

## I! Cleaner 511

### Chapter 511: Hand-to-Hand Combat

Watching as Leon suddenly regained his mobility and lunged at her, the Iron Princess almost popped her eyes out.

What the... are you really doing this?

Kingdom's Twin Pillars, Speaker of the Upper House, Duke of Lionheart, future Prince... You've gotten to the point where you're almost second to none, and you're still leading a fugitive rebel group? Isn't this like rebelling against yourself? Are you out of your mind?

There was no time to scrutinize what was wrong with Leon's mind as the startled Iron Princess hurriedly sidestepped, barely avoiding Leon's hand reaching for her shoulder.

But immediately, her inner ankle was fiercely hooked, causing her to lose her balance and fall. A knee with a metallic sheen was heading straight for her abdomen.

"Bang!"

With the dull sound of metal striking wood, the fallen Iron Princess grabbed the remains of the study's outer wall, hauling herself up with all her might, then stretched her legs apart at the last second, letting the deadly knee fall through the air.

Leon had learned police combat techniques from a female officer, but his practice time was too short. He only knew the basic moves, not what to do after failing to take down the target completely, causing a slight delay in his actions.

Taking advantage of this rare opening, the Iron Princess suddenly kneeled, rabbit-like, kicking at Leon's head. However, Leon reacted in time to dodge and was only hit on his right shoulder.

"Clang!"

With a somewhat piercing metal clash, Leon's iron-clad shoulder caved in as if smashed by a solid iron hammer, his entire right arm hanging helplessly.

Using the recoil from the kick, the Iron Princess propelled herself away, sliding across the floor and hastily moved out of Leon's reach.

That was close! Almost got touched by him.

Glancing at Leon's hands, the still-shaken Iron Princess took a deep breath, immediately twisting to get up and running toward the guards outside the door.

Forget it, even if I can't control him!

Gesturing to the guards with two gestures to hold off Leon for her, the Iron Princess immediately turned and ran toward the staircase.

The whole palace is now mine. In half an hour, when my power continues to spread, even the entire capital will be mine. So many people can pile up and crush him!

...

There's trouble...

Seeing the ten or so guards approaching with weapons, following the Iron Princess's orders, Leon couldn't help but sigh and took the black goat out from the Mirror World.

If I had known this would happen, I wouldn't have loaned out the Lust Dream Invader.

I've been with the Clean-up Bureau for too short a time, haven't collected enough items. Just now, after [Witch's Broom] broke, I have no "main battle" anomaly at hand, especially lacking means to "clear small fry".

After all, fighting a few Ironskin Guards can't mean I have to gulp down [Immortal in Liquor] and then wear [Hand of Screams] to brawl with them, can it? After this, I have to quickly find another suitable anomaly.

"From now on."

After tying the excited black goat to his waist, Leon picked up the old King from the floor, hanging him on his belt as well.

"I declare war on the Kingdom!"

With Leon's declaration of war, a pungent sulfur smell immediately filled the entire study. Two spiraling black ram horns also appeared above Leon's head, glinting with dark red sparks.

"See, at critical moments, you have to rely on me!"

Amid the black goat's triumphant boasting, Leon, with a goat head on one side of his belt and the old King's head on the other, turned and charged directly at the guards.

After sizing up Leon's "appearance", realizing their "job content", the guards, already under orders, seemed like they'd been given an extra boost of adrenaline. They immediately charged into the study with weapons in hand, shouting chaotically:

"Rebel!"

"Defend the palace!"

From further down the hallway, the Iron Princess's shout also echoed:

"Someone! A rebel is assassinating the King! Quickly notify the guard captain! And call the defense force! Take... damn it! Capture him for me!"

Under the Iron Princess's orders, the Iron Guards in the entire sleeping palace rushed up the stairs, trapping Leon on this floor, charging several times without breaking out.

However, although the black goat's mind was unreliable, its abilities were incredibly dependable. The moment Leon declared war, the effect of the Endless Blood Battle was completely activated.

Surrounded by a hellish aura, with a demonic silhouette behind him, Leon fearlessly stormed into the mob of guards, relying on the double undying nature of the goat head and heart, engaging in close combat with the mass of guards.

Would you really come alone to assassinate the King?

Seemingly infuriated by Leon's "arrogance", a hefty Ironskin Guard raised his ceremonial sword and swung at Leon in anger, shouting:

"Rebel!"

"Indeed, I am!"

Leon casually answered him, slightly tilting his head to take the hit with his shoulder.

Although palace guards might not be suited for the battlefield, their physical fitness is undoubtedly exceptional. Facing a solid iron sword swung down with full force, even with Leon's physique, his shoulder caved, his upper body harshly jolted, nearly toppling over.

But before the Ironskin Guards could celebrate, the demonic silhouette behind Leon shivered slightly, and his caved shoulder eerily returned to normal, even replacing the paint that had been stripped off.

"Hand it over!"

With his arm raising once more, gripping the ceremonial sword's thick blade, Leon yanked it forcefully, pulling the surprised guard, who was almost two heads taller and looked powerless, along with it.

Not letting go?

Seeing the Iron Guard who stubbornly held the sword hilt, Leon, urgently needing a weapon, without hesitation, lifted his leg, and kicked him between the legs!

Strangely enough, the Iron Guard seemed unfazed, still clutching his sword, refusing to let go. The surrounding Iron Soldiers took advantage, brandishing weapons and swinging at Leon.

Oh crap... I underestimated them

After taking two sword strikes and three blows in one second, Leon finally realized. The Queen and the King didn't die from losing their heads, so kicking his buddy shouldn't matter, should it?

Need to change the badge!

After switching out the egg badge... and bringing forth [Pity it's Not], Leon raised his arm to desperately fend off the Ironskin Guards' weapons, while swinging his right leg around to deliver another fierce kick to the hefty guard's weak spot.

"Bonk!"

Chapter 512: When You're Down on Your Luck...

"Ah!!!"

With the help of [Pity it's Not], the stout guard who had suffered a deadly kick screamed once and immediately let go, clasped his legs, and knelt down with a thud, unable to rise again.

After going through this, Leon not only got a weapon from his hands but also found the trick to dealing with these Ironskin Guards.

Once these guards are iron-coated, their bodies become incredibly solid, they don't feel pain and are very tough, each one more difficult than the last. If I really want them not to stop me, I might have to dismember them one by one.

But with the "egg-kicking" badge installed, it's not that troublesome anymore. Just explode their eggs one by one, ensure that with each kick they're down, and they won't get up for at least five minutes.

Simply perfect!

After giving himself a mental thumbs up for his acuity, the fully recovered Leon once again pinpointed a target, grabbed the opponent's weapon and tugged it over, disrupting their balance, followed by a heavy kick. The unlucky fellow immediately cried out in agony and fell, following in the footsteps of the sturdy guard.

Now that the way to handle them is known, the following actions become much simpler.

Amidst the repetitive cycle of "bang" and "ah," the Ironskin Guards, as robust as little calves, each clasped their legs and knelt down in a line, all over the corridor resounded with the groans of the fallen guards.

"Stop! Stop!"

When over twenty guards were mostly on their knees, someone finally gave up resisting, hurriedly threw down his weapon, clasped his legs, and said in horror:

"I... I surrender..."

"Bang!"

"Ah!!!"

After prying apart the legs of the pleading guard and giving a kick, sending him to line up with the Wudang group, Leon finally free from the entanglement quickly dashed toward the staircase, while inwardly apologizing to the Ironskin Guards.

Don't blame me for being harsh; I'm doing this for your good.

If I don't do this, I'd have to use heavy hands to get rid of you, but after this anomaly is resolved, it's uncertain if people with decapitated heads can live, right? It's better to have a small explosion than a big one, right?

"He got out!"

"Get him!"

"Don't let him go upstairs!"

Seeing Leon break free from those guards' entanglement, the subsequent guards hurriedly filled in to try to entangle Leon and prevent her from going upstairs to find the Iron Queen.

However, in the relatively spacious study, a one-on-many fight might hold Leon for a while, but the stairway is much narrower, and at most two or three people could confront Leon simultaneously before they were quickly taken down.

The cycle of bang-a-bang explosions echoed up the stairway, reaching the ears of the Iron Queen.

Damn it! Couldn't stop him even for this little while?

Realizing that Leon seemed to have already caught up, the Iron Queen clenched her fist, then shouted to the Flag Officer beside the tower:

"Isn't it ready yet? Notify the stationed guards to come over; does it need this long to signal?"

"Well... it should have been notified long ago... but the one signaling seems a bit off..."

Looking at the semaphore response from the distant barracks, the Flag Officer's iron face was full of confusion and said:

"I reported that something happened on our side and needed support, and they signaled back that everything was fine. Then I said the royal palace was under attack and requested immediate deployment; they replied that the situation was stable;

Just now, I tried to notify them again, telling them it's extremely urgent and immediate deployment is required, but they replied with 'Long live the Kingdom' ... I have no idea what's going on..."

What kind of nonsense is this?

Snatching the telescope from the Flag Officer's hands and glancing at the barracks' semaphore, realizing the other side was indeed "read and messaged back," the Iron Queen gritted her teeth, internally cursing the old King and the barracks' commander.

A bunch of idiots!

How could such an important position to guard the royal palace be entrusted to someone so dumb? The army responsible for guarding the royal palace can't even understand semaphore? This damned Kingdom is truly rotten!

Forget it, expecting the guards to rush over isn't realistic anymore.

Hearing the noise gradually approaching from downstairs, aware that Leon had nearly caught up, the Iron Queen stamped her foot, tossed the telescope back to the Flag Officer, ordered him to continue signaling here, and hurriedly ran toward another staircase, planning to get out of the palace first.

There are only dozens of guards inside the palace, but the two squads alternate guarding the royal palace have a total of eight or nine hundred men, with even more considering the four patrol teams outside the palace!



As long as I leave the palace, I can assemble the guards and temporarily hold off this troublesome guy, then head directly to the guard barracks, lead them to kill all the royal family members, and by then, he definitely can't stop the organized army!

...

And through the soul vision of the black goat, noticing the Iron Queen's movements, Leon followed suit down the stairs, only to be blocked by the fallen soldiers along the way, with new Ironskin Guards continually entering the palace, temporarily blocking him in the staircase.

Looks like I have to take another route.

After much effort to go down a floor, discovering a large group of soldiers still blocking below, while the Iron Queen's soul had already rushed out of the palace, Leon hesitated slightly, then directly flipped over the handrail amidst the shocked gazes of the Ironskin Guards below.

"Boom!"

With a loud crash, Leon fell head-first from a six-floor height, directly hitting the ground on the first floor, smashing several pieces of stone tiles in the stairwell.

Upon hearing the loud noise, the Princess turned her head in alarm, finding Leon staggering to his feet, swaying toward her and gave her a shiver from her scalp to her feet.

Damn it! How can he be so relentless?

"Guards!"

Seeing Leon desperate enough to jump off to chase her, afraid she'd be caught before completing her goal, the Iron Queen had to run while shrieking:

"Someone! Help!"

"The rebel wants to kill me! Guards!!!"

However, peculiarly, despite the Iron Queen's prolonged shouting, there wasn't a single response. The guards supposed to be stationed inside the palace seemed to have mysteriously disappeared, no trace of them despite her calls.

What's going on? Where are all the guards?

Unbeknownst to her, the palace guards had been redirected by Leon to practice diving at the garden's pond; after shouting for a while with no response and Leon closing in, the Iron Queen bit her lip and sprinted toward the palace gates.

No guards? No problem, there're people on the streets! Letting those people entangle him is just the same!

Resolute on her plan, the Iron Queen darted toward the palace exterior with all her might, but Leon, relentless behind her, had repaired his body, his heavy footsteps growing louder and closer, each seemed to crush on Iron Queen's heart, making it sink deeper.

Not good! The palace covers quite an area, plus there's a plaza outside. At the current pace, I might be caught before I even run out of the palace or enlist help from outside; what do I do?

However, just when the Iron Queen was about to despair, as if even fate was on her side, a mass of armed people stormed in from outside the palace, entering her command range.

Saved!

No time to ponder why so many ordinary folks barged into the palace, the Iron Queen, overjoyed to have reinforcements, directly pointed to the approaching Leon, shouting at the top of her lungs:

"Quick! I order you, catch him for me!"

"..."

Huh???

Seeing "Princess Veronica" running out unharmed, the rebels who had barged into the palace were ecstatic, but after hearing her command, deep confusion clouded the eyes of these elite rebels.

"Princess..."

Gazing at the jubilant Iron Queen yelling for them to catch Leon, the bald-headed woman who led the rebels into the palace, couldn't help scratching her bald head, then pointed to Leon in the distance, dumbfounded, and asked:

"You want us to catch our own leader?"

"..."

????

Chapter 513: This Shitty Job

It's over...

Looking at the clueless rebels blocking the way completely, the Iron Princess felt a chill run down her spine.

Although she had long known from Veronica's memory fragments that this Kingdom was already rotten, it was beyond her imagination that it had decayed to such an extent.

The stationed guard army in the capital was unable to understand flag signals from their Flag Officer, the palace guards neglected their duties, and during the day were all absent from their posts. The patrol soldiers outside seemed dead, allowing these rebels to break in without shedding any blood, yet...

How is this possible?

Unable to comprehend why she had failed, the Iron Princess, pinned down according to Ryan's orders by the bald woman, felt bitter and began to ponder where the mistake occurred.

The palace must have a problem. No matter how rotten the Kingdom is, it shouldn't be this bad. And although the old King is stubborn and muddled, he isn't as foolish as his son. At least he can manage a palace.

The answer is straightforward then; the Clean-up Bureau must have done something, and maybe they had early information and specially set up a trap for me!

"I admit defeat!"

When Ryan arrived, with a goat's head at his left waist and a king's head at his right, the Iron Princess, pinned to the ground, raised her head with bitterness and said:

"But can you tell me how I was exposed? Did Watcher's Palace provide some information? Or did someone on our side give you the inside scoop beforehand?"

Hmm?

Hearing the Iron Princess's question, Ryan's eyebrows slightly raised.

Judging from her words... could it be that you are not some sudden rogue abnormality but some antagonistic force against the Clean-up Bureau, who infiltrated the palace with premeditation?

"Heh."

As Ryan pondered how to extract more information, the black goat at his waist sneered:

"Practice harder if you're weak! Admit your loss! Can't you die without making excuses? We disdain those with a hard mouth like yours!"

You?! Stupid demon! What do you know!

Provoked by the black goat's disdainful gaze, the Iron Princess stared angrily at it, about to retort, but seeing Ryan approaching, she quickly warned:

"Don't come closer! I know your ability. You better not touch me. If you try to touch me, I'll self-destruct instantly to ensure you get nothing!"

Know my ability huh...

Upon hearing the Iron Princess's threat, Ryan squinted his eyes.

Knowing my details means she probably saw my submitted file. She must be from the Bureau, or at least colluded with someone from the Bureau, this is truly...

I had known the Clean-up Bureau is a very loose organization with rampant internal chaos, but how can anyone dig out information from it? Is this even feasible anymore?

...

"Leon Layne, I know you!"

Just as Ryan silently cursed the troublesome nature of the Bureau, the pinned Iron Princess took a deep breath and then looked at him standing two steps away, gritting her teeth:

"Leon Laine, a Level 3 Cleaner of the Virgin Branch in the Clean-up Bureau, has the abnormal ability 'Compulsory Intelligence Acquisition,' and has an excellent affinity with Demonic Abnormalities. Although joined the Bureau for only over two months, the record is astonishing, with a report of single-handedly repelling a Holy Spirit in the first month of employment.

Furthermore, during the year-end assembly of the Clean-up Bureau, you publicly exposed the conspiracy of the Aquarius Director, survived from his hand, and forced him into exile, later with two Level 1 Cleaners from the Virgin Branch, disrupted the Scales Gold Sect assembly, killed a Holy Spirit, and repelled the Wealth Goddess from the Dream Realm.

Recently, during the arrival of the Demonic Soul Abyss, alongside the director of Scorpio Branch who came to aid, you held off the physically arriving King of Nightmares, even personally releasing the [Dream-Eater Mutant Shell], consuming most of the Dream Realm, causing the most severe disaster in a century..."

"..."

Impressive... really anything I file, you know, huh?

The MI6 of Britain permeated like a sieve by KGB, doesn't seem to have so many loopholes as our Clean-up Bureau. Although this job gets decent perks, reflecting deeply, it truly is annoyingly troublesome...

Watching the Iron Princess recite his resume like a list, with Ryan slightly overwhelmed, he sighed, letting the other rebels retreat a bit, to avoid overhearing too much, then directly retorted:

"Why are you reciting my file?"

"I mean, I can exchange information with you."

Finding finally the opportunity to negotiate, the Iron Princess slightly relaxed her taut body, then directly stared into Ryan's eyes:

"Do you want to know where I got this information? Or to put it more bluntly, do you want to know who's the traitor within the Clean-up Bureau?"

"Yes."

"Then you have to tell me first, who is the traitor among us!"

"Alright, then you go first."

"No! You go first!"

Slightly shaking the shoulders under pressure, the Iron Princess insisted:

"I'm already caught by you. If I go first, what if you change your mind? Either you go first or the deal is off!"

"Fine."

Ryan's eyes flickered slightly, then planning to bluff, since he knows nothing, hoping to trick some information, he fabricated:

"I can't mention the name, but I can tell you, it is someone absolutely unexpected by you."

Absolutely unexpected by us?

Upon hearing, the Iron Princess was slightly stunned, then frowned and said:

"How does that differ from saying nothing? No deal!"

"No deal then."

Understanding the negotiation principle, that whoever seems to care more loses, Ryan decisively chose to overturn the table, extending his hand towards the pinned Iron Princess.

"Wait! Wait a moment!"

Desperately retreating a bit, dodging Ryan's hand, the Iron Princess angrily said:

"I didn't say I wouldn't tell you, but at least you need a little sincerity, just one sentence isn't enough!"

"Then add another sentence."

Ryan thought for a bit, then continued to blurt with empty detail:

"The traitor among you is someone who once died."

Once died?

Reflecting deeply on Ryan's words, the Iron Princess's expression suddenly tightened.

According to this clue, the recently deceased Aquarius Director must be one to consider, but besides him, it seems like there are others worth suspecting, even the old Four Pillar Gods were once killed by the Bureau, including perhaps... Serpent Bearer?

"Your turn."

Faking profoundness with empty reasoning, seeing the Iron Princess bewildered and guessing, Ryan urged expressionlessly:

"So, who's colluding with you in the Bureau, exposing my file?"



## Chapter 514: Slayer King III

"Alright."

After hearing Leon's inquiry, the Iron Doll Princess stopped pondering, coldly sneered, and said:

"I can't reveal that person's name either, but I'll tell you one thing... the person who betrayed your file is one of the eighty-seven division chiefs of the Clean-up Bureau."

"..."

Upon hearing the Iron Doll Princess's words, Leon couldn't help but click his tongue speechlessly.

Though he's merely a level three Cleaner, his file had been involved in "True God" level events three times, and according to the Bureau's rules, such level events require the authority of division chiefs or higher to access.

So once she recited the file, Leon understood that the person leaking information within the Bureau must be one of the eighty-six division chiefs besides his own chief, thus making the scope of the traitor even broader after her words.

"Hehe."

Seeing Leon, rendered speechless by her answer, finally venting his breath, the Iron Doll Princess lifted the corners of her mouth, then said with her head slightly raised:

"I won't take advantage of you. You told me two things, so I'll tell you two things as well. If you want to know who the traitor in your Clean-up Bureau is, investigate the operation with the highest personnel losses in recent years!"

The operation with the highest personnel losses...

Half-believing, Leon noted down the sentence, then nodded and said:

"In that case, while there's still time, do you have any intelligence you want to exchange?"

"Yes."

After the glass eyes blinked slightly, the Iron Doll Princess spoke up:

"In order to achieve my goal, I've prepared for six whole years before finding this opportunity. I want to know how long you've prepared for today?"

"..."

How long have I prepared for today? Um... Strictly speaking, this armed coup to attack the palace, I seem to have started preparing last Saturday...

"It's been some time."

Judging from the earlier conversation, Leon assessed that the Iron Doll Princess has a proud personality and seems to seek recognition, feeling that if he spoke the truth frankly, she might have a mental breakdown, so he responded ambiguously:

"Though I haven't been in the Clean-up Bureau for long, I've seriously prepared for a long time to seize this opportunity today."

Really...

After hearing Leon's reply, the Iron Doll Princess felt considerably better.

Though the biggest reason for her failure was due to betrayal by a traitor, being something beyond combat control, it would be utterly embarrassing if she had been caught effortlessly; Leon's "attention" was quite comforting to her.

"It's your turn."

Confirming she indeed completed a "high-level duel," though due to an actor in the team, a wrong move was made, the satisfied Iron Doll Princess simply spoke up:

"Ask anything you want to know! Even ask two more, I'll answer based on the situation."

"Thank you."

Noticing her remarkably softened attitude, Leon couldn't help but blink and then asked the question he was most eager to know.

"What's your purpose for attacking the palace?"

"You're asking..."

Upon hearing Leon's question, the Iron Doll Princess frowned.

"Of course, it's to kill all the members of the royal family; what else could it be?"

"..."

Oh, why didn't you say so earlier?

Upon hearing the Iron Doll Princess's answer, Leon couldn't help but show a trace of regret.

Though there were many despicable creatures with darkened souls in the royal family, most were related to Veronica, making it hard for him to act himself. If he had known what she was planning, he would have let her clean up first before capturing people.

"Wait?!"

Noticing Leon's unusual expression, the Iron Doll Princess suddenly realized, with full suspicion:

"If you don't know what my target is, how can you be prepared with the identity of a rebellious leader to bring so many people into the palace to confront me?"

"..."

Because I was here to rebel, who knew you were planning something today too?

"You're misunderstanding."

Quickly switching to "Master Performer," steadying his expression, Leon nonchalantly lied:

"Of course, I know your goal is to clean the palace, but I wanted to know not such a 'superficial' goal, but a more 'profound' goal."

So you wanted to ask about that...

Steadied by Leon's unmoving demeanor, the Iron Doll Princess hesitated for a moment, then said resignedly:

"Since I'm doomed anyway... let me tell you! Our goal is to kill..."

"Crunch!"

Like countless predecessors who were silenced precisely at the moment of revealing key information, the Iron Doll Princess shuddered violently as soon as she spoke halfway, with a distinct cracking sound from her chest cavity.

Seriously, why so timely?

Realizing something was wrong, Leon immediately reached for the Iron Doll Princess, hoping to extract a bit more intelligence while it's still hot.

However, the Iron Doll Princess's body instantly shrank, turning into an Iron Doll barely taller than a palm in a blink of an eye, leaving Leon grabbing at thin air, and then it shattered with a crunch.

Soon after, the old King, subdued during Leon's window-breaking, and tied to his waist, started humming, while a group of distant iron rebel minions suddenly showed a splash of flesh color.

Darn! The princess is still in the mirror world! Living beings can't stay inside for long!

Noticing the "Iron Palace's" effect starting to dissipate, Leon quickly reached for his cufflinks, pulling the doll-turned princess out, then reached for the scattered pieces on the ground, managing to touch them before they turned to dust.

[Name: Remains of Slayer King III (?, ?, ?)]

[Appearance: A handful of metal fragments continuously breaking apart, and continuing to do so until completely turned to powder]

[Ability: ?]

[Cost: ?]

[Archive: Accidentally triggered Word Spirit under the deceit and persuasion of Virgo Bureau's level-three Cleaner Leon Laine, the abnormal object was thus completely destroyed; every aspect constituting it, including its material, soul, and rules, was extremely thoroughly damaged, not even time reversal can restore it.]

[Evaluation: Judging by the vast divinity retained in the residue, the origin of this abnormal object is quite intriguing; it might even contain the soul or flesh of a True God level existence.

But having suffered pulverizing damage by a powerful Word Spirit, apart from its surging divinity, it no longer holds any value; even for crafting abnormal objects, it causes the object itself to crack and damage due to the strong Word Spirit residue.]

[Contamination Value: 60]

"..."

My goodness, so after all this busyness, besides two answers that I don't know are true, I end up with a handful of True God's ashes...

While Leon held the Iron Doll Princess's ashes, lamenting the speed of the silencing, the real princess, tossed aside, finally regained the ability to move and pounced directly at him.

"Leon!"

"Hmm, I'm here."

Catching the princess that pounced at him, Leon comforted her warmly:

"It's alright now, the abnormal object has been dealt with."

"No, I mean..."

"No need to say thank you."

Feeling slightly embarrassed under the gaze of the distant rebels, Leon quickly covered the princess's mouth, seriously responding:

"You don't need to thank me; just do what you're supposed to do in the future, and that's the biggest... hmm? Why are you unbuckling my belt?"

"The head! The head!"

Twisting away the hand covering her mouth, the princess blushinglly tugged Leon's belt impatiently:

"My father is still tied to your waist!"

#### Chapter 515: Competing Fathers

Tsk... It seems we've been found out.

Although he wished he could delay a little longer, till the old king dropped dead after regaining his human form, the princess was obviously a little anxious. Leon had no choice but to abandon his plan to continue stalling for time and returned the old king's iron-clad head to him.

"Father? Father?"

After calling twice and failing to wake the old king, the princess could only hold onto the old king's iron head and hurried back toward the direction of the royal chambers.

Fortunately, the effect of [Slayer of Kings III]'s iron transformation required time to fully activate, and similarly, it needed time to revert back. This left her a window to perform a rescue.

By the time the princess hurriedly returned to the study and reattached the old king's head, the old king's body had not yet fully reverted from the iron transformation. Luckily, he hadn't perished due to a head-body separation.

Phew... Just in time.

Watching the old king whose eyelids still fluttered slightly after reattaching his head, the princess, successful in rescuing her father, finally breathed a sigh of relief. Then she turned her head back, her eyes glancing complexly at Leon.

Even though Leon had placed her in the mirror world, just like [Slayer of Kings III] could read part of her memories, the princess Veronica, turned into a doll, could see everything [Slayer of Kings III] experienced.

This time, had Leon not arrived in time, once the power of [Slayer of Kings III] spread, all members of the royal family, including the old king, would have been slaughtered, but...

His malice toward his own father was indeed quite considerable.

Previously he insisted on tying his father's head to his waist, which could barely be justified as wanting to protect his father from harm by keeping him close. But had it not been for her urging just now, he would really have feigned ignorance until the abnormal power completely dissipated.

And her father and Leon had never even met before, the only possible reason for Leon's great malice towards him could only be because of her matter. In other words, Leon likely did this to "eliminate obstacles" for her, with the root cause lying with herself...

It's quite a headache...

...

"Leon..."

Noticing that Leon shifted his gaze away, avoiding eye contact after perceiving her stare, the princess Veronica couldn't help but instruct helplessly:



"My father indeed has many... shortcomings, but ultimately he is my father, and he used to treat me well, so no matter what happens in the end, I still hope he can be okay... Can you?"

"Mm-hmm."

Nodding in agreement, Leon, realizing he couldn't kill the old king, answered with some insincerity:

"An abnormal incident breaking out in the palace already counts as a failure of the local branch. If the king were to die as well, our director would definitely go mad, so I also hope your father can be okay."

"..."

I seriously doubt you...

Hearing this response, one-tenth genuine and ninety-nine parts insincere, the princess couldn't help but shake her head speechlessly and decided to skip this topic entirely, instead asking worriedly:

"Leon, shouldn't you be in a meeting right now? How's things going over at the parliament? Also, what about Joshua?"

Joshua... While you're over here playing the father game, he's probably over there playing the mother game, but he shouldn't be in any danger, right?

"Joshua should be fine, you'll see him soon enough. As for the parliament..."

After answering Joshua's question, with the armed coup basically a success, Leon, in a good mood, smiled and confidently promised:

"Rest assured, I have things in parliament under control, guaranteed no problems!"

"That's good."

Unaware that Leon's "under control" meant detaining the dissenting members, and thinking he merely advanced a few proposals according to the original plan, smoothly and steadily.

Upon hearing that "everything's normal" in parliament, Princess Veronica couldn't help but exhale deeply. With the worry lifted from her heart, she couldn't help but grasp Leon's hand, and said with some guilt:

"Leon, you've really had a rough time these days. I... I'm sorry, I've talked to you about so many different things, asked about both the parliament and Joshua, but haven't asked if you were hurt.

Even until now, I haven't thanked you properly for saving me once again... Leon, do you... do you think I'm being overly selfish?"

"No."

Shaking his head, Leon patted the back of her hand and replied earnestly:

"You and I are not the same, you have too many responsibilities and things to handle. At times like this, first making sure of the situation is the right thing to do, and it's what you should do.

Besides, whether I'm hurt, you can see clearly, there's no need to ask further, and thanks aren't necessary. Whether you say these things or not makes no difference to me."

"..."

Alright then...

After listening to Leon's answer, Princess Veronica couldn't help but bite her lip, then sighed helplessly in her heart.

I thought you would say something like "between us, there's no need for thanks." or "it's okay, people always care last about those close to them," but it turned out to be such an answer...

...

"Mmm..."

Just as the princess, unwilling, grasped Leon's hand in return, preparing to say something more, the iron-transformed palace finally returned to normal, and the iron covering the old king completely faded away, causing him to open his eyes, slightly confused.

"I... where am I?"

"Father..."

Seeing the old king's entire body huddled on the wheelchair, even his once straight spine now drooped, appearing old and helpless, Princess Veronica called out once and then pressed her lips together, remaining silent.

When the old king came to his senses and moved his body a bit, his gaze suddenly sharpened, and he straightened up from the wheelchair, glaring at the princess as he questioned sharply:

"Why are you here? Where is Joshua? What are you planning to do?"

"..."

Oh my... I previously thought Joshua's annoying demeanor came entirely from the queen, but it seems your father's no innocent party either!

Listening to the ill-natured tone of the old king's successive questions, Leon couldn't help but click his tongue. Then, catching the princess before she could answer, he responded with a grim look:

"An abnormality just ran rampant; your head got chopped off. You were about to be finished off.

But it just so happened that I was about to... about to bring Joshua back to find someone, and when I discovered something was wrong, I resolved the rampant abnormality. Veronica reattached your head, so you didn't die... Any other questions?"

"..."

An abnormality ran rampant... my head... so it wasn't a dream?

After hearing Leon's words, the old king, whose eyes were a bit unfocused, finally fully retrieved his pre-coma memories, recalling his conversation with the "iron princess."

"Veronica..."

Seeing the princess before him gazing at him with mixed emotions, her expression both disappointed and distant, the old king remained silent for a moment before averting his eyes and sighed lightly.

"I'm sorry, I'm not a good father."

Unsure whether he was affected by something that the iron princess said or if he was emotionally overwhelmed after being struck, the old king, usually cold-faced and even colder at heart, rarely showed a sign of fatherly love and remarked softly:

"In the past, I wronged you. If you don't want to marry, then don't. Once Joshua ascends to the throne, I will order him to treat you well."

"..."

Chapter 516: Scheming Runs in the Family

You're thinking bullshit!

Hearing the rare "true sentiment" from the old King, the princess pressed her lips together in silence, while Leon almost burst out laughing.

Despite knowing the old King had been unconscious early on and was unaware of the current situation, his words still managed to escalate the comedic effect to its peak.

At present, the rebels under his command... ahem... the enthusiastic citizens inspired by the princess, had basically taken control of the palace and were confiscating the weapons from the guards.

Meanwhile, the opposing members of parliament were caught neatly by the spatial anomaly holders from the rebels when they left the parliament and boarded their respective carriages. Who knows where they are, maybe tucked away in some small dark room.

It could be said that there were only a few people left in the capital whose words counted now. At least in the coming days, the upper-echelon power will be in a complete vacuum, allowing for an easy takeover.

Although a few streets away, the arriving guard army, which consisted of the old King's staunch confidants who only followed his orders and still held heavy firepower, couldn't theoretically be stopped by the "enthusiastic citizens" with their military academy dropout level, there was still a possibility of a comeback.

But now, with the old King, Queen, and Prince in our hands, how could the guard army make a comeback?

By then, hanging those three outside the palace gates, if they have the guts, they could fire the cannon; they'd face a court-martial for killing one, immediate execution for killing two, and if they killed all three, the princess would directly ascend to the throne!

In summary, this game of chess is completely checkmated.

Now, instead of ordering Joshua to be nicer to Veronica, it might be better to consider carefully which kind of monkey should be chosen for him to marry, a slim one or a plump one.

...

?!!

From the princess's silent demeanor, sensing something amiss, the old King's pupils suddenly narrowed, the slight warmth on his face quickly disappeared, and with a somber brow, he questioned:

"Veronica? What have you done?"

"Father."

Not answering the old King's question, the princess, after a moment of silence, directly met the old King's fierce, vengeful yet slightly panicked gaze, responding calmly:

"I will be a good King."

"..."

"Furthermore, in light of what you just said, I'll treat Joshua well; if the finance minister doesn't act rashly, I won't do anything to the Queen either. You can rest assured in retirement."

"..."

Hearing the princess's words and looking into her eyes, which were calm yet concealing sadness, the old King's lips moved slightly, seemingly wanting to say something, but in the end, he didn't, just turned his head and whispered:

"Sorry."

"There's nothing to apologize for, haven't you always been this way?"

The princess bit her lip, pushed the old King's wheelchair out of the study, handed it to the waiting lady outside, instructed her to take the old King to rest, and then stood by the blown-open window by Leon, staring blankly downwards.

"Veronica?"

Noticing the princess's mood seemed off, not like the joy of successfully seizing the throne, nor the relaxation after achieving a goal, but with a tinge of sorrow, Leon couldn't help but ask softly:

"What's wrong?"

"I... I'm actually fine..."

Hearing Leon's query, the princess bit her lower lip, then with slightly reddened eyes, she smiled and said:

"Just a bit regretful."

"Regretful?"

"Yes, regretful."

She reached out and held onto the edge of the broken windowsill, and facing the cold wind blowing in, she murmured softly with a hint of loneliness:

"Regret that the only family I care about, from beginning to end, never acknowledged my feelings, wanting me to agree to something, yet never willing to open their mouth to discuss with me, instead playing tricks before me."

"?"

"You don't really think my father said that because he couldn't see the situation, do you?"

Looking at Leon, who was bewildered, Princess Veronica sighed softly, saying:

"Even though he was unconscious, not knowing you had already taken control of the palace, after waking up to find you and me instead of the Queen and Joshua waiting by his side, he should have guessed part of the situation.

And he knows my character well, seeing I wasn't busy dealing with the aftermath of the coup but waiting for him to wake up here, he understood we had completely controlled the situation, and Joshua had no chance to ascend.

The old King knew?

Hearing the princess's words, Leon was slightly stunned, then instinctively frowned.

If the old King had guessed the situation, then why did he still speak of treating the princess well when Joshua ascended... wait!

"Seems you've figured it out too."

Seeing Leon's dawning realization, Veronica smiled, then, her eyes slightly reddened, she said self-deprecatingly:

"This is how the royal family shows affection. He feared I'd take a harsh hand against Joshua upon ascending, so with his 'control of the situation,' he pretended not to see through it and deliberately said that.



Although only lip service, given that Joshua could treat me well as his sister upon ascending, naturally, after I ascend, I should also show some compassion; after all, I couldn't be seen as lesser than Joshua, right?"

"..."

So... the old King was playing a trick, knowing Joshua had lost, he deliberately pretended to be oblivious, using his words to bind Veronica, hoping to spare his son's life?

Understanding the old King's intention, Leon finally understood why the princess felt sad, but he didn't know what to say to comfort her, so he stood by the window with her for a while.

Soon, a cold hand reached over, grasping Leon's hand, gently shaking it in a pleading manner.

"Leon..."

Seeing Leon looking over, the princess, tears glistening in her eyes, softly requested:

"Not to trick you, I feel a bit upset now, could you let me lean on you?"

"Alright..."

"Thank you."

Leaning on Leon's shoulder, facing the cold wind blowing in from outside the window, the princess said mournfully:

"Actually, I am not disappointed about father playing tricks on me. I've long since been accustomed to these; what truly saddens me is that even now, he refuses to ask me a single favor."

"Ask you?"

"Yes, implore me as true family does, once, willfully."

She shrunched a bit more into Leon's embrace, biting her lips, she whispered:

"It's not that I want him to beg me lowly for my own satisfaction, but for someone like my father, anything he can utilize, he'd exploit to the utmost.

If he thought it useful to beg me, he wouldn't hesitate to do so, the only reason he didn't do it is because he feels this father-daughter bond between us holds no value, is not a good 'card' to play."

"Perhaps not necessarily..."

Seeing the princess's eyes redden more, Leon couldn't help trying to console her:

"Your father... maybe just doesn't know how you feel about him, believing you don't value him as a father, so he was unwilling to speak up and ask."

"That's not it."

The princess shook her head, saying:

"Although my father doesn't know my feelings towards him, he certainly understands how he perceives me as his daughter, and in such a short time, he can only subconsciously measure my feelings to his by how he feels about me.

Since he made this decision in the end, it proves that in his mind, he indeed thinks our father-daughter relationship is worthless, choosing to play tricks and trap me with words rather than pleading emotionally.

To me, he's the only family I care about, but to him, I am just a stranger. Playing the emotional card is a privilege only between family, and between him and me, it's always been about benefits and gains.

"..."

"Sorry for rambling on about this..."

With a low sigh, the princess looked through the broken window, watching Joshua, hugging the awakening Queen and crying bitterly outside the garden, and said mournfully:

"Actually, I am really jealous of Joshua.

He's reckless, irritable, arrogant, immature, likes to squander... has many bad habits, but our father indeed loves this son, he also has a mother who loves him very much, and an uncle who forgives him no matter what mistakes he makes.

I did everything better than him, handled everything perfectly, had countless people willing to praise me, but since my mother passed, no one ever showed such unconditional favoritism towards me."

"..."

"Leon..."

Gently pulling Leon's collar, leaning in his arms, the princess looked up with teary eyes, softly asking:

"Would you be that person for me?"

Chapter 517: You Can't Possibly...

Am I willing to be that person for you?

Listening to the princess's hopeful inquiry and feeling the atmosphere that had been perfectly set, Leon couldn't help but twitch the corner of his mouth, feeling as if he had fallen into a trap once again.

Although the princess's words were sincere without a trace of falsehood, and even the soul vision of the black ram couldn't find any flaw, upon careful reflection, he felt that things were progressing a bit too rapidly.

Originally, he just wanted to comfort her slightly because she seemed a bit sad, to chat with her a bit, but as they talked, things suddenly escalated crazily.

From the moment she stood by the window, to holding hands, leaning on his shoulder, and then snuggling into his arms before he could even react, they were suddenly hugging each other.

While the experience wasn't bad, it did feel a bit like he was... well... like a naïve little flower coaxed by an old player, leaving him somewhat panicked...

...

"Uh... do you want to calm down a bit?"

Glancing at his left hand, which had been pulled and unknowingly wrapped around the princess's waist, Leon awkwardly bluffed:

"You're not in a very stable mood right now, and your decisions aren't rational. So maybe you should wait until..."

"I won't wait!"

After forcing Leon's hand back to her waist, the princess gazed at him stubbornly and said,

"You always want to escape from me, and I finally caught you once. If I let you run away this time only to get caught in someone else's net, I'll definitely regret it in the future!"

"..."

What do you mean by someone else's net... you're not even pretending now, are you?

"It's still too sudden."

Faced with the queen-level master fisher's fierce hook, Leon struggled desperately,

"Don't make choices on a whim; matters of love should take more time to get to know each other..."

"See, you admit there's love between us."

"..."

"Also, you said we should get to know each other better, so you better keep your word~"

"..."

I shouldn't have even opened my mouth!

Realizing the terrifying level gap between himself and the princess in debating, Leon decisively discarded the topic and argued helplessly,

"I already called off the engagement before..."

"A verbal cancellation doesn't count."

The princess snuggled closer into Leon's embrace, then smiled contently within the comforting warmth and replied,

"Such a big matter can't be settled with just a casual remark, right? We should at least notify the elders first."

"And your father..."

"He's listening to me now, and I don't agree to call off the engagement."

"..."

"The few elders left in the Ryan Family, they need to report to me regularly about the military department's affairs. Should I help you ask them?"

"..."

No need, the result of your inquiry would naturally be disagreement, so let's not bother those old folks...

Shaking his head speechlessly, Leon tried to remind,

"Veronica, you've basically succeeded in your coup now. Even without the support of the Ryan Family or a seat in the House of Lords, you can definitely stabilize the situation. So why insist on this engagement?"

Hearing Leon's words, the princess blinked her eyes, then gently pinched his side, teasingly saying,

"You're so bad~"

"???"

"You know what I'll say, yet you still ask... If you must hear it, it's because I think, even without all those extras, I want you to be my prince."

Seeing Leon's somewhat puzzled expression, the princess raised her hand to touch his cheek, then pouted slightly, grumbling,

"Don't look down on the fact that I'm so eager towards you yet always neglected by you, but those trying to pursue me are at least a hundred times more than those pursuing you... No! At least a thousand times!

But what they're after is either my princess status, the wealth I can mobilize, the people I can command, the resources at my disposal, or my beauty; I can see what they want at a glance.

But you're the only one who wants nothing, not even expecting anything from me after the engagement. When you're with me, there's no ulterior motive at all. If it were you, what would you choose?"

"..."

Hearing the princess's words, Leon's cheek couldn't help but twitch slightly.

Though the words made sense, the feeling of déjà vu...

There's this weird feeling like some old-school overbearing CEO lifting the chin of a sweetie pie with a smug face saying, "Woman, the reason I like you is that you don't care about my money"...

"Of course, the most frustrating thing about you is that you want nothing... not even really wanting me."

With a slightly troubled sigh, the princess couldn't help but pinch Leon gently before continuing with a smile,

"But I am confident that you'll want it sooner or later, um... like you just said, more interaction, more nurturing, I'm in no rush~"

"..."

"By the way, since we have to interact more... when are you planning to move in?"

???

Wait, were we talking about this? How did you steer the conversation here?

"Also, once you move in, we should consider the wedding..."

"Stop!"

Feeling that if he didn't back out, even the wedding date would be set in a haze, Leon quickly withdrew his hand, nervously saying,

"I have things to do. Um... the parliamentarians we arrested earlier still haven't been dealt with, so I'll be leaving first!"

"Oh~"

Looking at Leon, who was driven to a panicked state by her, the princess couldn't help but smile triumphantly, then pouted, pretending to be aggrieved,

"Then you must... Hmm? Wait! You arrested parliamentarians?"

"Indeed, we did arrest a few."

Seeing the topic finally diverge, Leon couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief, admitting openly,

"Wasn't Joshua attending the meeting on your behalf? So I followed him to oversee the session."



You know, this time the two major proposals in the parliament are crucial, but I'm also a bit worried about your safety here, so I sped things up slightly and arrested some of the more aggressive dissenting parliamentarians."

Upon hearing Leon arrested parliamentarians, the princess was initially a bit angry, but when she heard "worried about your safety," her heart suddenly melted, erasing any lingering irritation, and she could only say with a helpless glance,

"So you didn't have them arrested during the meeting, right?"

"No."

Leon shook his head, saying,

"I had people ambush outside, and arrested them after they stormed out early because I forcibly passed the proposals."

Arresting them after their exit... that's somewhat acceptable.

Upon hearing Leon's explanation, the princess breathed a slight sigh of relief, then remarked a bit wearily,

"Being provoked to storm out early... those who more fiercely oppose me and have a violent temper, capable of storming out, should be Marquis Mori, Earl Evans, and Count Pavna. Did you arrest all three?"

Marquis Mori? Earl Evans? Count Pavna?

Recalling these three names, Leon vaguely remembered.

These were the ones who threw a shoe and knocked out the Minister of Finance, whom he had guards arrest; the one he forced to bow with [Migratory Thrush Prince], ending up fainting on his desk; and the

one who intended to impeach him, only to be counter-impeached and carried away along with the podium.

It seems that although the princess wasn't present, she was well aware of the situation in the bicameral parliament, and these three were indeed the most aggressive dissenting parliamentarians.

"No, I didn't arrest those three."

Once identifying who these three were, Leon shook his head,

"I arrested the other opposing parliamentarians, aside from those three."

The rest?

The princess was a bit puzzled upon hearing this, asking,

"Meaning who? Parliamentarian Brocash? Parliamentarian Klose?"

"Just the rest."

"I know you mean the rest, but there are at least about sixty more dissenting parliamentarians; you didn't apprehend them all, did you?"

"..."

Chapter 518: Don't Ask—It's All Aquarius's Conspiracy

Commentators News: "Outrageous! Numerous members suspected to be kidnapped, the police department accused of serious misconduct!"

Daily News: "Palace attacked! His Majesty frightened and resting, plans for the princess's early accession"

Royal Mail News: "Duke of Lionheart loyally saves the day, His Majesty praises: Pillar of the nation, my worthy son-in-law"

Corner Alley News: "Two major military and political bills simultaneously passed, upper echelons of the Kingdom may face a major reshuffle"

The Sun News: "Exclusive Interview - Finance Minister: I blinked my eyes, click! The throne was gone!"

The Sun News: "Correction, coup is a rumor, former Finance Minister: I was just jealous for a moment, will publicly apologize soon"

"..."

After reading the headlines of newspapers accumulated during the few days he was on a business trip to the dream realm, the red-haired director couldn't help but suspiciously pull open the drawer and glance at the calendar inside.

Good heavens... was I really gone for just a week? Not a month? How could so much have happened in these few days?

"Leon!"

Slamming the desk hard, the red-haired director squinted and shouted:

"About what happened these days, don't you think you owe me an explanation?"

"Uh..."

Noticing that the director seemed genuinely a bit angry, Leon, standing at the desk, hesitated for a moment, then tentatively explained:

"These past few days... should be considered a good thing, right?"

Director, look, an unknown organization took advantage of your absence to attack the palace intending to slaughter the royal family. This is a serious provocation against you, our Virgo branch, and even the entire Clean-up Bureau!

And I, representing our Virgo branch, arrived just in time, and after a tough battle, not only saved the royal family but also ensured no casualties throughout the process. The royal family even wrote a letter of thanks to the main bureau, isn't that great?"

"Stop pretending with me!"

Amused by Leon's answer, the red-haired director lowered his voice, gritting his teeth as he said:

"You might fool the main bureau with this, but not me!"

Who exactly do the remaining abnormal entity holders among the rebels listen to, you know it very well yourself! If you ask me, you damn sure led them to kidnap parliament members first, and then led the group to attack the palace to help the princess seize the throne!

As for this so-called unknown organization, either you discovered their plot in advance but didn't report it, or you knew nothing about their existence and just happened to run into them during your operation! Am I right?"

"..."

Good heavens, and you say you can't read minds?

"Ahem, no, director, you really misunderstood."

Seeing the anger about to overflow from his own director's pretty fox eyes, Leon couldn't help but blink, then vigorously denied:

"They're rebels, wanting them to take risks with me, of course, requires negotiation, and their condition was having me help kidnap the parliament members. If you don't believe me, ask them, they truly demanded so.

The main issue was the shortage of staff in the bureau at the time, and the situation was incredibly urgent. On one side was the palace being attacked, with the royal family about to be killed, and on the other just kidnapping a few parliament members, I didn't really have a choice, did I?"

"Then how did you know the royal family would have issues?"

"My ability is forced intelligence acquisition, obtained from those influenced by my ability."

"And how do you explain leading people to attack the palace?"

"No choice, that thing's ability controls those in the Kingdom with lower status than herself, only rebels could avoid being controlled by her."

"What about the abnormal entity that released the ability?"

"It was silenced by the other side."

"The remains?"

"Just ashes left, I have them in a can, if the bureau wants to see, they can take it anytime."

"The princess and the old King over there..."

"Fatherly love, filial piety, very good relationship, any investigator can ask, ensuring the old king genuinely wants to abdicate."

"..."

Good heavens, you're something else!

Having asked all the suspicious points he could think of, only to find them all tightly covered, the red-haired director couldn't help but roll his eyes, then said with a bad mood:

"Fine, I'll consider it my misjudgment! When the bureau's investigator comes down, remember to say the same, otherwise, if you're exposed, don't come to me asking for help!"

"Sure thing~"

"And also!"

Seeing Leon slightly relax after finishing the account, the red-haired director frowned and couldn't help but remind:

"Make sure this doesn't happen again! You were purely lucky this time! If you hadn't encountered that abnormal entity, or if it was beyond your ability to handle, what would you do then?"

"If it was unsolvable, I would instantly come back to call for help or find the things you left, director. I have a double Undying Body; I could probably still survive. As for if I hadn't encountered the abnormal entity this time..."

Realizing that his words could deceive the main bureau but not the director, Leon thought for a moment, then admitted frankly:

"Then I wouldn't act, would I? It was the rebels kidnapping parliament members and attacking the royal family; what does it have to do with me, a third-level Cleaner? Besides, there's no need to worry about them being dealt with afterward either.

Once the princess takes power, she certainly won't pursue it, and by regulations in the bureau, criminals who have committed serious offenses can join the Clean-up Bureau, working off their crimes by clearing abnormal entities, isn't this a win-win?"

"You sure have thought it through."

With a somewhat dissatisfied hum, the red-haired director snorted and said:

"What if I report to the upper levels, or if someone in the main bureau insists on thoroughly investigating the abnormal entity holders among the rebels, what will you do then?"

"That would be an Aquarius conspiracy!"

Upon hearing the red-haired director's question, Leon, who already had an excuse prepared before acting, immediately replied decisively:

"They didn't get their abnormal entities from me; it was all orchestrated by Aquarius Director, so I can't be blamed. Moreover, a few nights ago, Aquarius Director even attacked Prince Joshua's dream, which I managed to fend off, and that has also been reported.

By linking these two matters, we have every reason to conclude that Aquarius Director, having regained power, has become increasingly cruel, even planning to target the royal family!

Fortunately, director, you were ahead of the game, sending me to infiltrate the rebels early, gaining the trust of many rebel members and guiding them onto the right path, bringing a number of talents to our bureau.

As for the palace attack, that was purely to lure Aquarius Director out, to rid the bureau of a major threat. However, Aquarius Director was too cunning, sensing something was amiss and not taking the bait."

"..."

Good heavens... If I'm willing to cooperate, this explanation might just barely make sense...

"And also."

Seeing the red-haired director seemingly lost in thought, Leon couldn't resist continuing:

"As for whether the old king's abdication will raise suspicion within the bureau, actually there's no need to worry. After all, he surely won't hold an abdication ceremony anytime soon; he definitely needs time to recuperate, so a coup is out of the question.

Moreover, he's been vigorously supporting the princess's reforms for over six years, the previous trend was always about the princess's accession. How could it suddenly shift to the prince's accession? Besides, Joshua couldn't handle the king's duties even if he wanted to, there's clearly an issue!

Considering the fact that Aquarius Director infiltrated Joshua's dreams, we have reasonable suspicion that Aquarius Director isn't doing this for the first time, the old king might've been influenced by Aquarius Director without realizing it, so we're merely righting the wrongs, it can't be deemed as against the rules."

"..."

You truly are a talent! Even if the main bureau went insane and forcibly opened the headquarters' lockdown, bringing out the abnormal entity capable of reversing time, it might not even convict you.

Based on your reasoning, no amount of evidence would matter; if asked, you could just profess your unwavering loyalty, whereas the true intentions behind your actions would only be known to your own internal worm.



"By the way, director."

Seeing the red-haired director's mouth twitch slightly, appearing speechless, Leon cautiously opened his mouth to remind:

"Not only did we preemptively thwart Aquarius' plot, but we also uncovered a nefarious organization plotting maliciously, completely neutralized a True God level abnormal entity, ensured the royal family members' safety, and even recruited quite a few talents into the bureau.

So no matter how you look at it, we must firmly request commendations from the bureau!"

Chapter 519: Four-Sevenths

You actually have the audacity to request merit recognition?

Upon hearing Leon's proposal, the red-haired director felt a wave of toothache.

Although Leon's reasoning was nearly flawless and, upon close consideration, he did have the qualifications to request merit recognition, most people would try to keep a low profile after making so many mistakes, hoping not to attract attention. Who would think to request merit recognition?

Also, if you remember, just over two months ago, when this little rascal had just joined, he was so shy about getting an extra duty allowance, acting all embarrassed about benefiting from the bureau. I even had to personally teach him how to reasonably tap into the bureau's funds.

And now, not even three months later, he's seamlessly become a standard smooth operator, even capable of high-level maneuvers like turning a funeral into a celebration. Where on earth did he learn this from?

"Director?"

After not seeing the red-haired director respond, Leon blinked, figuring she might be grappling with her inner feelings, and tentatively tried to persuade her:

"This incident was beneficial to the Kingdom: the royal family ensured their safety, the princess got the opportunity to showcase her talents, the Kingdom gained a wise King, and ordinary people obtained a more hopeful future.

As for the Clean-up Bureau, we averted a crisis without causing casualties; we uncovered a conspiracy, helping to maintain stability; and simultaneously displayed great prowess, deterring potential wrongdoers. Whichever way you look at it, it's a win-win situation.

Since so many people benefited and gained a better future, the minor 'roughness' in the operation really isn't a problem... This is called keeping things separate, and it was you who taught me that~"

"..."

Oh, it turns out I taught him that, so never mind then.

"Alright."

Rolling her eyes, the red-haired director looked at the slick Leon, feeling somewhat speechless:

"Then go back and complete the paperwork, and once you've finished, I'll submit it for you to request merit recognition."

"Thank you, Director!"

Realizing that he had completely passed this hurdle, Leon couldn't help but smile, then he pulled out a folder and handed it over.

"I've already prepared the materials; could you help check them?"

"..."

Seeing the merit recognition materials on her desk, the red-haired director's lips couldn't help but twitch.

Really... I had just made the decision, and you can pull this out directly? Did you prepare a bit too thoroughly?

"And these, these two are reimbursement requests, the blue cover is for the Kingdom, the purple cover is for the bureau."

With the red-haired director looking a bit dumbfounded, Leon pulled out two more documents and said with a serious face:

"In the defense of the royal palace, not only did I lose a precious abnormal artifact, but those 500 or so enthusiastic citizens who participated in the operation also prepared for several days.

They not only funded weapons themselves but also pooled resources to buy trucks to block roads, dug up roadbeds overnight, and monitored the palace conditions... In short, it was a really tough few days.

Moreover, those people aren't financially well-off, many don't have proper jobs, their economic situation is not great, so I thought the Kingdom should at least reimburse them a bit, to avoid them taking a loss."

"..."

While what you said isn't exactly wrong... but asking the Kingdom to reimburse you for the costs of your rebellion? Can you be any more outrageous?

After taking the two reimbursement files, the red-haired director couldn't help but ask:

"I can help you submit it... but I have no control over the Kingdom's side; I can't guarantee it will pass."

"No worries, I've already discussed it with the princess. As long as you submit it, it'll definitely go through."

Oh right, that part too.

Casually putting away the reimbursement documents, the red-haired director couldn't help but curiously ask:

"You have a marriage agreement with the princess; it shouldn't be hard to meet her in person. Why not submit it yourself?"

"..."

Upon hearing the red-haired director's question, it was Leon's turn to twitch his lips.

Sure, I could submit them, but ever since the princess shrugged off the 'suppression' over her head, she seems to have become even more uninhibited. I feel like if I submit them, it might develop into 'Your Highness, you don't want your subordinates not getting their reimbursements, do you?'

...

"As for me... well... having just stormed the palace after all, it's better to avoid seeing her too much for now to dodge suspicion... Oh, Director!"

Spinning a reason he couldn't even believe himself, Leon barely managed to muddle through, then proactively steered the conversation, his expression tinged with curiosity:

"Did you gain anything from your trip to the dream realm?"

"Indeed I did!"

Although she knew Leon was clearly dodging the issue, the red-haired director couldn't help but smile with pride upon hearing his question.

"The gains were substantial!"

Hmm? Sounds like there's good news?

Hearing this, Leon raised an eyebrow, somewhat excitedly asking:

"Did you find where Aquarius's physical form is sleeping in the dream realm?"

"Uh... not quite."

The smile on the red-haired director's face slightly faded, and after a slight cough, she said:

"But I did capture his most loyal subordinate, so it wasn't a wasted trip... Oh, and you know her, it's that female reporter named Nicole."

Nicole?

Upon hearing this familiar name, Leon pondered for a moment, then his eyes slightly lit up.

"I recall the Black Goat's Tail is with her? Since you caught her, doesn't that mean..."

"Exactly, just as you thought."

The red-haired director said with a playful smile:

"Congratulations, with this tail, plus the horn, heart, and stomach from before, you've already assembled four-sevenths of the goat's components. Soon you can awaken this near-god-level demon."

Yes, yes.

Hearing this, Leon nodded a bit excitedly, realizing that what once seemed unattainable, the Seven Goat Components, had come together so quickly that now thinking about it...

Doesn't seem that impressive?

Reviewing what he owned, the joy on Leon's face slightly diminished.

For a rookie like him, the Goat Components Suite was obviously excellent, but compared to things like the [Unfair Snake Pact], Hand of Screams, Lust Dream Invader, which worked even on deities, the Seven Goat Components Set exhausting only 60 points of Contamination Value seemed somewhat paltry.

Although the abilities like Endless Blood Battle, Arouse Wrath, Domination Substitute Death were practical, the Goat Components themselves were merely 'near-god' level, and Goat Whip had exploded before, uncertain if it was fixed, making its potential appear limited.

"Hmm?"

Glancing at Leon's expression, the red-haired director blinked her foxy eyes with a hint of amusement:

"What? Now that you have better abnormal artifacts, the silly goat doesn't meet your standards anymore?"

"Uh..."

"No worries, it's perfectly normal to feel that way."

Seeing Leon appearing a bit bashful, the red-haired director crossed her legs, then said with a playful smile:

"Back then, I was much like you. After acquiring the [Slaughter Blood Hair], I realized most of my anomaly artifacts weren't as powerful.

Moreover, the effects of [Slaughter Blood Hair] are quite comprehensive: perception, defense, confinement, destruction... Every issue I encountered, none were unsolvable with it, and over time, I grew accustomed to relying on it for solutions.

Thanks to [Slaughter Blood Hair]'s unparalleled destructive power, any entity with a physical body was no match for me. Within the Clean-up Bureau, aside from the director who could command Sunshadow, and Aries board member who mastered Destruction Secret Technique, no third person dared claim to have a guaranteed victory against me."

Pausing briefly here, the red-haired director then earnestly stated:

"But my most important anomaly artifact is actually... hmm... never mind, it's kind of complicated to explain, you should just come over and touch it yourself instead."

## Chapter 520: Thirty-Two Defenses

At this point, the red-haired director sitting in the chair stood up, propping both hands on the table and leaning toward Leon, then opened her mouth.

"Ah..."

Ah?

Looking at the tender red tip of the tongue exposed between the two rows of pearly white teeth, Leon momentarily felt a little dumbfounded.

According to logic, shouldn't you explain your journey and use your experience to tell me that there are no useless abnormal objects, only useless cleaners, so I shouldn't look down on the Black Goat? Why did you inexplicably open your mouth?

"Nya! Flower God what da?"

"You mean... you want me to reach in and touch it?"

"Mm-hmm!"

So that's it!

Finally understanding, Leon nodded and then, according to the red-haired director's request, extended his finger and lightly tapped the tip of her tongue, which was as lively as a little snake and as tender as chive leaves.

However, nothing happened.

"?"

What are you randomly poking at? I want you to feel my teeth!

Receiving Leon's puzzled look, the red-haired director rolled her eyes impatiently, then gently tilted her head and voluntarily bit Leon's finger that had reached into her mouth.

"Sss..."

In the familiar noise, a string of information popped up one after another, unfurling before Leon's eyes.

...



[Name: Second Guard御 (Protection, Activation, Concealment)]

[Appearance: A white hard incisor, with a glossy and bright enamel, not only has it not been decayed, but no trace of wear is found]

[Abilities: Flesh and blood protection, temporary enhancement, anomaly disturbance immunity]

[Cost: Completely lose the original tooth, both the flesh body and the soul, permanently retaining the corresponding defect]

[File: To ensure the safety of anomaly number 004 "Twelve Ant Nests," the Director of Taurus, on her own initiative, prepared to gather the secret techniques of Taurus, Aquarius, Capricorn, and Sagittarius palaces, to collectively create a set of defensive anomaly objects.

This set of anomaly objects is based on the Aquarius Palace's "Anomaly Creation" secret technique, strengthened by the Sagittarius Palace "Anomaly Reinforcement" secret technique for defense effects, the Capricorn Palace "Anomaly Concealment" secret technique adds the disturbance immunity trait, and was finally completed through the Taurus Palace "Anomaly Forge" secret technique.

After thirty-two days of effort, the four directors ultimately created thirty-two defensive anomaly objects, named "Thirty-Two御," held by the Clean-up Bureau's Virgo Division Chief Olivia, and it continues to this day...

Note: This anomaly object is one of the "Eight Flesh Guards" of the "Thirty-Two御," specifically guarding the body, as the Second Guard.

[Evaluation: An extremely tough defensive anomaly object, though the effect is very singular, after targeted reinforcement by the Sagittarius secret technique, in a normal state, it is enough to resist the majority of physical attacks.

If activated, while the consumption increases significantly, the protection effect will drastically increase under the Sagittarius secret technique, and due to the Capricorn secret technique's immunity effect, the protection effect of this anomaly object is almost impossible to be weakened by other anomalies.]

[Contamination Value: 3.2 (Inactive) (Whole Set) -32 (Activated) (Whole Set)]

...

[Name: Sixth Knowledge Guard御 (Protection, Activation, Concealment)]

[Appearance: A white hard incisor...]

[Abilities: Cognitive enhancement...]

[...]

[Contamination Value: ...]

...

[Name: Tenth Soul Awakening Guard御 (Protection, Activation, Concealment)]

[Appearance: A white hard canine...]

[Abilities: Soul revival...]

[...]

[Contamination Value: ...]

...

What the—?!

Seeing the anomaly information popping up like a barrage, Leon couldn't help but widen his eyes in shock, touching the red-haired director's molar in disbelief:

"All 32 of your teeth... are defensive anomaly objects?"

Heh, heh, how about that? Surprised?

Very satisfied with Leon's shocked expression, the red-haired director raised her eyebrows and said:

"Um-wah-la..."

Tsk, fingers are still in there.

"Ptooeey!"

Letting go of the teeth and tilting her head back, spitting out Leon's finger, the red-haired director took out a handkerchief to wipe the corners of her mouth, then said with a smiling face:

"This set of items, although not numbered, is not any worse than anomalies numbered under thirty. In terms of protection capability alone, it can even easily be in the top three.

At that time, to craft this set of items, not only was the expenditure in the bureau enormous, but I almost handed over all the anomalies I had saved in the past. Yet, the resulting protection level is unparalleled.

With the "Thirty-Two<sup>御</sup>" fully activated, I almost have no weaknesses, even a Four Pillar God with a 70-point Leon Value wouldn't be able to topple me with sneak attacks; it would be forced to endure[Slaughter Blood Hair]'s attacks and go head-to-head with me until I exhaust myself."

"..."

The system's evaluation is spot-on, your set of anomaly objects is genuinely extraordinarily tough...

Recalling the protection effects he touched, and thinking about the scene when those True Gods faced his director, Leon couldn't help but hiss, feeling a sense of despair for them.

This so-called[Thirty-Two御]defensive anomaly object is like thirty-two incredibly solid pieces of armor. Add in the director's almost seventy-point Contamination Value, and defensively, the director is practically an iron fortress... an impregnable gate!

"Leon."

Unaware of her definition, swaying between amphibians and metallic types, the red-haired director looked at Leon's thoughtful expression and gently reminded him:

"I'm telling you all this because I want you to know that although the status of an anomaly is important, the most crucial things are its capabilities and features. As long as you have enough strength and a high Leon Value, even lower-tier anomaly objects can play a significant role in True God-level battles.

Just like my[Thirty-Two御], although each individual piece has a low Leon Value, altogether it only amounts to thirty-two points, but in my hands, it can be tough enough to give all True Gods a headache."

"Similarly, although that stupid sheep is only near God-level, its seven parts each embody an original sin, and its abilities are very outstanding. If used well, it's honestly not bad, which is why I kept that stupid sheep by my side before.

Leon, when you someday have a sixty-point Leon Value, these seven pieces of that stupid sheep could also play a[Thirty-Two御]level of effect, so if they can be collected, they should be collected as much as possible."

"..."

I understand now...

Although the red-haired director spoke somewhat tactfully, Leon still understood the underlying message...

It's not about the sheep being useless, but about the person being unable.

Although the battle record is quite impressive, my current Contamination Value is really too low, and the opponents I face are too fierce, so the sheep parts, despite their excellent abilities, can't affect the target, failing to showcase their effects.

While anomalies like [Unfair Snake Pact] and [Hand of Screams], due to their materials being of True God level, can compulsorily affect True God-level targets with their high status, it doesn't mean they are necessarily more useful than the sheep set. At least, I am not yet in a position to dismiss them.

Hmm... seems like I've been having it too good recently, I seem to have gotten a bit carried away.

After repeatedly admonishing myself internally to maintain my mindset, avoid arrogance, and stay impetuous, Leon took a deep breath and sincerely thanked:

"Thank you, Director, I will definitely keep these words in mind... By the way, where's the sheep's tail now?"

"Still on that female reporter's butt."

Pointing to the storage room diagonally opposite her office, used for storing wine, the red-haired director said with a smile:

"I'm only good at killing demons, not making them listen to me. If you want to obtain that anomaly object, you'll have to negotiate with her butt yourself."