

## **Inevitability 351**

Chapter 351 Killing Intent

Dammit! Lumian couldn't help but curse inwardly when he saw Monette.

A mix of anger and fear washed over him, a reaction to the stress of the situation.

Why is it him again?

...

Why did he appear underground in front of me at such a critical moment?

What is he up to?

Why is he like the bedbugs at Auberge du Coq Doré, the cockroaches in the trash, and the rats in Underground Trier, ubiquitous and unavoidable?

“Who are you?” Hela asked coldly.

Her deadpan demeanor swiftly soothed Lumian's emotions. His mind raced as he analyzed the intentions of the Islander swindler, Monette, and the Salle de Bal Unique dance hall backing him.

Monette, with a sly smile, pinched the monocle in his right eye socket and replied,

“Like you guys, a tomb adventurer.”

Tomb adventurer... You make grave robbers sound so honorable... Madam Justice once said that the higher a Sequence, the more dangerous it is to enter the catacombs... Therefore, the angel Monette believes in can't provide him with any assistance here. The saints with godhood in Salle de Bal Unique don't dare enter either... In other words, if Madame Hela and I join forces, we have a high chance of keeping Monette here forever, preventing him from roaming around like a cockroach! Lumian narrowed his eyes as he gazed at Monette.

The fear in his heart dissipated significantly, and the dangerous thoughts of using this opportunity to eliminate the swindler in front of him rapidly multiplied.

Lumian smiled and looked at Monette.

“Tomb adventurer? Do you know this place well?”

Monette smiled and said, “Of course.”

He raised his right hand and pointed at an ancient tomb at the edge of the candlelight's range.

“That belongs to a member of the Fourth Epoch's Zoroast family.”

Immediately after, Monette pointed to a few nearby tombs.

“That's a member of the Jacob family, a member of the Abraham family, a member of the Blood Legion...”

“Unfortunately, there are no Beyonder characteristics left behind.”

Lumian's surprise and puzzlement grew as he realized that the Islander swindler had genuinely answered his question. This raised even more questions about Monette's motives.

He cautiously pointed towards the ancient tomb from which Monette had emerged.

“Whose tomb is that?”

Monette took a few steps forward, noticing the subtle shift in Lumian's demeanor. He stopped and maintained his enigmatic smile.

“A member of the Fourth Epoch's Amon family.”

This swindler's knowledge of the Fourth Epoch families and the catacombs' fourth level is far more extensive than what should be written on the road signs.... Amid Lumian's bewilderment, Hela spoke again.

“Then do you know where the Samaritan Women's Spring is?”

Monette stroked the outer edge of his monocle and wore a smirk.

“Why should I tell you? What kind of reward can you offer?”

“Why should we believe you have the exact location of the Samaritan Women's Spring?” Lumian asked instinctively.

He suspected that Monette was about to embark on his habitual deception.

Monette chuckled lightly.

“I really don't know. The name Samaritan Women's Spring isn't that impressive. It seems to come from an ancient book I once read. However, after coming to this level many times, I discovered some strange phenomena. Some occasionally animated bones will automatically gather in this area, enter a tomb, and never come out.”

The undead animated by the environment will be affected by this tomb's abnormality and drawn to it automatically? Or is that the Samaritan Women's Spring? Western side, some ancient tomb. The conditions match... Lumian's heart raced as he became even more vigilant.

Monette, the Islander swindler, voluntarily disclosed such crucial information without receiving any payment ?

This was completely out of character for him!

Any anomaly that occurred meant that something was wrong!

Lumian suspected two potential scenarios: either Monette was luring him and Hela into the ancient tomb where the undead gathered, hoping to lead them into a trap, or he was using them as scouts to navigate this dangerous territory.

Both possibilities were equally plausible. Although the former didn't benefit Monette, some people did enjoy seeing others suffer.

“That's all I know.” Monette pinched the monocle in his right eye socket and said with a smile, “I'll search the other tombs. If you can find the so-called Samaritan Women's Spring, remember to leave a note for me in the tomb of the Amon family member; tell me what's so special about it.”

As he spoke, he advanced toward Lumian.

In Lumian's tense state, poised to strike at a moment's notice, the Islander swindler sidestepped him and headed for the distant tomb, carrying a lit white candle.

Soon, his silhouette disappeared at the crossroads, plunging the area into darkness once more.

Has he truly left? Lumian remained vigilant, his attention focused on Termiboros's reaction.

The Inevitability angel remained silent, seemingly unperturbed by Monette's reappearance.

Hela took a few steps back and positioned herself beside an ancient tomb, pushing open its rickety stone door.

Confronted by the pale-white bones strewn at the tomb's entrance, Hela raised her right hand.

As if pulled by invisible threads, the bones swiftly converged, morphing into a swaying humanoid skeleton with a creaking sound.

Hela refrained from issuing any commands to the undead creature she had summoned. She observed coldly as it slowly departed from the tomb, drawn by an unseen force into the darkness.

Is Madame Hela from the Corpse Collector pathway, or does she possess a corresponding mystical item? Lumian roughly discerned Hela's intentions. She intended on utilizing the undead creatures' characteristic—the automatic attraction to the problematic ancient tomb—to chart their course.

The most probable anomaly in this region was the Samaritan Women's Spring!

Holding their burning white candles, the pair followed the humanoid skeleton through the westernmost tombs.

Suddenly, another figure emerged from the darkness around the corner, a candle flame accompanying him.

A crystal monocle adorned his right eye socket, and an enigmatic smile graced his face.

It was that Islander swindler Monette once more!

As Lumian jumped in fright, Monette asked with a smile, “Is that Samaritan Women's Spring interesting? Can I accompany you?”

Why didn't you ask previously? Lumian's killing intent surged.

Without batting an eyelid, he said, “We haven't even located it yet. How would we know if it's interesting? Why didn't you conceal yourself in the shadows, awaiting the completion of our exploration and confirmation of any dangers or traps before venturing forth? That way, the risk would be considerably lower. And even if we succeed, we won't be able to remove the Samaritan Women's Spring in its entirety.”

Monette pressed the back of his right index finger against the monocle and nodded in agreement.

“You make a valid point.”

The swindler grinned and retreated into the darkness around the corner.

The candle's flame promptly dwindled until it vanished.

He left so easily? Lumian's thoughts raced, but he couldn't quite decipher Monette's intentions.

He glanced at Hela and noticed that she was sipping liquor again, but her complexion had a pallid, almost bluish hue.

She resembled a corpse even more now.

“Do you have any idea what's up with these monocle-wearing folks?” Lumian inquired.

Hela placed the empty military flask back into her hidden pocket. As she continued to follow the humanoid skeleton, she replied in a cold, ethereal voice, “It's tied to the Fourth Epoch's Amon family.”

Fourth Epoch's Amon family... The ancient tomb Monette emerged from belonged to a member of the Amon family... They control the Marauder pathway, much like Franca mentioned the Demoness family's control over the Assassin pathway. Seeing that Hela wasn't inclined to share more, Lumian had no choice but to keep silent and follow.

Monette's reappearance pushed aside any thoughts of idle chatter to ease his restlessness.

As they proceeded, the candles held by Lumian and Hela took on a faint, eerie shade of dark green.

The “resurrected” skeleton turned into a massive, decaying tomb with a partially open stone door.

Lumian's spirits soared, sensing that the Samaritan Women's Spring lay ahead.

At that moment, another figure poked its head out from the side of the tomb.

Under the yellowish candlelight, the crystal monocle gleamed with an unsettling brilliance.

It was the Islander swindler, Monette, once more!

He grinned and inquired, “Do you have any messages for your family and friends? I can help convey them.”

Lumian was so startled that he almost couldn't contain the urge to strike down Monette right then and there!

There couldn't be a better place to deal with him!

“No,” Hela replied icily, choosing not to engage.

Lumian exhaled slowly and said, “Neither do I.”

“What a shame.” Monette returned to the dark tunnel beside the tomb, looking disappointed.

The yellowish candlelight flickered slightly, indicating that he hadn't gone far and was waiting nearby.

Lumian couldn't help but glance at Hela and gesture with his right hand as if cutting a throat.

He was asking if they should eliminate the Islander swindler in advance.

Hela remained silent for a few moments before gently shaking her head.

“We'll leave as soon as we obtain the Samaritan Women's Spring.”

She intended to stay focused on their objective and avoid stirring up further trouble.

Yes, once I've collected the spring water, I'll teleport away with Madam Hela... Lumian agreed and replaced their candles with fresh ones.

After some time, the skeleton still hadn't emerged. Cautiously, they entered the massive tomb through the partially open stone door.

At that moment, a raspy, elderly voice echoed from the depths of the tomb.

“Halt!”

Within the perimeter of the yellowish candlelight, a figure trembled into view.

### Chapter 352 Spring Source

A figure staggered out from the depths of the tomb.

As the figure entered the range of the candle flames, it seemed uncomfortable with the light. It raised its right hand to shield itself from the glare.

Similar to the tomb administrators, the figure wore a blue shirt and yellow pants. However, his face bore deep wrinkles and light-brown patches. Sparse, dry, white hair adorned his head, and his eyes were an unusual pure black, giving off an icy coldness.

...

For some inexplicable reason, Lumian found it challenging to discern the features of the aged tomb administrator. His form seemed to blur at the edges, blending seamlessly with the surrounding darkness, impervious to the white candle's glow. His breath was so faint it bordered on non-existent.

In a hoarse, emotionless voice, like that of a corpse capable of speech, he uttered, “Get out of here!”

“Since it's open for viewing, there shouldn't be any restricted areas!” Lumian retorted, echoing the tone of college students in Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, attempting to reason with him.

But the aged tomb administrator repeated, “Get out of here!”

Lumian turned to Hela, hoping she might succeed in persuading the gravekeeper.

If that failed, he was prepared to take more direct action, either restraining the other party or even rendering him unconscious.

The Spell of Harrumph was perfectly suited for such tasks.

However, Hela shook her head slowly and began to exit the tomb.

Deep underground near the arcade of the opera house, Franca gazed at the entrustee and inquired, “What kind of deal?”

The Warlock-dressed man responded in a shrill tone, “I'll increase the reward to 50,000 verl d'or. Go to the Deep Valley Quarry and create a huge commotion, exposing the secret cave.

“If you're willing, you can sign the contract now. I have a way to ensure the contract's binding powers on both parties.”

Fifty thousand verl d'or to create an explosion capable of shattering the stone wall at the secret cave's entrance? Why seek us out for such a straightforward task while offering a generous compensation of 50,000 verl d'or? Franca's suspicion deepened.

With a subtle movement, Franca produced a fist-sized grayish-white cloth bag and tossed it into the shadows beside her. She assumed a guarded posture against the man across from her and as though it was inconvenient for her to find a necessary item.

“Help me find my seal.”

Seal? Jenna materialized from the shadows and caught the small coin bag, hearing the metallic clinks within.

She was baffled by Franca's request.

Isn't the bag supposed to be filled with coins and the Ring of Punishment?

Franca smiled at the entrustee.

“What are the specific terms of the contract?”

She sensed the possibility that the other party might manipulate the contract using Beyonder powers from the corresponding domain. Franca had a plan to attack before committing to any contract—capture him, clarify the terms, and then consider whether to sign it!

Baffled, Lumian followed Hela out of the tomb and asked, “What do we do now?”

“Grab my right arm,” Hela's voice was colder than before, devoid of warmth.

Lumian roughly grasped her thoughts and quickly complied, reaching out to firmly grasp her right arm.

Almost instantly, Hela twirled the black diamond ring on her right middle finger with her left palm.

Almost simultaneously, Lumian felt a profound shift. He was no longer in the same world as the tomb entrance.

Surveying his surroundings, he noticed that everything, including the dim candlelight, had become hazy, shrouded in dense fog.

Guided by Hela, Lumian moved cautiously through the thick fog, taking one step at a time.

There was no movement in the depths of the tomb, and the two of them slowly advanced in silence.

Before long, within the limited visibility of five meters, he spotted a rotting coffin standing upright on the ground.

The aged tomb administrator lay motionless in the coffin, his eyes wide open and devoid of life.

Lumian couldn't detect any sign of breathing this time.

In this foggy state, the aged tomb administrator seemed to pay them no mind, allowing Lumian and Hela to pass by as they headed towards the end of the tomb.

There, they found a gentle downward slope leading to an unknown destination.

Hela gestured for Lumian to release his grip, and the enigmatic concealment dissipated.

Standing at the top of the slope, Lumian held a candle flame in his hand, illuminating a path lined with scattered, broken bones.

An unsettling chill emanated from the depths of his heart, stifling his emotions and desires. Yet, an unshakable anger and malice of wanting to snap someone's neck persisted, growing stronger. Lumian felt as though he was observing his own duality—a sane self contrasted with a crazed, unfamiliar self.

He couldn't help but glance at Hela, who downed a flask of liquor in one go. Her face remained pale, and purplish-red patches marred her skin, making her look as if she had been dead for some time.

“Are you alright?” Lumian remembered his primary role as a constant reminder to Hela to prevent her from being corrupted by the catacombs and undergoing any abnormalities.

Hela put away the empty flask and replied in a lifeless voice, “I'm fine for now. I've made preparations to deal with this situation. As long as I don't linger too long, I should be alright.”

Lumian pressed, “How long can you stay?”

“About half an hour,” Hela replied, beginning to descend the slope.

Lumian planned to grab Hela's arm and use spirit world traversal to force her out of here a few minutes in advance, regardless of what they found later.

Descending deeper, the slope became littered with more bones, gradually taking on complete and original forms. Some resembled humans, while others appeared monstrous.

The skeleton Hela had awakened earlier knelt on one knee on this slope, unable to proceed further.

As they continued, Lumian noticed a thin grayish-white fog up ahead, contracting and expanding, as if it had a life of its own.

Hela slowed her pace and regarded the fog with heightened caution.

“Is there a problem?” Lumian asked, finding the fog oddly familiar.

Hela nodded and said, “It's very dangerous. I've prepared as best as I can, but I'm not certain it will work.”

As Lumian listened to Madame Hela's response, he continued to observe the grayish-white fog.

Suddenly, he recognized it.

Isn't this the same fog that shrouded Cordu's ruins?

The very fog that provided protection when I prayed for boons?

In that moment, Lumian realized the true reason behind Madam Justice's insistence that he accompany Madame Hela in the search for the Samaritan Women's Spring.

He cautiously extended his right palm towards the grayish-white fog, and as they touched, he felt warmth in his left chest.

He knew that Mr. Fool's seal had been activated.

He pushed forward, his right palm passing through the grayish-white fog without encountering any danger or abnormality.

With newfound confidence, he couldn't help but think, Praise The Fool!

After a brief prayer, Lumian turned to Hela with a confident smile.

“I've also made the necessary preparations, and they seem effective.

“I'll grab your arm.”

Hela didn't inquire further about Lumian's preparations or the information he possessed. She allowed him to grab her left arm, and together, they ventured into the grayish-white fog.

The surroundings grew even quieter, and an unusual, almost palpable aura seemed to fill the air. Before long, they heard an ethereal and faint splashing sound.

The sound of water... Lumian felt a surge of excitement and relief.

They were in the right place, and the Samaritan Women's Spring was likely nearby!

They continued to move forward, and as they did, the grayish-white fog rapidly dissipated, revealing a pond-sized spring.

Around the spring, a dark substance of an indescribable color encircled the pale-white water at its center.

In the water, wet, black seaweed-like hair floated, and a few vague figures struggled to crawl out from the depths.

A woman stood beside the spring. It was the white-robed figure Lumian had seen before, suspected to be a high-ranking Demoness.

Her face was pale-white and translucent, her eyes blank and cold. White bones were scattered around her.

Splash!

Suddenly, the pale-white spring water receded with a splash, leaving behind a pitch-black hole that seemed to defy the presence of light.

With another splash, the spring water surged from the dark hole, filling the pond-sized spring once more.

This time, it was dimmer, less pale-white, and appeared empty and dark, containing countless indescribable colors.

In an instant, the spring water blended with the surrounding grayish-white fog, restoring its original appearance when Lumian and Hela first laid eyes on it.

In this place, their memories began to blur as if they were slowly fading away.



In a hurry, Lumian reached into his pocket, intending to retrieve the metal canister he had prepared to collect the pale-white spring water.

But he touched something stone-like.

He had never put anything similar into his pocket!

Lumian retracted his right hand in surprise and saw a brown stone in his palm. The stone was riddled with potholes, each filled with dark-red speckled spots.

Earth Blood ore!

It was the Earth Blood ore he had previously lost.

When did it return? Why did it suddenly appear in my possession? This is a part of Underground Trier! As Lumian's pupils dilated in alarm, a frenzied, terrifying aura saturated with blood and rust emanated from the dark hole that had swallowed the pale-white spring water once more.

The mere presence of this aura froze Lumian and Hela simultaneously, rendering them immobile.

Beside the suspected high-ranking Demoness, a skeleton raised its palm and touched its right eye.

Simultaneously, it bared its white teeth and emitted a chilling, delighted laugh.

“You've already obtained it. How can you not give it a try?”

Around the spring, other white skeletons joined in, their mouths opening to produce the same voice: “You've already obtained it. How can you not give it a try?”

### Chapter 353 Crazy Figure

“You've already obtained it. How can you not give it a try?” The ghastly white skeletons stared at Lumian, their terrifying aura intimidating him. They laughed mockingly, their laughter exaggerated and crazed.

Splash!

The dark spring water, not pale-white enough, gushed from the dark hole and filled the small “pond.”

...

Compared to before, there was an additional figure in the water.

The figure seemed to be engulfed in an intense inferno, almost colorless flames covering its entire body.

Despite occupying only a corner of the spring, Lumian, frozen in fear, felt it was abnormally huge, like a mountain peak.

Within the nearly intangible flames, the figure revealed long, blood-colored hair. Its sculpted face was marred by decay and pus, and its bones gleamed with a metallic luster. Its iron-black eyes seemed rusted, emitting a sinister blood-red glow.

Yellowish “magma” dripped from the figure's body, quickly extinguished by the pale-white spring water.

As the Samaritan Women's Spring surged again, the dense white bones that had made the sound fell silent, as if they were about to decay into mud.

Seeing the decomposing mountain-like figure, the stench of blood and rust intensified in Lumian's nostrils. His stunned mind was tinged with a madness that yearned to destroy everything, igniting his already violent and ferocious aura.

If he hadn't been on the brink of death, his thoughts completely stalled, he might have lost his mind and become a lunatic.

He could lose control at any moment if that happened.

In any case, he stood frozen in place, as if facing his most feared natural enemy. All he knew was to tremble, forget to resist, and forget to escape.

Splash!

The highly decayed figure, shrouded in intangible flames, entered the pitch-black cave, determined to reach the edge of the Samaritan Women's Spring. It reached out its right palm, dripping with a faint yellowish-red liquid, trying to grab Lumian, who stood there.

The spring water surged, and a faint fog gathered, preventing the figure, which appeared as massive as a mountain, from leaving the spring.

A low growl escaped the figure, and its iron-black eyes emitted a corrupting redness, capable of unsettling anyone who lay their eyes on them.

Under this influence, Lumian's mind buzzed, and he went blank. The Samaritan Women's Spring trembled violently.

Although the terrifying figure couldn't break free from the spring's constraints, it successfully blocked the spring water's retreat into the dark hole.

Simultaneously, the decayed and shadowy figures within the spring surged toward the shore, driven by the low growl.

Among them, there was a woman filled with pus exuding a serene night-like temperament, a decaying corpse adorned with a golden crown, an iron-colored skeleton sprouting greasy feathers, a figure entwined with countless shattered maggots, and a strange black entity...

These figures, too, couldn't leave the Samaritan Women's Spring but approached the edge, extending pale-white, pus-covered or highly decayed palms made of repulsive maggots toward Lumian's feet.

The long black hair floating on the water's surface, resembling a tangle of weeds, suddenly came to life and extended rapidly beyond the spring.

The white-robed woman lingering around the Samaritan Women's Spring was instantly ensnared by the long black hair. Lumian's figure reflected in her stiff, cold blue eyes.

Bizarre and terrifying palms gripped Lumian, and the long black hair tugged at him. Slowly and uncontrollably, he slid toward the Samaritan Women's Spring, drawing closer to the colossal figure formed by madness and flames.

His body grew colder, and his thoughts went blank.

At that moment, all light suddenly vanished, and he was consumed by a most profound darkness.

Melodious singing and chanting echoed from afar, soothing the area. The blurry and shadowy figures no longer displayed the same level of madness as before, as if they had been pacified.

The terrifying palms that had clutched Lumian's feet and nearly froze his spirit and flesh retracted. The long black hair that had tugged at his body lost its vitality and fell to the ground, powerless. The figure suspected to be a high-ranking Demoness lingering around the Samaritan Women's Spring also came to a halt, as if listening to a nocturnal symphony.

Even the most terrifying and frenzied figure slowed down, its terrifying aura significantly weakening.

Lumian snapped out of his daze and instantly comprehended what had transpired.

The thief who had stolen the Earth Blood ore was none other than Monette of Salle de Bal Unique!

Monette had deliberately orchestrated a coincidental encounter with him on the fourth level of the catacombs. Using his thieving skills, he had surreptitiously returned the Earth Blood ore, enabling Lumian to bring the ore specimen to the Samaritan Women's Spring without detection, triggering this bizarre turn of events!

Lumian had never intended to take the Earth Blood ore underground, deeming it too dangerous given his current abilities. Monette's theft and return of the ore had been a passive way to provoke an encounter, the nature of which remained uncertain!

As for Monette's motives, Lumian knew he might only uncover them after this ordeal concluded.

With his thoughts racing, Lumian instinctively reached for Hela's arm, intending to activate his contract mark and escape using spirit world traversal.

In the process, he attempted to rid himself of the Earth Blood ore, hoping to distract the crazed figure with long, blood-colored hair.

However, the Earth Blood ore appeared to be affected by the abnormal environment, showing visible signs of deterioration.

Silently, it crumbled, dissolving into the air. The hidden blood stains marked Lumian's palm, corroding his skin.

Meanwhile, the flame of the white candle Hela held flickered precariously, on the brink of extinguishing. The black diamond ring on her right hand emitted a profound darkness.

After grasping her arm, Lumian realized they were both frozen in place.

This area seemed to be cut off from the spirit world, rendering escape impossible!

I can't escape... Lumian retracted his hand decisively and addressed the fiery figure, who gazed at him with madness: "Ha!"

A pale-yellow beam emanated from his mouth, striking the dark, mountain-like figure.

The figure swayed, but remained unharmed. It unleashed an intangible roar once more.

Receiving this new “command,” the bizarre figures, previously calmed by the tranquil night, trembled. They extended their decaying or repulsive hands once again, clutching at Lumian's feet. The black hair, previously lying dormant, rose again.

Realizing evasion was futile, Lumian's body erupted in fiery flames.

The crimson blossoms of destruction rapidly dimmed and faded, as if their vitality had been extinguished in an instant.

The pale-white, pus-filled hand was the first to seize Lumian's right foot, “silencing” him as his thoughts rapidly waned.

The highly decayed hand, the iron-colored skeleton adorned with light-yellow feathers, and the form intertwined with shattered maggots fulfilled their tasks one after another. They dragged Lumian, who appeared as if in a trance with wide-open eyes, toward the Samaritan Women's Spring.

Hela found herself encircled by layers of long black hair. It pierced through the tranquility of the night, enveloping the lady, who displayed signs of decay.

Lumian stared vacantly at the rigid, decomposing countenance, at the iron-black eyes tinged with blood. He sensed an overwhelming, unadulterated madness but could summon no coherent thought.

His body grew more rigid, and purplish-red livor mortis emerged on his flesh.

He was now just a step away from the pale-white spring.

At that moment, the Samaritan Women's Spring, which had been held at bay by the colossal figure for an extended period, finally surged forward, breaking through the barrier. It swept all the figures, including the colossal one engulfed in invisible flames, back into the lightless abyss of the dark hole.

The colossal figure emitted a furious roar, but it was helpless against the relentless flow of pale-white spring water, vanishing into the depths of the abyss.

Lumian “woke up” and spotted the white-robed woman lingering nearby. He swiftly turned and sprinted toward the crest of the slope.

His plan was straightforward:

Since the abnormality stemmed from the Earth Blood ore, which had partially melded with his palm, he needed to seize this chance to escape. It was not the time to collect the remaining spring water.

As long as he could make his getaway before the pale-white spring surged again and the menacing figures resurfaced, Hela would be safer left behind. She could gather the water calmly and share it with him later.

To escape, given that teleportation had failed, his legs were his sole option now.

As Lumian ran, he readied himself for any potential setbacks.

Harnessing his Pyromaniac abilities, he steadied the flame of the white candle and retrieved the Flog boxing gloves from his bag, fitting them onto his hands.

Concurrently, he attempted to invoke The Fool's honorific name in Hermes.

“The Fool that doesn't belong to this era...”

This inspiration was triggered by the grayish-white fog enveloping the Samaritan Women's Spring!  
Splash!

Midway through his invocation and while covering some ground, Lumian heard the sound of the spring water surging.

It was faster than he had anticipated!

The growl, steeped in the scent of blood and rust, reverberated through the surroundings.

Unaware of Lumian's thought process, Hela's body shuddered once more, as if she had transformed from an emotionless corpse into a frightened living being.

Out of the corner of her eye, she caught sight of the colossal, invisible-flame-shrouded figure with blood-colored hair and tattered, bloodstained armor.

Lumian, too, was taken aback. He even felt an inclination to surrender and give up his resistance.

He strained to endure, unable to continue invoking the honorific name. His only recourse was to place his faith in the Flog boxing gloves.

If he could hold out just a little longer, the hidden evil gods might direct Their attention toward him because of the material of the boxing gloves, sending forth dangerous creatures to influence or assail him.

In the past, Lumian would have prayed for the impending abnormality to remain manageable. But now, he hoped that the more dangerous it became, the better!

Only by muddying the waters would a fish have a chance to escape!

## Chapter 354 Palm

Underground near the arcade of the opera house.

The Warlock-dressed man spoke to Franca in a shrill voice, “It's simple. There are only three specific terms. First, you two must promise to blow up the hidden door of the secret cave in Deep Valley Quarry, creating a commotion that can attract everyone nearby. Second, I'll pay both of you 50,000 verl d'or with an advance of 20,000. Third, you'll face consequences if you don't uphold your end of the bargain. This restriction applies to both parties. We can discuss the details.”

The man had no intention of deceiving the two Beyonders in the contract. Instead, he planned to use his abilities to modify the mission's content the moment the contract was established, forcing them to infiltrate the secret cave in Deep Valley Quarry and retrieve what he wanted, along with sufficient evidence.

...

This entrustee had once purchased a human soul for 1,000 verl d'or using this unique ability to tamper with transaction terms. He believed he wouldn't be disappointed this time.

As Franca conversed with the Warlock-dressed man, Jenna, hidden in the shadows, reached into the small money bag and idly stroked the gold, silver, and copper coins inside.

She was certain that there was no seal inside the money bag.

Or rather, Franca didn't have a seal!

What does she mean? Jenna's gaze shifted to the entrustee who had stated the terms of the contract, finding it rather peculiar.

If he wanted to strike a deal, why not apply for notarization at the mysticism gathering just now?

If he were afraid that the contents of the commission would be exposed, he could have gone to the "conversation room" and borrowed the host's mystical item. There was no need to secretly follow us for the commission!

Something is definitely off!

Jenna understood why Franca had tossed the coin bag to her.

As soon as she realized that something was amiss, she was to immediately use the Ring of Punishment to attack the other party and take control over the situation!

Phew... Jenna exhaled slowly and put on the Ring of Punishment. Using the shadows, she closed the distance between herself and the entrustee.

Franca glanced at the shadows not illuminated by the carbide lamp and smiled at the entrustee dressed as a Warlock.

"That sounds reasonable, but I need to confirm if you're lying and if there's a problem with this matter."

As she spoke, she gently tossed the carbide lamp in front of her and retrieved a mirror from the Assassin suit's hidden pocket. She smiled and said, "Coincidentally, I'm skilled in divination."

Upon hearing this, the entrustee dressed as a Warlock's pupils dilated, and his entire body tensed up.

He wasn't sure if Magic Mirror Divination could expose his scheme!

Hidden in the shadows, Jenna detected his abnormality. Without hesitation, she raised her right hand slightly, causing the iron-colored ring covered in tiny spikes to glow.

Simultaneously, two blinding bolts of lightning shot out from her eyes.

Psychic Piercing!

At the Samaritan Women's Spring.

Lumian and Hela were once again gripped by a horrifying terror, consumed by pure madness. They stood frozen in place, their bodies quivering slightly.

While this madness immobilized them, it paradoxically spared them from imminent death. Their frozen bodies burned with an intense heat, and their dormant thoughts ignited with fury and brutality.

However, their purplish-red livor mortis and decaying skin continued to worsen, showing no signs of improvement.

Darkness descended once more, and Hela used the black diamond ring on her right hand to try and pacify the spectral figures hovering in the Samaritan Women's Spring, including the burning giant in rotting armor.

Lumian recollected his thoughts and realized that his escape with Hela had not been in vain.

They had distanced themselves more than ten meters from the spring, and the decaying, shadowy figures could not leave the Samaritan Women's Spring or reach the shore to grasp their legs and drag them underwater.

These figures clustered at the spring's edge, their vacant eyes staring into nothingness. Their heavily decayed or distorted hands occasionally reached out from the water, only to be forcefully pulled back by some mysterious force.

Silently, they emitted roars that made the entire slope tremble, inducing drowsiness and feelings of submission in Lumian and Hela, causing various adverse reactions.

However, the madness that had ignited their thoughts and the strange effects that had led to signs of dissociative identity disorder had failed to take hold.

Around the Samaritan Women's Spring, only the lingering female figure and the long black hair, resembling seaweed, could approach Lumian. One gazed at him with eerie eyes, while the other extended itself, attempting to ensnare him.

Lumian was relieved. Even if his resistance failed, he would be dragged toward the Samaritan Women's Spring by the long black hair and the indistinct figure suspected to be a high-ranking Demoness. With more than ten meters to cover, he had a chance to hold on until the pale-white spring water overcame the terrifying figure with its reddening iron-black eyes and carried him back into the pitch-black abyss.

When the moment arrived, Lumian could make a swift escape. In two or three attempts, he could exit the area shrouded in the grayish-white fog and return to the chamber above.

Later, he would send Hela inside to retrieve the Samaritan Women's Spring's water, avoiding the adverse reaction caused by the blood ore and the colossal figure which was clearly more potent than the other "water ghosts."

But in the next moment, Lumian's body froze unnaturally.

White frost appeared and vanished repeatedly on his body.

In the blue eyes of the woman, Lumian was now imprisoned in ice.

The long black hair coiled tighter around him, dragging him toward the Samaritan Women's Spring.

Seeing Lumian in peril, Hela, who had remained relatively unaffected, swiftly aimed her right hand at the unknown entity, suspected to be the lingering spirit of a high-ranking Demoness, using the black diamond ring that emitted a constant darkness.

The night transformed into a shroud, enshrouding the other entity and inducing slumber.

Lumian seized this opportunity to release a harrumph, channeling a white stream of light through his nose and into the crystalline ice that bound him, targeting the seaweed-like black hair.

The black hair that ensnared him suddenly lost its strength.

Simultaneously, the curtain of night that had surrounded the entity abruptly constricted, leaving it empty.

Not far away, the female figure in the white robe reappeared, her gaze fixed on Lumian.

Though danger still loomed, Lumian felt a surge of relief. He believed that, even if he stopped resisting now, he could hold on until the pale-white spring withdrew into its depths.

At that moment, the iron-colored eyes of the colossal figure floating in the spring grew wilder, and the rust-like redness became as vivid as blood.

He tugged violently at the spring water, as if trying to break free from invisible chains.

Finally, amid a tumultuous earthquake-like upheaval, the figure draped in tattered, blood-soaked armor and engulfed in invisible flames reached the edge of the Samaritan Women's Spring.

Rumble!

The ground quaked, sending grayish-white dust raining down.

Lumian's mind buzzed, and he blacked out instantly.

When he regained his senses, he found himself back at the edge of the Samaritan Women's Spring, having covered over ten meters in an instant.

From the corner of his eye, he saw Hela rushing back towards him, her eyes vacant and bloodshot, resembling a puppet or a mindless soldier following orders.

Lumian could already guess that when he closed his eyes, he had returned to the spring's edge in a similarly empty and obedient state.

At this moment, he couldn't flee upon regaining consciousness. Behind him were the coiling black hair and the figure of the supposed high-ranking Demoness. In front of him were the grotesque, decaying, and repulsive palms.

Simultaneously, they clawed at Lumian, intent on dragging him into the spring. The colossal figure with long, blood-red hair hanging over it was just a step away.

Gritting his teeth, Lumian seized the chance to bite the base of the white candle and reached into his pocket with his gloved left hand.

As he did, he cursed internally.

You dogsh\*t evil gods have been observing me for so long. Why haven't you sent anything to harm me?

Where are the promised dangerous creatures?

Are you afraid to confront that insane figure here?

Despite his curses, Lumian didn't give up. He drew a dagger and was about to cleave off his right palm, which had been corroded by the Earth Blood ore.

If you want it, take it!

As for whether the 6 a.m. reboot each morning would cause his missing right hand to regenerate, he didn't care at this point.



At that moment, a pale-white hand emerged from the pitch-black hole at the depths of the spring, where the ground trembled and quaked.

The fingers of the hand were slender, with cracks running along its back. These cracks oozed pale-yellow feathers and decaying yellow pus. The skin on either side of the cracks was crystalline like jade, but pale and dark.

As the palm emerged, it crossed the barrier of the spring water and seized the right leg of the colossal figure.

The figure, clad in tattered, blood-stained armor and shrouded in intangible flames, swayed uncontrollably as it was pulled toward the pitch-black abyss deep within the pale-white spring water.

It struggled and resisted with all its might, but the bizarre palm's retreat remained relentless. The only response was the falling of light-yellow feathers, pus stained with blood, and skin that was no longer crystalline but highlighted with black, living blood vessels.

Countless complex symbols—pale-white, pitch-black, or dim—appeared, carrying the frenzied and terrifying figure as it rapidly shrank toward the pitch-black spring.

Lumian couldn't witness the scene, nor could he see what was happening. All he knew was that the massive figure with a decaying face, blood-red hair, and iron-black eyes was moving away from him. The terrifying hands that had grabbed him stopped moving, frozen in place.

The crazed figure growled repeatedly but couldn't break free. In the blink of an eye, most of its body had been dragged back into the depths of the spring.

Just as it was about to disappear completely, its madness materialized. Two dark-red “rust spots” shot out of its iron-black eyes and darted straight toward Lumian.

Instinctively, Lumian raised his right hand to block. The two rust marks pierced through the Flog boxing glove and into his skin, which had been corroded by the Earth Blood ore.

Splash!

The pale-white spring water receded entirely, pulling all the floating figures into the pitch-black abyss.

The vicinity of the spring fell eerily silent.

### Chapter 355 The Real Spring Water

In the midst of the eerie silence, Lumian sensed an unusual heat in his right palm, as though it were ablaze.

Swiftly, he stripped off his boxing gloves and inspected his palm. The Earth Blood ore's corrosive touch had left it bright red, radiating waves of excruciating pain that left him seething with frustration and anger.

Aside from this, nothing appeared out of the ordinary for now.

...

Given the circumstances, Lumian couldn't afford a detailed examination. Ignoring the cold creeping through his body and his "calmed" thoughts, he retreated to assess the situation at the Samaritan Women's Spring.

Indistinct figures and the long, weed-like black hair submerged in the water were drawn into a lightless abyss, swaying relentlessly, as though a fierce battle raged within.

The white-robed, corpse-like figure that had lingered nearby had vanished into thin air, leading Lumian to suspect that his encounter with the suspected high-level Demoness on the fourth floor was linked to a similar change in the Samaritan Women's Spring.

This sight sparked a daring idea in Lumian's mind.

Seeing the terrifying figure pulled back to the fountain by a strange power, one in fierce resistance and the other trying to suppress it, it seemed unlikely a victor would emerge quickly. Lumian decided to stay vigilant, pause his escape, and explore the possibility of setting a trap while collecting some of the pale-white spring water once it surged again.

The "water ghosts" were nowhere to be seen at the spring's bottom, nor were there any blurry figures lingering nearby. It appeared to be a safe moment.

In the next instant, Lumian noticed Hela producing a golden bottle adorned with intricate, mystical symbols, reminiscent of the symbols he had seen at the basement door of the Highland Mystic Potion shop.

Hela didn't wait for the pale-white spring water to rise again. She squatted down and pressed the bottle's opening to the damp soil at the spring's edge.

The soil was dark-colored, and the closer they got to the pitch-black hole, the more it seemed to contain countless colors. The soil was more ordinary the farther it was from it. It was no different from the slope itself in areas where hadn't been submerged by the spring water.

The soil, dark and filled with countless colors near the pitch-black hole, dried up as the pale-white spring water receded into the abyss. However, the periphery remained slightly moist, producing droplets that were more tangible than the pale-white spring water and resembled the color of a nocturnal lake.

Seeing that Hela's target was the liquid, Lumian asked in confusion, "Aren't you going to wait for the Samaritan Women's Spring to resurface?"

Hela shook her head.

"This is the true Samaritan Women's Spring Water. The pale-white water is too dangerous to touch right now. Contact with it means instant death, wandering forever near the spring or its source. Our containers are no exception."

That terrifying? Could it be that the Samaritan Women's Spring is a byproduct of the pale-white water and not its true form? Lumian took out a metal canister he had prepared in advance and held it to the droplets seeping from the soil at the spring's edge.

With just one drop, the canister showed signs of rust and decay from prolonged submersion.

Without a word, Hela produced a golden canister engraved with intricate symbols and tossed it to Lumian.

Only then did Lumian manage to collect the Samaritan Women's Spring. His attention remained focused on the dark spring.

As long as the earth-shaking tremors ceased, he planned to make a hasty retreat with the Samaritan Women's Spring water he had collected.

One drop, two drops, three drops. The spring water entered the golden canister at a painstakingly slow pace, as if it might stop at any moment. His prepared canister, on the other hand, grew increasingly rusty and fragile.

Lumian watched the sluggish progress, concerned that the pale-white spring water might surge again.

Frustration and anxiety welled up inside him.

Hence, he silently cursed to relieve his pent-up emotions.

Drip, drip. He had only filled a third of the bottle when Hela decided to stop and seal the golden canister.

I mustn't be greedy... Lumian warned himself, putting an end to the collection of Samaritan Women's Spring with Hela.

Together, they sprinted toward the summit of the slope.

Before long, the sound of water echoed from behind them.

Once more, the pale-white spring gushed forth from the pitch-black hole!

Without looking back to assess the situation, they continued their sprint through the grayish-white fog, as if a relentless, intangible monster pursued them.

In a matter of seconds, they finally reached the fog's edge. Lumian grabbed Hela's arm and propelled himself forward.

Exiting the shroud of grayish-white fog, Lumian finally breathed a sigh of relief. The coldness in his body abated, and his thoughts settled significantly.

Psychic Piercing!

Jenna emerged from the shadows, her eyes crackling with lightning.

The man in the Warlock robe heard a surreal crack and felt an intense surge of pain radiate from the depths of his Spirit Body, gripping his mind.

Instinctively, he crumpled to the ground, curling up in an attempt to alleviate the agony.

Franca wasted no time and seized the moment. She pointed the mirror she held at him.

As the Warlock-clad trustee appeared in the mirror, black flames ignited in Franca's palm and spread across the glass.

Demoness's Curse!

Black flames erupted from the man's body, weakening his struggling spirit.

Soon after, crystalline ice encased him layer by layer, and colorless spider silk cocooned him, revealing his form.

Franca's intention was to restrain him, not kill him. After all, nobody knew if he was involved in any corruption or high-level matters, and reckless spirit channeling could lead to accidents.

Seeing the man weakened and heavily restrained, Franca whispered in surprise,

“That's it?”

She had no doubt that she and Jenna could defeat the other party with a surprise attack, but she hadn't expected it to be so straightforward.

In the next moment, the man struggled to speak under the threefold control of black flames, ice, and spider silk, his voice faint but determined. “You're committing a crime!”

As soon as he finished speaking, a violent tremor emanated from deep underground. A rock from the tunnel's ceiling plummeted toward Jenna's head.

Jenna swiftly rolled to dodge, but she still felt the impact of falling debris.

Franca faced a similar predicament. She sensed that if this continued, the entire tunnel might collapse. Even with Mirror Substitution, she couldn't guarantee her safety in this segment of the tunnel.

Without hesitation, she clenched her right hand, reigniting the remaining black flames within the entrustee's body.

Black flames engulfed his Spirit Body, and the Warlock-dressed man quickly met his end.

The tunnel's tremors ceased, leaving nothing but dust hanging in the air.

Franca breathed a sigh of relief and wasted no time. She swiftly set up a spirit channeling ritual, while Jenna kept a vigilant eye out for any passersby while kneading her shoulders and back.

After a while, Franca completed the Magic Mirror Spirit Channeling Spell. Holding the mirror, she gazed at the pale-white face with a hint of arrogance and inquired, “How much do you know about the secrets of the Deep Valley Quarry?”

The man's spirit responded in a daze, “Some seek to use machinery to prolong their lives, while others seek machinery to acquire life.

“A portion of the Deep Valley Cloister is sliding into the abyss.”

Can't you be more specific? Franca pressed, “Which organization are you from? Why are you exploiting the gatekeeper's disappearance?”

Just as the man was about to respond, an ever-changing fog suddenly enveloped the mirror.

Crack!

The mirror in Franca's hand shattered instantly.

Bang!

The man's body, encased in ice and spider silk, exploded. His flesh disintegrated into mist that filled the surroundings.

Almost simultaneously, Franca shattered like a mirror, breaking into fragments that fell to the ground.

Her figure quickly outlined at the tunnel's intersection and appeared beside Jenna.

“As expected, something was amiss,” Franca said solemnly, watching as the indeterminate blood mist gradually settled and melded with the ground.

By that point, the corpse had transformed into a pile of minced meat, with only the metal items on it remaining intact.

Franca and Jenna conducted a simple search and found a brass key and coins worth 200 to 300 verl d'or.

They didn't dare linger. After erasing any traces of their presence, they made their exit.

Approximately two to three minutes later, a pair of legs clad in knee-length brown boots materialized beside the puddle of flesh and blood, clutching a shrunken, golden kettle with a protruding wick.

...

The scorching sunlight bathed the entrance to the catacombs of Place du Purgatoire, and Lumian felt as though he had returned from the kingdom of the dead to the world of the living. The chill that had permeated his body gradually dissipated.

Turning to Hela, whose pale-white complexion, purplish-red livor mortis, and signs of decay had yet to fully heal, he smiled and remarked, “Even though it wasn't a real battle, it's the closest I've come to death.”

Hela replied simply, “Those who can retain a mark in the pale-white spring water for a long time were once formidable individuals.”

As Lumian strolled to the edge of the square, he casually inquired, “What's the purpose of the Samaritan Women's Spring? You can't actually use it to forget the past and pain, can you?”

Hela shook her head.

“For me, it can serve as a replacement for a certain ritual, or rather, become the central element of another ritual.”

Lumian didn't fully grasp the concept, so he didn't press for more details.

Soon, however, he noticed that the residual chill in his body and thoughts hadn't completely vanished just because he had left the catacombs.

While it had mostly dissipated, it seemed to linger within him, resurfacing gradually as night fell.

“The abnormality in our bodies is still present,” Lumian reminded Hela with a solemn tone.

Hela nodded.

“I have a solution. The one who tasked you with obtaining the spring water should have a solution as well.”

Lumian acknowledged her words briefly and bid farewell to Hela, making his way toward the public carriage stop.

Compared to the abnormality of gradually dying, he was more concerned about the Earth Blood ore that had corroded his palm, as well as the bizarre “rust.”

#### Chapter 356 Scar

As time ticked away, Lumian sensed his body temperature slowly dissipating. Even the blazing sun outside the public carriage window couldn't stave off this change.

His thoughts dulled, and the skin on the back of his hand turned a pallid white.

At last, Lumian made it to the market district.

...

As he disembarked from the public carriage, his limbs seemed to stiffen.

Just as he turned onto Rue des Blouses Blanches, a man who approached him was taken aback. He let out a quiet gasp, his eyes filled with fear.

Lumian instinctively glanced to the side, assessing his reflection in the café's glass window.

His blonde-black hair appeared as if it hadn't been washed for days, and his face had turned a sickly shade of pale blue. There were purplish-red patches and signs of decay on his neck, and his eyes mirrored the cold emptiness of a corpse that had lain dead for many days.

Lumian smirked at the man and remarked, “Well, what do you think? Have I convincingly transformed into a zombie?”

He noticed his voice adopting a colder tone, reminiscent of Hela.

The gentleman silently cursed and bypassed the fellow who appeared ready to attend a masquerade ball.

Lumian knew the corruption consuming him was worsening. He quickened his pace and reached the safe house he hadn't yet turned over.

Swiftly, he arranged the altar, unfolded a piece of paper, and penned a brief letter to Madam Magician.

“I've fulfilled Madam Justice's mission and acquired the spring water of Samaritan Women's Spring, but I'm also succumbing to corruption. It's worsening. How can I eradicate it?”

After neatly folding the letter, Lumian summoned Madam Magician's messenger.

The “doll” messenger materialized above the blue candle flame and gave Lumian an approving nod.

“I'm quite fond of your current demeanor, though your hair is too greasy.”

The aura of near-death? Lumian's urge to mutter was weaker than before.

After watching the “doll” messenger depart, he set a fifteen-minute time limit. If Madam Magician didn't respond by then, he'd have to explore other avenues to rid himself of the corruption. One possibility was to perform a ritual and beseech Mr. Fool.

Tick, tock. The needle on the pocket watch borrowed from Salle de Bal Brise maintained a steady rhythm. However, Lumian had previously noticed that it was nearly ten minutes slow. It was as if the closer he came to the Samaritan Women's Spring, the slower it ticked.

Suddenly, starlight materialized from the void, forming a mysterious and ethereal door.

The door swung open, and Madam Magician emerged, dressed in a brownish-yellow gown. Beyond the door, there was a profound darkness adorned with starlight.

The Tarot Club's Major Arcana card holder glanced at Lumian and gave a gentle nod.

“Pray to Mr. Fool for an angel's purification.”

I'll still have to pray to Mr. Fool? Lumian didn't probe further. He proceeded with the ritual at the prepared altar.

He lit the candles in the correct sequence and let the extract drip. After burning the herbs, he stepped back, gazing at the candle flames, and intoned in a deep voice, “The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck...”

“I implore you,

“I implore you to cleanse the corruption within me...”

Once the ritual concluded, Lumian once again saw an angel formed from light, surrounded by twelve pairs of luminous wings.

With only his peripheral vision remaining, he felt the chill in his body dissipate, and his body temperature quickly returned to normal.

Before long, the angel departed. Lumian looked at the full-length mirror in the room and realized that his complexion, hair, and eyes had completely returned to normal. The purplish-red livor mortis had vanished entirely. Only a few traces of decay remained, but there were no signs of deterioration. It seemed that these remnants would heal with time.

Lumian expressed heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Fool and concluded the ritual.

As he turned to Madam Magician, a sudden recollection struck him, and he hastily raised his right hand to inspect his palm.

The wound from the corrosion of the Earth Blood ore was still there. Though it was no longer as vividly red as when it first fused with the “rust,” it hadn't faded either. It appeared as if he had marked his palm with a few scars using blood.

Sensing a faint undercurrent of madness and violence emanating from his right palm, Lumian furrowed his brow in confusion.

“Can't this be cleansed?”

Madam Magician fixed her gaze on his right palm for a few moments but didn't provide a direct answer. Instead, she spoke, "Share the details with me."

She took the initiative to pull up a chair and sat down, showing no inclination to continue the conversation standing.

Lumian settled into a chair at the wooden table, beginning with Madam Justice's assignment and recounting how he and Hela had each extracted a third of a canister's worth of Samaritan Women's Spring water.

He narrated the encounter with the colossal, frenzied figure and the bizarre power. Simultaneously, he didn't omit any details about Monette's appearance and actions, as well as the curious "return" of the Earth Blood ore.

Madam Magician listened to Lumian's account in silence before letting out a chuckle.

"It's quite challenging for truly formidable figures to die completely. Even without Beyond character characteristics, bodies, or souls, they often leave behind mental imprints, death marks, residual auras, and other remnants. When the right conditions align, they may find a way back into the real world with a suitable vessel."

"Like the Oldest One, the Creator?" Lumian grasped the gist of Madam Magician's explanation and inquired further, "So, who is this figure?"

Madam Magician took a moment to reflect and replied, "It's likely the Blood Emperor of the Fourth Epoch, Alista Tudor."

"The Blood Emperor? One of the Four Emperors?" Lumian had heard this title and name mentioned by Gardner Martin.

Alista Tudor's empire once spanned what was present-day Intis. The Trier, submerged underground, had served as His capital.

According to Gardner Martin, the Blood Emperor was a true deity who grasped the Hunter pathway, signifying that He was a Sequence 0 Red Priest!

"That's correct," Madam Magician affirmed. "The War of the Four Emperors was a genuine conflict among gods. Alista Tudor met His end in the submerged Fourth Epoch Trier, which also caused the capital to sink underground. He had long descended into madness and committed numerous atrocities. Rumor has it that He nearly entombed all the deities who participated in the war alongside Him. Even now, many remnants of that war lie buried beneath Trier, profoundly shaping some aspects of the Fifth Epoch's history."

The Fifth Epoch, the epoch in which Lumian and his companions resided, was often referred to as the Iron Age.

Nearly burying all the deities who participated in the war? The Blood Emperor was truly deranged... Lumian mused, genuinely intrigued.

"What occurred during the War of the Four Emperors?"



“I'm not entirely certain either,” Madam Magician admitted with a shrug. “I've only heard about it from two beings who personally witnessed the war. Even They don't possess the full picture. After all, one should not look directly at a god. Remember, never look directly at a god, even if it's an incomplete Mythical Creature transformed from a Sequence 4 saint.”

Beings who had personally experienced the War of the Four Emperors and still survived to this day? To have participated in such a divine conflict, they must be at least angels... Could they be the two angels beside Mr. Fool's throne? Yes, the Holy Bible mentioned that Mr. Fool's Angel of Time was an ancient angel, and one of them could be this figure? Lumian pieced together the information he had and ventured a guess.

Having heard Aurore mention the concept of Mythical Creatures and their associated complexities, Lumian had no doubt about the admonition “never look directly at a god.”

Eagerly, Lumian asked, “So, after the Blood Emperor's demise, His mental mark, death mark, or residual aura remained sealed within the Samaritan Women's Spring?”

“That would likely be a death mark, but I suspect it's intertwined with a mental mark, residual aura, and even some lingering spirits left behind for reasons unknown. Otherwise, Blood Emperor Alista Tudor wouldn't persist in a combative state within the spring. Heh heh, combat can indeed be considered a Hunter trait,” Madam Magician speculated.

As Madam Magician spoke, she extended her hand into the void, disappearing from Lumian's sight. After a brief search, she reappeared, holding a tempting glass of Kirsch.

“Didn't your sister teach you? When you have a guest, remember to ask if they want tea or wine, or perhaps offer snacks,” Madam Magician chided playfully as she took a sip of the light red wine and shook her head.

How could I remember at a time like this? Where did she get her wine? Only then did Lumian realize that he had forgotten to ask about the most important thing.

He sincerely acknowledged the lesson and then raised another query.

“What's the origins of the strange power that dragged the Blood Emperor back into the spring?”

“I don't know,” Madam Magician replied candidly. “Even a true god might not know. All I can be certain of is that it has no connection to the War of the Four Emperors.”

Lumian decided to put this matter aside for now and turned his attention to his right hand, where the mysterious traces remained.

“What are these marks? Can't Mr. Fool cleanse them?”

“If this isn't corruption, it can't be cleansed,” Madam Magician explained while sipping her Kirsch. “It's more similar to a mystical item embedded in your hand. It will

bring about certain adverse effects, and these effects can't be cleansed unless the item itself is removed."

"A mystical item... What's its purpose and what dangers does it hold?" Lumian hadn't anticipated this revelation.

"It's useless." Madam Magician chuckled. "I mentioned it's similar, but not equivalent. It certainly isn't a direct source of power enhancement. Rumor has it that in the underground of the Fourth Epoch's Trier, there are numerous treasures left behind by Blood Emperor Alista Tudor in various hidden locations. Only those with the Tudor family's bloodline can unlock them. And now, you can unlock them as well."

So, it's like my palm contains some of Tudor's blood and aura, unrelated to Beyonder powers? Lumian tried to probe the bright red scars on his right palm with his consciousness.

As soon as the two connected, he was abruptly engulfed by a surge of frenzied, violent, terrifying, and dominating aura. The entire room, and even the entire apartment, quaked uncontrollably.

#### Chapter 357 Monette's True Identity

The sudden change and the frenzied aura that had affected Lumian instinctively made him withdraw his consciousness from the scar on his right palm.

The anomaly ceased, and everything returned to normal.

Lumian surveyed his surroundings, concerned that the aura might attract unwanted attention.

...

At that moment, the room fell unusually silent, and the surroundings dimmed slightly, as if a layer of dark-colored soundproof glass had been added.

Lumian relaxed and turned his gaze back to Madam Magician.

"What happened?"

"The trace carries the aura of Alista Tudor, but it has no practical effect. It can't intimidate others or make them submit." Madam Magician held a cup filled with Kirsch and smiled. "With the Niese Face, you can act as The Blood Emperor at Théâtre de l'Ancienne Cage à Pigeons."

It could only be used for acting or to frighten people under specific situations? Lumian nodded thoughtfully.

"What kind of negative effects will these traces have on me?"

Madam Magician chuckled.

"You'll become crazier, more ferocious, and more impulsive, but you're not lacking in those qualities already."

What she meant was that you have many similar negative effects. As long as they don't exceed the limit, there wouldn't be any problems. Or rather, you are already used to it, so it couldn't get any worse.

“That's good.” Lumian heaved a sigh of relief.

Madam Magician took a sip of Kirsch and reminded him, “For now, you mainly rely on your perseverance and Alms Monk endurance to suppress the negative effects and maintain your normal state. However, when the time is right, you need to vent. It's like a reservoir. You can't keep accumulating water. You have to find an opportunity to release a portion. Otherwise, if you accumulate it day by day, it will either break the dam or spill out of the reservoir, leaving behind psychological problems.”

That's true. While Alms Monk's subsequent advancement to Ascetic emphasizes endurance and accumulation, there's also an explosive aspect... Lumian understood Madam Magician's words.

Simultaneously, he thought of something.

After joining the Iron and Blood Cross Order, he would inevitably explore Underground Trier. Although he possessed the Blood Emperor's aura and had the qualifications to enter specific places and open certain treasures, would he trigger more abnormalities and encounter more danger?

Lumian expressed his concerns, and Madam Magician nodded slightly.

“This is a completely foreseeable discovery.

“Like, uh, as the saying goes, it's both a boon and a curse.”

“If you don't want to take such a risk, pray to Mr. Fool again in two or three days and ask him to help you eliminate Alista Tudor's aura. Remember, you must specify that it's the aura of a high-level Beyonder of the Hunter pathway to prevent any misunderstandings of removing any unnecessary things during the surgery.”

“Can't I clear it with my daily 6 a.m. reset?” Lumian asked out of habit.

Madam Magician shook her head.

“It can't reset an aura of this level.”

Lumian fell into deep thought, contemplating whether to retain Alista Tudor's bloodline aura or use a ritual to remove it.

Recalling that entering the underground to search for the Fourth Epoch Trier would undoubtedly be a mission assigned by the Iron and Blood Cross Order, and triggering an abnormality was highly likely, he steeled his resolve and chose to keep the bright red scar on his right palm.

Unlike other members of the Iron and Blood Cross Order who had been corrupted by the building at 13 Alista, only Alista Tudor's bloodline aura could allow him to withstand the same underground “treatment” as the corrupted without losing his sanity.

As for the potential dangers, he was concerned, but he could only choose the option with fewer disadvantages.

In any case, searching for the entrance to the Fourth Epoch Trier wasn't his sole mission. When the time came, many members of the Iron and Blood Cross Order would undoubtedly join the effort. Gardner Martin might even lead the team. If the sky collapsed, they would all face it together!

Seeing that Lumian had made up his mind, Madam Magician didn't say anything else and quietly savored her Kirsch.

Lumian then inquired about something else.

“That group of Monette Islander swindlers, or rather, the people at Salle de Bal Unique? Could it be that they want me to obtain Alista Tudor's bloodline aura and open a treasure trove in the future? But why not obtain it themselves? They've already stolen the Earth Blood ore, and they can clearly enter the area around the Samaritan Women's Spring.”

“Perhaps it's too dangerous for them, and they don't want to try it themselves. If you fail, it could unleash the Blood Emperor's remnant spirit. If you succeed, they just have to wait until you find the treasure,” Madam Magician replied with a smile.

“Ushering in the Blood Emperor's remnant spirit?” Lumian expressed his puzzlement. “Back then, I felt that as long as I came into contact with the pale-white spring water, I would die immediately and completely. I probably can't become a vessel for the Blood Emperor's resurrection.”

Madam Magician pondered for a moment and said, “Normally, that should be the case, but since you're a Hunter and possess Mr. Fool's seal and an angel from the Inevitability domain, once you're dragged into the spring and fused with the Blood Emperor's remnant spirit, it might trigger an unpredictable explosion, allowing Alista Tudor's figure to escape its restraints and prevent death from imprisoning Him.”

Lumian pondered Madam Magician's words and felt that the more he thought about it, the more questions arose, making him feel more terrified.

Madam Magician gently swirled her glass.

“That was just my guess. The true motives of those at Salle de Bal Unique remain to be confirmed. It might even be a prank that could endanger your life to interfere with our judgment of other matters.

“In short, you have to be vigilant. Don't relax just because you feel that the other party has achieved their goal.”

Lumian tersely acknowledged, indicating that he wouldn't let his guard down.

In fact, even if Madam Magician hadn't mentioned it, he would have taken precautions against the Islander swindler who always appeared underground at critical moments.

This guy was close to traumatizing him.

“Should we report the anomaly at Salle de Bal Unique to the two Churches?” Lumian inquired.

Madam Magician wore a peculiar expression as she replied, “I’ve been observing the dance hall for some time and realized that most of the people wearing monocles in their right eyes are normal. Only a few are problematic, and the few who are problematic are irregular. It’s difficult to lock onto them as they can be one thing today and something else tomorrow.

“Furthermore, no one knows if He is among those who don’t wear monocles with their right eye. To completely eliminate Him, we might have to apprehend everyone on that street and those who have visited the dance hall, either destroying or purifying them.

“However, this won’t truly finish Him. It will only force Him into the shadows.

“Mr. Fool’s Angel of Time is keeping an eye on this matter, hoping to find His most important avatars. Only then can we inflict pain and keep Him in check for a while.”

Lumian was abnormally confused. Puzzled, he asked, “What do you mean if He is among those?”

Madam Magician spoke as if the abnormal ones were the same person.

Madam Magician pondered for a few seconds and said, “He has already interacted with you several times. It’s necessary for you to understand Him to a certain extent.

“He is the great noble of the Fourth Epoch’s Tudor Empire, Amon. He is also the child of the Ancient Sun God, who ruled the entire world in the Third Epoch.”

“He’s Amon?” Lumian recalled that the Islander swindler, Monette, had crawled out of the tomb of a member of the Amon family.

The person behind him was an ancient angel!

It’s no wonder he knows so much about the Fourth Epoch tombs!

Madam Magician nodded.

“He was once a King of Angels and ascended the throne of a deity, but He was defeated by Mr. Fool. Now, He is an ordinary angel.

“He belongs to the Marauder pathway. High-ranking individuals of this pathway have a special ability called Parasitism. It is the separation of a portion of themselves and parasitize the bodies of others. There are shallow levels of Parasitism and deep levels of Parasitism. The latter can allow the host to become an avatar.

“The higher the Sequence, the more targets they can parasitize.”

Lumian was alarmed and afraid as he blurted out, “Island swindler Monette has been parasitized by him?”

He was actually a formidable figure who had once fought Mr. Fool!

Madam Magician agreed with Lumian's guess.

“That's right. Every member of the Fourth Epoch Amon family is Amon. The abnormal ones in Salle de Bal Unique are also Amon. The ones who haven't shown any abnormalities are potential Amons, or potential believers of Amon.”

Lumian was rendered speechless.

He found it fitting to describe those wearing monocles with their right eyes as bedbugs in Auberge du Coq Doré and cockroaches from the trash.

It was too similar!

Monette had, in a way, risen from his own grave.

“How many avatars does He have?” Lumian inquired after a brief pause.

Madam Magician shook her head and replied, “Since the Fourth Epoch, He has been hunting Beyonders of the Marauder pathway for ages, gathering many characteristics. No one knows how many avatars there are. What you need to remember is that when you encounter an Amon, there are already many Amon lurking around. They can be rats, bedbugs, or even smaller creatures.”

“Isn't this perfect for monitoring others?” Lumian's hair stood on end.

He roughly understood why Amon knew he had the Earth Blood ore and could grasp his movements. He also understood why he had felt that something was amiss when he prayed for the boon the last time—the “illusion” of someone watching him.

“What's the approximate Sequence of Amon's avatar?” Lumian asked with lingering fear, recalling his desire to eliminate Monette in the fourth-level tomb.

Madam Magician finished the remaining Kirsch and tossed the glass back into the void.

“He has a way to weaken His avatar, but He's still an angel. You can't underestimate His avatar because of this. Yes, it's similar to a special scene on the third level of the tomb and below. You can determine and treat it according to the specific situation.”

Lumian rubbed his temples, feeling a headache brewing. Without a clear understanding of Amon's intentions, every venture into the depths of Underground Trier was risky.

He changed the subject.

“What's the purpose of the Samaritan Women's Spring?”

## Chapter 358 Negligence

Madam Magician chuckled.

“Why do you care? You can't use it. You can only use it to forget all your memories and original feelings and become a new person.

“Right, in the Corpse Collector, Sleepless, and Warrior pathways, the Samaritan Women's Spring has different uses depending on usage, ritual, and compatibility. It

includes, but isn't limited to temporarily clearing memories, healing essential damage to the spirit, improving one's spiritual perception, becoming an ingredient for important rituals, and unlocking various abilities, among other things."

...

Corresponding to the three neighboring, exchangeable pathways, Corpse Collector, Sleepless, and Warrior? Lumian extracted crucial information.

At that very moment, Madam Magician glanced at him, her smile restrained yet knowing.

"Are there any more questions?"

Lumian took a moment to contemplate before responding, "Not for now."

Madam Magician nodded. "Then it's my turn to ask."

"Ask what?" Lumian was puzzled.

He had recounted all the details.

Madam Magician tapped her finger against the empty air in front of her.

"Why didn't you inform me that Miss Justice sent you to the Samaritan Women's Spring?"

Lumian was taken aback.

"I thought she would have informed you herself. Moreover, since she's also a Major Arcana card holder in the Tarot Club, I didn't see any need to confirm it with you."

Madam Magician wore a thoughtful expression.

"Normally, there would be no issue, but this world is filled with anomalies."

Lumian, now feeling bewildered, asked, "Is something wrong with Miss Justice?"

Madam Magician shook her head. "No, that's not it. The problem lies in the fact that shortly after you accepted the journey to the Samaritan Women's Spring, the Earth Blood ore went missing. I had no knowledge of your impending trip to the fourth level of the catacombs, and Miss Justice wasn't aware that the Earth Blood ore had fallen into someone else's hands. It's not a matter of whether you wanted to take it with you or not."

"If we had communicated beforehand, I could have delayed the mission to ascertain the whereabouts of the Earth Blood ore or made suitable arrangements."

Lumian reflected on her words, realizing the truth in them.

Having foreseen that the Earth Blood ore would bring about certain encounters underground, she couldn't ignore the hidden connection between the loss of the Earth Blood ore and the journey to the Samaritan Women's Spring.

Lumian's negligence, or rather, his assumption of a reasonable course of action had led to the subsequent encounters that later awaited him.

Madam Magician fixed her gaze on Lumian for a few seconds before responding, "You can't entirely be faulted for how you handled the situation. I'm merely reminding you to exercise more caution in the future."

She paused, her words heavy with meaning.

"This will become even more crucial when you seek the entrance to the Fourth Epoch Trier in the days to come."

"Yes, Madam Magician." Lumian accepted her guidance wholeheartedly.

After Magician disappeared with the bottle of Samaritan Women's Spring water, Lumian swiftly tidied up the altar and settled back down.

He contemplated his errors during the operation.

Firstly, Madam Magician is right. I should have informed her about Madam Justice's commission. Even if they had already communicated privately and there were no issues, I should still mention it. After all, my Major Arcana card holder isn't Justice but Magician. Helping other Major Arcana card holders requires my own Major Arcana card holder's permission.

Secondly, before entering the Samaritan Women's Spring, I should check my condition and items for a final confirmation. Unless there's a battle or an emergency, this should be a necessary process.

If I had remembered and completed this matter, I could have avoided many problems in advance. I wouldn't have brought the Earth Blood ore into the Samaritan Women's Spring area undetected. Monette, no, Amon, appeared several times and deliberately frightened me to disrupt my thoughts and keep my attention on Him instead of my own state, causing me to neglect the Earth Blood ore's "return."

Thirdly, I didn't notice Termiboros's abnormality. He remained silent in the face of Monette's appearance, unlike His vigilance and anxiety from before. Heh, although He is sealed, He can sense His surroundings through me. As an angel, how could He not notice Amon stuffing the Earth Blood ore back into my pocket?

Furthermore, His fate is intertwined with mine. When I entered the Samaritan Women's Spring with the Earth Blood ore, my fate must have changed. How could He not have noticed? Why didn't He warn me?

Does He also want to use the special environment of the Samaritan Women's Spring and the abnormality caused by the Earth Blood ore to find a way to escape the seal? Yes, He was the one who warned me that the Earth Blood ore was special and said it would bring me a fortuitous encounter!

The strange power ultimately prevented Him from achieving His goal. Who could it be?

It's true that an evil god's angel can't be trusted completely. Termiboros has been acting so reliably recently. He reminds me from time to time not only to avoid dangers that can affect Him but also to lull me. He's waiting for an opportunity to stab me in the back.

Heh heh, you're a Hunter too?



After entering the Samaritan Women's Spring, there was no problem with my choices. The adverse effects erupted, and with all kinds of mental corruption stacked on top of each other, it was already very difficult for me to react. Regardless of right or wrong... If the corruption hadn't conflicted and hindered each other, I might have gone crazy on the spot.

Lumian reviewed the entire matter and suddenly chuckled.

“Termiboros, how did you not notice Monette stuffing the Earth Blood ore back to me?”

But Termiboros remained silent, withholding any response.

Lumian roughly ascertained the role this Inevitability angel had played in the recent events. He examined the items on his body, fearing that they would also lead him to “death.”

Thankfully, the inanimate objects were relatively unaffected and suffered no substantial damage. As for the “rust” that the Flog boxing glove encountered, it wasn't a true attack. Apart from leaving some traces, it didn't affect its usage.

As for the gazes and dangerous creatures that wearing the boxing gloves would bring, Lumian didn't have any thoughts. He believed that the special environment of the Samaritan Women's Spring limited the corresponding negative effects.

After doing this, Lumian surveyed the surroundings. He felt an indescribable fear and disgust for the safe house that Amon had once entered. He felt as if there were eyes hidden in the surrounding air.

Of course, this was mainly psychological. After all, Madam Magician had already visited.

After dismantling the hidden traps in the safe house, Lumian opened the door and left with all his belongings. He planned to never return, preferring to waste the rent.

In Trier, in a verdant park.

Magician, adorned in a brownish-yellow dress, observed a golden retriever leisurely strolling on the grassy path. She turned to the woman standing beside the dog, who wore a simple white dress with delicate green patterns. Her long blond hair flowed casually down her back, tied loosely. Her eyes resembled sparkling emeralds, mirroring the nearby trees in their clear depths.

“The Samaritan Women's Spring has been retrieved.”

The woman smiled and said, “Did something happen? You should have gotten a messenger to bring it over.”

Magician nodded and summarized the key information. Finally, she said, “Coincidentally, we haven't met in the past few days and haven't communicated.

“This led me to know that he had lost the Earth Blood ore, suspected of being stolen by Amon, but I didn't know that he was going to retrieve the Samaritan Women's Spring. You, on the other hand, knew that he was going to retrieve the Samaritan Women's Spring, but you didn't know that the Earth Blood ore had been stolen.”

Justice listened in silence for a few seconds before sighing.

“It's very similar to that person's style...”

“Is it really that person?” Magician frowned slightly. When did He cast His gaze over? Did we fail to hide from Him since the beginning?

Justice pondered for a moment and said, “That's not surprising. The most important thing now is what arrangements He has in mind.”

“I don't know,” Magician replied with a self-deprecating smile. “But since the Samaritan Women's Spring incident has already occurred, I can foresee...”

As she stepped into the void, surrounded by starlight, she sighed and said, “It won't be long before Fourth Epoch Trier's door truly opens.”

Outside an abandoned castle.

Justice materialized at the door, clutching the golden canister containing the Samaritan Women's Spring.

In front of her, a dark illusory sea materialized. She stepped into it and arrived in a special dream.

In the dream, not only was a portion of the inverted black mausoleum missing, but it had also split in half. Deep cracks covered its surface, and pale-yellow feathers stained with oil and various symbols of death were scattered everywhere.

Justice floated in midair, tipping the golden canister in her hand.

Under her guidance, a portion of the Samaritan Women's Spring's water transformed into dark rain that gently sprinkled onto the ground.

All the damage healed further, and the two halves of the mausoleum gradually closed in.

Amidst this transformation, Justice stowed away the golden canister and gazed at the remaining Samaritan Women's Spring. She muttered to herself, “Two more rounds should suffice.”

On the second floor of Salle de Bal Brise, Lumian's bedroom.

After taking a nap, he raised his right palm and realized that the bright red scar had faded significantly. It looked more like the marks left by compression.

Lumian heaved a sigh of relief. That won't attract too much attention.

His original plan was to wrap his right palm in a white bandage to prevent the Boss and the others from spotting anything amiss.

As for now, Lumian thought for a moment and wrapped the bandage around his left palm, which appeared normal.

After completing this task, he eagerly awaited the compensation Madam Justice had mentioned. He wondered when it would arrive.

He believed it wouldn't take more than a few days.

Suddenly, Lumian turned his head and looked at the window in the alley behind him.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

There were knocks on the glass.

Chapter 359 Malady God

Lumian glanced over and noticed Franca, clad in a blouse, patting the glass.

He opened the window, a grin on his face, and asked, "Why didn't you use the front door?"

"Don't you often resort to window-climbing antics?" Franca leaped into the room with grace, followed by Jenna.

...

Jenna observed for a moment and pointed at Lumian's left palm.

"Are you injured?"

Why's it bandaged?

Lumian chuckled.

"I headed into the fourth level of the catacombs and crossed paths with a creature that seemed like an evil spirit. I had an intense battle with it and ended up with a few scratches."

Franca examined Lumian's left palm, perplexed. "Really? The fourth level of the catacombs..."

"Believe it or not, that's your choice," Lumian replied with a smile.

Franca got the message and dropped the subject.

Jenna, however, muttered under her breath, "I think it's a mix of truth and lies..."

Lumian chose to ignore Jenna's comment and asked, "Did something happen to you guys too?"

"That's right." Franca proceeded to recount their encounter in detail and produced a brass key. She eagerly suggested, "Should we try to divine which door this key opens? Whoever's offering a bounty of 50,000 verl d'or must be loaded!"

Lumian scoffed.

"You've got an adventurous spirit, alright.

"Of course, a matter this dark should be left to the Purifiers for investigation. Besides, it involves some monks from the God of Steam and Machinery Church descending into the abyss. You don't really want to explore the secret cave in the Deep Valley Quarry on your own, do you?"

Franca admitted sheepishly, "To be honest, I'm tempted. The idea of extending life through machinery and giving life to machinery fascinates me. But my rationality keeps me in check."

Jenna stayed silent, indicating that she had discussed this with Franca on the way.

After sharing her delusions, Franca agreed to let Jenna find a way to hand over the key to the Purifiers and report their encounter.

She then turned to Jenna. "I plan to head to Rue des Fontaines. What about you?"

Jenna had already made plans. She said to Lumian, "Didn't you ask me to find out where the factory owner lives? Well, I've followed him and gathered plenty of information. Now we can locate the families awaiting compensation and guide them into demanding what's rightfully theirs."

Lumian replied with a smile, "I didn't ask you to do it; you wanted to."

Franca acknowledged his response curtly before proceeding with her plan to visit Rue des Fontaines.

In Quartier du Jardin Botanique, at the intersection of Rue Pasteur and Rue Evelyn.

The buildings bore a mishmash of components that seemed like they didn't belong, like building blocks assembled by a careless child. The place exuded an unsettling vibe, akin to a wild and unstable forest.

Jenna pointed toward a woman crouched by the street, washing clothes, and said, "That's Madame Mogana. Her husband also perished in that accident a few years ago."

Madame Mogana wore a worn-out grayish-white patched dress, her face marked by wrinkles that spoke of over fifty years of life.

Lumian, having digested a bit more of the potion's effects after igniting the Bottle of Fiction, was in no rush. He replied, "You handle it."

Jenna gazed silently at the gaunt, high-cheekboned Madame Mogana. After a few seconds, she spoke, "Truth be told, I don't really like her."

Curiosity piqued, Lumian asked, "Why's that?"

Jenna let out a sigh and explained, "She's quite malicious. The kind of person who wishes ill upon her neighbor when she's going through a tough time. She does despicable things even when there's no gain for her.

"As you know, my mother was a theater actress and was somewhat literate. She used to work as a tutor for a middle-class family. It was a respectable job with good pay. But when Madame Mogana found out about it, she followed my mother and discovered the family. She told the servants who were out running errands that my mother was moonlighting as a street girl, that she was immoral and skilled at seducing her male employer. Before long, my mother was fired. She had to settle for jobs as a cleaning lady, a dishwashing maid, or even working in a chemical plant.

"Madame Mogana, illiterate as she is, had no chance of getting the job my mother lost because of her actions, but she seemed oddly pleased."

Lumian nodded in understanding. "Jealousy is indeed one of humanity's cardinal sins. Why didn't you take revenge on her?"

Jenna whispered with a chuckle, “That was a long time ago. Besides, in a place like this, similar things are bound to happen sooner or later. When my father passed away, my brother was considered a strong lad. Otherwise, our family would have been in an even worse state. If a widow moved in with her daughter, someone would come knocking on your door the next day, cursing you and claiming that her husband stole a few glances at you. The neighbor would pretend to be friendly and introduce you to her male relatives.

“If you refused, that relative of hers would sit outside your door and drink every day. The police didn't bother with such matters, and you couldn't count on anyone else for help. One day, when he got really drunk and bold, I don't need to spell out what would happen, right?

“Sometimes, the police would arrest him, but arresting one would only bring in a second or third. They might even enrage his relatives. They'd smash your window every night, pile feces at your door, and recruit older kids to harass your daughter.

“But the worst part was being targeted by the mob.

“To survive in a place like this, you either needed a few adult men in the house or you had to be tough and make it clear that you wouldn't back down even if it cost you your life. Thankfully, when our lease ended, my mother moved to the other end of the street, and the environment improved significantly.”

Jenna's words were spoken as if she had witnessed such hardships many times before.

While Lumian had faced his own share of difficulties, ones worse than Jenna's, he had never encountered anything like that. The conflicts and confrontations among wanderers were even more overt. It was a matter of either being beaten into submission, forcing others into submission, or hovering on the fringes like feral dogs, scavenging what remained of others. When he arrived in Cordu, his sister, a Beyonder, protected him, allowing him to play pranks without worry. The other villagers were mainly subjected to the padre's family's bullying.

He looked at Jenna, who was recounting her past, and asked thoughtfully, “Didn't you say that everyone around here is just trying to survive?”

Jenna cursed, frustration evident in her gestures as she gestured toward the woman washing clothes not far away with her chin. “Dammit, that doesn't excuse their vileness. Take Madame Mogana, for instance. She works three part-time jobs a day just to give her son a chance to escape this place. Heh heh. You might not believe it, but despite maliciously slandering my mother, she sometimes slips me a piece of bread when I'm hungry and waiting for my mother to come home.”

Lumian glanced at Madame Mogana.

“People like her are easily instigated.”

“Exactly,” Jenna affirmed with a nod and walked over.

Her demeanor shifted dramatically as Jenna shouted at the woman washing clothes, “Madame Mogana, did you know? That damned Alphonse betrayed us!

“That piece of dogsh\*t always tells us to wait a little longer. He claims that since the court has already passed the verdict, Edmund Sr. would surely compensate us. But that scheming swine plans to run away, with no intention of giving us a single copper!”

“That swine Alphonse must have secretly pocketed his share to say such a thing!”

Madame Mogana stood up, water droplets trickling from her rough fingers.

Her expression twisted with a mix of anger and concern as she asked, “Is that true? I’m going to confront that swine!”

Jenna’s face also contorted with resentment.

“We can’t waste time on him now. Edmund Sr. is on the verge of escaping!”

“Let’s hurry and stop him. I know where their family lives!”

Lumian stood about five to six meters away, listening as Jenna stirred up the locals who were waiting for compensation. He casually surveyed the area and realized that this place was similar to Rue Anarchie. Vendors, children, women, and a few men mingled together, crowding most of the road. Occasionally, regular carriages passing by would alter their route after a brief observation.

In the midst of this bustling scene, one individual stood out noticeably.

Draped in an old linen shirt and dark pants, his face was relatively clean, and his hair neatly combed. He contrasted sharply with the surrounding vendors and residents.

At that moment, the man was engaged in conversation with a few women holding long sticks of rye bread.

He presented a stack of banknotes, not too thick or thin, and counted them meticulously, one by one.

“195, 200... Check if it’s 200 verl d’or?”

“If you don’t trust me, you can count it yourselves.”

The smallest denomination of the banknotes was 5 verl d’or.

The women had likely never held so much cash before. They trembled as they counted and confirmed that it was indeed 200 verl d’or.

The man took the banknotes back and counted them again.

“195, 200, 205... See, as long as you sincerely utter God’s name, you get an extra banknote with each count!”

Impressive magic tricks... A swindler? Whenever Lumian encountered swindlers, he couldn’t help but recall Monette and the Salle de Bal Unique. Anger and hostility welled up within him.

The women recounted the money and realized there were indeed 41 banknotes. There was an extra note—an extra 5 verl d’or!

Upon seeing this, the middle-aged man said with solemnity, “My Lord is the ruler of all diseases. If you believe in Him, you’ll never fall sick again. Even if you do fall ill, you’ll recover quickly.”

“Illness is the punishment of the Malady God. If you have faith in the Malady God and devoutly worship Him, He will spare you...”

Hearing these words, Lumian's eyes narrowed as he approached.

He drew his revolver, flipped it skillfully, and then swung it at the middle-aged man's head.

Bam!

Instinctively, the middle-aged man crouched down, clutching his head. He couldn't even scream.

Between his fingers, bright red blood began to flow.

Amidst the bewildered and fearful gazes of the surrounding crowd, Lumian crouched down, shaking the barrel of his gun. He smiled at the middle-aged man and remarked, “Come, let's see how the Malady God heals you.”

The middle-aged man yelled in shock, fear, and anger, “Malady God, hiss, the Malady God will punish you!”

Lumian picked up the banknotes that had fallen and handed them back to him.

“If you can't count an additional 100,000 verl d'or today, don't even dream of leaving.”

With that, he raised his revolver and struck the man in the side of his face, causing blood to splatter in all directions. His face caved in, and his teeth were sent flying.

#### Chapter 360 Physical and Mental Wellbeing

The middle-aged man's fear-filled gaze locked onto Lumian, uncertain about what had triggered this sudden confrontation.

He wasn't the one being deceived, nor was he one of the mobsters who held sway over this neighborhood. He wasn't a relative or a friend of theirs. So, why was Lumian rushing up to assault him like this?

Adding to the confusion, Lumian didn't even give him a chance to defend himself. He unleashed a blow after each sentence!

...

His eyes fell upon the revolver, and he discreetly glanced at his aides concealed in the shadows. Their hesitance to intervene weighed heavily on his heart.

He couldn't afford to threaten Lumian or resist him. Trembling, he stammered, “I-I can't produce that much money. I didn't bring that kind of cash.”

Lumian responded with a regretful smile, “How disappointing. I'm short of 100,000 verl d'or. Who taught you the magic of counting money? Who introduced you to the Malady God?”

The middle-aged man's throat tightened, and he remained silent.

With an air of calmness, Lumian opened the revolver's cylinder, revealing the yellow bullets to his captive.

He then closed the cylinder and pressed the muzzle against the middle-aged man's forehead.

“Three, two...” Lumian's finger on the trigger moved back with each count down. Panic and terror swelled within the middle-aged man's eyes.

Though he doubted anyone would dare to shoot him in broad daylight, this man had started the encounter with an inexplicable beating. It was impossible to predict how much further he might go.

Just as Lumian reached the final count, the middle-aged man cried out in desperation, “It's the Envoy!”

“Envoy?” Lumian arched an eyebrow.

With his psychological defenses shattered, the middle-aged man abandoned any hope of escaping unscathed. He blurted out, “The Envoy of the Malady God!

“He approached me, taught me some tricks, and told me about the Malady God. He asked me to help him recruit believers, promising a share of the profits.”

Is he a genuine believer in an evil god, a swindler exploiting a deity's name for riches, or perhaps a blend of both? Lumian withdrew the revolver from the middle-aged man's forehead and lightly tapped his still-intact cheek with it. A smile crossed his face as he remarked, “Now, that's more like it. All it took was a little chat, didn't it?”

Bang!

A bullet tore through the air, embedding itself into a nearby felled tree.

Lumian exclaimed.

“Sorry, it went off accidentally. I didn't scare you, did I?”

The middle-aged man's heart pounded wildly, and a small puddle formed beneath him.

Lumian cast a brief glance at the trembling man and offered another reassuring smile.

“What's the name of this envoy of the Malady God? Where does he reside, and what does he look like? Lately, I've been running low on funds, so I thought I'd pay him a little visit.”

Inwardly, Lumian pondered,

He didn't react to that little prank just now. He's not a bestowed...

The middle-aged man vigorously shook his head.

“I-I don't know.”

Seeing Lumian raise the revolver once more, he hastily amended his response, “All I can tell you is that he's tall and slender, with pale skin, almost as if he's chronically ill. His eyes are a grayish-blue shade, and he has black hair. It's short, like the haircut of a wealthy boss's secretary.

“He visits me once a week, but I have no clue how to track him down.”

Meanwhile, Jenna had joined Madame Mogana and the others, her curiosity piqued by Lumian's actions. She stole a moment to cast a glance in his direction, wondering what her Hunter companion had uncovered and what he was up to.



However, the urgency of the situation prevented her from inquiring at that moment.

Jenna had effectively instigated several individuals who had been long-awaiting compensation. The more these wronged souls spoke, the fiercer their fury grew. Some had already taken it upon themselves to seek out other victims or their families, urging Jenna to lead them in confronting the factory owner named Edmund.

In the midst of this mounting outrage, Jenna found that she no longer needed to actively instigate. The collective anger had taken on a life of its own, and individuals were stepping forward to aid her in this quest.

As they hurried toward the neighborhood where Edmund Sr. resided, Jenna had an epiphany.

To instigate someone, she had to converse with them, but to instigate a group of people, she didn't need to personally converse with every member of the group to incite them. Understanding the situation and igniting the spark in a few initial individuals was sufficient. The ignited ones would, in turn, become agents of instigation, rallying more people to their cause in a snowballing effect.

While Jenna and the mob progressed toward their destination, Lumian remained behind to extract more information from the middle-aged man. After confirming that he couldn't elicit any further details, he rose to address the deceived women who had been observing the unfolding events.

“You heard him. This guy is trying to deceive you. Do you intend to let him off the hook?”

Lumian had discreetly employed the Niese Face to alter his appearance slightly when confronting the middle-aged man, ensuring that no one would associate him with the wanted criminal, Lumian Lee.

One of the women present had actually been the middle-aged man's collaborator, assisting in the preaching and swindling of money. In this dire situation, she dared not utter a word and looked to the others for guidance.

Among the women, some were brimming with anger, ready to hand the con artist over to the authorities, while others cowered, fearing that the swindler might have dangerous accomplices who would seek revenge.

Lumian observed in silence as they voiced their opinions, casually scanning the onlookers nearby.

Among the bystanders, he noticed three men attempting to slip away unnoticed.

These three were the accomplices of the swindler, responsible for resorting to violence when required.

Without hesitation, Lumian raised his revolver and discharged three rounds.

The trio let out cries of pain and crumpled to the ground, suffering from wounds to their legs and calves, blood streaming freely.

“No need to worry about them seeking revenge,” Lumian assured the women with a grin.

The victims, their emotions running high, fell silent, almost like statues.

After a few seconds, they stammered, "It's up to you..."

Lumian nodded with satisfaction and motioned for the trembling cheat and his injured accomplices.

"Take them to the nearest... Uh, Steam Cathedral."

At the intersection of Quartier de l'Observatoire and Quartier du Jardin Botanique, 5 Avenue Sèlbù, a swarm of men and women dressed in tattered attire surged toward a beige three-story building.

The two guards stationed at the entrance observed the approaching, agitated crowd and swiftly withdrew their legally owned semi-automatic revolvers. Their voices rang out, commanding, "Halt!"

Confronted with the sight of firearms, even Madame Mogana and her determined followers involuntarily slowed their advance.

The presence of the weapons was undeniably daunting.

Sensing the hesitation, Jenna rushed to the forefront and hollered at the two guards, "We're here to demand our rightful compensation. The court has already rendered its verdict!"

"You sons of bitches, go ahead and shoot if you dare!"

"Do you even have enough dogsh\*t bullets? Can you take down all of us? If not, each of us will take a bite out of you that you won't recover from!"

With fiery determination, she strode toward the entrance.

Beads of sweat formed on the palms of the two guards as they peered out at the sea of faces. The sheer number of debt collectors was overwhelming, their exact count obscured by the throng.

It was impossible to predict the response if they opened fire on the crowd. They felt exposed and isolated, like logs confronting a relentless flood.

Jenna, utilizing her Instigation ability, pressed forward with her rhetoric.

"If we disable or kill you, do you think you'll still receive your compensation?"

"Look at us. Our due compensation has been withheld for years. Are you certain you'll get your payment from that stingy old scrooge? His family might flee town tomorrow!"

The two guards were taken aback.

This was indeed a problem.

Furthermore, they were well aware that the boss's family had liquidated most of their assets and were on the verge of fleeing the city in two days, seeking refuge in another province. Would they take two injured and incapacitated bodyguards along? Would they seize the opportunity to withhold compensation?

The harsh reality was laid bare before them!

As the guards hesitated, Jenna had already reached the entrance, with the crowd of debt collectors close behind.

Instinctively, one of the guards followed standard procedure, raising his right hand and firing a warning shot into the sky, attempting to deter the approaching horde. The other guard tried to subdue an elegant-looking young woman who appeared to lack substantial combat prowess.

Jenna recoiled momentarily, grabbed hold of the guard's arm, and unceremoniously brought him crashing to the ground, causing his firearm to skid away.

Spurred by the gunshot and Jenna's boldness, Madame Mogana picked up the semi-automatic revolver. Although she wasn't familiar with its operation, her resolve surged, and she sprinted toward the entrance, cursing all the way.

The remaining guard hesitated for a fleeting moment before relenting, opting not to open fire on the advancing crowd and instead allowing them to swarm into the house.

Inside the living room, Edmund Sr. and his family, on the brink of departure, found themselves instantly encircled by Jenna's nearly hundred-strong assembly of debt collectors. It was an impenetrable wall of humanity.

Clutching a revolver, Edmund Sr. voiced his trepidation, "What do you intend to do?"

"We're here for our money!" Jenna seized the revolver from Madame Mogana's trembling hands and leveled it at Edmund Sr. She declared, "Without the compensation we're owed, we won't survive. Let's find out who meets their end today!"

Edmund's hand trembled, as though he had contracted an incurable ailment.

Outside a Steam Cathedral that bore a resemblance to a small factory, Lumian gave instructions to the woman assisting the injured swindler.

"Take them to the padre and have them explain the money conjuring magic and their association with the Malady God. If they refuse to talk, provide an account on their behalf."

The women nodded solemnly and, with their black eye, guided the swindler's group into the cathedral, a trail of blood marking their passage.

Lumian holstered his revolver and observed silently from the doorway.

He reflected with a touch of amusement, Madam Magician's suggestion is indeed on point. It's healthy both physically and mentally to let off some steam now and then.

Of all things to believe in, they choose an evil god, and on top of that, they're swindlers!

After a mere two minutes, Lumian casually strolled away, while the police officers hurriedly arrived on the scene.

Lumian unexpectedly crossed paths with Jenna and the jubilant debt collectors outside 5 Avenue Sèlbù.

"So quickly?" he inquired, surprise evident in his tone.

Jenna pursed her lips.

“I didn't anticipate it happening this swiftly either. I was prepared for someone to call the police and handle the situation accordingly. However, once we had Edmund Sr. and his family surrounded, and we issued our threats, he yielded and began paying according to the list.

“Damn it, his family's cash, gold, and other valuables added up to more than enough for our compensation. There's even a surplus. And that doesn't even account for his assets that haven't been liquidated yet. He delayed our compensation for so long!”

Lumian chuckled.

“Giving always stings. Sometimes things seem complex, but when you truly commit to them, they become simple. And then there are situations that seem straightforward but turn out to be fraught with twists and turns that nearly cost you everything.”

His words carried the weight of experience.

Jenna knew that Lumian needed gold, and the compensation she had received came in the form of various types of gold jewelry, which were collectively worth 3,000 verl d'or at their pure gold value.

She offered, “Here, I'll sell these to you.”

Lumian fell briefly silent before responding, “I'll withdraw the money from Salle de Bal Brise.”

He only had banknotes and silver coins totaling just over 600 verl d'or on him.

In the evening, Lumian found himself with some free time and leisurely returned to Auberge du Coq Doré. He descended to the basement bar and spotted Charlie, beer in hand, regaling a group of patrons with stories.

Lumian grinned and declared, “Drinks are on me!”

Amidst the cheers of 20 to 30 people, Lumian added a playful twist, “Charlie's footing the bill!”

Charlie's expression froze.

Lumian chuckled and shouted again, “And if he does a strip dance, I might even cover that too!”