

## I! Cleaner 531

### Chapter 531: A Parent's Love for Their Child

Indeed, the Scarlet Hair Lady arrived quickly. If she had been any later, the two of us might have been completely digested.

Hearing Leon's words, the female journalist nodded and prepared to follow him back the way they came, through the Canine Deity's open mouth. However, they hadn't gone far when Leon stumbled and fell with a splash.

What the...?

Sensing something was wrong, Leon looked down at his legs and helplessly found that both of his legs were almost entirely transparent, barely able to support his body's "weight" anymore.

Come to think of it.

While the Canine Deity was alive, its pitch-black stomach walls constantly secreted digestive juices capable of eroding souls. Just hitting the stomach wall twice with his right hand had turned it more than half transparent.

And since being swallowed by the Canine Deity, his legs had been in contact with the secretions, naturally speeding up the "transparency" process. It's already not bad that they held up this long.

"Let me go first."

After pulling Leon from the ground and seeing his whole soul turn transparent, the female journalist couldn't help shaking her head and said:

"My soul has been digested nearly thirty percent. Your soul's strength is far weaker than mine, probably six to seventy percent digested by now. With your current soul strength, even a scratch from the Canine Deity's teeth would make you disperse on the spot."

"Alright..."

After hearing the female journalist's words, Leon could only reluctantly nod. He then followed her into the spacious esophagus of the Canine Deity.

However, just as he was about to follow the female journalist out of the Canine Deity's throat, she suddenly snapped, pushed back hard with her right foot, and kicked Leon back inside.

???

Wait, what are you doing?

As anger rose in Leon's heart over the unexpected kick, ready to ask what she was doing, he heard the female journalist outside exclaim in shock:

"Aquarius? Why... why are you here?! "

Aquarius?

Upon hearing the female journalist's shout, Leon's mind buzzed, completely thrown into disarray.

So the one coming to rescue wasn't my director but yours?

...

"Nicole..."

Unaware of what was happening inside the Canine Deity's stomach, the Aquarius Director sighed as he looked at the defensive and wary female journalist before him, his youthful eyes showing a hint of weariness.

"You won't even call me director anymore?"

...

Upon hearing the Aquarius Director's question, the female journalist's lips trembled slightly but quickly bit down hard, pressing her lips together without saying a word as she looked at him.

"Forget it, don't call if you don't want to."

Seeing no trace of past closeness, only full of vigilance and wariness, the Aquarius Director sighed again, then instructed somewhat tiredly:

"I'm leaving. When the Scarlet Hair Lady arrives, just say you haven't seen me and know nothing. I used other means to deal with it, and the investigators from the Clean-up Bureau won't find out."

...

"Besides, you don't need to hide information about me."

When the people from the Virgin Branch ask you, just tell the truth. You don't need to worry that this information will affect me because since I had you infiltrate the Royal Capital, all the information you know has been fake.

But in the places pointed by that fake information, as well as the safe house and laboratory you are aware of, I've deliberately left some traces. If the Clean-up Bureau people follow the information to investigate, they will find I just left and even gain some 'key' finds, so no one will suspect you of providing false information."

"Why?"

After hearing the incomplete instructions from the Aquarius Director, the female journalist touched the antler mark on her head, unable to resist asking:

"Director... didn't you set something in my soul for confidentiality, that if I spoke, I would be sent to the Realm of the Dead? Why did you arrange these things then?"

...

The Aquarius Director fell silent for a while and then somewhat helplessly said:

"Nicole, though you're an excellent Cleaner, all your talents lie in dealing with abnormal objects. When it comes to figuring out people, your mind is really not great!

Not to mention, if you'd replaced with that Level 3 Cleaner in the Virgin Branch, he'd probably figure out seventy or eighty percent just by seeing me here, even if I kept my mouth shut."

...

If you're talking about Leon... he's indeed right here, less than two meters away, even able to hear our conversation...

"Forget it, I'll explain it to you."

Seeing the female journalist still full of confusion, worried she'd reveal everything to the Scarlet Hair Lady due to misunderstanding, the Aquarius Director had to sigh and explain:

"To make it clearer... being sent to the Realm of the Dead doesn't necessarily mean death. This journey, though dangerous, is actually good for you.

According to my arrangement, if the Three-Headed Canine Deity hadn't suddenly awakened and inexplicably swallowed you, you'd only have been pulled to the vicinity of [Zangyi Mirror Lake] and stopped, not sent to the depths of the Realm of the Dead.

And when the Scarlet Hair Lady comes, because you're 'almost dead' from betraying me, you'll truly be able to cut ties with me and won't be executed as a traitor by the Clean-up Bureau... Do you understand what I mean?"

Meaning... the director didn't actually plan to kill me?

"You really are..."

Seeing the female journalist seem to grasp something yet still full of doubts, the Aquarius Director had no choice but to remind her further:

"My objective is to replace the Director of Taurus and become the Seatkeeper of the Watcher's Palace. So once I ascend to the Palace, what would be your outcome? Have you thought about it?"

"I..."

"Don't think, I'm not asking you a question—it doesn't matter whether you've thought about it or not. When the time comes, your only outcome will be death, even a fate worse than death."

Shaking his head helplessly, the Aquarius Director continued:

"Take it as twenty years of friendship; I can't bear to see you die so foolishly, so I devised a way to provide a backdoor, ensuring that after I ascend, you can still live foolishly as ever."

After all, anything involving the Watcher's Palace is never a trivial matter. To protect you from being held responsible because of me, an advocate above the rank of Yellow Road Director must plead for you, otherwise your fate will surely be bleak."

At this point, the Aquarius Director paused and then somewhat reluctantly said:

"Although the Scarlet Hair Lady thwarted my plans, I have to admit she truly is a good person. Among those qualified to advocate for you, only she would stand up because 'you're a good person' and vouch for you.

Similarly, although your record is very clean, since you followed me to betrayal, only she and her peculiar Virgin Branch might have room for you as a traitor... Do you understand now?"

"I think I get it... "

"If you understand, hurry back, then insist you know nothing and saw nothing, and don't utter any unnecessary words! The fact that you miraculously survived is already the biggest suspicion. Anything more said will just make things worse!"

Pointing to the Canine Deity's body, the Aquarius Director massaged his temples, slightly annoyed:

"The Scarlet Hair Lady is incredibly cunning; sometimes even that Level 3 Cleaner thinks more than her. With your mind, I don't expect you to keep up the ruse forever. It's enough if you hold out until I ascend.

But they are not hard to deal with. Remember, just keep being your good person; even if they sense something wrong, they certainly won't harm you, possibly even choosing to help you cover it up."

"Okay..."

"Then I'm off... don't forget what I said!"

Seeing the journalist's expression become exceedingly complex after finally understanding his arrangement, the Aquarius Director shook his head, left a reminder, and turned to leave.

But before leaving, he seemed to remember something, suddenly turned back, and stared at the journalist now relieved, asking:

"By the way, there should be another soul that went into the Realm of the Dead with you. Who is that soul?"

## Chapter 532: The Deal

Oh no!

Upon hearing Aquarius Director's inquiry, the female reporter's body stiffened slightly, while chills crept up Leon's spine.

Leon wasn't like the female reporter!

Given the enmity between himself and Aquarius, if Aquarius knew he was there, he would be delighted, then slice him into pieces, grind his bones, sprinkle them into his meal, and even laugh aloud about it someday in Watcher's Palace.

And the female reporter...

Although she intended to cover for him, Aquarius was right about her. With her expertise in this field, trying to protect Leon might be no different than directly selling him out!

'Don't move!'

Realizing that the time for concealment was over, Leon risked exposure by extending his almost invisible right hand to press against the female reporter's waist.

In a place unseen by Aquarius Director, Leon's thoughts and intentions traveled through the tight soul connection, passing from the female reporter's waist into her mind.

'Do what I say! Hesitate first, and then say that another soul was accidentally expelled from its body and entered the Realm of the Dead during interrogation by Scarlet Hair Lady, invited as an expert by the police department. However, its soul was too weak to survive and was already digested by the Canine Deity!'

'Okay...'

After awkwardly adjusting her posture, the female reporter tried hard to control her emotions and relayed Leon's words.

"I see..."

Upon hearing the report from the female journalist, Aquarius Director nodded slightly and, without further questioning, said calmly:

"Nicole, after this meeting, it seems we will be parting ways forever. While there is still time, let me talk to you a little more."

"..."

Hearing Aquarius Director's words, the female reporter couldn't help but clench her fist involuntarily, her mind in turmoil.

Although the Three-Headed Canine Deity is dead, its ability to "digest" souls remains! If this conversation continues, Leon, still enshrouded in unpurged "digestive fluids," will likely suffer, potentially unable to withstand the erosion, leading to his soul's dissolution!

So... should she make up an excuse, tell the director that safety comes first, and suggest that the Scarlet Hair Lady might arrive at any moment, so he should leave first and release Leon?

'No! Absolutely not!'

Through their soul connection, Leon discovered the female reporter's intentions and vigorously halted her:



'You can't fool him this way! He might leave and then sneak back later, which would definitely mean certain death for me! Just nod and lower your head, stay silent!'

"Mm..."

After simultaneously responding to both individuals, the female reporter, feeling restless, pressed her lips together, lowered her head, and fell silent.

Meanwhile, Aquarius Director, receiving the response, spoke with a slight guilt:

"There is something I've never told you... Although I didn't harm your parents, when I found you initially, I actually had the chance to save them. However... I chose not to."

"?!!!"

Upon hearing Aquarius Director's words, the female reporter trembled, raising her head to glare at him intently.

"I'm sorry..."

Not meeting the female reporter's eyes, Aquarius Director closed his eyes momentarily and said with regretful tones:

"Regarding this matter, I have nothing to explain. As for the reason I chose this way, you understand without me elaborating."

"You..."

"I must say, I really regret it now."

He glanced at the female reporter's lips, now white from pressing tightly, and sighed:

"If I had known it would end like today, I probably would have chosen differently back then. But now it's too late to regret; your parents won't come back, and my choice was indeed poor..."

Nicole, although I wanted to leave you with a good impression during our last meeting, if I don't tell you now, these words won't have another moment to be spoken. After much thought, I decided to be honest with you."

"..."

Honesty...

Hearing Aquarius Director's words, the female reporter's fist clenched tighter, wanting so much to confront him. But worried that without her energy concealing it, Leon's soul would be exposed, she suppressed her urge and asked in a hoarse voice:

"Just because... I'm excellent material, potentially producing extraordinary abnormal objects?"

"Yes."

Aquarius Director nodded slightly, his expression void of regret, calmly stating:

"You know, after the last relative's passing, there is nothing left in this world for me aside from the Creation Mystique. My only wish, my final one, is to ascend to Watcher's Palace and see the pinnacle of Abnormal Genesis Sorcery."

"Is the Abnormal Genesis Sorcery that crucial to you?"

Upon hearing this, the female reporter gritted her teeth, then questioned tearfully:

"Even if it means ruining countless lives, betraying the Clean-up Bureau and facing pursuit, potentially in the silent deep space, sitting alone until your soul collapses... Even knowing all this, you don't regret?"

"That's a problem for the future."

Upon hearing this, Aquarius Director blinked, his expression becoming serene:

"In the future, when I'm seated in the deep space, I don't know if I'll regret or not. But if I clearly have the chance and don't seize it to witness the spectacle, I'll start regretting right now."

"..."

"Nicole, you wouldn't understand this feeling."

Looking at the female reporter biting her lip in silence, a trace of intense fervor appeared in Aquarius Director's eyes.

"In this secret technique, my skill surpasses nearly all predecessors, yet falls short comparing to [Watcher's Palace]. Even understanding it proves difficult, as it contradicts everything I've learned and known.

Over the past century, most abnormal objects I've created using the Abnormal Genesis Sorcery have sprung from extreme emotions such as rage, hatred, and fervency.

Yet the ultimate masterpiece of this sorcery, the root of [Watcher's Palace], is love, a kind of non-intense, obvious benevolence and compassion.

If Watcher's Palace is indeed the masterpiece, then I, who started incorrectly yet possess incomparable talent, might never reach the true zenith of this sorcery in my lifetime...

Nicole, do you know how despairing it was for me to realize this?"

"I neither want to know nor care!"

Seeing Aquarius Director's eyes filled with fervor, the female reporter angrily and disappointedly snarled:

"You're nothing but a madman! You're utterly insane!"

"Hmm... perhaps I've indeed gone mad."

Upon hearing this, Aquarius Director fell silent briefly, his ardent emotions slightly diminishing, then seemed to notice something, turned his head back before looking away again, regretfully shaking his head:

"Nicole, I must leave now. Remember my earlier words, only if you keep..."

"Leave! I don't want to see you again!"

"..."

Glancing at the female reporter, Aquarius Director shook his head, turned and stepped away, disappearing quietly beyond the Gate of the Deceased.

As Leon sighed in relief, hesitating whether he should crawl out immediately or wait a moment to guard against Aquarius's sudden return, a light cracking sound came from the skull of the Three-Headed Canine Deity.

Soon, an oddly shaped paper knife easily pierced through the Canine Deity's upper palate, then fell onto Leon with a click, along with a low murmur.

"Let's make a deal."

In Leon's suddenly widened eyes, the thin and sharp paper knife quietly circled to his soul's neck, slicing a small cut.

Then, peculiar characters seeped through this cut, permeating Leon's soul, and transforming into the familiar voice of Aquarius Director.

"I've already ruined my relationship with Nicole, she's now harmless to you all, so I'd like to exchange this knife and your life for her protection from the Virgin Branch... Are you interested in this transaction?"

"..."

### Chapter 533: Turning the Tables

To be honest, I'm not really interested in this so-called transaction, but the biggest problem right now is that I'm damn well forced to be interested...

After feeling the sharp cutting sensation on his neck, Leon fell silent for a moment, then decisively and crisply said, "Hmm."

Although it's not yet certain whether there's anything malicious behind Aquarius Director's deal, the female reporter herself is indeed a good person.

Even if resumes can be forged, personalities can be hidden, and reactions can be faked, all her reactions and soul fluctuations align, indicating they can't be faked. Someone like her being executed by the Clean-up Bureau, just for being implicated with Aquarius, doesn't seem right.

"Very well."

Upon hearing Leon's response, the paper-cutter on his neck finally stopped digging deeper and began to withdraw.

But what Aquarius Director didn't expect was that just as the blade was about to completely leave Leon's neck, a hand suddenly reached up and pressed the paper-cutter back into Leon's neck.

"Don't be in such a hurry to leave."

Having walked on the edge of death, Leon acted as if he wasn't the one nearly killed, pressing the paper-cutter on his neck and using the soul connection to pull it back without hesitation:

"Since you're willing to spare me to save Nicole, wouldn't you consider providing more so she can live better at our bureau?"

"..."

Looking far into the distance at the paper-cutter pressed against by Leon, listening to his question, Aquarius Director, who hadn't left but hid, silently fell into thought.

From a strength perspective, although the other party has some special aspects, he's ultimately just a level-three cleaner. Given the right opportunity, I could kill him dozens, if not hundreds, of times in a single breath.

But this level-three cleaner is the one who repeatedly spoils my plans. Even with countless trump cards and the upper hand, when dealing with him, the situation always slips out of my control, bit by bit...

"Speak."

Looking at the distant, despondent female reporter, Aquarius Director hesitated for a moment before suppressing the urge to go back on his word and spoke through the [Silver Dagger of Cutting]:

"What do you want? Wealth and status should be easily attainable for you. Do you want powerful abnormal objects or a lifespan beyond human limits?"

"None of that, I just want to ask you a few questions."

Upon hearing Aquarius Director's response, Leon couldn't help but secretly breathe a sigh of relief, then continued pressing the knife's blade, a bit impatiently asking:

"Does that tin doll that attacked the palace have anything to do with you?"

"..."

"I just thought about it; it doesn't make sense for it to attack sooner or later, but precisely when the Director was in the Dream Realm. The only one who could possibly know the Director's whereabouts, besides me, is you."

"..."

"Don't try to deny it; this has to be your handiwork!"

Seeing Aquarius Director's continued silence, Leon hurriedly pressed down on the paper-cutter as the blade attempted to withdraw, then continued speaking:

"Before you appeared, I was merely skeptical, but now that you're here, I'm certain Nicole's capture was your deliberate setup.

You definitely wanted to give her a way out while also orchestrating the Director's removal, paving the way for that doll to attack the palace. You and that mysterious organization and the abnormal object known as [Slayer King III] are definitely tied together!"

"Sort of..."

Listening to Leon's unusually confident deduction, Aquarius Director had no choice but to nod and, frowning, replied:

"But I can't answer that question. You saw how that doll died. Joining them meant signing on a contract-type abnormal object.

If I betray and divulge key information, other signatories' powers will converge and use the contract-type abnormal object to crush my flesh and soul completely!"

You'd die if you leaked information?

Upon hearing Aquarius Director's words, Leon's eyebrows raised sharply.

So what you're saying is, as long as I ready a 'forced truth serum' or similar abnormal object, I might trigger that abnormal object's effect and directly eliminate Aquarius Director or other members of the organization?

"Moreover, don't think you can use things like [Scale of Truth] to eliminate me by triggering that abnormal object's effects."

As Leon began pondering a loophole, Aquarius Director coldly snorted and said:

"Before joining them, I used that method to eliminate two of their members. Now, upon my suggestion, they've modified that abnormal object's effect, making [Scale of Truth] and the like useless."

"..."

Damn... you're a turncoat hacker who patches loopholes madly after they're hit, aren't you—?

Feeling disappointed, Leon clicked his tongue, but maintained his composure while lying through his teeth:

"No, I'm barely protecting myself right now. How would I consider eliminating you?

I was just thinking about the deer symbol on Nicole. It must be the mark of the Marian Deer, one of the Overlords of the Dead Realm, right? Is it also a member of that organization?"



"Don't know, I'm not familiar with it; haven't even met it yet."

You're not familiar with it?

Upon hearing Aquarius Director's reply, Leon blinked, immediately understanding the implication.

Despite Aquarius Director claiming unfamiliarity and never having encountered the Marian Deer, they're "trusted" enough to borrow its authority, indicating that Marian Deer must be a member of the organization.

Otherwise, how did Aquarius Director interact with it? Through WeChat's proximity radar?

"Got it."

Understanding, Leon nodded and continued pressing the cutter, questioning:

"Then onto the next question..."

"I've said enough!"

Though the knife was meant to threaten Leon, he ended up being interrogated while pressing the blade. Even Aquarius Director's inherent poise couldn't help but feel somewhat annoyed.

"Just those two pieces of information are enough for me to discuss with the Scarlet Hair Lady to ensure Nicole's protection; don't go too far!"

"Last one, I guarantee it's the last one!"

Having identified Aquarius Director's weak point, Leon quickly pressed down the paper-cutter that wanted to withdraw and grinned:

"And I'm not asking for free. You know, even if I'm just a level-three cleaner, having exposed your secret, the high-ups at the bureau see us as sworn enemies.

So if I, your archenemy, am willing to step up and guarantee Nicole's safety, proving she's merely collateral damage, wouldn't it make Nicole completely innocent, don't you agree?"

(≡\_≡)

"Last one..."

Chapter 534: You Smell So Good~

"Hmm, it must be the last one!"

Seeing that Aquarius chose to back down, Leon's lips involuntarily curved slightly, and he immediately asked:

"What's going on with the Crolock Kingdom? Why are they so crazily searching for energy? Even to the point of waging war against other countries?"

"..."

"Also, what's the situation with the Gemini Branch? What exactly did you talk to Atifei-01 about? Why did you give up on the Gemini Branch and leave with Nicole after your conversation? How is the royal family of the Crolock Kingdom now? They..."

"Damn it! You call that one question?"

"Uh... you can think of it as I'm still asking the first question, 'What's going on with the Crolock Kingdom,' and the other small questions are part of that bigger question."

"..."

If you put it that way, why don't you just ask me what I experienced this entire century!

"Just one! No more than that!"

"Don't you wish for Nicole to have a more..."

"Do you want to live or not? If not, I'll give you a quick end!"

Tsk... so stingy!

Leon internally grumbled about Aquarius's pettiness before choosing the question he most wanted answered from the pile.

"What's the deal with Atifei-01 and the Gemini Branch?"

"I'm not familiar with her!"

Fearing that Leon might continue to pester like a sticky candy, the Aquarius Director didn't bother to count how many questions were in that statement and hinted directly:

"It's the same unfamiliarity as with the Reincarnated Doe!"

Does that mean... Atifei-01 is also a member of that organization? You even recruit artificial intelligence?

Under Leon's surprised gaze, the Aquarius Director quickly said:

"As for the Gemini Branch, all its members are now controlled and cannot disobey her orders. The entire Crolock Kingdom is hers, running according to her will... Goodbye!"

"Then what exactly is her will?"

"Aquarius?"

"Are you still there?"

"..."

Looks like she's really gone this time...

After waiting a while without hearing anything, Leon couldn't help but click his tongue and then pulled the box cutter out of his neck, pushing the female journalist's rear with a weak voice:

"Move aside, I need to get out."

"Just wait a bit longer!"

Unaware of the conversation Leon had with the Aquarius Director, the female journalist, standing in front of the dog's mouth, warned cautiously:

"The Aquarius Director might not have left. If you come out now, what if he attacks you?"

Well, your dad already attacked me, not only that, but he also chatted with me for a bit...

"It's fine... I guess he should be gone..."

After a casual assurance, the soul-transparent-like-a-plastic-bag Leon used the last of his strength to pry open the canine deity's mouth and carefully crawled out, sitting down on the ground afterward.

Really, this time... though my soul is still intact, having been swallowed by the dog and slit on the neck, I've truly suffered not a little, feeling my soul begin to float...

"Are you okay?"

Helping Leon up, the female journalist couldn't help but ask worriedly, seeing Leon's soul become light as a veil:

"Why not go back inside and hide? Your soul doesn't seem in good shape, and near the Gate of the Deceased, winds from the living world occasionally blow your way. You shouldn't get blown away by the wind."

"..."

Indeed, feels like if not for you holding on, a gust of wind might lift me away.

Feeling his frighteningly light soul, Leon couldn't help but sigh. Then, although he didn't crawl back into the dog's mouth, he circled the Three-Headed Canine Deity's corpse to find a sheltered spot to huddle.

Hmm... wait, what's that smell?

Just as the tired-to-death Leon closed his eyes to rest, a strangely alluring scent suddenly rushed into his nose... or maybe not just his nose.

Suddenly opening his eyes, Leon found, to his surprise, that the Three-Headed Canine Deity he was leaning against was exuding a horrible, indescribable attraction on his entire soul, making him kind of want to...

Take a big bite!

"Stop staring, I feel the same way, but it isn't hunger."

Noticing Leon's gaze, the female journalist quickly reminded:

"Your soul may be complete, but over eighty percent was digested by the Canine Deity and integrated into its body. So your weakened soul is instinctively longing to take back what it lost from it."

"So that's how it is..."

Hearing the female journalist, Leon nodded with sudden understanding, then hesitantly asked:

"If I eat it, can I restore my missing soul?"

"What?"

Baffled by Leon's question, the female journalist replied in shock:

"You... say that again? What do you want to do?"

"I mean, can we eat it?"

Smelling the "tempting" Three-Headed Canine Deity, Leon, whose eyes looked "hungry" with a hint of green, gritted his teeth and said:

"With the current strength of my soul, I can't control my body at all; I'd have to lie in bed for a year or two, needing people to feed me water... I don't think that's acceptable! We need to reclaim what we lost!"

"But... it's the True God..."

Looking at the huge corpse of the Three-Headed Canine Deity, Leon felt a bit hesitant, disgusted by the thought of eating something that could talk.

But thinking of potentially lying bedridden for years or even longer due to a weak soul, unable to control his body, Leon immediately regained his determination.

Within a month, it'll be the Director of Taurus's ascension day. Who knows what the scheming Aquarius will do. At such a crucial time, I can't be lying down!

Moreover, the princess hasn't ascended yet, and the situation is not 100% stable. The mysterious organization targeting the royal family is still active. There's also the Reincarnated Doe suspected of causing Senior Emma's tragic life, and the possible future invader Atifei-01 of the Kingdom of Lutung...

So many life-threatening issues waiting, just lying in bed for a year doing nothing, needing help even to drink, eat, and use the toilet?

To hell with that!

"To hell with the True God!"

Resolutely, Leon took a deep breath, pulled out a wooden-handled silver-blade box cutter under the female journalist's somewhat horrified gaze, and slashed it hard on the Canine Deity's body.

"It doesn't matter what kind of god, if it wanted to eat me just now, then I have the right to eat it now, that's true fairness!"

...

As Leon wielded the box cutter, cutting meat from the Three-Headed Canine Deity, a sorrowful howl suddenly echoed from the top of the Cliff of Doomsday in the deepest realm of the dead.

The howl, filled with intense resentment, pierced the gloomy sky of the dead, spreading outward from the deepest parts, causing the lost souls on the No Return Path to raise their heads and drawing the attention of all living in the realm of the dead.

Was it Angsi's howl?

Hearing the howl, all the denizens of the realm of the dead wore looks of shock.

As a guardian canine of death, the range of the Three-Headed Canine Deity's activities should be limited near the Gate of the Deceased, unable to penetrate deeply into the realm of the dead.

But now, its howl suddenly echoed from the top of the realm's end, the Cliff of the End. This could mean only one thing...

The guardian canine of death was killed by someone!

Facing this once-in-a-millennium upheaval, the entire realm of the dead awoke to the howl, with nearly all Overlords of the Dead Realm sending emissaries to investigate, and those impatient hurried there personally.

Countless wisps of dense death energy cut through the night sky, burning the dark grey sky until it boiled like oil dropped into boiling water, pressing heavily down on the realm of the dead.

Even the death guides circling above the No Return Path were terrified into screeching cries, stopping their guidance of the hidden dead and fleeing in all directions in panic.

In the very end, even the No Return Path itself, spanning the realm of the dead, shuddered with the realm's turmoil, issuing unintelligible cries toward the stone statues lining the path.

"Go see what happened! Who's behind this!"

Chapter 535: Swarming In



"Phew..."

Unaware of the drastic changes occurring in the Realm of the Dead, after swallowing a piece of the Canine Deity's "flesh," Leon couldn't help but let out a long breath as he felt his soul quickly filling up.

Even though the process was somewhat nauseating, he finally managed to replenish his empty soul. The previous feeling, where a mere gust of wind might disperse him entirely, was truly unsettling.

Picking up the small knife again, Leon carved a strip of black muscle from the back leg of the Canine Deity, thicker than a tree embraced by three people, and then turned to invite the female journalist.

"Want a bite?"

"No thanks..."

"Your soul has also been digested quite a bit; you should have a bite to replenish it!"

Seeing the female journalist's embarrassed look, Leon sincerely suggested:

"Trust me, although it looks a bit disgusting, it actually doesn't have much taste, not fishy or smelly. It's like chewing unsalted beef jerky; apart from having to chew a bit, it's basically like chewing cold water."

"But..."

"Trust me, it's fine."

Nibbling on another strip of Canine Deity meat and feeling the soul power quickly spreading in his mouth, Leon couldn't help but squint happily, then continued to persuade:

"You know, the Canine Deity's body doesn't consist of pure flesh; seventy percent is materialized death energy, and the remaining thirty percent is the purest soul power. If you consider it as the purest energy entity, you won't feel awkward about eating it."

"Then I'll just have a little... um... maybe not..."

Initially somewhat tempted by Leon's persuasion, the female journalist's thoughts quickly vanished upon seeing Leon's blood-red stained teeth. She shook her head wildly, saying:

"I... um, I have a weak stomach, can't eat raw things, so maybe not!"

"Alright, it's your choice."

Leon was rendered speechless by the female journalist's reason and nodded without further persuasion.

However, after eating for a while, Leon realized in confusion that although his soul had become extremely solid, there was still a strange emptiness; his soul felt a perpetual "hunger," as if something was missing.

"I don't know much about soul matters, but if I had to guess, your original soul hasn't successfully returned yet."

After hesitating a bit with Leon's inquiry, the female journalist responded uncertainly:

"The Canine Deity's body is too large; the soul you were digested was scattered throughout its whole body. So, although you've replenished your soul's strength, not much of the original soul that belonged to you has returned.

And your soul itself has always longed for that 'original' completeness, hence your feeling of emptiness, like something is missing."

"I see..."

Feeling the instinctive longing within his soul, Leon frowned slightly and continued asking:

"I remember Aquarius went through some trouble to repair my soul before. Would there be any impact if I don't recover my original soul?"

"It probably wouldn't."

After some thought, the female journalist answered:

"Although most of the soul was missing in both cases, he lost parts of it from being killed, whereas your soul is still complete, so the circumstances are quite different.

If we were to compare, hypothetically speaking, if your souls were like a word, his would be like erasing half of a word, turning 'good and evil' into just 'good,' changing the meaning without completing it.

In contrast, yours is like having the word written on paper that faded over time. The overall picture remains intact and doesn't hinder recognition; you just need to retrace it with ink, and it's still your own soul."

"But will this post-repair hold up as well as the 'original'?"

"Uh... if you're worried about that..."

After some contemplation, the female journalist tentatively suggested, pointing at the Canine Deity:

"Why don't you go inside and eat?"

"?"

"What I mean is, the core part of the Canine Deity surely isn't the physical flesh, but... er... places like the heart or brain.

After your soul was digested by it, only a small portion went to the limbs, with most likely gathering at these more central locations. If you're looking to reclaim your soul, eating those parts should be more effective."

"I see... I'll give it a shot!"

Considering the female journalist's suggestion, it seemed reasonable to Leon. He then took the small knife left by the Aquarius Director and sliced open the Canine Deity's belly, bending down and heading towards the heart's location.

As the female journalist breathed a sigh of relief, relieved not to witness Leon's gluttonous act again, the Cliff of 'Death' flanking the Gate of the Deceased lit up with the nests of Crows of Death Report.

Soon, two Crow Feather People with blood-red heads and black wings peeked out from two enormous Crow Nests and cautiously gazed at the massive canine corpse outside the Gate of the Deceased.

When they saw the female journalist standing beside the Canine Deity's body with a relaxed look on her face, the two Crow Feather People jumped in fright, seemingly not expecting the "killer" of the True God to still be there, instinctively wanting to retreat.

But amidst the cries of countless Crows of Death Report, they crawled out of the nests, tightly clutched their wings to their backs, and bravely approached near the female journalist. Bowing deeply upon meeting her, they immediately inquired:

"May I ask, are you the one who killed the guardian of the God of Death?"

These crow-headed ones... Are they Crow Mother's kin? The heralds of the God of Guiding Death?

"No, no, no! It wasn't me!"

Realizing how quick the reaction of the dead realm was, not long after the Canine Deity died before the Overlords of the Dead Realm sent emissaries, the female journalist quickly waved her hands.

"I just... I just happened to be passing by, noticed it was dead, so I came to take a look! Yes! I was just here to see!"

"..."

Discovering a True God was slain, wouldn't one hastily flee instead of coming over to look? Are humans today really so nonchalant?

After hearing the journalist's answer, the two Crow Feather People exchanged glances, clearly not quite believing her words.

But observing her anxious expression and the hurried explanation fearing to be misunderstood, they felt she indeed didn't seem like a god-slaying murderer, so they simultaneously let out a sigh of relief, their slightly bent figures straightening back up.

"Then, did you see the perpetrator who killed the Canine..."

"Glug, glug..."

As the two Crow Feather People were about to continue asking, a sudden roar of waves surged from the Yellow Springs River at the foot of the No Return Path. A voluminous murky yellow stream ascended the bank, forcefully carving out a yellowish tributary on the black ground of the realm of the dead.

Soon afterward, dozens of enormous yellow fish with closed eyes surfaced from the tributary, opening mouths likewise closed towards the Canine Deity and the female journalist.

"May we ask..."

The gigantic single eyes of the fish watched the female journalist momentarily before suddenly opening two eyes, revealing two mouths filled with teeth and tongues. The melodic voice courteously and softly asked:

"Was it you who killed the guardian of the God of Death?"

"No... I was just passing by..."

"Then did you see the perpetrator..."

"Whirl!"

As the yellow fish attempted to continue questioning, a ghostly, cold black wind suddenly gusted from the depths of the dead realm, transforming into Black Robed People, draped in black robes, skeletal, and their faces obscured.

Consequently, the cries of the deceased on the No Return Path echoed as white bones prematurely shed inwardly from bodies, blinking pairs of non-existent eyes, turning back toward the Gate of the Deceased.

Meanwhile, in a more distant area, the colossal stone statues originally standing on both sides of the No Return Path, mountain-like in size, began marching heavily, thunderingly converging here...

"..."

Blood-Head Crow, Netherworld Fish, Silent Wandering Souls, Shedding Evil Skeletons, Unspeaking Stone Idols...

Looking at the death omens, normally hard to spot and uncertain where to find, now emerging like popping dumplings, appearing one after another, the female journalist's scalp tingled.

Leon, oh Leon, I'm begging you, please stay inside without making a sound, absolutely don't come out! If you emerge now, we could be in serious trouble!

## Chapter 536: A Terrifying Motive

"This... Human."

As a group of bizarrely shaped death's messengers settled according to their identities and representing Overlords, under the terrified gaze of the female journalist, a reindeer composed of fine white bones spoke first:

"I overheard your conversation with the messengers of the Yellow Springs. If it's convenient, could you tell me your name?"

"My name is Nicole..."

"Alright, Miss Nicole."

Nodding towards the female journalist who wore a bitter expression, the bone reindeer gently said:

"Among everyone, you are the first to arrive at the Gate of the Deceased. Could you tell me who killed the guards of the God of Death?"

"Uh... I'm not really sure..."

The female journalist shook her head, then braced herself to say:

"I... It was already like this when I arrived. I actually didn't see anything."

"You're lying!"

At that moment, a dark purple swamp crocodile person stood up, opened its mouth towards the female journalist, and a man with an unfulfilled expression shouted from its mouth:

"I can sense it, everything you're saying is a lie! You were here before the Canine Deity was killed, and you know who the culprit is!"

"..."

Is this... the Adjudicator Crocodile? The messenger of the Crocodile God of Condemnation?

"Human, I advise you to think carefully before you speak."

Seeing the female journalist's sudden shock, the dark purple swamp crocodile closed its mouth and spoke coldly:

"The head in my mouth is because he lied in my presence, and that's why I ate him, leaving only a head stuck in my throat. If you keep lying, I won't mind using you to replace him."

"..."

I'm doomed...

Seeing the suddenly unfriendly glances of the death's messengers, the female journalist had no choice but to complain inwardly while stalling for time:

"It's not that I don't want to tell, mainly the person who killed the Canine Deity, uh... is very powerful, I'm worried..."

"You don't need to worry about anything."

Interrupting the female journalist, the bone reindeer spoke gently once more:



"Someone who can blatantly ignore Lord Angsi's status and madly kill him must be extremely powerful and cruel. If you witnessed all this, I can understand your fear of him.

But as death's messengers, the will of the Overlords is our will. We need to get the answer from you, and to fulfill the Overlord's will, we will stop at nothing. Please understand us on this point."

"..."

"Of course, that's the last resort if necessary."

After glancing at the female journalist's tightly clenched fists, the bone reindeer suddenly changed his tone, speaking calmly:

"If you haven't decided whether to reveal the identity of the culprit, we're willing to give you a bit more time to think, but during this period, you'll need to answer some other questions. For example...

What was the motive of the culprit?"

With empty eye sockets staring at the nervous female journalist, the bone reindeer, full of curiosity, inquired:

"Miss Nicole, I am personally very curious, what reason could possibly drive that culprit to make the wild decision to kill Lord Angsi?"

"This..."

Hearing this, the female journalist bit her lip, then took a deep breath, pointing at herself, eyes resolutely confessing:

"I won't say who that person is, but the reason he killed the Canine Deity is probably for..."

"Squeak..."

Just as the death's messengers were waiting for an answer, the back of the Canine Deity bulged slightly, producing the sound of a blade cutting through a tanned hide.

Then, a silver short knife emerged from the Canine Deity's back, slicing along the median of its spine, opening a three-meter-long gash.

?!!!

Seeing this scene, the death's messengers collectively took a step back, staring shockingly at the back of the Canine Deity's corpse.

With the bewildered gazes of the messengers, the first thing that appeared before them was a blood-soaked backside... A man dyed entirely red by Divine Blood was struggling to drag something, trying to squeeze out of the Canine Deity's body.

"Quick! Give me a hand!"

Failing to move the enormous heart of the Canine Deity after a couple of attempts, Leon, covered in blood and unable to open his eyes, had to call for help:

"Its heart is too big, it's hard to eat while inside, help me pull it out!"

Inside... eating?

At Leon's words, watching that human backside dive back into the Canine Deity, the death's messengers, stunned, collectively gasped, instantly having answers to the previous two questions.

The culprit who killed the guards of the God of Death was undoubtedly this man, and his heinous crime of brutally killing a True God...

Was just to eat?!!!

...

"Uh, wait, maybe you don't need to help."

After groping for a while, Leon found a large blood vessel still attached to the Canine Deity's heart. After cutting it with his knife, Leon, full of joy, emerged from its torn back, holding the half-meter-tall heart of the Canine Deity.

"Got it out!"

Taking a bite of the blood-dripping heart with blind enthusiasm, feeling a rising sense of security within his soul, Leon, having finally recovered his spirit, could not help bursting in joy while holding the remaining half of the Canine Deity's heart:

"It's indeed the heart that did it, one bite and I feel relieved."

With one bite...

Hearing Leon speak like this, with the look of bliss on his face and such a delicious and satisfied demeanor, even the seasoned death's messengers found their scalp tingling.

They'd seen audacious lunatics, mad enough to challenge the True God, and the longest-living bone reindeer, who once witnessed the fall of an Overlord of the Dead Realm.

But the scene of killing a True God, crawling inside its stomach, then emerging with the half-eaten heart, went beyond the limits of even the death's messengers.

Particularly seeing that face full of blood, with such a satisfied innocent smile, it bore a kind of cruel naivety, like watching a beast devour its kin on the spot, instinctively making people shiver.

"Nicole? Why aren't you talking?"

Seeing no response from Nicole, Leon wiped the blood off his face and, with black blood continuously dripping down, opened his eyes to ask curiously:

"You... Huh? Why are there so many people?"

"..."

(ÖđÖ|||)!(ÖđÖ|||)!(ÖđÖ|||)!

He noticed me! He noticed me!!!

As Leon's gaze swept over them, the death's messengers immediately took two big steps back, even the fish in the Yellow Springs River were so frightened they submerged beneath the water, not daring to resurface.

Facing a person who had subdued a True God, rather than fleeing, but staying to feast joyfully, what they need to consider now isn't whether they can fight but how to avoid being eaten!

Favored death's messengers generally don't die, and even if they did, they could be resurrected, but if they were to be eaten by such a terrifying man, survival would be uncertain!

"This... This... Honorable one."

After a dread-inducing silence, it was the leading bone reindeer who finally mustered the courage to speak, lowering its head respectfully, asking dryly:

"May I ask... Are you full?"

"Uh... Pretty much..."

Seeing so many peculiar creatures, Leon also felt a little nervous.

Awkwardly responding, he was just about to ask about their identities when he caught sight of a familiar antler imprint on the forehead of the bone reindeer.

Another Embodiment of the Doe?!

Noticing this familiar mark, Leon's expression abruptly changed, his hair clumped from blood, and his eyes narrowed involuntarily.

"You..."

"Run!!!"

Seeing the "Food God Demon" suddenly angry, the death's messengers, already beyond endurance, instantly collapsed in terror and ran cleanly away at the shrill shout from someone. Even the statue with no mouth jumped into the river, desperately swimming towards the bottom.

Being stared at by Leon, the bone reindeer didn't hesitate for a moment, instantly abandoning its body, exploding into fragments, going so far as to split its soul into four parts, fleeing in different directions.

"..."

Chapter 537: You Can't Rush Things

[Due to consuming the corpse of a True God in your soul form, you terrified a group of Death's guardians into fleeing, successfully activating the hidden golden badge "God of Food and Evil"]

[God of Food and Evil: An audacious and lawless supreme malicious soul, that would even dare take a bite out of a True God when hungry. Its eating manners are brutally savage, fiercer than any fierce ghost, causing even True Gods to shudder at the sight]

[Equipped Effect: Through the extreme evil deeds of becoming a God of Food, you've obtained partial authority left behind by the God of Death. Though limited by your low status, you can only temporarily wield its authority without truly absorbing it. Until the God of Death is resurrected, you are the most loyal protector of death]

[Advancement Path: Once the God of Death is revived and you completely kill it, this badge will automatically upgrade to a multicolored badge "Protector of the God of Death"

If you locate and kill the Evil God of Consumption and devour it, this badge will automatically advance to a multicolored badge "Corpse-Eating Evil God"

If you choose to continue hunting other True Gods of the Netherworld, once you've consumed all True Gods of the Netherworld, this badge will automatically upgrade to a hidden multicolored badge "I Am the End of Death"]

[Hidden Trait (No Equipping Required): As Death's guardians scatter and flee, Leon's terrifying name as the God of Food has spread widely throughout the Realm of the Dead, becoming a horror story that can stop a child's cries at night. Any creature below the True God level in the Realm of the Dead trembles upon hearing your name.

Furthermore, due to extracting part of the authority of the God of Death by killing and devouring True Gods, you are feared and loathed by all True Gods of the Netherworld, and there is a strong likelihood of being besieged by them.

They haven't acted against you immediately because the God of Death has not yet revived. Killing you before it happens could result in you fully replacing its place, becoming part of the Realm of the Dead's rules.

But this safety is only temporary. When the God of Death revives, its first bark will be the war horn of the Netherworld's True Gods against you]

"..."

Oh, this...

Looking at the new badge on his panel after the Death's guardians fled, Leon couldn't help but take a sharp breath, feeling a slight sense of weightlessness beneath his feet.

This damn... Is the revival of the Three-Headed Canine Deity the time for the Netherworld's gods to avenge?

"Leon?"

Seeing Leon's pupils suddenly contract and his face full of shock, the female reporter couldn't help asking:

"What's wrong with you? Why do you look so pale?"

"It's nothing..."

After slightly calming himself, Leon's cheeks twitched slightly as he said:

"I just suddenly remembered that the Canine Deity wasn't completely killed. Once it revives, it'll surely seek revenge on me, so I'm a bit worried."

"..."

You're worried about revenge?

Hearing Leon's response, the female reporter's cheeks couldn't help but twitch as well.

Previously, while working under the Aquarius Director, she had seriously considered Leon's information due to the attention on this "Enemy of Aquarius".

Back then, looking at those reports, she thought this person was a bit outrageous. Just having joined for less than a month, he dared to take on a holy spirit single-handed; seized the opportunity of searching for abnormal objects to take down over two hundred nobles in one go; soon after becoming official, he dared to storm into a Scales Gold Sect gathering, participating in missions against a True God;

Not long ago, he subdued a nightmare envoy alone, held the descending King of Nightmares at bay, released the Dream Eating Anomalous Carapace, and devoured half of the Dream Realm; now, right in front of Death's guardians, he devoured the Three-Headed Canine Deity live, highlighting an audacious and ruthless disregard, capable of anything when cornered.

Honestly speaking, although the proportion of madmen in the Clean-up Bureau is quite high, from Leon's extremely wild record, even among this sea of lunacy, he ranks among the craziest.

Yet someone like him, who seems to gamble his life daily, goes around radiating an air of death-defying bravery, and now he talks to me about worrying over revenge?

What a joke!

There are loads of people who want to kill you! Aquarius Director, the Goddess of Wealth, King of Nightmares, and Dream Realm's gods... Compared to those who would love to eat you alive, even if Angsi came back to life, they'd have to take their place in line first, right?

...

"I think you don't need to worry too much about this."

After holding back the flood of retorts surging to her lips, the female reporter awkwardly attempted to console:

"That's a rather distant event. Although the Aquarius Director left Canine Deity's authority without completely destroying it, it's not that easy for it to revive; it needs at least twenty to thirty years to do so, focus on more immediate concerns instead."



Twenty to thirty years, huh...

Hearing the reporter's comfort, Leon contemplated for a moment, and his expression improved a lot.

Although I've only been with the Clean-up Bureau for nearly three months, I've already acquired quite a number of abnormal objects, and my Contamination Value is nearing that of a Second-level Cleaner. In another twenty to thirty years, there's a chance I could occupy the Director's position.

Even if truly unlucky, becoming a branch director at the Zodiac Branch Office, like my current boss, shouldn't be too difficult. By then, if the Netherworld's True Gods want to mess with me, it means going against the entire Clean-up Bureau, meaning safety isn't a concern.

And these assumptions are conservative. If I truly showcase divine prowess, achieving the capability of exploding a group of gods single-handedly like my boss does, it might be my turn to actively hunt down those deadland deities for badges.

Hmm... Advantage is mine!

After weighing the current situation, Leon's slightly suspended heart settled back into place with a thump.

Just as he was about to speak further with the female reporter, a bright red point emerged from the deep gray mist outside the [Gate of the Deceased].

"Boom!"

With the fearful expressions of the dead, the sky outside the Gate of the Deceased burst open, and the frenzied aura of the living rushed in through the cracks, cleansing the area around the [Gate of the Deceased].

Then the vivid red in the mist bloomed suddenly, and the red-haired boss, full of fury, shot out from the mist like a missile tearing through the sky, with strange red tails formed by countless fiery hairs, fiercely blasting into the death realm, rapidly heading towards [Burial Garment Mirror Lake].

"..."

"..."

Damn!!!

Watching far away as the red-haired boss tore through the deathly gray sky, like a burning red comet crashing down toward [Burial Garment Mirror Lake], Leon's heart, which had just settled back in his chest, shot right up to his throat again.

Boss, I'm really touched by your urgent rush to save me, but please look below!

Although the traces left suggest I was taken away by [Flesh Female Deer], I was bitten off right after passing through the Gate of the Deceased, not even going further inside! Boss, please don't be impulsive!

Please don't take action! Uh... go ahead, take action if you must, but don't destroy someone's turf... Ah, this... fine, destroy it if you like, but just don't... My god! Now it's really game over!

Chapter 538: Leon in High Demand

"Olivia!!!"

In the mirror of the Celestial Globe Mirror, the Director of Taurus, who was usually benevolent, was now flushed with anger and shouted:

"What the hell are you doing? Do you want to make me mad on purpose?"

"..."

"Answer me!"

"I... actually have my own difficulties..."

Facing the rage-filled questioning from the Director of Taurus, the red-haired director instinctively shrank back, then awkwardly said:

"That dead... um... that incarnated doe not only snatched a crucial witness right under my nose, but also took Leon's soul, so in a moment of urgency, my methods may have been a bit extreme, but ultimately nothing major happened..."

"Nothing major happened?"

Upon hearing the red-haired director's defense, the Director of Taurus laughed angrily, then slammed the table with clenched teeth, furiously saying:

"Without proper preparation, you forcibly crossed into the Realm of the Dead, causing vital energy to pour back into the Gate of the Deceased, directly resurrecting over five hundred dead! Over five hundred!

It's one thing for those whose bodies were intact, but among those five hundred dead, one-third are already decayed! Their souls have no idea where to go! To deal with sending back those five hundred souls, even the director from Pisces branch has been dispatched, running everywhere to cover for you!"

"..."

"And still, you were looking for people, but why did you mess with Funeral Garment Mirror Lake?"

Thinking of the news that landed on his desk, the Director of Taurus angrily gritted his teeth.

"The Realm of the Dead doesn't want trouble with you, they've been yielding to you! But you went ahead and, when the incarnated doe wouldn't appear, you demolished its lake, forcing it to come out, right? After your big fuss, you did force it out, but after your fight, half of the Funeral Garment Mirror Lake was destroyed!

Olivia! Do you understand how big this is? If you had been just a little more aggressive and completely ruined Funeral Garment Mirror Lake, the deceased would be lining up on the No Return Path! What would the bureau do then? Are they supposed to kill you and send you down to guard it?"

"..."

"And more! It's one thing to fight that doe, but then you started attacking those trying to break up the fight too. Were you really there to find someone or just venting your frustration? Tell me! Do you even want to..."

"Um... Mr. Taurus..."

Seeing the director being scolded, unable to raise her head, and peeking furtively, Leon felt he had to help out, or surely he'd be retaliated against by the director. Leon braced himself and said:

"Actually, we discovered some crucial information that needs to be reported to you..."

"Right, and as for you! Your issues aren't much smaller than hers!"

Upon hearing Leon's voice, the Director of Taurus immediately turned his attention to Leon, staring angrily:

"Olivia's antics are one thing, she's had moments of impulsive indiscretion before, not just once or twice. But what's with you lately? Must you escalate everything?"

Last time's Demonic Soul Abyss incident is explainable, holding off the King of Nightmares alone for so long was commendable, releasing the Dream Eating Anomalous Carapace to ravage the Dream Realm was understandable. But what about this time?"

Thinking of Leon, usually very reliable yet this time causing huge trouble, along with the intelligence received, the Director of Taurus was both angry and anxious:

"Do you know what people are calling you outside after the Realm of the Dead incident spread? Leon the Glutton God! The Clean-up Bureau's hyena! The human-shaped Glutton Demon! Your infamous reputation spread, even attracting attention from the Abyss!

The Gluttonous Demon God sent word through others saying, as long as the Clean-up Bureau agrees to kill you off early, to prevent you from someday usurping its position, it's willing to offer any terms, even a way for me to live an extra twenty years!

And plus! The competitors of the Gluttonous Demon God declared that no matter the amount offered by the Gluttonous Demon God, they are willing to pay double! They'd give you a posting in the Abyss to annoy the Gluttonous Demon God, and they're willing to provide anything!"

"..."

Goodness... Am I really worth that much?

"And more! Do you know what a huge taboo you've committed? Killing and stripping power from the Eating True God... the True God of the Realm of the Dead will not spare you! As long as you're alive, Olivia and I can protect you, but what about when you're dead?"

"I... I was wrong, but please don't get angry..."

When the Director of Taurus paused to take a breath, just as Leon shrunk back like the red-haired director, he awkwardly admitted:

"At the time, my soul was too digested by the Canine Deity, with all the digested soul still within its body, I momentarily couldn't control my appetite, it certainly won't happen again."

"You want there to be a next time?"

'No, no, definitely no next time!' Leon quickly shook his head:

"I truly don't have any weird quirks, I was simply too weak in soul at that moment and couldn't restrain my instincts, along with not wanting to lay in bed for years, which is why... um... perhaps I should share the intelligence first!"

Seeing the Director of Taurus' eyebrows twitch, as if ready to speak more, Leon hurriedly interjected:

"Mr. Taurus, you know my abilities, when the palace was attacked by an abnormal object earlier, I touched its remains and discovered it wasn't an accident, but a premeditated assault!

A mysterious organization is planning to strike at the royal families of various countries, and even the Aquarius Director is involved, he maneuvered to pull away the director, granting the abnormal object the chance to target the royal family!"

An abnormal object targeting various royal families?

Listening to Leon, the anger on the Director of Taurus' face paused slightly, then he said gravely:

"Leon, are you certain of this information?"

"Absolutely sure!"

Recalling his conversation with Aquarius, Leon confidently said:

"Though we have yet to understand why they're acting this way, I can guarantee there exists an organization targeting royal families, and I've identified two of its members!"

"Who are they?"

"Crolock Kingdom's Atifei-01, the intelligent automaton, and the incarnated doe who nearly succeeded in descending during the treasure flower incident six years ago!"

Crolock Kingdom's intelligent automaton and the incarnated doe from the Realm of the Dead?

Upon hearing this, the Director of Taurus frowned slightly, then nodded:

"Indeed, something strange is happening in Crolock Kingdom, even the Sagittarius Director is arranging investigations, but as for the incarnated doe... are you sure it's involved?"

"I'm sure!"

Exchanging a glance with the red-haired director, Leon said earnestly:

"Mr. Taurus, six years ago, the incarnated doe planned to descend into the current world but failed due to unforeseen circumstances, soon sparking the national war, and coincidentally the abnormal object that attacked the palace lurked by the princess.

This doesn't seem like mere coincidence; we strongly suspect the incarnated doe's attempt to descend was aimed at the royal family, only to fail, forcing the mysterious organization to leave a tin doll behind the princess, waiting for a later opportunity!"

It does seem plausible after all...

The Director of Taurus frowned upon hearing this, then glanced at the red-haired director.

"Olivia, what do you think?"

"I think the same as Leon!"

Upon hearing the Director of Taurus' inquiry, the red-haired director cleared her throat first, then righteously replied:

"Also, the reason I stirred up such a commotion this time was actually to probe if it had any issues, to see if there's something wrong!"

"And how did your probing go?"

"It clearly has something to hide!"

The red-haired director boldly replied:

"I approached causing trouble, it hid! I asked it to come out to hand over people, it concealed! I fought it directly, it fled! If it has no guilty conscience, why fear me so much, refusing to fight?"

"..."

Seriously... do you even hear yourself?

After the red-haired director finished her statement, Leon couldn't help but roll his eyes.

The doe fled because it couldn't win! With your killing intent shooting from the sky, looking ready to tear it to bits, even I felt uneasy just watching! Wouldn't it be foolish to stick around for a beating?

However, surprisingly, after hearing the red-haired director's explanation, the Director of Taurus pondered for a moment, then nodded in agreement:

"Indeed, viewed this way, it's likely something is truly wrong with it."

"..."

???



## Chapter 539: Stealing Heart Stud and Anchor Point

Isn't it... are you maybe spoiling her a bit too much?

Though Leon knew the Director of Taurus and his boss had a strong relationship, almost treating her like his own daughter, upon hearing the Director of Taurus's words, Leon couldn't help but tighten his expression.

However, just as Leon was about to say something, the red-haired director seemed to predict his thoughts in advance, slightly turned, and whispered:

"I have a pair of earrings, during the time of fighting with me, whether they attack me or I attack them, it will trigger the effect of these [Heart-stealing Studs] and allow me to hear parts of their inner thoughts."

"..."

So that's how it is...

After hearing the red-haired director's explanation, a flash of understanding crossed Leon's eyes.

No wonder the incarnate doe was bullied to such an extent but stubbornly refused to fight back — as a member of that mysterious organization, it certainly had secrets it dared not let the director know, and thought processes, after all, even the True God could not fully control.

Thus, the more the incarnate doe didn't want something to be heard by the director, the more it would think about it, and if they really fought, it would be almost like a direct confession, so naturally, it could only avoid direct confrontation desperately.

"Director, speaking of which, another thing came to mind."

After glancing at the Director of Taurus deep in thought in the Celestial Globe Mirror, Leon reached out and tapped the red-haired director's back, communicating through a soul connection:

'How effective is your [Heart-stealing Stud]? Is it easily triggered?'

'Quite easily.'

The red-haired director blinked and said:

'These two heart-stealing studs are a pair, the left one triggers every time the body is attacked, the right one triggers every time it attacks the body of an opponent, I generally only need to use the right one.'

Every time it attacks the opponent's body, it triggers the effect of the [Heart-stealing Stud]?

Upon hearing the red-haired director's words, Leon couldn't help but raise an eyebrow slightly.

If that's the case, then the number of times the [Heart-stealing Stud] triggers would be directly tied to the frequency of attacks, and given his boss's [Slaughter Blood Hair] had over a billion strands, potentially no one could match that attack frequency.

That means, if not concerned about receiving too much junk information and causing the brain to overheat and explode, those fighting his boss, their intentions would be completely transparent, any plan would be anticipated.

Hiss... on second thought, that's truly terrifying, no wonder no one wants to provoke her.

'Leon.'

Secretly, she reached back and twisted the back of Leon's hand, then the red-haired director gave him a rather unhappy glare.

'Have you forgotten, our souls are still connected, I can hear what you're thinking?'

Uh... I haven't forgotten, but what my mind thinks is not something I can control...

Leon, caught "saying" bad things about people in his mind, a bit embarrassed, could only change the subject:

'The Aquarius Director mentioned that members of that organization signed something, once leaked they would die on the spot, and though later it was revised on the suggestion of the Aquarius Director, there's still a limitation.

So your [Heart-stealing Stud]'s effect, Director, perfectly counters them, if we encounter someone suspected of being a member of that organization in the future, you could first ask about things in that regard, if succeeded they drop dead on the spot, if not, you still might uncover some information.'

'Great idea!'

...

"Olivia."

Just when the red-haired director and Leon were whispering, figuring out how to use the effect of the [Heart-stealing Stud] to directly sabotage Aquarius Director's associates, on the other side of the Celestial Globe Mirror, the Director of Taurus had also completed his thoughts and spoke with a furrowed brow:

"I just pondered a bit, and I feel this matter might be far more serious than imagined.

If I'm not mistaken, the ultimate goal of that organization targeting various royal families should be to weaken or even block the protective effects of the Watcher's Palace in this way."

Watcher's Palace again?

Hearing the Director of Taurus's judgment, Leon and the director exchanged a glance, then the red-haired director took the lead to ask:

"Could you explain more? Why would targeting royal family members weaken the effects of the Watcher's Palace?"

"It's a long story..."

The Director of Taurus didn't look too pleased as he said:

"We 'sitters' initially could retain human hearts after ascending the palace, but over unimaginably long years, we are destined to slowly lose our will, become indifferent to human emotions under the influence of the Watcher's Palace.

However, the power source of the Watcher's Palace is the love for oneself, for others, and even for the entire human race, lacking a soul driven by this love will contradict the power of the Watcher's Palace and find it hard to continue the work of a sitter."

At this point, the Director of Taurus paused slightly, then sighed:

"In terms of details, this matter is actually somewhat cruel..."

Because sitters are truly rare, and sometimes there's even a vacancy. To ensure each sitter's 'service life' lasts long enough, reaching until the next sitter appears, the first-generation Pisces Director came up with a clever idea to propose putting a 'soul anchor' for all sitters."

"Soul anchor?"

"You might understand this soul anchor as the person the ascender cares about most, preferably a spouse or direct descendant."

The Director of Taurus gently explained:

"Love, in addition to being an emotion, is also a habit, and with this soul anchor, even if a sitter's soul loses its original abundant emotions over time, they will follow the habit to maintain their current state, continuing the task of guarding humanity.

And the ancestors of the Twelve Kingdoms' royal families chose their children as the soul anchor before ascending, and though the 'anchor' they chose is long gone, this connection was passed down through the bloodline to the royal family members of the Twelve Kingdoms."

"But weren't all the souls of past ascenders already dissipated over time?"

Leon couldn't help but ask:

"If they are no more, wouldn't the presence or absence of these soul anchors not affect Watcher's Palace anymore?"

"No, though their souls are gone, their will hasn't disappeared, but has become part of the Watcher's Palace."

The Director of Taurus shook his head and said:

"Depending on the strength of the soul, a sitter can be maintained for at least three to four hundred years, possibly even a thousand years, until they're completely worn away. This time is indeed very long.

Even ordinary people who sit facing a wall all year round can leave their shadow on it, and those strong predecessor souls, after sitting for millennia in the Watcher's Palace to protect humanity, have their 'shadows' engraved into the Watcher's Palace and become part of it.

The Watcher's Palace becoming increasingly effective is inseparable from the 'shadows' left by these predecessors, continuing to uphold their will even after their souls were worn away, continuing the habit of 'life before death' to guard our species."

Chapter 540: Field Assignment?

Even if the soul is obliterated, will the will never perish...

After hearing the answer from the Director of Taurus, Leon couldn't help but fall silent for a moment, then asked:

"So if the royal family of the Twelve Kingdoms is controlled or even killed, does that mean the anchor points left by the past guardians are erased, and without the will of those past guardians, the Watcher's Palace will also be weakened?"

"Yes, but rather than weakened, it's more accurate to say it returns to its original state."

The Director of Taurus sighed and said:

"In the beginning, the ancestors who created the Watcher's Palace only hoped that if a 'Pillar God' level being descended, they could receive information in advance and block the other party slightly, trying to push the battlefield to a place far from the present world.

After all, a being at the level of a Pillar God is extremely destructive. Olivia, with the support of the Star Palace, can barely touch the lower limits of this level, and when she goes all out, she can destroy the entire Royal Capital in just a few minutes. Such a battle absolutely cannot erupt in the present world.

But the ancestors didn't expect that with the sacrifices of generations of guardians, the power of the Watcher's Palace would continuously strengthen, and the protection over the present world would become more comprehensive and thorough, far beyond their original design goals.

By the time the ninth guardian appeared, even True God level beings could no longer enter. Now, even weaker holy spirits require a large number of human believers to pray in advance, leveraging human will to open a path from within, in order to temporarily break the protection of the Watcher's Palace and open a temporary passage."

I see...

After hearing the words of the Director of Taurus, a look of realization appeared in Leon's eyes.

Simply put, the initial version of the Watcher's Palace 1.0 could only block beings with a 70 Contamination Value, but after the sacrifices of generations of guardians, the ever stronger Watcher's Palace N.0 now has enough strength that not even holy spirits with a 50 Contamination Value can get in.

And the goal of the organization that the Aquarius Director joined is to destroy the anchor points left by past guardians, causing the Watcher's Palace to lose the support of their will, reverting back to the original 1.0 version, allowing True Gods to freely enter and exit.

...

"In any case, the royal family of the Twelve Kingdoms cannot afford any loss."

After explaining the reasoning, the Director of Taurus said with a heavy expression:

"Olivia, regarding the matters of that organization, you should refrain from getting involved. Your Virgin Branch is always short on manpower, and your abilities aren't suited for protecting targets. Once you're far away, it becomes difficult to respond quickly.

Considering the situation with the mortal she-deer and that Atifei-01, the Director of Sagittarius and I will find other branches to investigate. From now on, you must stay in the Royal Capital to guard, ensuring nothing goes wrong here."

"Understood."

Upon hearing the words of the Director of Taurus, the red-haired chief nodded solemnly, but after thinking for a moment, she took the initiative to ask:

"Mr. Taurus, do you remember the Level 1 Cleaner from the Gemini Branch who lost both hands?"

"Nicole? Isn't she the adopted daughter of the Aquarius Director, who rebelled with him?"

"Well... the situation is a bit complicated, but Leon and I both judge that she can still be trusted, so we've temporarily let her affiliate with me here."

The red-haired chief proposed:



"Nicole has been in the Crolock Kingdom for nearly twenty years and was always a member of the Gemini Branch before, so she's most familiar with the situation there. Therefore, I think she should be included in the investigation of the Crolock Kingdom."

"I see..."

Upon hearing this, the Director of Taurus pondered for a moment and then decisively decided:

"Since you both find her trustworthy, let her join!

However, given my understanding of the Director of Sagittarius, the investigation of the Crolock Kingdom will likely be assigned to the Scorpio Branch, but since you and they have always had conflicts, it's best to send someone who can ease relations along."

Someone who can ease relations? Who would that be?

With a surprised expression on the red-haired chief's face, the Director of Taurus in the Celestial Globe Mirror turned to look at Leon and asked:

"Leon, are you willing to join this investigation?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

Looking at Leon, who seemed a bit dazed, the Director of Taurus said apologetically:

"I know this task is dangerous, but you are indeed the best candidate.

When the King of Nightmares descended last time, you fought alongside Edward. Although he had some criticisms of your insanity... of your choices, I saw that the report he submitted afterward had quite an appreciation for you.

Furthermore, since you believe Nicole can be trusted, it proves that you must be relatively familiar with each other, and you can also forcibly obtain a large amount of hidden information through touch, which is exactly what is needed for this investigation."

"Mr. Taurus, I think it's inappropriate!"

Upon hearing this, the red-haired chief frowned and protested:

"Although I'm still not clear about what's going on with Atifei-01, given that the entire Gemini Branch has been controlled, it must be difficult to deal with. Leon is just an ordinary Level 3 Cleaner, and it's not appropriate for him to join a mission of this level, is it?"

"..."

Hearing the red-haired chief's words, the Director of Taurus couldn't help but twitch the corners of his mouth.

I admit, this mission is indeed quite dangerous, but... an ordinary Level 3 Cleaner? Can you take a look at his record, known for its madness, before stating this? Which family's Level 3 Cleaner dares to eat a True God alive?

'Chief.'

After secretly nudging the back of the red-haired chief, Leon transmitted through soul communication:

'Why don't I still go? Mr. Taurus is right, this mission I...'

'Shh!'

"Mr. Taurus, Leon really isn't suitable for this mission."

After casting a covert glare at Leon, the red-haired chief sighed faintly and said with a troubled expression:

"Technically, we shouldn't refuse this sort of thing, but the Crolock Kingdom is too far away, where Leon's Undying Body can't take effect, meaning he loses his means of survival, not to mention the abnormal objects he's holding have also recently incurred significant losses...

Did you know? The holy spirit pendant you gave Leon has been destroyed by the Goddess of Wealth, and the new abnormal object I helped him acquire later has been temporarily lent to the Snow Maiden for protection, and even the broom I got from Beverly for him has been snapped in two.

Given Leon's current situation, sending him to such a dangerous place with Edward, that bastard, is as good as sending him to his death?"

"..."

So you were trying to get some benefits for him...

With an exasperated glance at the red-haired chief, the Director of Taurus said through clenched teeth:

"Just state your needs directly, stop playing games! What do you want this time?"

"It's not that I want something."

Upon hearing this, the red-haired chief blinked, then smiled and said:

"I was just wondering if you could discuss with the Director of Sagittarius about temporarily lifting the seal on the [Prayer Wheel] and sending it over to let Leon use it once?"