?"

Chapter 104 Revenge and Understanding_1

"Ahahaha, it really is funny."

When the policewoman was shaken by the fate of the female prisoner's husband, her whole body started to tremble slightly. The shopping bag hidden by Leon's feet rustled a little, and the Black Goat, having heard everything, couldn't help but burst into laughter in Leon's mind,

"So he went through so much trouble, and in the end, nothing changed! Ahahaha, that cripple's death was really hilarious, I've never seen something so stupid... Ow! Why did you kick me?"

After firmly stepping on the goat's head to ensure it wouldn't move around again, Leon, who felt slightly more at ease, silently reminded,

"Keep an eye on that bandage, I feel there's something abnormal about it."

"Hmm? You suspect that's also an Anomalous Object?"

Through his soul vision, he observed the bandage on the female prisoner's hand and indeed sensed a peculiar aura. The Black Goat also became cautious, asking with curiosity,

"Wow, there's really that kind of feeling... So how did this woman mess up so badly? Holding an Anomalous Object and yet getting caught by an ordinary person?"

"She... probably did it on purpose..."

After touching the Dung Beetle Lady badge from the Virgin Sanitation Bureau and not feeling any burning, Leon couldn't help but sigh slightly.

This badge from the Purification Bureau would trigger an alert in the presence of Uncontrollable Afflicted individuals, but it would have no response when faced with expertly controlled Abnormals. So that female prisoner must be someone proficient in controlling Anomalous Objects.

Although he didn't know what ability this bandage had, from the experiences of the "former owner," it probably wasn't a positive ability, and her destination with the policewoman happened to be the Ryan Family, so...

She was most likely planning to infiltrate the Ryan Family and use that bandage to avenge her husband!

With the help of the Black Goat's soul vision, he observed the female prisoner. Although she appeared calm on the surface, her soul was seething with towering blood flames. Having basically confirmed his guess, Leon couldn't help but take a deep breath.

So... should I fulfill my duty?

...

While Leon was hesitating on whether to stop this "dangerous element," to simply ignore it, or even to add fuel to the fire, the policewoman, who had been silent for a long time, finally spoke again,

"You must not be an ordinary Rebel..."

Seeing the prisoner's pupils contract sharply, the policewoman spoke softly with a complex expression,

"I have arrested and interrogated many Rebels. Most of them are from the lower classes in the Capital City, with not very good education or experiences, so when they speak, they usually use short sentences to directly and succinctly express their emotions.

"For example, the ecstasy of a successful attack, insults toward us, complaints about their plight, and even when we break down their mental defenses and they reveal their background and experiences, their narratives are often tangled and unclear. Their words and logic appear rather chaotic.

"But you're different from them. Even though the conversation was unprepared, your narrative was smooth and clear. With the exception of a few short recollections, your words almost had no hesitation, and you were able to explain your experiences entirely. This isn't something an average person can do."

"Because my husband..."

"No, I'm not talking about that respectable gentleman, but about your situation."

Recalling the words just now slightly, the policewoman bit her lip hard, her eyes dim as she continued,

"Besides that, just now when you wanted to use some more complex and obscure words, you could say them directly without much thought.

"And during the narrative, you kept intentionally provoking my emotions, as if you were quite familiar with such exchanges. So, you must have received excellent education, and you frequently speak to large groups of people.

"Plus, with your knowledge of the military high command changes and the division of responsibilities among departments... you are a high-ranking Rebel, aren't you?"

"..."

"I did underestimate you."

Facing the policewoman's question, the female prisoner rubbed the bandage on her wrist before nodding, acknowledging her mistake in judgment. A look of mild surprise appeared on her face,

"I originally thought you were just a naïve young lady, wrapped around the authorities' finger, like my crippled husband, led around by those lies, which gave you this unrealistic fantasy, but I didn't expect you actually had this capability."

"You didn't underestimate me. In the past, I truly was as you described, believing as long as I did what I thought was right, it would be fine, but before you..."

After biting her lips until they turned pale, the distressed policewoman lowered her head slightly, her voice extremely low,

"Before you, I encountered another Rebel. After reading his file, I began to feel..."

Due to the policewoman speaking too softly and the boiler's noisy rumble, the prisoner didn't hear what she said clearly, so she frowned and asked,

"What did you say?"

"Nothing..."

The policewoman shook her head vigorously, regaining her composure, then clenched her fists, exclaiming with determination,

"I admit, I lack enough experience, and sometimes... I might be foolish, but as for my duty, I've been attentive to it!

"Furthermore, not only with the Ryan Family's case, but if your husband's situation is indeed cleared up as true, I would definitely..."

"Before it's figured out, you'll be reassigned!"

After hearing the promise, the prisoner, whose identity was exposed and plans thwarted, preparing to take action, couldn't help but snicker. With a cold expression, she mocked,

"Ms. Yisha, you are indeed adorable... naively adorable!

"You're not alone in standing up against the grand nobles due to your duties, but not everyone comes from a good background like yours!

"Go ahead and investigate! But remember, if it weren't for your family name, your end might very well be worse than my husband's!"

Seeing the policewoman's expression dim after being criticized, the female prisoner snorted disdainfully,

"And even if you manage to accomplish something in the end, my attitude won't change. Because even if you can do such a thing, it's only because your father's status is higher!

"What my husband and I desire isn't this tedious rescue from those above, akin to pity. What we need is the most direct blood for blood!"

"..."

Perhaps you are right... but...

Hearing the murderous words, the somewhat bewildered policewoman bit her lip. Her mind flashed to her father's visibly hunched back and rapidly greying hair after taking over the military's mess.

Father... I think I understand you a little...

After clenching her fist hard and taking a deep breath, the policewoman, whose gaze had been avoiding her, for the first time met the other's cold gaze, her voice very light but exceptionally firm,

"Maybe it indeed is meaningless. But as long as someone is striving to do it, it's certainly better than giving up completely!"

Chapter 105 Light Speed Crash_1

"As long as someone is still trying, isn't that always better than giving up completely?"

Hearing the straightforward yet determined words from the female police officer, Leon couldn't resist using the Black Goat's soul vision to observe the state of her soul.

Although the bright white soul carried a hint of lingering restlessness, its glow was somewhat glaring. Still, it burned persistently, fervently flickering.

It was like a small flame just kindled, striving to radiate warmth to its surroundings, trying to bring a touch of warmth to a small part of the world around it with its still immature light.

Unfortunately, nearby her wasn't a vulnerable soul awaiting warmth, but rather a surge of cold fire desperately needing to erupt.

...

This person... will surely become an obstacle for us in the future!

Although she knew this assumption was somewhat absurd, the female criminal couldn't help but have such a thought flash in her mind as she looked into the policewoman's eyes.

Human nature is always to seek stability and is adept at numbing oneself. Even if you live in suffering now, as long as there is hope for the future, most people won't pursue change.

Only in circumstances like mine, having experienced the deepest despair and pushed to a dead end, will one truly go all out and resolve to take revenge on everything that once caused harm. So...

"You're a good cop, but you're our enemy!"

Listening to the "Please trust me one more time" and "I will uncover the truth" promises by her ears, the female criminal's eyes didn't soften; instead, they grew sharper with the sound of the promises.

It was exactly as the leader said, *the arrival of the "new world" everyone yearns for isn't really up to us, but rather depends on how fast the whole Kingdom rots!*

The only way to make those content with the status quo abandon their false hope is to thoroughly spoil this nation's sores, even push them along, allowing everyone to personally experience its decay and ugliness so they will resolutely stand with us to overthrow it!

"So whether it's the reform-driven Princess, the Minister of Defense fighting hard to maintain the military, or you, who has close ties with the current Minister of Defense, are all targets that must be eliminated!"

"Aha~ Leon, look!"

The changes in the female criminal's soul certainly didn't escape the Black Goat, a Great Demon's attention.

Watching her soul gradually shift from red to an obscure hue, feeling the vibrant killing intent flicker along with the flame, the Black Goat couldn't help but close its eyes blissfully, assessing with a face full of contentment,

"Someone doesn't recognize the other's actions but plans to risk everything to save her; meanwhile, the other, although acknowledging the other's kindness, is ready to kill her by their own hands.

It's really wonderful; for a so-called great belief, one can unhesitatingly enact evil. Such filthy and sticky souls are truly magnificent!

And as for the other, when sincere kindness from the heart meets the utmost venomous response, what kind of wicked thought will erupt in her mind then?

"Ahahaha! It's so wonderful! I can't wait to see her reaction!"

"..."

How can a Great Demon talk as if they're in the late stages of some terminal teen syndrome?

Pressing his foot a bit harder on the goat's head, Leon rolled it around the dirty wagon floor, drawing a series of curses from the Black Goat. He then silently grabbed the Holy Spirit pendant, preparing to rescue.

If the target was someone from the Ryan Family, that was fine, even if he didn't intervene to add fuel to the fire. There was still a chance of "delayed rescue."

However, from the dialogue he just heard, the policewoman, though a bit stubborn and a tangled mess, wasn't really a bad person. If he could lend a helping hand, he should.

Watching the state of the Rebel keenly, the moment the darkness in her soul surged, reaching out for the policewoman's neck, Leon had already activated the pendant to create an invisible hand, gripping the bandage on the female criminal's wrist tightly.

"How could this be?"

A searing pain shot through her wrist in an instant; the bandage that should have floated up was firmly pressed down by some invisible force. The female criminal couldn't help but be shocked.

However, noticing her movement, the policewoman had already turned slightly, meeting the hand reaching for her neck with her shoulder. Then, with the edge of her other palm, she struck fiercely below the female criminal's ulnar styloid process.

Taking advantage of the numbness in the criminal's elbow and wrist, unable to change her posture, the police officer grabbed her right wrist and twisted her shoulder, bending it into a reverse arm lock.

Finally, she lowered her center of gravity, folding the wrist, pushing the shoulder with the momentum of nearly crashing to the floor, and directly slammed her off the seat, crashing onto the carriage floor with force.

Although complex in description, the police officer executed the whole set of moves astonishingly smoothly. By the time Leon flung off the coat covering his head, she had already completed the entire set, forcing the female criminal off the chair and efficiently subduing her.

"..."

So, this is something you've been hiding, huh?

Watching the policewoman pinning the criminal to the floor with her left knee against her lumbar spine, hands twisting the right arm to press against the shoulder pit, Leon couldn't help but gape, a hint of relief flashing in his eyes.

Good thing I'm pretty temperate and didn't get into a fight with her earlier, or I wouldn't have fared much better than that criminal.

Within less than 0.2 seconds, after regaining control of the offender trying to attack her, the policewoman instinctively, by police procedure, immediately raised her head to scan her surroundings, checking for any hidden accomplice, then...

"You?!"

"Just passing through!"

Watching the policewoman's graceful eyebrows suddenly rise, her pretty face plagued with a mix of shock, hesitation, panic, and resolve, like a store of spilled seasoning, Leon sat back onto the chair promptly before she lunged at him.

"I'm also running field assignments, and I got on the bus before you!"

Stressing his current stance as briefly as possible, Leon lifted his hand to reveal his ID, flashing it at the ticket lady rushing over from the front, ready to unleash a slew of curses at the three of them.

"Police escorting a criminal, please cooperate."

"More police? I'm from the Department of Road Administration, Level Two Carriage Driver! Even if you're police..."

"Secret Investigation Bureau police."

"Secret... Nevermind then..."

Upon viewing the official badge mark glistening on the ID cover, the ticket lady recoiled, her neck shrinking back. After confirming the criminal locked in a grappling posture on the floor, her brewing rage was quickly extinguished.

Under the blank stares of all the passengers, her slightly bow-legged short limbs circled half a turn like a compass, her stout body twisting back pliantly. Then, crouched, she scurried back to the front row and plopped into her seat.

And the female criminal half-pressed against the floor caught a glimpse of Leon out of the corner of her eye, as if struck by lightning, all the "causes and effects" became clear to her.

"Despicable!"

Chapter 106 Secondment_1

Damn the Secret Investigation Bureau!

Seeing another "male police officer" who had already been sitting in the corner before she got on the bus, the female prisoner, who had fallen into the "trap," became red with anger.

What about believing her confession and taking her to the Ryan Family for a fact-checking investigation? What about the official car being occupied, forcing them to use regular public transport? What about the car being too full to escort her alone with just one female officer...

Trap! It was all a trap to make her lower her guard!

Adding to that, the suddenly malfunctioning bandages that refused to activate no matter how much she tried...she might have been betrayed by a traitor, recognized from the start!

Thinking of how hard she had tried to disguise herself during the interrogation at the Secret Investigation Bureau, the female prisoner felt she was nothing but a clown. The image of the interrogator's pitying look when hearing about her "encounter" in her memory turned into mocking laughter filled with ridicule!

Liars! All of you are liars!

Realizing she had fallen for such a blatant trap, the enraged female prisoner, in spite of the pain in her shoulder and neck, twisted herself with all her might, sharply questioning the female officer holding her down,

"You knew, didn't you? You knew all along, didn't you?"

I... knew what?

Confused by her out-of-context questioning, the female officer was ready to ask for details, when she felt the vehicle lean forward, the entire carriage began to decelerate, pulling up at a nearby stop—it'd arrived.

As the carriage stopped, the passengers simultaneously stood up, crowded toward the door, eager to disembark.

The earlier conversation between the two female officers was too low, mostly drowned out by the noisy boiler, so apart from the young couple huddled fearfully in the back row, hardly anyone heard them. But when Leon revealed the badge just now, what he said was heard very clearly by the passengers.

Secret police! Then the person they're holding must be one of the Rebels.

Whether it's the rebellious group causing havoc and orchestrating multiple assassinations, or the secret police who can investigate, summon, or even arrest anyone on suspicion, for ordinary people, both are something to avoid at all costs.

Now that both sides were gathered on the bus, no one would want to stick around and watch the drama unfold.

Even the young couple cowering in the corner, evidently terrified, stood up tremblingly, casting a terrified glance as they clung to each other, tentatively asking the female officer blocking their way,

"Um... it seems we've reached our stop, could you... could you...?"

"..."

Understanding that it was not because they had reached their stop but because they wanted to avoid any contact with the secret police, the female officer sighed, directing the furious female prisoner back to her seat.

"Sorry, I'll move, but please, you both need to head to the Secret Investigation Bureau right away."

"Huh?"

"Don't worry, you won't be interrogated. It's just a standard classified investigation."

The female officer, slightly relieved when she saw that Leon seemed not to be causing trouble, slightly tilted her head, glancing at the alarmed young couple, explained,

"What you heard just now is somewhat sensitive, so please report to the Secret Investigation Bureau's Classified Section within thirty minutes for registration and to receive some basic information security training.

Rest assured, the process is safe, and we'll compensate for your travel expenses and any time you missed.

However, please go to register as soon as possible—if there is a significant delay in registration compared to your travel records, or if you come into contact with too many others during this time, subsequent investigations could get complicated."

"Then... then let's go now!"

Once the young couple exited hurriedly, as though escaping, the female officer finished handling the basics and struggled with the disgruntled female prisoner, pushing her toward a corner spot while looking curiously toward Leon on the other side.

Although she was confident in her abilities, the female officer knew that if Leon had attacked from behind while she was subduing the prisoner, he could have forced her to let go, giving the female prisoner a chance to escape.

Yet, he made no move, simply sitting back down on his seat, merely donning his coat, doing nothing else, and even shifting aside to avoid suspicion.

So... what is your purpose?

"Stop staring at me, all right? I really am out on field duty... by the way, everyone left pretty cleanly."

Because those aware of abnormal existences tend to be more susceptible to unusual incidents, Leon didn't explain his actions. Instead, he glanced around and diverted the conversation,

"Just at the mention of the Secret Investigation Bureau, a whole bus cleared out to the last person. Your bureau's reputation sure packs a punch~"

"..."

Hearing Leon's slightly mocking evaluation, the female officer felt a knot in her heart. Knowing her department's reputation, she had no grounds for rebuttal, and could only glare at Leon,

"Did you just..."

"I heard everything."

Unabashedly admitting he was faking sleep, knowing he couldn't change the subject, Leon calmly cut off the conversation,

"But I'm currently on a crucial field mission, so the classified registration can wait. I'll get to it when I'm not busy."

"..."

Just as the female officer was left speechless, the ticket lady eventually ambled over cautiously from five steps away,

"You two, should... should I keep this vehicle going?"

Yeah, should we continue?

Hearing the ticket lady's question, the female officer hesitated, lost in thought.

Ideally, realizing that the female prisoner was not just a "small role" as imagined, but likely a high-ranking member of the Rebels, she should have immediately terminated the investigation and returned with the prisoner to the Secret Investigation Bureau.

However, given the agency's emphasis on the Rebels, if she brought her back now, the prisoner would likely face endless questioning, aiming to extract all intelligence related to the Rebels.

As for her husband's past affairs, and the crimes committed by the Ryan Family, they wouldn't compare to the attempted assassination of the Princess. Even if she were to have her father intervene, all inquiries would revolve around the assassination plot.

So, if she immediately returned her, the tragic fate of the honorable investigator from six years ago might never see the light of day, and the perpetrators would escape deserved punishment...

"Continue, but skip all later stops and head directly to the Ryan Family."

Quickly seizing "command," fearing the female officer might be killed by those bandages on the way if tasked with escorting the prisoner alone, Leon nodded towards her.

"Additionally, deduct the missed fare from her."

"Huh?"

"No more huh-ing, you've been seconded now. You'll need to support my work as a priority."

Producing a document obtained from the Red-haired Director during the file access, showing the "administrative level" header to the female officer, Leon fished out a charcoal pencil from inside his coat, dipping his head and starting to fill out the form.

[Reason for Secondment: Abnormal situation encountered during field duty, need personnel]

[Object of Secondment: One Secret Investigation Bureau Police Officer]

[Detail of Secondment: ...]

Pausing while writing, Leon looked up at the somewhat bewildered female officer, inquiring directly,

"During secondments in your bureau, what do you usually fill out here?"

Chapter 107 Bandage and Problem_1

"..."

So you haven't even decided what you want me to do, and you're already asking for my transfer?

Startled by Leon's unexpected move, the female detective thought this might be her last chance to investigate the past incident. After clenching her fists several times, she finally agreed to cooperate with the "bastard rebels," and with a tense face, she responded, "Just put 'assist investigation'... Wait, are you really in the field? And you're going to the Ryan Family too? What are you going to do there?"

"Why do you have so many questions? These are confidential matters, don't ask about things you're not supposed to!"

After rebuking the female detective, Leon felt much better and swiftly filled out the paperwork before stuffing it into her pocket. He then pointed at the female prisoner pressed against the wall of the compartment and made his first request. "Loosen your grip a bit, let me see the bandage on her wrist!"

???

Although she didn't understand what Leon intended, seeing him extend just one finger, apparently only wanting to touch the bandage, the female detective didn't stop him and slightly loosened her grip on the prisoner's arm.

"Sizzle..."

[Name: Plague-Infected Blood Bandage (Decay, Healing)]

[Appearance: An old bandage stained with a lot of blood. The central gauze that binds the bleeding point still has a large amount of dark brown old blood stains, and if you get close, you can smell a faint salty odor.]

[Ability: Actively entangles any living target, draining their health and causing rapid decay, but when used correctly, can quickly heal all wounds below "limb severance."]

[Cost: When used, unbearable pain will emanate from the right thigh, making it nearly impossible to walk.]

[File: Removed from the body of a soldier who died of wounds, each fiber of this bandage has been soaked with the painful tears of the soldier's wife.]

[Evaluation: The bloodstains born out of guardianship have yet to successfully convey the deceased's wishes, but the tears brimming with hatred are tormenting the souls of the living repeatedly.]

[Contamination Value: 1.1]

"..."

Another "dual-trait" Anomalous Object?

After reading the abilities of this bandage, Leon couldn't help but furrow his brow slightly, feeling a bit strange. Like the [Spirit Lodge], the two abilities of this bandage were unrelated, even completely opposite.

Moreover, judging from the file and evaluation, the "creator" of this Anomalous Object might not only be the deceased investigator but likely also included the female prisoner being held.

If I'm not mistaken, her husband's will to survive and his concern for his family should have fostered the bandage's healing ability.

As for the source of the other half, the decay ability, it was probably the female prisoner's deep-rooted hatred and her desire for her enemies to experience the pain her husband endured before he died.

Although this formation process seemed "reasonable," most Anomalous Objects were born out of pure and extreme emotions.

And pure implies complexity is unlikely; although the probability of an item carrying both "love" and "hate" emotions is not non-existent, both emotions would need to be strong and nearly equivalent in intensity, which should be extremely rare. Yet, this was already the second one he had encountered.

So... Could this also be related to that Aquarius Director?

Following this faint sense of familiarity, Leon furrowed his brows tightly, moved closer, and lowered his voice as he dared to ask, "I'm asking you, have you seen someone with narrow eyes, drooping eyebrows, and corners of the mouth, a natural crying face?"

?!!!

They knew!

Hearing Leon's question, the female prisoner couldn't help but tense up. Upon considering the suddenly ineffective bandage, she finally confirmed her earlier judgment.

There is a traitor within the organization! And it's very likely not a mere traitor, but someone possibly in a higher position than me! It might even be one of those core members who also gained power!

Damn it! Who the hell is the traitor!

...

Although the female prisoner bit her lips and remained silent, without giving any response, her self-perceived stubborn resistance meant nothing to Leon, who possessed soul vision.

Goodness, it seems she really has encountered him? So, is that Aquarius Director still creating abnormalities?

Watching as the female prisoner's soul panicked upon hearing his inquiry, Leon couldn't help but take a deep breath, instinctively clenching his fists, and immediately continued to press, "How did you meet him? Did he approach you?"

"I don't know what you're talking about!"

"So he approached you!"

Having discerned the answer through her soul's reaction, Leon furrowed his brows once more, and amidst the female prisoner's alarmed expression, continued questioning harshly, "Tell me! Is it only you related to him, or are your entire rebels involved?"

"I said, I don't know what you're talking about!"

"..."

What the hell... aren't you supposed to interrogate her? Isn't this supposed to be my job? What am I even here for?

As Leon and the female prisoner quickly exchanged questions and answers, the female detective on the side was completely bewildered and couldn't help but ask softly, "Leon... what exactly..."

"Don't interfere, hold her down!"

After shooting a glare at the tool, signaling her not to interrupt, Leon pondered briefly as he looked at the once-unchanged soul of the female prisoner before asking differently, "If neither of those answers is correct... does that mean not many people know of or have seen him, but within your rebels, there are indeed a batch of people who gained power from him?"

"..."

Unable to comprehend how she let something slip from the first two questions, the female prisoner stubbornly clenched her jaw, remaining silent to prevent her tone or expression from unveiling the answers.

However, though she didn't utter a word, her once again turbulent soul directly revealed the correct answer to Leon.

"So there really are a batch of people who have encountered him... is there a lot of them? Very few? Not too many?"

"..."

"Seems like not too many... Tell me, counting people like you, does it amount to fifty? Thirty? Twenty? Ten? More than ten, right?"

"?"

"Up to fifteen? Twelve? Thirteen? Oh, it turns out to be twelve!"

"??"

There are actually a whole twelve?

Quickly deducing the number of people who obtained anomalies from observing the changes in the female prisoner's soul, Leon, feeling a bit tense, urgently continued asking, "What level are those people? Are most of them stronger than you?"

"???"

"Seems they are stronger than you... so how many of them are stronger than you? Three? Five? Seven?"

"!!!"

He's one as well! He's also that kind of person!

Though she stubbornly refused to say a single word the entire time, essentially giving away all the intelligence, the female prisoner—who was nearly driven to collapse by the interrogation—finally realized what she had encountered.

I don't know how he's doing it, but it seems as long as I'm alive, I can't keep any secrets from him!

"Go to hell!!!"

With a hysterical yell, she recklessly dislocated her arm as her upper body suddenly leaned back, her head slammed into the female detective's chest, and then she arched her body backward, slamming forcefully against the compartment's hard iron wall!

"Bang!"

Chapter 108 Sugar and Ryan Hell_1

"Ah!"

Seeing the female prisoner who had collided headfirst into the metal wall, her head embedded deeply, the female police officer did not take the time to rub her bruised chest. She quickly let go and rushed over, pulling the motionless prisoner out.

"What happened? How did she slam into the wall? Wake up! You..."

"You... Wait, don't shout..."

After patting her shoulder, Ryan leaned against her, his heart racing over one hundred sixty beats per minute, his whole body breaking out in a cold sweat. Covering his humming ears, he weakly advised,

"She probably just knocked herself out, she won't die... You... phew... you need to be quiet, it's making my ear..."

"How could that be!"

Although she did not know why the prisoner did this, it was clearly related to Ryan's issues. The policewoman, worried sick, shrugged off Ryan's hand, turned back, and pointed angrily at the dented wall,

"Look at that! She dented such a large piece! This is iron! Such strength..."

"Don't look at the carriage, can't you check her head?"

"What's the use of looking at her head! It's iron! If iron is dented this much, how could a human head... huh?"

Checking the prisoner's head, she found no expected bloody wounds, only a large red bump. The female police officer widened her eyes in shock, her gaze shifting back and forth between the dented wall and the prisoner's forehead.

"How... how is this possible? How can a human head be harder than iron?"

"Heh, can you be a Rebel with anything less than a head of iron?"

After mumbling a few nonsensical words, Ryan, feeling that more than fifty percent of his energy had been drained, leaned halfway against the seat, panting heavily with lingering fear and grateful that his reaction had been quick enough.

The moment he realized the prisoner intended to crash into the wall, he decisively activated the Holy Spirit Pendant, using his will to alter reality and forcibly "changed" a small piece of the wall into a rubber-like substance.

Ryan originally planned to maintain this state for a few seconds, at least until the wall returned to normal to avoid arousing the policewoman's suspicion.

However, the energy consumption of altering reality was unexpectedly horrendous. Maintaining the "rubber" state even for a moment drained most of Ryan's strength, and upon realizing something was wrong, he dared not wait for the wall to revert. He quickly released the hold on the Holy Spirit Pendant.

After the sudden interruption of the ability, the rubberized wall was immediately restored under reality's "pressure," which trapped the prisoner's head inside the "wall" instead of rebounding her directly...

...

After catching his breath while leaning against the chair, Ryan, now recovering, couldn't help but lift the corners of his mouth slightly. Seeing the policewoman still studying the "Rebel's iron head" in befuddlement, he checked the prisoner's condition.

"She seems okay; besides her head swelling, there aren't any other visible injuries. She probably just fainted, maybe a mild concussion."

"That's good, that's good..."

Although Ryan wasn't a doctor, the policewoman inexplicably felt reassured hearing his words. Then, she noticed his abnormal appearance.

"You... what's wrong with you? Why do you look so pale, and have so much cold sweat?"

"..."

I asked for it! Clearly aware that people with abnormal powers tend to be radical, yet unprepared for her to go to the extreme right away, I gave her a chance to struggle.

Ryan let out a bitter smile internally, firmly taking this lesson to heart, and casually replied,

"I'm not sure; maybe I'm just hungry... How about talking about you guys! Why are you taking her to the Ryan Family?"

"It's because of the assassination of the Princess..."

As she spoke, the policewoman hesitated, recalling Ryan's identity as a "damn Rebel," feeling it odd to discuss these matters with him. Yet remembering Ryan's strange interrogation earlier, she finally decided to confess,

"The firearms left behind by the Rebels at the scene were numbered under the Ryan Family's arms factory, and she persistently claimed that the guns were bought from the Ryan Family... Are you feeling very unwell?"

Looking at Ryan's pale face and hand unconsciously pressed against his stomach, the policewoman bit her lip and dug two candies out of her pocket, shoving them into his hand somewhat roughly.

"Take these and hold on! If you faint from hunger, it's not my problem!"

"..."

Even when showing kindness, you have to keep up appearances, huh? You really are contrary...

Looking at the candies in his hand, Ryan silently unwrapped the light pink wrapper, popped the heart-shaped milk candy into his mouth, vaguely murmuring thanks. He continued to inquire,

"And now, are you still going to the Ryan Family to confront them about the arms factory business?"

"No, I have other questions to ask first!"

Upon hearing this, the policewoman shook her head, first glancing at the unconscious female prisoner beside her, then biting her lip firmly and said,

"When attempting to assassinate the Princess, she created an opportunity by directly blowing up a flour factory, causing a massive casualty of workers. Although she is not a good person, the fact that she ended up like this is ultimately due to the crimes the Ryan Family committed in the past.

The arms factory issue can be investigated by others, but what happened to her and her husband, if I don't continue investigating, no one else will. Hence, I must get to the bottom of this, ensuring those bastards face the punishment they deserve!"

"Good, I hope you can achieve it!"

While sharing the prisoner's perspective, believing that she would probably find nothing before the Ryan Family used their power to stop her, Ryan continued to respect those who persisted in doing the right thing. Even if their methods were naive, he felt contemplative respect and opened his mouth to promise,

"You saw my ability earlier, generally liars can't slip past me. In the future, if you encounter such issues in your investigation, feel free to ask me for help."

"..."

Seeing Ryan not dampen her spirits or mock her convictions, even offering help, the policewoman blinked emotionally complex eyes, awkwardly turning her head and murmuring a mosquito-like "thank you."

You're truly a contrary weirdo...

Silently shaking his head, with the consideration of the previous candy-borne kindness, Ryan reminded,

"Make sure you stay vigilant; the Ryan Family operates uncleanly, and even with your substantial backing, they may still take action against you."

"Don't worry, I am mentally prepared."

The policewoman nodded, her expression tense as she said,

"I've been working on several cases recently, all significantly linked to the Ryan Family. To handle these, I've reviewed almost all the files related to their family.

I'm well aware of how despicable and unscrupulous this family is—it's clearer to me than ever! I'll be doubly cautious, regardless of what you say!"

"Alright, as long as you're confident."

Seeing that the policewoman understood just how dangerous this matter was, Ryan nodded, choosing not to say more. Instead, he savored the sweet milk candy in his mouth, leaned back against the chair, and closed his eyes to recharge his energy. However, just as he shut his eyes, someone tapped his thigh lightly.

"Don't just talk about me, what about you?"

Gazing at the sole "Ryan" in front of her whom she found not so detestable, the policewoman's eyes rarely showed a hint of warmth as she softly inquired,

"Aren't you also heading to the Ryan Family? I aim to seize evidence of their crimes, but what are you intending to do there?"

"I'm going for a family reunion."

Chapter 109 Baohua and Lion_1

.....

Did you even listen to what you're saying?

Upon hearing Leon's response, the expression on the policewoman's face was beyond complex.

A person who counted as a radical among the rebels had just interrogated a high-ranking rebel, asking such deadly questions that it forced the person to commit suicide by headbutting the wall.

And after finishing his interrogation of the rebels, he advised her to be cautious of the Ryan Family's desperate moves, while calmly informing her he was going to the Ryans for a family reunion...

What side are you really on?

Completely bewildered by Leon's reply, the policewoman had a thousand questions she wanted to ask, but seeing his exhausted expression, she refrained from disturbing him further and instead sat on the other side with the unconscious female prisoner.

...

Since the entire carriage had been 'wrapped up,' there was no need to frequently slow down and stop for passengers. Additionally, the steam carriage was moving at its maximum speed to quickly rid itself of these exceptionally troublesome passengers.

With all these factors in play, the carriage arrived at Redwood Avenue, where the Ryan Family resided, in less than half the usual time. It hastily asked the several 'plague gods' to disembark.

Having caught a brief nap on the carriage, Leon felt his strength slightly restored; he looked much better, and once he stepped into the cold wind, the signs of fatigue were almost unnoticeable.

Ignoring the policewoman's hesitant gaze, Leon grabbed the ram's head and broom, identified the surroundings of Redwood Avenue, and walked toward the end of the road, where two towering trees, nearly a hundred meters tall, stood.

Indeed, Redwood Avenue lived up to its name, with two incredibly massive redwoods planted there.

This type of tree, with a reddish-brown bark, could grow over a hundred meters tall and had an average diameter of eight meters, which generally wouldn't be found in an industrial city like the Capital City—let alone on Redwood Avenue, where land was so precious.

Yet for certain groups, these factors were not an issue; in fact, the more challenging and unreasonable something was, the more it displayed their loftiness and distinctiveness.

These two redwoods at the end of Redwood Avenue were forcibly transplanted from hundreds of miles away by the royal family and gifted to the two most noble families in the Kingdom, planted at the entrances of their private estates.

The royal family's intention at the time was to use these trees, capable of living for a thousand years, to symbolize their hope that the two most loyal supporters would endure and inherit the Kingdom alongside them.

Unfortunately, the royal family's effort to gift these massive trees was somewhat self-indulgent.

The Bauhinia Family, having received their tree, didn't last many years before launching a violent coup to overthrow the royal family, resulting in the betrayal and execution of their entire clan—the execution platform was set under the tree gifted to them.

Though the other family didn't instigate a coup, they transformed from the once ambitious, expansionist Lionheart Family into the Ryan Family, now infamous as one of the Kingdom's three great malignancies—a massive abscess growing at the Kingdom's core...

Honestly, with such ill fate surrounding these two trees, there could be some reasoning behind it.

Using credentials from the Purification Bureau, Leon successfully accessed this private road not open to the public, deliberately ignoring the villas and gardens lining the way, and briskly heading straight for his goal.

"Hey, you're going the wrong way!"

Seeing Leon veer right rather than toward the Ryan Manor at the end of Redwood Avenue, the policewoman, carrying the female prisoner in her arms, quickly called out:

"It's not that way! That's the Bauhinia Family's estate! The Ryan Family is at the other end!"

"I know."

Continuing to walk right down the road, although thoroughly abandoned, amidst the weeds and crumbling walls lay remnants of the stately entrance to Treasure Flower Manor.

Leon first inspected the area once designated as an execution platform, almost soaked in blood, then cautiously approached the slightly withered giant tree, touching the cracked, dark brown bark.

Nothing happened.

It seemed that this tree, which witnessed the Bauhinia Family's downfall and contributed considerable wood for their execution platform, hadn't turned into something abnormal and remained just an ordinary redwood.

Retrieving his hand with mixed feelings of regret and relief, Leon confirmed this tree wasn't abnormal, then returned to the path leading to the Ryan Manor.

You really... Do you always have to explore both options whenever faced with two contradictory ones?

Exhausted from chasing after Leon while carrying a woman heavier than herself and just catching her breath, the policewoman, tired out, sneaked a glance at Leon with suspicion, wondering if this guy had a few screws loose, just as he once suspected her.

This suspicion hit its peak when Leon brought her to the Ryan manor's entrance and, after stating his purpose to the butler, responsible for greeting guests...

...

Wait... you really came to recognize relatives?!

Having calmed down along the carriage ride, the policewoman thought Leon was merely too tired to bother responding, offering a perfunctory excuse to dismiss her.

But after being brought into Ryan Manor and led by two attendants to a three-story building housing the Ryan family records, she saw Leon truly browsing through the allowed sections of the genealogy. The policewoman, filled with questions, couldn't help but quietly sidle over and whisper:

"Leon, I read your file. Your parents are regular folks from Laine County, unrelated to the Ryan Family!"

"I know."

Without lifting his head, Leon, staring at the array of books filling two large cabinets, felt a headache coming on and decisively enlisted this unpaid labor.

"Put the person down and help me go through the Ryan family's genealogy."

"Huh?"

"Huh, what? Did you forget you've already been conscripted by me?"

"..."

Remembering her current 'status' and needing his assistance, the policewoman had no choice but to cooperate obediently.

Refusing help from two willing attendants and, finding their gazes peculiar, securely tying up the female prisoner, the policewoman suddenly thought of something. Quickly, she hurried back to Leon's side, whispering excitedly:

"I got it! Are you planning to first delve into the Ryan family's genealogy, specifically pinpointing those whose life paths seem abnormal or who suddenly rose suspiciously to uncover their crimes?"

"..."

You know, that's actually the idea...

However, what I'm looking for isn't crimes, but traces of those suspected of profiting from anomalous objects. Those with questionable "success stories" are naturally more likely to have had interactions with Yang Xin.

Surprised, Leon gave the policewoman a look, nodded silently, and half-truthfully said:

"That's about right."

"I knew it!"

Elated to have her suspicion confirmed, the policewoman clenched her fist with excitement, then, acting guilty as a thief, glanced at the distant attendants. She then inquired softly:

"How can I assist you?"

"For you... try this one!"

After pondering for a moment, Leon rummaged through the shelves, pulling out a moderately thick register to hand over.

"You're a police officer, after all; you should have some expertise in this."

Chapter 110 Accidental Discovery_1

"Unnatural deaths and disappearance register?"

After looking at the title on the roster, the female police officer exclaimed with surprise,

"Isn't everyone listed here from the Ryan Family? If you're looking for evidence against the Ryan Family, searching this won't be of much use, right?"

Indeed, if it were for evidence, looking at this wouldn't be very meaningful, but for investigating Anomalous Objects, it became quite effective.

Especially with Anomalous Objects like the "Demon" Yang Xin, when the holder couldn't control it, it almost inevitably caused many unnatural deaths.

And if many people who died unnaturally were connected to one person, then the possibility of this person using or even possessing Yang Xin would increase infinitely, but there was no need to explain all of this to her.

"Don't worry, it's useful."

To ensure that the hard-to-find helper worked efficiently without slacking off, Leon continued flipping through the genealogical records in his hands without raising his head, he casually replied,

"The records in this room are not the original genealogy; they are the copies that the Ryan Family allows others to peruse, so the contents must have been glorified, and most overly sensitive parts have likely been removed, but..."

"But records of events can be deleted, while records of who is alive or dead are generally accurate! So in these semi-public genealogies, the credibility of such basic records is actually the highest!"

Upon understanding Leon's point, the female police officer's eyes lit up involuntarily, and she looked at Leon with a bit of admiration in her eyes.

This bastard... this guy's brain is really quick!

Not only could he instantly judge the credibility of information, but he also had a terrifyingly accurate interrogation method, and even his shooting was super precise. No wonder he could get into the "hidden department" of the investigative department; this guy really was a rare talent!

Shocked by Leon's methods, in the female police officer's eyes, Leon seemed to be haloed with an aura of a "big shot," and even the frown he formed while flipping through the "fake" genealogy carried a hint of wisdom.

"..."

This guy, although impulsive, turned out to be quite easy to pacify... hmm... but his gaze was a bit unsettling...

Feeling uncomfortable being stared at by the female police officer, Leon subconsciously moved his chair a bit away from her, then continued flipping through the genealogical records while affirming,

"Yes, that's what I mean!

Plus, the Ryan Family is a large family; their internal relations aren't that close and even involve mutual infighting. Those accustomed to scheming probably won't only resort to such tactics externally but might also do so internally. So..."

"So we prioritize looking for those linked to many of the deceased and missing people!"

Understanding Leon's point once more, the female police officer couldn't help but slap her long leg, whispering in admiration,

"Having a connection with one deceased might be a coincidence; having connections with many deceased, it's most likely the mastermind!

Plus, if they are this ruthless internally, they would surely be even more unscrupulous externally, making it relatively easier to find evidence against such people compared to those who use fewer means!

Damn it! Why didn't I think of it? You really are... hmm..."

"..."

No... how did you suddenly switch from critiquing Leon to praising him?

Being stared at by the female police officer's heated gaze, Leon was unnerved and, for the first time, found that being looked at with admiration could be so uncomfortable.

Please, could you act a bit more normal?

I'm not being falsely modest; I'm genuinely uncomfortable... to be honest, compared to this weird gaze, the disdainful look you used to give me was actually more comfortable...

"I'll check right away!"

Unaware that she was being disliked, upon finding the "meaning" of her work, the female police officer immediately stood up, obtaining paper and pen from a servant. She then took the death roster and the genealogical records of important contacts, energetically plunging into the endless "Ryan Hell."

Seeing her finally calm down, not looking at him with those eyes or asking questions, Leon let out a sigh of relief and also immersed himself in the investigation of suspicious files.

After the two servants left, only the sound of pages turning remained in the genealogical room on the first floor of the small building.

Both were closely examining the records for separate purposes, Leon aiming to find evidence against the Ryan Family, and the female police officer seeking the missing Yang Xin, for several hours filled with intense scrutiny.

As the sun began to set, Leon had written nearly thirty names on the paper beside him, while the female police officer had found only eight or nine.

...

Hmm... you might say, this time around, recruiting her turned out to be spot on...

Closing the genealogy in his hand, Leon stretched his somewhat stiff neck, while glancing at the paper beside the female police officer, and was pleasantly surprised to find that five or six names on her "master" list overlapped with his "newly rich" list.

These seemingly unremarkable individuals suddenly rose to prominence and wealth while also being linked to many internal Ryan Family death incidents... if the person who obtained Yang Xin weren't a Buddhist youth, they likely were among these five or six people.

Moreover, just to be safe, ensuring that the "Yang Xin holder" didn't already hold a high position or lack a strong desire for wealth, the range could be slightly expanded but should remain within seven or eight individuals. It could be said he was not far from Yang Xin.

Hmm... the director was indeed the director. Visiting to acknowledge kinship, though sounding frivolous, proved astonishingly useful for investigating Anomalous Objects, accomplishing so much in just a few hours.

If I had listened to the Black Goat's proposal to sneak into Ryan Family rooms one by one in the middle of the night, interrogating anyone I found with the smell of Yang Xin, safety issues aside, it wouldn't have been as efficient as this!

Seriously reminding himself to learn from the director and Senior Emma, to think more before acting, so as not to become a reckless fool like the Black Goat later.

Looking at the female police officer who suddenly furrowed her brow, as if something was troubling her, Leon didn't disturb this still hard-working helper. Instead, he got up to exit the genealogical room, requested two servings of meals from a servant, and placed one beside her.

"Stop looking for now, take a break."

"Huh? Oh! Okay!"

Accepting the serving set on the table, she quickly swallowed a spoonful of soup, tasting nothing. Afterwards, the female police officer clenched her fist tightly, raising her head to look at Leon eating across the table, her face filled with hesitation.

"Hmm?"

Noticing her gaze, Leon put down the spoonful of mashed potatoes he scooped up, asking with some surprise,

"What's wrong? Why are you looking at me like that?"

I actually didn't... it's mainly because of you...

Instinctively licking her dry lips, the female police officer's white teeth began unconsciously nibbling her lower lip.

"Leon, let me ask you..."

Watching the man across from her, seemingly puzzled, the female police officer tightened her fists, even clenching her toes inside her shoes, and cautiously probed,

"If... I'm just saying if... if you were really a member of the Ryan Family, what would you do then?"

"..."