

Inevitability 41

Chapter 41: Undead

What's Paramita? Lumian was alarmed as he quickly turned to look out the window.

But what he saw outside was not what he expected. Instead of mountains, pastures, and trees, he was greeted by a desolate wilderness. The pale-white clouds in the sky blocked out all the sunlight, casting everything in shadow.

In the wilderness, strange figures roamed about. Most of them wore white linen clothes, with pale-blue faces, empty eyes, and agape mouths, looking anything but normal.

Lumian watched in horror as some of the figures ran crazily towards the edge of the wilderness, while others stumbled towards them from the other side. It was as if they would never stop, doomed to wander aimlessly forever.

At the edge of the wilderness, near a cliff, he could make out dark monsters with long horns and humanoid bodies, grabbing the white-clad figures and throwing them over the edge.

Suddenly, a blood-curdling scream pierced the air, right into Lumian's and Aurore's ears.

The sound of hooves echoed through the wilderness as a tall figure in full black armor rode a white horse. The horse was so thin that it looked like it had only skin and bones left. The rider moved slowly at times and galloped back and forth at others, as if shepherding sheep.

Lumian's eyesight was sharp, and he could see the rider clearly from afar.

Inside the helmet that shone with a metallic luster, two deep red rays of light flickered like flames. A hideous wound on the rider's neck extended all the way to their navel, almost splitting them in half and dragging out their pale-white intestines.

Without any need for further evidence, Lumian knew who it was: a Death Knight!

It was a creature that often appeared in Intisian folklore.

Suddenly, the carriage they were in came to a stop.

Naroka silently opened the door and stepped out.

Her pale face, empty eyes, and numb expression were starting to resemble the figures in white linen clothes that Lumian had seen earlier.

Aurore turned to him and said in a deep voice, "This place is filled with undead. You must stay by my side at all times."

As she spoke, she took out a gold brooch and fastened it to her clothing.

Aurore took out a handful of grayish-black powder from her pocket with her other hand.

Lumian leaned forward to look at the carriage driver and realized that Sewell had become like Naroka—pale-faced and empty-eyed, slowly walking deeper into the wilderness as if he had been dead for a long time.

He said quickly to Aurore, "Grande Soeur, I'm already a Beyonder. You deal with these undead. I'll drive the carriage and get us out of here as soon as possible!"

He knew he couldn't fight the undead, so he could only be a temporary carriage driver.

But if the Death Knight showed up, he would do his best to block it.

Aurore was taken aback by Lumian's sudden transformation, but quickly regained her composure. She reminded him, "Check the horses' condition!"

Lumian looked ahead and saw that the horses were motionless, with their flesh and blood seemingly extracted, leaving only withered fur and skin wrapped around their bones.

"The horses are dead," he reported back to Aurore.

Suddenly, the undead caught a whiff of the living and rushed towards the carriage, trying to enter.

"XXX." Aurore uttered a word in a language Lumian didn't understand.

As soon as Aurore spoke the word, the golden brooch in front of her lit up with a violent but not stimulating golden light.

The grayish-black powder in her left hand burned, emitting a flow of light that resembled water, spreading in all directions. The undead screamed as soon as they came into contact with the light, and cyan smoke rose from their bodies.

They wanted to retreat, but more undead surged forward, squeezing around the carriage, evaporating and disappearing.

Lumian watched enviously and solemnly, wishing he could do something to help. He yearned to advance in Sequence and gain more abilities.

But the powder in Aurore's hand was about to run out, and the undead were still coming, ignoring the ones that had already been destroyed. Lumian knew they couldn't stay there forever.

"We can't stay here. Let's make a run for it!"

No matter how many materials his sister had prepared, she couldn't deal with so many undead!

The Death Knight and the creatures that looked like demons were still out there.

Their best chance was to use what resources they had left to escape from the wilderness known as Paramita.

Aurore nodded and said simply, "Follow me."

The moment she finished speaking, the grayish-black powder in her palm vanished into thin air, and the desolate surroundings were engulfed by the undead.

Aurore wasted no time and retrieved another handful of materials, igniting them with the golden brooch before her. The materials combusted, creating a dazzling golden light

that decimated the approaching undead. Their agonizing shrieks echoed through the wilderness before they disintegrated into nothingness.

Aurore leaped off the carriage with Lumian hot on her heels, sprinting towards the nearest edge of the wilderness.

Suddenly, a hand jutted out from the golden blaze, snatching Lumian's arm.

Lumian's instincts kicked in, alerting him of the imminent threat. He pivoted his forearm and delivered a swift blow to the hand.

Pa!

It felt like he had punched a block of solid ice. A shiver ran through his body, rendering him immobile for a moment.

Lumian's teeth clattered as he caught sight of the hand's owner.

It was another undead clad in white linen, but it donned a mask made of white paper over its face. The figure disintegrated slowly under the golden light.

The peculiar undead lunged towards Lumian, but before it could make contact, a beam of pure, holy light descended upon it.

The masked undead halted in its tracks, burning fiercely before dissolving into black vapor.

“Keep moving!” Aurore shouted, withdrawing her hand from the golden brooch and darting forward.

Lumian shook off the cold and picked up his pace to follow his sister.

The duo relied on the grayish-black powder and Warlock spells to traverse the wilderness. The golden light eradicated countless undead garbed in white linen.

Unfortunately, Aurore couldn't simply rely on one material to stuff every bag. As a Warlock, she had to anticipate various scenarios.

Before long, the bag containing the Sun Flower powder was empty, and they were still hundreds of meters away from the wilderness's edge. The undead horde seemed never-ending.

What frightened them even more was the Death Knight's approach. The horse-mounted knight had sensed the turmoil and was galloping towards them.

Aurore's expression changed several times in the golden light. She slowed down, gritted her teeth, and spoke urgently to Lumian.

“When I shout 'three,' run towards the edge of the wilderness and don't look back!”

Lumian opened his mouth to protest, but Aurore cut him off.

“Don't worry, I'll follow you. If you stay, you'll only interfere with my use of a powerful spell and slow us down when we try to escape.”

As she spoke, Aurore removed the golden brooch from her chest and handed it to Lumian, giving him instructions.

“Focus your spirituality and extend it to this brooch. Repeat this word when you're running: 'XXX!’”

Lumian didn't understand the word, but he committed the pronunciation to memory.

As soon as he took hold of the golden brooch, he felt a warm light envelop his body, banishing his dark thoughts and slowing down his racing mind.

Instinctively donning the brooch, Lumian concentrated his thoughts according to his sister's directions, extending his spiritual energy.

Seeing that the grayish-black powder in her hand was running low, Aurore retrieved another material and shouted out, "One, two, three!"

In order to avoid slowing down his sister, Lumian sprinted wildly towards the edge of the wilderness, shouting the word Aurore had given him with all his might.

"XXX!"

The golden brooch emitted a golden, radiant glow, illuminating Lumian as though a miniature sun was hanging on his chest. The undead in his path instinctively avoided him.

Thud thud thud!

As he ran, Lumian couldn't shake his worry for his sister. He cast a glance back at Aurore, who remained in her spot surrounded by a cloud of black gas.

The undead were drawn to the gas, abandoning Lumian to swarm towards her.

Lumian wasn't a fool. When he saw this scene, he understood that his sister was lying when she said that she would follow him.

"Aurore!"

He shouted, halted abruptly and spun around, running back towards his sister.

Aurore looked back and saw that he had stopped. She hurriedly shouted, "Are you stupid? Run!"

Lumian didn't say anything and ran towards Aurore. The undead parted before him, clearing a path under the golden light of the brooch.

Seeing this, Aurore lowered her head and cursed softly, "What an idiot..."

She then took out another iron-black substance and sprinkled it on Lumian, causing him to be pushed to the edge of the wilderness by an invisible force.

He struggled to break free, but he was in midair with no point of leverage.

"My stupid brother, live well..." Aurore whispered with a melancholic smile before the black aura consumed her completely.

She was directly exposed to countless figures and the Death Knight.

"Aurore!"

Lumian's eyes bulged with terror, his skin and eyes turning red with blood vessels.

However, he was still pushed to the edge of the wilderness.

But suddenly, all the undead stopped in their tracks.

Something was happening in the distance.

Aurore sensed the shift and looked up in shock. She saw an open carriage passing by, pulled not by horses, but by two demonic creatures with goat horns. The carriage was a deep red color, resembling a conch or a cradle, and a woman resembling Madame Pualis wearing a flower crown and green dress sat inside.

But unlike Madame Pualis, she was very dignified.

The Death Knight abandoned his target and turned his horse towards the carriage.

All the undead followed suit, clustering around the carriage as it headed towards the hazy mountain range beyond the wilderness.

Chapter 42: Madame Night

Lumian was stunned by the carriage pulled by the 'demon' and the undead's reactions. He forgot to struggle and got pushed by the invisible palm for over ten seconds before coming to a stop.

Although the carriage was getting farther away, he could still see the woman's face clearly with his eagle-like vision.

Her long brown hair was tied up high, and her brown eyes were beautiful and bright. She had light eyebrows and wore a fresh green dress and a laurel crown made of flowers. She had an elegant and dignified aura.

Madame Pualis! Lumian's first thought was that the woman on the carriage was Madame Pualis—the administrator's wife and the padre's mistress.

However, on closer inspection, he noticed an obvious difference between the two. Not only was there a vast disparity in their aura, but there was also a distinct difference in their looks.

The lady in the car had softer and more mature facial features.

If Lumian had to make a comparison, he would describe the lady in the car as Madame Pualis's older sister by seven or eight years.

At the moment, the lady sat in an open carriage pulled by the 'demon.' Surrounded by countless undead and the Death Knight, she traveled towards the distant forest as if she was on some kind of magical patrol.

Aurore retracted her gaze and ran towards Lumian. As she ran, she shouted, "Take this opportunity to escape from here!"

Lumian snapped out of his daze and waited for his sister to catch up before taking large strides and fleeing to the edge of the nearest wilderness.

Before long, they felt as though they had passed through an illusory curtain or a thick layer of water.

The scene before them changed.

The wilderness dissipated like bubbles. The clear river, new grass on both sides, and green trees all entered their view at once.

To Lumian and Aurore, this scene was so familiar that they didn't need to identify it to make a judgment.

They were still near Cordu Village!

This was where Ava Lizier used to tend to her geese!

“We're back...” Lumian wasn't surprised or disappointed. Instead, he looked around, having confirmed his suspicion.

Aurore panted and said, “Whether Madame Pualis made a mistake on purpose or not, we can't go back to the village now.”

“Let's head to Dariège!” Lumian suggested immediately.

“Then let's go to the nearest pasture. There's a dangerous path down the hill. With our abilities, we'll be fine,” Lumian added.

“Okay.” Aurore turned around and started running.

Having borrowed the pony from Madame Pualis from time to time, she was familiar with the highland pastures around Cordu.

Lumian followed his sister closely, both glad and terrified at what had just happened.

He didn't expect Madame Pualis to be so powerful that she could have so many undead, the 'demon,' and the Death Knight chase after her.

Of course, it might not be Madame Pualis.

As she ran, Aurore slowed down. Her breathing became heavier, and her gasping became more and more pronounced.

“What's wrong?” Lumian still had plenty of energy.

This was one of the benefits of being a Hunter.

Aurore stopped and panted heavily.

“I'm exhausted. The spellcasting took up a lot of my energy.”

Lumian said without hesitation, “Then I'll carry you. I'm not tired yet.”

They were in a dire situation, and time was of the essence. Aurore nodded, went behind the squatting Lumian, and leaned on him.

Lumian first took off the brooch in front of him and returned it to his sister. Then, he straightened his body and ran again.

“Is this a mystical item?” Lumian still had the energy to ask.

Aurore was taken aback for a moment before she chuckled.

“Looks like you know quite a bit. This is indeed a mystical item. I call it the Integrity Brooch. It can create Holy sunlight or help me ignite materials to help me use a mystic technique to deal with ghost-type creatures. However, wearing it for too long

will cause people to become fanatical. And as long as you wear it, you will lose some thoughts. As you know, immoral methods in battle might be more useful, but you get limited by it.”

Aurore paused and asked in a deep voice, “Where did you get the Beyonder characteristic?”

As Lumian ran, he replied intermittently, “Didn't that Wand card allow me to stay awake in the dream?”

“What Wand card?” Aurore was confused.

Oh, this is something from the previous cycle... Lumian reorganized his words.

“I was at Ol' Tavern and met a mysterious lady. She gave me a Wand card. With that card, I stayed lucid in my dream and entered a strange space. There, I encountered some monsters and obtained a Hunter Beyonder characteristic.”

“Hunter...” Aurore was familiar with this Sequence commonly seen in Intis.

As she muttered to herself, she suddenly chuckled, seeming to have thought of something.

What are you laughing at... Lumian was baffled.

Aurore asked again, “Then who gave you the formula? That mysterious lady?”

“Yeah.” Lumian nodded as he ran.

Aurore sighed and said, “My stupid brother has his own secrets now... I can't confirm if what you said is true or not. I'll just take it at face value.”

Lumian couldn't bear to see his sister disappointed, so he quickly changed the topic.

“Was that Madame Pualis on the carriage?”

“They look alike, but they're not the same,” Aurore said, contradicting herself.

After a few seconds of deliberation, she said, “Since you're already a Beyonder, I'll tell you directly. My companions, uh, my pen pals, once mentioned something.

“They said that in the past few years, there have been many strange phenomena similar to what happened just now in the southern parts of Loen, the southern parts of Intis, and the Feynapotter Kingdom. Women ride carriages pulled by demons, patrol the wilderness and have hordes of undead following them. Some Beyonders who have grasped the corresponding mystic arts will let their spirits leave their bodies and follow the carriage for a period of time to experience something wonderful and obtain mystic knowledge.

“One of my companions obtained one of the Beyonders' notebooks. It mentioned that the lady's name is Madame Night. The owner of the notebook obtained a secret medicine production method from his experience following a carriage, which can create an invisibility potion from a baby's corpse.

“According to the investigation, the women in different places exhibit similar phenomena, but things happen at night.”

Lumian said in surprise, “But it's daytime now.”

Could the anomaly in Cordu Village have brought about a change?

“That's why I'm not sure,” Aurore said after thinking for a moment. “Perhaps sending Naroka to Paramita made a difference. Perhaps that wilderness is Paramita, where Madame Nights patrol in the day and appear in the human world at night. Yes, combined with the fact that the lady resembles Pualis, I'm inclined to the previous guess.”

Lumian didn't know much about mysticism, but he instinctively felt that his sister's suspicion was right.

He ran in silence for a distance before finally asking, “Why did you sacrifice yourself to save me? I wish you were more selfish.”

“I'm very selfish,” Aurore said with a smile. “I considered abandoning you and escaping on my own. Then, I would avenge you when I became stronger. However, after careful consideration, I realized that even if I gave you the Integrity Brooch and taught you how to use it, you wouldn't be able to help me attract most of the undead to give me a chance to escape. Only a Warlock like me could do it.

“It was a choice between us dying together or at least you being able to live. I don't have to tell you the choice I made, right?”

Making such a choice isn't as easy as how you make it sound. Lumian could accept it rationally, but not emotionally.

He said gloomily, “We might as well die together.”

“You can't die! Who'll bring me back if you're gone? Anything's possible in the world of mysticism,” lectured Aurore to her brother. “That's why I said all those sappy lines. So you'll remember to work hard and bring me back.”

That's true... Lumian gradually agreed with his sister's choice.

After running for a while, they saw the nearest highland pasture. Lumian, who had been carrying Aurore, clearly felt tired, but he didn't stop to rest. He mustered his remaining strength and rushed to the hill covered in green grass.

There were many livestock pens and shacks here. The former was surrounded by rocks and tree branches. The ground was compacted soil and flattened feces. There was a long and narrow exit at one end that could only allow one sheep to pass through. The latter was similar to a primitive tent: stones were first used to build a circle of low walls, leaving a door and a smoke vent. Then, a row of grates were built against the low walls. The bottom half of the grates was buried in the soil, and the upper end supported a wooden structure. On the wooden structure was a roof made of grass and mud.

This was where the shepherds lived. The environment was very harsh.

Lumian no longer carried Aurore and led her all the way to the other side of the hill.

The dangerous path was hidden below.

Looking at the path that required her to jump seven to eight meters off a cliff, Aurore said to Lumian, "Although you can climb this now, don't waste time. I'll fly you down."

"Alright." Lumian wanted to see what kind of changes would happen if he left Cordu.

Aurore grabbed Lumian's arm with one hand and sprinkled silver dust with the other.

The two of them floated up at the same time and slowly flew down the cliff.

In midair, Lumian suddenly felt a pain in his head, as if someone had hit him heavily.

Aurore had a similar reaction.

Lumian's vision quickly turned black as he felt everything shatter.

Lumian jolted awake and saw the familiar sights of the table, chair, bookshelf, and wardrobe.

Back to square one... He got off the bed thoughtfully and went downstairs. As expected, he found Aurore in a light-blue dress, preparing dinner.

"Aurore, what's the date today?" Lumian asked.

Aurore glared at him. "Call me Grande Soeur! Are you still not fully awake? It's the 29th today."

Chapter 43: Frank

As expected, the loop has repeated... Lumian wasn't surprised to hear Aurore's answer.

This was the third cycle he could recall. Combined with his own experience and the mysterious lady's pointers, he had a preliminary conclusion:

The time limit for the loop is until the twelfth night.

The spatial range of the loop is Cordu Village and its surroundings.

Characters in the loop are restricted from killing the padre.

These are the three key points of the loop...

At this thought, Lumian looked at Aurore and asked thoughtfully, "Grande Soeur, if you wrote a novel about a time loop, where would you put the key to undoing it?"

Aurore looked Lumian up and down in confusion. "You suddenly asked such a question and even called me Grande Soeur obediently... Did you come up with a new story to deceive others?"

"I guess so," Lumian replied sincerely.

Aurore frowned and thought for a while before saying, "From a novelist's perspective, or rather, from the perspective of normal logic, the most critical part of the cycle is definitely the final scene. This is because it is both the end of this cycle and the beginning of the next cycle. It is the button

that connects the end and the beginning. Without it, there is no way to turn the flow of time in a straight line into a closed circle.

“Think about it. The loop reverses, so there will always be a first time. Something must have happened at the last moment to cause time to restart.”

Twelfth night? Lumian agreed with his sister's guess about the twelfth night. He nodded and asked, “Then why can't the most critical part be the first day of the loop? Shouldn't we ask why the loop starts at this moment?”

Aurore chuckled and said, “Making a short story to deceive a few people temporarily is your forte, but when it involves this kind of content that requires strict logic and rich knowledge, you aren't capable of it.”

“The reason why the first day of the loop is the first day is perhaps due to the power or energy that causes the loop. Proceeding past the last day will end up overlapping this day. This is like why a loop probably doesn't cover the entire world, but some localized area. It's not that it doesn't want to, but it's incapable of doing so.”

Lumian had actually considered this possibility. He just hoped that his knowledgeable sister would come up with a different answer.

Aurore thought for a moment and added, “If the loop is not a completely closed circle, where there is still interaction between those inside and outside the loop—for example, information inside can be transmitted, and people outside can enter but not leave—the first day of the loop might start from the day the outsiders happen to enter, so that when the loop is repeated, they don't have a 'position.' Of course, it can also compel the outsiders to do something they will do subsequently on the originally eventless first day. There are too many ways to make up similar stories.”

Lumian's eyes lit up when he heard that. He wanted to praise his sister loudly.

He suspected that the entry of Leah, Ryan, and Valentine caused the cycle to start on the afternoon of March 29th.

If that was the case, the twelfth night might have already turned into the tenth or ninth night. Of course, it might also have originally been the thirteenth night that turned into the twelfth night due to the 'intrusion' of the outsiders.

These were all possibilities that Lumian needed to verify himself.

He completely agreed with his sister's deduction. He believed that something must have happened on the twelfth night to cause the loop to happen. Only by figuring out what happened at that time could he find the key to undoing the loop.

Therefore, Lumian decided not to trigger any abnormalities in this cycle. He also found an excuse not to join the procession and stay until the twelfth night.

But he couldn't do nothing. Time wouldn't allow it.

Unless Lumian broke out of the cycle after experiencing the twelfth night, he would have to make the best use of time for the next cycle.

A complete cycle lasted twelve days. After that, the probability of the outside world discovering any abnormalities in Cordu would increase exponentially. Lumian had, at best, one complete cycle or less to resolve the problem.

If he wanted to stop the abnormality in one cycle, he needed to have enough information and a sufficient understanding of the entire village.

Lumian couldn't help but mock himself. Not only do I have to avoid triggering the abnormality, but I also have to investigate the problem.

What was the difference between this and a clown walking on a tightrope at the edge of a cliff?

Wanting both wasn't something good.

Aurore saw that he didn't speak for a few seconds and seemed to be making up a story. She waved her hand and said, "I almost forgot to make dinner!"

"Wait a minute," Lumian said with a solemn expression.

Aurore immediately clicked her tongue. "I smell mischief."

Lumian said bluntly, "Aurore, uh, Grande Soeur, actually, we've already fallen into a loop."

"Heh, you've just learned the trick and you're already using it on me?" Aurore was both angry and amused.

I guess people need to be trustworthy at times... Lumian sighed silently.

"Can you at least listen to the story I made up first? Why don't you score me while we're at it?"

Aurore looked outside at the bright sky.

"That works too."

Lumian began from the time he met Leah and the other outsiders. He spoke as if he had a general outline, claiming that he had maintained his consciousness in the dream and entered a unique ruin. Through hunting monsters, he obtained a Beyonders characteristic and became a Hunter.

He didn't hide the matter about the thorned ring pattern that sealed his chest because it might involve the key to the time loop. He had seen the same symbol on the padre, and killing the padre had caused time to restart.

At first, Aurore was still smiling, thinking that her brother had come up with a creative story. But as she listened, her expression turned serious. There was a lot of knowledge that Lumian shouldn't have known.

When Lumian said that he had become a Beyonders, Aurore raised her right hand and massaged her temples.

Her light-blue eyes instantly became deep, but there was no figure reflected in them.

She looked at Lumian for a while and nodded slightly.

“Your Ether Body has undergone a huge change. Your life force and physical state are much stronger than ordinary people. Your Astral Projection has changed to a certain extent, but not much... As expected of a Hunter who's better at hand-to-hand combat than spellcasting... I can't see the symbol and the related changes, and I don't dare to look deeper...”

Aurore pouted and asked in confusion, “Don't tell me you deliberately made up such a ridiculous story to make me accept your becoming a Beyonder?”

This was a typical Lumian *modus operandi*.

Lumian didn't explain and directly talked about the mysticism knowledge that the lady had imparted to him.

Of course, he only briefly mentioned the name and did not elaborate.

This was not because he was very moral and principled about not telling his sister before obtaining the lady's permission. Instead, the other party was clearly very powerful. If he leaked precious knowledge and angered her, the time loop might be resolved, but they would die.

“Indestructible law... law of convergence... acting method...” Aurore was dumbfounded.

Aurore was stunned that her illiterate brother in the field of mysticism had grasped such incomparably precious knowledge.

It had been more than five years since she became a Beyonder. At first, she had relied on Emperor Roselle's diary to join that organization. Her pathway was a symbol of knowledge in the field of mysticism. From time to time, she would be pursued by knowledge, allowing her to master the acting method, the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility, and the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, the three cornerstones of the Beyonder world. Therefore, she thought of herself as a Beyonder with insufficient experience but sufficient knowledge, miles ahead of most of her peers.

Now, her brother, who had never come into contact with mysticism, could actually mention such terms. Furthermore, he knew about a law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics that she didn't know about!

This eliminated the possibility that Lumian had peeked at her witchcraft notebook.

As a Beyonder of the Mystery Pryer pathway, Aurore suppressed her desire to know the specifics of the law of convergence as she looked at her brother. She asked in puzzlement, surprise, and worry, “What did you pay for that lady to teach you this knowledge?”

The potion formula was even free of charge!

She sized up Lumian again, from top to bottom, then from bottom to top, trying to find out what was missing from him.

“Nothing,” Lumian laughed self-deprecatingly. “That's why it's terrifying. I don't even know what price I'll have to pay in the future. Yes, I suspect that it has something to

do with the symbol on my chest and the dream ruin. That lady probably wants me to unravel the corresponding secret.”

Aurore tersely acknowledged, “Continue.”

She waited for the rest of the “story” with a serious attitude.

Lumian talked about the owl, the anomaly during Lent, and the siblings' experiences during the second cycle. He also talked about how the cycle would restart the moment they attempted to leave Cordu.

Aurore listened carefully and muttered to herself in disbelief, “Either I've been hypnotized by you and told you everything, or time has really entered a loop...”

She began to believe Lumian because she had named her “Integrity Brooch” herself, and there was no record anywhere. Unless she told her brother herself, it was impossible for Lumian to know, and she had no impression of it.

Lumian struck while the iron was hot.

“I can also prophesy that the three foreigners will appear at the Ol' Tavern at night. I can also prophesy that the padre is having an affair with Madame Pualis tonight. I can also prophesy that the shepherd, Pierre Berry, has returned to the village. There's something wrong with the three sheep he brought with him...”

The more Aurore listened, the more serious she became. After a while, she said, “The three foreigners entered the village in the afternoon while we were practicing combat. After that, we rested and didn't go out at all. Yes, in the combat class in the afternoon, you were still an ordinary person...”

She accepted Lumian's time loop theory.

If it were anyone else, Lumian would have laughed and said, “You believed it! Ha! You believed such a ridiculous story.” But in front of Aurore, he was very restrained.

He then suggested, “I'll go around the village now and see if I can gather more information.”

Aurore nodded.

“I'll also use my 'eyes' to look around, but there are huge restrictions and it's very dangerous. I'm not sure I'll gain anything.”

Lumian waved his hand, indicating that he understood, and walked out the door.

As Lumian took a few steps, he looked back at Aurore's figure standing in the kitchen. He immediately thought of the scene of Aurore pushing him to safety among the countless undead and felt an inexplicable pain of separation.

He subconsciously asked, “Grande Soeur, why did you adopt me in the first place?”

Aurore grumpily replied, “I didn't want to either!”

“I was just kind enough to give you some food, but you kept following me. I couldn't shake you off, and you even obediently helped me do all kinds of things. My heart softened for a moment, and... who knew that you would grow into this!

“Do you know how hard it was for a young girl to raise a child like you?”

Lumian wanted to thank and praise her, but the words were stuck in his mouth, as if they wanted to rush to his eyes and nose.

He turned his head and walked back into the village.

Chapter 44: Eavesdropping

Lumian had to investigate, but he couldn't activate any abnormalities, causing the cycle to restart ahead of time. He had to consider starting from the peripheral problems and edge in one step at a time.

His initial idea was to find the padre's mistresses this afternoon and use eavesdropping and other methods to see if they knew anything. If he didn't gain anything or lacked the opportunity for the time being, he would go to the cathedral to see if he could meet the padre and chat with him about daily life in the village.

Lumian's first target was Sybil Berry, the mistress of the padre Guillaume Bennet and the sister of the shepherd, Pierre Berry. She had a close relationship with the two abnormal figures, so perhaps she knew something.

Lumian's friend Guillaume-junior, Guillaume Berry, was a distant cousin of Pierre Berry. Even his hair color was different, and they didn't live together.

Sybil Berry was twenty-four years old and married to Jean Maury, a middle-aged man in his late forties.

He had been single for more than 30 years. The reason why he could marry Sybil Berry was because he did not have any requirements for dowry.

Lumian suspected that the reason why she married him using only a small amount of assets was that she had already become the padre's mistress at that time and needed a husband to be her illegitimate son's father. The padre had secretly promised something.

Although Intis was open-minded, and illegitimate children were common, many husbands or wives were still willing to take their spouses' illegitimate children under their wing despite being angry when they found out. After all, this was equivalent to having an additional free manservant or maid in the future. Furthermore, they didn't have the right to inherit any of the assets, but clergymen of the Eternal Blazing Sun Church weren't allowed to get married and have children. They often found fathers for their illegitimate children.

Lumian arrived at Jean Maury's house, a grayish-white short house at the edge of Cordu with only one floor. Behind the kitchen was the bedroom, and the other side was connected to the basement, serving as a living room and dining room.

There was no washroom; they only built a shed at the back of the house.

Lumian entered without knocking, quietly coming to the side of the house and squatting under the bedroom window.

At that moment, someone was sitting inside. Lumian could hear their breathing and determined their corresponding height.

Not long after, light footsteps came from the kitchen to the bedroom.

There was no need to calculate. As a Hunter, Lumian naturally had the approximate weight of the owner of the footsteps in his mind.

It was likely a woman, probably Sybil Berry.

Lumian's impression of Sybil Berry was a woman with soft and smooth black hair who didn't like to tie it up like other women. She left it flowing down or tied it into a ponytail, giving off the feeling that she was still a young unmarried girl.

Her facial features were not outstanding, but they were soft and round, very fleshy.

At this moment, Jean Maury, who had been sitting silently in the bedroom, spoke gloomily.

“The padre came this afternoon?”

His voice was just like him, rather stuffy. He was the kind of person who usually chatted under the elm tree in the village square, replying one in every four or five sentences. In addition, he was often too lazy to comb his black hair. His brown eyes were lifeless, and his beard was not shaved clean. He looked gloomy.

“He was here.” Sybil Berry's voice was still a little girlish.

She was born like this.

Jean Maury fell silent for a moment before asking, “Did you do it?”

“We did,” Sybil answered frankly.

Jean Maury fell silent again. When Sybil walked to the kitchen, he said, “I don't have much to say about the padre, but you watch out for other men, especially Pato Russel.”

Pato Roselle was Madonna Bénet's husband. His wife was also the padre's mistress.

Lumian, who was outside the window, was secretly speechless.

This relationship was really messed up!

He gained a higher opinion of the padre. He had come to Sybil Berry in the afternoon, and he was having a date with Madame Pualis at night. He could be said to be a model worker in the field of cheating.

If he could allocate more energy in this area to the Church's matters and combine it with his scheming and machinations, he could have long advanced in clerical rank and become a Beyonder.

The clerical rank was the rank of a clergyman of the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. Starting from the first rank, it was ostiary, reader, chanter, acolyte, sub-deacon, deacon—also known as a priest or padre—bishop, archbishop, and cardinal. The pope was not in the ranks of the clergy.

Among them, the sixth-rank and above made them senior clergymen. In Aurore's words, it was possible that they possessed superpowers. As for the lowest three ranks, they mainly handled cathedral chores and ritual support. In the past few centuries, they were only glorified titles and were not treated as true clergymen. The fourth-rank acolytes were usually students who had just graduated from the seminary. The fifth-rank sub-deacon could represent a true priest to preside over a cathedral in a rural area.

The situation in Cordu was the same. A fifth-rank sub-deacon was the padre, a fourth-rank acolyte was the deputy padre, and they were staffed with a few servants.

Guillaume Bénét only needed to advance one more rank to become a true priest.

"I understand," Sybil Berry simply responded to her husband's exhortations.

Jean Maury changed the topic.

"Is your brother Pierre back from herding?"

"Yes, there's an important ritual that requires his help," Sybil casually explained.

A ritual? Lumian's eyelids twitched when he heard that.

Jean Maury asked, "The Lent Festival?"

"No, it's a ritual of God," Sybil impatiently replied. "Don't ask too much. You'll know when the time comes."

Jean Maury tersely acknowledged and said, "Praise the Sun!"

Sybil didn't respond and left the bedroom to walk into the kitchen.

Lumian instantly made a judgment.

Sybil had a certain understanding of the secret dealings between the padre and Shepherd Pierre Berry, but her husband, Jean Maury, was completely unaware!

The ritual she was talking about wasn't the "sacrificial ceremony" at the feast. It was likely related to twelfth night!

Having gained something, Lumian left Maury's house and rushed to the two-story building where Pato Russel and Madonna Bénét lived.

Unlike Sybil, Madonna Bénét was married off with her share of the inheritance. Pato Russel also received his share from his original home, so they could build a decent house and entrust more than 20 sheep to the shepherds for grazing.

Lumian didn't know when Madonna became the padre's mistress. He only knew that in the past year, before he hooked up with Madame Pualis, the padre often visited Madonna. Perhaps the taboo from his identity sparked some kind of flame.

At this moment, Pato Russel, who had a gentleman's beard, was pacing in the kitchen. He asked Madonna, who was busy commanding the lady's maid, "When will you invite the padre over as a guest again?"

He had a fervent expression, hoping to cling to the person with real power in Cordu.

Madonna glanced at Pato's father's illegitimate daughter, who was also the servant cooking, and said in a subtle tone, "I don't know. It depends on his mood."

And his physical condition, I suppose? Lumian, who was eavesdropping outside, silently muttered.

"Don't you often go to the cathedral to pray recently? You can ask him while you're at it," Pato Russel refused to give up.

Often go to the cathedral? Lumian frowned.

The padre's group is planning something in secret in the cathedral?

He really doesn't give a damn about the Eternal Blazing Sun and Saint Sith...

After listening for a while, Lumian walked from Russel's house to the cathedral at the edge of the village square, hoping to have a face-to-face chat with the padre.

However, when he arrived at the cathedral, Guillaume Bénét was no longer there. Only the deputy padre, Michel Garrigue, stood in front of the altar.

This foreigner from Dariège had graduated from Bigorre Theological Seminary. Last year, he was sent to Cordu on the bishop's orders to be Guillaume Bénét's deputy. He was usually ostracized and was only in charge of the registration of funerals, marriages, and newborns.

During the last cycle, Lumian had arrived at the cathedral and happened to encounter the padre leaving. The latter had asked him to pray the next day, not giving Michel a chance to listen to the prayers and confessions of the believers.

Michel was taller than Lumian. (Lumian felt that he had grown two to three centimeters taller after consuming the Hunter potion. He was almost 1.8 meters tall.) He was a young lad with curly brown hair.

Looking at Michel Garrigue, who was wearing a white robe with golden threads, Lumian spread his arms.

"Praise the Sun!"

After bowing, he stared at Michel, wanting to see how this deputy padre would react to the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun's etiquette.

If there was a certain amount of hesitation, Lumian would be able to determine that he had been implicated by the padre's group.

But Michel Garrigue immediately returned with the same posture.

"Praise the Sun!"

He did not hesitate at all. His brown eyes were filled with joy and anticipation.

From Madonna Bénét's words, the padre's group often discussed matters here. As a deputy padre, Michel should have noticed something, right? Lumian didn't ask directly. He looked around and asked, "The padre isn't here?"

"He's been gone for a while," Michel replied. "Three foreigners came here about 15 minutes ago, to no avail."

The deputy padre's eyes were passionate, as if he was asking if Lumian would make a confession while here.

Considering that the padre might have taken a detour and hid back in the cathedral, waiting for Madame Pualis to bring dinner over and was eavesdropping on his conversation with Michel, Lumian deliberately sighed.

“Then forget it. I'll pray again tomorrow.”

Michel's eyes lost their luster.

Lumian turned around and left the cathedral. He planned on sneaking to Michel's residence when the night deepened to see if he could get any useful information.

Seeing that the sun was about to set, he returned home and asked Aurore, “Did you find anything?”

Aurore nodded slightly.

“In addition to the abnormalities you mentioned, I also discovered that there's something wrong with the deputy padre, Michel Garrigue.”

“Huh?” Lumian didn't hide his surprise.

Chapter 45: Make-up Lesson

Lumian had just confirmed that Michel Garrigue should not have been implicated by Guillaume Bénet and the others. He planned to visit the deputy padre late at night, but when he returned home, he heard his sister say that there was something amiss about him.

Aurore glanced at Lumian and smiled.

“My clueless brother was standing right in front of him when I realized that something was off about him. Seems like you didn't notice...”

She appeared quite delighted, to the point that she had to raise her right hand to cover her mouth. After all, her younger brother, who was clearly ignorant of mysticism, had suddenly become a Beyonder. He had grasped a wealth of advanced knowledge and discovered that Cordu was stuck in a time loop. Not only had she been useless as a sister, but she also found herself outmatched in mysticism knowledge. This made her a tad unhappy.

Now, she had finally regained her dignity as an elder sister.

Lumian looked at his sister's smile and nodded.

“I didn't see anything unusual in his behavior.”

Aurore tersely acknowledged, “His Astral Projection; how can I put it? Simply put, it's brighter than a normal person's, and he's not a Beyonder. He hasn't been training his body systematically for a long time.”

“Maybe he was born with a good physique?” Lumian guessed before asking in puzzlement, “What's an Astral Projection?”

Aurore asked in surprise, “You don't know?”

“No.” Lumian shook his head.

Aurore grinned again and said with a hint of disbelief, “That woman taught you divine paths, the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility, and the acting method, but she didn't tell you basic concepts like Astral Projection?”

“She was in a hurry, so she only focused on the main points.” Lumian defended the mysterious woman.

Aurore smiled even more happily.

“Perhaps this basic mysticism knowledge is useless to unofficial Hunters. You just need to track, set traps, and fight.”

She struggled to describe her brother's current state. To say he was ignorant of mysticism wasn't entirely accurate since he knew a great deal. The things he had learned were all formidable. To say that his knowledge surpassed most Beyonders wasn't right either; he didn't even know what an Astral Projection was.

Aurore sighed and said seriously, “I can only complete your mysticism education. Remember, in mysticism, the external parts of the human body are divided into four levels. The innermost layer, which is also the core, is the Soul Body. It's almost equivalent to the concept of a spirit. It's the spirituality of everything—what gets strengthened. You could say it's the essence of building a soul.

“To a Mystery Pryer, the potion mainly upgrades the Soul Body.

“The Astral Projection is located outside the Soul Body. It's the latter's manifestation in the real and spirit worlds. Moreover, it's closely related to your will and current emotions.

“So, do you understand? When I said the deputy padre's Astral Projection was brighter than a normal person's, I meant that his Soul Body or spirit had an issue. This is reflected in his Astral Projection. It has nothing to do with his natural physique. Of course, it could be because his spirituality is naturally strong.

“Through the Astral Projection, we can still grasp the target's true emotions. For example, red signifies passion and excitement. Orange represents warmth and satisfaction. Yellow indicates happiness and extroversion. Green conveys calmness and peace. Blue suggests coldness and introspection. White denotes brightness—an eagerness to improve. Dark colors symbolize worry, sorrow, and silence. Purple implies that spirituality is taking control, coldness, and estrangement...

“It's very difficult to fake these colors, but they're relatively generic. It's impossible for us to distinguish subtle emotions and delicate feelings.”

Lumian listened attentively, as if he wanted to take out a fountain pen and jot everything down.

“Just listen.” Aurore felt a little worn out from talking. She sat down at the dining table. “I’ll give you my first witchcraft notebook later. It’s filled with such basic knowledge.”

“Alright, alright.” Lumian sat down and nodded obediently. “What’s outside the Astral Projection?”

Aurore picked up her carved glass cup and took a sip.

“Beyond that is the Body of Heart and Mind. From this point on, spirit and flesh merge.

“The Body of Heart and Mind involves the mind. It relates to one’s reasoning, thinking, insight, and ability to understand things. Some potions mainly improve this, but there are also many spells targeting it.

“The outermost layer is the Ether Body. It’s a manifestation of life force and physical state, so I can tell at a glance that your body has improved greatly. Yes, through the thickness, brightness, and color of different parts of the Ether Body, I can also determine the target’s health. As a Sequence 7 Mystery Pryer, I can even determine the target’s lifespan from the specific situation of the Ether Body.

“As for how to differentiate them, read the notebook later.”

Lumian was enlightened.

“The Hunter potion mainly targets the Ether Body?”

“You’re wrong. It targets the body and life force, and ‘Ether Body’ is the straightforward manifestation of both.”

Lumian nodded as he revised, gaining a preliminary understanding of such mysticism knowledge.

He recalled his sister’s words and asked curiously, “Aurore, how did you observe the deputy padre? Why didn’t I sense you nearby?”

Aurore smiled.

“Actually, I’ve been staying at home all this while, using the Mystery Pryer pathway’s special trait.”

“What’s special?” Lumian asked with the mentality that it didn’t matter if his sister didn’t answer.

Aurore pointed at her eyes.

“The most unique ability of a Mystery Pryer is called the Eyes of Mystery Pryer.

“Although I need to reach a higher Sequence before I can activate the complete Eyes of Mystery Pryer, allowing it to not only be of use to me, but it can also be placed on the surface of other objects to help me monitor matters remotely, this doesn't mean that Mystery Pryer's eyes aren't special before this.”

“From Sequence 9 onwards, a Mystery Pryer has seen more than most Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway. The simplest example is that a Hunter can only see an Ether Body before they undergo a qualitative change in their godhood. Furthermore, it's in a less detailed manner. And now, I can examine the various details of the Astral Projection. In addition, I can also see things around me that aren't normally visible.”

Aurore glanced at the kitchen.

This made Lumian inexplicably shocked.

There was clearly nothing in that direction, but he felt that there might be something invisible that he could not see!

Aurore continued, “Of course, this might not be a good thing. It's very easy for something to happen when you see something you shouldn't see. Therefore, I've been restraining myself. I don't look at things I shouldn't see, but as my Sequence increases, it's not up to you not to look.”

Lumian thought for a moment and asked in confusion, “Didn't you say that only higher Sequences can project out the Eyes of Mystery Prying? Why can you observe the people in the cathedral from home?”

Aurore raised her right hand and pointed with her index finger.

“I've always told you that knowledge equals power, but you didn't believe me!

“Under normal circumstances, it's true that I can't observe things hundreds of meters away from home, but humans can use tools, and I have two 'assistants'.”

As she spoke, she took out two items from a hidden pocket in her blue dress.

One was a brass telescope that could shrink and lengthen, and the other was a miniature version of a dark ink bottle—this was more like a child's toy.

“Look, the telescope can help me see people a few hundred meters away clearly. Once the visual range is closed, I can observe the target's Astral Projection, Ether Body, and Body of Heart and Mind state,” Aurore introduced with a smile. “This is suitable for open spaces without obstacles.”

Lumian was a little dumbfounded.

That works too?

They were clearly discussing mysticism. Why did his sister take out a telescope?

“What about this?” He pointed at the pocket ink bottle.

Aurore didn't answer. She massaged her temples and opened the bottle cap.

Lumian suddenly felt a little cold. A cool breeze seemed to blow in through the window.

"It's a unique spirit world creature," Aurore introduced.

"It? Where is it?" Lumian looked around.

Aurore was rather surprised.

"You still don't know how to activate Spirit Vision? But didn't you say you saw a lot of undead in the wilderness?"

Lumian had read about the term Spirit Vision in Psychic and knew what it meant. However, he was completely at a loss as to how to activate Spirit Vision.

He looked at his sister and slowly shook his head.

"I don't know." Then, he guessed, "Maybe ordinary people can see ghosts and undead directly when entering the so-called Paramita."

Aurore thought seriously and asked, "So, you don't know Hermes, ancient Hermes, Elvish, Dragonese, or Jotun?"

"What are those?" Lumian fully displayed what it meant to be illiterate in the field of mysticism.

Aurore couldn't help but facepalm.

"What exactly did that lady teach you?"

"Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility, law of convergence, acting method, paths of the divine, Sequence 0, Sealed Artifacts..." Lumian answered honestly.

"..." Aurore felt like he was flaunting. "I think you want a beating!"

She sighed for a few seconds before regaining her composure.

"Then I'll combine it with my contracted creature to teach you how to activate Spirit Vision, how to carry out ritualistic magic, and how to use language with supernatural powers.

"This is only a rough explanation. If you really want to completely master it, especially those few languages, it will take at least a year or two. Of course, this is also a problem with your Sequence pathway. Hunters probably don't have their learning abilities improved, nor do they have any enhancements in mysticism. Back then, I relied on diligence and indoctrination to master all of them in less than half a year."

Her right hand gently stroked the void in front of her, as if she was stroking a transparent kitten.

“It's very simple for Beyonders to activate their Spirit Vision, but it's not completely dark yet. Let's talk about something else first.

“I call it White Paper. It's a very weak spirit world creature. As long as you have an accurate description, you can hold a ritual and summon it in your name. Other than the fact that spirit world creatures are difficult to see, it only has one use. That is to carry a certain supernatural ability of the contractor, but it can't be too complicated or too powerful.”

Chapter 46: Ritualistic Magic

Lumian gazed at the invisible spirit world creature and contemplated for a moment.

“How complicated can it get? How strong can it be?”

“Heh, I thought you'd ask how to summon or perform ritualistic magic, but you just want to know how to use it!” Aurore teased. “That might be a characteristic of the Hunter pathway. You don't need to fully understand the principles, only consider how to apply them.”

Not waiting for Lumian's response, she pondered and said, “I've tried. Not too complicated means it can only perform one action. Not too powerful means it can't surpass a Mystery Pryer Sequence 7 Warlock's spell.”

It's nice discussing this with Aurore. She has a habit of analyzing things both qualitatively and quantitatively, unlike someone who prefers vague descriptions... Lumian felt emotional hearing that.

As he mulled it over, he stood up and helped his sister bring the food to the dining table. As they ate, he asked, “But I remember your spells often require materials. You can't carry White Paper, right?”

“Yes, that's inconvenient.” Aurore grabbed a piece of fried trout and stuffed it into her mouth. After chewing and swallowing, she said, “Moreover, a Warlock's spells can't be completed in one move. Even the simplest has three steps. First is concentrating spirituality, the second is outlining the symbol of the corresponding spell in the mind. This can also be replaced by reciting the incantation aloud. The third is using materials to cast the spell. The materials serve either as a medium or part of the spell.”

This does sound a little complicated. It isn't something the single-celled White Paper can do... Lumian knew he couldn't do it anytime soon. He'd need extensive training before he could cast spells proficiently.

Aurore glanced at him.

“Don't even think about it. It's impossible for you to be like me. First, you're limited by your Sequence, and your spirituality is insufficient. Second, using materials to help cast spells is a unique ability only Warlocks have. Yes, perhaps certain Sequences of certain pathways can do it. I don't know enough to make a definite judgment.

“However, once a Hunter reaches Sequence 7 and becomes a Pyromaniac, they can use many fire-related spells. Furthermore, they don't need materials, nor do they need to outline symbols or recite incantations in their minds. In terms of actual combat, it's faster, more convenient, and might even be stronger. As for Warlocks, their main advantage lies in their versatility. The more knowledge they acquire, the more comprehensive and powerful they become.”

Lumian said with anticipation, “I don't know when I can become a Pyromaniac...”

He planned to explore the dream ruins again tonight. Firstly, he wanted to use hunting to help digest the potion, and secondly, he wanted to find clues about the main ingredient of Sequence 8 Provoker.

As for the corresponding monsters of the Pyromaniac, he didn't dare think about them yet. He believed it would be like serving himself on a platter. After all, those creatures could definitely launch long-range attacks, rendering his “special” abilities useless.

He then asked, “Can White Paper withstand the Pyromaniac's one-movement spells?”

“Theoretically, yes, but I'm not sure if Pyromaniac's spells exceed a certain level.” Aurore's reference standard was Warlock.

Upon hearing this, Lumian became excited.

“If I could, wouldn't I be able to simulate the Funnels¹ you mentioned?”

“Huh?” Aurore was puzzled.

Lumian explained his idea in detail, “I can summon a group of White Papers and form a contract with them. Then, I can have each White Paper carry a fireball. They'll float in the air and attack the target together. Isn't that similar to the description of the Funnels?”

“Unfortunately, you can't have a group of White Papers at the same time,” Aurore laughed. “After you form a contract with a White Paper, the next time you use the initial summoning description, the same White Paper will appear.”

“Can I summon one first and hold off on the contract? Then, I'll summon another until I have a satisfactory number before forming a contract?” Lumian hadn't received a traditional education, but instead, a custom one that included Aurore's ideas. Combined with the “refinement” of years of pranks, he always had creative ideas.

“...” Aurore admitted she wasn't that cunning. She considered and said, “I've never tried it before, so I don't know if it'll work. You can try it yourself when you're at Sequence 7. However, I think having a White Paper beside you while summoning

others might cause a conflict. It's unlikely to succeed. The only hope is to directly summon multiple White Papers, but there's a high chance that only Sequences skilled at summoning can do it."

Lumian decided to give it a try when the time came. After all, he had nothing to lose.

Aurore scooped up some mashed potatoes.

"Now, let's talk about how to summon creatures from the spirit world. This is an application of ritualistic magic.

"Ritualistic magic is magic cast by selecting the date and time, preparing the corresponding materials, and strictly following the format and process. It's often used in prayers and summonings."

Lumian nodded. "It's to achieve a certain supernatural effect through a ritual?"

He thought of the various rituals of the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, as well as the process of the Lent celebration.

"Yes," Aurore was very satisfied with her brother's comprehension ability. "To put it simply, ritualistic magic needs a target to pray to. It can be the seven orthodox gods, other hidden beings, or even evil gods or devils. It can even be you. When you pray to the orthodox gods, you need to check or choose the date and time they rule over. For example, Tuesday symbolizes the Eternal Blazing Sun, and there is a corresponding Sun hour every day. During these times, the probability of success will be greatly increased if you perform the ritualistic magic that targets the Eternal Blazing Sun.

"However, this isn't very useful. Those who aren't official Beyonders have a very low chance of successfully praying to the corresponding orthodox god. Even if you receive a response, don't be happy. This might mean that you have been noticed by that entity.

"Of course, we also have ways to bypass restrictions. For example, obtaining an item closely related to the target deity.

"There's no need to pick a date or time to pray to a hidden being or an evil god or devil, but I don't need to tell you how dangerous it is, right? 99% of people who do this don't end up well.

"Therefore, for wild Beyonders, the most commonly used ritualistic magic is to pray to themselves to mobilize their spirituality to complete some relatively complicated tasks.

"Create charms and Beyonder weapons?" Lumian recalled a point of knowledge that the lady had mentioned.

Aurore nodded.

“That's right. Some mystical medicines also require ritualistic magic.

“You also missed something. Summoning a creature from the spirit world.”

She ate some more food before saying, “The second step of ritualistic magic is to prepare the corresponding ingredients. If you wish to pray to an existence, prepare herbs, essential oils, powders, extracts, and so on from their domain to please them. Let's use the Eternal Blazing Sun as an example. If you pray to Him, you can use Sun essential oil, rosemary powder, Buddha's hand, and all kinds of sunflowers. As for praying to yourself, it won't be too troublesome. Although it's best to use the ingredients in your domain, someone like you can even put a cup of absinthe. It's fine even if you don't do so.

“The third step is to set up an altar. This can be determined by the environment. There's no need for a special holy solemnity. It's mainly because there can't be any miscellaneous items.

“The most important thing about the altar is the candles...”

Aurore picked up her knife and fork as she spoke.

She stretched out the two items and said, “Pretend that they are candles. If you pray to a deity, make them with the corresponding symbolic materials.

“As an example, the Eternal Blazing Sun has the Inextinguishable Light and the Embodiment of Order in His name.” Out of caution, Aurore paused for a few seconds before continuing, “God of Deeds and Guardian of Businesses.”

“There should be the honorific name 'Father of All Life,' right?” Lumian asked, familiar with the preaching.

Aurore shook her head.

“That's just a title used by the Eternal Blazing Sun Church when proselytizing. It's beyond Him in mysticism. If it was really part of His name, it would mean something big had happened.”

She didn't give any more details, unsure herself.

She brought the conversation back on track.

“Anyway, if you want to exorcize the undead, you have to pray to the symbol of Inextinguishable Light. So, you need to make candles out of different sunflowers. For contracts, use the honorific title of the God of Deeds to make candles with Buddha's hand and other materials. Check my witchcraft notebook for more options.”

“In ritualistic magic, we can only place two candles at the spot corresponding to the deity. This is because in mysticism, 0 represents the unknown or Chaos. It symbolizes the state of the world before it was born. If we don't place the candles, it means that

there won't be any effect. 1 represents a beginning, the first Creator; it also accurately pinpoints a particular existence. 2 represents the world and various divinities that were produced from the Creator's body. Therefore, ritualistic magic can only have two candles to represent the deity. As for which candles to use, it depends on the desired effect.

“Three represent all things, so the third candle is for us. The two candles in the upper position represent the deity, and the candle in front is for myself, for a total of three candles. If you have an item related to a deity or a hidden existence, you can replace the two candles with that item for a dualistic ritual. If you pray to yourself, leave only the candle that represents yourself.”

Lumian listened attentively, realizing that as a wild Hunter, he could only pray to himself in ritualistic magic before knowing the honorific name of the great existence. Where would he find items closely related to a deity?

“Let me show you the next few steps using summoning creatures from the spirit world,” Aurore said, standing up as she saw her brother finish his dinner.

They quickly cleared the dining table.

Chapter 47: Truly “Illiterate”

Aurore looked at the slightly stained white tablecloth and smiled at Lumian.

“If you're the target of ritualistic magic, it doesn't matter if the altar is dirty. But if you want to pray to a deity or a hidden existence, I suggest you change to a cleaner piece of cloth or remove the cloth and wipe the table.”

“Anything works if I'm just praying to yourself, right?” Lumian teased.

Aurore chuckled.

“That refers to the environment, materials, and equipment, but the ritual process and incantations must strictly follow the rules of mysticism.”

She pulled out an orange candle from her pocket.

“This is a candle mixed with citrus and lavender. It has nothing to do with their domain; I just like it.”

Aurore waved the candle above the altar.

“Remember, the candle representing the deity is placed in these two places. It can be empty now.”

Then she placed the candle close to her.

“Remember, this is the location of 'me'.”

Next, Aurore brought a cup of water, a plate of coarse salt, and a small steel bowl from the kitchen.

“We need to create a clean and undisturbed ritual environment. Clean in the sense of spirituality. We have to construct it ourselves. Enter Cogitation and focus your mind. You can guide the spiritual power out through supplementary items and build a wall of spirituality around the altar.

“Mystery Pryers and Seers find this simple. Hunters need the help of other items before reaching Sequence 7. For example, incense to calm your emotions and make you ethereal, or a crystal ball to help you focus on your spirituality.

“The meditation I taught you before is incomplete. It's only the first step. It can only gather your thoughts and calm you down. I'll teach you the rest later.”

Lumian was surprised. Why can I activate the dream's specialness and make the two symbols appear if the meditation method is incomplete?

Aurore pulled out a silver dagger.

“Watch carefully how I build the wall of spirituality.”

Lumian was stunned and blurted out, “Why do you have so many things on you?”

First, there were various casting materials, a retractable telescope, a miniature ink bottle that stored the spirit world creature, White Paper, and candles for rituals. Now, she had taken out a dagger.

Aurore sighed in exasperation.

“Do you think I want to? It's just inconvenient for Warlocks.

“It takes me a long time to alter each of my clothes. Sometimes, I even feel like Doraemon. I can take out whatever I want.”

“What —Amon?” Lumian asked, not understanding the reference.

Aurore hesitated for a moment before replying with a mixed expression, “You don't need to know.”

Lumian suddenly felt a pang of sadness for his sister.

Aurore composed herself and reached for the orange candle representing her.

“In ritualistic magic, candles can't simply be lit. Of course, there are times when ordinary methods can work, but that's not always the case,” Aurore explained. “The correct way is to extend your spirituality, rub it against the wick, and light it.”

As she spoke, she lit the candle with a spark of spirituality, and it burned with an orange flame.

The dining table transformed into an altar, and the surrounding area was bathed in a deep, otherworldly light.

Aurore's light-blue eyes had darkened, and an invisible wind swirled around her as she plunged the silver dagger into the coarse salt and began chanting a mysterious incantation.

“XXX, XXX!”

Lumian was bewildered as he watched his sister complete the incantation and draw out the silver dagger. She stabbed it into the cup of water and raised it again.

Aurore pointed the dagger outward and began to walk around the altar. With each step she took, Lumian sensed an invisible force emanating from the dagger. It was agile and lively, mingling with the air to create an impenetrable barrier.

As Aurore completed the circle, Lumian felt as if she had been transported to a different realm.

“Did you understand the steps?” Aurore's voice sounded distant.

Lumian nodded truthfully.

“Yes, but I don't understand what you mean.”

Aurore could not help but laugh.

“You're completely illiterate when it comes to mysticism. Literally. That's Hermes. When translated, it's:

“I sanctify you, blade of pure silver!”

“I cleanse and purify you, allowing you to serve me in this ritual!”

“In the name of Warlock Aurore Lee,

“You have been sanctified!”

Lumian scratched his head. “It sounds ordinary.”

“That's just the translation. The meaning of the incantation and the language used is what's important,” Aurore explained, her eyes lighting up. “In Intisian, it might sound ordinary, but if you use Hermes, ancient Hermes, Elvish, Dragonese, or Jotun, you can tap into supernatural powers. That's what sets them apart.”

Lumian asked curiously, “Are these the only languages that can communicate with the mysterious?”

“No, there are many other languages in the field of mysticism, each with its own specialties. For example, some are specifically meant for the undead, but most Beyonders won't be able to use them unless they want to study a unique and rare domain or perform the corresponding ritual,” Aurore explained casually.

She went on to explain the incantation.

“During the sanctification ritual, the penultimate sentence should be in the name of a certain deity or a hidden existence, but as wild Beyonders, it's best not to use them to avoid unnecessary trouble.

“As a Beyonder, it's enough to use your name to sanctify an ordinary item. Although it won't be as effective as the original version, it can still be used.”

Lumian nodded, then asked, “You came up with my name. Can I use it in the ritual?”

Aurore replied confidently, “Yes. A completely new name wouldn't work, but your name has been in use for several years, so there's a mystic connection.”

She paused for a moment before continuing, “If you're in the wild and don't have many materials, you can complete the ritual with simple salt or clear water.”

With that, Aurore pulled out a small silver-black metal bottle from her pocket.

“This is my own concoction of essential oil called 'Wizard of Oz.' What sets it apart is that it smells good,” Aurore explained as she dripped three drops of light green liquid on the candle representing her.

The light of the candle flickered and sizzled, and a faint mist spread out, giving Aurore and the altar an air of mystique.

“Now for the important part,” Aurore said, pulling a small imitation goatskin from her pocket. “If you're holding a ritualistic magic that prays to a deity, you need to draw the symbol of what you want on the paper and burn it during the ritual.

“The first part is a prayer for someone's power. This 'someone' needs to be replaced by the symbol of a deity, an honorific name, or a domain ruled over by Them. For example, I pray for the power of the Sun or the power of Order. Remember, there are always two sentences that correspond to the two candles that represent the deity.

“The second part is 'I pray for the God's loving grace.' Remember, don't call Him by His name. Doing so in a ritual is sacrilegious. The Eternal Blazing Sun can be referred to as God or Father.

“The third part is what you want to pray for. You must be brief and finish it in one sentence.

“The fourth part is to give more power to the incantation. For example, 'Sun Flower, a herb that belongs to the Sun. Please bestow your powers to my incantation.' You can choose two to three types based on the materials used.

“After reciting the incantation, drip a drop of essential oil on each candle and burn the piece of paper that was used to draw the symbol. After the paper is burned, the ritual comes to an end. Then, thank the deity and extinguish the candles in the order of 'me', followed by 'god', right to left. Dispel the wall of spirituality. Oh, and remember to light the candles from left to right, beginning with 'god' followed by 'me'.”

Lumian nodded twice in acknowledgement before asking, “What about praying to yourself?”

Aurore chuckled before explaining, “The incantation is even simpler. I'll use summoning spirit world creatures as an example. For the first part, there's only one word: 'I'. Remember, you can't use modern Hermes here. It has to be ancient Hermes, Elvish, Dragonese, or Jotun. The second part is 'I summon in my name,' which can be said in modern Hermes. The third part is the exact description of the summoned spirit world creature.”

Lumian was curious. “What's an exact description?”

Aurore explained solemnly, “It needs to be limited to three lines to help us lock onto the creature we want to summon.”

“For instance, if someone said they were looking for the prankster of Cordu Village, Aurore Lee's idiot brother, and a regular customer of Ol' Tavern, we know exactly who they're looking for because of the specific characteristics given.”

“I get it!” Lumian was enlightened. “So, if we don't know the target's name, appearance, or address, we can use their characteristics to help find them.”

Aurore said seriously, “That's the principle, but there are many problems when put into practice. For example, when summoning creatures from the spirit world, the first sentence is often fixed. It's either 'the spirit that wanders about the unfounded' or 'spirit wandering above the world.' Its function is to point to the spirit world and clearly state that we want to summon a spirit.

“The second sentence is also very universal. We don't summon spirit world creatures to harm ourselves, so we must restrict it to friendly creatures. Sometimes, we also add the word 'weak'. This is because some spirit world creatures may be very friendly, but their existence can bring great danger.

“Considering these circumstances, the description is fixed. 'The friendly creature that can be subordinated', 'the friendly creature that can be consulted', 'the weak creature that can be subordinated', and so on.

“But based on these two descriptions, the direction is still very broad. It doesn't reflect our needs. Therefore, the third description is very important. You need to use a sentence to clearly explain what creature you want to summon.”

“Sounds very difficult.” Lumian felt a headache just thinking about it.

Aurore nodded.

“Not only is it difficult, but it's also dangerous. When the direction is vague, it might summon a spirit you don't need or a creature that brings danger. Remember, being weak doesn't mean it can't kill you, just like being friendly doesn't mean it won't pose a threat to you.”

Lumian deeply understood Aurore's words.

As a vagrant, he knew better than to underestimate anyone. Some adult vagrants suffered massive losses because they looked down on him and assumed him to be weak. As for some almsgivers, they provided food out of kindness but forgot to consider the starving bodies of the vagrants, causing them to make the wrong decisions.

After a moment of serious thought, Lumian said, "It seems like the description of a creature that can be summoned with relative precision is very valuable."

Aurore nodded solemnly. "That's right. A notebook that records the corresponding summoning incantations is very precious. Every incantation and commentary on it is exchanged with life, blood, or pain. For example, when I summoned White Paper, the three lines described it as 'the spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the weak ball that can telepathically connect with me'. You have to make countless attempts and experience countless failures before you can piece one together. And every failure implies a huge risk."

Is this a description that a normal person can come up with? In particular, the words 'weak' and 'ball'... As Lumian criticized inwardly, he asked, "So, you bought this from someone else?"

"No." Aurore shook her head and said with a bitter expression, "The Mystery Pryer pathway is different from other pathways. From time to time, it will be chased by a large amount of knowledge. It's impossible to ignore, and there's no way to reject it even if one can't handle it. And when one consumes a potion to advance, the situation of being chased by knowledge becomes even more serious."

"Although most of this knowledge is useless, there will always be some that are valuable. The incantation to summon White Paper was one of them."

Lumian understood. "Indoctrination from the Hidden Sage?"

Aurore looked at him in surprise. "You know that? Did that lady teach you?"

"Yeah." Lumian nodded.

Aurore pursed her lips, lost in thought.

"From my personal experience, Knowledge Pursuit isn't limited to the Hidden Sage's indoctrination. My so-called 'ear ringing' does indeed hear His voice, where I gain knowledge, but it always puts me in pain. My head is close to exploding, and I wish I could lose control."

"But occasionally, especially when I'm not in the best state and am about to lose control, I have an illusion that all the knowledge in the world has come to life. A small number of them will chase after me and rush towards me, but I can't dodge them. This is how the summoning incantation for White Paper barged into my brain."

"When consuming the potion, 99% of the Knowledge Pursuit comes from the Hidden Sage. 1% is related to revived knowledge."

“It's very magical and terrifying. It can scare everyone in the village.” As Lumian sighed with emotion, he was thinking for his sister about whether there was a way to resolve the problem of Knowledge Pursuit or reduce its impact.

Aurore replied with a bitter smile, “It's precisely because I often suffer such torture that I don't want you to follow the path of Beyonders. But in our current situation, it's better to become a Beyonder than an ordinary person.”

To make her brother remember the madness and danger of the path to transcendence, she pointed at her head.

“After being pursued by knowledge and experiencing pain for a long time, I feel that my mind and personality have undergone a certain mutation.

“Don't I always tell you that I have a phobia for social interaction, but I am very talkative sometimes? I like to go out and chat with the old ladies in the village and tell stories to the children. Occasionally, I will go crazy and borrow Madame Pualis's pony to ride free into the mountains and shout?

“Being especially talkative is a kind of rebound from prolonged isolation and being unable to return to my true home. The path to transcendence is also a form of oppression.

“And the occasional madness...”

At this point, Aurore chuckled and looked at Lumian.

“You don't think that's just an exaggerated adjective, do you?”

Lumian fell silent, feeling his sister's smile was self-deprecating, lost, and filled with indescribable pain and struggle.

Aurore sighed.

“During those times, I wouldn't even recognize myself.”

Lumian felt deeply helpless. “There should be a solution.”

“Hopefully, let's continue,” Aurore said, pointing at the altar. “After we sign a contract with the summoned spirit world creature, it'll be easy to summon it again. We can change the last description to 'contracted creature that belongs to Aurore Lee.' That will be very accurate, right? Besides, before the contract is terminated, no one can summon it again.”

Lumian was concerned. “Everyone can only have one contracted creature?”

“Not really. I'm not sure how high the upper limit is, but it's definitely more than one, especially with some special Sequences. When summoning, say the first contract creature or second contract creature of the person to differentiate.” Aurore spoke the truth. “In addition, summoning creatures from the spirit world will consume your

spirituality. The more you summon, the greater the consumption. With a Hunter's spirituality, I estimate that it can only withstand one contract creature at most."

Knowing her brother's personality, she curbed any loopholes that Lumian might find.

"Every spirit world creature can only stay for a limited period of time after being summoned to reality. The weaker they are, the longer they can stay. You don't have to think about summoning one first. You can summon the next one after your spirituality recovers, unless you choose a very weak one. And only when your spirituality is significantly stronger than it is now."

She used White Paper as an example.

"If I didn't let White Paper be a vessel for my powers, it could stay in reality for twelve hours. If I share the specialness of my eyes with it and let it do things for me, it can last at most three hours, and my spirituality would be constantly depleted."

Lumian was disappointed. He had wanted to form an army of spirit world creatures.

He thought for a moment and asked, "Can I only summon creatures from the spirit world? Can I only summon spirits?"

"No," Aurore shook her head. "We can also summon creatures affiliated with the spirit world, the real world, and the astral world, as well as creatures from alternate worlds or other planets. Regardless of whether they are spirits or not, this is very dangerous. Most of the Beyonders who have attempted this have died tragically, and a small number have mysteriously disappeared. Only the corresponding notebooks were left behind to prove what they had done."

Lumian asked curiously, "Can I summon something from the real world?"

Aurore pondered for a moment before responding, "In theory, as long as the other party has a close relationship with the spirit world or has reached a certain level, they should be able to hear the summoning and decide if they want to respond. However, such a target is either very special or very powerful. If you want to live well, don't try it."

"Furthermore, when the summoning target isn't a spirit, the requirements for the corresponding ritual will be even higher. It will require more spirituality, and it might even require a large number of sacrifices. Only then can we open the Door of Summoning that can be used by non-spiritual creatures.

"You can barely summon White Paper with a Hunter's spirituality. If you want to try something more powerful, you can only pray to a deity or a hidden existence. For this, you might have to prepare something filled with spirituality as a sacrifice."

Lumian roughly understood the ritualistic magic of summoning.

"So next, you are going to recite an incantation and complete the summoning?"

“How is that possible?” Aurore scoffed. “The ritual has been interrupted so many times. How can we continue? In fact, normally, as long as we follow the process, we can resume from any breaks. However, I was mainly explaining, and didn't divert my attention to do the corresponding things.”

You probably forgot... Lumian muttered inwardly but didn't dare say it out loud.

Aurore then said, “However, I do want to hold a summoning ritual. On the one hand, I want to give you a complete demonstration of the entire process. On the other hand, I want to seek help.”

“Seek help?” Lumian asked in puzzlement.

Summoning powerful spirit world creatures to help?

Aurore explained, “Among the countless spirit world creatures, only a very small number of them can act as messengers. Private messengers—uh, messengers can be summoned by others based on special contracts.

“For example, if I have a contracted messenger, someone in Trier can summon it and give it a written letter. It will immediately pass through the spirit world and deliver the letter to me.

“Due to the special connection between the spirit world and the contract, it only takes a second or two to complete the letter delivery.”

Lumian sighed from the bottom of his heart. “Very impressive. It's as fast as sending a telegram.”

But the thought that crossed his mind was: I want one too!

“Don't even think about it,” Aurore read his mind. “It's very difficult to summon a messenger. Unless you obtain an exact incantation, it's unlikely that you can succeed trying yourself. And only a few special Sequences can grasp an exact incantation. Even I don't have one.”

Lumian was disappointed and asked,

“Are you going to summon a messenger and write a letter to them for help?”

“Yes,” Aurore nodded. “She's one of the few among us who have gone the furthest on the path to transcendence. She has her own messenger. I don't expect her to save me, but she should be able to give me some advice.”

I'm afraid it's very difficult. That mysterious lady said that we can only rely on ourselves... Lumian asked curiously,

“Us? You mean your pen pals?”

Aurore nodded and asked in confusion, “When did I ever mention pen pals to you?”

“Last cycle, no, last last cycle,” Lumian answered honestly.

“Alright,” Aurore facepalmed. “Actually, it's a mutual support organization slowly established by those of us who can't return home. We rely on letters to communicate daily, share knowledge, and solve problems. There will be small-scale gatherings or communication through messengers. She's the vice president of our organization and one of the initiators. Her code name is 'Hela'.”

“Code name?” Lumian was a little puzzled.

Aurore tersely acknowledged, “In the organization, everyone uses code names without exposing their real names. When they write letters, they emphasize that it's a pseudonym to avoid being discovered by the officials.”

“What's your code name?” Lumian was very curious.

Aurore was silent for a moment before she replied with a sigh, “Muggle.”

“What does it mean?” Lumian was puzzled.

Aurore's eyes darkened as she replied, “Ordinary person without superpowers.”

Lumian knew that his sister wanted to become an ordinary person living back home more, so he quickly changed the topic.

“What's the name of your organization?”

Aurore's expression became complicated.

“Originally, everyone wanted to give it a classy name, but considering that we would write letters every day, a name that was too conspicuous would attract the attention of certain forces. Therefore, in the end, we decided on a name that sounds like a group of animal lovers.”

“What is it?” Lumian pressed.

Aurore replied in embarrassment, “The Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society.”

Chapter 49: True Cogitation

Lumian couldn't help but suppress his laughter at the name of the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, but he managed to hold it in.

But even if he held it in, he couldn't help but say, “Those who know will understand that you're studying curly-haired baboons. Those who don't know will think that a group of curly-haired baboons are doing research.”

Of course, he was only joking.

Aurore rolled her eyes at him. “We often tease ourselves as a group of curly-haired baboons being studied.”

Seeing that his sister was in a better mood, Lumian asked, "Are all the members of your research society Beyonders?"

"Not all of them," Aurore answered briefly. "But some gatherings can't be attended by ordinary people."

She didn't say why they couldn't participate.

"Who's the president? How many vice presidents are there?" Lumian asked.

"Are you doing a census?" Aurore snapped back.

"Huh?" Lumian was confused.

Lumian was confused and realized that Aurore didn't like him asking too many questions about the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society.

Aurore pouted and exhaled.

"The president's code name is Gandalf. There are a total of five vice presidents.

"Alright, I'm going to summon Hela's messenger."

Lumian was puzzled and asked, "Aurore, uh, Grande Soeur, didn't you say that you only know the code name 'Hela' and don't know her exact name? How are you going to summon her messenger?"

He remembered that his sister had just mentioned that by changing the last sentence of the summoning incantation to "the messenger that belongs to so-and-so", he could very accurately pinpoint the target creature. However, she didn't know who "so-and-so" was.

"Excellent," Aurore praised him and said, "to be able to discover the problem is an excellent learning quality. Let's put it this way. It doesn't matter what name you use when you sign a contract with a spirit world creature. The contract will automatically extract a bit of your true aura from you, allowing the two parties to be related. However, remember, you can only use the name written when you sign the contract in the future. Changing it to your real name will be ineffective."

Lumian pondered seriously and said, "Got it. The key is the aura and connection. The name when signing the contract is only equivalent to the incantation used for the subsequent summoning. It doesn't matter what you write."

"Yes." Aurore nodded.

Lumian suddenly laughed.

"Is there such a situation? Let me say hypothetically. Grande Soeur, you obtained an exact incantation and summoned a messenger. You signed a contract with it in the name of Aurore Lee. After that, you taught me that incantation because you loved your younger brother, which is me. As for me, I successfully summoned another messenger. However, when signing the contract, I used Aurore Lee's name to sign it for fun.

“Then the question is, which one will be summoned with the description of 'the messenger that belongs to Aurore Lee'?”

Aurore's face turned livid. “I don't have a messenger. How would I know!”

She exhaled and calmed herself down.

“This is actually a confusion caused by having the same name. Compared to ordinary contracted creatures that can only be summoned by oneself, it's indeed easy for a messenger that can be summoned by others to have such problems. However, because I don't have a messenger, I'm not sure if there's a special mechanism to avoid such mistakes. I can only use my knowledge to attempt an analysis.

“First, very few people have a messenger. The probability of having the same name is so low that it's almost negligible.

“Second, if there's an overlap in names, you can place an item with the messenger's owner's aura in the summoning ritual and use it to accurately lock onto them.

“Third, if you're really afraid of having the same name, you can make your name longer when signing a contract. For example, Lumian Torres Arri Lanos Arthur Gehrman Sparrow Lee. That way, you probably won't have the same name.”

“But it's very likely that I'll forget this name after signing the contract. It's too difficult to remember,” Lumian muttered. “Also, why did you add the name of the Pirate Hunter and Great Adventurer?”

“Because I like it. Madam Fors Wall's adventurer series is a classic,” Aurore said confidently.

She turned around and tidied up the altar, preparing to officially hold the summoning ritual.

At that moment, Lumian thought of something and shouted, “Wait a minute!”

“What's wrong?” Aurore turned around, looking confused.

Lumian asked seriously, “Does the messenger count as an outsider?”

“...” Aurore was confused at first, but quickly figured out the problem.

She deliberated and asked, “You mean that as an outsider, the messenger will fall into a cycle after coming to Cordu and won't be able to leave?”

Without waiting for Lumian's reply, Aurore came up with a new theory.

“No, the situation will be worse. It's a contracted creature. After receiving the letter, it will immediately go to Hela. It's equivalent to leaving Cordu. That will cause a restart.

“After that, it will instinctively attempt to leave again and again, while we restart again and again. We won't have time to investigate the key to the loop.”

Lumian couldn't help but imagine the scene his sister had described.

Just as he opened his eyes to see his familiar bedroom, he would open his eyes again to see the familiar bedroom. Only to open his eyes again to see the familiar bedroom... He would repeat this action countless times, and the root cause of this was that a certain messenger was in a hurry to "go home."

Aurore raised her hand to cover her forehead.

"I can't even imagine what kind of changes will happen then..."

After sighing, she analyzed seriously, "From the current situation, the departure of living things from Cordu and the surrounding area will cause the loop to restart, and inanimate objects won't trigger the restrictions. The telegram and the letter that were sent are proof.

"If that's the case, spirits definitely won't do either. From the looks of it, I can't summon the messenger."

Lumian suddenly figured out why the livre bleu could maintain its state of having its words cut out.

The pieced together notes had left Cordu, making it no longer affected. Since it couldn't return, it naturally couldn't return to its original state!

He shared his speculation with his sister and asked, "The problem with livre bleu has been solved, but how did that letter get sent?"

"There's definitely no way to send it out during the loop. The moment the messenger leaves Cordu, it will cause a reboot. And if it's before the loop, I have no impression of it. What about you?"

"Neither do I," Aurore thought for a few seconds before jokingly scolding, "You idiot, you almost led me astray. It's easy to send the letter in a loop!"

Lumian looked at his smart sister and asked, "Huh?"

Aurore chuckled before explaining, "There's no need for a postman to send the letter, nor is there a need to hire a messenger.

"When we discover an abnormality and don't want to alarm those who might be problematic, the best choice is to find a wooden box and place the distress letter inside. After sealing it, we will throw the wooden box into the river outside the village and let it float downstream naturally. When the other villages and even the people of Dariège pick it up, they will help us deliver it to the officials.

"You said that our last cycle confirmed that the loop contains a small portion of the river that can be reached."

"That's right!" Lumian exclaimed, pressing his palms together.

He thought of another question.

"Will the fish in the river cause a reboot?"

"I don't think so," Aurore replied after thinking for a moment. "These creatures without any intelligence are very sensitive to invisible restrictions. Or rather, they're more prone to invisible influences. There's a high chance that they'll instinctively stay away from places that might cause a reboot."

"What about your White Paper? It has no choice but to leave the real world after twelve hours." Lumian felt that this would also restart the cycle.

Aurore looked around and said thoughtfully, "I suspect that the loop not only includes Cordu and the surrounding mountainous areas but also the area that corresponds to everyone here in the spirit world.

"You probably don't know that there are actually more natural interactions between the spirit world and reality. If you don't include the corresponding spirit world, it might restart every now and then, but the current situation is clearly different.

"As my contracted creature, White Paper has a direct connection with Cordu. The spirit world it roams is most likely included."

I still don't know enough about mysticism... Lumian didn't ask further.

Aurore demonstrated the ritualistic magic process again and dispelled the wall of spirituality.

In the formless wind that suddenly blew, she said to Lumian, "It's already dark. I'll teach you true Cogitation and the way to activate Spirit Vision."

"Okay!" Lumian replied, showing that he had his sister's full attention.

Aurore explained, "You've long grasped the first half of Cogitation. Let's start from the second half. When you imagine the Sun, retract your spirit and enter a relatively calm state. Let your mind be slightly empty. Draw an outline of something that doesn't exist in reality to replace the Sun. Keep drawing and repeating until your body and mind obtain peace. Your thoughts will have a feeling that they are floating."

Lumian didn't quite understand. "Something that doesn't exist in reality?"

Aurore took out a pen and paper and drew a few strokes. "Look, is there anything like this in reality?" The paper had something very abstract on it, like a ball with eyes and a cross on its face. "Doesn't it exist once you draw it? This drawing is in reality."

Lumian felt that her sister's explanation was wrong. "Pictures and imaginations aren't real."

Aurore rolled her eyes. As her younger brother's teacher, she had to suffer this kind of anger often. Lumian acknowledged her comment tersely. "Then I'll try using this picture of yours." He pulled up a chair and sat down. He leaned back and focused.

The crimson sun quickly outlined itself in his mind, gradually calming him down. After a while, because he was in reality, he did not hear the terrifying and mysterious voice. He could calmly use the pattern that his sister had casually drawn to replace the Sun in Cogitation. The ball with eyes and a cross quickly appeared in Lumian's mind. As Lumian repeatedly outlined it, his body and heart became more and more peaceful, and his thoughts gradually felt ethereal.

He “saw” that there was a faint gray fog around him. There were many indescribable, non-existent things, and dense colored blocks mixed together. And high in the sky, perhaps deep in the depths, there was a clear light.

“There's no hurry. The probability of a Hunter succeeding in Cogitation on their first try is very low,” Aurore consoled her brother.

Just as Lumian was about to report to his sister that he had successfully entered a Cogitation state, he suddenly felt something watching him from the depths of the gray fog and an infinite height! This seemed to be an illusion, but it made him break out in a cold sweat. He felt an inexplicable fear and immediately left the Cogitation state.

Chapter 50: Observation

Aurore had intended to reassure him that non-spellcasting Sequences usually took several attempts at Cogitation to succeed. Some even had to practice for five or six days or even more than half a month. However, when she saw her brother open his eyes, she noticed that Lumian's forehead was drenched in cold sweat, and fear was evident in his eyes.

“What's wrong?” Aurore asked, concerned.

Lumian took a couple of deep breaths. The more he thought about it, the more frightened he became.

“I successfully Cogitated. My mind seemed to float, surrounded by a myriad of colors and an indescribable faint gray fog. There were a few particularly bright and pure beams of light up above. No, it might not have been the sky. It could have been far away. I can't be certain.”

“From your description, it seems like you succeeded,” Aurore explained. “What your Astral Projection sees or senses is the spirit world. There, many concepts of reality either don't exist or are intertwined. That's why you feel like you're high in the sky yet far away at the same time.

“Those seven lights are the Seven Lights of the spirit world, mentioned in ancient texts. They're believed to be near-deity level and omniscient. Moreover, they're considered relatively friendly hidden entities. If you can grasp their complete honorific names, you can pray to them. Unfortunately, I don't know them either.

“Those indescribable things that roam everywhere belong to the spirit world, but you didn't seem to see much, nor did you perceive them clearly. This is likely a limitation of the Hunter Sequence. Your spirituality isn't high enough. Hmm... Activating Spirit Vision later will probably prove difficult. The final effect certainly won't be impressive. Still, it's better than nothing.”

She had been monitoring her brother's condition, ready to intervene and assist him at any moment.

Seeing Lumian gradually return to normal, she finished what she needed to say in one breath and asked, "But what you saw shouldn't have scared you. Aren't you known as Bold Lumian? Lately, you've experienced a time loop, people turning into sheep, men giving birth, and Madame Night's patrols. How can ordinary spirit world creatures frighten you?"

Lumian's forehead veins twitched at his sister's words. He didn't want to recall anything, especially anything related to Madame Pualis.

He exhaled and said, "I sensed something deep within the spirit world, or rather, extremely high up, observing me. Just being watched by it terrifies me. I couldn't help but exit the Cogitation state."

Aurore's eyelashes flickered as she thoughtfully said, "I suspect that it has something to do with the two strange symbols on your chest you mentioned. They involve some hidden entity. They might point to the source of Cordu's loop, or they might represent the 'special' trait that allows you to maintain your clarity and strength in the dream and the loop. As a Hunter, you succeeded in complete Cogitation on your first attempt. It's highly likely that the two symbols influenced this."

Lumian nodded as he listened, agreeing with his sister.

This realization left him somewhat disheartened.

"In that case, I can't Cogitate. As soon as I succeed, I'll be watched and forced to leave that state. Besides, I don't think being constantly monitored is a good thing."

"Do you think you aren't being watched now?" Aurore couldn't help but laugh. "It's just that you can't sense it without being in a state of Cogitation. Since there's no way to evade it and you're bound to suffer damage, it's better to make more attempts to increase your resistance, allowing you to spend more time in Cogitation. In the future, when facing certain situations, this might give you an edge. Of course, before becoming a Sequence 7 Pyromaniac, Hunters don't need deep Cogitation. It's best to wait for your spirituality to improve before trying again."

"Why does that sound a bit depressing?" Lumian had already composed himself and mocked his predicament. "Since I can't resist, I might as well enjoy it."

Aurore scoffed.

"In our current situation, I'd rather have a unique trait like yours. Even if it means facing numerous unknown dangers and challenges, at least I can retain my memory during the next cycle. I wouldn't need you to remind me, sparing many details."

She then looked out the darkened window.

"It's time to teach you how to activate Spirit Vision.

"Keep sitting and attempt Cogitation again. You don't have to enter a state where your thoughts are floating. Although that would be more conducive to activating your Spirit Vision, aren't there hidden entities watching you?"

“Yeah.” Lumian leaned back in his chair, relaxing his body. He first envisioned the Sun in his mind, then swapped it out for the ball his sister had sketched haphazardly.

He didn't repeat the outlining process, stopping only when his body and mind were serene.

Aurore monitored his condition, offering a soothing voice.

“Lift your hands in your current state and place them in front of your eyes. You can open your eyes now.”

Lumian kept his cool as he slowly opened his eyes. At some point, his sister had snuffed out the kerosene lamp, casting the first floor into darkness. The crimson moonlight outside the window was the only thing illuminating the outlines of objects.

Once his eyes adjusted, he could barely see his hands.

“Point your index fingers at each other without touching. Then, concentrate on the back of your hand, which can be the back of the opposite point,” Aurore instructed.

“After completing this step, slowly move your fingers to keep them facing each other without touching. And remember, they can't leave your sight.”

Lumian followed her guidance, focusing his gaze on the empty space beyond his hands as he moved his fingers.

Despite repeating the process countless times, he saw no changes.

Soon after, he couldn't sustain the Cogitation state and snapped out of it.

“See anything?” Aurore asked.

Lumian shook his head.

“It's harder for Hunters. Don't stress. If it doesn't work now, it'll work later. If it doesn't happen today, it might happen tomorrow,” Aurore consoled. “Don't fret. Regular folks with high spirituality can activate their Spirit Vision after professional training, let alone Beyonders. But the results vary.”

If this loop fails, I can try again next time, but if that doesn't work, there may not be another chance... Lumian thought to himself.

He was patient and resilient. After resting and regaining some strength, he tried again.

After multiple attempts, he finally saw a fiery red dot emerge from the void between his index fingers.

Success! Lumian was thrilled. He turned to his sister.

But then he saw a red light radiating from Aurore's body, encompassing it entirely.

“Didn't you say you could see the different colors of the Ether Body?” Lumian asked, confused.

Aurore asked excitedly, “Did it work?”

Lumian nodded and recounted his experience.

“It's a success,” Aurore breathed a sigh of relief. “You're impressive. It's probably due to your 'special' enhancement. Other Hunters would need at least two weeks of practice, and some might have to reach Sequence 8 before they can activate their Spirit Vision easily. You can only see a vague Ether Body. The red color means I'm healthy. You won't be able to see much else with your Soul Body's current strength as a Hunter.”

She pulled out a tiny ink bottle and unscrewed the cap.

“Let's see if you can see White Paper.”

Lumian focused and saw a transparent bubble emerge from the bottle.

It was similar to the bubbles he made while blowing soapy water, about the size of a fist and tinted red by the moonlight.

He could barely keep track of it and feared losing sight if he blinked.

The bubble floated towards Aurore's palm, which she scratched with her thumb, causing it to contract and expand.

Lumian composed himself and reported what he saw to his sister.

“It's blurry?” Aurore shook her head. “A Hunter's Spirit Vision is limited. You can only perceive basic Ether Body concepts and creatures like White Paper. Most things are invisible.”

“It's better than nothing,” Lumian replied with what his sister had just said.

Having never experienced a stronger Spirit Vision, he was rather content with his current situation.

Aurore instructed Lumian to use Cogitation to stop his Spirit Vision from deactivating and to establish simple activation and deactivation triggers.

Lumian practiced repeatedly until he mastered the method but never succeeded in the “express key” Aurore mentioned. He only vaguely understood the concept.

“Take a break. We'll monitor the deputy padre later for any anomalies,” Aurore advised, noticing Lumian's pale face from depleted spirituality. She urged him to rest.

They ascended to the second floor and lit the lamp in the study. Lumian dozed off in a recliner while Aurore read, waiting for night to deepen.

Lumian quickly fell asleep in the recliner, while Aurore casually read her book, waiting for the night to get deeper.

Lumian eventually fell asleep and forced himself to remain sleeping instead of exploring the dream world.

Aurore woke him up shortly after.

“We can observe the deputy padre now.”

“Okay.” Lumian sat up and faced his sister.

Aurore opened a miniature ink bottle and stroked White Paper with her right hand, her eyes darkening.

With the aid of the contract, she recited in Hermes, “My contracted creature, bear the uniqueness of my eyes.”

Lumian couldn't understand or see anything without his Spirit Vision. He waited patiently.

In mere seconds, Aurore withdrew her hand and sat down.

“White Paper is on its way to the deputy padre's house.”

Lumian inspected the scene and noticed that his sister's eyes reflected trees swaying in the dark, not the study or himself.

The trees were left behind swiftly.

That's what White Paper sees? Lumian realized.

Aurore took out a mirror coated in mercury and sprinkled it with light white powder.

The powder quickly bloomed with light, covering the mirror with an aqueous layer.

In the water, the deputy padre, Michel Garrigue, appeared.

White Paper had reached the target's room and peered through a glass window.

Michel Garrigue slept soundly, his eyes closed and breathing steady.

Aurore and Lumian waited patiently, observing from all angles with White Paper.

Suddenly, Michel opened his mouth slightly, and a blurry, transparent figure emerged.

It was a lizard-like thing.