

Inevitability 37

Chapter 37: "Dangerous Forest"

Lumian paused for a moment and then said, "So the body, mind, and spirit will approach the bestower because the power of the gift carries a corresponding brand?"

He made this inference from the Beyonder characteristics left behind by the Oldest One and the previous owners.

Although the bestowment was pure strength and didn't contain any characteristics, it was also likely to have been tainted with all the previous owner's quirks.

The lady held the tarot cards and nodded in agreement.

"Your logical ability is impressive. You should thank Aurore for giving you enough basic education."

Lumian muttered inwardly, No need for your reminder...

The lady continued, "Even if the bestower doesn't wish to affect the bestowed, it's difficult to prevent the other party from approaching Them physically, mentally, and spiritually. This is because if the power bestowed doesn't contain the bestower's will, it will be challenging for the bestowed to control it, and it will quickly dissipate.

"Therefore, the blessings of the orthodox gods in this aspect are basically temporary and limited to a certain extent."

And the evil gods don't care what happens to the bestowed? Lumian nodded thoughtfully and asked curiously, "Beyonders, what I mean is, can people with Beyonder characteristics still accept gifts? Will the two conflict and cause them to lose control?"

The lady smiled and shook her head, "There may be some conflict, but not much.

"Think about it. The power of the gift will transform your body to match that of the bestower, but your body has already adapted to your Beyonder characteristics. So, there will be a conflict until you find a new balance. However, this conflict won't affect your mind or spirit, so you won't lose control unless you're on the brink of collapse. The only problem is that you might have to get used to seeing a third eye and a fourth hand growing on your body. Of course, the prerequisite is that the power bestowed on you will last for a long time. The corresponding level has to be very high as well. Otherwise, the little changes in your body can be ignored."

Lumian acknowledged the information in a terse manner.

“What if the gift is from the same or a neighboring pathway?” he asked.

The lady nodded.

“It won't cause any conflict.”

She then chuckled.

“But that doesn't mean there won't be physical changes.”

What does this mean? Lumian was confused and was about to ask for clarification when the lady interrupted him with a chuckle.

“I thought you'd be more interested in the time loop after learning about Circle Inhabitants. It's surprising that you're paying attention to this knowledge that may not be useful to you in the future.

That's not like you!”

Lumian revealed a self-deprecating smile.

“I wanted to ask if you could help us break the time loop,” he said.

“But then I remembered what you said before. You claimed that the price for resolving the corresponding problem would be the complete destruction of Cordu. Everyone would die. If I wanted to achieve a better outcome, I could only rely on myself. I didn't understand it at the time, but now I can guess the reason. If you want to break the cycle and you're not a Circle Inhabitant, the only way is to destroy everything?”

The lady nodded in agreement.

“That's correct.”

Lumian was confused and asked, “Then why didn't you make it clear before?”

It's not like it's something that would lead to destruction!

Or was this lady used to speaking in a half-concealed manner?

The lady immediately laughed.

“Would you have believed me if I had told you that the whole village was caught up in a time loop?”

Lumian thought about it for a moment and replied, “Probably not...”

It was difficult to believe such an absurd story without experiencing it firsthand.

The lady smiled and said, “That's why I didn't make it clear. I didn't want to spend a lot of time explaining it to you.”

“...” Lumian fell silent for a moment before seizing the opportunity to ask, “Do you know what the key is to breaking this cycle? In what direction should I focus my efforts?”

The lady shook her head.

“Divination on certain matters is very dangerous here.”

“Huh?” Lumian was confused.

The woman could only add, “If I knew the key, I would tell you,” the lady said. “The sooner I solve this, the sooner I can end this journey.” She sighed. “When can I have a work-free vacation...”

Work? Lumian couldn't obtain any inspiration from the mysterious lady, so he probed, “If the padre isn't killed, will time stop repeating itself?”

“No,” the lady replied accurately. “There are many trigger points in the loop, including time reaching the twelfth night. You can figure out the rest yourself.”

Twelfth night... There's still quite a bit of time to investigate... Lumian thought for a moment and said, “Because I triggered the specialness in my body, I can maintain my memories and Beyond characteristics every time I loop, right?”

Seeing the lady nod, he further asked, “So, as long as I'm alive and continue to investigate, I'll be able to find the key to end everything sooner or later?”

This was an application of the “exhaustive method” that Aurore had mentioned.

“In theory, that's right.” The woman's emotive eyes, which puzzled Lumian couldn't put his finger on, surfaced again. “But you should have realized that only Cordu and the surrounding area are in a time loop. Time is passing normally in the outside world, and the date is completely different from Cordu's.

“The three investigators will send telegrams to describe their situation and the village, and the officials will sense the abnormality here once they mention the date.

“Even if the investigators fail to send a telegram before the cycle restarts or they don't mention the date, as time passes, the officials will discover the problem. What do you think they will do to resolve the time loop in Cordu?”

Lumian fell silent for a moment before replying, “They'll destroy it directly, just like your alternative choice.”

The lady nodded with mixed emotions. “That can effectively prevent the abnormality from spreading and affecting others,” she said. “If you have the chance to go to the Sonia Sea in the future, you can ask about Bansy Harbor. It was destroyed by the Church of Storms due to some kind of corruption. No one escaped.”

Lumian felt a renewed determination to find the key point of the loop on his own.

He mocked himself, saying, “Looks like I don't have much time left.”

He knew he only had three or four more cycles, and he couldn't have it loop to the twelfth night every time.

The lady stood up and calmly said, “At least you still have a chance. Some people don't even have that.”

After leaving Ol' Tavern, Lumian stood on the road and looked at the few pedestrians and houses around him. Everything in Cordu Village seemed normal on the surface. The villagers had the same emotions as people everywhere: joy and anger, desire and longing.

However, beneath the peaceful and noisy facade, this village hid an unimaginable horror. Everyone here had fallen into a loop and lived the same few days over and over again.

Aside from a few people like Padre Guillaume Bénet, Shepherd Pierre Berry, Pons Bénet, and Ava Lizier, Lumian was temporarily unable to determine who was innocent.

He wasn't even 100% sure that Reimund Greg, who was usually rather dim and unscheming, was fine.

The padre's superpower may have influenced the lads' strange behavior at the end of Lent, instead of them having issues beforehand.

For a moment, Lumian felt that Cordu was like a primitive forest, rife with unseen dangers. He couldn't tell who was the prey and who was the hunter.

Caution and patience were most important to survive in such an environment. Ability, courage, wisdom, and experience had to take a backseat.

This was somewhat similar to his vagrant days, yet clearly different.

As these thoughts surfaced, he felt the Hunter potion showing signs of digestion.

This is the first step of the 'acting method'?

That's pretty fast. I thought it would take a month or two to start.

He became excited at the possibility of digesting the Hunter potion.

Can I digest the Hunter potion in one or two cycles?

With the help of dream ruin's hunting, he might quickly become a Sequence 8 Provoker and increase his chances of solving the time loop problem.

Lumian pondered as he walked forward. Soon, he arrived at the village square.

His current plan was to “chat” with the padre to test him for abnormalities and obtain any clues.

As he looked around, he saw a figure walking towards the cathedral.

The figure was wearing a dark brown long coat with a hood, a rope tied around his waist, and a pair of brand new soft leather shoes. It was Shepherd Pierre Berry.

It's him... Lumian quickly approached Pierre and deliberately asked, “Pierre, why are you back?”

Pierre's black curly hair was greasy, and he hadn't shaved for a long time.

He happily replied, “Isn't Lent almost here? I haven't celebrated it in years. I can't miss it this year no matter what...”

His blue eyes were filled with a gentle smile, and he seemed completely different from the shepherd who had traumatized Lumian before.

Uh, the answer will be somewhat different from the previous cycle in a different place with a different questioner. Although the essence doesn't change, certain words will be different... Lumian listened carefully and looked at Pierre's new shoes before asking, “Did you make it rich?”

“Not really. I can only say that my current boss is not too shabby. He gave me quite a bit of things. Drinks are on me tonight.” Pierre's joy was evident.

“Alright.” Lumian agreed and pointed at the cathedral. “Are you going to pray?”

Pierre sighed and said, “Yes, it's been too long since I prayed to God in a cathedral.”

Though the sentence didn't seem significant, the more Lumian listened, the more he sensed that something was off.

Shepherds weren't entirely isolated from human settlements. Numerous villages were scattered around the plains and pastures. High mountain meadows might be desolate, but shepherds would occasionally descend the mountain to resupply. How could he not find a cathedral?

Indeed, if Pierre Berry had ventured to Feynapotter or Lenburg, locating the Cathedral of the Eternal Blazing Sun would be a fruitless endeavor. However, Lumian couldn't shake the feeling that there was something amiss in every word Pierre Berry uttered.

Instead, Pierre Berry inquired, “Are you headed to the cathedral as well?”

“No,” Lumian replied, shaking his head. “I thought there'd be people chatting in the square, but it was empty.”

He then waved his hand.

“I'm going home.”

“See you tonight,” Pierre Berry responded, waving back.

After watching the shepherd head towards the cathedral, Lumian made his way back to the village.

He decided against having a chat with the padre. His next destination: the home of Shepherd Pierre Berry!