

I! Cleaner 28

Chapter 28 Badge Inventory

"Didn't that sister with hair like a tomato say it, big brother's just drunk! Drunk, do you understand?"

It's just a little sickness like a cold, sleep it off and it'll be fine, he won't die! If you keep talking nonsense, I'll hit you!"

After scolding a little boy taller than herself, the little girl with hair the same color as Anna's hesitated for a moment, then pounced forward and hugged Leon's other leg, her head down and eyes red as she said,

"Big brother, how is sister doing?"

"Anna is fine, she's all right now."

Seeing the two children clinging to his thighs, Leon's eyes betrayed a hint of guilt.

The night before last, Anna suddenly coughed up blood. He hurriedly entrusted these siblings to the neighbors, without even having time to explain, and rushed Anna to the hospital, which was a whole day's ordeal. That night, he joined the Purification Bureau, encountered an abnormal event, and spent the entire night in turmoil.

After resolving the Uncontrollable Afflicted, he, along with Senior Emma, revived the doctors and nurses, switched Anna to a new room with new potions, only to find it was already dawn. Exhausted, he couldn't make it home, so he dozed off beside Anna's hospital bed.

When he woke up, he rushed back to the Purification Bureau to report the situation. After reporting, he specifically took a leave to check on Anna, intending to go home afterward. Instead, he overheard from a baby-faced employee at the gas company about intelligence on a suspected Anomalous Object, and had to rush back to the Purification Bureau temporarily once more.

Sigh... He hadn't managed to sleep properly for two consecutive days, and was so busy he forgot to send anyone home to reassure them. Even after work, he was dragged into a drinking spree, then slept through an entire day. Truly... with both adults at home either sick or bedridden, and having been away for more than two days, those two must have been scared out of their wits. He really wasn't a very competent big brother...

...

Gently stroking his siblings' heads, Leon sat down with them at the bedside, leaning forward to softly reassure,

"Don't worry, I specifically asked the doctor yesterday. The doctor said Anna's condition was very stable, and her illness is no longer a problem."

"Really?"

Upon hearing Leon's words, the plainly naïve William stayed buried in silence, while the much more lively little girl immediately lifted her head, her face full of joy, and asked,

"So is what the sister with red hair said true? Sister Anna can come home soon?"

"Yeah."

Leon smiled and nodded, saying,

"The doctor said she can come home after two more days of rest. As long as she takes her medicine on time afterward, she'll be completely healed in up to three months, and won't cough anymore in the future."

Upon hearing this good news, the two little ones immediately brimmed with happiness, their faces beaming with unadulterated delight.

When they were still too young to remember, the four siblings' parents, both Mechanics, had sacrificed their lives in the national defense war a few years ago, leaving them with faint memories of their parents. It was almost entirely Anna who had brought them up.

So, despite Anna being not quite sixteen herself, in the hearts of these two younger siblings, the saying "eldest sister as mother" wasn't an exaggeration, but an accurate depiction. Hearing that Anna was fine made them probably happier than anyone else in the world.

Having carefully examined his siblings' appearance and complexion, confirming they hadn't been starved or chilled over the past two days, Leon finally relaxed and stroked the little girl's golden hair, smiling as he asked,

"What about that big sister with red hair? Melanie, tell me, when did she leave, and what did she say to you?"

"Ah... let me think..."

Even though she was the youngest in the family, compared to her somewhat simple twin brother, Melanie was clearly much smarter.

After tilting her head and thinking for a while, she earnestly recounted with her fingers,

"The big sister with red hair brought you back on her shoulders, gave a Silver Wheel to the aunt taking care of us, and asked her to take good care of us until you woke up.

Then she said she's giving you another day off today, and the nurses and such could wait till tomorrow, um... also, she bought me and William some really sweet candy, and said she would get us new clothes..."

"But we didn't take them!"

At that moment, the little boy who had been silently listening couldn't help but interrupt,

"Both brother and sister said that people who offer us candy or clothes are definitely bad people, child traffickers, and we should never go with them.

So as soon as she said she'd buy us clothes, I glared at her real hard and shouted that someone was trying to kidnap kids, and scared her away!"

"..."

(☹_☹)?

In Leon's look of three parts speechless and seven parts bewildered, the naïve little William jumped up, proudly beating his small chest, and said,

"Brother! I scared away a bad person and protected Melanie! Wasn't I great?"

"Gosh! How can you even say that!"

Before Leon could speak, the furious little girl with golden hair pounced forward in a flash, using her small hands to beat her twin brother's head, shouting angrily as she did,

"Idiot! Moron! Big dumb fool! Simpleton! Blockhead!

Are you stupid? Couldn't you use your brain? If she carried brother back, how could she be a bad person? You owe me new clothes!

And if you were really afraid she's a bad person, you shouldn't have taken the candy either, so why did you fight me for it? I can't stand you!"

"I... didn't you eat several pieces first?"

The naïve little boy, while raising his thin arms to cover his head, tried his best to fend off his sister's blows while arguing righteously,

"I thought, since you ate the candy and nothing happened, then the candy must be non-toxic, right? Why wouldn't I eat candy that isn't poisoned?"

"..."

Oh my... the logic is pretty strong, but should this be considered stupidity or cleverness?

Watching the siblings chase each other around and make a mess of the room, Leon, who had just been drowning in guilt, immediately switched to the exasperated parent mode, holding his headache from a hangover and weakly waving his hand,

"Stop messing around, sigh... you two are really... the family is about to be rich, as soon as my salary comes in, I'll buy you both candy and new clothes!"

After promising huge benefits worth two Copper Wheels, Leon finally managed to calm down the quarreling siblings. He looked at the dark sky outside and, struggling, prepared to get something to eat.

"Must be starving, huh? Brother will go make you something to eat."

"No need, we've eaten!"

After giving her exceedingly dull twin brother a fierce glare, Melanie swung her light golden braids and cheerfully responded,

"Though that red-haired sister was scared off by stupid William, she later came back quietly and left a lot of food inside our house, enough for the whole family for several days. We ate before we came to see you."

"Yeah yeah!"

Seemingly recalling the deliciousness, the naïve William licked his lips, nodding enthusiastically,

"Especially the fried fish and smoked sausage, they were really really tasty, we ate a lot!"

"Hmph! Didn't you say she was a bad person? Why did you eat her food then? Aren't you afraid of being kidnapped?"

"I'm not afraid, I waited for you to finish eating first and see that you're okay, then I ate. Like the mashed potatoes you didn't eat, I didn't touch a bit, I'm smart!"

"I... you drive me crazy!"

"Okay, okay!"

Seeing them starting to argue again and preparing to launch into a new round of battle, Leon quickly grabbed them both by their hands and, feeling a headache coming on, changed the subject,

"So then? After eating so many good things from someone, did you both thank her properly?"

"Of course!"

Glaring at her silly twin brother, Melanie tossed her braids proudly and said,

"Sister Anna said that though we're poor, we're not wild kids without parents, and must always be polite!

So not only did I thank the big sister, I also made William say it by pushing his head down! But... um... the big sister didn't seem too happy, and when I tried to hug her, she just ran off..."

Saying this, as if recalling something she couldn't understand, Melanie blinked her bright eyes and, puzzled, pinched her small skirt,

"She said something like... she doesn't like kids, because once kids get familiar, they tend to think of others as their mother, and then they just forget her..."

Bro, I didn't really understand what the big sister meant, why would we forget her once we get used to her?"