

## I! Cleaner 371

### Chapter 371: Lack of Oxygen Can Make People Dumb (Part 1)\_1

Yes, it was indeed oxygen deficiency.

Relying on the "free" seashell coins handed out by the Goddess of Fortune during the counterattack, Leon had bought up most of the oxygen in the valley. The oxygen content in the air of the entire Emerald Valley was extremely low.

Blurred vision, accelerated heartbeat, rapid blood flow, pale skin... all the abnormal symptoms on the Goddess of Fortune's body were severe responses to oxygen deficiency. And even if she temporarily bought "health" for herself, it probably still wouldn't resolve the state of oxygen deficiency.

As for the reason... there wasn't just one Goddess of Fortune in Emerald Valley!

Although many had been killed by Leon and the Black Goat, there were still more than 29,000 headless Divine Corpses left in the valley. The human body currently carrying the main consciousness of the Goddess of Fortune would represent only about two or three percent of the "Goddess of Fortune" at most, which was about the weight of one hand compared to the whole.

Since the Goddess of Fortune could reclaim her power directly upon the destruction of the Divine Corpses, her connection with these separated bodies must have been extremely close and was not fully severed. Even watching the slight rise and fall of these corpses' chests, their breathing and heartbeat were synchronized, not appearing much different from a whole.

And now, more than ninety-seven percent of her body was in a state of extreme oxygen deficiency. What use would it be for just one hand to remain healthy?

Just as Leon had predicted, the Goddess of Fortune, realizing that her body felt increasingly wrong, took out piles and piles of seashell coins and, relying on her authority, began frantically purchasing health, life, and vitality.

However, every time the state of this body was refreshed, ninety-seven to eight percent of the remaining body would immediately absorb two percent of the health, and then consume this exceptionally precious health at a rate thousands of times faster, bringing on even more intense pain.

"Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!"

After several attempts, even trying different methods, she found that no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't escape the pain clinging to her like a bone attached to her flesh, ever approaching death. The Soulfire of the Goddess of Fortune, which she desperately tried to keep calm, started flickering wildly.

"No! This can't be!"

Looking at Leon, who stood expressionless, overlooking her and quietly waiting for her death, the fear gripped the heart of the Goddess of Fortune, and she couldn't help but throw her head back and roar:

"I don't believe it! You're considered weak among humans! How could you possibly possess the means to kill a True God like me?"

"Hmm?"

Hearing the Goddess of Fortune's words, Leon's eyebrows raised slightly. He asked with a tone full of implication:

"Who told you I was a human of this world?"

???

How could you not be human? Your soul and body are genuinely...

Wait! Not a human of this "world"?

Yes! No wonder a weak Third-Class Cleanser could not only kill that toad and break its soul but also forcibly exempt my authority and even grasp techniques to kill me. So that's how it is! That's how it is!

Seeing Leon's soul as steady as ever, showing no signs of chaos brought by lies, the Goddess of Fortune completely confirmed her suspicions and couldn't help but widen her eyes in disbelief:

"Are you... one of those people from the Old Soil? But isn't the situation over there already... Uh... Wait! We may not necessarily be enemies!"

Seeing Leon's eyes suddenly narrow, the Goddess of Fortune instinctively stopped from revealing more and urgently proposed:

"Although I am a True God reliant on humanity to exist, I have also been hunted and targeted by the Purification Bureau! Therefore, we can cooperate!"

"As long as you stop and let me go, I can swear by my authority that I will never reveal your origin! And no matter your agenda within the Purification Bureau, I can help you!"

???

So what exactly have you misunderstood?

Looking at the Goddess of Fortune before him, desperately clutching at what seemed to her like a last straw and attempting to "cooperate," Leon, who initially intended to bluff her using his identity as a traveler, felt a tug at his heart. He immediately opened the badge panel, using the Master Performer to replace Pity it's Not.

"Heh, help me?"

Under the effects of the Master Performer, with the persona of a "Conspirator," Leon emotionlessly took two steps forward, standing before the Goddess of Fortune. Then, looking down at the slightly shorter Goddess, he said with indifference:

"No need. The best help you can give me is to die here peacefully."

?!

He's no longer pretending! He only wants to silence me now!!!

Facing Leon, whose demeanor had suddenly changed radically, shaking off the previous guise of valuing companionship and bravely warm-bloodedness, transforming into someone emanating a cold and sinister air and a gaze full of indifference, the Goddess of Fortune, weak all over, almost fell to her knees.

Based on the effects of the Master Performer's wearing effect, the more unfamiliar someone was with Leon's appearance, voice, and character, the more susceptible they were to be influenced. And if someone was sufficiently unfamiliar with Leon and hadn't discovered any glaring inconsistencies, they might even deeply believe Leon was the role he played.

Meeting Leon for the first time today, the Goddess of Fortune was fully under the spell of the Master Performer's effect, shivering under Leon's look, which regarded her as though she were a corpse.

"You... you can't kill me!"

Growing more terrified, the Goddess of Fortune summoned her last bit of courage to resist:

"I am a True God! My soul is too vast. Whatever means you use to process it, there will inevitably be fragments falling into the Realm of the Dead! If the Purification Bureau discovers my soul fragments, your identity will be..."

"They won't."

Interrupting the Goddess of Fortune, Leon, the visitor from the Old Soil who had infiltrated the Purification Bureau with unspeakable intentions but inadvertently stumbled upon and had no choice but to eliminate the Goddess of Fortune, responded coldly:

"The soul entering the Realm of the Dead will walk the 'No Return Path.' My companions are already there waiting.

"And before I spoke, those two Cleaners had already lost consciousness and hadn't heard our conversation. So as long as you can die quietly, whatever happened here will never be known to a third person."

"..."

Someone is already at the entrance to the Realm of the Dead, guarding it? Even my soul fragments after death need to be destroyed? Do you have to be so thorough?

Watching Leon's soul remain steady throughout, without any traces of lying, the Goddess of Fortune couldn't hold on any longer. After teetering slightly, she collapsed to the ground, eyes filled with despair.

Just as she prepared to take a last desperate chance before being eliminated, she noticed Leon's gaze seem to involuntarily glance at the fallen Female Cleaner in the distance.

Wait! I still have one last card to play!

"Let me go, or I will immediately kill those two Cleaners!"

With a sudden revelation, the Goddess of Fortune's eyes widened, and she shouted fiercely:

"If those two Level One Cleaners die, but you, a Third-Class Cleanser, survive, and this True God never shows up, the Purification Bureau would certainly focus on you, suspecting that you were controlled by me!

"And your history surely won't hold under scrutiny. Even if there are no differences between Old Soil humans and those of this world, once the Purification Bureau begins to suspect you, your infiltration is as good as a failure!"

You finally noticed.

Hearing the threat of the Goddess of Fortune, Leon furrowed his brow slightly but instead released a sigh of relief internally.

Since the Watcher's Palace would block the presence of all "non-human" beings from entering the world, coupled with a similar appearance making it easier to gain belief compared to an aberration, most True Gods, upon descending, would adapt their bodies to be more "compatible" with the world's rules by appearing with human form and shell, reducing the repulsion from the Watcher's Palace.

But ultimately, True Gods were still not purely flesh and blood beings and were almost impossible to kill through such means. If the Goddess of Fortune really "died" from lack of oxygen, she would merely lose the physical body she possessed. Once free from human corporeal influence, the chaotic soul would immediately return to normal.

Moreover, apart from this, the situation of Senior Tom and Senior Emma was also dire; they would likely suffocate to death before the Goddess of Fortune's body could die from lack of oxygen. The longer this stalemate continued, the more dangerous it became. They had to coax her into leaving as soon as possible.

\*The problem was that when you were in the "unyielding upper hand," there was no need to negotiate with her; rashly speaking to drive her away would only arouse her suspicion, even risk being discovered in bluffing\*. Then everything would be over.

So the only solution now was to "encircle three sides and leave one open," exposing a flaw to give her a "card" to negotiate with, allowing her to find a "way out" herself, then narrowly escape through this escape route.

However, the experience of lack of oxygen magnified by thirty thousand times seemed to also affect the Goddess of Fortune's mind. He had tried to hint several times, yet she failed to discover this left-way escape route. \*If she couldn't even catch a direct hint from the eyes, he would really have to take the risk to drive her away\*.

...

"You threaten me?"

Facing the long-awaited resistance, Leon, fully immersed in the role, used the remaining drunkenness, narrowed his eyes, and said coldly,

"You can just kill them off and see if I care!"

Moved, his soul moved!

Seeing Leon, though still sturdy, slightly waver involuntarily, showing a faint chaos brought by a lie in the soul, the Goddess of Fortune finally found a way out and was overjoyed, hurriedly grabbing this lifesaving straw, and eagerly spoke,

"Lies! I saw lies in your soul! You're lying!"

Hearing the words of the Goddess of Fortune, the "aware of his slip" Leon's cheek twitched slightly, revealing an expression of frustration in his eyes, deeply hidden yet clearly visible to the Goddess of Fortune.

"Though I don't know what you're planning, putting in so much effort to infiltrate the Purification Bureau, your purpose must not be simple, and absolutely not allowed any error!"

Capturing the extremely subtle change in Leon's expression and feeling that no one could act to this degree, the Goddess of Fortune finally let her guard down completely, weakly yet not without pride, she said,

"Genuinely deciding success or failure, it's often not power but wisdom! Old Soil person, you wouldn't want to be targeted by the Purification Bureau and expose your identity, would you?"

"..."

Seeing Leon, whose expression changed to one of unpredictable shade, clearly weighing within himself whether to kill her, the Goddess of Fortune feared driving him into choosing a mutual destruction. She quickly restrained her smug look, then suggested with a gentle expression,

"Old Soil person, like I said earlier, we are not necessarily enemies. The reason we got to this point is simply that I happened to stumble upon your infiltration, yet our interests and goals are not conflicting and could even be cooperative!"

"..."

Seeing Leon who remained silent and unmoved by her words, the Goddess of Fortune couldn't help but tense up and quickly explained,

"Of course, even if you don't want to cooperate, it's alright. As long as you release your measures and let me go, I can immediately swear by my Authority to not reveal today's events. You can continue to hide in the Purification Bureau. How does that sound?"

"..."

"Not enough!"

After silently counting to twenty in his mind, using this deliberately left gap to show his internal "struggle," Leon furrowed his brow tightly, displaying full reluctance, and said,

"Besides that, you have to help me eliminate all doubts, at least providing a reasonable explanation. Otherwise, three Cleaners who lost the ability to resist yet mysteriously escaped from your hands would still appear very suspicious!"

"This... is also possible!"

Hearing Leon's request, the Goddess of Fortune bit her lip, pulled out a broken pink trident, and stabbed it hard into her left arm, staining it with a lot of blood. She then swung the trident to cut off half of her serpentine tail.



"This is the weapon of the Lord of Lustful Dreams, and I happened to enter through the Dreamrealm, making it an appropriate excuse for you guys 'surviving' from my hand."

With the broken trident, pinning the severed tail to the ground, the pale-faced Goddess of Fortune weakly said,

"When the Purification Bureau starts its investigation, they will know he was here from the sight of this item and assume that, angered by multiple forced entries into the Dreamrealm, the patrolling Lord of Lustful Dreams attacked me after you stalled me, forcing me to escape injured. I might even go for a fight with him upon my return from the Dreamrealm, and as for you, just pretend to be unconscious and claim you know nothing... do you think this explanation works?"

"..."

6.

Seeing the Goddess of Fortune who, without a word, directly severed her tail and prepared to go through with the act by returning to battle the Lord, Leon couldn't help but give her a thumbs-up internally, then frowned and nodded, saying,

"It'll do... just make sure to swear to everything!"

"I will, I will!"

As the Goddess of Fortune, according to Leon's request, swore by her Authority to ensure no leaks and affirmed her commitment to fight the Lord of Lustful Dreams, she saw a slightly eased expression on Leon's face and timidly reminded,

"Then the things on me, do you..."

"Come over here."

"Huh?"

"Stop wasting time, come over here!"

Appropriately displaying the annoyance brought by "forced compromise" and the impatience from this anger, Leon reached out to tap the forehead of the Goddess of Fortune forcefully and then gently knocked the cufflinks hidden in his mouth with his Tongue.

Following that, from a dozen mirror surfaces within the Emerald Valley broken open, a large amount of oxygen was quietly released. At the same time, the isolated [Dream of Verdant Green] was opened, quickly flooding the area with oxygen.

A tap on the forehead is all that is needed?

Not feeling any special energy fluctuation from this tap, the suspicious Goddess of Fortune was about to ask further when she felt her body suddenly lighten.

After that unassuming tap, her already overwhelmed body felt utterly relieved, like a traveler in a desert for ten days finally encountering heavy rain.

\*So subtly concealed and yet extremely lethal... truly a terrifying method...\*

Glancing fearfully at Leon's right hand, having brushed against the brink of life and death, the Goddess of Fortune wanted nothing more than to linger a moment longer. She immediately forced open the Dreamrealm, dumping over twenty thousand of herself into it without a second thought and swiftly turned to leave!

\*What a damned misfortune! I just wanted to capture a Level Three Cleanser to interrogate about the toad, but unexpectedly ended up touching a big fish from Old Soil. Not only did I lose a Holy Spirit, but nearly lost my own life as well!\*

\*This damned world is far too deep of water. I'm never coming back!\*

## Chapter 373: Life-saving ritual\_1

Finally got away with it...

Leon tried hard to maintain his persona as a schemer, standing with his hands behind his back and a distant gaze while waiting for the Dreamrealm to close. Only after more than twenty thousand Goddess of Fortune avatars completely disappeared did he finally let out a genuine sigh of relief.

The work of the Purification Bureau was truly arduous. Even someone as capable as Senior Emma had failed, and dragging another First Level like Senior Tom to help almost resulted in both of them being obliterated by the descending Goddess of Fortune.

Hmm...

Or maybe it wasn't supposed to be so dangerous, but the fact that Tom and Leon, two jinxes hated by the world's will, came together caused a super streak of bad luck, inviting the unwelcome descent of the Goddess of Fortune.

After silently warning himself to avoid grouping with Senior Tom in the future, Leon quickly walked over to the unconscious Senior Emma. He unbuttoned the top of her collar to help her breathe more easily, and then carried her, attempting to climb toward the top of the valley.

...

"Wake up!"

"Slap, slap!"

"Senior Tom! Wake up!"

"Slap, slap, slap!"

"Ugh..."

Awoken by stinging pain on his cheeks, the pale and lethargic young man blinked in confusion and muttered,

"I..."

"You were unconscious."

After stating the obvious, Leon, who had forcefully slapped Senior Tom awake, pointed toward the half-buried trident with a snake tail in the valley and replied somewhat vaguely,

"The Goddess of Fortune seems to have encountered some trouble and suddenly rushed into the Dreamrealm... Let's not worry about her. We should hurry and escape. Have your bones grown back yet? Can you move?"

To avoid a situation where the Goddess of Fortune, not completely gone, might unexpectedly return after hearing his explanation and confession, Leon refrained from recounting the recent events.

Meanwhile, the revived lethargic young man tried to lift his head in futile effort, only to fall back again, shaking his head in frustration,

"Not yet... Your bandages are still too slow, and the bones in my legs still show no signs of growth. Only a bit of my tailbone has grown."

"...."

"Ugh... Why do my face and upper lip hurt so much?"

"Well... I called you for a long time and got no response, so I had to use my hands. Sorry..."

Looking at the lazily swollen cheeked young man with several nail impressions above his philtrum, Leon said apologetically,

"Senior Emma is severely injured this time and probably won't wake up soon. I had my cursed silver and pendant confiscated by the Goddess of Fortune, so my defensive capabilities are quite limited now.

Outside, apart from the followers of the Scales Gold Sect, there are probably around eighty to ninety clerics and at least two bishops. I don't think taking you out directly would be very secure, so I wanted to wake you up first and ask if you have any ideas."

\*Any ideas?\*

Looking at his boneless body, the lethargic young man said with a headache,

"All my bones and joints are gone. Only my mouth and neck can move. Oh, and now I have a tail... In short, in this state, what ideas could I possibly have?

Right, didn't you collect all those bead coins? Why not try to revive Emma the same way you revived me?"

"I've already tried, but it didn't work."

Hearing this, Leon shook his head helplessly and said,

"Senior Emma's situation is quite complicated. The stab to her heart is a soul wound, and both of her arms have been petrified by the [Dream of Verdant Green] into jade, and over three hundred lives were bought by the Snake Spirit. These three types of injuries mixed together can't be separated; the bead coins are not enough.

Also, unlike buying your bones, 'injuries' can't exist independently from the body. So to buy Senior Emma's injuries would require someone to bear them."

Lifting his right hand to show Senior Tom the jade-like fingernails, Leon added with lingering fear,

"My Contamination Value compared to Senior Emma... the Leon Value is far too low. Whether it's physical endurance, soul strength, or resistance to the Abnormal, they're not on the same level.

What are simply serious injuries to her would be lethal wounds to me. I estimate that buying less than one-tenth of the injury would leave me with my soul shredded by the sword wound in Senior Emma's heart, turning me into a motionless jade statue."

"Then it's better not to buy it..."

After looking at Leon's green nails, the lethargic young man thought for a moment and realized the current situation was indeed tricky.

Though the most lethal Goddess of Fortune inexplicably left, sparing their lives unexpectedly, the followers of the Scales Gold Sect outside the [Dream of Verdant Green] remained.

According to the Scales Gold Sect's assembly process, generally, a bishop from each of the three branches would be present. After they had eliminated one, at least two bishops and dozens of ordained, specially capable core followers likely remained outside.

Although as an Underground Sect not renowned for combat strength, the bishops of the Scales Gold Sect fought no better than ordinary Second-Class Cleaners, even weaker than Jerry, the investigator-type Cleaner, they weren't considered tough opponents.

If either he or Emma were functional, taking down those two bishops would be a breeze, probably not even needing thirty seconds. However, with Emma unconscious and himself immobile, only Leon was unscathed, yet he lost his main battle Anomalous Object. Handling these sect members wasn't assured.

Having escaped death from a True God, just to be brought down by some lousy bishops, that would truly be a case of dying with no peace...

...

"How about... you just stab me to death."

"Huh?"

"Relax, it's my trump card."

Seeing Leon's slightly confused expression, the lethargic young man explained,

"Before we entered, didn't I set up three rituals in advance?"

The first two ritual sets have already been triggered, the first prepared with five metals to steal the Scales Gold Sect's Cat Spirit money, another arranged with mercury, sulfur, and salt to neutralize the Snake Spirit's secret shrine influence, and the last ritual is just right for revival."

"Revival?!"

"Yes, the effect of that ritual is revival... or rather, to automatically revive me to the moment the ritual was established after I get killed."

Glancing at Leon's shocked expression, the lethargic young man proudly explained,

"The Regression Ritual has six materials paired in opposition: matches and amber represent the eternal solidification and transient extinguishment; a child's fingernail and an elder's last will symbolize the body's growth and termination, while horn and tail signify beginning and end, forming three perfect balances in between.

If I'm killed, it's equivalent to the body's match extinguishing, the soul's elder passing, and the life reaching its end, thoroughly breaking the one-sided balance. Then, the opposing half will activate, beginning to reshape my everything.

After this, my body will be eternal like amber, my soul will thrive like a child, and a concluded life will restart. Thus, I will be revived."

"I'm telling you, this is my proudest ritual. During the retreat battle with the True God, I relied on it to save my life, so go on and stab, as soon as one sword lands, I'll be bouncing... uh... wait a minute!"

Seeing the blood-red spiked mace in Leon's hand, the lethargic young man's eyes filled with terror, a reflexive shiver traveling up his newly-grown tailbone.

"No... I meant for you to stab me, but using that?"

Chapter 374: Not at Peace Even at Home\_1

.....

"Not that I want to use this, it's just that compared to other stuff, this is already the best..."

Leon replied rather helplessly after glancing around the empty Emerald Valley,

"I don't dare pull the sword from Senior Emma's chest, so I can only use what's taken from her office. If you don't like the spiked mace, there's still the spiked board, the iron maiden, the crushing punishment cart, the iron caltrop whip, or even the big guillotine blade removed from the guillotine... Which one do you prefer?"

"..."

Seeing the grim torture devices scattered on the ground, the lazy young man's cheek twitched slightly. He then realized Leon was not wrong, that compared to those terrifying devices that killed little by little, the spiked mace, which could solve "problems" all at once, was indeed the best choice.

But being killed by a spiked mace was really a bit...

"Why not...just pull out Emma's sword instead?"



Looking at the bloodstains still fresh on the reversed spikes of the spiked mace, the lazy young man couldn't help but swallow his saliva. Not wanting to be hammered to death by this steaming hot thing, he suggested,

"I've seen her use Emma's 'Satisfying Scales.' It's mainly for soul judgment, and the harm to the body is just added. It's generally not fatal. Even if it is fatal, actually it's not a problem. Her Undying Body can still be used at least three hundred times again. A single death wouldn't cause any issues.

She's in a coma mainly because of severe soul injuries that prevent her will from controlling her body. And this soul-targeting sword is in her heart. While it won't cause her body further trauma, it actually impacts her Soul Resuscitation. You should just pull out the sword!"

"I see..."

Hearing this, Leon nodded, then reached out to touch the hilt of the 'Satisfying Scales.' Confirming the situation as described, he carefully grasped the hilt, steadied his arm, and gently pulled it out.

"Poof!"

With the subtle sound of a blade leaving the flesh, Emma's body shuddered slightly, and the freshly flowing blood immediately soaked her front.

But just as the lazy young man had said, despite suffering secondary trauma from Leon's sword-drawing movement, as the blade of the 'Satisfying Scales' left, Emma's previously chaotic and sluggish soulfire swiftly became smooth and stable, even showing faint signs of awakening.

"Not bad. Her condition is better than I expected."

Noticing the slight twitch of Emma's fingertips, the lazy young man's eyes flickered twice before speaking,

"She'll probably wake up soon. If she's in good condition, you might not even need to kill me.

Although my return ritual consumes little, the feeling of having the body completely destroyed and then gradually rebuilt, and the soul completely extinguished before reigniting, is somewhat hard to say which is more uncomfortable than being hammered to death by a spiked mace bit by bit... Wait!"

Raising his head to check Emma's condition, he seemed to have noticed something strange, jolting his neck upright, his eyes brimming with eagerness as he shouted,

"Turn around! Look at that crocodile!"

Crocodile?

Hearing Senior Tom's reminder, Leon suddenly got startled.

Wasn't the Crocodile God brought by the 'Satisfying Scales' contract already gone?

...

Oh no, he had been found!

Upon hearing the commotion from the mountain top, the Crocodile God, who was stealthily moving its hind legs step by step away, suddenly shivered violently.

Because the 'Satisfying Scales' contract hadn't concluded yet, the unfortunate Crocodile God couldn't leave and was picked up by Leon, who was drunk, and used to smash the Goddess of Fortune's forehead like a weapon.

After being caught by the Goddess of Fortune and thrown away, the small and helpless Crocodile God dared not interfere further between these two big shots, quietly hiding far away.

According to the original idea of the Crocodile God, it was just ready to lie low quietly until Leon and the Goddess of Fortune had finished their fight, then discreetly act cute to whichever side won to beg for mercy, and this would all be over.

After all, it was merely following a contract to have a snack, without any direct conflict with the two, and backed by some big shots in the Realm of the Dead, both the Purification Bureau and the Goddess of Fortune had to give it some face.

So no matter which side won, they were unlikely to kill it, as long as it hid properly and didn't get involved, there was absolutely no life threat.

To its misfortune, the situation took a sudden nosedive. Leon, the Old Soil resident infiltrating the Purification Bureau with ill intent, suddenly exposed his identity, being uncovered by the Goddess of Fortune as an Old Soil visitor, even reaching a secret agreement with each other.

The unspeakable means one couldn't tell anyone, or everyone who knew would have to die!

Witnessing the entire conversation between Leon and the Goddess of Fortune, and watching with his own eyes as the Goddess swore by Authority to keep it secret no matter what, the unfortunate Crocodile God almost burst into tears right on the spot.

Worried about being murdered by the two villains intent on keeping secrets, the Crocodile God maxed out its natural ability to play dead, lowering its presence to the minimum, with even its soul sinking into silence, just a faint breath away from total extinguishment. It then silently prayed in its heart, begging not to be noticed.

Unfortunately, its stealth was barely enough to deceive humans but was utterly useless at the True God level. A mere glance from the Goddess of Fortune noted the feigned-dead Crocodile God.

However, while the Goddess of Fortune noticed it, she didn't act directly, seemingly believing that the Old Soil resident would finish it off to protect the "hidden" secret and directly stepped into the Dreamrealm and left.

Just when the Crocodile God, anxious and desperate, was repeatedly begging in its heart, fearing it would be killed by that Old Soil person; a miracle really happened.

That Old Soil person, who nearly took down the Goddess of Fortune, after scanning the surroundings with soul vision, actually ignored it just like a regular person dull to soul perception!

How lucky!

Seeing the Old Soil person, pretending to be extremely weak again, carrying the unconscious female cleaner, beginning to climb up the mountain with effort, the heart of the fortunate Crocodile God pounded wildly, nearly pulling it back from its pseudo-dead state.

Under its intensely hopeful gaze, the Old Soil infiltrator of the Purification Bureau truly ignored it and climbed all the way to the mountain top, eventually, even pulling out that ever-maintained contracting stiletto sword that kept it from leaving at the suggestion of another cleaner!

Thank heavens!

Sensing Leon's "murderous" gaze, the Crocodile God, suddenly jumping, used the fastest speed of its life to activate the door between life and death, then plunged headlong into it, stepping onto the "No Return Path" leading to the Realm of the Dead.

Finally got away!

Having escaped from the overly dangerous world of the living, looking at the dim and gloomy Realm of the Dead before it, as well as the wailing and struggling dead desperately trying to turn back on the No Return Path, the Crocodile God who escaped unharmed was almost moved to tears.

That damn world's water was too deep. It was merely too hungry, eager to taste some fresh delight, and nearly lost its life in the process.

The Realm of the Dead is still the best!

Though the scenery was somewhat monotonous, the wailing dead a bit noisy, and the taste of sinful souls somewhat stale, not as fresh as those freshly dead, life here was fairly stable at least, without worrying about sudden attacks. The Realm of the Dead was truly too...

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!"

???

In surprise and horror, within the monochrome world of the dead, abruptly arose a brilliant splash of color.

Countless strands of bright red hair suddenly surged out of the rolls of the Yellow Springs River beneath the No Return Path, instantly weaving a gigantic blood-red cocoon over a hundred meters in diameter, trapping the Crocodile God just stepping onto the No Return Path tightly inside.

"No wonder the scent felt familiar."

Observing the terrified Crocodile God inside the hair cocoon, the Director squatting on the shore of the Yellow Springs River brushing his teeth spat out the toothpaste foam, frowned, and asked,

"If I'm not mistaken, you are the crocodile that signed a contract with Emma, right? Why do you have the Goddess of Fortune's scent on you? Wait, how do you have Leon's as well?"

""

Chapter 375: Crocodile Tears\_1

Blood, blood, blood, blood, blood, blood... Scarlet Hair Lady!!!

Facing the red-haired beauty who slightly wrinkled her nose before him, and recognizing her identity through that striking crimson hair and the boundless Sea of Lost Souls behind her, the Crocodile God caught at the doorstep instantly froze up in an alligator-like stiffness.

This was the director of the Purification Bureau's Virgin Branch, the most ruthless executioner in history, who single-handedly wiped out the entire East Carleighbwen Kingdom, and personally sent 1.29 billion of the dead onto the No Return Path!

Back when the rebellion of the Purification Bureau's Serpent Bearer Division escalated, the Crows of Death Report perched at the entrance to the Realm of the Dead took off immediately, more than 1.2 billion dark crows weaving an ominous curtain of black feathers that blocked out the sky of the dead realm entirely.

\*At that time when I looked up to the sky, I couldn't even see the sun, only an endless stretch of dark fog spanning tens of miles, with countless pairs of crimson points of light within—those were the eyes of over 1.2 billion crows of death!\*

Over 1.2 billion!

\*Whenever the Crocodile God recalled the red-eyed black crows blotting out the sky and the tsunami-like influx of the dead into the realm after the Crows of Death Report soared deeper in, its soul involuntarily trembled.\*

The seemingly kind red-haired woman in front of him had taken just over two minutes to send 1.3 billion dead into the realm of the dead, blocking up the usually unobstructed No Return Path with the madly surging dead for the first time.

Even though the overlords of the dead realm, who noticed the unusual movements of the Crows of Death Report, acted at once to mitigate the situation, it was still like pouring a cup of water into a burning cart for the ever-increasing dead. Almost every second, millions of the dead were squeezed off the path, falling into the Yellow Springs River below.

In fact, towards the last half a minute, not only had the No Return Path which attracted the dead come to a complete halt, but even the waters of the Yellow Springs River were blocked by the falling souls of the dead, causing the river to backflow and flood, creating a muddy yellow marsh realm spanning several hundred miles around the entrance to the realm of the dead.

And the large marsh created in that flood was now exactly where he was living...

After casting a glance at the massive sinkhole at the center of the Muddy Yellow Marsh Country in the distance, the unfortunate Crocodile God, faced with the red-haired woman who "built him a house," felt a moistening around his eyes, and large, hot tears of gratitude began to roll down.

\*So that "partner" guarding the realm of the dead was you!\*

\*No wonder that old earther pretended not to notice me; with the Scarlet Hair Lady guarding the realm of the dead, he didn't even need to lift a finger. Once I came back, I was doomed!\*

...

Why are you crying?

Seeing the Crocodile God, who he had caught but hadn't even said a word before breaking into tears, the Red-haired Director was slightly stunned. Then, quite uncivilly, she tossed her toothbrush into the Yellow Springs, furrowing her brows as she approached.

"Tell me, where did you come back from? How are Emma and the others?"

"They... they're all good..."

"You're lying!"

After slightly wrinkling her nose, the Red-haired Director's fox eyes narrowed, and the cocoon of hair that merely bound the Crocodile God slightly dimmed, shifting from bright red to a dark red that resembled venous blood, and continued to constrict inwards, directly cutting into its carapace.

"Tell the truth! Just because you're a god of the realm of the dead doesn't mean I dare not touch you!"

Having smelled the aura of the Goddess of Fortune and an extremely strong scent of blood from the Crocodile God, the Red-haired Director, concerned about Leon and the others, was already somewhat truly angered.

According to the tasks she assigned, Emma was to eradicate the Scales Gold Sect, while Leon was to raid the Sky Clipper. No matter how one thought about it, their auras shouldn't appear together, so the only possibility was that Emma was ambushed by the Scales Gold Sect, possibly even personally dealt with by the Goddess of Fortune.

And after Leon completed his task and returned to the bureau, when he was about to report to her, he received a distress call from Emma, so he dragged Tom along... no! It should be he dragged Tom to rescue, only to face the Goddess of Fortune head-on!

Although, since she was always guarding the No Return Path, she hadn't seen their souls enter the realm of the dead, which meant they might not have been killed yet, considering the opponent was the Goddess of Fortune, there was still a possibility of something happening to them.

If her assigned missions truly caused Emma and Leon to fall into the Scales Gold Sect's trap...

\*Thinking this far, the increasingly anxious Red-haired Director accidentally exerted more force, and a large number of fine, sharp strands of hair had already penetrated the Crocodile God's shell, deeply embedding into its skin.\*

"No! I'll talk! I'll talk!"

Having noticed the blood scent emanating from the dark red hair strands, the Crocodile God, shedding tears like a fountain, got startled and hurriedly stammered as it began to recount everything it had seen.

As the creature haltingly told its tale, the impatience in the Red-haired Director's eyes gradually faded away, slowly transforming into deep confusion.

\*Leon almost took down the Goddess of Fortune?\*

\*And he's from the Old Soil? Aiming to infiltrate the Purification Bureau with ill-intent?\*



\*In the end, the Goddess of Fortune grabbed some leverage over him, and to avoid exposing his identity, he had to temporarily cooperate with her?\*

\*What on earth is all this?\*

...

"I swear it's all true!"

Realizing covertly that the Scarlet Hair Lady didn't seem to be allied with the "Old Soil people," the Crocodile God, suddenly lit with hope of survival, feared that this kill-god might filet him into sashimi in a fit of pique and hurriedly swore:

"I swear by the great death, it's all what I saw with my own eyes! I guarantee there are no lies!

"Moreover, after he awakened that male cleaner, he spoke according to the agreement with the Goddess of Fortune, and at that time, the Goddess had already left. Surely he wouldn't need to lie then?"

\*Not necessarily.\*

\*Recalling the cautiousness running through Leon and Emma, the Red-haired Director couldn't help but wrinkle her brow.\*

\*Considering Leon's insecure nature, the reason he didn't confide the truth to Tom was probably for fear that the Goddess of Fortune hadn't left and upon hearing his "revelation," would cause more trouble, so he chose to keep it temporarily concealed.\*

\*After all, although the soul vision of that Black Goat was decent, it could still make mistakes against a True God capable of disguising their soul, as proven by this successfully feigning-dead Crocodile God, so Leon choosing to wait wasn't a problem.\*

\*As for the card to nullify the Goddess of Fortune's authority, it should likely have been during the time he received the wine from the Taurus Director and got utterly intoxicated, even turning even my [Slaughter Blood Hair] into nothingness—nothingness, making it natural for the Goddess of Fortune not to harm him.\*

\*If my guess is correct, Leon must have used some method to fool the Goddess of Fortune and found a way to scare her off, and that whole Old Soil origin identity was just nonsense... hmm...\*

\*It seems it might not entirely be nonsense either?\*

Thinking over Leon's lot of secrets, the Red-haired Director couldn't help but hesitate slightly.

\*Although, from what I know of Leon, he couldn't be the type to "harbor ill intentions," there are indeed many strange things about him. Even if he doesn't have bad intentions, it might be best to just double-check, ensuring he hasn't been swayed by odd entities.\*

\*Seeing as I'm currently in the realm of the dead, and since nothing can conceal itself here, why not just pull Leon and the others down and thoroughly check them over?\*

Chapter 376: Report of a Dead Crow\_1

"Caw! Caw!"

After hearing the mournful cawing from above, Leon instinctively looked up in response. However, instead of the familiar blue sky and white clouds, what met his eyes was an entire expanse of hollow, deep gray filled with the essence of death.

A sun devoid of any warmth, resembling the dying gaze of an old man, hung quietly over the sky shrouded in dark clouds, gazing at the turbulent, murky river below.

Above this yellow and noisy great river, a road paved with countless ancient bones, tinged faintly in yellow, bore one mourning soul after another, winding toward the Depths of the Realm of the Dead.

"This is the Realm of the Dead, where everyone comes after they die."

After glancing at Leon, who was carrying Emma out of the crocodile's mouth with eyes full of awe as he observed the Realm of the Dead, the Red-haired Director monitored the situation of the three before advising,

"After you come out of the crocodile's mouth, it means your body has entered the Realm of the Dead. At that point, you might see some crows flying over. Remember, don't attack those crows; just stand still in place."

"Ah, okay!"

Nodding somewhat bewildered, Leon quickly sought help, remembering Senior Emma, who was still unconscious on his back,

"Director, Senior Emma is very badly wounded..."

"Don't worry; she's not in serious trouble."

Looking at Emma's emerald-green soul, the Red-haired Director let out a sigh of relief,

"Although the blow dealt by the Goddess of Fortune was heavy, Emma's soul is remarkably resilient. She'll be fine after a period of rest. Only the partially emeraldized body is somewhat problematic... How about you? How do you feel?"

"I'm fine."

Upon hearing the Red-haired Director's words, Leon slightly shook his head, then subconsciously reached out to touch two small bald patches on his head.

Although he suffered several injuries during this operation, he had already used the [Plague-Infected Blood Band] to treat them. The only exception was the two small patches of hair that had been displaced after the horns grew, which the [Plague-Infected Blood Band] couldn't restore. Hence, this was probably his only injury this time.

...

"Director, he's fine, but I have a problem. A big one!"

Just as Leon was touching his hair, a head suddenly rose from the depths of the crocodile's mouth. Lying on the Crocodile God's Tongue, the lethargic young man looked full of misery,

"I've lost more than half of my bones. Right now, only my neck and butt can move. Could you..."

"You call that an injury?"

Glancing at Tom, the Red-haired Director waved dismissively,

"You must have already set up a return ritual in advance, right? Wouldn't reviving yourself once fix such an injury?"

"It would, but it hurts a bit..."

"Oh, just a matter of slitting your neck. Don't be so delicate!"

After dismissing the lethargic young man with a few words, the Red-haired Director retrieved the hair tied around the Crocodile God's neck, then walked behind Leon to take Emma from his back, cradling her horizontally before urging,

"Come on, come on, don't stay inside this crocodile's mouth. Let's move outside!"

"Oh..."

Per the Red-haired Director's request, Leon walked out from the mouth of the Crocodile God, which had brought him to the Realm of the Dead. Before he could speak to ask why she wanted him to come to the Realm of the Dead, a cacophony of shrill cawing erupted once more.

Unlike the few sparse cries earlier, this time the cawing was chaotic and dense. As Leon focused his eyes, he noticed around six or seven hundred red-eyed crows flying from the distance. Unlike other crows before, which all flew directly into the depths of the Realm of the Dead, these crows began circling above the trio.

"These birds are called the Crows of Death Report, pets kept by one of the rulers of the Realm of the Dead. Every time a new dead soul appears, they fly up from their resting place, all the way to the deepest part of the Realm of the Dead, announcing the birth of the deceased."

After briefly explaining the significance of these crows, the Red-haired Director continued with a tone full of meaning,

"And if a living person with an intact body enters the Realm of the Dead, their Crow of Death Report won't fly into the depths but will instead find the person it's focused on, circling persistently overhead, or even landing directly on their shoulder."

"Isn't that wrong?"

After looking up at the red-eyed crows circling in the sky, Leon remarked with some surprise,

"There are only three of us, even counting Senior Tom, who hasn't come out, that's only four. But aren't there almost seven hundred crows up there?"

"To be precise, there are six hundred and sixty-six of them."

Taking a look at Emma in his arms to ensure she wasn't awake and couldn't hear him, the Red-haired Director quietly explained,

"You've probably heard about Emma's origins before. Her people launched a coup, intending to overthrow the current royal family. However, someone tipped them off, and her entire clan was executed, except for Emma herself. The execution ground was set at the entrance of Treasure Flower Manor, staining the redwood tree red.

Her Undying Body was born out of that execution.

Over six hundred clan members were executed, leaving her with over six hundred lives to replenish. She must be killed six hundred and sixty-six times in a single day to be completely killed.

While inheriting her clansmen's lives, she also inherited their Crows of Death Report. The crows flying above us were actually drawn to her."

"..."

\*I see...\*

After hearing about Senior Emma's past experiences, Leon fell into a brief silence. Although he had long suspected something similar about Senior Emma's Undying Body, hearing such a blood-tinged fact still left him utterly shocked.

During Leon's silence, the Red-haired Director attentively observed him, scanning him from head to toe repeatedly. Her intense scrutiny made Leon feel all kinds of uncomfortable, prompting him to ask proactively,

"Why are you looking at me like that? Is there something on me?"

"No, the reason I'm looking at you like this is precisely because there's nothing on you."

Giving Leon a meaningful glance, the Red-haired Director asked,

"Leon, where is your Crow of Death Report?"

"???"

Slightly stunned by the Red-haired Director's question, Leon puzzledly asked in return,

"There are so many Crows of Death Report flying above us; isn't mine among them?"

"As I just mentioned, all the Crows of Death Report above us were drawn by Emma; neither yours nor mine is among them."

Locking her gaze on Leon's eyes, the Red-haired Director deliberately slowed her speech, saying with utmost seriousness,

"When my Leon Value reached 60 points and my Hierarchy equaled that of the True God, my Crow of Death Report lost its ability to sense my death, flying straight into the depths of the Realm of the Dead with its eyes closed.

But your Leon Value is only around 6 points, with no ability to escape the death perception of the Crow of Death Report, so your crow should still be roosting at the entrance of the Realm of the Dead."

"..."

\*Leon, can you tell me why, even though your body has entered the Realm of the Dead, your Crow of Death Report has never come looking for you?\*"\*

Chapter 377: Untitled\_1

"Why hasn't my Crows of Death Report ever come to me?"

After hearing the inquiry from the Red-haired Director, Leon's breath caught slightly.

The most likely answer to this question would be his identity as a transmigrator, as he wasn't even a person from this world. Naturally, the Crows of Death Report announcing the death of this world's Leon wouldn't have a reaction.

Secondly, it could be the Badge System that was with him. Just like how the Scales Gold Sect couldn't buy him off despite activating their powers, the ability of the Crows of Death Report to foretell death might also have been blocked by the Badge System.

But whether it was his identity as a transmigrator, or the existence of the Badge System, these were his biggest secrets and could not be divulged. So, how should he answer this question?

"To be honest, I'm not really sure..."

After hesitating for a moment and looking at the Red-haired Director, whose expression was serious but not hostile, Leon finally chose to be "partially" truthful and replied,

"As for why the Crows of Death Report hasn't come, I do have some vague guesses, but it involves some of my... uh... secrets, so I'm not really willing to say. Is that okay?"

"..."

Is that okay... do you think it is okay?

Hearing Leon's response, the Red-haired Director was almost amused out of anger.

Based on the crocodile's account just now, you have the suspicion of being an "Old Soil spy"! You could very well be someone who infiltrated the Purification Bureau to plot something nefarious!

And although I haven't been very competent these years, I am still the Director of the Virgin Branch of the Purification Bureau, an actual high-ranking official of the Bureau! And you think you can just brush it off with 'I have secrets and don't want to say' without any explanation?



"No way!"

After glaring at Leon, the Red-haired Director said, somewhat annoyed,

"Do you really think I would accommodate you unconditionally? The things you said to the Goddess of Fortune, that crocodile told me everything. Do you even know how serious this matter is?"

According to bureau regulations, just for the suspicion of you possibly being an Old Soil person, I should immediately catch you, tie you up, and send you to the main bureau to let that God Tier Brain-Eating Demon lick your brain!"

...

\*Phew... it seems like I might pass this test!\*

Having his "unreasonable request" sternly rejected by the Red-haired Director, Leon looked at her slightly irritated yet pretty face and felt a sudden sense of relaxation instead of urgency.

If the Director really suspected him, thinking he might be up to something malicious, given her way of handling things, she would have detained him first and interrogated by all means.

But now, not only did she give him a chance to explain, but even after he abstained from explaining, she still didn't arrest him but instead scolded him for being reckless and threatened to tie him up for the Brain-Eating Demon. These actions rather proved that the situation hadn't escalated to that extent.

And if he had tried to outsmart the situation instead of being partially truthful, chances were he wouldn't have fooled the sober Director, and she might have exposed his lie, worsening the situation.

"If it's really this serious... should I say a little more?"

Raising a hand to make a small gesture, Leon tentatively said,

"You know, Director, according to the file, my ability is to forcibly obtain information on Anomalous Objects by touching them, but my ability is actually a bit more special..."

"..."

"..."

Is that it?

After waiting for a long time without further explanation, and seeing Leon make that "tiny bit" gesture, the Red-haired Director couldn't help but look displeased.

So when you said you'd say a bit more, you really meant just this tiny bit!

"Um... that's just one possibility..."

Seeing the Red-haired Director's increasingly displeased expression, Leon cautiously added,

"Besides this, another possibility is my background; I'm not actually Anna's biological brother, it's because of that family photo..."

"So, based on what you're saying... since Leon Laine shouldn't exist, there wouldn't be a corresponding Crows of Death Report?"

After hearing Leon's explanation about the "Warm Home" situation, the Red-haired Director frowned and said,

"But that's just your one-sided speculation, plus the ability of that Anomalous Object has changed, so now we can't even test it. Doesn't this mean you basically haven't said anything at all?"

"Anyway, I've said everything I can say!"

After struggling to come up with two reasons without lying, Leon boldly shrugged and said,

"I can't even be sure why there's no Crows of Death Report for me; these are just guesses. But I know I'm definitely not some Old Soil person infiltrating the Purification Bureau to cause trouble. These are just her own wild theories — I haven't admitted a single word."

"Anyway, if you believe me, just pick one of these two reasons to trust. If you don't trust me, then bind me and send me to the main bureau to let that God Tier Brain-Eating Demon lick my brain. It's up to you!"

"..."

It's up to me? What choice do I have?

After you took such a huge risk and even confronted the True God to save Emma, who was captured because of my mistake, how could I report you to the higher-ups over some baseless matter?

Moreover, even if I had the heart to send you for the Brain-Eating Demon to lick your brain, the main bureau is now entirely closed off, not allowing any entry or exit. Am I supposed to fly you over seventy thousand kilometers and force our way in just to torture you?

This brat! He just knew I wouldn't go that far and didn't even bother pretending!

Unable to help glaring at the straightforward Leon, the Red-haired Director said with a stern face,

"Don't think you can just brush this off! I'll remember this! Write the report of this Purification action seriously!"

However, since the doubts haven't been cleared up, forget the Old Soil person thing for now; just write it according to the Goddess of Fortune's... ahem... her statement. Just say the Lord of Lustful Dreams ambushed the Goddess of Fortune and you barely escaped.

And remember to write the process in detail, but leave out the final events.

You haven't met the Lord of Lustful Dreams, and I'm afraid you might not write it accurately, misleading the main bureau's reviewers. So, finish the report as soon as possible and let me review and fill in the details, got it?"

Oh yes, absolutely need help with the review!

Realizing he had successfully passed this checkpoint, Leon couldn't help but respond cheerfully, promising that he would write the action report meticulously, ensuring not to miss any detail.

Seeing the relaxed smile on his face, the Red-haired Director whose probing had failed couldn't help but purse her lips, then asked somewhat displeased,

"For Emma's sake, I won't ask about your secrets; just keep clear in your own mind.

Also, I heard from the crocodile that the Holy Spirit pendant made for you by Taurus His Excellency was destroyed by the Goddess of Fortune?"

Chapter 378: The second best\_1

"Hmm..."

Hearing the red-haired director's words, the smile on Leon's face froze slightly, and then he nodded somewhat gloomily, saying,

"Previously, when Senior Emma was preparing to perish together with the Goddess of Fortune, to enhance her own power, the Goddess of Fortune swallowed my pendant, along with Senior Pioni's cursed Silver."

"Director, now all I have are support-type anomalous objects, nothing that can directly damage a target. Next time you assign me a task, I guess I'll have to carry a sniper rifle to work."

"You won't need to. I let that crocodile bring you down here to solve this problem... Keep moving forward, and remember not to stray too far from me!"

After looking up at the gray sky overhead, the red-haired director whistled upwards, scattering the crows circling above. He then watched their flight path and, carrying Emma, walked toward the depths of the Realm of the Dead.

"Leon, although you lost the Holy Spirit pendant this time, you actually gained quite a bit. Whether it's the Lord of Lustful Dreams' fork, the Goddess of Fortune's tail, or the green bead that trapped Emma, they're all just as valuable as the pendant."

Walking the No Return Path, the red-haired director spoke to Leon behind him without blinking while staring at the Crows of Death Report overhead,

"However, the things you got are a bit problematic. The Lord of Lustful Dreams isn't dead yet, so even if his weapon is broken, you can't use it. The Goddess of Fortune's snake tail is just material, also not directly usable.

The remaining bead, though not having these problems, is something the Goddess of Fortune used for herself. The cost for you to use it is a bit too high. Without fifty Leon Values, you can't get much out of it."

"Yes..."

Following the red-haired director, Leon nodded and replied,

"That bead is called [Dream of Verdant Green], an anomalous object modified from the shattered [Land of Bliss] of the God of Agriculture and Pastoralism. It can temporarily open up an emerald world with no exit, and the more the contamination value of the user, the vaster the world. That Snake Spirit even expanded an entire valley.

Although I can directly use this thing and even bring people in and out of the already expanded emerald world, if [Dream of Verdant Green] is put away now and I activate it again, the expanded world might be

just a few dozen square meters, and its stability couldn't compare to the world expanded by that Snake Spirit."

"In short, either it's unusable or unsuitable!"

After summarizing, the red-haired director continued,

"When you have good things but can't use them, you need to find an anomalous object forge master.

And if we're talking about the best forge master, it must be Taurus His Excellency, but she's self-sealing in the headquarters now and can't lend a hand, so we have to find the second-best."

The second-best anomalous object forge master?

Upon hearing this, Leon blinked and then curiously asked,

"Director, is the second-best forge master in the Realm of the Dead? Was he someone from our Purification Bureau?"

"Yes, he is indeed in the Realm of the Dead and was part of our Purification Bureau during his lifetime."

"..."

Wait! During his lifetime?

...

"Olivia! Ah hahaha! You actually came to find me!"

In Leon's somewhat shocked gaze, a slightly hunched, goofy-looking old man sat up from the coffin pried open by the red-haired director, full of joy,

"Since you're here to see me, does that mean this generation's Taurus is already dead?"

"Uh... Taurus His Excellency hasn't ascended yet..."

"Tsk!"

After hearing the red-haired director's response, the goofy old man looked utterly disappointed, lifting the coffin lid to lie back down, but was stopped by the well-prepared red-haired director.

"Don't mess with my coffin! Let go of me this instant!"

The old man, who seemed to bear a grudge against the Taurus Director, angrily said,

"Didn't I tell you? Don't come to me if she's not dead! Why aren't you keeping your word?"

"Third Generation Your Excellency, that wasn't our agreement at the time."

The red-haired director, pulling hard on the old man's coffin lid, shook his head and said,

"According to our agreement back then, it was that I would come to see you once you became the world's best forge master again and tell you the good news."

"Isn't that the same thing?"

"It's different."

The red-haired director explained,

"Third Generation Your Excellency, there's been a bit of a situation at the bureau recently. The current Aquarius Director covets the Watcher's Palace, intending to replace Taurus His Excellency as the Palace Occupant to enter the Watcher's Palace.

To ensure the security of the Watcher's Palace, Taurus His Excellency, under the guardianship of the other two directors, is self-sealing at headquarters and won't come out until she ascends the palace. So, you're the best forge master in the world again."

"Oh, well, I suppose that's acceptable..."

After hearing the red-haired director's explanation, the goofy old man hesitated for a moment, finally not continuing to cover his coffin lid. Instead, he reluctantly asked,

"Since she's not coming out, I suppose I can consider you kept your word... So tell me, what do you want from me this time?"

"If we're looking for the best forge master, it's naturally to ask you to forge something."

After taking out the snake tail and broken halberd that Leon had acquired, the red-haired director pointed to Leon and said with a face,

"Third Generation Your Excellency, he's a new cleaner who joined our bureau just last year. While performing a rescue mission, his anomalous object was destroyed, and he now needs an offensive anomalous object.

Can you use the two things he acquired as the main materials to custom-make something suitable for him? If possible, it should not be too consuming, the kind that an average third-class cleanser can handle, and ideally, one that accommodates future growth potential."

"Tsk... So many requirements!"



Grumbling with dissatisfaction, the goofy old man stood up from his coffin, took the materials with a sullen face, and examined them, then exclaimed in surprise.

"A True God's body part and weapon?"

Manipulating the snake tail and half of the trident with his slightly green-tinged hands, the goofy old man finally looked at Leon, and asked with a face full of confusion,

"Is this tail freshly chopped off? Did you happen to encounter a True God's death battle during your rescue mission?"

"Strange! You look so weak at a glance, and you're still just a newcomer who joined the Purification Bureau last year. If you had really stumbled into a True God's battlefield, you might not survive long enough for outsiders to blink, so how did you get such rare materials?"

"That's a long story."

Giving Leon a look that said, "Don't even bother with him," the red-haired director quietly closed the goofy old man's coffin lid, kicked the coffin on the ground far away, then smiled warmly and said,

"Third Generation Your Excellency, why don't you craft something for him while I tell you what happened? What do you say?"

Chapter 379: York Duo\_1

"Ugh... you just love those useless little tricks!"

After glancing back at his coffin kicked into the distance, the square-headed old man, who aside from his inverted black and white eyes looked no different from a living human, grumbled with a displeased look on his face,

"I've already crawled out of the coffin and accepted the materials you brought. How could I crawl back without finishing the job?"

"Hmm hmm, you're right."

The red-haired director, unfazed by the old man's complaint, cheerfully pushed the square-headed old man to the forge, helped set up a big black iron pot, and then began discussing recent happenings.

"Third Generation, don't underestimate Leon because he's a rookie. He's been with our branch for less than a year, but he's already completed many dangerous tasks. He even uncovered the Aquarius Director's plot..."

If the forging had already started... then I should make my move!

Glancing at the old man who was chatting with the director while tossing a snake tail and half a trident into the pot and stirring vigorously, Leon confirmed that he had fully captured his attention. Leon then stealthily took two steps back, grabbed the coffin on the ground, and dashed off!

...

Rewind time a bit.

"Leon, the person we're about to meet is the second-best Anomalous Object Forge Master in the world and also the third director of the Purification Bureau."

Pointing to the somewhat dilapidated cemetery in the distance, the red-haired director, carrying a big shovel, warned with a serious expression,

"The Third Generation can mark a person's soul just by their voice. Once he's spoken to you, no matter where you are, you can't escape his perception. So once we go in, no matter what he says to you, do not respond. If it gets too difficult, just smile and pretend you're mute."

"Okay..."

Leon, also carrying a shovel, nodded and couldn't help but ask,

"Director, it's been a long time since the Third Generation Director of the Purification Bureau passed away, right? How can he still help us forge Anomalous Objects? Could you or I be like him after we die?"

"We certainly couldn't, and neither could the Third Generation Director, in fact."

The red-haired director shook his head and said,

"The real Third Generation has long been dead. The situation of this Third Generation Director inside is somewhat similar to the 'Drama King' you and the princess caught at the Central Cross Theater—it's a manifestation of the Third Generation's obsession with Abnormal Forging.

Back then, he learned the Taurus Secret Arts better than anyone else and was poised to become the new Taurus Director. But, due to his extraordinary talent, he was temporarily appointed as the Third Generation Director, narrowly missing his beloved Taurus Secret Arts, which left him regretful for life."

With a bang, the red-haired director kicked open the cemetery gate. While counting the locations of the graves, he continued narrating,

"You know, obsessions, regrets, those things are naturally prone to triggering anomalies. Plus, the Third Generation Himself was powerful, and his forging skills indeed top-notch, increasing the odds significantly.

In short, after the Third Generation died, his yearning for the Taurus Secret Arts and not becoming the best Anomalous Object Forge Master transformed into an anomaly capable of forging Anomalous Objects, preserving all his extraordinary forging skills."

"Of course, the bureau was delighted about the emergence of such a high-level Forge Master, but even though the Third Generation's forging skills were superb, he never truly mastered Taurus Star Palace. Once a new Taurus Director appeared, he'd always remain the second-best Anomalous Object Forge Master.

No matter how much less adept each Taurus Director might be in forging, with the Taurus Star Palace's support, they exceed him by a hair's breadth, a competition he can never win... Leon, go dig up that grave. The Third Generation wasn't buried here; he might have moved."

Pointing to the grave opposite him, the red-haired director switched to another grave and continued digging while saying,

"Initially, the Third Generation could endure it, but after several generations, his competitive nature couldn't bear always being the second-best. Hence, he asked to be sent into the Realm of the Dead, claiming to be the best Forge Master among the dead.

And whenever a Taurus Director died, losing the soul supported by Taurus Star Palace, he'd challenge them in a forging skill contest to prove who the strongest Forge Master truly is.

However, the current Taurus Director chose ascension, preventing his soul from reaching the Realm of the Dead. He lost the chance to challenge a non-Taurus Palace-supported Taurus Excellency, to prove who the strongest Forge Master truly is. Frustrated, he buried himself in his coffin... Hmm, this should be it!"

After digging seven or eight graves, they finally found the coffin. The red-haired director nodded in satisfaction and called Leon over to help dig the coffin out from underground, which was tightly capped with a large iron pot.

"Remember, whatever you do, don't talk to him."

After reiterating, the red-haired director tossed aside the shovel and pointed to the coffin covered by the big pot, saying,

"The forge is right next to the cemetery. I'll help set up the pot. Once the Third Generation starts forging, you go and steal his coffin!"

"What?"

"Don't what. Just touch it, and you'll understand."

After pressing Leon's hand on the coffin, the red-haired director explained,

"Although you can release Emma from the 'Dream of Verdant Green,' she's died over three hundred times in there, with many parts of her body turning into emerald, even her soul infused with some of the Dream of Verdant Green's power.

While there are many Anomalous Objects that could help Emma, most of such caliber are stored at headquarters. Only the Third Generation's coffin remains outside, so we have to steal his coffin."

"..."

Staring at the blackened pot and the dusty coffin before him, Leon hesitated and asked,

"Director, why do we have to steal his coffin? Can't we just directly borrow it?"

"If he was willing to lend it, do you think I'd need to plan to steal it?"

Giving Leon an impatient look, the red-haired director urged,

"A living Third Generation would surely have lent us his coffin, but the deceased Third Generation, no matter how human-like he seems, is merely an obsession now. To him, being the strongest Forge Master is paramount.

Once someone else lays in that coffin, the maintained form of the dead would gradually interrupt, reverting him from the strongest Forge Master among the dead to the second strongest among the living, so he definitely wouldn't lend it...

Oh well, just listen to me. I'll find a way to distract him; you're in charge of stealing his coffin. Then place Emma inside and seal it for a while. Once Emma's injuries are healed, discreetly return the coffin, and everything will be fine! Got it?"

## Chapter 380: Crow and Human\_1

\*Was there a problem... How could it not be a problem?\*

Although that wasn't the real Third Generation Director, it was merely the obsession left behind by the Third Generation Director after failing to become the Strongest Blacksmith. But it did look no different from being alive, and with the Director leading him to dig graves, even stealing an old man's coffin lid, it truly felt awkward no matter how you looked at it.

But compared to these moral blemishes, it was clearly more important to first heal Senior Emma's injuries, so they had no choice but to apologize to the little old Director first.

Feeling a slight guilt, Leon apologized in his heart to the Third Generation Director. He carried the coffin lid out of the cemetery and ran toward an abandoned lakeside cabin... where he had placed Senior Emma temporarily before the Director had them dig graves.

"Keep an eye on the cemetery for me! Call me if there's any movement!"

After instructing the little crocodile lying by the door, Leon carried the Third Generation Director's coffin inside the house. He was just about to follow the Director's instructions to help repair Senior Emma's damaged body but suddenly noticed the cabin was empty. Originally, Senior Emma had been placed on an old wooden bed, but now there was no trace of her.

??!!!

Where was she? Wasn't that crocodile supposed to be watching the door? How did she disappear?

Shocked by Senior Emma's sudden disappearance, Leon hurriedly dropped the Third Generation Director's coffin lid and quickly ran outside. He hoped to ask the Crocodile God guarding the door what was happening, but near the lakeside not far from the cabin, he saw a familiar silhouette.

"Leon?"

Noticing the commotion on his side, the tall and beautiful woman sitting by the lake slightly turned, allowing her light chestnut hair to gently fall over her shoulder, revealing a slender, fair neck, and a gentle, smiling face.

Even though the background wasn't the blue sky and vast sea but the ink-black Lake of the Dead and the lifeless gray sky, Senior Emma's mature and graceful smile still unexpectedly calmed Leon's heart.

"You're awake..."

After stating the undeniable fact, Leon put down the little crocodile that was struggling and wagging its tail in his hand and walked toward Senior Emma, who was sitting on a round stone by the lake.

"Senior Emma,"

Upon reaching the white round stone where Senior Emma was sitting, Leon spoke a bit anxiously, urging,

"The Director found an Anomalous Object that can repair your body's injuries. You just need to sit inside for a while to be healed, I just hauled it back, so please quickly..."

"Look at those birds over the lake."

Interrupting Leon's words, Senior Emma, sitting by the lakeside, turned her head back to calmly watch the Crows of Death Report circling above the black lake, speaking with a serene expression,

"Leon, do you know what they represent?"

"..."

\*Are you... seeing the Crows of Death Report, being triggered to find me for a heart-to-heart chat?\*

\*Uh... I don't mind listening to your heartfelt thoughts. I'd even be glad to be a quiet listener, but isn't now an inappropriate time for that?\*

\*The Director is still working hard on delaying the Third Generation Director. We plan to return the coffin lid once we're done. Isn't our sudden heart-to-heart chat here slightly inappropriate?\*

...

"It seems the Director must have told you."

Watching Leon, whose face was filled with words caught on their path to be spoken, Senior Emma smiled again, then softly spoke with a hint of loneliness,

"These Crows of Death Report are not mine but those from my clan who died six years ago. After that day, while inheriting their lives, I also inherited these Crows of Death Report that belonged to them."

Although I haven't been to such a deep position before, I've actually quietly visited the Realm of the Dead many times and seen them many times. After coming repeatedly, I can even vaguely distinguish which Crows of Death Report belong to whom."

"..."

"The one that keeps flying high and refuses to land seems to be desperately staying away from me; that should be my grandfather's Crow of Death Report... Such birds inherit fragments of living consciousness and, just like my grandfather, refuse to turn their heads to glance at me till the very end."

"The one resting on the shore should belong to my mother's Crow of Death Report. It often watches me in silence like this, but merely watching. The moment I walk over, it immediately flies away far off, refusing any contact."

"The only one willing to come close to me should be my sister's Crow of Death Report. She would have been a few years younger than your sister, always a mischievous child who loved clinging to me..."



"..."

\*Although reason told Leon that now he should immediately interrupt Senior Emma's recount, urging her to quickly lie in the Third Generation Director's coffin to repair her body,\*

listening to Senior Emma recount the origins of each Crow of Death Report and remembering the relatives they represented, the words that had rushed to the tip of his tongue felt as if something was blocking them. No matter what, he couldn't utter them, up until he heard the little crocodile's low "grr" from behind.

There was no time to delay anymore!

Looking back toward the cemetery, he saw the signal previously agreed upon by the Red-haired Director and him. Leon, to Emma's astonishment, sprang up, returned to the already half-collapsed lakeside cabin, and hauled out the Third Generation Director's coffin lid.

"Senior Emma, I actually don't mind listening to you talk about this. But this thing is something I, um, the Director and I, borrowed from the Third Generation without telling him when we took it.

Therefore, we can't use it for long, only for a short time. After using, we need to quickly... return it quietly. So maybe you can lie down first, once I close the lid, we can continue talking?"

"..."

\*If you close the lid, I won't see anything, so what's there to talk about?\*

After casting Leon a slightly reproachful glance, knowing he felt awkward interrupting her, Emma shook her head gently and, with a soft acknowledgment, rose from the round stone by the lake and lay into the empty coffin.

"Leon, can you not close it please?"

Gently placing her hand on the back of Leon's hand to stop him from covering her with the coffin lid, Emma somewhat absent-mindedly gazed at the hovering crows in the sky, softly negotiating with a gentle tone,

"While on the outer perimeter of the Realm of the Dead, these Crows of Death Report fly particularly high, sometimes only appearing as small black dots in the sky. It's the first time they've come this close, and I'd like to watch them a bit longer."

"But if I don't close it, it might affect the repair's effectiveness? Besides, after returning it, we can come back again..."

"It's alright, as long as most issues are resolved. The last small portion, I can slowly nurse back to health by myself."

"Alright then..."

Seeing the slight entreaty in Senior Emma's clear eyes, the words that Leon intended to persuade further softened, and he no longer insisted. He raised one side of the coffin, propping it at an angle allowing a view of the lake and crow group and leaned it against his chest.

"..."

"Thank you."