

I! Cleaner 631

Chapter 631: Painting (Part 1)

"Feiliya."

Hmm...

"Feiliya, wake up."

Who? Who's calling me?

"Feiliya, stop sleeping, you need to wake up."

Stop it, stop it, I'm getting up now!

At the call of the familiar voice, the girl with emerald eyes unconsciously rubbed her eyes and then sat up from the ground, looking around bewilderedly at her surroundings.

Lawns, fountains, ponds, open terraces... stone paths patterned with moss, beautifully sculpted statues with chipped edges, untended greenery with withered yellow patches, a garden in decay and ruin overgrown with weeds, everything appearing so unfamiliar, yet so familiar...

This is... the old garden behind the palace?

"You're finally awake."

Looking at Feiliya, sitting dazedly on the withered grass, her hair in disarray, Prince Andre behind her couldn't help but chuckle softly. He continued setting up the easel, speaking with a hint of nostalgia:

"You used to love lying on the lawn to sleep, especially when it wasn't too hot in summer. You'd always pester me to bring an umbrella and take you to play in this garden."

After playing till you were tired, you wouldn't even wipe off your sweat, you'd set up the umbrella and lay on the ground, snoring away, rolling around in your sleep, your little face getting all muddy like a little monkey, which got me scolded by mother more than a few times."

"Andre brother..."

Seeing the gentle expression on her brother's face, Feiliya's previously flustered heart relaxed unconsciously, and she couldn't help but ask:

"Just now..."

"Just now I controlled that troublesome Cleaner and rescued you from his hands, you're safe now."

"Ah... that's good..."

"..."

Watching the emerald-eyed girl, who had asked a question but was standing still, not coming over, Prince Andre blinked in surprise. Then, as if understanding something, he frowned and said:

"Did he say something to you?"

"Mm..."

Feiliya, of course, understood who Andre was referring to. Remembering Leon's previous words, the emerald-eyed girl bit her lip, but finally chose to speak directly and honestly:

"That person told me... you had at least two intentions to kill me.

When attacking the Director of the Scorpio Branch, you probably didn't know that I wasn't with them, but to prevent the Scorpio Director from taking me away, you ordered a bombardment on Administrative Zone 38 where the Clean-up Bureau was located.

And, you had Atifie00 replace me, gain control of the Kingdom's long-range weapons, and initiate a saturation bombing once any suspicious targets left the Royal Capital... are all these true?"

"..."

After listening to the emerald-eyed girl's questions, Prince Andre fell silent, then nodded slightly.

"Mm... I did give those two orders."

"..."

"But you know, I had no choice."

Seeing the disappointed expression on his beloved sister's face, Andre sighed and explained sincerely:

"Feiliya, you're also a recognized official member of the Slaughter King Association, aware of the situation there, both you and I have constraints, we must ensure the bloodline of the Crolock royal family is severed, and I only had one chance to ambush the Director of the Scorpio Branch.

If, because of your situation, I had held back during the attack and not managed to keep him there, if he had discarded other Cleaners and forcibly taken you out of the Crolock Kingdom, both of us would have been 'restrained' and executed."

"Mm... I know."

The emerald-eyed girl nodded, responding in a low voice:

"I'm not blaming you. After all, things turned out like that because of my mistakes. If I hadn't let my curiosity get the better of me, and insisted on daring to approach Leon, you wouldn't have had to deal with such choices. It was too reckless of me."

"It's not your fault."

Hearing this, Prince Andre shook his head, looking troubled:

"I agreed when you decided to go, after all, my previous actions didn't show any flaws. In the eyes of the Clean-up Bureau, the entire royal family should have still been alive, they had no reason to act against you.

But that Leon..."

Recalling the person at the Royal Palace Night Banquet, who, even turned into a clown, could seize on Andre's vulnerabilities with frenzied attacks, the corners of Prince Andre's mouth twitched. He then said helplessly:

"He's just not normal.

Feiliya, after you were captured by him, I seriously pondered for a long time but still couldn't understand, even though he knew nothing about the situation, why he unhesitatingly captured you..."

"..."

After hearing her brother's complaints, the emerald-eyed girl subconsciously raised her hand, touching the back of her head where Leon had cut her, and fell silent.

Indeed, that lunatic was indeed outrageous.

Before she decided to approach him, she had conducted repeated calculations with an intelligent core, and no matter how she calculated, the result was always that he wouldn't harm her. Yet that lunatic just dared to act like that, after a couple of sentences, he immediately seized and captured her.

As for how to evaluate this person... after much thought, only one word seemed appropriate, and that is "abnormal."

...

"Alright, let's not talk about this now."

Exhausted by Leon's "abnormal behavior," the two siblings remained silently for a while. Then, Prince Andre broke the silence and, while organizing the easel, comforted:

"At the time, the trap against the Scorpio Director hadn't been sprung, my goal was to stabilize them, so whether it was me or you, one of us had to encounter Leon.

If you hadn't wanted to go, then it probably would've been me who got captured, and the situation might have been worse. Anyway, being captured isn't your fault."

"Mm..."

After nodding and accepting the comfort, the emerald-eyed girl looked at the easel before Andre, hesitantly asking:

"Andre brother, are you planning to paint my portrait again?"

"Yes."

After stretching the canvas on the easel, Prince Andre nodded, and while cleaning his paintbrush with turpentine, he replied with full focus:

"In the past, when I painted you, it only resembled you in form. Technically, it was fine, but I could never capture that elusive quality. But now it's different. Now I have confidence to capture the most complete you."

"That's good..."

Upon hearing this, the emerald-eyed girl nodded, then gently pressed her lips together, and asked:

"Andre brother, could I know, why you couldn't paint me well in the past but now you're confident you can do it?"

"..."

Upon hearing Feiliya's inquiry, Prince Andre, who was sketching, paused for a moment. Then he lifted his head to look at the emerald-eyed girl.

"Why do you ask that?"

"I just want to know the answer..."

Feiliya's small fists clenched slightly. She raised her head and looked directly at the Andre Prince in front of her, asking softly:

"Andre brother, the person you've been painting, is it really me?"

Chapter 632: Painting (Part 2)

The person I painted... is it you?

Looking up into Feiliya's emerald eyes and sensing the indescribable complexity within them, Prince Andre fell silent for a moment, then with a look of surprise, he replied:

"Feiliya? Why would you ask that? Who else could I have painted but you?"

"Brother Andre..."

The emerald-eyed girl pursed her lips and, instead of answering Prince Andre's question, turned her gaze aside and said softly:

"I've noticed that, when faced with questions you want to avoid, your favorite method is to answer a question with another question."

"..."

"Actually, being kidnapped by that maniac these past few days, my mind seems to have become 'clearer,' and I've figured out many things I couldn't understand before."

Staring intently at her sleeve, Feiliya said with a complicated expression:

"Brother Andre, with your painting skills, there's no way you couldn't even finish a simple portrait. The only reason I can think of is that the person you truly want to paint isn't me."

"..."

After listening to the emerald-eyed girl's words, Prince Andre fell silent for another moment, then, while lowering his head and continuing to paint, he answered:

"No, the person I'm painting is you."

"But you're painting not me as I am, but the me in your heart, and that's why you can't complete it, right?"

"..."

With a somewhat desolate gaze, the emerald-eyed girl said:

"Besides some missing memories, I possess most of Feiliya's soul and an almost identical body, yet you can't convince yourself to consider me your sister, can you?"

"..."

"After giving me a body, you've been indulging my whims, even willing to accompany me in doing childish antics... Are you really humoring me, or are you trying to 'replicate' the original Feiliya?"

"..."

Seeing Prince Andre remain silent and just focus on painting, the emerald-eyed girl couldn't help but bite her lower lip as she asked her final question.

"Brother Andre, can you tell me, if it were the real Feiliya who was captured, would you have ordered the attack that day?"

"Scratch... Snap..."

Upon hearing this question, Andre paused slightly in his drafting, causing the tip of his charcoal pencil to snap.

That would probably be... no.

With almost no hesitation, this rather cold answer emerged from Prince Andre's heart.

To him, the real Feiliya had long been dead, leaving only a core made from Feiliya's brain and soul.

Even if he had helped "reshape" her body and treated her as if she were the real Feiliya, insisting on calling her Feiliya rather than Atifei-01, it could not change this fact.

The real Feiliya had long been dead!

...

"Didn't we just agree not to talk about that incident again?"

After replacing his charcoal pencil with a new one, Prince Andre continued to work on the canvas while gently comforting:

"Feiliya, please stop this. This time is different from before; I can finish your painting soon."

"And after it's done?"

The emerald-eyed girl said softly:

"After it's done, what will be different?"

"It will be different."

Without looking up, Prince Andre replied:

"Once I'm sure I can capture your 'soul' in the painting, I will add you to the 'Royal Palace Night Banquet'; then we can both stay inside the painting together."

"Is it staying in the painting, or being trapped in it?"

"?!"

Seeing Prince Andre pause his strokes once more and look up in surprise, the emerald-eyed girl bit her lips and said:

"Though I'm not familiar with Soul Encoding Technology, I do know some of the soul research from Zone 01. The body is the vessel for the soul, and the soul is the most reliable carrier of will and Wisdom.

Even though you painted the 'Royal Palace Night Banquet,' the people within it aren't fake. Except for being unaware that they're within a painting and needing to follow certain rules, they are no different from people in reality; they all have souls."

"..."

"Brother Andre, when I looked at the Feiliya being held by mother in that 'Royal Palace Night Banquet,' she was the only one who was still throughout the painting.

What you're trying to do now is to draw my soul into it, using my fake sister's soul and existence to bring your painted real sister to 'life,' am I right?"

"Feiliya, you're overthinking..."

Prince Andre closed his eyes at her words, then resumed painting, saying calmly while shaking his head:

"There's no real or fake sister; she is the true Feiliya, and you are the true Feiliya. She is you, and you are her; it's just that both of you are currently incomplete.

Once I draw you in, she can truly awaken in that world, and you too can lie carefree in our mother's arms just like her... Isn't that good?"

"It's not good!"

Biting her lower lip, the emerald-eyed girl said with full disappointment:

"Even if I'm not the real Feiliya, I have the same soul and body as her, but she's just a false painting! You simply want to kill me and use my soul to bring back a Feiliya you imagined!"

"She's not imagined, she truly exists."

Continuing his work on the canvas without looking up, Andre explained patiently with a calm expression:

"Though the space is smaller, it is indeed a real world, just like the one we're currently in, with people inside also possessing souls and bodies. They're real, just existing in a different manner compared to the people in this world.

And I'm not killing you by doing this; I'm just letting you in this world fall asleep and waking you up in that world... Did you forget? I'm planning to draw myself in too. Would I kill myself?"

"Andre, you really have gone mad!"

Seeing that no matter what she said, Prince Andre remained stubborn, the emerald-eyed girl shouted angrily in despair:

"That maniac was right! You're nothing but a clown! A giant infant who can't face his own faults, seeking solace in a created false world of your own making! You... mm! mm!"

With a gesture made in the air, he sealed Feiliya's mouth from a distance, veins bulging at his forehead, Prince Andre took a few deep breaths to calm his tumultuous emotions, then said emotionlessly:

"The true Feiliya would never say such things; it seems these days with him have influenced you greatly.

But it's okay; with his current Ability, he can never escape the 'Royal Palace Night Banquet,' and once I finish this, I'll take care of him so he can't continue corrupting you. You'll have plenty of Time to amend.

Feiliya, though you might think I'm crazy now, once you and I awaken in that world with our true identities, you'll immediately understand that I am the one who..."

"Rip..."

"?!!!"

At the sound of fabric tearing from behind, Prince Andre's emerald pupils contracted instantly. Gripping the brush, he turned sharply to find a bright silver knife tip protruding from his suspended painting 'Royal Palace Night Banquet'!

Chapter 633: It's Not Over Yet

?!

How could this be?!!!

Staring at the tip of a knife struggling to cut horizontally from inside the "Royal Evening Banquet," Prince Andre was shocked. Without thinking about how Leon managed to break open the fragment of the world, he lunged forward to grab the frame with both hands, trying to forcibly push the knife tip back.

No matter how much strength he poured in, the gap cut in the canvas continued to grow uncontrollably larger. A hand reached out from inside, gripping the edge of the opening.

"Tearrrr!"

Accompanied by a horrid tear, the canvas, unable to withstand the contest of strength, split downwards along the gap cut by the Cutting Silver Dagger, opening a forty-centimeter-long tear.

As the knife tip sliced through the edge of the canvas, completely severing the painting, a figure both Andre and Feiliya were familiar with suddenly rolled out from the opening, then unhesitatingly turned and slashed the airborne "Royal Evening Banquet" into two!

No!!!

Seeing the "Royal Evening Banquet," cut in half and completely robbed of its "vitality," Prince Andre felt a chill run through his entire body, his whole being frozen in the pose of holding the painting frame, standing there in a daze.

Immediately after, as if a prison door had been opened, the warm and joyful scene of the "Royal Evening Banquet" faded, replaced by one shattered soul after another rushing out from the canvas, fleeing in all directions.

It's over...everything is over...

Watching those familiar souls rushing out from the canvas and escaping, Prince Andre instinctively raised his hand, subconsciously wanting to grasp something, but in the end, he let his arm droop powerlessly, abandoning this futile attempt.

The world fragment he obtained from the Slaughter King Association had already become one with the entire "Royal Evening Banquet." Since the "Royal Evening Banquet" had been broken, with no way to repair it, the fate of those souls no longer mattered to him.

His dreams and expectations had completely shattered, with no chance of realization.

"Why?"

After closing his eyes in pain, Prince Andre released the frame, gazing at the panting Leon opposite him, he clenched his fists and said angrily:

"I just wanted to retrieve what I lost! Why must you block me..."

"Crack!"

Before he could finish his angry question, the pale-faced Leon stooped and dashed forward with a near-ground-hugging stride, crossing the nearly five-meter distance between them directly, arriving in front of Prince Andre, and in a straightforward and clean motion under the distant horrified gaze of the gagged Feiliya, decapitating him with a single stroke!

Perhaps worried that Prince Andre might have some other trump card, Leon immediately released his grip on the silver knife with his right hand after the slash, transferring the Cutting Silver Dagger to his free left hand and severing both of Prince Andre's paint-stained hands at the wrist!

I can chat with you, but only after I've secured victory!

Glancing at the stunned Prince Andre, whose eyes were still fixed on his own, Leon still wasn't reassured. He turned his attention to the art tools scattered on the ground and the easel not far away, gripping the Cutting Silver Dagger tightly once again.

The Remaining Sutra of Senior Emma says, the best way to gather information is to have a brief chat before making a move, and when you don't need to extract information, the tighter you keep your mouth shut, the higher your chance of winning!

"..."

Nevermind, in that case, there's no need for me to ask further.

Seeing Leon not resting easy even after severing his head and hands, still choosing to slash apart the brushes and easel, and even throwing the paint on the ground, Prince Andre's head lay silent on the ground for a while, then slowly closed his eyes.

...

Hm?

Just as Prince Andre closed his eyes, Leon, who had been observing his state, found his expression slightly freeze, then quickly frowned and looked over.

Is he...dead?

He shouldn't be, considering Feiliya's situation is quite special and may not gain Watcher's Palace's approval, I didn't deal a killing blow but chose to cut him open "alive," so why is his soul suddenly...ugh...wait!

As Prince Andre's soul gradually dimmed, moving towards extinction, Leon abruptly turned back, sensing something off.

Then, he discovered in shock, from the "Royal Evening Banquet" cut into three pieces on the ground, a familiar small figure was coldly staring at him from the canvas, expressionlessly opening its mouth.

'It's not over yet.'

Upon reading these words from young Andre's lip movements, the reacting Leon immediately turned back and dashed forward, preparing to once again shred the Andre in the painting.

However, at that moment, a massive amount of bright paint, more vivid than a solar halo, surged out from the "Royal Evening Banquet" canvas, pulling Leon back and spiraling out violently and unstopably in all directions.

The old garden, Crolock Kingdom's palace, the square outside the palace, the entire District 1, the surrounding neighboring four blocks...

The enormous quantity of paint sprayed from the canvas, rushing like a tidal wave along the connecting tracks of each block, took less than five seconds to cover all over eight hundred blocks of the Crolock Kingdom with a vivid yet desolate orange-red.

What is this?

Looking at the weeds underfoot, washed over by the massive paint but not even swaying, merely overlaid with a thin orange-red hue, Leon, blocking in front of Feiliya, could not help but deeply frown.

And after spraying out the massive paint, dying the entire Crolock Kingdom in orange-red, the ground's "Royal Evening Banquet" subtly blended into the surrounding world without a sound.

"Rest assured, I won't harm Feiliya now."

As Leon focused all his vigilance, prepared to counter any attack from the surroundings, the young Andre holding a football slowly emerged from where the "Royal Evening Banquet" vanished, speaking calmly:

"Though she isn't my sister, she's indeed part of Feiliya's soul. With the 'Royal Evening Banquet' destroyed by you, I have no reason to hurt her anymore. Your task is complete."

"So?"

Looking at Prince Andre composed of paint before him, Leon judged that the [Silver Dagger of Cutting] probably couldn't kill him, so he suppressed his impulse to act, squinting as he asked:

"What do you intend to do next? Avenge your ruined painting?"

"Yes, I do intend to."

Prince Andre nodded, acknowledging Leon's judgment; then he unemotionally asked:

"But before that, I have a question for you... With your previous skill, it shouldn't have been possible for you to tear open the 'Royal Evening Banquet.' I'm curious, how exactly did you gain the ability to surpass the limits of the True God's realm?"

"..."

Chapter 634: Make Your Choice

What method did I use to cross the difference between man and god?

Upon hearing Prince Andre's question, Leon couldn't help but twitch the corner of his mouth, then instinctively reached out to touch his own stomach.

Explaining this matter in detail is a bit complicated, but to put it simply... all the members of the Scorpio Branch who participated in this mission, except for the absent predecessor Alger, are now having a meeting inside his stomach.

Previously, with the "generous feeding" of the three predecessors, he temporarily gained the power of 59 contamination value, which was just a tiny bit short of the minimum requirement to "cut through the world's plane."

As for the "solid" soul of the Scorpio director, he couldn't absorb it at all, but by using the authority of the "Ward of the Deathly Hound," he managed to "siphon" a bit of power from his soul to make up for that final small gap.

In summary, relying on consuming companions.

...

"You don't want to say?"

Seeing Leon sitting across in silence, Prince Andre, not minding, nodded and said:

"Then I won't ask. After all, my painting has already been destroyed by you, so even if I know how you did it, it doesn't change anything... Well... let's talk business next."

Under Leon's wary gaze, Prince Andre looked up at him and said calmly:

"I must admit, your previous assessment of me was correct. I am indeed a cowardly person, always lacking the courage to face my own mistakes... Sir Leon, do you want to know what I think of you?"

Honestly, I don't really want to know, but looking at you, no matter whether I want to or not, you'd definitely tell me...

Looking at Prince Andre, who was staring intently at him, his emerald eyes devoid of hatred and anger, only filled with some kind of resolution, Leon couldn't help but sigh inwardly and replied:

"Go ahead, what do you think of me?"

"Greedy. In my eyes, you are a very, very, very greedy person."

Seeing Leon's somewhat surprised expression, Prince Andre, who had repeated "greedy" three times, calmly explained:

"I had Atifie control six royal corps to besiege the palace. Facing the organized elite corps, not knowing what other cards I had, you still chose to expend extra power to stun all the soldiers without killing a single one.

Later, when attacking the No. 1 Research Zone and destroying the mechanical intelligence core, you knew you might face the Scorpio director, yet you chose to enter Cooling Lake alone without bringing Alger, an important combat force Level 1 Cleaner, instead letting him act alone to take the opportunity to rescue people at No. 1 Research Zone.

From these two responses, it's not hard to see you are very, very, very greedy, willing to take many unnecessary risks for a perfect completion, almost unwilling to accept any 'loss' or 'trade'...

Hmm... Or to put it another way, you are a kind-hearted person."

"..."

After rattling off a lot and handing a "kind person card," Prince Andre continued to analyze slowly:

"You detest involving the innocent, and are accustomed to respecting life. I guess in your mind, you probably have a set of very special beliefs, different from other Clean-up Bureau cleaners, possibly even most people.

Lastly, you're fanatical about your beliefs, with the stubbornness of a zealot. When you deem something right, and judge you can bear the consequences, you'll immediately act.

I even have a faint feeling, if the 'correctness' is high enough, even if you judge you cannot bear the consequences, but if it's worth it, you'd still attempt to achieve it.

To you, your life is important, but sometimes not so important. You are not afraid to put your life on a balance scale... Sir Leon, is my assessment accurate?"

"..."

Uh... Though not entirely correct, it seems not wrong either...

After hearing Prince Andre's lengthy analysis, Leon couldn't help but cough dryly, feeling a bit embarrassed by the "praise."

Not fearing death is true, after all, he currently occupies the spot left by the "Ward of the Deathly Hound," holding its authority, should he die, the Realm of the Dead would definitely take him to guard their gates.

So even if all three of his Undying Bodies were broken, the worst-case scenario would be an early death, becoming the gatekeeper of the Dead Realm, which, though not a good ending, isn't too hard to accept.

"Seems my assessment is quite accurate."

After waiting a while without seeing Leon refute, Prince Andre chuckled softly, then with a calm expression said:

"For someone like you, if directly killed, it's likely you wouldn't feel much pain, only regret for not achieving your best. Death to someone like you might not even be considered punishment.

So if I were to seek revenge on you, I'd have to destroy your beliefs, force you to betray what you've always believed in, truly hurt your heart, making you feel the deep pain as I do, watching what you pursued torn apart right in front of you!"

"..."

"Sir Leon, listen carefully."

After delivering an extreme, melodramatic revenge declaration, in the world turned orange-red, Prince Andre sat cross-legged, gazing coldly at Leon, saying:

"What you now face, other than 'Royal Evening Banquet,' is the artwork I'm most satisfied with, titled 'Krolock Under the Sunset.' This painting has absorbed the world fragments from 'Royal Evening Banquet,' completing its erosion of the entire Crolock Kingdom.

Next, the setting sun already fallen in this painting will rise again from the horizon, then continue to approach the entire Crolock Kingdom until the two align, burning everything entirely.

Seemingly to prove his words wasn't false, Prince Andre gestured behind him, and on the distant horizon, the sun, with just one arc edge above the ground, indeed climbed upwards slightly.

With the sun reemerging, the surrounding gentle orange-red afterglow suddenly brightened, starting to shift into a brighter yellow, while a stifling heat wave began to roll in from the distant sky, instantly curling up and scorching the surrounding green grass yellow.

"Sir Leon, it's time for you to make a choice."

With his back to the increasingly scorching golden-red sunset, Prince Andre first raised his hand, pointing to the sunset behind him, then pointed to Feiliya behind Leon, explaining:

"I'm already a dead man, and Feiliya is the last living member of the Crolock royal family. If she dies too, then the Watcher's Palace, protector of all mankind, would be greatly weakened.

If you still wish to fulfill the mission of protecting mankind, you must keep her alive. But if you wish the sun to stop, avoiding the burning death of the 1.3 million people in this painting, you'll have to give her body to me."

After explaining the "game rules," seeing the somewhat dazed Leon before him, Prince Andre's lips curled slightly, his eyes full of delight, saying:

"Sir Leon, it'll take me about an hour to fully finish painting this huge sun, so you have an hour to slowly consider your choice..."

"Fine, take her."

"?!!!"

Watching as Feiliya was directly thrown in front of him, with an "ouch!" landing heavily, the smile on Prince Andre's face suddenly froze.

No... Didn't you make your choice a bit too quickly? Didn't even hesitate?

Chapter 635: Persuasion to Surrender

After picking up Feiliya and throwing her onto the lawn between the two of them, Leon looked up at the climbing sun, then turned his gaze to the somewhat at a loss Prince Andre.

"I've given you the person; can that sun stop now?"

"..."

"You're not planning on going back on your word, right?"

"..."

Although I wasn't planning on going back on my word, your reaction... why does it seem a bit different from what I expected?

Looking at Leon, who without a moment's hesitation and with decisive straightforwardness handed over Feiliya, Prince Andre subconsciously opened his mouth, but in the end, said nothing.

What I truly wanted to see was, when faced with such a dilemma, the helplessness and torment Leon endured before making a choice, the despair and pain at the moment of decision, and the suffering and regret he would endure afterward, but...

Why the hell can you be so decisive!

...

"The sun cannot stop now."

Glancing at Feiliya, also stupefied on the ground, and guessing that Leon might just be holding on, Prince Andre gritted his teeth and said:

"The condition I mentioned earlier was not for you to hand over Feiliya, but to hand over her corpse, so you... you wait a moment!"

With a shout mixed with astonishment and anger, a huge clock face suddenly appeared behind Prince Andre.

And as the shorter "hour hand" on the face lit up, Leon's actions instantly slowed down by a whole sixty times, and the [Silver Dagger of Cutting], initially almost a blur of silver line, revealed its true form as it slowed, narrowly avoided by the green-eyed girl, who was startled.

He really made a move...

Seeing the silver dagger, which would have slashed across Feiliya's throat without his intervention, Prince Andre's face darkened.

"Why?"

Releasing the effect of the Scepter of Time, Prince Andre asked in a low voice while looking at Leon, who still maintained a calm demeanor:

"Do you really believe that I would undoubtedly intervene to save her?"

"It's not that I think you'd save her, it's that you got it wrong from the start."

Retrieving the [Silver Dagger of Cutting] and feeling a sense of relief himself, Leon replied with an odd expression:

"It's not that I trusted you to save her, but the choice you offered me doesn't make much difference regardless of what I choose... In truth, I'm curious why you think threatening me to kill your own sister with the lives of your own citizens would put me through torment?"

"..."

Silenced by this question, Prince Andre stared at Leon for a while, then slowly shook his head and said:

"No, you are still deceiving me, I don't believe you are as carefree as you seem, someone like you wouldn't not care..."

"No, you're not finished yet, are you?"

Interrupting Prince Andre, Leon said with a face full of impatience:

"You gave me a choice, and I made it; you changed the condition to wanting a corpse, so I started to provide you with a corpse; I've already cooperated with your madness so much, why are you still talking all this nonsense?"

How about this, I'm actually quite good at acting, so if you really want to see me in pain and torment, breaking down and crying, can I perform a little for you right now?"

"..."

"No! You're just deceiving me!"

After staring into Leon's eyes for a moment, Prince Andre took a deep breath and resolutely judged:

"You're saying all this to infuriate me, to make me choose to kill you in a fit of rage!

And only after killing you would I have no reason to harm others, only by doing so could I simultaneously save Feiliya and all the citizens of the Crolock Kingdom from my hands!"

"..."

"Alright, whatever you say..."

Faced with Prince Andre's obstinate argument, Leon, feeling somewhat numb, helplessly asked back:

"So if that was truly my plan, how do you intend to further punish me? By first dealing with your only sister and then roasting all your citizens with the sun, to make me suffer intensely?"

"..."

Indeed, that was my plan, that is indeed the scenario, but why does it sound so strange when explained by you!

Killing one's last remaining family member, then destroying a kingdom and its citizens that should be one's own, just to make you suffer a bit... this description is ridiculous just to hear.

What is even more ridiculous is being unsure if doing so would indeed cause him pain.

If my judgment is wrong, and he does not intend to sacrifice himself to save everyone, but truly doesn't care... then I fear I would be more ridiculous than a mere clown...

Through Leon's description, and with a touch of normal human thinking clearing the logic, Prince Andre, bursting with anger and ready to abandon everything to retaliate against Leon, became entirely stuck in awkwardness.

Doing nothing, clown.

Doing something, still a clown.

Doing it wrong, clown of clowns.

It seems my life no longer has a second option, since after Leon spoke those words, regardless of what I do now, the ultimate destination seems to lead to the same inevitable conclusion.

Clown!

...

"Honestly, why don't you just concede?"

Seeing the lost expression twisted on Prince Andre's face, Leon pondered for a moment before tentatively advising:

"Your painting was cut by me, those fake parents made with remnants of souls can certainly no longer be found, but I do have some connections in the Realm of the Dead and know quite a few people there, maybe I could arrange for you to meet your real departed parents once more."

Upon hearing Leon's words, Prince Andre's eyes widened suddenly.

"You... what did you say?!"

"I said, if you choose to surrender now, I might be able to allow you to meet your deceased parents once more."

Recalling some information about the Realm of the Dead, Leon continued to explain:

"In the Realm of the Dead, there's a place called the [City of Regret], where souls with regrets and guilt too intense to move forward in afterlife temporarily reside until they resolve their regrets or are forgotten by all living."

Considering your family situation... hmm... their regrets and guilt are certainly extremely strong, and many who have met them still remember them, so they are likely waiting for you there in the [City of Regret]."

Finishing his explanation of the [City of Regret], Leon glanced at the trembling Prince Andre and walked slowly towards him, extending his right hand.

"Prince Andre, as long as your resolve is strong enough to support you through the long [No Return Path], and reach the front of the [City of Regret], it may be possible to see your family again and apologize to them for your mistakes...

So, are you interested in my proposal?"

Chapter 636: Connections

"I..."

Faced with the right hand extended by Leon, the seven or eight-year-old Andre Prince showed a timid expression and unconsciously took half a step back, then frantically shook his head:

"I'm not going! They definitely won't forgive me!"

"Of course, isn't that obvious?"

Leon, maintaining his extended hand, retorted with a face full of exasperation:

"Take a good look at all the crap you've done over the years, who in the world would freaking forgive you?"

Honestly, if I were your dad, the regret I'd leave in the City of Regret wouldn't be a misunderstanding between us, but more like why I didn't just... uh... why did I ever bring you into this world? They'd have to be crazy to forgive you!"

"..."

Wait... are you even trying to convince me?

Originally hoping to receive some consolation from Leon, to hear something like "Parents will never blame their kids," Andre Prince instead got hit with a brutal sarcasm that doubled the heartbreak. His already fragile state of mind was shattered by a verbal sucker punch, trembling with fear as he shook his head desperately:

"No! I don't want to go to the Realm of the Dead! Or the City of Regret! They won't forgive me, so then I..."

"Smack!"

After delivering a swift slap to the young prince's face, Leon casually wiped off the grease paint on his hand and told the stunned Andre Prince with a huff:

"Could you stop making a scene? No one's obligated to forgive you. The reason I suggest you apologize isn't to make your parents feel better, it's to help you feel a bit less miserable!"

"I..."

"You, like the persona you've painted for yourself now, are just an overgrown man-child!"

Looking at the boy prince clutching his face, Leon sneered:

"Being an adult isn't marked by height or a beard, but by stepping out from your parents' shadow, starting to take responsibility on your own, facing and accepting your mistakes.

Even though you're older than me, you've been so well-protected that you've hardly faced any challenges, which leaves your mindset still stuck at a juvenile level."

"I...I'm not..."

"Smack!"

"Don't be stubborn."

After delivering another slap from the opposite direction, Leon, feeling finally at ease, looked down at the bewildered young prince and extended his right hand again, speaking each word firmly:

"If you really think you're not, then grab my hand and prove it to me!"

"I... I'm afraid to go..."

After getting slapped twice, Andre Prince's mental age seemed to regress back to his "body's" eight years. He turned his head away, unable to look Leon in the eye, whispering while tears welled up:

"I want to see them one more time, but... but they must be really, really angry. If they see me..."

"Smack!"

"Why are you still hitting me?"

"Sorry, it was a reflex."

After wiping the grease paint on his clothes, Leon gazed at Andre Prince, and asked:

"So what if they don't forgive you? How much worse could things get?"

After all, you're already dead. Even if they're mad, they can't kill you twice. At most, they'd just scold or hit you a bit, but you get to see them with your own eyes after all these years, talk to them, maybe even get held in their arms again.

For the fake parents you painted, you risked desecration by the Clean-up Bureau, stirring up all this trouble. Now you just need to take a few slaps to see your real parents, what's there to hesitate about?"

"..."

That's right... compared to seeing them again, what's there to hesitate over?

After hearing Leon's words, Andre Prince bit his lip tightly, trembling as he raised his eight-year-old hand tentatively towards Leon's palm.

Yet even having made up his mind, that small arm was still weighed down as if carrying a mountain. He tried several times but couldn't raise it to Leon's hand level, only able to jaggedly wave it beneath.

"Could... could you lower your hand a bit...?"

After several fruitless tries, the eight-year-old Andre Prince couldn't help but plea:

"You're too tall; lower your hand a bit, I can't reach..."

"You can reach."

Glancing at the young prince's trembling arm, Leon, whose tone was perpetually cold and eyes always full of disdain, softened his voice for the first time and gently reminded:

"Andre, the path you're about to take can't be helped by anyone. What you need to hold onto is not my hand, but your own conviction.

Only with firm resolve can you possibly cross the No Return Path, reach the City of Regret, apologize to your parents, and make amends for your past mistakes... Finally, if you manage to grab my hand, then you're no longer a child."

Am I no longer a child...?

Upon hearing Leon's words, the eight-year-old Andre Prince looked up at the steady hand above him, then through its fingers at the face that no longer held disdain, prompting a slight smile with tear-filled eyes and softly queried:

"So... you're also trying to save, not just Feiliya and the others, but even me?"

"I haven't saved you."

Leon shook his head:

"I'm merely telling you that besides this dead-end, there's another path you can take, and whether to walk it is your choice; besides, you're not being saved by anyone, you're merely learning not to always run away, but to face things head-on with courage."

Avoidance... Facing it...

After Leon's words, Andre Prince's trembling hand finally steadied, reaching upwards silently and placing itself into the warm, steady palm that then gripped it tightly.

"Good."

After grasping the tiny hand that belonged to the eight-year-old child-forged by grease paint, Leon's face showed approval for the first time, all while muttering a silent salute to the "trustworthy older brother" within him.

In helping Andre Prince "regress" to his eight-year-old state, his bronze-level "good brother" badge performed miracles beyond imagination. Without this assurance, things might have turned disastrously.

There's no such thing as a worthless badge, only treasures whose potential hasn't been realized!

Reminding himself never to underestimate any badge's power, and with his Golden-tiered "Master Performer," Leon held onto Andre's increasingly stable hand, gently asking:

"I'll ask one last time, are you ready?"

"Hmm..."

Though no longer guarded against assaults on his soul, Leon, instead of seizing the chance to subdue him, gently asked if Andre was ready, to which Andre Prince nodded gratefully, declaring with resolute eyes:

"I'm ready!"

"Alright."

With an affirmative answer, Leon then utilized the authority of the Three-Headed Canine Deity to establish a connection with the Gate of the Deceased, clutching Andre Prince's soul and pulling it out.

"Let's go!"

After extracting Andre Prince's soul from "Krolock Under the Sunset," Leon opened the pathway to the Gate of the Deceased while kindly warning:

"When you get there, make sure never to mention knowing me. If anyone suspects anything, and wonders why you have my aura, just say I was the one who killed you, and there's bad blood between us."

"Okay... wait, what?"

What's that about? Didn't you say you had connections there, and plenty of acquaintances?

Chapter 637: Endgame (Part 1)

"Sigh..."

Just as Leon grabbed the bewildered soul of Prince Andre, preparing to send him to the Gate of the Deceased, a somewhat regretful sigh suddenly arose from the depths of Andre's soul.

"As expected, not completely trusting you was the right choice."

"?!?!?"

Hearing this familiar sigh, Prince Andre's pupils abruptly contracted, and he asked in a mix of shock and anger:

"White Snake? What have you done to my soul... uh..."

"It's not that I tampered with your soul, but that the entire Slaughter King Association collectively took some precautions with the world fragment entrusted to you."

The voice called White Snake sighed and said:

"Black Owl, while your ability and wisdom are commendable, your mind is ultimately too immature. And given that you are still part of the targeted royal family, how could we fully trust you?"

Indeed, the Slaughter King Association had more tricks up their sleeve regarding him.

After listening to the brief exchange between "White Snake" and Prince Andre, and seeing the eerie scale-like markings resembling snake scales on the outer layer of Andre's soul, Leon couldn't help but squint his eyes.

Previously, when the Scorpio Bureau Chief was ambushed, the Slaughter King Association managed to bypass the Watcher's Palace, sending power down to forcibly seal his soul, leading to the Scorpio Chief's swift demise.

And where there is one, there is two. Once it is detected that the situation is out of control, the likelihood of the Slaughter King Association intervening again is naturally very high.

"Leon Laine."

The silver-white scale markings, sprinkled with starlight, quickly spread and soon climbed up Andre's face, occupying nearly half of it. With half of his face turned to snake scales, Andre's voice changed to that of White Snake, speaking wistfully:

"Although Black Owl himself indeed has many problems, the fact that you could seize the opportunity to forcefully turn the tables even when the Scorpio Bureau Chief was dealt with, seems we've underestimated you in the past."

"So what?"

With his hands tightly gripping Andre's soul, the shadow of the Three-Headed Canine Deity faintly appearing behind him, Leon squinted and asked:

"Andre's soul is now in my grasp, ready to be sent into the Gate of the Deceased at any moment. What are you going to do to stop me?"

"You've misunderstood. I have no intention of rescuing Black Owl."

Upon hearing Leon's words, "Prince Andre" shook his head and said calmly:

"To us, he is only an auxiliary member, just like that Aquarius Director of your Clean-up Bureau. He is not aligned with us, so there's no need for me to save him."

What I need to do now is to enforce the constraints he and Xue Xiao signed upon joining the Slaughter King Association, ensuring that no royal bloodline can leave Crolock Kingdom alive."

Constraints?

Leon was slightly stunned upon hearing this, then suddenly seemed to realize something and quickly turned his head to look.

Sure enough, the emerald-eyed girl, who had been silent for a long time, was trembling and crouched on the ground. Not only were her arms covered with black raven feathers, but even her mouth had formed into a shiny, black bird's beak.

"Constraint one: As long as the Crolock Kingdom exists, you may never leave. Violators will have their spirit and flesh obliterated."

As "Prince Andre" recited, the foreheads of the two siblings simultaneously cracked open, and a drop of golden-red blood rolled down from the cracks in their brows.

"Constraint two: You must never bear offspring, and the bloodline inheritance must be severed. Violators will have their spirit and flesh obliterated."

As "Prince Andre" raised his second finger, a second fine crack opened on the siblings' foreheads, pushing out a pale pink drop of blood again.

"Constraint three: No member of the Crolock royal family shall be captured by the Clean-up Bureau and removed from Crolock Kingdom. Violators will have their spirit and flesh obliterated."

As the third crack appeared on the siblings' foreheads and the deep gray drop of blood floated up, "Prince Andre" raised three fingers and said calmly:

"Ladies and gentlemen, in my judgment, it is now time to trigger constraint three."

"No!"

As White Snake announced this calmly, Prince Andre's soul surged, then regained control of half his face, angrily shouting:

"No one has been taken out of Crolock Kingdom! I did not breach the contract! You are the ones who have breached it!"

"But this matter is inevitably going to happen."

The other half of "Prince Andre" said calmly:

"You always misunderstood one thing: the trigger condition for the constraints is not your understanding of 'having already happened.' Once this matter is 'about to happen,' we already have the right to invoke the constraint.

Moreover, if you insist on accounting for breaches, you were the first to breach. After obtaining the world fragment, you drew most of your soul into the painting blending with the world fragment.

You merely retained consciousness and flesh in Crolock Kingdom and a small part of the soul within the scope of ordinary people, trying to free yourself from the constraints you set. This is already a betrayal."

"No! You are..."

"We are very fair, always acting according to the agreement. Even though you were the first to breach, we didn't immediately penalize you. By any calculation, you are the one at fault."

After saying this, "Prince Andre" raised his head to look at Leon, who was frowning, and peacefully conveyed:

"I've done what needs to be done, and conveyed what needed conveying. So farewell, you can now send his soul into the Realm of the Dead."

"..."

Send into the Realm of the Dead... is there even a need anymore?

After glancing at the souls of the two siblings, who were exerting all their efforts to hold on but were still gradually crumbling after 'White Snake' departed, Leon couldn't help but close his eyes, sighing deeply inside.

At the rate at which Andre's soul is disintegrating, it'll likely dissipate just past the Burial Garment Mirror Lake and won't be able to reach the City of Regret. And Feiliya's soul is much weaker than his, estimated to completely vanish in two to three hours.

So after all the hassle, the mission ultimately still failed...

...

"No! It shouldn't be like this!"

As Andre's will regained dominance, with some of the White Snake markings faded, he bit his lip, tears welling up in his eyes, and said with deep unwillingness:

"I had prepared everything, I... I was ready to apologize... Why... why is it like this?"

"Sorry, there's nothing more I can do."

After moving the trembling, raven-feathered Feiliya next to him, Leon sighed and spoke to the siblings lying side by side on the ground:

"Regret is a part of life from start to finish. Some things, if not done at the time, may never have a chance to be done later.

Andre, with your soul's current state, it's impossible for you to reach the City of Regret to apologize to your family, but you still have one last chance to say something to your sister."

Chapter 638: Endgame (Part 2)

"..."

After hearing Leon's words, Prince Andre, covered in serpent scales, fell silent for a moment. Then he turned his head to look at Feiliya beside him, his lips moving slightly, but he couldn't say anything.

"Andre, this is your last chance."

"I..."

Upon Leon's reminder, Prince Andre trembled slightly, looking at his sister who's eyes were filled with pain, he finally murmured softly:

"I'm sorry... I... I'm not a good brother..."

"..."

Feiliya, with an expression full of pain, turned her face gently to glance at him, then shook her head, reaching out with a quivering arm covered in crow feathers to lightly place it on his shoulder. Though she said nothing, it seemed as if she had said everything.

Catching her gaze, the tears in Prince Andre's eyes fell instantly, filled with regret as he said:

"I'm sorry! Feiliya, I have failed you, and everyone else; if... if only we had not been born in the Crolock Kingdom..."

Um... wait?!

On hearing this, Leon was slightly stunned as if he had grasped something, yet it was vague and unclear.

Meanwhile, Prince Andre hugged Feiliya, who was covered in crow feathers, tightly, sobbing uncontrollably and speaking incoherently:

"It's all my fault, I was too... If only... if only we weren't born in the royal family, without this cursed bloodline, perhaps... perhaps our whole family could..."

"Wait a minute!"

In the middle of Andre's sobs, Leon suddenly hissed, then slapped him hard on the back.

"Quick! Repeat what you just said!"

"Huh?"

Interrupted in the midst of his heart-wrenching cries, Prince Andre was dumbfounded for a moment, then he said in confusion:

"Perhaps our whole family could..."

"Not that sentence! A bit earlier!"

A bit earlier...

"If only we weren't born in the royal family, without this cursed..."

"That's it!"

Finally capturing the elusive inspiration, Leon slapped his thigh, then yanked Prince Andre's soul off the ground and asked loudly:

"Quick, tell me, what kind of 'binding' did you sign? Is it a trigger that once activated can't be stopped, or does it continuously trigger the way it is now?"

"It's continuously triggered..."

A bit dazed, Andre pointed to the three blood beads floating at his brow and said:

"These three are the blood oath's beads, also serving as the mark for executing the blood oath. Apparently, a few members in the past died due to accidentally breaching the blood oath, so aside from intentional leaks and such now, they're all switched to this continuously triggered method..."

"Then there's still a chance! Kneel down quickly! Immediately announce your surrender to me!"

"Huh?"

"Don't get it yet? Those three constraints of yours, they all have prerequisites!"

Pointing to the three blood beads floating at Prince Andre's brow, Leon reiterated the three constraints, then explained:

"You cannot leave while the Crolock Kingdom exists; you must not produce royal offspring; no Crolock royal family member can be captured and taken away... the premise of it all is the royal family! Understand?"

"You mean..."

"I mean, I'm now declaring war on behalf of the Kingdom of Lutung, capture you two last royals, and obliterate the Crolock Kingdom entirely!"

With a confused expression, Prince Andre listened as Leon reminded him:

"Only when the kingdom's rulers are gone is the royal family eliminated. If the Crolock Kingdom itself ceases to be, what then is your royal family? And since no royal members have been captured and taken by the Clean-up Bureau, can the constraints still hold?"

It should... stop?!

Following Leon's line of thought, Prince Andre couldn't help being so excited that he trembled all over, though he hesitated a bit and said:

"Isn't this a bit too much of a joke? Can it really work this way?"

"Whether it works or not, you must give it a try, right?"

After helping the green-eyed girl to her feet and kneeling before him, Leon pulled Prince Andre down too, executing the simplest surrender ceremony in history, then broke off a dead branch from a nearby tree to use as a ceremonial sword and placed it on Prince Andre's shoulder, proclaiming loudly:

"I, Leon Laine, upon my mission to the Crolock Kingdom discovered the kingdom's hidden evils, therefore, on behalf of the Kingdom of Lutung, I declare war and capture the last two members of the Crolock royal family, declaring the Crolock Kingdom's demise!"

"..."

"What are you hesitating for! Don't you care about your sister's life? Surrender quickly!"

"..."

I can surrender, but this ceremony is a bit humiliating. Generally speaking, even if I really surrendered, I wouldn't have to bow to you...

Seeing Leon urging him to surrender quickly, the corner of Prince Andre's mouth twitched slightly. With a sense of desperation, he led his sister to bow to Leon.

"I... Andre, the third prince of the Crolock Kingdom, along with the sixth princess Feiliya, hereby surrender to... the person in front, and declare the permanent renunciation of our royal status in the Crolock Kingdom..."

And with Prince Andre's proclamation, the three-colored blood beads at their brows indeed began to wobble and then visibly start to dissipate.

It's working! It actually works!

Unexpectedly, with such an absurd method, they managed to circumvent the blood oath, and the dethroned king Andre couldn't help but stand up excitedly.

Yet at this moment, after dispersing halfway, the three-colored blood beads didn't continue to collapse but slowly stopped moving, still quietly rotating, slowly and irresistibly destroying everything about them.

It's still not working, huh?

Seeing the three-colored blood beads at their brow shrink a bit but still continuously destroying their souls, the expectant looks in Andre and his sister's eyes dimmed instantly.

Indeed, such a ridiculous method couldn't wholly bypass the Slaughter King Association's constraints, merely loosening the grip on their throats a bit, their fate still not changed.

...

"Do you think it's possible that this condition alone isn't enough?"

Gazing at the halved three-colored blood beads, Leon frowned and pondered:

"In your constraints, you must not leave the Crolock Kingdom, nor be taken away by the Clean-up Bureau from the Crolock Kingdom, so... besides royal status, could the territory of the Crolock Kingdom itself be one of the blood oath's conditions?"

???

It means... you've merely accomplished 'surrender' but haven't actually 'occupied' the territory of the Crolock Kingdom, thus not completely destroying it, nor thoroughly nullifying the blood oath?

With previous experience as a reference, Prince Andre instantly figured out Leon's intention, then with his face twitching, he asked:

"Are you planning to capture..."

"Destroy the entire Crolock Kingdom!"

Chapter 639: Endgame (Chuunibyou)

"Hiss..."

Upon hearing Leon's suggestion of not just an unattainable dream but rather racing a Pegasus through Hell, the royal siblings of the fallen Kingdom couldn't help but exchange glances, noticing the same wild tremor in each other's pupils.

Even though they knew this person wasn't normal, isn't he a bit too abnormal? No matter how imaginative, ordinary people wouldn't think of directly destroying an entire Kingdom, right?

"It's up to you whether to do it or not, I just offered an idea."

Leon spread his hands, his expression unchanged, and said:

"After both of you surrendered, the blood oath was indeed partially broken, which at least proves my logic isn't wrong, the premise of this blood oath is indeed your royal identity in the Crolock Kingdom.

And although the Crolock Kingdom has just declared its demise, its territory remains intact, you still have a chance to leave here, or be taken beyond the lands, hence the blood oath on you isn't completely unraveled.

So, if one wants to dissolve this last half of the blood oath, the best method is naturally to treat the symptom and destroy Crolock Kingdom in one go, making the Slaughter King Association's blood oath fundamentally ineffective, thereby resolving the problems you bear."

"..."

While the logic makes sense, isn't your approach a bit extreme?

"Isn't there a more gentle way?"

After listening to Leon, Prince Andre couldn't help but suggest:

"Like bringing people to occupy the land and do something else, so Crolock Kingdom loses its territory nominally?"

"It's possible, but can you wait till then?"

Pointing at Feiliya's body covered in crow feathers, Leon reminded:

"Other than directly taking action and destroying the entire Crolock Kingdom in one go, any other method can't possibly achieve the 'destruction' of the Crolock Kingdom's territory before your souls are obliterated, meaning you two and the entire Crolock Kingdom have no possibility of 'coexisting'."

Indeed, this is truly the only way.

After glancing at his sister's condition, Prince Andre couldn't help but sigh, then staggered to turn around and waved toward the distant giant painting 'Krolock Under the Sunset'.

Unexpectedly, after being a ruler of a fallen kingdom once, he now had to personally destroy the entire Crolock Kingdom.

As he stood in front of the painting, pondering, drawing people out of the Kingdom stroke by stroke, Prince Andre seemed to vaguely understand something and looked back at Leon with a complex expression.

Noticing his strange look, Leon couldn't help but ask:

"What is it?"

"Nothing..."

Prince Andre shook his head and said:

"I was just wondering why you'd propose such a solution."

"Certainly to protect Watcher's Palace and thus safeguard humanity."

Upon hearing Prince Andre, loyal to the Clean-up Bureau, Leon immediately replied without hesitation:

"For us at the Clean-up Bureau, if any line of the twelve royal families is completely severed, a Saint-level anomaly can already freely enter reality, and if more than three lines are severed in total, some of the weaker True Gods might barely squeeze in, which is a result our bureau absolutely cannot tolerate."

"And besides that?"

Prince Andre turned his head back, continuing to "paint" the populace away from Crolock Kingdom's territory while softly saying:

"Actually, since the first time I met you, I've felt you seem to hold some unexplainable malice against Crolock Kingdom, which intensified after the attack on Administrative Zone No. 3, as if..."

"You're definitely mistaken."

Leon unhesitatingly interrupted Prince Andre, looking ahead, he explained with an honest face:

"I treat all kingdoms equally, without any particular malice toward yours."

"Alright then..."

After glancing at Leon's expression, Prince Andre hesitated for a moment, then didn't say anything more, continuing to prepare for the destruction of Crolock Kingdom with his brush, while Leon standing beside him prompted a subordinate to take the bandit siblings away, giving Prince Andre a sidelong glance.

The man's intuition is truly keen, and indeed he harbors no goodwill toward the extremely abnormal Crolock Kingdom.

According to the documents obtained after attacking Administrative Zone No. 3, Crolock Kingdom's actual controlled territory is immense, nearly four hundred thousand square kilometers, with over 3.7 million people living under their system.

Yet apart from the 1.3 million citizens chewing on disgusting vegetable paste daily in Crolock Kingdom's over eight hundred blocks, the remaining ninety-six percent can't truly be called living, merely surviving.

Especially the Floating Crystal Mines, in order to extract these things, countless people die each year, and though other types of mines and resource areas aren't as bloody as the Floating Crystal Mines, their conditions aren't significantly better.

The prosperity and advancement of Crolock Kingdom are sustained by the blood and flesh sacrifices of those over 3.5 million people, exchanging ninety-six to ninety-seven percent of suffering for three to four percent of brilliance.

Though in most kingdoms, such matters are unavoidable, differing only in degree, Crolock Kingdom is especially egregious, truly taking only the 'profits' and leaving none of the 'burden'.

Usually, considering that even the worst order is better than complete chaos, and the Clean-up Bureau would also suffer if a kingdom is directly destroyed, I might think of a more gentle method, proceeding step by step.

But now, since this matter is linked to Watcher's Palace, with the grand cause of protecting humanity as reason, naturally, it's time to make a grand gesture, utterly removing this sore spot!

It's almost done...

After a prolonged depiction, 'Krolock Under the Sunset' was obliterated by Prince Andre, transformed into 'Empty Crolock Kingdom after All Citizens Were Safely Blown Abroad by the Wind'.

Watching the chaotic wilderness outside the painting with countless bewildered 'small black dots', Prince Andre let out a slight breath, then under Leon's eager gaze, lifted the heavily dipped brush to press firmly on the far end of the canvas.

The glow burst forth.

As Prince Andre used his brush, the edge of the orange-red sunset quietly dissolved into a golden hue, quickly fading away, surprisingly making the sun's brilliance burn more fiercely as the canvas color lightened.

When Prince Andre took out the half-broken knife, vigorously scraped away the heavy background and lightly spread a layer of pale white paint, the once gentle sunset had brightened to the point of dazzling.

And throughout Crolock Kingdom's over eight-hundred districts, countless surging flames erupted, lighting everything combustible, even non-combustible metals began to redden and soften under the furious roasting of the burning white sun.

Chapter 640: Endgame (Part 2)

This destructive power... truly impressive...

After glancing at the painting depicting the destruction of the Crolock Kingdom, Leon squinted his eyes at the palace's metallic outer walls, glowing fiery red and on the verge of collapsing, silently gauging Prince Andre's capabilities.

Though this was primarily due to using pre-drawn abnormal object scrolls and the effect of world fragment corrosion, Prince Andre's ability to completely incinerate a city, purely in terms of destructive power, was already on par with some Zodiac Bureau directors, moreover...

Observing Prince Andre's incredible resilience even on the brink of collapse, with a soul contamination value level of at least sixty, Leon couldn't help but click his tongue, feeling a slight hint of envy.

If he hadn't consumed all his teammates from the Scorpio Branch, his current level would just be twelve or thirteen points. Though decent compared to an average rookie Cleaner, it was ultimately far behind these big shots starting at sixty points.

But this state derived from consuming teammates can't persist forever. Once the mission ends, he has to return their souls, and then he'll be back to newbie status.

Hmm... Seems like it's best to ask the director when he returns if there's any way to quickly increase his contamination value.

After all, having offended the Slaughter King Association, future opponents will undoubtedly have high contamination values. He can't just kill teammates and consume their souls whenever he finds his contamination value insufficient, can he?

...

"How are you still alive?!"

Just as Leon was letting his thoughts wander, pondering how to swiftly increase his contamination value, a familiar voice suddenly erupted from Prince Andre's mouth.

The serpent scale pattern climbed again, leveraging Prince Andre's right eye, seeing the burning Crolock Kingdom before them, and the tricolor blood beads dispersing halfway between the brother and sister's eyebrows, the white snake's eyes immediately flashed with illumination, then shouted in shock:

"Using this method to escape restraint? Are you two crazy?!!!"

I don't appreciate your words.

After hearing the white snake's evaluation of his method, Leon squinted his eyes slightly, before immediately swinging the [Silver Dagger of Cutting] towards Prince Andre's right cheek.

Anyway, the wounds caused by the [Silver Dagger of Cutting] could be restored, so regardless of usefulness, swing it once first!

"Stop! You... Damn it!"

Facing Leon's attack, the serpent scale pattern on Prince Andre's face suddenly shed, condensing into a nearly transparent half-body white snake, biting onto the blade of the [Silver Dagger of Cutting], swallowing back the half-spoken words.

They've gone insane! Absolutely insane!

Effortlessly moving the venomous fangs aside to evade the sharp blade of the [Silver Dagger of Cutting], witnessing Prince Andre ignoring his interference, still gritting his teeth while sketching the sun stroke by stroke, the white snake was no longer as calm and indifferent as before, about to erupt in his anxious heart.

Thankfully, he hadn't directly left earlier but greedily prepared to collect the remnants of a world fragment after the souls of Black Owl and Xue Xiao were annihilated. Had he not been greedy this time, not only would Black Owl and Xue Xiao escape restraint, but even the Crolock Kingdom would be directly destroyed!

The royal bloodline needs to be severed, but the thirteen kingdoms representing humanity's seven vices and six virtues absolutely cannot disappear together!

Previously, during the Ophiuchus Eroded Nation incident, East Carleighben Kingdom, one of the six virtues, had already been erased by that woman from the Virgin Branch, and if the Crolock Kingdom were destroyed again this time, gathering the essence of humanity would be... Damn scoundrels!

Watching Leon directly release the [Silver Dagger of Cutting], grabbing his serpent neck with both hands, trying forcefully to pull himself away from Andre's body, the anxiously fervent white snake immediately spat out the [Silver Dagger of Cutting] from his mouth, biting directly onto Leon's wrist.

"Sss"

The two large and two small sharp serpent fangs easily broke through Leon's clothing but couldn't pierce Leon's flesh no matter how hard, instead producing an ear-piercing noise akin to a knife scraping against glass.

This tough?!

Originally, he thought one bite from him, even if he couldn't shatter Leon's arm, would at least slightly loosen his grip.

However, the venomous fangs capable of easily piercing a divine body, upon landing on Leon's mortal flesh, couldn't even cut a single scratch. The white snake's mind went blank, then Leon caught the falling [Silver Dagger of Cutting], easily severing the snake neck with a backward motion.

Already prepared for you!

Leon, who had once fallen victim to a "sucker punch," naturally wouldn't be unguarded against the white snake's reappearance, had been drinking non-stop during Prince Andre's painting adjustment, making sure [Immortal in Liquor] never ceased.

Grabbing the severed snake head, slicing it into seventeen or eighteen pieces with the knife, then observing the lightened serpent scale pattern on Andre's body, Leon asked:

"How is it going? Can you still hold up?"

"A bit difficult... but should be alright..."

Gasping lightly, Prince Andre gritted his teeth and said:

"You can slice the scales that leave my soul, but best not touch those on my soul, or it would weaken my soul, possibly leading me... Damn it! Stop it!"

A large number of serpent scales shed from Prince Andre's limbs, following his neck, completely occupying his face, and the white snake controlled Prince Andre's face, roaring furiously at Leon:

"Stop! You can't do this!"

Hmm?

Noting something from the white snake's highly agitated demeanor, Leon's eyes instinctively squinted slightly.

His attitude seemed peculiar, as if the source of his anger wasn't the safeguarding of the Crolock royal bloodline but possibly the impending destruction of the Crolock Kingdom?

Unaware of Leon's fleeting suspicion, the slightly calmer white snake took a deep breath, then solemnly promised Prince Andre:

"Black Owl! All you want is to go to the [City of Regret] and see your parents once more, right?"

If you stop now, ensuring the Crolock Kingdom's... ensuring the Crolock Kingdom's bloodline is severed, killing this doll made from your sister's soul, I promise to immediately cancel your blood oath and send you to meet them!"

Upon hearing "Andre," Prince Andre's hand sketching the sun paused minutely.

Seeing his persuasion beginning to work, the white snake gleefully pressed on:

"Right! Just stop, I will certainly keep my word!

Not just seeing them once, we also have people amongst the Overlords of the Dead Realm, even if you wish to live with your deceased parents and clansmen in the City of Regret indefinitely, we can fulfill your wish..."

"Slap!"

Watching Leon withdraw his hand silently after slapping, the bewildered white snake instinctively reached out with his left hand, covering his fiery hot face.

"You slapped me..."

"No."

The serpent scales on the left cheek shed, Prince Andre twitched his lips into a rather forced smile.

"He slapped me."

"?"

Without explaining to the white snake, Prince Andre, reclaiming half of his face, quietly picked up the paintbrush soaked with paint, adding a stroke of blazing sunlight to the scroll.

"Black Owl!"

Watching him start painting again, the white snake angrily shouted once more:

"Think it through! If you refuse my offer now, even if your soul endures my torment, I can ensure you never reach the City of Regret in this lifetime!"

Prince Andre paused for a moment upon hearing, then using his remaining half of the face, replied calmly:

"Not going is fine."