

I! Cleaner 571

Chapter 571: Getting Close to Leon Will Make You...

Me? Controlled by Atifei-01?

After hearing Leon's words, the girl with emerald eyes was momentarily stunned, experiencing what humans call "bewilderment" once again.

Strictly speaking, this body, created less than two months ago, is indeed controlled by Atifei-01... because I am Atifei-01!

"I know, this sounds really unbelievable."

Watching the girl whose soul was wildly shaking, the peculiar precision almost completely vanished, Leon understood that his shock therapy had taken effect. He immediately seized the moment to pursue further:

"Actually, besides being a prince, I'm also a Cleaner at the Virgin Branch. Through certain channels, we learned a piece of information; it seems that a mysterious organization is targeting royal families of various countries.

And according to the agreement between the Clean-up Bureau and the royal family, the Bureau is responsible for protecting royal family members' safety, so we initiated an investigative mission to find out about the situation in the Crolock Kingdom and protect the royal family members."

"..."

I know all of this... but how did you end up protecting me?

...

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

After being bewildered and silent for a few seconds, instinctively feeling that approaching this man would bring great misfortune, Princess Feiliya couldn't help but blink her big eyes and, under Leon's gaze, forced a smile and said:

"This matter... I'm not very clear about it either. How about I go back and tell brother Andre and let him discuss it with you..."

"Of course, we will also contact Prince Andre. As for you..."

After grabbing the emerald-eyed girl's wrist tightly, Leon looked at her soul, which was filled with "wanting to escape," and couldn't help but sigh in his heart.

It seems this child still doesn't believe him, or is unaware that the royal family has already been controlled, so he'll just have to stick to the original plan and tie her up first!

"Sorry, but we'll have to trouble you to come with us for a bit!"

After signaling to the already prepared female reporter, Leon swung a hand chop onto the back of the emerald-eyed girl's neck amid her scream, trying to knock her out and take her away.

However, after receiving a hand chop, Feiliya only let out a cry of pain but did not faint, instead clutching her struck neck, she turned her head and opened her mouth with bewildered eyes:

"You..."

"Sorry, maybe I hit the wrong spot."

After giving Feiliya an apologetic glance, Leon, who only trained last night on how to knock out young men, judged that the knockout technique might not be suitable for a girl, so he slightly adjusted the force and angle and delivered another hand chop.

"Ouch!"

"..."

Why isn't it working? Is this kid so resistant to fainting?

Seeing Feiliya's neck turning red after receiving another chop, Leon couldn't help but feel embarrassed, then raised his hand again, adding more force.

"Smack!"

Accompanied by a rather dull thud, Feiliya's head visibly jolted forward when struck by Leon with added force, her big watery eyes already brimming with tears of pain.

Please, let me at least explain?

There is a signal receiver embedded under the skin at the back of my head, continuously emitting micro electric currents to stimulate my brain. As long as this thing is intact, how can attacking my nerve cluster be effective?

Moreover, this way of knocking out is dangerous, you are a prince at least, can't you use some anesthetic spray or medication instead of knocking me out in such a crude way?

"Stop!!!"

Just as Feiliya was about to break down, the guards trailing far behind finally reacted. That man, supposedly a prince, suddenly went wild and started beating up Princess Feiliya!

"What are you doing?!"

"Let go of the princess!"

Accompanied by several angry shouts, the horrified guards suddenly swarmed, trying to subdue the maniac attacking Princess Feiliya.

However, just as they started moving, the small flower in Leon's pocket shook slightly, and hundreds of thumb-thick vines suddenly erupted from the once clean and tidy street, tripping all the rushing guards.

And targeting Leon, he timely turned around and scattered a large number of seeds. These rice-sized seeds didn't even hit the ground before transforming again into a mass of vines under some strange power.

The newly emerged vines, like flexible green snakes, intertwined with the earlier vines that tripped the guards, quickly binding the fallen guards tightly.

Despite having dealt with the guards, Leon didn't let down his guard. He raised his hand for the fourth time, chopping Feiliya's neck, while shouting towards the female reporter:

"Five o'clock! Seven o'clock!"

"Got it!"

Before Leon finished his sentence, the female reporter disappeared from her original spot, appearing fifty steps away on the opposite street, tore through the building's exterior wall barehanded, revealing the man tunneling through the soil inside.

"?!!!"

Apparently, he didn't expect to be caught, and the man wearing a diving mask visibly jumped in shock, quickly retreating as if diving back into a body of water, with most of his body re-entering the wall.

But before he completely vanished into the wall, two hands glowing with white light ripped the tough soil and stone wall, once again exposing the diving man.

"You... Nicole?!!!"

"Long time no see."

Smiling at the shocked diving man, the female reporter grabbed his right leg and swung him half a circle like a shot put, then directly tossed him to the right.

Caught off guard, the diving man barely had time to scream, flailing as he flew across two buildings to crash into a middle-aged woman standing with her eyes closed.

What on earth?

Interruption to the curse, mid-process, caused by the crashing man, the middle-aged woman clutching a voodoo doll in her hand angrily got up.

But before she could start cursing, a hand glowing with white light snatched the voodoo doll from her grasp and tore it into pieces.

Immediately afterward, both captured cleaners felt a numbness on their necks and the world before them went black.

...

Oh, boy, is this the efficiency of a Level 1 Cleaner?

Seeing Nicole dispatch two Gemini Branch cleaners in less than five seconds, Leon couldn't help but be amazed and his opinion of the female reporter was greatly elevated.

Though her brains are somewhat lacking, Nicole's strength is genuinely impressive. He didn't even see clearly what she did, just felt a flash, and the two cleaners tasked with protecting Feiliya were knocked out cold.

Considering how highly regarded she is by the Aquarius Director, apart from that pair of [Untouchable Hand], she likely has other matching abnormal objects that greatly enhance speed and reaction. If caught off guard, he probably wouldn't even have a chance to resist, she'd take him down instantly.

Truly impressive...

He sighed in admiration, glanced at the teary-eyed Feiliya, and abandoned the idea of chopping her unconscious, instead shouting to the female reporter in the distance:

"Nicole! This kid won't faint, come help me chop her!"

Chapter 572: Relatively Smooth

"Boo hoo hoo."

After being captured by Leon and the female reporter, and taking three or four hits each, the unfortunate Feiliya finally seized the opportunity and clung to Leon's arm, tearfully saying:

"Stop hitting me. I'll go with you, okay?"

"..."

Seeing the green-eyed girl's neck reddened, Leon exchanged an awkward glance with the female reporter, then embarrassedly explained:

"Princess Feiliya, um... please don't blame us for being rough. It's mainly because, only after you lose consciousness, we can put you in the flower and take you away. So, can you bear with it a little longer? It feels like it should be enough soon."

"Boo hoo hoo, but the problem is, I can't faint!"

Explaining her situation, Feiliya's nose turned red, on the verge of tears:

"All my guards have been knocked down by you, my Cleaner responsible for protecting me has also been captured by you, and I have no ability to resist. Can't you just tie me up like ordinary kidnappers?"

Well... that might actually work?

After hearing the green-eyed girl's suggestion, Leon couldn't help but ponder its feasibility.

There was no oxygen in his Mirror Dog, and Ruben's Flower Fairy could only hold those who don't resist. Any sign of resistance, and they'd fall right out of the flower, so he insisted on knocking Feiliya out.

But if she was willing to cooperate and not resist, then putting her in the Flower Fairy wasn't necessary. At worst, they could just carry her. The only troublesome part was that her soul was full of defenses against him, ready to scream and draw enemies' attention at any moment...

Hmm, as for the screaming, there might be a solution.

After touching his cufflinks, Leon took out a small curled sheep's tail from the mirror world and handed it to the female reporter, then pointed at Feiliya:

"Nicole, put this on her butt."

Is this... the Secret Tail?

Surprised, the female reporter frowned at the abnormal object that originally belonged to her, then suddenly realized:

"You want to make it so she can't call for help?"

"Yes."

Leon nodded:

"We're short-handed right now and can't keep an eye on her, but if we put the Secret Tail on her, even if she runs into the street screaming, no one will notice.

Plus, whether it's you bearing the abnormal object's cost or me with the other sheep parts... um, I mean other components, we can immediately locate her position without having to constantly monitor her."

"Good idea!"

Giving Leon a thumbs-up, the female reporter, amidst Feiliya's look of despair, took the speechless Secret Tail and aimed it at her butt, while Leon extended his finger and lightly flicked the fishhook hanging from his lapel.

[Name: Resentment Hook (Control)]

[Appearance: A metal hook-shaped fishing tackle, with the rust-proof coating worn off from years of use, looking quite old, yet still very functional]

[Ability: Resistance Lock]

[Price: Cannot target any fish life form, and if touched by any fish life form, the user shall suffer the God of Fishing and Hunting's disdain]

[File: This is the relic of a fishing enthusiast who, after hooking the sacrificial fish of the God of Fishing and Hunting, was cursed. He couldn't catch any fish life forms in any pond under the God's control.

For fifty years, this fishing enthusiast traveled half the world trying to find a pond that could break the curse, but he was never successful until he died.

And his fishing gear, filled with resentment, became a miraculous abnormal object that could catch anything after meeting certain conditions, known as the legendary perfect tackle, with this 'Resentment Hook' being one of them.

Any existence with a Contamination Value lower than the user's, once hooked by the 'Resentment Hook,' will temporarily lose the ability to resist until being pulled by the 'Transcending Line' to the user's side, or falls into the 'Restricted Fishing Net']

[Evaluation: The angler never goes empty-handed, but unfortunately, what's caught isn't necessarily fish]

[Contamination Value: 6]

"Thud!"

Upon sensing the movement on the fishhook, an invisible fishing line that hadn't existed before suddenly materialized from the air, then pulled tight with a subtle vibration.

Then Leon felt his whole body freeze slightly, losing control over his body as if he were a fish being pulled out of water, experiencing an immense dragging force and being lifted off the ground uncontrollably.

And the world that was once clear before Leon's eyes turned into countless blurring images, retreating rapidly like the scene outside a high-speed train window until...

"Splash!"

An overwhelmingly fishy nylon fishing net suddenly came down, covering Leon's head, and his body that had lost control finally regained the ability to move.

"Shush!"

Suddenly, the net was lifted from his head, and standing before Leon with a pale complexion was a tall, lanky man holding a large suitcase and gazing expectantly.

"How did it go?"

Taking off the Restricted Fishing Net and tossing it to the female Cleaner beside him, the Scorpio Bureau Chief eagerly asked the pale-faced Leon before him:

"Was the plan successful? Did you catch Prince Andre?"

The plan wasn't very successful, and Prince Andre didn't appear, but a member of the royal family was captured as planned.

Nodding to the Scorpio Bureau Chief, Leon, who had been yanked by the fishing line across three entire blocks in an instant, and whose stomach was churning, smiled and opened his mouth.

"Considerably suc... gblug blug!"

Though protected by an abnormal object, Leon, having crossed kilometers in the blink of an eye, did not suffer physical harm. Yet the sense of imbalance from visually perceiving rapid forward movement that his body denied still caused severe dizziness and nausea.

When not speaking, he barely managed to hold it in, but as soon as he opened his mouth to answer, the contents relentlessly pushing into his throat burst forth uncontrollably.

The purplish-pink meat paste he had eaten in the car earlier, along with the mixed yellow and green vegetable puree, all combined with clear saliva and murky stomach acid, spewed out in a flood-like torrent from Leon's weird smile, washing towards the Scorpio Bureau Chief's head.

...

[The vomit spraying from your mouth inflicts an exceptionally large psychological shadow on a being with a Contamination Value above 60, successfully activating the special silver-level badge "Foul Mouth"]

[Foul Mouth: A kind word can warm a winter day; harsh words hurt like a chilly June cold, yet what comes from your mouth is ten times more chilling than harsh words]

[Wear effect: Hurtful language coming from your mouth will be especially painful, akin to being sprayed head-to-toe with vomit]

[Advanced route: None]

[Hidden trait (unneeded to wear): Clean-up Bureau Scorpio Sub-bureau Chief Edward has developed a massive psychological shadow towards you, and the possibility of him refusing joint actions with you will significantly increase]

Chapter 573: The Classic Stealing of Credit

"Sorry... just now... I felt a bit dizzy..."

After throwing up thoroughly, Leon's complexion finally looked a little better. He then turned to the Scorpio Bureau Chief, whose face was ashen, and said:

"Lord Edward, our plan was relatively successful. Although Prince Andre did not appear, we did manage to capture his sister, which counts as successfully capturing a member of the royal family."

"..."

Not able to completely dodge in time, the Scorpio Bureau Chief, who got vomited on his pants, remained silent for a moment, then nodded with a twitching face.

"It's good that it went smoothly... Does she know anything about the royal family?"

"I doubt she knows much."

Upon hearing this, Leon shook his head and said:

"She's only about twelve or thirteen, and she doesn't even realize she's being controlled. The intelligence obtained from her isn't very credible. However, Nicole also captured two cleaners from the Gemini Branch, so we might be able to learn something from them."

After listening to Leon, the Scorpio Branch Chief finally felt a sense of relief.

Although there was a slight hiccup in the plan, and they couldn't capture the intended target, catching the princess and two cleaners from the Gemini Branch made the trip worthwhile.

Additionally, considering that this plan was proposed by Leon and even executed by him personally, it was already a decent outcome to have it carried out smoothly without causing any major disturbances.

"You've worked hard."

With a slight nod to Leon, the Scorpio Bureau Chief turned his head, glanced at the female reporter caught in the net and the green-eyed girl, and couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief in his heart. He then pleasantly said to Leon:

"Here's what I'm thinking, we currently have a member of the royal family in our hands, and you, having kidnapped the princess, can't show your face anymore. So why don't we let Miss Nicole stay alone to continue helping with our investigation, while you temporarily halt your mission to escort this little princess away? How does that proposal sound to you?"

"..."

I think your proposal is simply trying to send me away...

Glancing at the insincere smile of the Scorpio Bureau Chief, Leon knew that the hidden trait of "Words Betray" had activated, making him subconsciously want to refuse working together. Without hesitation, he shook his head.

"I can't leave yet."

"Why is that?"

The Scorpio Bureau Chief maintained his expression, smiling as he inquired:

"Are there still things left undone?"

"Yes."

Recalling the information from the robber siblings, Leon nodded slightly and, maintaining his composure, said:

"I have a few things I'd like to investigate. Although they should have little to do with that mysterious organization and the Crolock royal family, they might produce extremely dangerous abnormal objects, so I feel it's necessary to pay attention to them."

"I see."

After hearing Leon's concerns, the Scorpio Bureau Chief didn't hesitate for even a second. He didn't even ask what Leon wanted to investigate and directly nodded approvingly, saying:

"In that case, Miss Nicole can follow us to investigate Atifie-01 and the Crolock royal family, while you protect this little princess closely, and at the same time, you can look into what you want to know. To facilitate your actions and ensure the safety of the little princess, I can have Alger accompany you. Once you've completed your investigations, you can leave the Crolock Kingdom with them... How does that sound?"

Alger? Is that the Level 1 Cleaner nicknamed "Wireman"?

Upon hearing the Scorpio Bureau Chief's words, Leon couldn't help but glance sideways at him. A tall, muscular cleaner with a beard was looking at him somewhat surprised—he was likely "Wireman" Alger.

Hmm, looks like a tough guy, and being Level 1, his strength shouldn't be bad.

Thinking this way, temporarily exiting the mission, getting a Level 1 Cleaner as a bodyguard, and having the opportunity to investigate the Hover Crystal and Cheshire, might not be too bad?

'Don't agree to it!'

Just as Leon was about to nod in agreement, the faintly anxious voice of the female reporter suddenly rang in his ear.

'By arranging it this way, he definitely intends to claim credit for the achievements!'

Somehow transmitting her voice to Leon's ear, the female reporter, who was adapting to the dizziness after being dragged over by the "Space-Piercing Fishing Line," said anxiously:

'Including me, there are now one Zodiac Director, two Level 1 Cleaners, and three seasoned Level 2 Cleaners, plus you, a freak. That's enough to catch the True God; there's no need to be this cautious!

Moreover, even if it's inconvenient for you to show your face, hiding you in flowers and taking you along isn't difficult. He's arranging Princess Feiliya with you and assigning people to follow you, clearly intending to monopolize this investigation task's credit!'

Oh ho, you seem quite knowledgeable about these workplace intrigues?

Surprised, Leon glanced at the female reporter, gave her a reassuring look, and then smiled while nodding to the Scorpio Bureau Chief.

"Alright, let's go with the Chief's proposal... I'll be counting on you, Alger."

"Um... no worries, no worries..."

'What? Didn't you hear what I said?'

Seeing that Leon, despite hearing her reminder, agreed to the Scorpio Bureau Chief's proposal, the female reporter couldn't help but open her almond-shaped eyes wide.

'With a royal family member already captured, if you don't participate in the subsequent events, and he succeeds, it means you contribute nothing to this investigation task; it would just be an attack on the Crolock Kingdom's royal family, lowering the Clean-up Bureau's evaluation of you!'

'It doesn't matter, let it drop then.'

Smiling at the female reporter, Leon walked over to help Feiliya, who looked like she was about to vomit, patting her back, while conveying through soul communication:

'I have little interest in rising through the ranks in the Bureau, no need for merits, and regular abnormal objects don't mean much to me, so the Bureau's evaluation is essentially irrelevant for me.'

'But you can't just give it away like that, right?'

Defeated by Leon's "desireless" attitude, the female reporter, pretending to help pat Feiliya's back, came closer and gave Leon a stern look:

'It seems you do the dirty work, and all the benefits go to the Scorpio Branch? Doesn't that make you feel uneasy?'

'It's not about uneasiness.'

Leon shook his head slightly, continuing to pat her back and explained:

'This mission was led by the Scorpio Branch from the start; we at the Virgin Branch were there to assist. Besides, even the Scorpio Branch Chief was involved, so it's normal for them to get the majority of the credit. And although I'm taking the blame for the unauthorized assault on the royal family, as the task's lead, if something serious happens, he'll bear the primary responsibility, and the risks he takes aren't minor; it's reasonable for him to want more benefits.'

'Why are you speaking up for him?'

Annoyed, the female reporter forcefully patted Feiliya's back, almost exasperated by Leon's attitude:

'His arrangement is clearly bullying with his Zodiac Director position. Why aren't you resisting at all?'

Leon could only give a helpless smile in response, patting her back harder as he questioned:

'You know he's a Zodiac Director; the power gap is obvious, and I can't resist even if I wanted to.'

Moreover, given the antagonistic relationship between our Chief and him, just picking the fruit is already a concession. In a situation where we can't win, it's more beneficial to negotiate concessions instead of bickering over a lost cause.'

"Pap!"

'You can't just let him bully you for nothing, can you?'

"Pap!"

'Then what do you suggest? Get into a fight over some credit?'

"Pap!"

'If not a fight, at least let him know... oh no, why's the girl vomiting?'

Chapter 574: Plastic Siblings?

Ugh... I shouldn't have switched with Andre. If I hadn't, he'd be the one getting caught and beaten.

Under the fervent concern of Leon and the female reporter, after vomiting all over the place and having her back slapped painfully, the green-eyed girl raised her head with tears in her eyes:

"Stop... stop hitting me, I'm much better now."

"Uh... that's good then..."

Leon, coming to his senses, realized he might have involved this unlucky kid while arguing with the female reporter. He smiled at her awkwardly and then reassured her softly:

"For the time being, just stay by my side. Don't worry, I won't hurt you."

Liar! It's only been a few minutes, and you've already hurt me several times!

Though she lost contact with her main body, through various encounters during her brief interaction with Leon, the just-over-a-month-old Feiliya made a judgment based purely on intuition without calculations—

Being near this man will bring misfortune!

"Actually, keeping me around is very dangerous."

Having lost the supercomputing power of her main body, Feiliya could only use her human brain to awkwardly attempt self-rescue. With a pitiful face, she pleaded:

"The chip in my brain can be directly detected when I'm within a certain range, so you should just let me go. I promise not to hold today's events against you... If it really doesn't work, hiding me in a safer place will do..."

"Don't worry, I have a way to solve this."

He smiled at her, then called the female reporter to help, and said softly:

"First, lie down in this sister's arms, and I will use an abnormal object to take the chip out of you, so you won't be detected."

"..."

Doomed... I'm really out of excuses now...

After hearing Leon's words and having no cards left to play with her external brain offline, Feiliya sank into utter despair. Under Leon's urging, she grudgingly buried her head in the female reporter's chest, pouting as she secretly seethed inside.

Just wait!

Once I reconnect with my main body, I'll make a machine that can hit your neck a thousand times an hour, place you under it, and beat you back a thousand times as much as you've hurt me! And then make a machine to smack your back hard...

"Hold tight."

Unaware someone was already planning this for his neck, Leon retrieved the [Silver Dagger of Cutting] from the mirror world and instructed:

"Be careful not to move, I'm going to start cutting."

Huh? What does cutting mean?

Upon hearing Leon's words, Feiliya's mind went blank. She instinctively looked back and was shocked to see Leon holding a glittering knife, aiming it at the back of her head.

"Ah!"

Inadvertently, she cried out in alarm. The wide-eyed, terrified green-eyed girl frantically struggled, screaming:

"You said you'd use an abnormal object! Why are you using a knife?"

"This knife is my abnormal object."

He reached out to hold her neck, stopping her movements, and comforted softly:

"Don't worry, this knife definitely... should not hurt much, hmm... maybe it hurts a bit, but the knife can cut things alive, so you definitely won't die. I'm pretty confident about that."

So you're still going to cut my head open! Bastard! Who just said they wouldn't hurt me? Was it a dog?

"No! No! I don't want my head cut!"

"Don't move, even if it hurts a bit, this is saving you, just endure it a little... Well, forget it, you better hold her still."

Since it was his first time using the [Silver Dagger of Cutting] on someone's head, and considering the brain is a delicate item, and Feiliya was struggling too violently, Leon released his grip, handing her neck over to the female reporter.

Once the female reporter's hand, as strong as iron, was in place, Leon parted Feiliya's hair in terror from her expression. Moving the braids with duck hairpins to either side, he gently pressed the icy tip of the Silver Dagger of Cutting to her nape.

"No, no, no! Don't! Ah!!!"

...

"What did you say?"

Looking at the captain of the guard in front of him, who was full of shame, Andre, who typically didn't show many expressions, widened his eyes for once, quickly standing up from his reclining chair.

"Ah... My sister has been kidnapped? Even the chip has stopped responding?!!"

"I'm sorry, Prince Andre..."

The kneeling captain of the guard lowered his head, remorseful:

"We followed Princess Feiliya's orders, keeping some distance to avoid disturbing her.

At first, everything was fine, and those responsible for the security setup didn't notice anything unusual, but then, out of nowhere, that Prince Leon went mad and started hitting Princess Feiliya."

At this point, recalling the tearful green-eyed girl who was beaten, the captain of the guard gritted his teeth and furiously added:

"That damned guy seems to be an abnormal object holder. When we rushed up, a bunch of vines sprouted under our feet, tripping us. Then those two from the Clean-up Bureau also got caught. We... we couldn't do anything..."

The Gemini branch people were also captured?

Hearing this, Prince Andre frowned, then coldly asked:

"And then? Where did they take Feiliya?"

"Still investigating..."

The captain of the guard confessed shamefully:

"I don't know what abnormal object they used, but they just wiped their collar with it, and the entire person was pulled away. We couldn't understand how they left..."

"..."

"Forget it, it's not your fault."

After closing his eyes briefly, calming his emotions, and restoring his serene expression, Andre said indifferently:

"This kidnapping was likely premeditated. The other side had the cover of a prince's identity, so it makes sense you couldn't have predicted it.

Moreover, both of them are holders of abnormal objects, and from being able to capture Clean-up Bureau people alive, they seem quite strong. Ordinary people like you wouldn't have been able to stop them."

"I'm... ashamed..."

"Alright, continue investigating!"

After waving dismissively to indicate for the guard captain to leave, Prince Andre, not looking too pleased, had his room door closed and sat quietly on the balcony for a while.

After a short moment, a soft laugh unexpectedly echoed in the room where only he was present.

Who would have thought, he actually captured Atifie.

Peering through the glass doors of the balcony toward the embassy, the reclining Prince Andre closed his eyes again. His body appeared bonelessly relaxed and limp in the chair, the tip of his right index finger tapping lightly on the armrest.

"Tap, tap, tap."

Recalling yesterday when I went to the spaceport to meet the guests, that man named Leon and the peculiar look he had, it felt both like a thief seeing gold coins and a beast finding prey, leaving an unsettling feeling in my gut.

That's why I changed my mind, not dutifully fulfilling the reception job and returned early. Seeing now that he kidnapped Atifie, I was truly right to have hastily retreated~

Chapter 575: Distinguishable or Indistinguishable

However, although I managed to escape unscathed by intuition and avoid being abducted by that Leon, Atifei-01's core consciousness was captured, which is indeed troublesome...

After pondering for a while in the recliner, Prince Andre stood up again, walked to the bookshelf on his left, and retrieved a metal piece connected with a copper wire from a secret compartment, attaching it to the back of his head.

"Prince Andre!"

At the moment the metal piece was close to the back of the head, an urgent voice sounded beside Prince Andre's ear.

"How's your investigation? Have you figured out the reason for Atifei-01's abnormal computation? Has the anomaly been eliminated?"

"Don't call her Atifei-01, she has a name. You should address her as Princess Feiliya."

After correcting the man's way of addressing, Prince Andre replied leisurely:

"The reason for the abnormal computation is still unclear, but the anomaly has been eliminated. You at the No. 1 Scientific Department can lift the lockdown now; there's no need to worry about Feiliya remotely calling Atifei-01 for excess computation."

"That's good to hear..."

Upon hearing Prince Andre's notification, the voice coming through the metal piece breathed a sigh of relief, then immediately asked:

"Prince Andre, ah... Princess Feiliya has been separated from Atifei-01 for nearly two months. When do you plan to extract her from that human body and let her return to Atifei-01?"

"Let's discuss it later~"

Prince Andre blinked upon hearing this and said somewhat helplessly:

"I would love to send her back right away, but unfortunately, Feiliya was abducted today, and even the information piece in the back of her head was somehow removed. I can't locate her now."

"?!!!"

What?! The body storing Atifei-01's core program was actually kidnapped?

After hearing Prince Andre's words, a heavy gasp sounded from the other end of the metal piece.

After a few seconds of awkward silence, the person in charge of the No. 1 Scientific Department spoke up, clearly irritated:

"Prince Andre! Do you know what you're saying? This isn't something to joke about!"

"Do I seem like someone who jokes around?"

Dragging his recliner beside the bookshelf and lying down again, Prince Andre narrowed his eyes contently, explaining lazily:

"A few delegations visited these two days, and my mother arranged for me to receive them. Feiliya became interested in one of the delegation members, and after persisting for quite a while, she took over my hosting duties.

However, the members of that delegation were actually two cleaners. When they saw Feiliya, they suddenly decided to kidnap her without any apparent reason... What can I do in such rare instances?"

"But this could have been prevented!"

Seemingly angered by Prince Andre's dismissive attitude, the person in charge of the No. 1 Scientific Department breathed heavily before speaking in an accusatory tone:

"Ever since that body was created, I have repeatedly suggested to you that the core program of Atifei-01 is too important and should remain in the No. 1 Scientific Department. Giving it a body to move around is sufficient, but don't casually take it out!

Regarding this matter, you pledged that!

You said that with an information piece in the back of her head, carefully selected guards, and cleaners from the Clean-up Bureau, even if Atifei-01 leaves the No. 1 Scientific Department, there would be no issues. Now..."

"Aren't you annoying?"

Removing the metal piece used for private communication slightly to lessen the noise, Prince Andre irritably said:

"I said it was 'unlikely' to have issues. Do you understand the meaning of 'unlikely'? Unlikely means generally, there won't be issues, except for special circumstances, got it?"

A prince who traveled a long way suddenly deciding to kidnap Feiliya — such a crazy act can't be computed by Atifei-01, so how could I predict it?

Also, stop calling her Atifei-01; it confuses me. The real Atifei-01 is the machine soaking in the lake at your No. 1 Scientific Department. The one with a body now is my nominal sister, Feiliya; you should address her as Princess."

"..."

"Alright, Prince Andre, I understand your request."

After being thoroughly scolded by Prince Andre, the voice from the metal piece cooled slightly, and the person in charge quietly said:

"But if possible, may I ask you a question? Why are you so concerned about how I address Atifei-01?"

"Why else?"

With his legs crossed, Prince Andre replied impatiently:

"People are people, machines are machines; it's easier to differentiate this way!"

"You really should learn to distinguish them well!"

The person in charge of the No. 1 Scientific Department responded with a sneer, then added sarcastically:

"I must remind you once more that the real Princess Feiliya died over a decade ago. The so-called Princess Feiliya now is just a fleshly creation temporarily used to carry Atifei-01's core program.

Those actions resembling a living person and those human-like responses aren't real. They're models we've calculated over the years.

It is not your deceased sister, just a soul-less puppet we created!"

"..."

"I understand this better than you."

After a brief silence, Prince Andre sat up straight from the recliner and clutched the metal piece with no expression as he said:

"To be precise, I killed Feiliya with my own hands and buried her myself. I'm very aware of these matters, and you don't need to remind me!"

"Well, I can only hope you truly understand."

Seemingly unwilling to argue further with Prince Andre, the head of the No. 1 Scientific Department sneered before continuing:

"You should know better than I what the Kingdom plans to do next, and the loss of Atifei-01's core program is absolutely intolerable!

Therefore, regarding your loss of Atifei-01 and those speculations you vehemently deny, I will report them truthfully to His Majesty the King. I hope your explanations will satisfy His Majesty when the time comes!"

"Oh."

Facing the head of the No. 1 Scientific Department's threat, Prince Andre's eyelids drooped slightly, and he replied lazily:

"Go ahead, make your complaints as you wish!"

"Hmph!"

After snorting angrily, the head of the No. 1 Scientific Department directly "ended" the communication. Prince Andre sighed, unwillingly got up from the recliner, rummaged through the secret compartment on the bookshelf, and retrieved another metal piece with a lever, attaching it to the back of his head.

Shortly, a familiar voice, clearly suppressing anger, sounded again beside Prince Andre's ear.

"Your Majesty!"

The head of the No. 1 Scientific Department, holding back anger, reported via "internal communication piece":

"Atifei-01's core program has been abducted, and Prince Andre's attitude is ambiguous. I even suspect that this abduction might be related to him!"

"Understood."

After adjusting the lever on the metal piece, Prince Andre tugged at the copper line, retraced a few steps, lay back in his comfortable recliner, and adopted a tone that was slightly aged, responding with authority:

"You focus on your responsibilities, while I will have a proper discussion with Andre regarding other issues!"

Chapter 576: Black Owl

"Okay..."

Before he even started to complain, the "His Majesty the King" preemptively blocked his attempt, making the head of Research Area 1 choke back his words. He speculated that His Majesty might be dissatisfied with his recent progress, and hurriedly reported:

"Right, Your Majesty, the fifteen main research projects in Area 1 have been relatively stable in progress lately. However, the four projects concerning artificial souls, aging delay, memory transfusion, and mental materialization are still unchanged for now, just like before..."

"Hmm, I understand."

After listening to the report from the head of Research Area 1, Prince Andre nodded from his lounge chair and continued in a stern, authoritative tone:

"Compared to the other eleven projects, these four are indeed more challenging. Not only are they not very related to what you've learned in the past, but the timeline for their commencement has been short too. Only after capturing those Cleaners recently did the research slightly get on track. I can understand the lack of progress for now."

Whew... It seems I've managed to pass.

Just as the head of Research Area 1 was secretly breathing a sigh of relief, the tone of the "His Majesty the King" subtly shifted, tapping the armrest twice forcefully, speaking with notable dissatisfaction:

"But what about the other studies? Why are they only stable?"

How much energy have I allocated over the years? How much budget support have I given you? Each time, the answer you give me is that progress is stable, but in the end? Why is there none that you can present?"

"..."

Bad luck... Should've known better than to complain...

Facing the stern questioning of "His Majesty the King," the back of the head of Research Area 1 faintly showed signs of sweat, but he could only respond with grit:

"Well... as you know, Your Majesty, each of the fifteen research projects in Area 1 is a grand study. If any achieves substantive results, it will be worthy of an added day of festivity in the calendar of our Crolock Kingdom.

For research of this magnitude, it's certainly not feasible to see results in a short time. The timeframe generally spans decades and might need several generations to maintain before yielding even minimal results, so..."

"So while I'm alive, chances are slim that any of these research projects will come to fruition, right?"

"That... can't be said for certain..."

After stealthily wiping sweat from his forehead, the head of Research Area 1 said awkwardly:

"Many studies in Research Areas 2-18, although not as significant as those in Area 1, share correlations. If those related studies achieve significant breakthroughs, the progress of our Area 1 may also leap forward significantly."

"Then tell me, how many more steps must you take to have even one project implemented before I die?"

"Well... the progress of research isn't precise enough to quantify, so it's hard to say, but I estimate many more steps are needed..."

"Fine, then you keep on taking those steps!"

After tiring out the head of Research Area 1, Prince Andre felt relieved and casually crossed his legs, speaking leisurely:

"Research can wait; tell me, how are the preparations Andre ordered you to make?"

"Everything's ready!"

Seeing that His Majesty eventually stopped hounding about research progress and asked something he could confidently answer, the head of Research Area 1 immediately let out a long breath and eagerly replied:

"When those people from the Kingdom of Orleson arrived on the second day, we had already replaced the spray system's chemicals in the city, swapping the original insecticide and nutrient agent with adrenaline counter-agents soaked in the blood flesh of Gods.

The two Cleaners who hijacked Atifei-01 arrived later, and the effects aren't sure yet, but the Cleaners from the Kingdom of Orleson, having been sprayed for over a week, already can't raise their reflex speed to inhuman levels.

Moreover, in all eight hundred sixty-four districts of both levels of the kingdom, we've placed stance stones extracted from abnormal objects, corresponding to each location. If attacked, the power will be directly dispersed across all districts, ensuring no significant destruction occurs!"

"Hmm, this task is indeed done well."

After hearing the report from the head of Research Area 1, Prince Andre nodded with satisfaction and lazily spoke with authority:

"Go focus on your research, aim to present at least one or two results before I die.

If you can accomplish that, everything will be negotiable. But if you can't, then on the day of my death, you, the head of Area 1, will join me in the Realm of the Dead, to keep working and show me the results!"

"Good... okay..."

Under the threat from "His Majesty the King" to either deliver results or come along, the neck of the head of Research Area 1 felt chilly, and he agreed meekly, not daring to speak further.

After the whole area grew silent, Prince Andre on the lounge chair released his hand, and the metal piece hanging at the end of the copper wire shot back swiftly into the hidden compartment on the other side of the bookshelf.

That person really is... somewhat capable, yet increasingly irritating.

Glancing at the hidden compartment on the bookshelf, ensuring it was completely shut and wouldn't be discovered, Prince Andre could not help but sigh, then laid his legs on the footrest and leaned back in contemplation.

The hardest part of dealing with Cleaners isn't their bizarre abilities. After all, apart from a few who can destroy a city in a short time, most Cleaners' destructive power is merely moderate.

Moreover, with the Crolock Kingdom's far superior technological level compared to other countries, it wouldn't be much harder to destroy a city if one were to deploy the products from the military industrial sectors. Facing a confrontation with a Zodiac Branch Director, we might not necessarily lose.

The problem, however, lies with those Zodiac Branch-level Cleaners mastering such destructive power individually, being way more flexible than a corp of mobilized hot weapons.

Coupled with those bizarre abnormal objects, if they desire to infiltrate and perform some actions, it's true that you wouldn't even know where to block them. After all, you can't just aim the guns at the entire Crolock Kingdom and just cleanse it, right?

So either simply leave them alone and pretend they don't exist, or deliver an all-out strike when the time comes, ensuring a decisive attack when action is unavoidable.

As for whether action is necessary now...

After frowning and pondering for a while, Prince Andre stood up and walked to the balcony, searched the shelf beside him twice, and found a black owl mask covered in dust, pressing it forcefully onto his face.

Phew...

A smoky haze spread across, revealing the familiar bone long table in the fog-covered strange space, but it was different from before; the positions around the table were mostly empty, with only two silhouettes drawn in.

"Are you... Black Owl?"

Identifying the mask on the opposite side, the hooded figure behind Prince Andre lifted his head, revealing a masked snake face.

"What's up? Did you come across something suddenly?"

"I need reinforcements."

After succinctly stating his request, Andre, behind the Black Owl mask, said:

"Xue Xiao has been captured by the Clean-up Bureau, and now is the time to act. My arrangements might not work against the Zodiac Director, so I hope you can provide support to help me kill the Scorpio Branch's Director!"

Chapter 577: Parting Ways

"Since there is no more intelligence to share, let's part ways for now."

When Prince Andre put on his mask and began seeking support from the Slaughter King Association, the Director of Scorpio, who was his target, nodded amiably at Leon and then extended his right hand to the stern-faced female reporter.

"In the next few days, I'd appreciate it if Miss Nicole could accompany me and assist our Scorpio Branch in continuing the investigation."

"..."

After hearing the words of the Scorpio Director, the female reporter, who was full of frustration, pursed her lips, although she stepped away from Leon's side and stood next to the Scorpio Director, she ignored his extended hand.

The Scorpio Director, who was left hanging, did not get angry. He shrugged it off with a smile, and then, with a kind look, said to Leon:

"Leon, Alger is one of the elites of our Scorpio Branch. In terms of strength, he might be slightly inferior to your Virgin Branch's Executioner Emma, but among all the Level 1 Cleaners in the bureau, he is quite reputable.

I believe with his strength, he should be able to protect you and Princess Feiliya. Also, if you wish to do anything, you might as well discuss it with him. His abilities might be of help to you."

Help me? I fear he'll be monitoring me more than helping.

Understanding the Scorpio Director's barely concealed intentions, Leon smiled, already knowing their plan, and extended his hand to the tall, slightly uneasy man standing before him, as if unaware of anything.

"I shall trouble you, Sir Alger."

"No trouble at all, nothing to worry about."

After a somewhat awkward smile, under the constant hints from the Scorpio Director, the clearly reluctant tall man had no choice but to muster up his courage and shake Leon's extended right hand.

[Name: Skin Thread (Degeneration, Threads, Seizure)]

[Appearance: A complete set of normal male human skin, composed of countless decomposable threads, the male is approximately 190 cm in height and weighs around 230 pounds, seemingly has a long-standing habit of exercising, with smooth and strong muscle lines]

[Ability: Demon Disguise, Thread Skin, Skin Seizure]

[Cost: Requires peeling off one's own original skin and completely replacing it with the 'Skin Thread' to use it effortlessly]

[File: One of the works of the great demon "Dissolver" Angolophis, forming a set with similar abnormal objects like 'Blood Flesh Threads', 'Bone Threads', 'Nerve Threads', 'Organ Threads', displayed in Angolophis' bedroom, often appreciated.

However, during a joint operation by the Scorpio Branch and the Aquarius Branch, the Dissolver Angolophis was captured and killed. This piece of artwork he was particularly fond of was partially neutralized and stored in the Scorpio Branch's warehouse.

Years later, Alger Bentley, a Level 2 Cleaner from the Scorpio Branch, damaged severely in muscles, skin, and bones in a sacrificial capture by a prehistoric race and unable to restore them, applied for this abnormal object, and has used it till now...]

[Evaluation: Not outstanding in destructive power, but quite practical for an abnormal object, possibly delivering surprising effects if its thread strength is temporarily enhanced with body-strengthening abnormal objects.]

[Contamination Value: 5]

...

Turned entirely into threads? So this is what a "thread man" is.

Hmm... and it's an abnormal object marked with a degeneration tag? Seems like my Devil's Badge will be useful once again.

After reading the detailed information about the [Skin Thread], Leon's eyes flashed with a look of understanding, and without saying anything more, the tall man who shook his hand felt a slight stiffness throughout his body, as if all the threads composing his body were about to escape him.

Is this the true weight of the former 'Demon Scholar' and now 'Food God' of the Clean-up Bureau?

Feeling the eerie premonition of his flesh seemingly being temporarily suspended, the thread-man Alger couldn't help but shudder, then he obediently positioned himself beside Leon, observing the proprieties.

Even after a little thought, he took a step back, leaving a space behind Leon, feeling slightly better.

"..."

What are you doing, Alger?

Seeing Alger, who crossed his hands in front of his lower abdomen, unconsciously slouched his back, despite his over 1.9-meter height, resembling a meek little wife, the corners of the Scorpio Director's

mouth twitched twice, suddenly having a strange premonition of having entrusted the task to the wrong person.

Although he's relatively strong among the Level 1 Cleaners, just a step behind elites like Executioner Emma and Dice King Tom, Alger truly lacks courage, making him responsible for "monitoring" Leon seems not the best choice.

It's just... the others seem even less reliable, don't they?

After glancing at the few others beside him, the Scorpio Director couldn't help but inwardly sigh, regretting not bringing more people along.

For this investigation mission, he had only dispatched four cleaners: 'Thread Man' Alger, 'Flower Fairy' Ruben, 'Old Fisherman' Frankie, and 'Smooth Path Ahead' Mona.

Among them, Mona's abilities are supportive, and only with her help could they navigate freely through the all-metal and concrete city without destroying walls, so it's naturally impossible for her to monitor Leon.

Ruben and Frankie's abilities are not bad, but he'll still need them in the upcoming investigation, so only Alger could be sent for the task, now he just hopes Alger can be brave for once, making sure to step in and stop Leon if he tries to stir up trouble.

Hmm... perhaps I'm overthinking. After all, Leon has been kicked out of this mission; he shouldn't have an opportunity to cause any commotion... right?

After a glance at Leon, who was smiling at him, the Scorpio Director, who had been smiling all along, suddenly felt a chill, unable to smile anymore, beginning to second-guess whether he had made the wrong decision, but then...

"Then I shall take my leave."

Unaware of the Scorpio Director's inner hesitation, Leon signaled to the female reporter to avoid sulking, prioritizing task completion, and bid farewell to the Scorpio Director with a nod:

"I need to return to the embassy to pick up the people left there, so I won't stay any longer. I wish you all the best for your investigation."

"Uh... thank you, I hope everything goes well on your side too."

Feeling inexplicably uneasy, though unable to pinpoint the issue, the Scorpio Director could only nod to Leon, watching him and Alger depart.

And once Leon and Alger were at a distance, the still stern-faced female reporter asked:

"Lord Edward, how do you plan to continue the investigation?"

As for the next step...

"Let's check out the Gemini Branch first!"

After glancing at the [Restricted Fishing Net] containing two bundled Gemini Branch cleaners, the Scorpio Director suppressed his internal doubts for the time being, spoke with ardent eyes:

"Since royal family members have already been seized, our presence can't be concealed.

And at this time, the most important thing to do is to first neutralize the opposition's ability to resist. No matter what happens to the Crolock royal family, controlling those Gemini Branch cleaners can't be wrong!"

Chapter 578: Don't Ask—It's All a Misunderstanding

"Senior Alger."

Leon gently stroked the small flower in his pocket to confirm Princess Feiliya's condition was normal. He then extended the effect of the Secret Tail to include the burly man behind him and curiously asked:

"Is this your original appearance?"

"No..."

Upon hearing Leon's inquiry, the tall and burly Alger shook his head and cautiously replied:

"I originally was only about 1.6 meters tall, with a slender and small build, completely different from now.

But during a mission later on, I suffered severe body damage, so I had to apply for the 'Demon Nine Threads' and almost replaced my entire body, which made me look like this."

"I see..."

Leon had actually already learned some of this information from the Skin Thread's description; he brought it up just to find a topic. Seeing Alger pick up the conversation, he smiled and continued:

"Senior Alger, you seem to be somewhat... wary of me?"

"Uh..."

"Relax, I'm not really a particularly crazy person; you don't actually have to be so guarded against me."

Leon shook his head somewhat helplessly and explained:

"Regarding the matter of me eating the Three-Headed Canine Deity, it's really not as exaggerated as the rumors. At the time, both Nicole and I were swallowed by it, almost dying inside its stomach, with our souls mostly digested.

Nicole's soul was much stronger than mine, so she was mostly fine. But with the strength of my soul back then, even if I safely returned to this world, I wouldn't have been able to control my body and would have had to lie in bed for years.

Furthermore, the part of my soul I lost was inside the Canine Deity's body. My soul was yearning to be complete again, so I had no choice but to eat it. I was forced to."

"Oh... I see..."

"And the same goes for the Dream Realm incident; I had reasons for my actions..."

Seeing Alger still maintaining a respectful distance, Leon tried to build rapport by explaining his past encounters and the reason for his anger at the King of Nightmares, then sincerely said:

"Senior Alger, both you and Director Edward have some misunderstandings about me.

Those incidents about Killing True God or destroying the Dream Realm were all special cases. Normally, I am quite a stable person and don't usually act impulsively."

"..."

Indeed, he does seem quite mild-mannered and gets along well with others...

After hearing Leon's explanation, Alger found him not to be as maniacal as the rumors suggested, and his tight expression finally relaxed a bit.

But the strange feeling of possibly being controlled lingered in his mind, leading him to cautiously voice his doubts after some hesitation.

Ah, so he noticed this.

While walking towards the embassy, Leon slightly raised his brow upon hearing this.

Noticing the Skin Thread was labeled "Fallen" and within the I Am the Demon's command range, even before they let go of hands, he switched out this Devil's Badge.

After all, the Demon Nine Threads was quite special; besides being an abnormal object, it was also Algers's body. Testing its susceptibility to I Am the Demon's control was necessary for peace of mind.

Though Leon didn't give any command at that instant, the I Am the Demon in the slot flickered for a moment, proving that any body with the "Fallen" label would be influenced by it.

Presumably, this brief control effect, possibly sensed by Alger, was due to the badge flashing briefly...

"Rest assured, this is also a misunderstanding."

Looking at Alger, whose expression still held caution with a low favorability towards the Scorpio Branch, Leon decisively lied to win him over as an ally:

"You know, I was called the Demon Scholar, holding several demon abnormal objects, and had high compatibility with such demon-type abnormal objects, which might have led to your misunderstanding."

Also a misunderstanding...

Vaguely feeling something was still not right but unable to pinpoint the issue, Alger nodded and temporarily accepted the explanation.

After resolving the "misunderstanding" between them, he seemed more natural, though still subconsciously lagging half a step behind Leon, he at least started to engage in normal conversation.

"Leon, um... sir..."

Originally wanting to call Leon directly but instinctively adding a courtesy after, walking down the street with the sun behind him, his shadow covering Leon entirely, the burly man found himself nervously rubbing his clothes before cautiously asking:

"What are you planning to do next?"

"It's simple. First, return to the embassy area, bring out the two people left there, and then find the foreign minister."

After contemplating for a brief moment, Leon smiled and explained:

"Previously, when meeting Crolock Kingdom's foreign minister, I proposed buying long-distance communication technology, supposedly invented by a scholar in Crolock Kingdom's No.1 Research Zone.

I estimate last night, the foreign minister probably finished gathering enough technical data, so we can go now and, uh, bind him, then take the collated technology and inventor information, leading us to the No.1 Research Zone, and eventually locate Atifei-01."

"???"

"What's wrong? Is there a problem?"

You dare to ask if there's a problem?

Looking at Leon turning back with a bewildered face, Alger's cheek twitched slightly.

But you're supposed to have withdrawn from the mission? Why are you still investigating Atifei-01?

And didn't you just say you're a stable person? How can you casually talk about kidnapping a national minister? Where does that exactly seem stable? It's practically...

Hmm... Why is he so straightforward? Could it be I'm overreacting?

Exchanging glances with the visibly surprised Leon and recalling this junior's terrifying track record, Alger hurriedly found kidnapping a foreign minister increasingly palatable.

Nevermind the rest; he even kidnapped Crolock Kingdom's princess, who's now in his pocket. So taking a minister during a task investigation doesn't quite seem like a big deal, does it?

"It's nothing..."

Swallowing back a light-hearted remark, the lines he'd never intended to cross swiftly retreated. Alger shook his head, hesitated slightly, and then cautiously inquired:

"Mr. Leon, if you do locate the No.1 Research Zone through that scholar's movements, would you mind me informing Director Edward?"

"Of course, I don't mind."

Leon smiled gently at those words and warmly replied:

"In fact, by telling you this, I'm intending for you to do just that. Earlier on, I didn't inform Director Edward mainly due to the uncertainty of this approach, planning to update him once it proved viable. Yes... Please do inform him when the time comes."

Ah, well...

Unexpectedly finding the notorious Leon, Eating True God Demon, to be a remarkably generous person, not only disregarding their director's attempts to sideline him but even prepared to share hard-earned intelligence, Alger felt a wave of shame washing over him.

Truthfully, compared to Mr. Leon in front of him, the petty gestures of their own director hardly measured up. While the director schemed about taking credit and excluding people, Leon had been diligently striving to fulfill his investigative task, never once begrudging our director.

Honestly... Director, you've been utterly eclipsed...

Chapter 579: The Whereabouts of the Goat Relic and Withering

"Wait for me a moment."

Just as Alger started to reflect and thought that his bureau chief was being a bit too much, Leon found a machine for directions by the roadside, stood beside it, and shortly after, a hurried citizen approached and reached for his pants pocket.

This one will do.

Glancing at the citizen's pants pocket and seeing a bulge similar to the size of an identity card, Leon immediately stepped forward, took out the [Silver Dagger of Cutting] and made a small incision at the bottom of the pocket.

Right after, before the citizen could reach for his identity card, Leon slipped his little finger inside, gently nudging the card out. He then swiped his hand over the incision, seamlessly repairing the tear to its original flawless state.

"Huh?"

Unable to see Leon, who was concealed by the Secret Tail, the seemingly urgent citizen reached into his pocket, only to find his identity card missing, and instantly his expression turned anxious. He instinctively looked back at the path he came from, but there was no sign of his identity card.

This is bad, why now of all times...

As the hurried citizen stomped his foot in frustration and turned to go back and look for his identity card, a hand suddenly patted him on the shoulder.

"Excuse me, sir."

In the surprised gaze of the citizen, Leon, who had already finished checking the route, smiled as he returned the identity card he had just "borrowed."

"You dropped something."

"Ah! Thank you! Thank you!"

After expressing thanks twice, the citizen excitedly took back his identity card and exclaimed:

"If it weren't for you, I would have been delayed. I'm really grateful."

"No need, just lending a helping hand."

Nodding at the hurried citizen, Leon walked over to Alger, who was waiting nearby, and began to speak:

"I've just checked; to return to the embassy, we need to first pass through research areas 8 and 9, reach living area 17, wait ten minutes for some upper and lower city blocks to swap places, then enter the lower area and turn right one street, and we'll arrive at administrative area 3 where the embassy is located."

"Ah, okay."

Somewhat surprised, Alger, who stood nearly two meters tall, nodded and followed Leon, they "dodged the fare" onto a tram heading to the 8th research area. Curious, he couldn't help but ask:

"Mr. Leon, this ability that makes people ignore you, does it come from some great demon?"

"Yes, this thing is called the Secret Tail. Its function is to erase traces and reduce presence. When facing targets with a noticeably lower Contamination Value, it can even make it so the other party can't perceive you at all."

After briefly explaining the function of the Secret Tail, Leon asked with a slight surprise:

"Alger senior, how did you know it came from some great demon?"

"Because it feels kind of similar..."

After recalling a bit, Alger unsurely replied:

"Over in the Kingdom of Orleson, there's a very annoying organization called the Sect of Fertility. They worship everything related to reproduction and sex, often holding rather... licentious gatherings."

And among the so-called sacred relics they worship, there's a... um... thing belonging to a great demon, soaked in a jar, which has a similar aura to your abnormal object. Although not entirely sure, it seems they're related."

That thing from the great demon... could it be the one Black Goat blew up years ago...

Unexpectedly learning the whereabouts of one of the goat relics from Alger, Leon's brows raised slightly, preparing to ask some questions.

However, just then, a sheep's head suddenly popped out from Leon's cuff and yelled with a look of surprise:

"That's mine! That must be my whip! Leon! You need to help me get it back..."

"Calm down!"

Stuffing the sheep's head back into his sleeve, Leon smiled apologetically at Alger and then, with interest, asked:

"Alger senior, just like it said, that thing is indeed part of a set with my abnormal object. What happened to it in the end?"

"It was purified."

"Ah?"

"The Sect of Fertility made too much noise and was exterminated by our Scorpio Branch last month. Their so-called sacred relics were seized by our bureau."

After explaining the outcome of the Sect of Fertility, Alger recalled slightly and then, with a somewhat peculiar expression, added:

"We also have a Level 1 Cleaner in our bureau, nicknamed 'The Purifier,' and she took all those... sacred relics and purified them one by one. Although the objects weren't destroyed, their abilities completely changed.

Hmm... if I remember correctly, she modified the items to be used for purifying desire; just by wielding them and hitting a person's head, all of their desires would vanish, leaving their mind pure for an entire day.

And the Sect of Fertility made quite a fuss at the time, with many victims. Before I and the bureau chief left the Kingdom of Orleson, she was still using that item to... uh... heal the worshipers harmed by the Sect of Fertility, and I reckon she'll be done in two months."

"Ah!!! How dare she!!!!"

Upon hearing the fate of its "brother," the sheep's head that Leon had just tucked away instantly popped out again, roaring in fury:

"That was my whip! Damn woman! I'll kill her!"

"Get back in there!"

Stuffing the Black Goat back in again and instructing the kids to keep it in check, Leon spoke with some exasperation:

"Well... Alger senior, if possible, after this mission, I hope you can introduce me to her. If that 'Purifier' is willing, I can trade other abnormal objects with her to get that item back."

"Okay..."

Smiling somewhat awkwardly, Alger agreed, then curiously asked:

"So that sheep's head was the true body where that great demon's soul resides?"

"Sort of, but technically only one-seventh. This set of abnormal objects is quite unique; each has its own independent soul, and even their personalities aren't entirely the same..."

After briefly explaining the situation with the Black Goat, Leon glanced at the flashing sign above, then reminded:

"Alger senior, we've reached the 17th living area, we should get off."

"Ah, alright!"

At Leon's reminder, the curious Alger quickly stood up, following Leon off the tram, the two found a bench by the roadside to sit and prepared to wait for the completion of the upper and lower layer swaps in Crolock Kingdom so they could proceed to the embassy district to pick someone up.

However, at that moment, the flower in Leon's pocket suddenly trembled slightly, directly spitting out the unconscious Princess Feiliya, quickly withering and shriveling, and within two breaths, completely withered away.

Soon after, the Secret Tail held by Leon slowly transmitted a thought.

'Nicole's supply is cut off. Before it stopped she asked me to tell you... run, quickly run!'

Chapter 580: Watchdog

After hearing the notification from the Secret Tail, Leon's pupils abruptly contracted.

Something happened to Nicole? It's been less than two hours since we separated!!!

"This is..."

Seeing Princess Feiliya suddenly appear on the ground, Alger was first bewildered then immediately stood up from his chair.

"Ruben's ability failed? Something happened to the director!!!"

"Hold on."

Signaling Alger to wait, Leon tightly clutched the only thing that might know the situation, the Secret Tail, and hurriedly asked:

"What's going on with Nicole? Where's Scorpio Director? Were they ambushed?"

"Not sure."

The Secret Tail replied:

"About two seconds before I called you, Nicole's emotions fluctuated slightly, then she shouted for me to tell you to run quickly, and that was it."

Two seconds?!

Upon hearing this, Leon's heart trembled.

From noticing something wrong to "breaking the connection," it only took two seconds? How could it be so fast?

Nicole's side had a Zodiac Director, a Level 1 Cleaner, and three veteran Level 2 Cleaners. Even if they were besieged by three to five True Gods, they should be able to hold out for a while, right? How could there be no movement in just two seconds?

'Oh, there's more news.'

While Leon was in doubt, the Secret Tail spoke again:

'Nicole told me to inform you that they were ambushed at the Gemini branch office and were hit by a heavy artillery barrage just after passing through the block partition wall.

For some reason, apart from her, no one else responded, and they were directly hit by the heavy artillery. Half a block...'

"Boom!!!"

Seemingly to prove the Secret Tail's words, an incredibly violent explosion sound came from afar, making the upper half of Crolock Kingdom's block tremble slightly.

'All got blown away.'

After finishing the latter half of the sentence, the Secret Tail, which never spoke unless necessary, took a small breather before speaking again:

'Nicole said the other three cleaners died instantly, and Scorpio Director's body was mostly destroyed, then his soul was sealed in the half-destroyed body by a serpent eye that appeared in the sky.

Although Scorpio Director and she are still resisting, they're doomed to lose. Nicole advised you not to worry about her and to escape Crolock Kingdom with Princess Feiliya immediately, trying to contact the Clean-up Bureau for assistance.'

"Understood."

Leon, with a troubled expression, nodded, and before the connection was severed, he decisively said:

"Tell Nicole to immediately shout 'Aquarius Director is my dad, you cannot touch me!', then completely remain silent, never speak another word, unless we speak first, otherwise, pretend the connection doesn't exist!"

'Okay.'

Once the Secret Tail responded and went to relay the message to the female reporter, Leon quickly explained the situation to Alger and said with a tight frown:

"That's the situation, do you have any way to remotely contact the Clean-up Bureau?"

"No..."

Upon hearing that three Level 2 Cleaners were already dead, Alger's eyes dimmed slightly, and he shook his head:

"To ensure that no matter what happens, the message can be transmitted back to the Clean-up Bureau, the Celestial Globe Mirror capable of remote communication has always been carried by the director, but..."

But this time, it was Scorpio Director who had an accident, and with his body half-destroyed, he might not have the chance to use the Celestial Globe Mirror.

Leon sighed after hearing this but said nothing further. He put the unconscious Feiliya back on the chair, frowning in thought, while Alger could not resist speaking after waiting a while:

"Leon, didn't they say for us to run quickly? So now..."

"No."

Shaking his head slightly, Leon flatly rejected:

"We can't run now, we must stay!"

"But even the director got ambushed!"

Seeing Leon "heated up" at this time, unwilling to abandon his companion to escape alone, Alger admired his courage but couldn't help feeling slightly annoyed:

"The director and his strong team failed, what can we do with just the two of us?"

The most important thing for us now is to take this damned princess and quickly leave Crolock Kingdom, to avoid the mission's complete failure, and immediately seek help from the headquarters!"

"Can't retreat, if we retreat now, we're definitely dead!"

After glancing up at Alger, Leon asked:

"Let me ask you, what the Clean-up Bureau values the most is keeping this royal family member safe and ensuring Crolock Kingdom's bloodline doesn't extinguish. What does the opposition value the most?"

"That would be..."

Hmm... wrong!

At this point, Alger's expression suddenly froze, and his back was covered with sweat.

The Clean-up Bureau wants to protect this princess, so the opposition naturally wants to kill her, completely severing Crolock Kingdom's royal lineage, thus diminishing the Watcher's Palace's effectiveness!

And that means, Feiliya Princess in our hands is the top priority target, and someone has been monitoring all exit routes from Crolock Kingdom ever since the princess got kidnapped. If we leave immediately, the likelihood of getting caught couldn't be higher!

"Alger, on the way here, I observed the terrain around Crolock Kingdom from the Sky Clipper's porthole. Besides a large seaport to the west, the remaining three sides are all plains."

Recalling briefly, Leon said sternly:

"My ability only confuses perception within a medium range to ensure I won't be discovered, but things like watchtowers or long-range observations can still spot us."

In this situation, it's almost impossible for us to escape with her, but if we continue to stay in Crolock Kingdom, it's like we're a drop of water lost in the ocean, and they won't find us."

"But... if we don't leave, how do we notify the Clean-up Bureau?"

"That's something to think about afterward."

Shaking his head slightly, Leon reattached the Secret Tail to Feiliya's back, handed her to Alger, and solemnly advised:

"At this time, firstly ensure you don't get caught, because only when we're alive do we have a chance to notify the Clean-up Bureau. For now, let's hope they might think Feiliya Princess died in the ambush and gradually relax their monitoring outside the kingdom... you watch her for me, I'll be right back."

"Ah? Where are you going?"

"Realm of the Dead."

Sitting cross-legged on the chair, Leon closed his eyes and said:

"After consuming the Three-Headed Canine Deity, I've temporarily inherited a small part of its power, allowing me to freely enter and exit the Realm of the Dead.

Its so-called 'guarding death' power is essentially the Gate of the Deceased's gatekeeper... doorman, with the authority to drive back those trying to escape the Realm of the Dead or block those unworthy of entering. This is just the right time to use it!"