

# CIRCLE OF INEVITABILITY

## Chapter 15: Getting Information

*That owl?*

*That owl from the Warlock legend?*

His mind raced with possibilities, trying to comprehend the gravity of the situation. His blood seemed to freeze.

It was worse than facing the three-faced monster.

After all, this was no longer a dream. This was reality.

Even if his demise in a dream led to the same in reality, it was different psychologically.

*What should I do?*

*Will Aurore be implicated?*

...

As Lumian racked his brain for a countermeasure, the owl remained still, observing him with a piercing gaze.

After a few seconds, the owl spread its wings and flew towards the distant forest.

Its graceful glide carried it down, down, until it vanished into Cordu.

Only when the owl had completely vanished did Lumian's mind snap back to the present.

He slumped into a chair and lifted a hand to his forehead.

He was drenched in sweat.

*Is it truly the owl of the Warlock legend?*

*Has it truly lived for so many years?*

*In any case, it was unlike any other owl with dull eyes. It almost looked human...*

*If it's really that owl, why did it choose to fly just outside my window? Is it because I want to uncover the truth about the Warlock legend? But we've already given up...*

*It left after a few moments of observation...*

*I wonder if it will return and cause trouble for Aurore...*

Despite wanting to observe the situation further since nothing had happened yet, Lumian knew he couldn't keep it from his sister any longer.

After leaving the room, he saw that Aurore was still asleep. He went downstairs to prepare breakfast, all of which were his sister's favorite dishes.

Sunny-side up, meringue cookies, ordinary toast with jam...

*I have to make noodles later. This time, I'll add meat sauce...* Lumian mentally noted that the noodle compartment was empty and decided to refill it some time in the next two days.

It was Aurore's favorite dish.

Aurore descended the staircase in a flowing nightgown, her golden locks tousled. The breakfast spread was readied.

"Morning," she mumbled, stifling a yawn.

Lumian grinned at her. "It's not getting early.

"Don't you always say a day's planning starts early in the morning?"

"That's right. My plan is to sleep." Aurore settled into her seat and tucked into her breakfast with a glass of milk.

Lumian sat across from Aurore At the table that could fit six. As he nibbled on a pancake, he casually said, "I've been in the village for the past few days trying to find out the truth about those legends."

"Why?" Aurore asked.

Lumian was very frank.

"You didn't want to help me get supernatural powers, so I decided to find my own way. Those legends might contain clues."

"It's almost impossible," Aurore commented, her tone casual. "The legends have been twisted beyond recognition over the years. Or hallucinated by some loony. It's meaningless. Yes, it's also possible that someone specially made up a story as an excuse. Heh heh, and the contributions of rubberneckerers like you."

"What?" Lumian didn't understand what Aurore meant by 'rubbernecker.'

It wasn't even Intisian.

"It means people who can't help but get involved in drama they have no business in," Aurore explained simply. "And judging by how you are suddenly raising this matter, I'm guessing you've caused some trouble and now have no choice but to come home to ask your sister for help."

"It can be considered an accident, but it's not to the extent of causing trouble," Lumian said, undaunted.

Lumian organized his thoughts carefully.

"My first target was the Warlock legend."

"What Warlock legend?" Aurore's confusion was palpable.

Lumian couldn't believe it. "You've never heard of it? A long time ago, a person in the village suddenly died. When he was buried, an owl flew over

and stopped by his bed. It only flew away when the corpse was lifted. After that, the corpse became very heavy. It took nine bulls to pull the coffin. Only then did the villagers know that the person was a Warlock when he was alive."

Aurore was listening intently.

"I really wasn't aware of such a legend before."

*It doesn't make sense...* Lumian was incredulous.

Aurore may have been a homebody, but she still made time to socialize with the other old ladies in town. She loved telling stories to the children and was always up-to-date on the latest Cordu gossip. It was hard to believe she hadn't heard about the Warlock legend that had been circulating for years.

But what was even more intriguing was the fact that her house was built on the very spot where the Warlock's home once stood.

Lumian had a hunch from the start that Aurore's decision to settle in Cordu was driven by the allure of the Warlock's treasure, the key to unlocking extraordinary power.

"And then?" Aurore asked calmly.

Lumian answered truthfully, "We did some digging around, and we got confirmation from the village elders. This wasn't some tall tale. The Warlock really did exist, but that was decades ago. The Church burned the house down, and now the land belongs to you."

"Is that so?" Aurore was obviously a little surprised. "I knew it. There's always a catch. Why else would they sell me this land at a price lower than the norm? I thought it was because of my gift of gab, when it came to old ladies..."

She thought for a moment and asked, "So, the Church burned the Warlock's body?"

Lumian nodded. "Yes. His ashes are buried in the cemetery beside the cathedral."

He continued, "We've given up on this matter because all the clues led to a dead end. But this morning, I saw an owl outside my window. It looked just like the one in the legend."

Aurore's expression became serious. "Are you certain?"

"I can't say for sure, but it didn't look like any ordinary owl," Lumian responded objectively.

Aurore pondered for a moment before saying slowly, "Don't leave the village for now. And after dark, don't step outside until I've finished investigating the situation."

She gave a sour smile. "I've warned you before about the dangers of seeking supernatural power. But look, trouble has already found you.

"Fortunately, it seems that the other party doesn't have any malicious intentions. The problem should be resolved relatively easily."

*I'm glad you're on guard...* Lumian lowered his head and said straightforwardly, "Grande Soeur, I was wrong."

He changed the subject.

"Did your pen pals write back?"

"How can it be that fast? It's not like we're sending e— Uh, post!" Aurore scoffed.

Lumian was puzzled. *Isn't post already referring to letters and packages sent through the post office?*

He was not too concerned. After all, Aurore often used strange words.

...

At the entrance of Ol' Tavern.

Lumian stood there and surveyed the area.

He knew that the woman who had given him the tarot card wouldn't be awake yet, so he was looking for the three foreigners: Ryan, Leah, and Valentine.

As expected, the trio was enjoying a lavish breakfast at a table inside the tavern.

Lumian observed them for a few seconds, taking in the spread of trout rolls, wine, and mayonnaise bread, before leaving without disturbing them.

Some time later, as Ryan and the others prepared to continue strolling around Cordu and "chatting" with the locals,

Lumian approached them with open arms and a bright smile.

"Good morning, my cabbages."

Valentine's face twitched, and between Ryan and Leah, one looked slightly embarrassed while the other looked amused.

Uh, they're dressed exactly the same... Did they not bring many changes of clothes despite being out? Lumian noticed that Leah was still clad in a snug pleated cashmere dress, a small white coat, and a pair of Marseillan boots, each adorned with a small silver bell. Her veil which doubled as a hat also had bells attached to it. Ryan was still sporting a drab duffel coat and pale yellow strides, topped with a rough dark bowler hat.

And Valentine still had powdered hair and makeup on his face.

"Good morning, Lumian. What brings you here?" Ryan asked calmly.

Lumian looked aggrieved as he responded, "Well, you guys are my friends, and I have nothing to do. I thought I'd come visit."

He then questioned them, "I noticed that you've been chatting with people in the village for the past few days. Is there anything you want to ask?"

"You can come to me if you have any questions, my cabbages. I'm your friend."

"We can't trust your answer," Valentine interjected.

Ryan shot him a look, signaling him to calm down.

Lumian smiled.

"So you can completely trust the others?"

Leah was at a loss for words, while Ryan thought for a moment before responding,

"Actually, we can't completely trust anyone. We have to make a comprehensive judgment based on the answers we get from different people and the situation we observe."

"That's more like it." Lumian spread his hands. "Well, then it wouldn't hurt to hear my answer. At least it's a reference."

Ryan was silent for a moment before glancing around.

The early morning in Cordu was bustling with people heading to the farmlands, but there was hardly anyone near Ol' Tavern.

"Here's the deal," he said finally. "We're here to find someone."

"The padre?" Lumian asked with a smile.

Ryan shook his head.

"No. We visited the padre to find this person."

"Who is it?" Lumian asked with interest. "I know everyone in the village. I should be able to help."

Ryan did not show any joy.

"Actually, we don't know who this person is, how old they are, or what they look like.

"We received an unsigned letter some time ago, and we're trying to find the person who wrote it."

Lumian couldn't help but wonder if the letter was from an informer.

He feigned puzzlement.

"Did the person who wrote the letter not reach out to you after you arrived in the village?"

"No," Leah replied for Ryan.

"Perhaps they don't feel safe and don't trust you?" Lumian suggested eagerly.

"Can't you glean any clues from the contents of the letter?"

Lumian was curious about the letter's contents.

If it was targeting the padre's crew, he'd be happy to help them. But if it involved Aurore, he'd urge his sister to move. After all, Aurore communicated with her pen pals frequently, and if any of them were caught, she could be implicated. The letter could be a crucial clue.