

I! Cleaner 191

Chapter 191 Can't the remaining sutra stop the wall hanging? _1

It seemed I had guessed correctly.

Watching the flame a few hundred meters away that desperately fled, Leon couldn't help but raise an eyebrow. He then swung a leg over the Witch's Broom that automatically hovered nearby, ready to pursue and bring the opponent to justice.

But just as the Witch's Broom was about to start, the lesson from narrowly escaping a bullet shot earlier surged in his mind, causing Leon to hesitate slightly. He then turned back to the princess, wrapping the Plague-Infected Blood Bandage around her, intending to wake her up first.

Although according to that shabby old man's "testimony," there seemed to be only two rebels in Ryan Manor with an Anomalous Object, since they had found a way to evade his soul vision, it's not impossible that they faked their stories during "interrogation."

If there was indeed a third rebel nearby, once Leon left to capture someone, they wouldn't even need to use an Anomalous Object. Even just a tiny Nail Gun could easily end the princess's life. It was safer to take her along.

...

Soon, under the "health" supplied by the Plague-Infected Blood Bandage, the princess, who fainted due to excessive blood flow, awoke with a faint bewilderment as she looked at Leon.

"I... what happened to me?"

"Your Highness, the rebels just launched an assassination attempt against you, which I thwarted. I am now preparing to apprehend the assailants."

After briefly explaining the situation, Leon helped the still-dazed princess onto the broom, advising her to hold tight around his waist, and then gently tapped the Witch's Broom with his heel.

"Ah!"

Accompanied by Princess Veronica's exclamation, the fully accelerated Witch's Broom shot out from the hall like an arrow, controlled by Leon as they chased after the desperately fleeing short man.

"You... you stay away! Stay away from me!"

Seeing that demon who could see into people's hearts was now flying directly towards him, the short man couldn't help but crumble instantly. His legs gave out as he nearly fell to the ground.

"Pop"

Yet at that moment, with the sound like a soap bubble bursting, as if a veil covering the soul was suddenly wiped away, the short man's fear-filled, chaotic eyes cleared in an instant.

So I wasn't a coward after all; memories of being a coward were woven into me to make me flee out of fear and lure the target into an ambush?

Damn it! Used as bait again!

Realizing what had happened to him, even if he recalled that he had initially agreed to this plan, the short man couldn't help but feel a twinge of discomfort in his heart.

If it weren't for being utterly crushed during interrogation by that demon, nearly leading to a mental breakdown that abandoned his escape, forcing Lucy to prematurely release part of the Ability, he might not have regained his true memories until the assassination mission was fully completed.

Lucy's old witch's memory Ability is... terrifying every time I wake up afterward, but it's oddly useful for completing missions. After all, even a bait like me didn't know there was an ambush, so the one behind wouldn't be able to react in time.

Shivering violently, the "coward" who regained a sliver of memory managed to avoid collapsing directly. He merely staggered a few steps before regaining his footing and continued to flee madly towards the manor's exit.

Meanwhile, Leon, who was relentlessly pursuing, remained cautious, never exiting his soul vision, and suddenly detected a small ripple in the soul of the short man.

Could this be a trap?

Watching the distant soul, whose level of fear had halved, Leon's brows furrowed slightly. He hesitated for a moment before purposely slowing down.

The Emma Remnants Scripture's seventh rule was to never underestimate an opponent's intelligence. The ability to conduct "sting operations" wasn't exclusive to Cleaners; it also belonged to intelligent Anomalous Objects, Uncontrollable Afflicted, and the Evil God-worshipping Underground Sect.

Those brainy enemies, when trying to execute plans, would similarly toss out bait, luring incautious Cleaners into traps to eliminate them in advance, paving the way for their own actions.

I have to guard against this!

Reflecting on Senior Emma's teachings, Leon squinted at the short man who was about to escape Ryan Manor. Instead of pressing the Witch's Broom to accelerate, he pulled up the broomstick and flew upward, then gently tapped the small mirror he carried.

Wherever you want to lead me, the trap can't work unless I'm physically "there," can it?

...

"Hiss..."

Feeling a cold chill penetrate his heart as if some extremely lethal thing had locked its sight on him, the short man shivered all over, cautiously turning his head to check behind him while fleeing.

What the hell?!

Seeing Leon in the sky several hundred meters away, assembling a sniper rifle silently, the short man felt utterly doomed.

According to information, the leader somehow acquired knowledge that while the target's Ability was comprehensive in attack and defense, its maximum shooting range wasn't impressive, supposedly only a few dozen meters. This ensured his safety.

But even though his Ability has limited range, he's actually carrying a sniper rifle! I'm dead for sure!

Staring at the weapon gradually forming in the sky behind him, the short man ignored any ambush locations and dashed toward the nearest building, knocking out an occupant en route. He then hid behind a shelf stacked with stuff, but...

"Pfft"

With a faint sound like a gas leak, the sack filled with rice burst open. Shelves, walls, bricks, and outer walls... all obstacles in front of the short man were simultaneously pierced by a glowing Nail.

"Ah!!!"

The short man felt a sudden chill at his thigh crease; before he could react, he was knocked out by the momentum of the nail, the burning smell of scorched flesh wafting into his nostrils.

No! I don't want to die yet!

Using the remarkable intuition of a soul-type Anomalous Object user, he vaguely sensed a second shot was imminent—one that would assuredly be fatal. The short man collapsed, scrambling towards the window, hoping to plead with the demon in the sky, testing if surrendering would save his life.

Yet as he crawled to the window, intending to proclaim his surrender, the man in the sky riding a peculiar broom, casting a presence more menacing than a demon's, suddenly twitched violently, then plunged like a kite with its string cut.

...

Inside the small clock tower six streets over.

"I hit him!"

Re-adjusting her fallen headscarf to cover her shiny bald head, the woman with odd goggles put away her slingshot and turned her curious gaze towards the middle-aged man beside her:

"Chief, how did you know he would fly up?"

Chapter 192 The True Power of the Gate to the Other World_1

"I saw it with my own eyes."

Through the telescope in his hand, the middle-aged man, after witnessing Leon and the Princess falling from the sky together, sighed with a mix of relief and complexity as he explained,

"The Anomalous Object I possess is called the 'Gate of the Other World.' Besides being able to open behind any door in the Capital City, allowing you to enter the base at any time, it can even open a door to the Future."

"What?!"

Hearing the middle-aged man's explanation of his Ability for the first time, the bald woman couldn't help but look over in shock, asking with her eyes wide open,

"The Future? Is it the Future I'm thinking of?"

"Yes, it's the Future you're thinking of, and this Future can still be changed. Everything I did after learning about the Future can change how the Future looks. For instance, the slingshot you just fired was the 'answer' I found from the Future."

After glancing toward Ryan Manor, the gray-templed middle-aged man said with a complex expression,

"That guy from the Purification Bureau is really... incredibly cautious and almost flawless in his work. At the slightest sign of movement around, he immediately uses that extremely troublesome Ability to protect himself and the Princess, not giving even the slightest chance.

You know, whether it's sneak attacks or poison blasts, yesterday, I took you from the Future and tried no less than eighty times, with more than a dozen different plans. But every time, he managed to evade it without fail, never once could we completely kill him.

The two closest attempts to success: Once, we went all out, sparing no Cost to corner him into a dead end, but he activated a lethal strand of hair. Except for Phoebe and her sister, everyone else was killed instantly by that strand, without any ability to resist, and he was only slightly injured.

The second time, we sent Phoebe, during one of her amnesiac spells, to approach him. When she reached out and touched him, everyone forgot about his existence. But just by touching Phoebe's hand, everyone's memories began to return slowly, and eventually, we still couldn't do anything to him."

After recalling the "battle of wits and courage" with "Prince Lyon," the middle-aged man turned his head, looking at the bald woman, who was already dumbfounded beside him, and sighed helplessly,

"That guy's Ability is really disgustingly perfect, almost without any weaknesses. *I really don't know what he encountered to become so cautious, as if someone is always ready to harm him.*"

"..."

Uh... it seems he really didn't over-prepare, after all, you attempted to 'harm' him over eighty times in one night. If he weren't cautious enough, he probably wouldn't be around anymore.

"Although that guy from the Purification Bureau has a remarkable Ability, you eventually found a chance to catch him, which still shows that your Ability is stronger!"

Looking at her "harmful yet persistent" leader with eyes that seemed to see a pervert, the bald woman said somewhat excitedly,

"Right, Leader! You can see the Future! With this Ability, aren't you invincible? Can't you do whatever you want?"

"No."

The middle-aged man's state seemed somewhat strange. He reached out to wipe away the sudden tears at the corner of his eye and shook his head with a somewhat forlorn tone,

"Even if you can see the Future infinitely many times, it doesn't necessarily mean you can really change the Future, because some problems are destined to have no answers."

"This... Leader, I don't understand..."

"Simply put, there are some things you just can't change, even if you know they will happen. For instance, the Future of this nation."

After looking at the slightly bewildered eyes of the bald woman, the middle-aged man hesitated slightly and then smiled with a bit of relief, explaining,

"You know? Our last attempt to assassinate the Princess was actually successful."

"What???"

"It's true. When I passed through the 'Gate of the Other World' and reached the Future, we had Luke control the Princess's chamberlain, successfully killing her. But shortly after her death, Future me found a way to send back the message.

Future me said that even in the Future without the Princess, the Kingdom still didn't get saved; it just went from completely broken to barely hanging on.

And because of a moment of weakness, after exiting the door of the Future, I slightly changed the plan, letting the guard controlled by Luke choose another position, voluntarily giving up the chance for success in the assassination."

"Ah this... this..."

Hearing that the failed assassination was actually their leader's voluntary abandonment, the bald woman was dumbfounded for a while, then suddenly lunged forward to grab the middle-aged man's shoulders, veins popping as she shouted,

"Why! Why! Also! She's the Princess! You're a Rebel! You tell me you got soft-hearted? What the hell are you talking about?"

"I had no choice. *I couldn't not be soft-hearted, she is, after all, my sister.*"

"What???"

Using the back of his hand to wipe the tear stains at the corner of his eye, which rubbed off the foundation covering his face, revealing several irregularly shaped freckles that looked like dirt stains, the middle-aged man said with complex emotions,

"If not for her, I would have been killed in the Capital City in the second year of the war. Since the Kingdom's fate is as tragic with or without her, how could I bear to kill her?"

So the leader of the Rebels... turned out to be the Kingdom's Prince? I... what have I been doing all along?

Looking at the distinctly spotted freckles on the middle-aged man's weathered face, the bald woman felt a rush of blood to the brain, almost driving her mad on the spot, and stammered as she questioned,

"Are you really Joshua? That foolish Prince? How is it possible! You? You?!"

"I've said it before, my Ability is called the 'Gate of the Other World.'"

Gaze fixed on the distant Ryan Manor, the middle-aged man said with a desolate look,

"Having the powerful Anomalous Object that can observe the Future at will naturally comes with an incomparable Cost, and the Cost I paid is akin to the name of this Ability.

I, who suffered thirty years of Pain because of the Kingdom's destruction, chose to step through the gate to the Other World, completely giving up everything I had, with no family, no past, and not even a Future anymore.

Now, I am just a ghost wandering in the Other World. Even if I have the chance to save the Kingdom and change all regrets, all the regrets I change no longer have the slightest relation to me. This is the Cost of using the Gate of the Other World."

"..."

After explaining the truth of his Ability, looking at the completely contorted expression of the bald woman, the middle-aged man wiped away his tears and bowed apologetically.

"I'm sorry, I originally intended to take this secret to the grave, but in just a few more minutes, my sister... the Princess, will disappear from everyone's memory, and I will follow and forget her too. I just couldn't hold back the urge to confide in someone while my memory is still intact."

"You... I... Damn it! Why did you choose me? Why didn't you... mm? Mm!"

"Because among all of us, you're the only one I can beat, sorry."

After forcing a pinch of some strange powder into the bald woman's mouth, the middle-aged man looked at her terrified face and said,

"Don't worry, what I gave you isn't poison. It's powder made from Phoebe's nails, and according to the dose, it should only make you lose about an hour of memory."

Just sleep for a while, just a while... Also, thank you for listening to my secret. I feel much better after getting it all out."

"..."

Looking at the apologetic middle-aged man in front of her, the bald woman struggled twice but couldn't break free, her mouth still clamped so she couldn't curse, leaving her to continuously express her anger through her eyes.

You feel better! But now I feel terrible! Let go of me, you bastard! Damn it!

Chapter 193 Phoebe and Grandma_1

"Leon? How are you?"

Without knowing that her currently somewhat brain-dead brother would evolve into the ultimate creature decades later, Veronica immediately hugged Leon's waist, dragging his pale-faced self from the soft, sponge-like ground.

"I'm fine... I'm okay..."

After spitting twice, trying to eject the cheese-cake-like floor tile from his mouth, Leon, feeling almost completely drained, hastily disabled the Holy Spirit pendant's ability to alter reality. Then he pulled out the [Plague-Infected Blood Band], attempting to place it on his injured left shoulder.

"Do I need to wrap this bandage?"

Understanding Leon's intent, Veronica quickly took over the bandage, efficiently wrapping it around Leon's left shoulder, and as per Leon's instruction, held his right hand against the bloodstained bandage.

"Squeak..."

Accompanied by the release of 'health' from the bandage, a tooth-aching sound of bones rubbing together emerged. Leon's fractured left clavicle slowly returned to place, and the shattered pieces of his scapula reassembled.

Soon, a small metal ball, smaller than a pea and seemingly crushed by bones, was squeezed out from Leon's shoulder as his bones and muscles resumed their positions.

Was this... a pellet from a child's slingshot?

After seeing the fallen object clearly, Leon's brows instantly knitted tightly, a trace of genuine bewilderment flickering in his gaze.

After the Demon series badges upgraded to Gold Level, the range of his soul vision had almost extended to three kilometers, but he hadn't detected any killing intent within his range just seconds ago, indicating the attacker's position was beyond his maximum sight.

Even if he were "fixed" in the air for better aiming, someone capable of shattering his scapula from a distance of at least three kilometers with a small, soft lead projectile must have shooting skills far surpassing human abilities, suggesting it was some Anomalous Object Ability at play.

But... for him to forego using the Holy Spirit pendant and opt for remote sniping was a snap decision. How had the opponent predicted this?

Could it be... causality? Foresight?

With such an exceedingly powerful ability, wouldn't one save or rule the world instead of hitting him with a single lead pellet? *Isn't this just absurdly insane?*

While Leon was racking his brains over the situation, a somewhat hurried footstep echoed from a distance.

Tracing the sound, Leon discovered a maid from the Ryan Family stealthily creeping around a nearby building, approaching where he had fallen.

Impossible... To fall from such a height and not die?

Controlling the maid to peek through the small kitchen window with caution towards where the "demon" had fallen, upon seeing Leon unscathed except for a bandage on his shoulder, a short man with an injured thigh couldn't help but gnash his teeth and hammer the floor in frustration.

Should he control a guard, find a gun, and then... um...

Watching the demon, who slowly turned their gaze in 'his' direction and gradually smirked, the maid and the short man controlling her both shivered simultaneously, promptly pretending to faint on the spot.

Meanwhile, from the second floor of another building several dozen meters away, a figure abruptly leaped down, rushed toward the warehouse where the short man resided, kicked open the door, and fled carrying his "out-of-body" self.

One should know contentment!

To escape with his life from such a demon was an enormous stroke of luck. Any greed for attempting further assassination would surely cost him even this last chance of escape!

...

Strange... Could it be there are no more ambushes?

Narrowing his eyes, Leon, reaching for the director's hair, couldn't quite grasp the enemy's motive as he watched the short man fleeing in panic within his soul vision.

After remaining on alert for a while and confirming the assassination attempt was truly over without any other rebels emerging, Leon breathed a sigh of relief, yet still found himself puzzling over it.

Those rebels went through so much trouble only to hit him with a single lead pellet—was that all there was to it? What were they after?

"Leon, the bandage seems to have stopped."

At that moment, a cautious reminder sounded.

Following Princess Veronica's prompt, Leon examined the bandage on his shoulder. It was then he realized the "health" stored within had been depleted, yet his shoulder hadn't fully healed.

Hmm... With little health left in the Plague-Infected Blood Band originally, using it today first to heal a slovenly old man, then the princess's fainting, and now his shattered shoulder, it was no surprise it's depleted. Replenishing it will suffice.

"Stay close behind me; don't wander too far," he instructed the princess, before using his soul vision to inspect the vicinity. Discovering a nearby building was a kitchen with a few live chickens and ducks inside, he then moved with the princess in tow to restock the [Plague-Infected Blood Band]'s consumed health.

"Quack!"

"Cluck cluck, cluck cluck!"

Entering the kitchen, Leon was just about to grab one of the bound chickens or ducks to drain some life force for his recovery when he glimpsed a pair of curious wide eyes amidst the fluttering creatures.

"Big brother, who are you guys?"

"We're here to fetch some chickens and ducks."

Carefully examining the little girl's soul and confirming she wasn't a rebel in disguise, Leon hesitated after catching a fat chicken. Considering the creatures tied by the [Plague-Infected Blood Band] died horrifically, he refrained from acting immediately but instead attempted to cover the little girl's eyes with his other hand.

"Hiss..."

As Leon lifted his left hand, his not fully healed scapula sent a piercing pain through him, causing him to inhale sharply, realizing it wasn't currently within his capability, he turned to face the princess outside the kitchen.

"Your Highness, I can't lift my left hand. Please take the child outside first."

"Just call me Veronica."

Nodding in agreement with Leon's request, Veronica, without a hint of disdain, picked up the dirty little girl and carried her out of the kitchen. Apparently fond of children, the princess affectionately nudged her forehead against the girl's, smiling gently, as she coaxed:

"Aren't you sweet? Come on, tell me your name."

"Me?"

Blinking her crystal-like big eyes, the little girl extended her ash-dusted hand and patted it forcefully on the princess's pale bust, then answered with utter seriousness:

"Phoebe. Granny, my name is Phoebe!"

"..."

Hearing the little girl's address, the princess, now approaching twenty-eight and thus considered an older young woman, couldn't help but have her expression freeze. Clamping her small cheek, she feigned annoyance as she corrected:

"Sister! It's sister!"

"Granny!"

The little girl said while reaching up to pat her chest once more.

"No calling me Granny! Call me sister, I'll give you candy. Call me Granny again and sister will spank your butt!"

"Then... give me candy first."

"Candy..."

Surveying her dress with no pockets, the princess, unable to make bricks without straw, rolled her eyes before resorting to a white lie:

"Of course, there's candy, but sister left her money behind. When she gets some, she'll buy it for you!"

"Granny!"

"Slap!"

This little brat!

Watching the little girl call her Granny, slapping her chest every time, leaving it smudged with soot, Princess Veronica helplessly chuckled, abandoning any hope of correcting her.

Following a screeching sound as though slaughtering a chicken, Leon within the kitchen finished his task and rewrapped the bandage around his shoulder.

"Sorry for the intrusion, here's the money for the chicken."

Nodding at the beautiful woman cradling the child at the doorway, Leon slipped her two Silver Wheels, managing to resist the urge to glance at her bust. One leg was now straddled on the Witch's Broom, he took off toward the Purification Bureau.

"???"

Why did he give me money?

Standing there dumbfounded for a moment, Princess Veronica lowered her head puzzled, examining the two Silver Wheels Leon handed her.

What's this supposed to mean? A breakup fee?

"Slap!"

"Granny! Now you have money!"

Chapter 194 Who is she?_1

"You were still thinking about the candy, while I almost lost my husband!"

After affectionately pinching the cheek of the little girl, as Princess Veronica was about to call out to Leon to ask why he suddenly left her behind, an old and hoarse voice suddenly came from the nearby window.

"Hello."

Startled by the sound that resembled a sharp object scraping against glass, Princess Veronica turned towards it and saw an old lady with sagging skin and white hair reaching out her arms in her direction.

"Can I have Phoebe back?"

"Ah, sure!"

Noticing the wary look in the other person's eyes, Princess Veronica thought she might have misunderstood something. To avoid being mistaken for a child kidnapper, she quickly set the little girl in her arms down.

However, Princess Veronica had already hesitated slightly when she was handed two Silver Wheels earlier, and now, with the sudden appearance of the old lady, Leon, who was riding on a broomstick, had already flown far away.

Forget it, I know his address, I can ask him later.

Looking at Leon's retreating figure, Princess Veronica couldn't help but sigh.

Today was just... not only was there an assassination attempt by the Rebels, but she also ended up getting married without any preparation, and the Prince she chose seemed like an odd person.

Especially just now, he had asked her to help look after a child one moment, and the next moment acted as if he forgot who she was, not only becoming polite and distant but even inexplicably giving her two Silver Wheels...

What a peculiar person; but since Leon worked for the Purification Bureau, it's probably normal for him to be a bit weird?

Shaking her head full of confusion, Princess Veronica smoothed out her skirt, squatted down, and opened the little girl's dirty, small black hand, placing a shiny Silver Wheel inside. She then smiled and patted the little girl's bottom.

"Here's the money, go to your real grandma and let her buy you some candy~"

"Grandma?"

Looking at the silver-white coin in her hand, the little girl tilted her head in surprise.

"Phoebe's grandma is already dead, dead for many years."

This child's grandma is dead? Then who was talking to me?

Hearing the little girl's words, Princess Veronica's eyebrows furrowed slightly, then she looked up at the old lady in the distant window and asked politely but cautiously,

"May I ask, who are you to this child?"

The old lady lifted her finely wrinkled brows, gave Princess Veronica a meaningful look, then smiled calmly, and answered,

"My name is Lucy, I'm Phoebe's sister."

You're Phoebe's sister?

Upon hearing this, Princess Veronica was momentarily taken aback, and her tightly furrowed brows did not relax, but instead tightened further.

Impossible! You look over sixty, while little Phoebe seems to be only five or six years old, how could she be your sister?

"Lucy!"

As Princess Veronica furrowed her brow, starting to suspect the old lady might have some mental issues, the little girl suddenly ran happily towards the old lady.

"Lucy, be good~"

Standing on tiptoes to pat the old lady's silver hair, the little girl lifted the coin to the old lady's eyes with her dirty little hand and affectionately imitated Princess Veronica's earlier words, saying:

"If you call me sister, I'll buy you candy~"

"..."

Looking at the little girl full of innocence before her, a hint of sadness flashed in the old lady's eyes, then she compliantly lowered her head so Phoebe wouldn't have to stand on tiptoes to touch the top of her head. Then, with a hoarse and eerie voice, she softly agreed,

"Sister, no matter what you become, you will always be my sister."

"..."

So... it turns out it's not the grandma who has mental issues, but the child who might be intellectually challenged?

Noticing the sadness in the old lady's eyes, as well as her allowing little Phoebe to touch her head, Princess Veronica fell silent and chose not to further disturb this peculiar "sisterhood," instead turning back towards the main hall.

Some things are almost impossible to change, whether it's this little girl's innate foolishness or the deep-rooted greed in people's hearts.

The only thing she could do was use the power that came with her title of Princess to try to put shackles on those excessive greeds, so these inherently unfortunate could be slightly happier.

And her marriage to Leon undoubtedly accelerated this progress, making everything worthwhile!

...

"What happened?"

"Did I pass out?"

"What just happened... Earl? Wake up, my lord!"

When Princess Veronica re-entered the hall where the ceremony of peerage was held, some of those who had fainted due to the "Heartbeat Moment" had already begun to regain consciousness.

However, those waking up were mostly the younger or stronger attendees or the guards; people with higher status were usually older and physically weaker, so most remained unconscious, leaving no one to take charge of the situation, and the hall was in chaos.

"Everyone, please listen to me!"

Observing the chaotic scene in the hall, Princess Veronica shook her head, then adjusted her shawl to cover the black handprint on her chest, and clapped her hands forcefully to attract everyone's attention, then instructed the awakened people:

"The current priority is to wake people up. VinceSmoke family's members should go fetch a doctor, while other families should move their unconscious members upstairs.

As for families where no one has awakened, the Ryan Family should take responsibility. Also, check the condition of the unconscious people so that once the VinceSmoke family brings a doctor, priority can be given to those in more serious conditions."

That seems... like the right thing to do now?

After hearing Princess Veronica's instructions, the chaotic hall quieted down for a moment, then people began to subconsciously follow suit. Their actions led more people to begin assisting, and the chaotic hall gradually became more orderly.

However, even as they followed her instructions, most people couldn't help but have a peculiar question arise in their hearts.

Who is this woman issuing orders... exactly?

...

"What? You encountered the Rebels with control over an Anomalous Object again and nearly fell into their trap?"

After Leon finished recounting today's events, the Red-haired Director blinked her fox-like eyes in surprise, saying,

"That's strange. Although the likelihood of encountering abnormalities typically increases with higher levels of Corrosion once someone joins the Purification Bureau, haven't you been getting into accidents a bit too often?"

"I do think it's odd too and suspect I might be under some Curse..."

Leon nodded somewhat helplessly and said,

"But the Black Goat said, assured as a Great Demon, that there's absolutely nothing abnormal about me; at least it couldn't detect any issues, so it suggested I come straight to you to find out what's really going on."

Chapter 195 Exchange and Door-to-Door Service_1

" "I can't see anything wrong with you either."

The Red-haired Director shook his head and said,

"Although I also had some sensory abilities, I was better at combat. This might involve the mysterious and the cursed. That sheep knew far more than I did.

Also, even though that sheep was currently a bit weaker, it was indeed a well-informed Great Demon with an extremely long life span. In terms of knowledge in this area, there weren't many in the Purification Bureau who surpassed it.

So, if even it couldn't see any problem, then you almost didn't need to consider the bureau. Among those I could call for help, including the Taurus Director, there was barely anyone who could solve your problem."

"..."

Wasn't that game over?

After hearing what the Red-haired Director said, Ryan's heart sank halfway.

Even though he had [The Emma Remnants Scripture] to protect him, he could only learn Senior Emma's caution, not her Undying Body.

If he kept encountering anomalies at this frequency, no matter how cautious he became, he would eventually fail like today when faced with an endless stream of anomalous objects.

Without mentioning anything else, today's lead bullet alone was deadly. If that person shooting the slingshot from three kilometers away had raised his hand just a little while shooting, it wouldn't just be Ryan's scapula that shattered.

"Are you thinking about the person who hurt you with the slingshot?"

Seeing the somewhat fearful look in Ryan's eyes, the Red-haired Director guessed what he was thinking and offered some comfort,

"Rest assured, you're carrying my hair on you. My hair was extremely sensitive to the scent of death. Once you were subjected to a potentially fatal attack, it would immediately intercept it. That person's ability might restrain you, but there was still a way to avoid it."

"Then, what if it wasn't immediately fatal, but something like poison, curses, bleeding that slowly kills me?"

Knowing roughly the effects of [Slaughter Blood Hair], Ryan pondered for a moment and then added with some worry,

"Besides that, what if the air around me was sucked dry, or if I was forcibly moved deep underwater or underground, or if I wasn't killed but aged by an anomalous object?"

There were also abilities that didn't directly harm the body, targeting the soul, mind, or will. They could bypass [Slaughter Blood Hair]'s protection, right?"

"Right..."

Watching Ryan quickly come up with seven or eight ways to bypass [Slaughter Blood Hair] and successfully "kill" himself, the Red-haired Director clicked his tongue, feeling like he saw a PLUS version of Emma.

To be honest, while being a little cautious was a good thing for a Cleaner, Little Lyon seemed to be deeply influenced by Emma.

"What if, for a while, you stay in the bureau?"

Tilting his head in thought, the Red-haired Director suggested,

"Those two investigators have already returned. If the investigation went without issues, the sheep's heart would be sent back in a couple of days. By then, you could visit the police department prison, get a warden position, and oversee those heinous death row prisoners.

Although it couldn't match Emma's Undying Body, with something at the Heart of Ambition level to protect your life, you should be able to get through it without encountering extremely extreme anomalous abilities."

Yeah! And there was the Heart!

Hearing the Director's reminder, Ryan felt reinvigorated, as a bit of hope flickered in the previously bleak future.

Although he wasn't like Bobby Laien who directly put the heart into his body, with the [I Am the Demon] Golden Badge's blessing, normally using the Heart's life-saving ability was still feasible. As long as he didn't encounter overly extreme situations, he should be able to hold on until he truly became strong.

Oh right, there was also the sheep stomach!

Remembering another anomaly from the "sheep offal series," eager to significantly boost his strength to cope with his terribly bad luck, Ryan directly asked,

"Director! How's the Black Goat's stomach? Can I apply to have it?"

"The stomach... that isn't difficult, but not as quick as the Heart. It will require some waiting."

The Red-haired Director thought for a moment before replying,

"That sheep's stomach was self-found, not confiscated from a task. But as an anomaly submitted to our bureau, after basic checks, we in the Virgo Bureau would have priority to apply for it."

According to the headquarter's application regulations, all you need to do was to submit an anomaly of the same basic level, or three anomalies of a lower level, and you could obtain it.

Hmm... As for the Sheep Stomach, the Leon Value was about 8, but because it was part of a whole set of anomalies, the conversion requirement was significantly higher. Probably calculated at 10 Leon Value you still have any anomalies to exchange for it?"

"I really do!"

After checking his current stock, Ryan tapped the small mirror he carried, instructing Young Ha to throw out the model small bed sealed with the "Under-the-bed Ghost Hand."

"This item had a Leon Value of 8.7, plus the 2.5 Leon Value [Heartbeat Moment] acquired today, which should be enough for exchange... uh... wait a minute."

Touching the red hair around his neck, Ryan didn't immediately hand over the items. He hesitated a bit and then spoke,

"Director, could I ask for a favor?"

"Hmm? What favor?"

"It's just... haven't I been targeted by those Rebels lately? I'm worried they might come after my family, so I hope to get three strands of hair, one for each of my siblings."

After explaining his request, without waiting for the Director to respond, afraid she might refuse, Ryan quickly added,

"Of course, I know the [Slaughter Blood Hair] was a powerful anomaly with the number 013. Even just a few strands were very precious, and constantly drained your power, Director, so I wouldn't ask for them for free.

If you can accept it, I am willing to use the 8.7 Leon Value [Under-the-bed Ghost Hand] to exchange for those three strands of hair. Is that okay?"

Exchanging [Under-the-bed Ghost Hand] for three strands of your blood hair for your siblings?

Hearing Ryan's condition, seeing his sincere expression, the Red-haired Director instinctively blinked her fox eyes, then tapped her knuckles on the table, and thoughtfully retorted,

"If you exchanged my hair for [Under-the-bed Ghost Hand], what would you use to exchange for the sheep stomach? Nonetheless, anomalies with nearly 10 Leon Value aren't easy to find. Are you sure?"

"I'm sure."

Ryan nodded earnestly and said,

"Though anomalies with 10 Leon Value are hard to find, they do exist. To exchange for Anna's safety, I believe it's completely worth it."

Did family mean more to you than anything?

Staring into Ryan's eyes for a while, the Red-haired Director confirmed that he genuinely thought so. She couldn't help but blink, feeling a tinge of bitterness in her heart. Not only was she envious of those Ryan worried about, she also envied him for having someone who could worry about him.

How nice, not only you but Emma also still had family members to rely on. Considering my circumstances, I was destined to have nothing to do with family.... Hmm... So annoying! My mood was pleasant until you came along and suddenly made everything awkward.

"Alright then, I'll accept it!"

Swallowing back the "no need to exchange" words that rose to her lips, she took the [Under-the-bed Ghost Hand] and threw it into her drawer, which prompted her to glare at the joyous Ryan and teasingly issue a battle invitation full of malice,

"Wanna drink a bit?"

"Huh?"

"If you drink with me wholeheartedly today, three hairs, or even thirty, would be fine!"

Chapter 196 Without the Royal Palace, I can only nibble on my husband_1

Was he not coming home today as well?

Unaware that Leon was risking his life in a sea of alcohol with a terrifying red-haired bad woman for the safety of himself and his siblings, Anna sighed quietly as the streetlights below the apartment turned on and Leon's figure was still nowhere to be seen.

But as she stood up from the window, intending to clear the meal on the table she had purposely left, she suddenly heard some familiar footsteps in the stairway.

Could it be... he's back?

Hearing the highly identifiable heavy footsteps, the frail girl's expression lit up ever so slightly. After wiping her damp palms on her apron, she quickly ran over to the door to open it.

However, just as she stood up, she realized that although the footsteps were very similar to Leon's, with the same heavy burden-like sound, the stride was noticeably smaller.

So it wasn't my brother...

Somewhat disappointed, Anna sighed and released her grip on the doorknob. Yet those footsteps that were so similar to Leon's headed straight toward her, and then, the door was gently knocked.

"Knock, knock-knock."

Someone at my house?

Hearing the rather sudden knocking, Anna was briefly stunned and then cautiously inquired through the door, "Who are you looking for?"

Hearing the voice from inside the door, the person outside paused and then replied warmly, "I'm looking for Leon, Leon Laine."

Looking for my brother? And that voice... a woman?

Although the woman's voice was very pleasant and carried a kind of convincing calmness, Anna couldn't help but instinctively become wary, almost subconsciously making an excuse, "He's already asleep! And it's very late now, you should come back tomorrow!"

"..."

Sensing her defensiveness, the woman outside pondered for a moment before leaning closer to the door and speaking softly, "You're Anna, right? Leon has mentioned you to me.

Also, although there are men's shoes left deliberately outside, Leon's pair isn't here, so he hasn't come home yet, right? Don't worry, I'm not a bad person; I really came to find him."

"..."

Caught lying straight through the door, Anna's face flushed slightly. She quickly turned the doorknob, feeling embarrassed, and apologized, "I'm sorry... My brother told me a few days ago to be more careful lately, saying that someone might be targeting our family, so I..."

Looking at the beautiful woman in front of her, who appeared somewhat tired yet had an astonishingly good figure, Anna found her words stuck, both shocked and instinctively comparing her own measurements to the woman's voluptuous front.

It actually can be like this... This is unfair!

"It's okay; it's normal to be more cautious when I show up so late suddenly."

Seeing that she had finally succeeded in tricking her way in, Princess Veronica, who could not afford a hotel and could not return to the Royal Palace with just a Silver Wheel from Leon, secretly breathed a sigh of relief.

To have a place to stay tonight, she recalled the information she had read and tried to charm her with a warm and friendly smile, "Nice to meet you; my name is Veronica. As for my identity... I'm your brother's fiancée."

What did you say?

After hearing Princess Veronica's shocking introduction, the frail girl was left stunned as if struck by lightning, akin to a little duck in a daze.

This is impossible!

He said he would spend his life... In any case, even without a blood relationship, I'm his most important sister! He would definitely tell me about something like marriage first! This woman must be lying... um...

Anna was about to scold the woman in front of her, burning with a nameless anger, telling her not to lie, but she couldn't help but glance again at the woman's chest.

Perhaps... maybe it's not completely impossible? After all, she's really...

"Anna?"

Waiting for a long time without hearing any skepticism, Princess Veronica, whose prepared talking points were unusable, had to think on her feet and improvise, saying, "I know this news might be hard for you to accept, but I'm not lying to you. I really am your brother's fiancée."

"But... but he never told me anything, and he's been so busy... Where would he have had the time..."

"It is indeed quite sudden."

Holding the frail girl's sweaty hand, she led her affectionately inside as if she were really her sister-in-law and apologized genuinely, "Just this afternoon, in the main hall of the Ryan Manor estate, in front of all the guests attending the ennoblement ceremony, he proposed to me."

Since we got along very well, I agreed after thinking about it. Because it all happened so abruptly, I didn't have a chance to inform you... Oh, did Leon tell you where he was going today?"

"He mentioned..."

Not noticing that Princess Veronica had deliberately left out "dating duration" and "why no introduction to family" issues, Anna correlated this "sister-in-law's" authenticity with whether Leon went to Ryan Manor today.

Remembering Leon had indeed mentioned going to Ryan Manor for an ennoblement ceremony, and seeing the "intelligence" match on both sides, the last shred of doubt in her heart was completely dispelled due to the "all true if partly true" mindset. With complexity in her eyes, she said, "So you really are..."

"I really am your sister-in-law."

Her nose, smudged slightly with soot, twitched as she caught a whiff of enticing food aroma. Starving since morning, the ravenous princess could no longer resist.

Pulling the dazed Anna to sit by the dining table, she naturally lifted the dish covers and pushed a small plate toward Anna, concernedly asking, "You don't seem to be feeling well; did you eat too little and feel unwell?"

"Ah..."

With her mind full of her brother getting married, the bride not being... not being... her brother got married and hadn't told her, Anna eludedly replied, "I guess... I didn't eat much..."

"Then eat a bit more; I'll eat with you."

Naturally picking up a dish and placing it before her, Princess Veronica speared a broccoli piece for Anna and then elegantly cut herself a sizable slice of still warm fried fish, impeccably put it in her mouth.

Chewing the fish at record-breaking speed and swallowing it whole, the princess, successfully conning her way to a meal, scooped mashed potatoes while persuading with concern, "Hurry and eat; you look so thin. If Leon returns and sees you didn't take care of yourself, he'll be upset for sure."

"Ah? Alright..."

Under Princess Veronica's earnest persuasion, Anna mechanically consumed two pieces of side broccoli and a few small carrot slices meant for soup ingredients.

Looking at the three plates cleaned out by her "sister-in-law," Anna finally noticed something was amiss. She gazed suspiciously at the woman opposite, who was contentedly wiping her mouth.

This sister-in-law... seemed to be here to swindle a meal, didn't she?

Chapter 197 Tonight no one sleeps_1

"I'm sorry, I seemed to be eating a bit too quickly."

Noticing the suspicious look in Anna's eyes, Princess Veronica didn't panic after revealing a slip-up. Instead, she apologetically admitted,

"Today has just been filled with unexpected events. First, your brother suddenly proposed to me, then we were attacked by the rebels. I haven't really eaten anything since morning, so I couldn't help myself just now. Please don't laugh at me."

So that's how it is...

Seeing the princess openly admit to "scamming food and drink," and recalling her still elegant demeanor despite being a bit rushed, the suspicion faded slightly from Anna's eyes. She was drawn to a new topic thrown her way and asked with some concern,

"So... how is Leon? Were you with him today? Since you were attacked by rebels, was he hurt?"

"Don't worry. Although he ran into a tiny bit of trouble, his shoulder was hit by... a small pebble, and I suspect the wound has probably already healed."

After relaying Leon's condition, Princess Veronica couldn't help but smile at the clearly relieved yet frail girl before her. She then warmly took Anna's hand, saying with a close expression,

"Honestly, when I saw you just now, it really gave me quite a scare."

"Huh?"

Upon hearing the "sister-in-law's" words, the frail girl couldn't help but shiver slightly, as if some little secret she harbored was seen through. She forced a smile and said,

"Wh-why?"

"Of course, it's because of you."

Without food or a place to stay, the princess, who urgently needed shelter, employed her political finesse, smiling as she praised,

"Leon mentioned he had a sister around his age, but he never told me you were so beautiful."

Watching the modestly dressed girl beside her, made slightly bashful by the compliment, lower her head shyly even in a plain white dress, Princess Veronica couldn't resist wrapping an arm around her slender waist, then sighed with three parts flattery and seven parts sincerity,

"Truly... so beautiful it makes me a bit jealous, especially your waist... Oh my, really... On the day Leon and I have our wedding, you must be my bridesmaid!

But you have to promise me not to dress too beautifully; otherwise, the guests might not even look at me and will keep their eyes glued to you. I would be so embarrassed."

"It's not... It's not that exaggerated..."

Embarrassed by Princess Veronica's words, Anna's fair cheeks tinged with a blush, and she waved her hands to indicate she wasn't as good as the princess described her.

Suppressing a small pang of envy, Anna looked at the beautiful, graceful, and impeccably mannered woman before her and sighed softly in her heart. She then reversed the grip on the princess's hand and said,

"You, sis... you're the truly stunning one, and you have such a good figure. Even if I dressed beautifully, everyone's attention would definitely be on you... By the way, how old are you, sis?"

How old am I...

Hearing Anna's inquiry, the princess couldn't help her expression from stiffening slightly, quickly masking it with a vague smile,

"I'm just a little bit older than your brother..."

A bit older? Her brother was sixteen this year, a little bit older would be... seventeen or eighteen? Nineteen?

Anna thought for a moment, looking at the mature and graceful woman before her, eventually estimating upward a little and carefully asked,

"Are you... twenty years old, sis?"

You mean... I look like someone not quite twenty yet?

The question prompted the princess, a fair twenty-eight-years-old beauty, to feel a thrill of delight in her heart, and her smile became a hundred times more genuine than before.

Not only was Leon's sister pretty and gentle, but she also spoke so well and cooked deliciously. Oh my, today I really did come to the right place!

"Yeah, about right, about right!"

Thick-skinned enough to accept Anna's guess with a broad grin, the princess continued chatting with her. With both sides eager to befriend each other, the conversation felt endless, lasting long into the night before ceasing.

...

"Oh my, talking was so delightful that I accidentally lost track of time!"

Always glancing at the window from the corner of her eye, the princess saw that most streetlights had dimmed, estimating the last public carriage had departed. She promptly stood up with a regretful expression,

"I only meant to come see you all but ended up disturbing for so long. I'm really sorry, I should be going!"

Was it that late already?

Looking outside at the dark streets, now pitch black with most streetlights turned off, Anna quickly stood up to stop her,

"Wait, don't. It's already so late; sis, just stay the night!"

"How could I impose?"

"What's the big deal? You're going to marry into the family sooner or later, so staying one night early doesn't matter."

"But since Leon and I aren't actually married yet, staying over now seems a bit..."

"It's fine; he's not here anyway. Besides, it's already so late, the last carriage might be gone, and if you encounter danger on the way, what would we do?"

"Well... okay then..."

Unable to resist the future sister-in-law's enthusiastic invitation, the restrained princess agreed to stay. She ended up being shown into Leon's room for the night.

Considering the clothes' size compared to her own, Anna realized the princess certainly couldn't fit into hers, so she thoughtfully found a few of Leon's old clothes and left them by the bed.

Chapter 198 Tonight no one sleeps_2

Picking up the old clothes and trying them on, Princess Veronica found they fit perfectly, and she smiled as she expressed her gratitude,

"Thank you, it's really been a bother today."

"You're welcome, after all, you are... well... it seems a bit late."

Seeing the princess quietly stifle a small yawn, her eyelids also a bit heavy, Anna gently reminded her with a smile,

"Sister, you've had a long day, so I won't disturb your rest. My room is right next door, so call me if you need anything."

"Okay, thank you."

After seeing Anna out of the room, Princess Veronica removed the ill-fitting dress and changed into Leon's old clothes. The sleepiness that had been on her face suddenly vanished.

Silently slipping under the covers, she sighed softly, lying on Leon's small bed, staring steadily at the slightly worn-out ceiling above.

Falling asleep was naturally impossible. The original princess had gathered all the conditions needed, just one step away from fulfilling her dream.

But in the blink of an eye, she disappeared inexplicably from everyone's memory. She couldn't even go home and had to rely on the intelligence she had on Leon to get food and shelter, lest she end up on the streets.

She now needed enough time to think, to ponder her own future, to find a way to retrieve everything she had lost. For Princess Veronica, tonight was destined to be a sleepless night.

However, she was not the only one destined to be sleepless tonight, as Anna next door was the same.

...

So, brother is really going to get married...

Equally sleepless, lying in bed, the frail girl stared at the ceiling for a while before turning her head to glance in the direction of Leon's room.

The sudden appearance of this beautiful "sister-in-law" completely shattered the reality Anna was most unwilling to face... that Leon would eventually have his own family.

And once Leon had a family of his own, with his own wife and children, even if he still recognized her as his sister with no blood relation, they were destined not to be as close as they were now.

At that time, Leon would likely move out, and the one keeping a warm meal for him, waiting under the light for his return, would be another woman, not herself...

And besides, there was that strange man with a crying face!

Recalling the mysterious man who "visited" a few days ago, Anna felt a chill run through her body, shrinking back under the covers. She then looked toward the next room with a deeply complex expression.

If that man really took the "photo" and made Leon forget everything, she could have tried to find him, to see if they could become family in another way.

But now, brother already had a fiancée, so could she... still stay by his side? Would her home... still continue to exist?

With her heart full of melancholy and worry, after staring at Leon's room for a while, she thought of that woman, perfect to the point where she had no way, not even able to dislike her. In the tangled mess of her thoughts, a strong, peculiar notion faintly emerged.

If... if I were her... how wonderful would that be?

...

"Zzzt..."

A rather strange sound came from the small mirror Leon used to store things. Young Ha, secretly gnawing on the sniper rifle barrel, jumped in surprise.

"Woof?!"

(What was that?!)

Releasing the sniper rifle barrel from its mouth, Young Ha shook its little golden fur, turned to look at the pile of miscellaneous items Leon had thrown in, and carefully extended a paw to nudge around, finding the source of the strange noise.

"Woof woo?"

(This photo... something's not right, is it?)

Looking at the photo on the ground, gently trembling, the images on it shifting from three people to one, Young Ha tilted its head in confusion, feeling it should inform Leon of this.

"Woof woof woof! Woof woof woof! Woof woof woof!"

(Leon! Something's wrong, Leon! Take the mirror out of your pocket!)

However, without knowing why, Young Ha barked outside the small mirror for a long time, even nudged its nose out to push him, yet received no response.

Growing anxious, Young Ha circled around before using its shiny black nose to sniff Leon's scent, following the constantly shifting boundary of the Mirror World, finally finding an exit relatively close to Leon.

"Woof woo... woof woo..."

(So, he was drunk... Humans are really unreliable...)

With its head poking out from the bottle of whiskey, Young Ha looked at Leon, lying on the table with glazed eyes, pouting speechlessly. It was about to try to bite him awake, to inform Leon about the photo exhibited strange changes in the Mirror World, when...

"What? Do you want a taste too?"

The Red-haired Director, eyes hazy with intoxication, extended red lacquered fingertips to pinch Young Ha's scruff, lifting it from the bottle of whiskey with a chuckle and, ignoring its horrified expression, pressed a bottle to its mouth.

"Don't be shy, it's my treat today! Whether human or dog, I guarantee you'll drink your fill!"

"Woof! Woof woof woof!"

(!! I don't)

"Zzzt..."

Just as the unfortunate Young Ha bumped into the Red-haired Director's hand, forced to stand in for Leon as a little drinking buddy, the photo in the Mirror World, ceaselessly making noises, finally began to quiet down.

Chapter 199 Tonight no one sleeps_3

After the last strange writhing stopped, the family portrait on the photo completely disappeared, transforming into a voluptuous and charming young woman who looked exactly like Princess Veronica.

...

"Beep!"

Just as the family portrait on the photo turned into the smiling Princess Veronica, a somewhat piercing noise suddenly sounded, startling the old man dozing on the lounge chair nearby.

What is this?!

Following the jarring noise, he looked down at the watch on his wrist and found all six hands moving. The old man, whose eyes were crescent-shaped and who naturally wore a smile, was suddenly ecstatic and widened his eyes.

It's complete! The last condition was actually complete!

He lifted his wrist to look at the last hand that had just started moving and saw that the number displayed was 0006, causing the naturally smiling old man, or rather the Aquarius Director, to pause slightly.

0006? Wasn't this a failure?

With a puzzled look on his face, he stood up from the lounge chair, walked to the table, and sat down. The Aquarius Director opened the desk drawer, took out a thick notebook labeled "Complete Record of Experiment Numbers," and quickly began to search through it.

"0006...0006...got it!"

He glanced casually at the records above, confirming it was the item he knew of. The Aquarius Director furrowed his brows and pondered for a while, then picked up a pen, wrote a few lines, and tore the page regarding Experiment 6. He then turned to the back cover and clipped this record together with the other five records.

...

Number: 0006

Name: Anna Lane

Form: Photo

Grant Level: Highest

Target Ability: Identity substitution, memory modification

Experiment Details: Utilize the test subject's longing for a happy family to induce thoughts of substituting for others and select the carrier as a photo representing the past, memories, and experiences, to purposefully cultivate the functional anomalous object with the ability to "substitute identity" and "modify the past."

Record 1: Failure.

After learning of her parents' death, the test subject developed an extreme longing for family. But, after being guided to see numerous happy families, she did not develop the impulse to replace the children of others; instead, she longed even more to find her own parents.

Note: It is judged that, because her usual family environment was relatively happy, the subject did not envy others' lives but rather the fact that others had real family members. It is recommended to abandon the cultivation of the "substitution" ability and instead induce her to reject reality and develop the idea of modifying the past.

Record 2: Failure.

Even witnessing the process of her parents' compensation being embezzled and being evicted from the house she grew up in, the subject still did not develop thoughts of rejecting reality, nor did she hope for her parents to truly resurrect.

Note: It is judged that although the subject was very young, her will was quite firm, and she already understood the meaning of death, not believing her parents could resurrect. Also, her naturally kind nature meant she was not completely disillusioned with humanity, thus the inducement failed.

Record 3: Failure.

The subject activated the anomalous object, but the effect completely deviated from the target ability, shifting from identity substitution and past modification to regaining family members.

Note: The experiment was temporarily shelved, awaiting the subject's adulthood and complete mental stability with no changes, before attempting to retrieve her and look for similar qualities in test subjects.

Record 4: Completely failed!

After a follow-up visit, the subject's mind was found to be not fully stable but had once personally destroyed the anomalous object she created, and wholeheartedly denied its significance. After being repeatedly provoked by my deliberate actions, her state showed no new changes, and the likelihood of success was nearly zero.

Note: Because the subject's "family" unintentionally joined the Purification Bureau's Virgin Branch, the photo anomalous object created by the subject was in the hands of the Scarlet Hair Lady, making retrieval extremely difficult.

Record 5: Success?

While preparing to sleep at night, the [Dream-Seeking Wristwatch] was suddenly activated, suggesting the test subject's psyche suffered a tremendous impact, causing a shift in her innermost desires, leading

to changes in the anomalous object. The new ability happened to meet the "substitute" and "modify" criteria.

Note: Pending verification.

Chapter 200 if_1

"Bang!"

"Ouch..."

Leon, who had turned over in his sleep and fallen off his desk, groaned in pain, feeling as if there were three worlds before his eyes, constantly shifting and alternating.

The director, she really was a dangerous woman... in the literal sense.

Recalling last night's disastrous drinking party and healing his broken ribs, Leon shivered with lingering fear.

Although the director was a good supervisor who took care of him in every aspect, she was indeed an incorrigible drunk.

Before, there was no one to drink with her, so she could only drink alone. But ever since she met him, who barely kept up with her drinking, it was like she opened a new door, and the further they drank, the more she enjoyed it.

By the time she was fully high on alcohol, even if a dog wandered into the Purification Bureau, it could be dragged onto the table for a drink. Yesterday, he even pretended to be drunk twice but was miserably seen through, only to be pulled up for more drinks with her arm around his shoulder.

But it wasn't all for nothing.

Looking at the three red hairs wrapped around his right hand, the slightly pale Leon smiled reassuringly after the hangover.

Anna and the others lived in Happiness Apartment, with a brawny old man patrolling with large scissors at night, and a blessing of protection from the apartment during the day. Plus, the hair he had asked from the director, they were completely protected this time, and he could be at ease...

Ugh... my head hurts... It seems like, while the drink was worth it, it was still a bit too much...

After rubbing his throbbing temples, Leon sighed as he sat back down at his desk, looking at the still slightly shaking world before him. He silently vowed that the next time the director tried to drag him to drink, he would refuse without hesitation, just like Senior Emma.

Although it was a bit like discarding the donkey after the millstone, taking the benefit and then not acknowledging it, but drinking with the director was really not something a human could endure. If I ever drink like that with her again, I'm a dog!

"Woof..."

???

Looking at the little Husky lying belly-up on his desk, also reeking of alcohol, Leon, whose vision was still a bit spinning, was stunned. He glanced speechlessly in the direction of the director's office.

I was just speaking hypothetically, but didn't expect you actually managed to make even a dog drink two shots!

"Wake up! Wake up!"

Leon carefully flipped the little Husky over, patting its back. The little Husky, who had crashed the party, let out two puppyish alcoholic hiccups before it finally came to and opened its bleary, drunken eyes.

"Woof woo, woof woo woof woo..."

(That scared the hell out of me, who would force even a dog to drink...)

The little Husky complained weakly to Leon, then wriggled like a fat caterpillar, its tiny legs wobbling as it reached for the photo on the desk, pulling out what had caused it to spend a drunken night.

"Woof, woof woo..."

(It's not what you initially put in, I'm going back to sleep for a while...)

"Go on, go on..."

Watching the little Husky stagger into the bottle and fall asleep without a sound, Leon rubbed his brow, then warmed his hands and placed them on his eyes for a moment. Once the world stopped spinning, he reached for the photo on the desk.

[Name: Hypothetical (Substitution, Modification)]

[Appearance: A brand-new photo showing a beautiful woman smiling at the viewer. If you continue staring at her, you'll unconsciously feel an inexplicable envy toward her.]

[Ability: Substitute identity, modify the world]

[Cost: None]

[File: One of the numerous anomalous objects created by the Aquarius Director of the Purification Bureau to fulfill a wish, temporarily numbered as 0006.]

This anomalous object had once completely lost its original power due to the creator's resistance and denial, but after some impactful events, the creator's mindset began to evolve, generating new desires, allowing this broken anomalous object to be repaired.]

[Evaluation: An extraordinarily powerful functional anomalous object, capable of substituting anyone you desire without cost, even erasing all associated traces.

Unfortunately, a person's heart is harder to manipulate than the entire world. Even if you can change the world, you can't change someone who doesn't love you; they only love the identity you've borrowed.

If someone seeks happiness through it, they might find even greater disappointment. Perhaps this unrequitable pain is the true cost of using it.]

[Contamination Value: 9]

[Due to your special relationship with this anomalous object's creator, you have full permissions to use it directly.]

[Your contamination value has increased.]

[The current contamination value is 4.1]

This thing... is that Anna's family photo?

As he stared at the photo, which was almost another complete anomalous object, except for retaining its world-modifying ability, Leon furrowed his brows deeply.

'The creator's mindset evolved'

'Generated new desires'

'Even if you could change the world, you can't change someone who doesn't love you'

This explanation, exuding a certain pitiable vibe, along with the identity substitution ability and the somewhat familiar beautiful woman on the photo...

Could it be Anna is in love? And she fell for this woman in the photo? To the point that it caused a change in the anomalous object?

Ah, this?

With the limited information and his hangover-clouded mind, Leon clutched his head and scratched at his hair, arriving at this possible conclusion.

What the hell is happening! I just took a nap, and suddenly the whole situation changed!

...

"Knock knock knock!"

Just as Leon, full of existential crisis, was about to consult the Black Goat, trying to figure out if he had slept for a night or a week, there came a polite knock at the door.

"You're finally awake."

Pushing the ajar door open slightly, seeing Leon was already off the desk, Jerry sighed in relief and then asked,

"Leon, someone came to file a report at the bureau today, claiming everyone suddenly forgot about her. I suspect she might have been attacked by some sort of abnormal ability.

The director drank too much with you yesterday and hasn't woken up. There are no tasks for anyone else in the bureau except Emma and me, but neither of us is good at handling soul or mental-related situations.

So if you're available, could you give me a hand? If there's any outcome, we'll distribute based on contribution size, and if it's soul-related stuff, you get it all. How about that?"

"Well... I don't have any tasks at hand, but I think there might be some issues at home..."

Glancing at the photo on the desk, though Leon was tempted by the offer, considering the changes over at Anna's side, he decided to decline,

"How about this, Senior Jerry, I need to head home first, and if it turns out there's nothing major, I'll then... um..."

This person filing the report... why do they seem familiar?

Seeing the door open, the woman in the hallway looking at him curiously, Leon paused, then looked down at the photo on the desk again.

Isn't this the same person?