

# I! Cleaner 551

## Chapter 551: Mutual Pursuit

If you can't react, then don't react, and wait for the other side to crash into you?

After hearing the red-haired director's words, Leon pondered for a moment, then reached out and touched the [Heart-stealing Stud] and [Cutting Silver Dagger].

[Name: Heart-stealing Stud - Left (Connected Heart)]

[Appearance: A ruby earring that can only be worn on the left ear, shaped like a half-cracked heart, which emits a pearl-like glow when the wearer is attacked]

[Ability: Penetrates the heart]

[Cost: The more heart thoughts eavesdropped, the harder it is to speak one's own heart while wearing this earring]

[File: Among the Merfolk Clan, there is a legend of a 'Heart-connected Gem', which is said to allow one to understand the thoughts of all wise beings just by holding it in their hand...

In a joint operation, the merfolk priest who led the tribe to invade the harbor was killed, and the 'Heart-connected Gem' he held was shattered by the Pisces Sub-bureau, with fragments obtained by Lion Sub-bureau director Beverly.

The 'Heart-connected Gem' fragments were forged into a left and a right stud using Taurus secret technique. Since no one in the Lion Sub-bureau claimed it, it was handed over to headquarters, eventually being acquired by Virgin Branch director Olivia]

[Evaluation: A very practical abnormal object, very suitable for someone with an Undying Body to use, although the design is somewhat feminine]

[Contamination Value: 3.3]

[...]

[Name: Cutting Silver Dagger (Cutting, Removing)]

[Appearance: A silver cutting knife with a pure and bright blade, feeling light and soft, with a black elderwood handle that is hard and smooth to the touch, with no thorns, with ancient, now-lost writing engraved along one side of the blade, meaning 'Pure Blade of Cutting Life and Death']

[Ability: Life to the cutter, death to the remover]

[Cost: When using this blade, one must maintain inner purity and focus, carefree of good and evil but honest in heart]

[File: One of the six special abnormal objects possessed by the deceased Overlord of the Dead Realm, Six-faced Elephant Deer, responsible for cutting the list of the deceased generated by the 'Death Soul Register', thus imbued with part of the power to cut life and death.

After the Six-faced Elephant Deer chose to leap from the end due to hatred for its endless work, the 'Cutting Silver Dagger' and other five abnormal objects were scattered in the Realm of the Dead, obtained by the then Gemini Branch director...]

[Evaluation: A remarkably effective abnormal object, when activating the 'cut' effect, can 'cleanly and neatly' cut open everything the blade touches into two;

When activating the 'remove' effect, it can forcibly remove a part of something from its 'main body', immediately granting it inevitable death]

[Contamination Value: 0.1 (Cut), 60 (Remove)]

...

You know, this combination really does seem to work.

After reading the descriptions of the [Heart-stealing Stud] and [Cutting Silver Dagger], Leon's eyebrows raised slightly.

For someone like me with an Undying Body, as long as it's not a particularly targeted attack, I won't die no matter how many hits I take, but my opponent might not be so lucky if they get slashed once with the [Cutting Silver Dagger].

Even if the [Heart-stealing Stud] doesn't necessarily trigger 100% of the time, and even if it does, it won't necessarily hear the right heart thoughts, but after taking three or five dozen hits, it'll surely succeed once, and as long as this set-up succeeds once, it's enough for the opponent to take a serious hit.

The only slight drawback is that the combination of [Heart-stealing Stud] + [Cutting Silver Dagger] is only suitable for dealing with close-combat opponents and lacks means for long-range enemies.

But with my soul vision from the [Black Goat], coupled with the silver-level [Shooting Expert] badge, the effect is not inferior to ordinary long-range abnormal objects, and while it may be a bit lacking in decisively defeating the enemy, it is more than enough as a complementary means.

"Judging by your expression, you should be thinking that my proposal is not bad."

Seeing the satisfaction in Leon's eyes, the red-haired director couldn't help but smile and then seriously advise:

"However, even with the new main battle abnormal objects, it's best to remain cautious, not to mention the controlled Cleaners in the Gemini Sub-bureau, just the hot weapons in the Crolock Kingdom itself are dangerous enough.

In this joint investigation mission with the Scorpio Branch, my highest requirement for you is to ensure your own safety. If you encounter an unsolvable problem, don't act recklessly, don't worry about losing face, quickly seek help from Edward.

Although my relationship with Edward is quite poor, he is, albeit barely, trustworthy, and at least won't leave you to die. If he gets caught up too, then stay with Nicole, her methods of staying safe aren't bad either...

In short, the success of the mission is not important, your safety is the most critical, understood?"

"Mm, I got it."

Hearing the red-haired director's sincere advice, Leon couldn't help but feel a slight warmth in his heart.

Although the director has a somewhat tricky personality and is extremely unreliable when drunk, most of the time, he is dependable, with not a bad character, and takes great care of me, making him a good leader.

"Additionally..."

Just as Leon was moved by the red-haired director's warm advice, she coughed slightly, then unconsciously averted her gaze, her eyes slightly shifty as she said:

"If you end up causing... causing quite a stir this time, like accidentally blowing up the City of Machinery, or almost wiping out the Crolock royal family, remember to say Edward commanded it, okay?"

"..."

...

"Remember, your primary task is not to investigate the situation in the Crolock Kingdom, but to keep a close watch on Leon for me, and don't let him act recklessly!"

Seeing the two Cleaners in front of her first exchange puzzled looks, then look at her in confusion, the Scorpio Director couldn't help but rub her brow, continuing with a headache:

"In short, you don't need to worry about anything else, just keep an eye on him for this joint investigation mission and ensure nothing major goes wrong, and then you'll both have done the greatest service! Understand?"

"Understood."

"Got it, Director!"

Facing the Scorpio Director's stern instructions, although full of doubts inside, the two Cleaners, one elderly and one middle-aged, nodded in succession, promising they would keep Leon watched tight.

However, although they agreed on the surface, faced with the Scorpio Director's wariness as if facing a great enemy, the two Scorpio Branch Cleaners couldn't help but have some internal grumbling, even thinking their director might be making a fuss over nothing.

After all, while powerful abnormal objects can be obtained quickly, the degree to which Cleaners get contaminated by them still takes time to gradually build up. That Leon, since joining the Clean-up Bureau, has only been in for three months, and could at most have accumulated five or six points of Leon Value.

Meanwhile, the two of us are both veteran second-level Cleaners, having joined the Clean-up Bureau for over five years, and our Leon Value is nearing the thirty-point mark, so simply in terms of "on paper" strength, we are estimated to be five or six times stronger than him.

You have to understand that this Leon Value accumulated from long-term contamination by abnormal objects allows a Cleaner's body to gradually transform into "non-human", and at level 1 Cleaner level, can even rely purely on physical reaction to dodge bullets shot from even farther away.

With such a huge gap between 30 points and 5 points, if the two of us get close, Leon probably wouldn't even have a chance to use any abnormal objects, what could happen with the two of us watching one of him?

Chapter 552: That's How He Got His Bad Reputation

"You two shouldn't take this lightly, he's different from regular Cleaners."

Just by looking at the expressions of the two Cleaners, the Scorpio Bureau Chief understood that his two subordinates probably hadn't taken his advice to heart. He couldn't help but want to talk about the outrageous record of a certain person to warn them to be careful, very careful.

But after pondering for a moment, the Scorpio Bureau Chief ultimately kept his mouth shut.

Simply put, there wasn't much he could say.

According to the Clean-up Bureau's confidentiality regulations, information on abnormal objects, related target intelligence, and mission records are classified into five levels of confidentiality from top to bottom.

Among them, Level 3, Level 2, and Level 1 Cleaners are qualified to access information of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 respectively. The branch chiefs of the Zodiac Branch Office and the Non-Zodiac Branch can access Level 4 confidential information, while the twelve directors and the chief can access Level 5 information.

Both Cleaners selected to watch Leon to prevent him from causing trouble were only Second-level Cleaners, so they only had access to Level 2 information.

But if you look at Leon's mission records over the past few months, aside from a few fragmented Level 1 records, the lowest level of confidentiality involves killing descended Scales Gold Sect holy spirits, and archives involving this level have a Level 3 confidentiality rating.

As for the rest—exposing the Aquarius Director, subduing the Goddess of Wealth, battling in the Demonic Soul Abyss and the King of Nightmares, devouring the Canine Deity alive, uncovering the mysterious organization targeting the royal families... any mission archive involving a True God starts at Level 4 confidentiality, and these don't even count towards the action tally.

So in the eyes of someone like me, who can see all the archives, Leon is a lunatic who, within three months of joining the Clean-up Bureau, started madly taking high-risk missions, handling them in extremely radical ways, and always causing a huge stir.

Whereas for those with insufficient confidentiality levels, Leon appears as a rookie with empty records, having only taken a few routine missions in three whole months, with the only special thing being two untraceable Level 3 records.

For a newcomer who seems to have stumbled onto two high-difficulty mission records, these seasoned Second-level Cleaners with nearly a hundred mission records between them would definitely think it's absurd...

"Let me put it to you this way."

Considering these two might not be able to stop Leon from creating chaos, and any negligence could lead to a major blunder, the Scorpio Bureau Chief hesitated for a while before choosing to breach the headquarters' confidentiality regulations and give them a roundabout reminder:

"That Leon, his total mission count is not the five as recorded in his archives, but a full eleven times. He's definitely not simple."

Eleven total missions?

Hearing the words of the Scorpio Bureau Chief, the two Cleaners were slightly stunned, then exchanged puzzled glances.

What about eleven missions? Together, our total mission count exceeds 180 times, and we've even participated in Level 3 missions five or six times. Just eleven missions...

Wait a minute? If he has eleven missions but only five are recorded, doesn't that mean...

"The situation is exactly as you imagine."

Seeing the two Cleaners suddenly enlarge their eyes in shock and look at him, the Scorpio Bureau Chief said helplessly:

"It's not something I can detail out to you, but the time when I suddenly left recently, it was actually to assist in the jurisdiction of the Virgin Branch. During the joint operation at that time, he was the one who received me, and we even... well, fought side by side I guess."

"..."

Fighting side by side with our Bureau Chief...

And despite having performed eleven missions, only five are recorded...

Doesn't that mean that Leon, after joining the Clean-up Bureau for three months, has already participated in six 'True God level' missions? And survived them all?

Damn it... Are newcomers this monstrous nowadays?

"In any case, you absolutely have to keep an eye on him."

Recalling the devastation in the Dream Realm and Leon's crazy feat of devouring the Canine Deity alive, the Scorpio Bureau Chief, still shaken, reminded them once again:

"Leon indeed has outstanding capabilities, but his nature is also truly crazy and extreme. If pushed, he'll do anything, so make sure to keep a close watch on him. If you notice any signs of him going berserk, you must find a way to contact me immediately!"

What... is such an absurdity?

After hearing the Scorpio Bureau Chief's repeated admonitions, a chill ran down the spine of the two Second-level Cleaners.

As everyone knows, the level of madness in a Cleaner is generally proportional to their individual strength. The faster the power increases, the more likely it is for them to lose control and go insane.



And this newcomer... after only three months of joining as a Cleaner, has already participated in six True God level missions. With Leon Value soaring, his degree of madness must be astonishingly high, I'm afraid there's not much humanity left.

Plus, his files explicitly state that he has a high affinity with Demonic Abnormalities. It seems that he's not just no good person, it's not even clear if he can be considered a person!

"Chief..."

The middle-aged Cleaner swallowed and said with some unease:

"That Leon... what's his personality like? Is he easy to get along with? If we try to stop him, he won't assault us, will he?"

"Look at you being such a coward."

Before the Scorpio Bureau Chief could respond, the elderly Cleaner with a fishing rod took a deep breath, suppressing his inner unease, and jokingly said to lighten the mood:

"No matter how extreme he is, he's a Cleaner, and if worst comes to worst, he would just hit us. Could he really eat us alive? Right, Chief?"

"..."

Hearing the elderly Cleaner's joke, combined with Leon's reputation as the 'Food God Maniac,' the Scorpio Bureau Chief couldn't help but ponder this line of thought further.

As for people, Leon shouldn't eat them, but considering his audacity to gnaw on a True God alive, if truly pushed, who knows what he might actually do...

???

Chief?

Wait... Chief, say something? The prolonged silence is making me nervous, why am I suddenly feeling a cold sweat?

Seeing the Scorpio Bureau Chief remain silent in response to his inquiry, the elderly Cleaner's smile stiffened.

I was just joking when I asked if he would eat us, but why is there no reaction after I asked? At least refute me!

"Oh, rest assured on this."

Seeing the two Second-level Cleaners turn pale, the Scorpio Bureau Chief, coming back to senses, quickly reassured:

"From my understanding of him, he shouldn't do something like that."

"..."

No... what do you mean "shouldn't", isn't the answer supposed to be "definitely won't" for such a question?

Chief, with you saying "shouldn't", does that mean if Leon gets in the right temperament, he might just eat the both of us??!!!

Chapter 553: Hay Fever and the Ironstone Rubik's Cube

"Achoo!!!"

After rubbing his recently itchy nose, Leon, dressed in a dark tailcoat, raised his hand to close the carriage window and started complaining to the female reporter opposite him:

"I really don't know what the road planning department of the Royal Capital is thinking, why plant so many winter cypresses along the road? They're... Achoo! In full bloom these days, and after a gust of wind, the pollen can cover half the street. It's such a hassle!"

"Just try to bear with it."

Handing over a handkerchief, the female reporter, also in formal dress, began to console him:

"The sky clipper to the Crolock Kingdom is already arranged. Once you're onboard, there won't be so much pollen."

"Let's hope so..."

Looking at the roadside winter cypress, with buds full of pale red little balls due to the warming climate, Leon couldn't help but sigh in frustration.

Although he and his siblings aren't blood-related, they all sneeze terribly when exposed to pollen.

And because their residence is street-facing, the past few days when the Royal Capital's winter cypress started releasing pollen, the Ryan Family's sneezing didn't stop from morning till night. Except for Anna who's somewhat adapted, he and the two little rascals constantly had red noses, truly putting them through the wringer.

Somehow it seems a bit odd...

The female reporter watched as Leon took the handkerchief to cover his nose, looking a little better, and couldn't help but blink, a hint of doubt appearing in her eyes.

The winter cypresses planted along the kingdom's roads should be the ball-flower cypress of Kingdom of Orleson, a very common city plant, widely found across the Western Nine Nations including Black Forest, Molna, and Orleson, with a cultivation history of almost a thousand years.

Having coexisted with this plant for over a millennium, most people in the Western Nine Nations have become accustomed to its pollen. Usually, only the people from the Three Eastern Nations across the sea, unfamiliar with the plant, sneeze uncontrollably upon encountering its pollen.

"Leon."

With a vague guess in her mind, glancing at Leon's black hair and eyes, the female reporter couldn't help but ask:

"Are you...?"

"Toot..."

Just as the female reporter was about to say something, the carriage they were in began to slow down gradually, the melodious steam whistle covering her voice completely.

"What happened?"

After the steam carriage came to a complete stop and the whistle ceased, Leon, still covering his nose with the handkerchief, asked somewhat puzzled:

"Were you about to ask me something?"

"..."

"It's nothing..."

Upon hearing Leon's inquiry, the female reporter hesitated briefly, then shook her head and said:

"I just wanted to tell you, there's no winter cypress in the Crolock Kingdom, hardly any plants even, so you won't have to worry about hay fever there."

Perhaps it's better not to mention it yet, as his reaction to winter cypress pollen and his black hair and eyes do resemble those of people from that country, yet there are also people in the kingdom with these traits. It might be a bit hasty to deduce his origins based solely on hair color and pollen allergies.

According to my understanding, due to experiments by the Aquarius Director, Leon not only lost his original life, but also his memories, a pain that's likely to be permanent in his heart.

If these two traits could help me uncover Leon's original background and find his lost life, it would be a joyous event.

However, if my assumptions are incorrect, or even if somewhat accurate but unable to confirm his true identity, it would be like tearing open a healed wound, bringing him false hope and additional pain, which indeed seems quite hurtful.

"Is that so? That would be wonderful."

Not aware that the female reporter was contemplating helping him find his roots, nor imagining that a pollen allergy caused such musings, Leon breathed a sigh of relief upon hearing there would be no pollen in the Crolock Kingdom.

Subsequently, he disembarked with a look of relief, joining the delegation heading into the Boarding Tower, while curiously asking in a low voice:

"Nicole, since the Crolock Kingdom doesn't allow many outsiders in, and the kingdom's records on it aren't thorough, could you tell me what it's like there?"

The Crolock Kingdom?

Following Leon, the female reporter tried to recall and then spoke with slightly furrowed brows:

"I'm not too sure how to describe it. Although Crolock looks round from outside, it's not a fixed shape. If I must compare, it's like a huge Rubik's Cube made entirely of steel and earth.

Oh right, a Rubik's Cube is a toy with six sides, each with nine small squares of different colors that can be twisted around. Crolock children play with these from a young age."

"Uh... I've seen a Rubik's Cube before."

Leon blinked upon hearing this, then continued to ask:

"I recall you mentioned that the core buildings there are separate hive-like blocks, connected by slides and docking rails, capable of moving up and down using hover crystals.

So, where is the royal palace of Crolock Kingdom? In the center of this hexagonal hive Rubik's Cube? And what about Atifei-01? In which block is it located?"

"Hard to say."

The female reporter shook her head and said:

"There are no 'parallel' relationships between the blocks in Crolock Kingdom; they can stack up and down. These regions are broadly categorized as residential, research, habitation, production, administration, and military zones.

Without major relocation, these hexagonal zones spread throughout the kingdom like clock hands, with six of each type per 'timezone'.

With the upper city always stationed above due to hover crystals, in the opposite direction of the lower half, the entire Crolock Kingdom consists of 36 districts multiplied by 24 timezones, totaling 864 movable blocks.

The Crolock Palace and the area housing the Atifei-01 body are likely among those 144 'administrative' blocks and 144 'research' blocks."

"..."

So it's a one out of 144 choice, and you have to do it twice... How am I supposed to find a bazaar here?

After hearing the incredibly complicated district arrangement of Crolock Kingdom, Leon couldn't help but rub his temples, muttering speechlessly as he boarded the sky clipper:

"Whoever designed this must be crazy—over 800 districts, and they occasionally change positions. How do people in Crolock Kingdom find their way?"

"What's so hard about that?"

Glancing at Leon oddly, the female reporter replied:

"Each block has a number. For instance, where the Gemini Branch is located is Administrative District No. 38, whereas I lived in Residential District No. 19.

Each day when going to work, I only needed to enter my desired district number into the directional machine and follow the guidance all the way there."

"..."

Chapter 554: Target Locked

Okay, maybe I spoke a bit too fast...

After listening to the explanation from the female reporter, Leon couldn't help but awkwardly scratch the back of his head. Then, under the guidance of the flight attendants, he sat down by the Sky Clipper's window and continued to ask:

"So, you're saying that as long as we find Research Zone 001 and the administrative zone, we'll be able to find the royal family and Atifei-01?"

"Theoretically, yes."

The female reporter nodded at his words, then somewhat helplessly reminded him:

"But to know the exact location of those two places, you'll first have to ask for directions on the route finder. And even if we could get in, just typing the numbers for Zone 001 would already attract the attention of Atifei-01."

Indeed, this is quite a troublesome matter...

Upon hearing her reminder, Leon pondered slightly before speaking:

"The palace should be easier to deal with; I'm carrying a Prince's identity. According to international correspondence conventions, the Crolock Kingdom must also send a royal family member to receive us.

At that time, I can remember the other person's soul vibrations and track them to find the location of the Palace's Administrative Zone 001. But the Research Zone is a bit of a headache... Do you know anyone who can access Research Zone 001?"

"No, I don't."

The female reporter shook her head, her expression slightly apologetic as she said:

"The important zones in Crolock Kingdom are mostly closed off to each other. If there's nothing unusual, I only move between my residential area, Gemini Branch's administrative zone, and some living areas. So I rarely come into contact with people from the Research Zone... Uh... Wait!"

At this point, she seemed to recall something, furrowed her brows in thought, then said excitedly:



"I remember now! Living Zone 039 is a green park. I went there once to handle a case involving a suspected abnormal object and met a very capable scholar. He might have the credentials to enter Research Zone 001!"

A scholar eligible to enter Research Zone 001?

Upon hearing the reporter's words, Leon was instantly intrigued and asked curiously:

"Where does he live? How can we find him?"

"I don't know where he lives, nor am I sure how to find him..."

"What's his name then? What's he called?"

"Uh... It's been years, I've forgotten his name, or maybe I didn't even ask back then..."

"..."

Seriously... So all you know is that he's a scientist and might be eligible, but nothing else? Then why even mention it?

"I'm not familiar with him. We just happened to meet once, and I honestly don't remember the details."

Seeing Leon's speechless expression, clearly holding back a torrent of complaints, the female reporter couldn't help but blush slightly and quickly added:

"But I still remember his research findings; maybe we can find him through that!"

"Research findings?"

"Yes!"

After trying hard to recall the situation, the female reporter somewhat uncertainly said:

"I remember it was either summer or autumn, we received a report at the bureau saying that strange sounds were often heard around the park in Living Zone 039.

According to the report, although there was no one around, strange sounds of a man constantly asking if anyone could hear him were coming from bushes, public toilets, and trees.

And since I was on duty at the bureau that week, I took my stuff and visited the park, squatting overnight by the tree near the public toilet, where I waited for a slightly shabby-looking man."

"Was he the scholar?"

"No, he was a homeless man hired by that scholar."

The female reporter shook her head and said:

"The homeless man said someone paid him a bit of money and gave him a map, instructing him to wait in various places like water, trees, bushes, and public toilets to see if he could hear anything.

Then, I took the homeless man and followed the map back, finding a man with a strange iron rod on his back by the tree near the park entrance. When I found him, he refused to come down from the tree, saying he would lose the signal."

Lose the signal?

Upon hearing this, Leon suddenly grasped the situation and, somewhat amused, asked:

"Is his research a device that enables long-distance communication?"

"Huh? How did you know?"

Surprised, the female reporter incredulously asked:

"Do you know him? Or have you seen something similar before?"

"I've seen something somewhat similar."

After giving a vague answer, Leon mused:

"I can probably guess what his research is about. If he truly has come up with something useful, he'll certainly have a place in Research Zone 001.

But if he's likely a scholar from Research Zone 001, wouldn't our rash actions to find or track him draw the attention of Atifei-01?"

"Of course not."

The female reporter blinked at these words, somewhat puzzled as she replied:

"Aren't you a Prince? Just change the mission objective of the delegation. Since you call the shots in the delegation, tell the reception side of Crolock Kingdom that Kingdom wants to purchase a set of similar devices.

After receiving and testing the samples, express great satisfaction with them, then request to meet the scholar who's behind this technology. Wouldn't that settle it?"

"..."

Right! I could use my status as a Prince + ambassador!

Prompted by the female reporter, Leon immediately realized that he didn't necessarily have to rely on "abnormal" actions to solve problems. His official Prince status was often sufficient, sometimes even more convenient.

Sigh... Even without a reminder, I should've thought of this plan myself. It seems I've been using "muscle" solutions for uncertainties lately, and that reliance has left my mind a bit idle.

"You're absolutely right."

Secretly reminding himself to use his brain more and to avoid becoming a brute, Leon noted down the matter of acquiring the "phone." Then he somewhat admiringly praised:

"Truly, a wise one among the foolish! I never expected your mind to be so sharp. I underestimated you before."

"..."

Though genuinely complimented, for some reason, she felt as if she was being cruelly insulted.

Parsing Leon's words, the female reporter couldn't help but glare in return.

"What do you mean 'didn't expect' my mind to be effective? Did you always think I was an idiot?"

"Uh..."

Well, it's not that you're dumb; being fooled by an old fox like the Aquarius Director isn't entirely your fault. However, based on your past performances, you've not exactly seemed bright.

Damn you!

Reading between the lines of Leon's stifled expressions, the female reporter felt a bit suffocated.

But just when she was about to argue for a fair assessment of her intelligence, a loud explosion suddenly erupted in the cabin.

A masked man, holding a somewhat makeshift nail gun, fired and shattered the panel above the passengers. Then, with fierce eyes, he shouted:

"Don't move! This Sky Clipper is now under our control!"

"..."

What?

Hearing this standard declaration, Leon's mind blanked briefly, then, with an utterly dumbfounded expression, exchanged a glance with the female reporter.

Seriously... Although my luck is bad, how did we encounter a hijacking right after takeoff? And they're hijacking an entire diplomatic mission too? Could it be any more ridiculous?

Chapter 555: The Humorous Airship Hijacking (Part 1)

"Everyone sit down! No standing up!"

Unaware that the Sky Clipper he hijacked had two VIP passengers on board, the skinny, tall bandit wielded a nail gun he somehow managed to bring aboard, gesturing with it as he shouted:

"You're all my hostages now! Someone immediately change the course of this skyship, or else I'll..."

At this point, the bandit hesitated briefly, glancing around at the positions in the VIP cabin before naturally aiming the gun at Leon, who was wearing a luxurious outfit, seated with a beautiful companion by his side in the best spot, and threatened harshly:

"Or else I'll shoot him!"

"..."

I knew I'd be the one he'd target...

Looking at the dark barrel pointed at him, Leon was silent for a moment before sighing inwardly.

He wasn't afraid. Not to mention, sitting beside him was Nicole. The Sky Clipper had just left the Royal Capital's vicinity not too long ago, so his Undying Body was still effective. Even if he took a bullet, it wouldn't matter.

What was truly frustrating was his unfortunate tendency to get into trouble, which was as consistent as ever.

According to Senior Tom, the reason for his bad luck was that the will of this world had deemed him a "harmful" existence, always wanting to eliminate him.

But the world's way of dealing with him wasn't a meteor falling from the sky, but arranging such a hijacking and sending a bandit with a homemade nail gun—this was quite humorous...

"Hurry up!"

Seemingly convinced that Leon was the most important person in the VIP cabin, the bandit, whose hand trembled, placed his finger on the trigger, sweat covering his forehead as he angrily threatened:

"If you don't want to die, have your people go to the control room and steer the skyship in the direction I say!"

"Mm-hmm."

Seeing the bandit in front of him, visibly tense and sliding facecloth due to sweat, Leon couldn't help but find it amusing. With a kind expression, he reminded him:

"Your facecloth is slipping, you should pull it up."

"Ah! Thanks..."

Hearing Leon's words, the bandit instinctively adjusted his soaked facecloth and even politely thanked him.

However, the next second, realizing his foolishness, the bandit's forehead visible outside the facecloth turned visibly red, as he angrily asked:

"Are you messing with me?"

"I'm not messing with you; just offering a kind reminder."

As a fellow skyship hijacker, Leon couldn't help but criticize, observing the bandit displaying some "immature" techniques:

"When choosing a facecloth, what were you thinking? Why pick one that's not breathable? It's covering your mouth and nose so thoroughly, and you're stuck with it for hours. Don't you feel stifled?"

"I..."

"Moreover, your facecloth is made of thick gauze. Once soaked with sweat, it loosens, even if you tie a knot at the back of your head; it'll still slip down, requiring constant adjustment. If you're serious about masking up, going to a department store to buy thick stockings would be more suitable."

"..."

Wait... are you insane or something?

Observing Leon, who despite having been held at gunpoint by the bandit, was neither panicking nor sending someone to take over the skyship control room, but instead was teaching him how to mask up, the humorous bandit became enraged:

"Stop talking nonsense! Get your people to the control room! Steer the skyship as I demand, or I'll shoot you!"

"Mm-hmm."

Giving a gesture to the female journalist to remain still, Leon, who had just decided to use brains more than brawn, raised his hands in a surrender gesture, then curiously asked:

"I bet you haven't been to the skyship control room, have you?"

The bandit hesitated slightly before cautiously retorting:

"How do you know?"

Leon explained amusedly:

"Because if you had been, you'd know that the main work of those in the skyship control room is actually weather recording. This thing is automatically steered; they don't manage the steering at all."

"???"



"Huh?!!!"

Befuddled by Leon's response, the bandit beneath the facecloth opened and closed his mouth slightly, momentarily at a loss for words.

If this thing is automatically steered, then what exactly have I hijacked?

"Moreover, if you don't mind, may I ask?"

Seeing the bandit's confused expression, Leon inquired calmly:

"What is your purpose in hijacking this skyship? Could you explain?"

"..."

"It's okay, just say it. Your purpose won't be achieved after hijacking since you can't change the course.

Well... even if you don't want to tell, I can guess myself.

Given that you don't know the people in the VIP cabin, it probably isn't to hold them for ransom, so who are you threatening with this skyship? Or are you planning to crash it somewhere?"

"I..."

After hearing Leon's words, the disillusioned masked bandit was silent for a while, then lowered the nail gun weakly, his voice somber:

"I wanted revenge on Crolock Kingdom, using this skyship to crash into Crolock Kingdom's palace..."

"Wow..."

Looking at the bandit who originally intended to pull the catch, Leon raised an eyebrow, then inquired puzzledly:

"Then how exactly were you planning to escape from the skyship at the start? Parachuting ahead of time? Aren't you afraid someone would change the course after you jump?"

"I wasn't planning to run!"

Upon hearing Leon's words, the masked bandit, seemingly provoked into recalling painful memories, gritted his teeth and said:

"Since boarding this skyship, I hadn't planned on getting off. Trading my life for the entire royal family of Crolock Kingdom was worth it!"

"Mm-hmm, the spirit's commendable, but there's something I don't understand."

Leon nodded slightly, then curiously asked:

"Since you weren't planning to live, why the mask then?"

"..."

Right, I was planning to die, so why mask up?

Awakened by Leon's words, the masked bandit finally realized, tore off his soaked facecloth, tossed it aside, then crouched powerlessly, covering his face as he began to sob.

Honestly, you're quite a talent.

Watching the bandit cry beside his seat due to his own stupidity, Leon patted him on the shoulder, then shook his head and sighed:

"One can't act solely based on passion; even as a bandit, you should learn well and remember to use your brain.

Moreover, although you probably don't know, I'll still ask... do you even know where Crolock Kingdom's palace is?"

"Where's the palace?"

Upon hearing Leon's questioning, the bandit halted his sobbing, then said blankly:

"Does it need finding? Isn't it generally the tallest and most beautiful structure in the middle of a kingdom, the palace?"

"..."

Good, indeed I didn't overestimate your intelligence.

Chapter 556: The Humorous Airship Heist (Part 2)

Of course, not having received any information about the location of the Crolock Kingdom palace, Leon couldn't help but curl his lips in resignation.

Then, too lazy to explain to a hijacker that the palace of the Crolock Kingdom was actually mobile, he straightened his wrinkled clothes and sat back down.

Meanwhile, a female reporter who had been listening in was trying hard to restrain her laughter, her cheeks flushed. She leaned over, unable to contain herself, and whispered with amusement:

"Why bother talking so much with him? You could just knock him out, couldn't you?"

"I could definitely knock him out, but if, when encountering problems, your first instinct isn't to think it through, and instead you instinctively rely on force, it can easily lead to... hmm..."

At this point, Leon paused slightly, glanced at the female reporter, then looked away and continued with a straight face:

"It can easily lead to becoming a bit of a dim-witted brute, so I try to solve problems with wisdom as much as I can."

"..."

Damn! Talking halfway through, then suddenly pausing and glancing at me, what do you mean by that?

"By the way."

Under the slightly annoyed gaze of the female reporter, Leon tilted his head slightly, looked at the somewhat blank-faced hijacker guy beside him, and asked:

"I remember at the beginning, you said 'we' took over the Sky Clipper, so you should have a partner, right? Where is your partner?"

My partner...

Hearing Leon's words, the hijacker guy froze momentarily, then shook his head hastily, "You must be mistaken, I don't have a partner!"

Alright, not only does he have a partner, but the partner is probably still lurking among the passengers, yet to show up.

Leon nodded in response, but didn't question further. Instead, he touched the ram's horn protruding from his cuff and quickly scanned the souls inside the Sky Clipper.

Sure enough, after resolving the hijacking crisis with just a few words, although most people didn't dare to speak, they were secretly relieved. Among them, a soul full of resentment and agitation was as conspicuous as a xenon headlamp on a heavy-duty truck.

"Your partner is you, right?"

Turning to look at a young girl dressed rather plainly, three rows away, Leon smiled and asked:

"And it seems like you are the 'mastermind'? He's just the one doing the labor? Considering how he defends you and the fact that you two resemble each other... are you siblings?"

"..."

This person... so terrifying!

Facing Leon, who was smiling gently but seemed to have a demon's shadow dancing behind him, making her heart tremble, the girl in the seat didn't answer. Instead, she stood up directly, pulled out a second homemade nail gun, and aimed it at Leon, gritting her teeth:

"You're a big shot, aren't you? If you don't want a hole in your head, you'd better send your men to the control room and help us take over this Sky Clipper!"

"But this Sky Clipper is auto..."

"Don't lie to me!"

The similarly slender young girl shouted angrily:

"If it's just for weather recording, does it need seven or eight people in the control room? Even if this Sky Clipper is truly automatic, the people in the control room must have a way to adjust the course!"

Tsk, she actually realized that. This girl seems to be a bit smarter than the hijacker guy.

"?!!!"

Upon hearing the young girl's words, the hijacker guy sprang up from the floor, glaring at Leon with a mix of shock and anger.

"You tricked me?"

"I didn't trick you, just didn't disclose everything. Additionally..."

Replying to the hijacker guy, Leon then turned to the gaunt, seemingly two years younger than Anna hijacker girl and raised an eyebrow, "You seem a bit more cultured than your brother, so you should know that the position of the Crolock Kingdom's palace isn't fixed, right?"

"How to find the palace is none of your business!"

Shooting a wary glance at Leon, the hijacker girl shouted sternly, raising her gun, "What you need to do now is send someone to the control room and take control of the Sky Clipper, or I'll kill you!"

"But even if I listened to you, wouldn't I still end up dead?"

Leon retorted, "You two plan a kamikaze attack with this Sky Clipper. As a passenger onboard, wouldn't I still end up dead?"

"As long as you do as you're told, you won't die!"

Seeing Leon still not cooperating, the hijacker girl flipped the safety on the nail gun, bit her lip, and shouted angrily, "We've checked, there are twelve sets of safety boats underneath the aft compartment equipped with flotation air bags, enough for everyone aboard to leave. As long as you cooperate with us, not a single person on the Sky Clipper will die!"

Hmm, that's actually the truth...

Glancing at the hijacker girl's soul, Leon blinked and said, "So when your brother was masked, you didn't stop him because you plan to have him keep living, while you, who can find the palace location, stay here..."

"Shut up!"

Seeing her plan being laid bare in a few words, the increasingly flustered hijacker girl stomped her foot and shouted sharply, "You mustn't speak again! Hurry and send your men to the control room, or I'll shoot!"

"Then go ahead and shoot!"

Sneaking a glance at the nail gun in the hijacker girl's hands, Leon chuckled and said, "As long as you pull the trigger and manage to fire a nail, I'll immediately have people take over the control room, and you can steer wherever you want. How about it?"

"?!!!"

"Looks like I guessed right, your guns can't fire at all."

Seeing the hijacker girl's lips move twice, a hint of despair sweeping through her bright eyes, Leon smiled and said, "I often handle guns too. Though your guns' exteriors seem fine, even restoring the rifling in the barrels, the paint on the junctions is suspiciously off, and the air tank dimensions are problematic—all just high-grade replicas.

And come to think of it, though the Kingdom's security is pretty lousy, they are diligent enough in their searches. It's unlikely they would allow two real guns onboard, much less miss two of them entirely."

What? Fake guns?!!!

Noticing the hijacker girl biting her lips pale and the nail gun she daringly held showing no action, the guests in the VIP cabin, who had been silently shaking with fear, finally started to speak up.

"Scared me to death..."

"They're fake!"

"Bastard! Scaring people with two fake guns?"

The overweight merchant beside the hijacker girl, wearing a silk frock and weighing close to three hundred pounds, stood up abruptly, extending a large hand that seemed ready to squeeze out oil, and slapped fiercely:

"You damned... ah!"

"Everybody freeze!"

Covering the distance in a couple strides, kicking over the fat merchant, the hijacker guy pulled a small horn-handled knife from his coat and brandished it at the surrounding passengers, roaring terribly:

"I may not have a gun, but I have a knife! Anyone who dares to touch my sister, I'll... uh..."

"So she really is your sister, and by the way..."

Pulling a long-neglected sniper rifle from the mirror world, flicking off the safety with his finger, Leon asked with a smiling face at the dumbfounded hijacker guy, "Wanna guess whether my gun's real or fake?"

Chapter 557: The Reason (Part 1)

"I'm really very sorry!"



Looking at the robber siblings with their hands tied to the chair by belts and their faces looking exceptionally grim, the security chief who rushed over from the auxiliary cabin couldn't help but wipe the cold sweat off his forehead and then bowed deeply without hesitation.

"It's our inspection that wasn't up to par, causing you such a fright!"

"It's all right, it's not your fault."

Upon hearing this, Leon smiled and then, while playing with the fake gun in his hand, spoke:

"The guns they're holding aren't real, not even made of metal. They're painted wood, probably disassembled into parts and smuggled up mixed in with the baggage clutter.

Because there were no metal pieces to begin with, the strong magnetic scales you use to check the luggage didn't cause the weights to change, allowing these two fake guns to be smuggled on board.

For such a method of bypassing inspection, unless you can search every traveler's luggage, it's something that can't truly be avoided, so you did your best."

"This... incredibly sorry, thank you for your understanding..."

Seeing that Leon didn't seem intent on pursuing the matter further, the security chief of the Sky Clipper exhaled a long breath, gave a fierce look at the robber siblings, then indicated for the security team behind him to grab them, and again bowed to Leon and the lady reporter saying:

"Your Excellency Prince, regarding today's incident, we are deeply, deeply sorry. I'll take these two away for now and ensure an explanation for you!"

"No need to rush."

Raising a hand to gesture downward, blocking the security guard wanting to make arrests, Leon smiled and said:

"There are some questions I'd like to ask them. I wonder if there is a quiet private room on the airship. If so, could you please arrange one for me?"

"There is..."

Hearing Leon's request, the security chief hesitated for a moment before reminding:

"But these two are, after all, hijackers of the airship. If you were to be harmed staying in the same room with them..."

"I won't be."

Leon shook his head, replied firmly:

"If I caught them once, I can catch them again. Just go ahead and arrange the room."

"This... since you insist, alright then."

Seeing His Excellency the Prince adamantly insistent, the security chief, who still drew a salary from the Kingdom's transportation department, naturally dared not continue opposing.

But fearing Leon might be careless and truly overturn on the hijackers, the security chief directed someone to fetch several thick ropes used for tying air bags from the storage, bound the robber siblings like dumplings, and only then led Leon and the lady reporter to a small room, earnestly introducing:

"Your Excellency Prince, this room was originally for balancing weight to prevent the airship from rolling, though it's a bit off-center, it's definitely quiet enough. I'll keep watch at a distance, ensuring no disturbance for you."

"Thank you."

Nodding in thanks to the security chief, Leon closed the door from inside, then, smiling, addressed the robber siblings tossed on the cabin floor, bound like two grub larvae:

"Shall we chat?"

"Bah!"

Seemingly angered by Leon's smile, the robber brother, successfully becoming a grub, scooted on the floor to shield his sister, glaring at Leon with anger, replied:

"You liar! We've got nothing to chat about with you!"

"Saying I'm a liar is a bit too much, don't you think?"

Leon, hearing this, blinked, then smilingly retorted:

"Since you appeared, I haven't uttered a single false word, have I? How does that make me a liar?"

"..."

"Besides, I don't even know you guys. I was just on an ordinary trip, yet you pointed guns at my head, threatening me to do this and that. Even if I actually deceived you under such circumstances, it doesn't seem really wrong, does it?"

Indeed...

Hearing Leon's retort, the robber brother couldn't help but feel uncertain, mumbled twice and closed his mouth.

Meanwhile, the robber sister, whom he shielded, observed Leon's expression for a moment, then stared fixedly into his eyes, took the initiative to speak:

"Sir... if you let him go, I can take you to find Crolock Kingdom's palace!"

Oh?

Hearing the robber sister's words, Leon raised his brow slightly, giving her a surprised look.

This kid... seems a bit capable?

After failing to hijack an airship and being tied like a grub, most people's minds should already be overloaded, but not only did she calm down, she even had the capacity to think through her idea and was actually trying to negotiate.

Although kids in this world tend to mature early, for a child around twelve or thirteen, who hasn't experienced much, this calmness and rationality are no ordinary feats...

At least she's already surpassed Nicole.

"She's addressing you, why are you staring at me?"

Feeling a bit uncomfortable under Leon's gaze, instinctively feeling he might be thinking something inappropriate, the lady reporter couldn't help but glare back, then turned her head slightly, curiously asking:

"How do you know the two of us are trying to find Crolock Kingdom's palace?"

"..."

See, that's what I said.

Seeing the robber sister slightly relax her tense body, showing a hint of joy in her eyes after hearing the lady reporter's question, Leon couldn't help but shake his head, looking somewhat helplessly at the lady reporter.

Your brain... truly got beaten by this kid.

Before you asked this question, she didn't even know what you wanted, she was just making a blind guess and probing. I could have coaxed a bit and probably extracted the answer.

But with your question, she now knows what we want, she'll certainly clutch onto her only bargaining chip. Without a substantial promise, like releasing her brother, she's certainly not going to talk.

...

"I guessed."

After glancing at the slightly clueless... innocent-looking reporter, the robber sister, while thankful for the not-so-smart one here, began to flatter, saying:

"With your temperament, both of you do not seem ordinary, nor appear to have ruthless dispositions, it's unlikely you'd waste time on two failed robbers.

So I surmised you might be trying to find something out, and among what I know, the only thing that might help 'distinguished people' like yourselves is the location of the Crolock palace."

"No wonder..."

After listening to the robber sister's explanation, the lady reporter nodded with a face of realization, then glanced in Leon's direction, her bright eyes sparkling with some surprised light, exchanged a look meaning:

Leon, see, this kid, she's so smart!

We should say, perhaps it's not her being clever, but a bit of your... naiveté?

Watching the lady reporter being dexterously led around by a half-grown kid, Leon couldn't help but rub his temple, feeling this fieldwork might not go all too smoothly.

Let's not mention anything else, but for Nicole's brains to survive in the Clean-up Bureau thus far, likely with a lot assistance from her dad.

I can already imagine when she was out executing tasks, the Aquarius Director trailing behind, helplessly and hastily cleaning up after her, and now this task of cleaning up has plainly fallen onto my shoulders.

Come to think of it... I'm doing the work her dad should be doing now, so does this make me her... step...

#### Chapter 558: The Reason (Part 2)

Unaware that Leon was eyeing him hungrily, and not knowing that his secrets had been uncovered, the female journalist started chatting with the hijacker girl after a few exchanges.

"I remember, when your brother first entered the VIP cabin, he fired a shot at the panel above, right?"

Recalling the previous situation, the female journalist curiously said:

"That shot scared the passengers, but after Leon checked, didn't he say that you two had fake guns? So how did the panel break?"

"Because I had prepared a lump of plasticine mixed with glycerin beforehand."

Although she wanted to talk seriously first, seeing the journalist's eager face, the hijacker girl reluctantly explained:

"That stuff explodes when shaken and is often used for mining. I stole a little from the mine, mixed it into plasticine, and secretly stuck it on when putting away the luggage.

My brother's gun was a toy, but it could shoot marbles. As long as he aimed at the lump of plasticine and shot, the panel, which was thin glass, would shatter directly, looking like it was shot by a gun."

So that's how it was...

After her doubts were cleared, a satisfied expression appeared on the journalist's face. Probably due to her professional curiosity, she couldn't help but ask further:

"By the way, how did you come up with this method? Did someone teach you?"

"No one taught me, I learned it myself..."

Though anxious to negotiate terms quickly, the move where Leon exposed her secrets earlier caused significant psychological pressure on the hijacker girl.

Afraid to speak to Leon directly, with the journalist being her only hope, the hijacker girl quelled her sense of urgency and patiently accepted the interview, saying:

"Our family are Cheshire miners, where one of the Crolock Kingdom's hover crystal mines is. I learned a little from watching them mix glycerin with clay to mine since childhood."

"You're amazing!"

Seemingly fond of this cute girl with a sweet tongue, the journalist affectionately patted her head and continued to inquire softly:

"Besides your brother, do you have anyone else in your family?"

"A grandmother..."

Hearing the journalist's question, the hijacker girl's expression darkened, and she replied with cold eyes:

"But she's probably dead now. Her lungs are full of dust from the hover crystal mine area, she was already beyond saving before we escaped."

Oh, this...

Surprised by the answer, the journalist's expression froze slightly, then she said apologetically:

"I'm sorry, I didn't know it was like this..."

"It's okay, we've accepted this outcome long ago."

"..."

If you've already accepted it... then why hijack the Sky Clipper?

Seeing the unique stubbornness in the hijacker girl's eyes, the journalist fell silent, then couldn't help but look at Leon with a pleading gaze.

Is she telling the truth? If so, can you let them go and not pursue the hijacking of the Sky Clipper?

What... why are you looking at me like that?

Confused by the journalist's gaze, Leon, who was fiddling with the lie detector horns, glared at her annoyed.



Darn it, I'm a good person too! Don't make it look like I'm ruthless and out to get them! I never said I would do anything to them from the start, did I?

...

These two people seem... not bad?

Noticing the exchange of glances between Leon and the journalist made the hijacker girl bite her lip slightly, then she clenched her fists tightly and lowered her head, saying softly:

"I don't know what you want, but if you're looking for Crolock Palace's location, I'm willing to stay and help as long as you let my brother go."

"No way! I don't agree!"

Unable to hold back, the hijacker brother shouted anxiously, arching his upper body while pouting:

"We agreed, you..."

"Take a break."

Stuffing a handkerchief into the hijacker brother's mouth to silence him, Leon pulled over a box to sit on, rubbed his throbbing temple, and asked:

"Let me summarize... So basically, Crolock Kingdom is mining hover crystals in your hometown, causing you to become orphans, you managed to escape from the mines, and now you want revenge against Crolock Kingdom... Is that about right?"

"Yes."

After hearing Leon's words, the hijacker girl nodded, then replied with eyes full of hatred:

"I read in a book that Crolock Kingdom is closed off from the outside world, almost impossible to enter by land, except for a few irregularly open harbors, only Sky Clippers can reach there.

After discussing with my brother, we sold the two small pieces of hover crystal we stole when escaping, bought tickets for the Sky Clipper and these things, planning to avenge our grandmother and all the people of Cheshire!"

Just as I guessed...

Hearing this, Leon couldn't help rubbing his forehead. Although soul vision proved the hijacker girl spoke the truth, he still frowned and pressed on to prevent any oversight:

"How long have you been escaped from Cheshire?"

"More than two years."

"Then why didn't you think of revenge at that time, and why are you suddenly ready to act now?"

"Because earlier, we didn't know how to take revenge."

The hijacker girl said sadly:

"We live in Creekwood Town outside the Royal Capital, not far from the Boarding Tower. Last month, when rebels attacked the Boarding Tower and burned the Sky Clipper, we could see the over 100-meter fireball from where we lived, inspiring my idea for revenge."

"..."

Good grief, you actually got your revenge inspiration from me...

Feeling helpless, Leon asked a few more questions but found no suspicious details, leading him to sigh and question the world will's reason for "arranging" this hijack.

Given the hijacker brother's antics, it was impossible to harm him, but the hijacker girl's tragic circumstances left things uncertain.

If he dug out more troubling facts, like uncovering Crolock Kingdom's dark deeds under its prosperity, he would inevitably be drawn into a massive dilemma...

...

"Let's talk about something else first."

After untying the hijacker girl, Leon, mindful of his headache, asked:

"I understand why you hijacked the Sky Clipper. Now can you tell me how you plan to find Crolock Kingdom Palace's location."

"..."

Upon hearing Leon's question, the hijacker girl hesitated slightly, not answering immediately. Instead, she rolled up her sleeve, revealing a small section of thin, dry arm covered with dark blue blood spots embedded tightly in her skin.

Chapter 559: Cheshire

"With the dust from the Hover Crystals in my body."

After showing Leon and his companion her arm covered in blood spots, under the female reporter's horrified gaze, the robber girl quietly explained:

"I was born in the Hover Crystal mining area. Even before I was born, my whole body was covered in this dust. These things are part of my body.

Grandma says Hover Crystals have an attractant nature; once activated, these tiny dust particles will naturally gather towards larger Hover Crystal masses. Every year, people in the mining area get too close to active Hover Crystals and have the dust in their bodies sucked out, tearing their throats and lungs apart.

And those Hover Crystals in the Crolock Kingdom are constantly in a low-intensity activated state. The closer I get to there, the more my body hurts. So if I try a few more times, I'm sure I can find the Crolock Palace's location."

To rely on such a method...

After hearing the robber girl's method for finding the Crolock Palace, even though Leon had somewhat prepared himself mentally, he couldn't help but fall into silence.

The robber girl hadn't purposely talked about the life she and her robber brother had before escaping from Cheshire, but from these occasional words, it wasn't hard to imagine what kind of life they had been living.

"I have a few more questions to confirm."

After a moment of silence, Leon spoke again:

"There are over eight hundred districts in the Crolock Kingdom. Each district is embedded with Hover Crystals. How can you be sure that the ones attracting you are the Hover Crystals beneath the Crolock Palace?"

"Rely on the mining area's numbering."

The robber girl replied calmly:

"Because once activated, Hover Crystals have an attractant nature. So to avoid mutual interference, the Hover Crystals below those districts are mined in different ways. The explosives' ratio, mining equipment, and cleansing materials all differ.

So in theory, the Hover Crystals mined from each area are different. My family is from Mining Area 1. Grandma heard the supervisor from the mine say that the Hover Crystals from Area 1 are specifically for the royal family's district."

I see...

After listening to the robber girl, Leon nodded slightly, while the female reporter, having recovered from her shock, suddenly stepped forward and grabbed the frighteningly slender arm, speaking somewhat incoherently:

"How can this be?! These Hover Crystals are actually so...do you...do you feel pain?"

"Not really."

Hearing the female reporter's question, the robber girl shook her head and said:

"I'm young; my body can still grow a bit. As long as I eat more, I can bear the effects brought by these dust particles. Probably when my bones stop growing and my internal organ size stops increasing, then they'll start wearing down my body."

"Wearing down?"

"Rotting away."

The robber girl pointed to the blood spots on her arm and replied steadily:

"Uncle Mazby told Grandma that when my body matures and the rate of cell replacement decreases, if it's not enough to replace these parts before rejection occurs, these blood spots will grow from the size of grains of rice to the size of beans.

Then the skin will also fail to maintain due to rejection from below, resulting in large areas of ulceration. After about a year, when these ulcers grow to pigeon egg size, my internal organs will also start having problems, and I'd probably die within half a year."

"..."

So, from the time her body stops growing taller to being tortured to death by these dust particles, there's only a year and a half?

Looking at the girl in front of her, who appeared unusually calm as though she wasn't talking about herself, the female reporter couldn't help but clench her hands tightly.

"Then you...how old are you this year?"

"Fourteen."

Fourteen...

Upon hearing the robber girl's answer, the female reporter couldn't help but bite her lip and then involuntarily averted her gaze, not knowing how to look at her anymore.

Even if nutrition could keep up, a person's rapid growth phase usually stops around seventeen or eighteen, and girls stop sooner than boys, some even as early as fifteen or sixteen.

If this child is similar, then her life is already on a countdown, and possibly in less than a year, she'll start being tortured, eventually dying covered in ulcers.

So, although she looks underage, she has practically entered a countdown and, like many aged elders, is about to reach the end of her life...

"Then you...you all..."

The female reporter, shocked by the harsh reality, couldn't continue after saying "then you" twice, silently covering her mouth, while Leon beside her chimed in:

"Now that you've left the mining area, can't the dust in your body be removed with medicine or some other method as time goes by?"

"Uncle Mazby tried; it's useless."

The robber girl shook her head:

"The activation method of Hover Crystals involves connecting to some form of energy, and Uncle Mazby says that humans have energy within their bodies that can be directly absorbed by the Hover Crystal dust.

Children like me, whose blood and organs have dust, are actually considered lucky. If the dust were in the brain or nerves, controlling the body would be impossible, and we'd die right after being born."

"Who is this Uncle Mazby you mentioned?"

"Uncle Mazby was a scholar from the Crolock Kingdom."

When mentioning the Crolock Kingdom, the robber girl's gaze slightly cooled, but then it turned somewhat complicated:

"He originally came to treat the overseers' diseases, but after seeing our conditions, he seemed to cause a stir, and then stayed in Cheshire, treating many miners for free. My brother and I managed to escape because of his help."

"And where is he now?"

"I don't know. Maybe he's dead."

The robber girl said with a somewhat somber expression:

"His health wasn't good either, and he was brushed by the Hovering dust too. His lungs were worse than Grandma's. When my brother and I escaped, he was already coughing up blood every day."

"..."

Upon hearing this, Leon couldn't help but close his eyes slightly, falling silent once again, while the female reporter, having composed herself, with slightly reddened eyes, said:

"Then if you all...if you don't go down the mine, what would the overseers from the Crolock Kingdom do to you? Would they take direct action?"

"No, the overseers from the Crolock Kingdom only care about whether the mine can operate normally and forbid anyone from leaving casually, and nothing else."

The robber girl replied through gritted teeth:

"But although they don't take direct action, in Cheshire and other big mining areas, plants can't grow, there are almost no animals, and everything, including food, has to be exchanged for the Hover Crystals mined!"

So if you don't want to starve to death, the only option is to go into the mine and excavate Hover Crystals?



Understanding Cheshire's 'operational' model, the female reporter bit her own lip so hard it left deep white marks, while Leon sighed inwardly, took out a silver knife, and cut the ropes bound around the robber siblings.

"I accept your offer."

Chapter 560: Xue Xiao

"Ding~"

Accompanied by the subtle sound of a knob turning into a slot on the dashboard, above the docking area of the Crolock Kingdom's airfield, twelve pairs of massive panels quickly slid open to the sides, revealing the densely packed docking stations below.

Immediately, the Sky Clipper, with a length exceeding four hundred meters and a passenger section suspended beneath measuring over a hundred and fifty meters, slowly docked into Airport No. 7 under the guidance of one of the docking stations.

Finally arrived.

When the hatch of the VIP cabin opened and a gust of fresh air rushed in, Leon glanced at the airfield filled with various steel constructions, then slightly bent his waist and stepped out of the cabin door, expressionless as he stepped onto the red plush carpeted escalator.

"Welcome, Your Highness!"

Although due to time constraints, the kingdom's diplomatic mission did not take the special airship of the secret port, but instead, the nearest passenger Sky Clipper, the reception standards from the Crolock Kingdom side were still adequately presented on the surface.

Even before Leon had completely disembarked from the Sky Clipper, two teams of people were already waiting on either side of the escalator. At the moment he appeared, they greeted him in unison.

Standing foremost in the honor guard, a youth in lavishly ornate clothes embroidered with half of a mechanical clock on his chest, walked up briskly with a smile, extending his right hand towards Leon.

"Lord Leon, I am Andre, the third prince of the Crolock Kingdom, representing the entirety of the Crolock royal family to welcome your visit."

Without even reaching the tiger's mouth, merely grasping half of Leon's palm in a light handshake, the youth who claimed to be the third prince politely but somewhat assertively arranged:

"Due to the rather tight schedule this time, and considering you are surely eager to attend to affairs, I've instructed to skip the overly complicated welcoming ceremonies. Please lead the members of your mission to the cars, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is already awaiting you in Administrative District No. 3."

If it was a genuine diplomatic envoy, faced with such somewhat impolite "informative" reception, they would likely not have a pleasant expression even if they didn't act up immediately. But Leon said nothing, merely nodded slightly, then led a few other members of his delegation toward the arranged vehicles.

It seems this Prince Leon might be someone easy to handle.

From Leon's reaction, the youth simply judged his character, and the smile that was barely considered cordial on his face was instantly tinged with a hint of perfunctoriness. He even skipped any further introductions, merely gesturing towards the open hovercar door with an inviting gesture.

Could it be that this third prince is actually someone with a rather proud nature?

Similarly assessing the character of the youth in extravagant clothing, Leon, who didn't care about the increasingly perfunctory reception, was happy to avoid false pretenses with others, merely glancing at him before boarding the vehicle and seating himself, beginning to close his eyes to rest.

However, after both were seated for a while, the hovercar still did not take off.

Subsequently, a close aide holding a thick book hurried over from where the other mission members were undergoing identity verification, first bowing respectfully toward the young man with his eyes closed, then frowning slightly as he addressed Leon:

"Your Highness, may I ask why your delegation has two more people than reported?"

Faced with the aide's question, which, though phrased respectfully, was evidently lacking in courtesy, Leon's eyebrows raised slightly before he responded:

"The extra ones are my maid and bodyguard who attend to my needs. These two individuals are not official members of the mission and were therefore not reported along with the others... Is there a problem?"

"There is indeed a bit of a problem."

Though appearing respectful, the aide's tone was far from polite as he said:

"The Crolock Kingdom differs from your country; we are much more meticulous here. All travel requires records, and identity verification cards must be used. Your mission underreported two people, so we have two fewer identification cards prepared, which may cause you inconvenience."

"I see."

Upon hearing this, Leon turned to look at him and calmly stated:

"First, give them my ID card for use. I can use Andre's Highness's ID card, then also take out your ID card, this way, your lack of preparation won't inconvenience us."

"???"

"Do you have any more questions?"

Of course, I do!

Seeing Leon solve the issue with just a few words and even shift the blame, along with the third prince's now open eyes looking over with dissatisfaction, the aide's face reddened with displeasure as he argued:

"Your Highness, you were the ones who underreported the numbers, it's not my..."

"I'm not in a good mood right now."

After glancing at the pair of siblings who had changed clothes in the distance, Leon interrupted the aide, and with a face tinged with coldness, he announced:

"So, let's leave it at that; don't force me to slap you."

?!!!

Confronted with Leon's reminder, which completely lacked the elegance expected of nobility and was blunt to the extreme, the aide, already slightly red, turned purple with indignation and said:

"You..."

"Smack!"

Seeing that he still wouldn't take a hint, Leon, whose mood had been ruined after hearing about the siblings' plight, simply raised his hand and delivered a slap, promptly knocking the clearly provocative aide to the ground, then turned his gaze to the youth seated opposite him in the compartment.

"Your Highness Andre, is there a problem with how I handled this?"

"It's fine."

Casting a glance at the aide on the floor clutching his face, clearly slapped senseless, the lavishly dressed youth impatiently instructed:

"Don't waste time; quickly do as His Highness said! The minister is still waiting!"

"Okay... alright..."

Seeing that the third prince had no intention of seeking justice for him, the aide could only pick up the book dropped on the ground, clutch his face, and return to his tasks, while the two inside the compartment once again closed their eyes to rest, reassessing each other mentally.

This Prince Leon seems not only not soft at all but potentially astonishingly tough...?

The aide wasn't enraged after being slapped, so it seems this third prince isn't naturally proud but... simply afraid of trouble?

...

"Everyone, the reason I've gathered you here this time is that I've discovered two very dangerous pieces of intelligence."

Just as Leon and the third prince sat silently with their eyes closed, proceeding toward Administrative District No. 3, around a long table made from unknown biological bones, a group of mysterious masked figures all stared at the head of the table, listening intently to the person sitting there.

"The first piece of intelligence is that following the failed operation targeting 'Pride' last time, all twelve Zodiac Branch Offices of the Clean-up Bureau have started self-examinations, and our existence as the Slaughter King Association may have been completely exposed."

What?!!!

Upon hearing the host's announcement, the masked figures couldn't help but express their shock, and the Dongya mask, who had previously clashed with the Aquarius Director, angrily said:

"I told you long ago, that Aquarius Director cannot be trusted!"

Meanwhile, the woman with the black cat mask said hesitantly:

"I also think he's very suspicious, should we reconsider our collaboration with the Aquarius Director?"

"But this opportunity is indeed very good; it would be a pity to let it go."

"The opportunity is good, but the cost of failure is also great!"

"Enough, let's discuss further collaboration with the Aquarius Director later! There are more important matters at hand now!"

After knocking on the table, making everyone quiet down, the individual seated at the head turned to the girl wearing a white owl mask next to them, and with a steady voice announced:

"Xue Xiao, while others' situations are unclear, the 'Sloth' you are responsible for monitoring has been completely exposed, and the Clean-up Bureau's investigators have most likely already arrived."