

Inevitability 38

Chapter 38: Sheep

Over a dozen members of the Berry family were crammed into a ramshackle two-story house. Lumian seemed unfazed by the open door and carefully maneuvered around it to the vacant area enclosed by wooden fences at the back.

Piles of hay and firewood were scattered near the eaves of the clearing, and three filthy, white sheep, muddied with dirt, were lingering there.

Lumian remembered Aurore mentioning that the sheep Pierre had hurried back with seemed peculiar, but she couldn't quite pinpoint what was unusual about them. That's why Lumian had taken advantage of the shepherd's absence during prayer at the cathedral to inspect the sheep.

Although he had never herded sheep himself, he had lived near the highland pastures in Cordu, so he had at least encountered 70 to 80 sheep. He was by no means unfamiliar with them.

After observing closely for some time, Lumian couldn't discern any differences between the three sheep before him and others of their kind. All he could do was mutter under his breath, "Can't see any issues with my naked eye—do I need some superpower?"

Sadly, Hunters didn't possess such abilities.

Lumian had already utilized his enhanced vision, sense of smell, and understanding of various clues, but he still couldn't identify any problems.

The only oddity he noticed was that the sheep's droppings were piled in one corner rather than scattered everywhere.

Of course, there was a high probability that the Berry family regularly cleaned the area to use the feces more efficiently.

After several more seconds of observation, Lumian murmured softly, "Looks like just looking and sniffing isn't enough... Do I need to get hands-on?"

Without any hesitation, he placed his hand on the fence and flipped over it, as if he was right at home.

The three sheep turned their heads simultaneously to look at Lumian, who greeted them with a grin.

"Come on, time for a checkup."

He wasn't concerned that their owner would discover his actions since he had done similar things more than once. Every family in the village knew that this guy enjoyed playing pranks in various ways. Using sheep as props was just part of his antics.

In Lumian's own words: When your reputation is already tarnished, there are some perks to being infamous.

With the title of "Prankster King," anything he did in Cordu Village wouldn't arouse too much suspicion. Even if those who were clearly abnormal caught him red-handed, they wouldn't be able to confirm that something was amiss with him.

Of course, under such circumstances, Padre Guillaume and Shepherd Pierre might try to silence him as a precautionary measure. As such, he needed to exercise caution when necessary.

“Baa! Baa! Baa!”

As if sensing Lumian's ill intentions, the three sheep hid behind the haystack, their cries barely audible.

But how could they escape a Hunter?

Lumian grabbed a sheep and patted its side while forcefully examining its teeth.

“No issues here either..” he whispered.

Seeing the sheep look at him, he added with a wicked grin, “You're in excellent health. You'd probably make a delicious mutton stew with peas.”

He deliberately said this to test the intelligence of the three sheep.

When there were no problems with the target's body, he could only start from this angle.

The sheep's eyes glazed over momentarily.

Lumian chuckled.

“Pretty smart, huh? Do you understand what I'm saying?”

The sheep's eyes returned to normal as it turned its head and began eating hay.

“Ignoring me?” Lumian stroked his chin. “I'll buy you from Pierre Berry later and have you for dinner tonight!”

The sheep remained unresponsive.

It bit off a piece of hay and yanked it out.

The haystack suddenly collapsed, and Lumian's sharp Hunter's eyes caught a glimpse of something.

His expression darkened as he walked over and squatted down for a closer inspection.

It was a bundle of black hair containing a few severed fingernails.

“Why would this be outside the house?” Lumian muttered in surprise.

As a native of Cordu, he was well aware of the burial customs of the Dariège region. When someone died at home, their hair and nails had to be cut and hidden somewhere inside the house to maintain their horoscope and good fortune.

How could such an item appear in an outdoor haystack?

Lumian picked up the bundle of hair and nails, weighing it as he examined it.

It looks quite fresh, as if it had been cut only recently... He quickly made a judgment.

However, no one had died in Cordu Village lately!

Lumian could only suspect that this was some form of witchcraft similar to the funeral customs. He planned to consult his sister about it later.

To avoid arousing suspicion, he stuffed the nails and black hair back into the haystack and restored the messy scene.

Having completed that task, he walked towards the wooden fence.

As Lumian took a few steps forward, he turned to look back at the three sheep. With a hopeful attitude, he muttered to himself, “Pierre Berry seems off. He's back in the village before May. Did he commit a crime outside? As a good citizen of Intis and a devout believer of God, should I visit Dariège and inquire around?”

The three sheep just stared at him, unresponsive and unchanged.

Lumian sighed inwardly, feeling disappointed. These sheep aren't particularly intelligent, he thought.

He then raised his hands—thumbs pointing up, index fingers pointing down—making a gesture of disdain.

What's wrong with mocking the sheep when I'm in a bad mood?

Suddenly, the sheep that Lumian had examined took a few steps forward, looking hopeful.

It raised its hoof and started drawing on the mud.

Lumian was momentarily stunned, but soon approached the sheep to see what it was drawing.

The sheep seemed to be drawing letters on the ground. Lumian found them familiar but didn't recognize them.

He frowned and speculated, This language should have the same origin as the Intis language... But I only know Intis and some ancient Feysac languages...

At that moment, Lumian realized the significance of Aurore's words: “knowledge equals power.”

The sheep finished drawing and took a step back, looking at Lumian with sincerity in its eyes. The other two sheep also had a similar emotional change and bleated softly.

Lumian looked at the word on the ground and fell into deep thought, wondering what it meant and how he should respond.

In just a second or two, he had an idea and nodded solemnly at the three sheep.

He stretched out his right foot and wiped away the word on the soil.

He may not understand, but he could pretend to understand it!

He would trick the sheep for now and ask his sister for guidance later.

Without waiting for the sheep to 'respond,' he nodded slowly with a heavy and thoughtful expression as he walked towards the fence, as if saying, “Be patient, I'll figure something out.”

After leaving the sheep pen, Lumian didn't waste any time and went straight home. He found Aurore reading on a recliner in the study.

“Grande Soeur,” he called out anxiously, “there's something.”

Aurore immediately raised her guard. “Calling me Grande Soeur... What kind of trouble did you get into this time?”

Lumian took a deep breath and organized his thoughts.

“Remember when you said there was something off about Shepherd Pierre Berry's three sheep?”

“Well, I went to the back of his house to take a look while he was praying in the cathedral. And guess what I found?”

Aurore's expression turned serious.

“If you're going to do something like that, you need to tell me in advance. It's dangerous now, and no one will protect you.”

Lumian felt touched by his sister's concern but complained, “If I told you in advance, you probably wouldn't have let me go...”

“I'll keep it in mind for next time,” he promised sincerely.

He had said similar words dozens of times.

Aurore understood the urgency of the situation and nodded, indicating that Lumian could tell her what he had discovered.

Lumian quickly recounted his experience in the sheep pen. The more Aurore listened, the more serious she became.

“Write down that word,” she said, getting up from the recliner and finding a pen and paper to hand to Lumian.

Lumian had memorized the word, so he quickly wrote it down on the paper.

Aurore took a quick glance and said solemnly, “This is a big problem.”

I know... Lumian responded inwardly.

Moreover, he believed the problem was even bigger than his sister had imagined.

“What's the problem?” he asked.

Aurore pointed at the word and said, “This is Highlander, the official language of the Feynapotter Kingdom. Like Intis, it comes from ancient Feysac.

“It means...”

Aurore paused for a moment, then spoke in a deep voice, “Help!”

“Help?” Lumian blurted out in surprise. “The sheep are asking us for help?”

Aurore tersely acknowledged, “I suspect they're not really sheep. They were probably humans!”

“Humans?” Lumian asked in shock.

This was beyond the scope of what he knew.

Before, Lumian had only thought that the three sheep were intelligent and had human-like emotions. They also seemed to have mastered some human language, but he had never thought of them as actual humans.

To him, turning into a sheep only happened in imaginative stories!

Just as he said that, Lumian was no longer shocked.

He realized that a time loop had already happened. What was so strange about people turning into sheep?

In the world of mysticism, there were plenty of bizarre and absurd things.

Aurore solemnly nodded at her brother's confusion and said, “I'm not sure if there's a secret art that can turn a person into a sheep, but all the details now point to that possibility.”

“Indeed,” Lumian echoed.

The more he thought about it, the more he felt that the three sheep were probably humans.

Did this mean that the shepherd, Pierre Berry, was actually grazing humans?

Lumian then asked, “Why were those nails and hair hidden outside the house?”

Aurore pursed her lips and said, “This is one of the funerary customs of the Dariège region. However, it's not used under normal circumstances. Many people have forgotten about it.

“As a Warlock, I've studied this aspect to see if I could obtain some useful knowledge.”

She then explained, “When a family member commits suicide or is murdered by a relative, or if they had a bad character while alive and exerted a negative influence on the entire family, the hair and nails that are cut after death have to be hidden outside the house to prevent the family's horoscope from being affected and bringing them bad luck.”

Suicide or murder by a relative? Lumian suddenly thought of something.

During the last cycle, Pons Bénet entered Naroka's house without adhering to the funeral customs.

Could he have gone to take away Naroka's hair and nails?