

# I! CLEANER!

## Chapter 3 3: 0003 Visit Again\_1

In the middle of the night, Leon frantically got up, carried his sister, whose face was turning faintly purple, and ran to the hospital. After more than ten hours of tossing and turning, with bloodshot eyes, Leon sat by a dirty hospital bed, turning his back to the sunset outside the window. He looked at his sister, who finally stopped coughing, and asked quietly with a complex expression, "Anna, tell me, when did you stop taking your medicine?"

Hearing Leon rarely address her by name, the pale and skinny girl on the bed shivered slightly. She knew that although her brother appeared calm now, he was probably on the verge of going mad. She could only lower her head and truthfully replied, "About... two months ago?"

Two months ago...

Upon hearing this, Leon recalled for a moment, then couldn't help but clench his fists tightly. His mud-caked nails almost dug into the flesh of his palm.

Two months ago, it happened to be when he turned sixteen and became an adult.

That day, the Consolation Officer from the Kingdom's army department visited as scheduled, announced his coming of age, and in accordance with that so-called new policy,

forcibly stopped the bereavement compensation that should have been provided until the age of twenty-two.

That rare afternoon, bright and sunny without floating exhaust and dust clouds, was colder than the ice fields of winter in the hearts of his family of four.

When the army department, in order to balance the overspending accounts, chose to embezzle the compensation to fill military expenses, forcibly stopping the compensation doomed this family, which was already barely getting by, pushing them to the edge of the cliff...

After recalling the events of that day, Leon silently clenched his molars, his hands turning pale at the knuckles from the strain.

\*Yes, even though a quarter of the compensation was gone, the family's expenses hadn't decreased much in these two months, and the food had even barely remained the same... Damn it! Why am I only realizing this now?\*

"Brother."

Seeing Leon next to her with his head lowered in silence, the girl on the bed, appearing even more emaciated, stayed silent for a while. Then, she slightly turned her head and spoke in a light voice that seemed like it could dissipate at any moment, "Maybe, just don't worry about me?"

Upon hearing this, Leon's whole body shook violently. He then quickly looked up and yelled angrily, his eyes filled with bloodshot, "Don't you dare..."

"Brother!"

Desperately trying to raise her voice, yet triggering a violent cough, the skinny girl hurriedly grasped Leon's tension-filled right hand. Struggling to stabilize her bellows-like breathing, she tried her best to speak calmly and softly, "I've carefully calculated these past two months. Even if I die and there's one less portion of compensation, without having to buy my medicine, with the remaining two portions of the compensation and you taking on more day laborer jobs, it would be enough to barely get the other two to adulthood.

"Also, my registered age is one year younger than my actual age, so after my illness... after I leave, as long as you avoid the patrols, secretly throw me into the sewage river outside the Capital City at night, and hang my old clothes on the clothes rack at home to make it seem like I'm still there, we can collect two more years of compensation from the army department.

"Brother, listen to me, I've already pleaded with the people in Veteran Lane in advance. They are all willing to help us cover up, as long as they cooperate with you to deceive the Consolation Officer from the army... Brother? Brother! Where are you going?"

\*To kill! I'm going to kill!\*

After hearing Anna's suggestion, Leon, trembling all over, was terrified to find that for a moment, he instinctively thought her plan was feasible. After being in this world for three years, he actually started to get used to all this!

\*It was as if there was another numb, cold version of himself chasing from behind, trying to swallow his barely vibrant self completely, causing Leon to unconsciously start running, hot blood almost instantly filling his brain.\*

As he sprinted out, he roughly knocked over a medical cart, grabbed a blood-stained scalpel, and staggered out of the hospital, madly rushing toward the Department of Road Administration three streets away!

\*If not for those bastards at Road Administration, placing the alchemy factory near residential areas, Anna wouldn't have gotten sick from the alchemy exhaust leaks!\*

\*If not for their collusion with the factory, issuing a certificate claiming no pollution was caused by the leak incident, her disease could have been treated with compensation!\*

\*If not for the shameless embezzlement by the Kingdom's army department, the double compensation left by my Mechanic parents would have been enough to raise my three siblings to adulthood!\*

\*And! If it weren't for this goddamn world being in such a terrible shape, I wouldn't have to struggle so desperately now and could at least live like a human!\*

...

In red-hot rage, Leon crossed three streets with a scalpel in hand and rushed to the Department of Road Administration under the blood-red sunset, arriving at the square where people lined up like cattle yesterday.

Though an hour was left until the end of the official workday set by the Kingdom, the department staff had already begun streaming out of the brightly lit building, passing by the shabbily dressed Leon while talking and laughing.

"Next week, Master Wilde's troupe will be performing his famous opera at the Central Cross Theatre, are you going?"

"I'm not as cultured as you. I'd be interested in a circus, but opera's not my thing. Why are you asking me to see an opera? Where's your wife?"

"Her? She does like opera, but she likes pretty bags and shoes more, especially the department store having a sale that day."

"No wonder, haha, well, I can only wish your wallet good luck then."

Opera, circus, bags, department store... If I hadn't heard them talking about these things, I might have almost forgotten that this wasn't a barren, impoverished world, and not everyone was suffering like this.

Listening to the Road Administration staff in their smart attire chatting merrily, Leon couldn't help but slowly raise his head, the two eyes full of prominent blood threads, fixating on the brightly lit building in front of him.

Anna was right. Rather than letting her illness drag the whole family down, the most correct choice would be to stop treatment, let her die of illness, then secretly throw her body into the sewage river filled with excrement and rancid water, somehow "trick" an additional two years of compensation from the army department, and use it to raise the remaining siblings until they grew up, but...

Sorry, I really can't hold on any longer...

After toiling early and late for three whole years only to find life not improving but rather slipping into the Abyss, Leon first pressed his cracked, bleeding lips tightly together, then quickly walked toward the Department of Road Administration building with his mouth full of that salty iron taste.

Now was the Department's closing time, the easiest time to slip in. Next, he had to head to the second floor first, find that bastard who approved the construction of the alchemy potion factory back then, and split open his fat-laden belly with a knife.

Then, amidst the chaos, run up to the fourth floor, find that scoundrel who falsified evidence for the potion factory, preventing the family from getting compensation and making it impossible to treat Anna's illness, and go down with him! Let all these damned...

"Bump!"

"Are you blind? Didn't you watch where you were going?"

Casting a glance at the thin young man who had been knocked to the ground, a stout man coming from the corner frowned, wiped the dust off the front of his coat in disgust, then took a bite of a cheese-slathered burger and strode away from the fallen Leon.

Getting up a bit dazed, Leon was slightly stunned as he watched the somewhat familiar figure.

It was that fat bastard who "selected cattle" yesterday!

Staring at the back of that boorish man, seeing that greasy and repulsive face devouring a double-deck burger, Leon felt his brain buzz with confusion.

\*As if manipulated by some inexplicable thing, the almost-exploding anger in his mind found the most suitable outlet, dyeing his bloodshot eyes crimson, urging him to grasp the cold, hard scalpel again and staggeringly chase after him.\*

\*If he had let me through yesterday, maybe I wouldn't be so desperate now! If he had let me through yesterday, maybe Anna's life could have been saved! If he had let me through yesterday...\*

"Daddy~"

Just as Leon caught up to the man and was about to do something, a crisp child's voice suddenly rang in his ear.

Accompanied by that bell-like call, the once arrogant and cold face suddenly warmed, the fatigue instantly swept from the plump man's face.

I saw him first suck in his ballooning belly with some effort, then squat down awkwardly, smiling as he opened his arms toward the little girl running towards him.

"...."

Watching the little girl laughing as she ran past him, like a swallow into the man's arms, Leon couldn't help but gradually slow his pace. He then turned around somewhat confusedly and found not far behind him, a slightly plump middle-aged woman was gazing over here with a gentle smile.

\*Even living in such a shitty and screwed-up world, the way the woman looked at the father and daughter still held a kind of happiness that was enviable... exactly the same as the smile Anna had when she looked at me during dinner yesterday.\*

"...."

"Damn it!"

Mumbling something unintelligible, not knowing what he was cursing at, Leon's right hand loosened slightly, dropping the blood-stained scalpel with a clang. This instantly drew the suspicious gaze of the fat official.

Completely ignoring the happy family of three that made people seethe with anger, Leon spat on the shiny bluestone pavement underfoot before quietly turning around and, with his signature heavy steps, headed towards the Purification Bureau set in the shadows.

\*Taking revenge and then dying once and for all might sound damn satisfying, but sometimes, no matter how much you want to die, you have to live properly... at least to die with a bit more value.\*

Standing in front of the heavy black door of the Purification Bureau, Leon remained silent for a while before raising his hand to grasp the shiny brass handle, pushing it with effort.

\*I remember the red-haired interviewer mentioning yesterday that the Purification Bureau is considered an auxiliary department of the police department. If I'm killed in the line of duty, I should be able to leave behind a large sum in compensation.\*

\*So if someone among the four of us in the family has to die first, and the remaining three can live through their tears... then let it be me!\*