

I! Cleaner 68

Chapter 68 Thirty Years West of the River_1

With the golden toad's confident speech, the towering Gold Wheel in front of it instantly vanished, reappearing in front of Leon out of thin air.

Leon, who received the "payment," let out a sudden scream, covering his ears in agony.

"Buzz!!!"

Accompanied by a mechanical buzzing sound a hundred times more piercing than ever before, a mechanized notification sounded in Leon's ears.

[Warning, the Anomalous Object "Wealth Exchange Toad" is attempting to change system ownership]

[System ownership cannot be transferred, change operation denied]

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[...]

"How could it be..."

Seeing Leon, who, despite the agony on his face, had not a single wrinkle or a white hair added, the golden toad widened its eyes in disbelief.

This was a full thirty thousand Gold Wheels! Enough to buy the lives of more than a dozen people, yet it couldn't even make him appear aged? Does the Purification Bureau pay that much?

Unwilling to give in, the golden toad scooted back, gathering with its hands a pile of Gold Wheels five times the previous amount, pushing them all towards the man in front of it.

"One hundred fifty thousand!"

"Buzz!"

[Warning...]

[...denied]

"Five hundred thousand!!"

[Warning...]

[...denied]

"One million!!!"

[Warning...]

[...denied]

"Ah!!! The pain!!!"

"This is impossible!!!"

How could a human be worth so much?!

Watching Leon, who clutched his head in agony yet refused to die, the golden toad's worldview suffered a tremendous shock. It gritted its teeth and opened its mouth as wide as possible, spitting out enough Gold Wheels to form a river.

"Add...all these!!!"

Like a gambler who has lost everything, the golden toad, whose purpose of existence was challenged, began spitting Gold Wheels with all its might, continuing until they submerged Leon's chest, piled into a towering gold mountain in the shopping plaza, causing its golden skin to take on a faint pale hue before finally taking a breath. However...

[Warning...]

[...denied]

"Ah..."

After a noisy bombardment lasting over five minutes, whether it was because his ears were completely deafened or he'd gradually adapted to the prickling pain the noise caused, Leon not only stopped shouting but stood up straight, and even had a healthy flush on his face from the recent intense "exercise."

"..."

Impossible! I don't believe it!! It's not supposed to be like this!!!

Seeing Leon, who besides being slightly uncomfortable from the pressure of the Gold Wheels, looked even healthier than before, the golden toad felt a buzzing in its mind as if someone had hammered a blow to its skull. It flopped down with a thud and stayed there for a long time without getting up.

"I've told you, there are many things that cannot be measured with money!"

Seeing that this unbelieving creature finally stopped, no longer tormenting himself, Leon sighed with relief as his ears were freed from further suffering.

Struggling out of the Gold Wheels that reached his chest, he pondered for a long time about how to retort. Using both hands and feet, he climbed up the Gold Wheel Mountain, courageously looking down at the golden toad below, full of hatred, and with half-true half-false bravado, said:

"Though I'm just an insignificant ordinary person, struggling every day for a meager salary, like you said, indirectly selling my life.

But in my heart, I know very clearly, that I'm not a slave to money! I've never lived for money! So no matter how much you can manipulate money, you absolutely cannot buy my life!"

"Nonsense!"

Enraged by the disdain in the eyes of this "slave," the severely faded golden toad forced itself up, its huge head bowing up, higher than the golden mountain. Then it opened its mouth wide, aiming at Leon on the golden mountain, attempting to spew more Gold Wheels to buy this human's life again.

Yet this time, what it spewed was no longer the brilliant Gold Wheels but a large quantity of silver-white coins carved with patterns, covering the shining gold mountain with a layer of pale snow.

"Why has it turned to Silver Wheels? Are you out of money?"

"I have!"

Spitting out a sea of Silver Wheels again, but finding it still had no effect on Leon, a hint of wavering flashed in the golden toad's eyes, but then it quickly lifted its head resolutely, responding in anger:

"I am the Holy Spirit of the Scales Gold Sect! My wealth is endless! It's just that descending here consumed too much of my power; once I leave this place and return to..."

"Don't be silly, no matter how much money you spit out, the result is the same!"

Buried up to his chest in Silver Wheels again, Leon sneered, taking out a bottle of liquor and downing a large gulp. With the effect of [Martyr of the Wine Country], he completely suppressed the lingering fear in his heart, then looked up, gazing at the copper-hued massive toad, and continued his aggressive "attack," knowing it couldn't understand the concept of a system:

"Look with your eyes, the relationship between me and money, isn't it like this mountain you've puked out?"

Moving the heavy Silver Wheels aside, Leon laboriously struggled out from the "snow top," once again occupying the highest point of the gold and silver mountain. He looked down at the faded toad below with disdain in his eyes, saying:

"Admit it, as long as I can stay clear-headed, not numbed and buried by the magic of money, but struggle towards a greater and higher goal, then no amount of money deserves anything but to stay beneath my feet!"

"Crack!"

"I don't believe it!"

Accompanied by a clear cracking sound, the toad, now covered in large cracks, jerked its head up, screaming it didn't believe, trying to raise its head to regain a position higher than Leon.

However, with the great gold and silver mountain supporting him, no matter how hard it tried, it could only be lower than Leon, receiving Leon's full disdain from below.

"This is impossible!!!"

Feeling an enormous humiliation from being looked down upon, the faded toad desperately supported itself and leaped upwards, trying to climb the gold and silver mountain to once again look down upon Leon.

Yet even a hill made of gold and silver couldn't support a massive beast six meters tall. Half of the gold and silver mountain instantly collapsed, and the toad, struggling to leap up, could only roll down, panting heavily and dizzily looking up at Leon atop the mountain.

"See, even the money you control is starting to abandon you now."

"Crack!"

Leon, giving the timely finishing blow, sat cross-legged on over a meter thick "Silver Wheel snow top," looking down at the toad below, eyes full of unwillingness, silently shook his head, then grabbed a handful of Silver Wheels, scattering them down, covering the increasingly fragmented skin of the toad, and opened his mouth to sigh:

"I've spent my life pursuing money, and now I stand atop countless moneys, whereas you, considering yourself as the master of money, can only be buried beneath it. Think about it, isn't it ironic?"

"Crack!"

No...this isn't real! This isn't real!

Looking at his nearly completely shattered body, the cracked toad, unable to rise again, held onto a last glimmer of hope, lifting its head in fury, questioning:

"Is it the Anomalous Object! It's the Anomalous Object, right? You must have a high-hierarchy Anomalous Object! One strong enough to resist my Ability!"

"If that's what you think, then yes."

Showing off his still muscless arm, Leon laughed dismissively, shamelessly bluffing:

"You guessed right, I do have an incomparably powerful Anomalous Object, one with a Hierarchy higher than True God, but it adds nothing to my body, making me unable to even lift an iron box, only able to carry that sheep head with a shopping bag to do tasks.

Oh, by the way, the reason you couldn't buy everything from me just now was because its Hierarchy is way too high for your Ability to be effective... Ha ha, does saying this give you a bit of comfort?"

"I... I..."

"Enough with the 'I', you're just a pitiable creature."

After arbitrarily summarizing the cracked toad's entire life, Leon restrained the excitement of outwitting the Holy Spirit, sitting leisurely atop the gold and silver mountain, narrating calmly:

"I've always thought that one's perspective of the world is actually just a projection of their self-worth.

You see someone making noise; what you see isn't those making the noise but your own dislike of the commotion;

You see someone working diligently, yet you see not the diligent worker, but your appreciation for effort;

This world is clearly vivid and beautiful, yet you feel nothing, only seeing a bunch of slaves controlled by money..."

At this, Leon paused, looking compassionately at the giant toad beneath him, breaking inch by inch, and gently said:

"What is truly buried by the magic of money, is it those living life with effort... or is it you who sees them as slaves?"

"Crack!"

"Crash!"