

Inevitability 461

Chapter 461 Strange World

He was taken aback for a moment before swiftly retreating from the window with Séraphine cradled in his arms.

Only then did Jenna, who appeared to be lost in a daydream, snap back to reality. Instinctively, she took two steps back and melted into the shadows cast by the building.

As her thoughts raced, chaos reigned in her mind.

Is that Gabriel?

I'm seeing him again... Didn't he morph into a monster and head to the Hostel?

Is this the Hostel? Auberge du Coq Doré is the Hostel?

No, the real Auberge du Coq Doré definitely isn't a Hostel. Otherwise, Ciel and the secret organization with tarot cards as their code names would have discovered it long ago...

Is this a mirror image of Auberge du Coq Doré, or is it the sketch of someone somewhere?

Jenna quickly deduced, relying on the information at hand.

Yet, upon further reflection, she sensed that something was off.

Auberge du Coq Doré used a naming system like Room 207 and 305. According to Bouvard's prophecy, Voisin Sanson was in Room 7, and Pualis de Roquefort was in Room 12. They didn't match up.

There must be something awry!

Jenna averted her gaze from the counterfeit Auberge du Coq Doré and surveyed her surroundings.

She noticed that this place was identical to Rue Anarchie. The buildings lined up perfectly, some tall, some short, some askew, and some precariously balanced, but all standing firm.

On the street, vendors peddled meatloaf, Whiskey Sours, and other wares. Pedestrians streamed in and out, creating a bustling scene.

If she hadn't spotted Gabriel and had been plummeting this entire time, Jenna would have believed she'd returned to the surface and Rue Anarchie.

As Jenna carefully observed the pedestrians and vendors, it became clear that something was off.

Their vacant expressions and infrequent changes gave them an eerie, mechanical quality. Many familiar faces seemed to vanish at the end of the street, only to reappear, circling around from somewhere and returning to the entrance of Rue Anarchie in a repetitive cycle.

It's indeed fake... like a massive stage production. Most people, like the surrounding buildings, serve as a backdrop, but it's just a backdrop... Jenna analyzed the scene, drawing parallels with theatrical performances she knew well, trying to make sense of what she was witnessing.

Her attention then shifted to the counterfeit Auberge du Coq Doré and Room 207.

With the curtains drawn, it was impossible to determine if a mirror image of Lumian was inside.

After a few moments of contemplation, Jenna decided not to risk infiltrating the fake Auberge du Coq Doré. She opted to explore the area carefully, gaining a rough understanding of the overall situation to see if there was a way out.

Following the shadows along the street, she cautiously made her way toward Rue des Blouses Blanches.

The layout and situation here mirrored Le Marché du Quartier du Gentleman. Jenna barely needed to distinguish the path before returning to Rue des Blouses Blanches.

With every step, her sense of unease grew. She even began to question if her usual neighborhood was real.

Jenna couldn't help but look up at the sky from the shadows.

Blue sky, white clouds, the westering sun, and billowing smoke.

It all felt real, yet helped Jenna confirm that this wasn't the genuine market district.

She had descended into the underground in the middle of the night to search for Will. Could she have been missing for twelve hours?

From across 3 Rue des Blouses Blanches, Jenna surveyed Apartment 601.

Beside the glass window in the living room, she saw Franca, dressed in a blouse and holding a bottle of dark red wine in her hand. Her flaxen hair was tied in a ponytail.

Behind Franca, Jenna, dressed in a light-blue dress, busied herself with tidying up, occasionally disappearing from the window's view.

Jenna wasn't shocked, but her heart sank.

She and Franca were undeniably present!

Is this really the reflection of the market district?

Jenna closely observed Franca and confirmed that Franca still used her right hand, ruling out the possibility of her being a mirror person.

Likewise, in Apartment 601, both Franca and Jenna's vacant expressions persisted as they continued their lives following predetermined paths without any deviations.

While remaining hidden in the shadows, Jenna pondered the location of the exit.

Lacking much experience, she sought inspiration from Lumian's accounts and the plays she had witnessed.

Should I head to the border and investigate the edge of this fake world?

Since this place faithfully replicates the market district, well, at least Rue Anarchie and Rue des Blouses Blanches, it resembles a reflection. Could I find the exit by locating distinct places?

The Church has always told us that we can seek refuge in the cathedral in times of danger or accidents... I wonder what église Saint-Robert looks like here. Does it seek God's protection or adhere to the Black Sun? If it's truly the Black Sun, it's an entirely different realm...

Jenna decided to stealthily make her way to Avenue du Marché and observe the state of the Eternal Blazing Sun Church's église Saint-Robert in this strange world.

She made sure not to expose herself to passersby, residents on both sides, or newsboys peddling their wares. Through the various shadows, she carefully and quietly turned onto Avenue du Marché.

After advancing a distance, Jenna's eyes suddenly froze.

She noticed something different.

There was no sign of Salle de Bal Brise on Avenue du Marché!

Where the khaki-colored building and the skull statue should have been, there was only impenetrable darkness. Even the sunlight from the sky couldn't pierce it.

In this dark black hole-like scene, bright red lines alternated between slowly materializing and being consumed by the surroundings. Their ultimate destination remained a mystery.

What's most peculiar about this place is Salle de Bal Brise? Ciel mentioned that there's something ancient and sinister beneath Salle de Bal Brise... Jenna stared into the darkness, sensing that this might be the heart of the problem.

Muttering to herself, Jenna contemplated, Will I be able to leave this strange world by walking into that darkness? But I have a hunch that not only does it not lead to safety, but it also represents danger. I can't enter rashly...

As these thoughts raced through Jenna's mind, she was suddenly jolted by a commotion.

Swiftly, she cast her gaze towards the other end of Avenue du Marché, where she spotted several indistinct figures hovering in the air, emitting a faint glow as they meticulously scrutinized every shadow and conceivable hiding spot for humans.

They clutched a stack of papers, which they compared to the pedestrians on the road.

Jenna's heart tightened as a thought crossed her mind.

Did the masters or guards of this world discover the collapsing tunnel above and suspect that outsiders had entered, prompting them to launch a thorough search?

Uncertain about the abilities of these blurry figures emitting a faint light, Jenna didn't dare risk assuming they couldn't spot her lurking in the shadows. Her only option was to swiftly retrace her steps and return to Rue des Blouses Blanches, planning to take a detour through an area that had already been inspected.

Yet, even on the other side of Rue des Blouses Blanches, faintly-lit figures were conducting inspections.

Jenna's heart raced, and amidst her unease, she had a sudden idea.

She slipped into a nearby building, scattered dust in an inconspicuous corner, and recited an incantation to become invisible.

With this newfound invisibility, she dashed along the street's shadows and infiltrated Apartment 601 before the floating figures could search 3 Rue des Blouses Blanches.

After patiently waiting for several moments, Jenna discreetly followed the imposter Jenna into the washroom.

Seizing the moment while the impostor was occupied with washing a piece of cloth, Jenna, still in her invisibility state, drew a dagger and executed an Assassin's Mighty Blow.

Her form materialized as her dagger found its mark in the impostor Jenna's back.

The fake Jenna's eyes bulged in shock, but Jenna swiftly covered her mouth and nose to stifle any outcry.

After a brief struggle, the impostor met her end.

Rather than withdrawing her dagger, Jenna chose to change into the fake Jenna's clothes. Her extensive experience with worn-out clothes helped her conceal the hole at the back.

She then concealed the impostor's body in the cupboard beneath the sink to prevent any blood from flowing.

With this done, Jenna wrangled up the cloth and mimicked the actions she had observed, maintaining the vacant expression.

Soon, a faint figure floated outside Apartment 601's window.

Jenna didn't look up, continuing to tidy the coffee table, which had already been devoid of miscellaneous items. She could sense two substantial gazes on her, accompanied by the sound of paper being flipped.

After an agonizing seven to eight seconds, the faint figures moved on to search the next apartment.

Jenna let out a relieved breath and proceeded to the washroom with a measured pace.

After what had just transpired, she felt an urgency to seek help. She couldn't afford to wait any longer. Even the suspected exit seemed too dangerous to approach, and numerous figures emitting a faint light were "patrolling" the area.

While these figures didn't appear overly formidable, Jenna knew that engaging them would undoubtedly draw the attention of the administrators of this world.

If this place was indeed the Hostel, the previous residents, granted boons by evil gods, would pose a significant threat. This included Madame Night Pualis, who alternated between a demigod and a Sequence 5, or the true demigod, Circle Inhabitant Voisin Sanson.

Jenna hadn't reached out to the outside world for help from the beginning because she lacked the means to send a message without leaving this place. Now, she was left with no other choice but to attempt something.

I wonder if the telegraph office here can be of any use... It doesn't seem promising... Uh... perhaps I should offer a prayer to a deity and recite His honorific name in Hermes. I hope He can hear my plea...

Jenna's heart raced as she seized the opportunity to clean the cloth in the washroom. She outstretched her arms and began reciting the honorific name of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

“The mighty Eternal Blazing Sun, Inextinguishable Light, Embodiment of Order, God of Deeds...”

As the soft Hermes words reverberated, Jenna's surroundings remained unchanged.

She couldn't help but regret not having made up her mind after becoming a Witch and putting her faith in Mr. Fool. That way, she might have obtained The Fool's honorific name from Lumian. But now, it was too late to consider that option.

Phew... Jenna let out a sigh and retrieved the lucky gold coin from a hidden pocket in her light-blue dress.

She felt that her best option was to rely on luck for now. She wanted to see if luck alone could help her elicit a response without using a complete honorific name.

Holding the lucky gold coin, Jenna continued her prayer in Hermes, “Great Mr. Fool, please help me leave this place. Please protect Trier...”

In the market district, Auberge du Coq Doré, Room 207.

Lumian suddenly awoke, sensing a faint warmth in his left chest.

Chapter 462 Critical Interference

He quickly unbuttoned his shirt and glanced at his left chest, where he saw the bluish-black symbol that represented Mr. Fool's seal. It was a fusion of a portion of the Pupil-less Eye and a portion of the Contorted Lines.

What happened? Mr. Fool's seal has been activated... Did Termiboros attempt to escape? Lumian's thoughts raced. However, as he pondered, he began to sense that something was amiss.

Sunlight filtered through the drawn curtains, casting a semi-darkness over Room 207.

At first glance, there was nothing unusual, as if someone had overslept until the sun was high in the sky.

But Lumian was different. He reset his body and mental state every morning, waking up naturally at 6 a.m. It was already autumn, and Trier didn't see the first light until 7 a.m.

Lumian recalled an earthquake that had occurred not long ago, and he suspected that the official Beyonders might have taken action. However, after carefully listening to his surroundings and confirming the safety of the market district, he had gone back to sleep.

It was still late at night!

Either Termiboros has escaped, and I'm no longer affected by the Circle Inhabitant's power, or there's been an anomaly in the market district... Lumian shrank into a gentle crouch, leaning against the desk beside the bed. He cautiously raised a corner of the curtain.

What he saw was a familiar daily scene, but soon, Lumian noticed blurry figures floating in the air, emitting a faint, eerie glow.

These figures had different faces, but they all shared an unsettling stiffness, emptiness, coldness, and detachment. They bore a certain resemblance to the corrupted Bouvard's corpse and Gabriel,

who had transformed into a monster. It was as if they could disappear into the crevices of space at any moment, gazing coldly and dispassionately at reality.

The monsters of the Hostel pathway have invaded Trier? But where are Trier's protective powers? This doesn't feel very strong; it's more like a product of corruption... He observed carefully and noticed that the street vendors and pedestrians also appeared somewhat empty, as if they too had been affected.

Combined with the anomaly in time and the westering sun, Lumian quickly surmised the situation.

I'm not in the real market district!

I've been drawn into a strange world suspected to be the Hostel. This is the reason why Mr. Fool's seal was activated!

Lumian released his right hand's grip, allowing the curtains to gently fall back against the wall, sealing off the interior from the exterior once more.

With a sense of purpose, he got out of bed and checked his belongings to ensure they were all intact.

Without wasting any time, Lumian set up the altar and erected a wall of spirituality, readying himself to perform ritualistic magic to seek Mr. Fool's assistance.

One by one, he used his spirituality to light the three candles and incinerate the herbal powder and essential oil. Stepping back twice, he began to solemnly recite The Fool's honorific name.

“The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

“I implore you...”

As he spoke, a thin gray fog suddenly emanated from the wall of spirituality. The candle flames took on a bluish-black hue, casting a sinister and dark atmosphere over the entire altar.

Lumian's thoughts slowed down once more, and an uncomfortable sensation coursed through his flesh. It was as if an army of countless worms were wriggling beneath his skin.

Unlike previous interactions, he suddenly felt a strong sense of imminent danger. It was as though the gray fog harbored blatant and unusually overt malice directed at him.

This malevolence would briefly fade, only to surge back. It didn't fully dissipate, nor did it manifest into tangible reality.

The cycle of vanishing and resurfacing was akin to a monstrous entity in the water extending its tentacles to the shore, only to be pulled back into the deep sea by an unseen force.

Lumian struggled to complete the ritual, waiting in vain for the angel's protection or any revelations to come.

The influence of the gray fog intensified, leaving him with no choice but to prematurely end the ritual and extinguish the candle flames.

As the wall of spirituality disintegrated, Lumian's thoughts finally returned to their normal pace.

Sometimes malice, sometimes no issues... Is The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings interfering with Mr. Fool's response?

He usually can't do it. Has He gathered enough strength to take a risk at a critical moment?

This implies that the situation has reached a critical turning point...

In Quartier érase, outside the Sacred Heart Cloister with its numerous golden steeples, the Major Arcana card holders, Magician—clad in a white knotted shirt and a beige dress—and the elegant and pristine Justice, stared at the magnificent building.

A golden retriever accompanied them, doing the same as well.

Rumble. The ground quaked, as if a brief earthquake had struck Trier.

Magician smiled and said, "It's beginning."

They understood that this commotion was likely stemming from the Deep Valley Cloister and the quarry. Their aim was to initiate a series of changes and set off a chain reaction, with the hope that Lady Moon, hidden within the Sacred Heart Cloister, would step out on her own and trigger their plan ahead of schedule.

By doing so, they could avoid forcefully entering the Sacred Heart Cloister and provoking the Eternal Blazing Sun Church. Their target was Lady Moon, the evil god's bestowed who nurtured a deity.

Assuming there were very few Angel-level heretics Blessed within the barrier, Lady Moon represented the Great Mother and the most potent power among all of Trier's heretics. It was highly likely that she was at the center of the problem. By controlling her, they could disregard the intricate web woven by fate and grasp the heart of the issue, possibly resolving it on the spot.

If Lady Moon didn't emerge, Magician intended to capitalize on the chaos in Trier, attempting to conceal the grand complex of buildings blessed by the Eternal Blazing Sun, and forcibly locate her target.

Justice nodded gently.

"In fact, I've always had a sense that something is amiss with Lady Moon. The problem may not be what we've suspected and might have lured us here.

"However, regardless of the situation, we have many dependable companions. Even if something occurs elsewhere, I believe they can handle it."

Magician concurred tersely.

"The two of us can't do everything. Believing in our companions is both hopeful and necessary."

At that moment, she suddenly turned her head and looked into the distance.

Justice asked calmly, "What's the matter?"

Magician frowned and replied, "The seal experienced a fluctuation... Mr. Fool has also sent a revelation, but I'm not certain if it's authentic..."

After tidying up the altar, Lumian was just about to settle down and consider the current situation and ways to contact the outside world when he heard two sets of footsteps approaching from upstairs.

Are they heading for Room 207? Had the dissolution of the wall of spirituality alerted someone here? Lumian surveyed the area, his fingers finding the gaps in the newspaper-covered wall as he climbed up to the ceiling.

Like a colossal spider, he relied on a Dancer's flexibility and a Hunter's physique to silently cling closely to the wall, waiting for the two people in the corridor to approach.

If they didn't spot anything unusual, he would consider it a successful deception and let them pass. If they sensed anything was amiss, he would strike without hesitation.

At that moment, Lumian felt a deep sense of gratitude for Auberge du Coq Doré's aged appearance. It was filled with damage and signs of repair. This was why he could grasp certain protrusions, secure his grip in certain crevices, and anchor his body safely to the ceiling.

In just over ten seconds, the door to Room 207 creaked open.

Lumian's eyes focused on Gabriel's hairline and forehead, as well as the black-framed glasses perched on the bridge of his nose.

Behind the playwright stood Séraphine, a model clad in a lake-blue dress, exuding an aura of detachment.

It's indeed the Hostel... Although Lumian couldn't fathom why he had inexplicably ended up at the Hostel, he still felt a surge of excitement despite his taut nerves.

From this point onward, as long as he could deceive Séraphine and the others, establish a connection with the outside world, and seek help, there was hope for resolving the problem!

Gabriel took two steps inside and halted. He scanned the room and said to Séraphine, "No issues here."

Séraphine tersely acknowledged his words and proceeded to inspect the other rooms.

Gabriel followed the model closely, making sure to close the door of Room 207 behind him.

After they ascended from the second floor, Lumian released his grip on the ceiling and gently landed on the floor.

He pulled up a chair, turned it around, and sat down, leaning back as he kept his gaze locked on the door.

After a few minutes, footsteps approached from the third floor.

Lumian remained motionless, unsurprised as he watched the wooden door gently open.

Gabriel's figure appeared.

"Why did you come in?" the playwright, now a monster with a slightly vacant expression, asked with a note of rational concern.

Lumian chuckled.

"I'd like to know that too."

Gabriel entered the room quietly, shutting the door behind him.

He was dressed in a white shirt, a dark jacket, black pants, and strapless leather shoes, his face showing signs of pain.

“Leave this place as soon as possible. I'm losing control. I don't know when I'll betray you. By the way, Jenna has also entered. I don't know where she's hiding.”

Jenna is here too? Lumian raised his eyebrows and asked the most critical question, “How do I leave?”

Gabriel began to respond, but the door to Room 207 creaked open once more.

Only then did Lumian sense the intrusion and turned his gaze towards the door.

S raphine stood there, with her plump face, naturally disheveled brown hair, and brown eyes exuding a unique ethereal aura.

Lumian didn't panic. He put on a calm demeanor and said, “You seem to know Gabriel so well.”

Despite his outward composure, every muscle in his body tensed.

“He's not good at hiding his thoughts,” S raphine replied in an empty voice.

Communicable... Lumian suppressed his urge to use the Spell of Harrumph and sighed.

“I thought you had already become a pure monster.”

S raphine's lips formed a self-deprecating smile.

“The difference between me and them is that before I turned into a pure monster, I realized there was still someone who truly loved me.”

Gabriel smiled.

Lumian sighed and inquired, “Is this the Hostel?”

“Yes,” Gabriel confirmed before anyone else could.

Lumian glanced at the dimly lit corridor.

“But the room here isn't Room 7, Room 12. It's still Room 207, 309.”

S raphine gazed at Lumian, her expression becoming increasingly ethereal, and her voice even more illusory.

“Here, they call me: Room 12.”

Chapter 463 Noncorresponding Details

He had considered various possibilities, but he hadn't guessed what Room 12 signified.

Room 12 was where Madame Night Pualis de Roquefort, her husband, butler, lady's maid, and the children resided!

Almost simultaneously, Lumian recalled the oil painting he had seen at Trier's art center. The woman in the painting, modeled after S raphine, was naked, her skin adorned with faces.

Were those faces the symbols of the room's occupants, or were they the manifestations of the Hostel itself? Lumian's pupils dilated as he fixed his gaze on Séraphine, prepared to activate the black mark on his body at any moment and use the Spell of Harrumph to block the exit of Room 12's occupants.

He was still haunted by the memories of Madame Pualis.

Séraphine tugged at her lake-blue dress, her plump face contorting with obvious pain.

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“I can't influence how long the residents inside can sense the outside world...”

In other words, Madame Pualis hasn't discovered me yet... Lumian heaved a sigh of relief, but he didn't dare to be careless. What if Séraphine's interference quickly failed?

At that moment, Séraphine pulled down the collar of her dress, revealing a portion of her skin.

Lumian could clearly see the oil painting-like faces there. They were half-hidden and half-exposed, looking exceptionally terrifying.

This confirmed Lumian's guess and piqued his curiosity.

Why use a corrupted human model as a room in the Hostel? Why allow Madame Pualis, Voisin Sanson, and other powerful evil god-bestowed individuals to stay there? Couldn't they just move into this replica—the fake Auberge du Coq Doré?

Was this to interfere with divination, prophecy, and other mysticism methods employed during a search?

Why does it feel like a ritual? It's like a specific setup and requirement... As an Alms Monk with ample knowledge of ritualistic magic, Lumian sensed something sinister about this matter.

Seeing that Séraphine hadn't left, he seized the opportunity to inquire, “How many rooms does the Hostel have?”

“From Room 2 to Room 13,” Séraphine replied in her ethereal voice.

“No Room 1?” Lumian asked immediately.

Gabriel answered for his lover. “There's supposed to be one, but we've never seen it. Room 1 has never moved into the Hostel.”

Mysterious Room 1... It's confirmed at the moment that there are 12 rooms, but there might be more than one evil god bestowed living in each room... Lumian realized that time was of the essence and quickly changed his line of questioning.

“How can I escape from here?”

“With the permission of the pixies or through the black hole on Avenue du Marché, but it's very dangerous. It might lead you to places you shouldn't be,” Séraphine replied, her eyes shifting between emptiness and pain.

Avenue du Marché's black hole... Lumian inquired further, “How many pixies are there, and where can I find them?”

“Three,” Gabriel responded. “They don't reside in this world and only visit occasionally. They typically allow the servants to maintain order here—they are the flying and glowing figures you see outside.”

Three pixies... According to the Purifiers' information, the Sequence of a Pixie likely hasn't reached godhood. I can tentatively consider them equivalent to Sequence 5, but their unique states mean that unless they actively enter reality, some Saints might not even be able to attack them... I do have the potential to deal with the pixies when encountering them, especially if I could capture one to facilitate my escape... Lumian's thoughts raced as he asked further, “Do the pixies have a regular pattern of entering and exiting?”

“No...” Séraphine replied, her demeanor gradually fading as she shook her head slowly.

Lumian switched to another line of questioning, “Do you know where Jenna is hiding?”

“I don't know,” Gabriel replied quickly. “The pixies' servants haven't located her either. They're uncertain if anyone has truly entered this place. The pixies must have ordered an investigation based on the changes in the outside world out of caution.”

Before Lumian could ask another question, Séraphine's face twisted once again.

She turned and left Room 207, heading upstairs.

It was evident that her ability to influence the residents' perception of the outside world was quickly fading.

Gabriel's condition worsened as he slowly made his way to the corridor outside.

“Is there a boundary here?” Lumian inquired one last time.

Gabriel nodded, his eyes growing increasingly vacant.

“Only Avenue du Marché and the area around it are real.

“It's surrounded by a dark, deep void with a formless barrier.”

Barrier... Lumian repeated this word in his heart, his expression unchanged as he watched Gabriel close the door for him and listened to his footsteps returning to the third floor.

The word “barrier” brought to mind something Madam Magician had mentioned before.

She had spoken of a barrier outside their world, preventing the invasion of alien evil gods.

Although Gabriel's description of the barrier might not be the same as Madam Magician's, Lumian couldn't ignore the possibility that these barriers were connected, especially given the evil god believers' grand plans.

Turning away from the door, Lumian realized that time was of the essence.

Séraphine and Gabriel's corruption would only worsen, rendering them increasingly out of control. Once fully mutated, they would no longer help Lumian and Jenna hide the truth, likely reporting it to the pixies.

There are two pressing issues at hand. First, how to contact the outside world or escape this place. Second, finding Jenna. Lumian focused and employed his Conspirer thinking abilities.

Regarding the first question, especially how to contact the outside world, he quickly brainstormed several potential solutions:

1. Fully activate the Blood Emperor's aura in his right hand to see if it could break through the barriers of this abnormal world, attracting the attention of the demigods in Trier.
2. Set up a boon-seeking ritual to bypass The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings's interference and transmit information to Mr. Fool.
3. Test the spirit and flesh connection between himself and Mr. K's finger.
4. Attempt to summon Madam Magician's messenger.
5. Attempt to summon Madame Hela's messenger.
6. Recite the incantation used to enter the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society's gathering—the Nation of the Evernight palace—to see if it could be of use in this situation without any prior request.
7. Find the fake Franca in this world and check if she possesses the ancient silver mirror they had obtained from underground to potentially use it to escape.
8. Create a commotion to attract one or two pixies and capture them.
9. ...

Before diving into any of his numerous plans, Lumian knew that locating Jenna was a top priority, as any of his actions could potentially alert the pixies and draw their attention.

How should I find Jenna? He tried to put himself in Jenna's shoes, considering how she, an experienced Witch, would handle being in this strange world, suspected to be the Hostel's location.

Jenna must have also seen Gabriel, and she wouldn't take the risk of entering the fake Auberge du Coq Doré immediately.

She can become invisible and hide in the shadows. She usually has the patience to observe. It's not difficult for her to notice the peculiarities of pedestrians and vendors...

Under these circumstances, what should I do if I were her?

Yes, I'd search for the boundaries of this place... I'd see if cathedrals and other deity-protected buildings have been replicated. If they have, I'd investigate what's inside and whom they believe in... I'd identify the differences between this place and the real market district to find any clues for my escape... And my first task will be to confirm if there's a fake me.

The pixies' servants were conducting a search...

Lumian's thoughts gradually cleared. He returned to the desk, drew the curtains slightly, and peered outside.

Lumian waited until the ethereal pixie servants, blurry figures emitting a faint glow and wearing blank expressions, had finished their investigation and disappeared before he took out the silver Lie earring and placed it on his left ear.

Swiftly, he transformed into Madame Fels and descended to the first floor, as though inspecting every room.

Then, he became a vendor who didn't sell his wares nearby, passing by Madame Fels and leaving Auberge du Coq Doré.

This was his home territory. Even though it was a replica or a reflection, it didn't stop him from already knowing the environmental details and the common figures that often appeared in this area.

Lumian didn't hurry to Rue des Blouses Blanches. Instead, he circled Rue du Rossignol and entered his secure hideout.

As soon as he opened the door, his brow furrowed slightly.

There was only one trap at the door among the many he had set up—the simplest one.

Lumian's gaze then swept across the room, but he didn't see the ritualistic furs or the used cowhide and dog skin that were placed here in the real world.

It's not a strict correspondence... he muttered to himself.

The more he thought about it, the more he realized that this place resembled the real market district on the surface. In particular, in a room protected by traps, various details didn't correspond.

It's like an external observation and the re-creation of key rooms... It's like... It's like... Lumian's pupils dilated as he had an epiphany.

It's like painting!

Fake 3 Rue des Blouses Blanches, Apartment 601.

Jenna clutched the lucky coin and offered a brief prayer to Mr. Fool. A thin gray fog materialized before her eyes but then dissipated.

“It... it's actually working,” Jenna stammered.

That lucky gold coin proved to be truly lucky enough!

Jenna didn't receive any revelations, so she had no choice but to persevere and maintain her guise as her counterfeit self. She diligently tidied up the room and wiped the coffee table.

Time in this world appeared to pass slowly, with the sun in the sky staying fixed in its position, unmoving.

Suddenly, Jenna heard the door open and instinctively turned her gaze in that direction. The fake Franca continued with her task, showing no reaction.

Jenna's eyes locked onto Lumian's golden-black hair. She immediately averted her gaze and assumed an expression of emptiness, not certain if Ciel was the real deal.

In the next instant, she heard a familiar, taunting voice.

“As expected, you're here. That's all you can think of.”

Chapter 464 A World in a Painting?

“Dammit! Can't you speak properly?” Jenna cursed, waving the cloth in her hand.

Lumian closed the door behind him and smiled.

“You're quite energetic. You're not crying from fear.”

Jenna cautiously looked out the window, confirming that the faintly glowing figures had long disappeared.

Suppressing her urge to argue with Lumian, she wasted no time and asked, “How did you get in here too?”

As she spoke, she reminded herself, As an adult woman with rich life experiences and many setbacks, I shouldn't argue with such an immature minor at such a critical moment!

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Lumian's gaze moved over to Franca, who was sipping red wine by the window. He settled onto the divan and leaned back comfortably.

“First, tell me how you got in.”

To be honest, he didn't know why he had suddenly arrived in this strange place resembling Hostel.

Jenna remained standing by the coffee table, ready to assume a dummy appearance at any moment.

She then recounted how she had received a dream revelation, came underground to deliver the mission item, and acquired a lucky gold coin.

Lumian listened attentively without interruption. Finally, he chuckled.

“Now, I can answer your question.

“I was sent here by Mr. Fool to save you.”

He roughly understood why he had appeared in Room 207 of the fake Auberge du Coq Doré after waking up.

“Did Mr. Fool really send you? I don't even know His—his full honorific name. Did my prayer succeed with just the lucky gold coin?” Jenna had her suspicions, but she still found it unbelievable.

“Of course it's true,” Lumian replied sincerely.

What puzzled him was something else.

Why did Mr. Fool send him and not Madam Magician?

If it were Madam Magician who had been pulled into the Hostel, the problem would have been easily resolved!

This could be explained by the seal of The Fool on him, but Madam Magician was a Major Arcana card holder, a key member of the Tarot Club who could participate in a meeting before a god. Furthermore, she definitely possessed similar marks in the three pathways of the divine controlled by The Fool. She could likely be “assigned remotely.”

I'm afraid there's another reason I don't understand... Lumian pondered for a moment and focused on Jenna's description of the world, then asked for confirmation, "From the outside, the only difference between this place and reality is Salle de Bal Brise?"

Previously, Séraphine and Gabriel had only mentioned that there was a black hole on Avenue du Marché through which there was a chance of leaving, but it was also very dangerous. They hadn't specified its location. Although Lumian had a vague guess, he couldn't be sure until Jenna revealed her discovery.

"I've only explored a few nearby streets and less than one-fifth of Avenue du Marché," Jenna replied cautiously to prevent Ciel from making a misjudgment.

She then continued, "And inside, there are many differences. For example, here, the layout of the room, large pieces of furniture, and reality are the same. The other details are somewhat different.

"I suspect, I suspect..."

Lumian looked at Jenna and spoke before she could.

"A world in a painting."

"Yes, a world in a painting!" Jenna's hazy thoughts finally became clear.

Combined with the Painter Sequence and the paints and brushes she had found from the mutated monk, she believed that it was an oil painting that only copied some of the streets in the market district and possessed supernatural powers. It was called Hostel!

Jenna was both concerned and intrigued.

Drawing a painting seemed to create a world!

Lumian teased, "I'm glad you could also come to such a realization. It's no easy task. This painting world isn't considered advanced. The oil painting created by an angel of the Painter pathway might truly be a world with living beings inside."

Unlike the current one, there were many aspects with fakeness.

What was the purpose of such a relatively low-level painting?

Without waiting for Jenna's response, Lumian instructed her, "Check Franca's hidden pocket and see if there's a classic silver mirror."

"Why don't you search for it yourself? You know what that mirror looks like better than I do." Jenna suddenly chuckled. "Don't tell me you're shy?"

Lumian said nonchalantly, "If you're not here, I'll search for it on my own. But since I can instruct you, why should I tire myself out?"

Jenna gritted her teeth and wasted no time. She walked to the window and rummaged through the fake Franca's various pockets.

She quickly came to a conclusion.

"There are no ancient mirrors. Many of the hidden pockets weren't depicted."

Lumian nodded slowly and inwardly crossed out Plan 7.

He turned to Jenna and said, “Try Magic Mirror Divination and see if it works.”

Jenna, experienced, knew that Lumian wanted to use this opportunity to confirm if the world in the painting was connected to the spirit world and determine if his “teleportation” could succeed or help them leave. Therefore, she took out a makeup mirror from her hidden pocket and prayed to one of the safer targets Franca had provided.

Before long, the preparations for Magic Mirror Divination were completed. The palm-sized mirror turned gray, but there was no aqueous light.

“It failed, but there's still something supernatural about it,” Jenna said, puzzled.

With a subtle nod, Lumian replied, “It's likely that there's a fake spirit world here. If you activate Spirit Vision, you might be able to see a few remnant souls, but this isn't connected to the real spirit world, so you can't find the entity you're trying to inquire about.”

In other words, he could “teleport” within the world within the painting, but he couldn't leave it.

Lumian reached into his pocket, retrieved Mr. K's finger, and flicked it in front of his eyes.

There was no reaction, nor was there any change.

“What's this?” Jenna was taken aback.

Ciel actually carried a blood-stained human finger with him!

“It's a mystical item. It can't contact the outside world,” Lumian explained patronizingly.

Simultaneously, he sighed inwardly.

Mr. K's finger seemed impressive, but it could never be used to its full effect.

Most of the time, Lumian had no use for it. When he needed it, the environment was often special, preventing him from using its connection to the true form to summon Mr. K.

Jenna didn't press further. She pursed her lips and said, “So, what should we do next?”

She couldn't think of any other way to leave this place. She could only consider starting with the black hole in Salle de Bal Brise, the edge of the painting world, and the situation with the two fake cathedrals.

Lumian chuckled.

“No need to rush. I still have eight plans left.

“But before we try them, we need to make a trip to Avenue du Marché and observe the black hole at Salle de Bal Brise up close.”

“Are you planning to leave from there?” Jenna asked with a frown.

It seemed perilous.

Lumian stood up and walked towards Apartment 601's door. "It is my last resort, but it's also a necessary preparation. I don't want to try the other methods and fail, only to be discovered by the pixies and blocked by the tenants of the Hostel. When that happens, I won't even be able to approach Salle de Bal Brise even if I want to risk it."

Jenna looked out of the window again, only to see that the Sun was setting in the west, and the pixies' servants had yet to return.

Only then did she quickly follow Lumian down the stairs.

On the way, she inquired, "Why did those heretics create such a painting world to hide the Hostel's residents?"

Lumian pondered for a moment and replied thoughtfully, "I believe this is a secondary purpose. Overall, it seems more like a ritual.

"Think about it. This place resembles a phony market district. The Salle de Bal Brise should be the only place left without any correspondence. And I've already told you that beneath the Salle de Bal Brise are old bones from the Fourth Epoch. It's connected to the secret of église Saint-Robert's old cemetery. It's definitely not a coincidence that the world in the painting left it blank."

"I also think that's the key to the problem." Jenna instinctively wanted to prove that she wasn't stupid by having a similar guess.

As Lumian descended, he pondered and said, "When the abnormality truly occurs, will such a painting world temporarily replace some streets in the real market district? Will only Salle de Bal Brise remain intact?"

"Who and what is this to confuse..."

"In mysticism, this represents the application of the Law of Similarity. When the similarity reaches a certain level, acts on the counterfeits can be reflected in reality..."

"Could they be using this method to unravel Salle de Bal Brise's underground secrets and uncover the old bones of the Fourth Epoch?"

"No, it's probably not just for the old bones... Are they trying to open the entrance to Fourth Epoch Trier?"

"But it's not that simple. The entire sealing system hasn't been destroyed or weakened..."

Lumian gradually formed an idea, sensing that he was getting closer to the key plan of this disaster.

If he could ultimately grasp the truth, it would be an excellent performance for a Conspirer's observational abilities.

Jenna nodded slightly, agreeing with Lumian's guess.

As they conversed about the fake 3 Rue des Blouses Blanches, their gazes suddenly froze.

On the road diagonally opposite, a woman in a loose strapped white dress was staring at them!

The woman had a beautiful face, her slightly curly black hair cascading messily over her shoulders. Her blue eyes were rather vacant, and her entire person appeared detached yet real.

Lumian and Jenna had encountered similar auras and feelings in another person.

It was the human model, Séraphine, Room 12 of the Hostel!

Is this another room in the Hostel—another human model? Why is she here? It's as if she's waiting for Jenna and me. Lumian tensed up and instinctively reached out with his right hand to grab Jenna's shoulder.

Simultaneously, the beautiful woman's voice drifted with a smile.

“Fate predestined us to meet.

“Convergence always happens inadvertently.”

Chapter 465 Circle

Convergence... Predetermined fate... Could it be Room 7, Voisin Sanson, and his family? As these thoughts raced through Lumian's mind, he activated the black mark on his right shoulder without hesitation.

Spirit World Traversal!

He and Jenna vanished, heading for the entrance of Auberge du Coq Doré. Lumian had never set foot on Avenue du Marché in the painting world, so he didn't have the coordinates for the spirit world there.

The spirit world in the painting realm still comprised dense layers of colors and countless transparent, strange figures. However, the seven bright and pure lights at the “top” appeared rather blurry, as if separated by many panes of mullioned glass.

Guided by his spirituality, Lumian pinpointed the corresponding coordinates at Auberge du Coq Doré's entrance and teleported there.

They swiftly departed the spirit world and found themselves on the street.

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But what Lumian saw before them was the building at 3 Rue des Blouses Blanches, the very spot where they had just been.

They hadn't left the street onto Rue Anarchie; they had merely shifted seven to eight meters from one side of the road to the other.

Circle Inhabitant... Jenna and I are already ensnared in the Circle? Lumian turned his head and wasn't surprised to see the beautiful woman suspected to be Hostel's Room 7, standing only a few meters away on the same side of the street as them.

“Voisin Sanson?” Lumian asked in a deep voice.

He temporarily abandoned the idea of teleportation, as their previous attempt had proven ineffective in escaping Rue des Blouses Blanches.

As Lumian spoke, Jenna discreetly retrieved a mirror, preparing to utilize black magic to maneuver around and launch an attack.

She sensed that, at such a tense and crucial moment, Ciel's inquiry, instead of initiating a series of attacks, might be an attempt to divert the enemy's attention and create an opportunity for her to deliver a fatal blow.

Although Lumian had mentioned that Voisin Sanson was a Sequence 4 Circle Inhabitant of the Inevitability pathway, a Saint bestowed with a boon, a true demigod, she believed that they had to make an attempt, despite the odds. So what if he had undergone a qualitative transformation in various aspects compared to Low- to Mid-Sequence Beyonders that even a small team combined wouldn't be a match for him?

Upon hearing Lumian's question, the beautiful woman in a white dress revealed a fleeting and distant smile.

“Seems like you're well-informed...”

Before “she” could finish her sentence, Lumian took a step forward and harrumphed.

Two beams of white light shot out from his nostrils and landed on the woman suspected to be Room 7.

Although the Spell of Harrumph's power had increased following his advancement to Sequence 6, he didn't believe it would truly work on a Saint. At best, it might make her sway slightly.

Lumian opted for this approach instead of donning the Flog boxing gloves to target the various negative effects of a Contractee. As a Conspirer, he keenly noticed a crucial detail: he and Jenna were trapped in the “Circle,” but Voisin Sanson hadn't left Room 7. He remained within the beautiful woman's body.

This clearly hindered his performance.

Therefore, he either had arrogance as a negative side effect of his contract ability, or he couldn't leave the Hostel's room for some reason.

Combined with his earlier hypothesis that the world in the painting and the situation in the Hostel were part of a ritual, Lumian was more inclined to believe the latter possibility.

In that case, even if my Spell of Harrumph can't affect you, can't it affect your room?

The human models, corrupted by the Painter pathway and adorned with special patterns, were equivalent to Mid-Sequence monsters!

As two beams of white light descended, the beautiful woman in the white dress fainted.

Almost simultaneously, Lumian and Jenna's vision blurred, and they felt slightly dizzy.

When they regained their senses, they found themselves back at the exit of 3 Rue des Blouses Blanches, facing the beautiful woman in a white halter dress diagonally across from them.

The woman's lips curled up, but she didn't repeat her previous statement.

Circle Inhabitant!

Lumian realized that he and Jenna were truly trapped in a loop, and the successful attack on Room 7 triggered the loop's restart.

Moreover, he confirmed that Voisin Sanson and his family couldn't leave Room 7 until something concluded. They could only exert influence on the outside world through obstacles. Otherwise, they would have opened the door and confronted Lumian with all their might. They sought to control the target with an Angel sealed in his body as efficiently as possible!

Even if Voisin Sanson had the negative side effect of arrogance, it was improbable for all three of his children to be the same!

Without hesitation, Lumian sank his consciousness into his right palm, revealing a few bright red scars.

An extraordinarily frenzied, violent, and high-and-mighty aura surged into the sky, as if it sought to dominate the land.

Alista Tudor!

Lumian activated the Blood Emperor's mark.

While this had no real impact in the physical world, it caused those around him to feel a slight fear, making them tremble. However, the response from the painting world exceeded Lumian's expectations.

The sky suddenly turned dark-red, and the westering sun appeared tinted with an iron hue as it swayed left and right.

Rue des Blouses Blanches and the entire world trembled as if struck by an earthquake.

The vendors and pedestrians on the street, as well as the residents and animals on both sides, blurred and distorted.

The beautiful woman in Room 7 of the Hostel was taken aback. She instinctively trembled and wanted to hug herself tightly.

An invisible force shrouding half of Rue des Blouses Blanches materialized, resembling transparent glass.

Suddenly, it shattered, revealing multiple cracks.

Seeing this, Lumian grabbed Jenna's shoulder and activated the black mark on his right shoulder once more.

This time, they swiftly passed through the local spirit world and arrived at Auberge du Coq Doré's entrance. They didn't return to the Circle.

The painting world existed between reality and fiction, and it was very sensitive to the aura of high-level figures, materializing the impact. As Lumian's thoughts raced, a distant rumble reached his ears.

It emanated from Avenue du Marché!

Lumian and Jenna exchanged glances as a term came to their minds: Salle de Bal Brise!

Has something happened to the black hole corresponding to Salle de Bal Brise?

Was it a subsequent change brought about by The Blood Emperor Alista Tudor's aura, or has the ritual officially begun, heralding the impending catastrophe? Lumian's thoughts raced as he raced towards Avenue du Marché.

Jenna's response was as swift as his, making the same decision.

Deep underground, in a hidden cave undetectable to the outside world.

The rock walls here had been meticulously modified, featuring two vertical beams and multiple horizontal beams, each marked with longitudinal gaps.

To anyone familiar with Trier's map, these formations would correspond strictly to a section of Avenue du Marché. Each rock wall was the equivalent of a side street, and each vertical gap represented an alley.

Adorning each rock wall were lifelike oil paintings, portraying buildings of various architectural styles, dark iron street lamps, pedestrians dressed as clerks, vendors selling an array of goods, and scenes from windows, all depicted with vivid and natural colors.

These scenes were almost identical to those on the corresponding streets.

On the eastern rock wall of Avenue du Marché, three men in white shirts with unbuttoned vests were using mural tools to craft a complex, bright red door at the spot corresponding to Salle de Bal Brise.

Their bodies were coated in paint, and their eyes displayed a peculiar detachment, as though they were gazing at a distant realm rather than a rock wall.

Each time they completed the bright red door on the rock wall, it mysteriously vanished after a fifth was completed. The three painters had no choice but to repeat their efforts in vain.

Suddenly, the mine trembled gently, and minuscule cracks that were almost imperceptible to the naked eye appeared on the rock wall adorned with various scenes.

The female painter in a blue beret and the male painter in red pants looked up at the depiction of Avenue du Marché on the rock wall.

In the next moment, they pressed their hands against the rock wall and vanished.

Two figures emerged within the massive oil painting. One was a woman donning a blue beret, and the other a man in red pants. They both wore white shirts and open beige vests.

The third painter, a man in his twenties, remained on the outside. He was clad in black pants with tassels, his brown hair disheveled, and a bit of stubble adorning his mouth.

The distant expression in his flaxen-colored eyes faded as he cautiously surveyed his surroundings.

Observing that the mine's tremors were limited to this area and that the anomaly in the painting hadn't extended, the young painter let out a sigh of relief. He redirected his gaze to the empty Salle de Bal Brise, seemingly contemplating whether to change his approach or wait for the right moment to try again.

At that precise moment, a skeletal palm suddenly extended from the rock wall and the ground.

It had a yellowish hue and a withered texture, with its surface covered in iron-colored rust, giving it an ancient appearance.

As soon as the skeletal palm appeared, it seized the young painter's ankle, aiming to drag him deep into the earth.

Late at night, 11 Rue des Fontaines, Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative.

Franca's dream had been an odd one, with various bizarre scenes woven together into a nonsensical narrative.

Suddenly, she jolted awake and instinctively looked to her side.

Although the room was shrouded in darkness due to the heavy curtains blocking the crimson moonlight, it didn't hinder her from noticing that the spot under the velvet blanket beside her was empty; Gardner Martin was nowhere to be found.

Franca's pupils widened with a mixture of surprise and suspicion.

It wasn't that she was shocked by Gardner Martin's disappearance. There was nothing he could do that would truly surprise her. What caught her off guard was her failure to detect his departure.

Demonesses possessed formidable spiritual senses. It was impossible for someone sleeping beside them to slip out of bed and leave without their knowledge. Franca had only snapped out of her reverie when she felt the drop in temperature on the other side of the bed!

Franca swiftly got out of bed, dressed, and opened the bedroom door.

The corridor lay in darkness, and an eerie silence hung in the air.

Chapter 466 Encounter

Franca blended into the shadows and moved silently through the shadows, her eyes fixed on the crimson-lit corridor.

She even began to suspect that Ciel had failed to find her and had enlisted the help of Madam Magician to teleport Gardner Martin away. How else could he have vanished without her noticing?

The third floor of the grayish-white villa remained still. Franca listened closely, feeling like she was the only one left in the building. The butler, valet, maid, gardener, and chef seemed to have disappeared into thin air.

She cautiously approached the valet's room, extending her right palm and silently turning the handle.

Through her Dark Vision, Franca spotted two people lying on the bed, wrapped in each other's embrace and covered by a thin blanket.

Almost simultaneously, Franca's pupils dilated.

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The two of them were headless, their necks nestled against each other, their wounds stained with blood.

Initially taken aback, Franca recalled Ciel's description of the Iron and Blood Cross Order's Supervisor Olson. She suspected that Gardner's valet and his lover had experienced a similar situation. Their heads had seemingly “come to life” and left their bodies.

Without further scrutiny, she quietly closed the door and blended into the dense shadows of the staircase.

Franca wanted to see if anyone else in the building had suffered a similar fate.

Upon descending to the first-floor hall, her eyes froze.

The armor and weapons that had been there were gone!

What a drastic change... F*ck, how did I not notice it at all? Franca, who had been confident in her abilities, experience, and reactions, couldn't help but waver.

In the next moment, the washroom door on the first floor swung open, and a lady's maid in an old nightgown emerged.

The lady's maid shook off the liquid in her hand and slowly made her way back to the servants' quarters, her head empty and her neck stained red.

Hidden in the shadows, Franca cast her gaze out the window. The two patrolling guards had also lost their heads, and the shadow reflected in the glass was like a magnified beer bottle.

Franca, having roughly confirmed the situation at 11 Rue des Fontaines, didn't hesitate and quickly sneaked out of the villa.

She planned to report this to Madam Judgment immediately and use the Primordial Demoness figurine to inform Browns Sauron and Demoness of Black Clarice about the anomaly here.

The latter necessitated a ritual. Franca was concerned that attempting it in this abnormal building would trigger unnecessary changes and bring unpredictable danger, so she decided to escape the abnormal environment before taking the corresponding measures.

In the darkness of the night, the Demoness of Pleasure lurked in the shadows of an empty house. She exited the building from the side and circled the lawn ahead.

Beneath Trier, Blazing Danitz forcefully opened the stone door.

Behind them, they found a small mine, with three classical oil lamps embedded in the stone wall—one high, and two low.

In the center of the mine, a staircase descended into darkness. The bottom was hidden in shadow, appearing to have no end.

Danitz retracted his fist and turned his body, signaling the nearly 20 sailors following him to enter the mine and cooperate.

Among them were Hunters responsible for observing the environment and detecting hidden traps and subtle traces. Seers used coin tosses or crystal pendants to determine the direction and danger of pursuit. A Mid-Sequence Sailor was ready to assist his teammates and handle any mishaps...

With this coordination, Danitz's team swiftly made their way through the stairs and tunnel, and their vision suddenly brightened.

They found themselves in a caved-in quarry cave, scattered with straw mats, rags, pottery jars, and other items.

Danitz scanned the area and chuckled.

“It's been turned into a weapons cache... Not long ago, dozens of rebels lived here.”

His gaze shifted to the end of the quarry cave, where a wide tunnel led to an unknown destination.

A sailor standing beside Danitz clicked his tongue and remarked, “There should be many similar military hideouts nearby. Are the main rebel forces led by the Carbonari all here?”

“I'm not blind. I can see!” Blazing Danitz cursed. “The question now is, where did they go? Is the chaos about to begin?”

In the market district, at Auberge du Coq Doré, Room 305,

Anthony Reid was awakened by the previous earthquake.

Ever since his escape that night, he had become sensitive to various movements, although not as fearful as when he heard gunshots.

Given the dangerous signals provided by the intelligence they had discussed earlier, he couldn't fall asleep quickly.

Anthony Reid got out of bed and poured a glass of light beer to ease his anxiety.

After using Placate on himself, he intended to force himself to sleep a little longer.

At that moment, he heard pounding at the motel's entrance.

Who returns so late at night? It feels a little urgent... Anthony Reid listened intently, sensing that something was brewing in secret.

Before long, footsteps approached his door,

and Anthony Reid immediately opened it to peer into the dimly lit corridor.

He spotted an impatient man in a grayish-blue worker's uniform and cap.

This was an informant he had developed at the docks.

“What happened?” Anthony Reid asked in a calm and gentle voice.

Having been placated, the informant's anxiety dissipated, and he cautiously glanced around before lowering his voice.

“There will be a huge strike at the docks tomorrow. Rumor has it that weapons will be issued.”

“Issued weapons...” Anthony Reid's mind instantly filled with images of barricades, incendiary bombs, smoke grenades, rifles, and two-wheeled carts symbolizing Trier's chaos.

In Trier, due to the strong resistance of the citizens and their adeptness at protests and battles, such occurrences weren't too unusual, happening every two or three years, sometimes even two or three

times a year. The only difference was in their scale. However, considering the critical situation before a terrifying catastrophe, a massive strike suddenly distributing weapons led Anthony Reid to consider the possibility that it had been premeditated and was part of the impending catastrophe.

The information broker produced a Louis d'or and instructed the informant, "Your intel is very important. Find an excuse not to go to the docks tomorrow and hide at home."

Instinctively, the informant bit into the gleaming Louis d'or, bid Anthony Reid a cheerful farewell, and departed from Auberge du Coq Doré.

Anthony wasted no time and swiftly descended to the second floor, arriving at Lumian's room.

He knocked lightly on the wooden door of Room 207, but as the sound reverberated, there was no movement inside. It was so silent, as if no one had lived there for a long time.

Anthony Reid stopped and furrowed his brow.

In the painting world, the westering sun cast its illumination on Rue Anarchie, keeping the sky bright.

Lumian and Jenna hurried past the broken gas street lamps, sprinting toward Avenue du Marché.

They were uncertain when Room 7, where Voisin Sanson's family resided, would discover their teleportation destination. Their goal was to reach the black hole representing Salle de Bal Brise before the other party could lock onto them again.

This way, even if their other plans failed or couldn't be completed in time, they still had a final option—to enter the black hole and try their luck to see where they would appear.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Lumian led Jenna forward, and Avenue du Marché came into view. He grabbed Jenna's shoulder and spewed crimson flames from his body, enveloping them both in a huge fireball.

The fireball sped forward with incredible velocity.

Lumian forcefully led Jenna across a distance of seven to eight meters towards the intersection of Rue Anarchie and Avenue du Marché.

During this process, Jenna, unlike Lumian, wasn't immune to the flames. Her hair and skin singed, but she didn't struggle violently. Instead, she shrank her body and created frost to resist the crimson flames, easing the pain.

In the blink of an eye, they reached the edge of Avenue du Marché.

From there, they had a clear view of Salle de Bal Brise in the distance and the pitch-black darkness.

This allowed Lumian to identify his destination without needing coordinates.

What he saw was where they'd arrive!

The black mark on his right shoulder emitted a dim light once more.

Spirit World Traversal!

In an instant, Lumian and Jenna appeared beside the darkness.

At that moment, a crystal-like wall materialized before them.

It extended upward, enclosing the entire Salle de Bal Brise like a transparent lid.

Lumian and Jenna subconsciously gazed up and saw two figures in the air.

One was a young woman wearing a blue beret, a tied-up white shirt, and dark pants. Her beige vest was open, and her body was covered in paint. Her orange hair was short, and her yellow eyes were deep and ethereal, as if hiding a world.

The other man, in his thirties, wore similar attire but with red pants for his lower body. He had gentle facial features, light eyebrows, and distant, ethereal blue eyes.

He still held a thick paintbrush in his hand, with a palette of mostly used paint.

Behind them, a pair of translucent dragonfly-like wings flapped gently, helping them hover in the air.

Painters? Those Pixies? Lumian and Jenna instantly speculated.

The man looked at Lumian with surprise and spoke in a voice that seemed to come from afar,

“Welcome back to the Hostel, Room 1.”

Room 1... Lumian's eyes froze.

Room 1? Jenna couldn't help but turn to her companion in shock.

Chapter 467 Old Bones

Upon hearing the term “Room 1,” Lumian was genuinely surprised, even with his wealth of experiences.

S raphine and Gabriel had previously mentioned that the Hostel had a total of 13 “Rooms,” but Room 1 had never been mentioned. It was as if it had never entered the Hostel. Lumian had always found this to be a mysterious omission, suspecting that there were critical points hidden in this fact. To his amazement, the painter-dressed man, likely a Pixie, now addressed him as “Room 1.”

This was beyond belief!

Lumian was certain that the symbols on him were related to Mr. Fool and the entity known as Inevitability. They had nothing to do with the Painter. While Termiboros, an evil god's Angel, resided within him, it was fundamentally different from the Hostel Rooms like S raphine's.

They had different sources of power and were different forms of abode!

At that moment, Lumian didn't waste time analyzing why the suspected Pixie called him Room 1 or whether there was important information hidden in it. He knew one thing—unless he could quickly eliminate or control the two enemies in midair and take command of the black hole in the Salle de Bal Brise area, the Hostel residents would undoubtedly notice the abnormality and rush their Rooms to the scene, making the situation more complicated.

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Upon hearing “Room 1,” Jenna was equally shocked, but she didn't question Lumian or waste time seeking answers. She retrieved the Arrow of the Bloodthirsty, made of obsidian, and plunged it into her chest, despite having used it only a few hours ago.

At this point, she cared little about the accumulation of mutations in her body.

Similarly, even if something was amiss with Ciel, she would have to wait until they escaped before inquiring about it.

As the Arrow of the Bloodthirsty pierced her chest, a dense black fog emanated from Jenna's back, forming a pair of colossal and rather illusory bat wings.

With a powerful flap, she lunged for the woman in the blue beret and the man in red pants.

Simultaneously, black flames gradually condensed in the Witch's palm.

The colossal bat wings extended from bottom to top, obscuring the Painters' line of sight.

The man in red pants swiftly turned his paintbrush around and dipped it in silver paint, drawing a menacing lightning bolt on his clothes.

Silver-white lightning detached from the man's white shirt and struck Jenna's illusory membraned black wings, numbing her entire body with the crackling electrical energy. The dense black fog that had formed the bat wings was diminished by the lightning, and Jenna began to descend slowly as she lost control of her flight.

In that critical moment, Lumian's form materialized in midair right behind the painter in red pants.

Without the ability to fly or float, Lumian chose to “teleport.”

Seeing Jenna use the Arrow of the Bloodthirsty to create Wings of Darkness and fly boldly towards the two presumed Pixies, Lumian understood that his companion was likely drawing the enemy's attention and creating an opportunity for him to swiftly attack one of their targets.

Witches rarely fought in such a manner.

“Ha!” Lumian exclaimed as a pale-yellow light, resembling a stream of air, shot forth from his mouth and struck the man in red pants.

Before the Painter, who had just drawn lightning, could react or even realize that Lumian had appeared behind him, he closed his eyes and lost consciousness.

Without suspension, he plummeted to the ground.

The woman in the blue beret remained composed. Figures emerged in her eyes, as if they held a world within them.

One of the figures traversed the boundaries of fiction and reality, moving from the realm of fantasy into the world within the painting.

Dressed in a light-blue dress with long, thick blond hair and serene light-blue eyes—Aurore!

It was Aurore!

Upon witnessing this, Lumian's resolve remained unwavering. His eyes burned with anger.

Are you worthy of imagining Aurore?

As he descended from the sky, crimson fireballs materialized around his body and were launched towards the woman in the blue beret.

The woman extended her right hand and pressed it into the void. Her entire being suddenly turned illusory, her expression vacant and cold.

Numerous fireballs landed on her, but they didn't detonate, as though there was nothing there.

They passed through her figure and exploded nearby.

At the same moment, the Painter in red pants landed before Jenna with a distinct cracking sound.

The excruciating pain brought him back from the unconscious state induced by Lumian's Spell of Harrumph. He instinctively opened his eyes.

Just as the woman in the blue beret dodged the explosion, she exited her peculiar state and flew toward Jenna, who was about to land.

In an instant, she collided with Jenna, sending starlight and sparks flying like meteors.

Crack!

Jenna's body shattered into fragments, transforming into mirror pieces that reflected the sunlight.

Her form reappeared beside the profound darkness within Salle de Bal Brise.

Lumian descended with a whoosh, his feet landing heavily on the ground, his body swaying.

At that very moment, the three of them, along with the woman in the blue beret, seemed to sense something. They turned their heads, casting their gazes towards the intersections leading into Avenue du Marché.

Women with detached dispositions, fleeting eyes, and indifferent expressions emerged from different directions. They were Room 12—Séraphine—and Room 7, which Lumian and Jenna had recently encountered.

Gabriel followed closely behind Séraphine, his gaze growing increasingly vacant, his face contorted with agony.

Jenna and Lumian felt a creeping unease, as if they were inexorably descending into an abyss.

Suddenly, a hand extended from the darkness within Salle de Bal Brise.

It was a hand devoid of flesh and skin, composed of withered, yellowed bones stained with rust.

In the enigmatic cave adorned with a colossal mural, the young painter altered his form and broke free from the skeletal palm's grasp.

He existed in a state between reality and the spirit world, untouchable by anyone and unable to touch anyone. His only capacity was to observe as the empty space on the rock wall and the ground intersected, turning dark and viscous, akin to a bottomless swamp.

At that moment, an incomplete skeleton, composed of dark-red stained bones and rust, emerged from the swamp.

The skeleton appeared to hail from ancient times. It extended its bony fingers into the oil painting on the rock wall, corresponding to the incomplete Salle de Bal Brise.

Beneath it, more yellowed skeletons crawled out from the depths of the swamp. Some bore shattered iron-colored armor, others carried rusty weapons, a few were missing a third of their bodies, and some were devoid of their heads...

In the market district, beneath *église Saint-Robert*, within the Inquisition.

In his office, Angoulême de François, donned in a golden shirt, attentively observed his subordinates delivering intel one by one.

“A violent explosion in the direction of the Deep Valley Cloister...”

“Abnormal activity detected underground...”

“Saint Viève Cathedral has issued an order to maintain maximum vigilance tonight...”

“Someone at the docks is organizing a huge strike tomorrow morning and distributing weapons...”

“There are also people organizing a march at the factories to the south...”

The Purifiers had a vast network of informants, surpassing even the most prolific information brokers. The manifold reports concerning unusual events in various locations within the market district nearly made Angoulême lose control of his expression. His facial muscles twitched ever so slightly.

When it finally grew silent, and no more subordinates came in to report, Angoulême stood up, adjusted his collar, picked up a substantial dossier, and slammed it onto the table.

While doing so, the Purifier deacon cursed silently, Hidden Blade, do you want me dead?

Ever since Hidden Blade had informed him about Gardner Martin's collaboration with the Carbonari, the anomalies between the Carbonari and the Deep Valley Cloister, and the Hostel's situation, various irregularities had emerged from every corner, relentlessly testing his nerves.

Only a few hours had passed, but Angoulême felt as though a tempest was gathering.

Phew... Angoulême exhaled and compiled the gathered intel, Hidden Blade's reports, and the questions she had requested clarification on into a single document. He pinned it to the wall with a thumbtack, hoping to discern any patterns or overlooked details.

The Purifier deacon's gaze roved the room.

After some time, his eyes settled on one of the documents.

Hidden Blade had inquired about the secret of *église Saint-Robert's* old cemetery but hadn't received an answer.

The old cemetery lay within the current *Salle de Bal Brise*.

Angoulême's heart stirred, and he resolved to seek answers to this question once more.

It was one of the few things he could undertake at the moment.

Blasted Hidden Blade, once this matter is resolved, if you don't leave the market district, I'll request a transfer! Angoulême inwardly cursed as he hurried into the telegraph room, angrily composing a telegram.

He intended to convey to the higher-ups that they shouldn't be overly strict about confidentiality classifications when it concerned intelligence.

The sooner he could figure out the details, the sooner he could unearth the truth and forestall impending catastrophe.

After a ten-minute wait, Angoulême received a response:

“The old cemetery of église Saint-Robert is situated above a node for the sealing of Fourth Epoch Trier. In the past, there was a breach that led to the release of some Fourth Epoch deceased. Subsequently, it was reinforced, and the situation was contained.

“When the sealing system for the catacombs replaced such nodes, the old cemetery lost its significance and wasn't retained.”

Chapter 468 Q&A Game

église Saint-Robert's old cemetery had once served as Fourth Epoch Trier's node for the seal. However, leaks had occurred, allowing the ancient dead to crawl out... Angoulême carefully considered the information and felt that there might be hidden dangers lurking beneath Salle de Bal Brise.

He returned to the office and fixed his gaze on the piece of paper pinned to the wall.

The paper not only clearly detailed Hidden Blade's previous inquiry about the old cemetery's secret but also provided the circumstances under which she had made the inquiry.

This was all part of their investigation into the Sick Church case!

Their goal was to uncover the reasons behind the unusual quietness of Trier's heretics and their activities as though they had gone into hiding for some massive endeavor.

Hidden Blade suspects that the old cemetery's secret is somehow linked to the heretics' plans? They aim to use the former leakage point to bypass the seal and open the door to Fourth Epoch Trier? Angoulême, with his experience, immediately connected the dots.

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Entering the telegraph room, he informed the higher-ups of his theory and made a recommendation.

“Send one or two teams underground to investigate the original leakage point as soon as possible, preferably led by Saints.”

After sending the telegram, Angoulême breathed a sigh of relief.

His next task was to assemble his team and coordinate with the police, military police, and army to prevent the protests from escalating into riots before dawn.

This process would inevitably lead to clashes with members of the Iron and Blood Cross Order and the Carbonari. Beyonders would also be involved.

Additionally, as 007, Angoulême needed to find an opportunity to contact Hidden Blade and share the secret of the old cemetery with her.

There was no more time for casual chats in the telegram group; he had to activate their prearranged practical approach.

Apartment 601, 3 Rue des Blouses Blanches.

“Ciel is missing too?” After informing Madam Judgment and Demoness of Black about Gardner Martin's abnormality, Franca returned to the market district, only to realize that Jenna, who should have been asleep in bed, had vanished. Before she could inspect the house, Anthony Reid, with his buzz cut, visited late at night and reported that Lumian had mysteriously vanished. There were no signs of a fight at the scene.

“Yes,” Anthony Reid was even more certain that something was amiss. It wasn't Lumian switching to a safe house for sleep.

“There are no signs of a struggle here either...” Franca walked to the guest bedroom door and looked at the lifted blanket.

She could tell that Jenna had taken her time before leaving. Not only had she removed her pajamas and changed into her female mercenary attire, but she hadn't messed up the bedroom.

Franca furrowed her brow, pondering the possible reasons.

Although she knew this was a serious matter, she still habitually complained inwardly, Why does it seem like my girlfriend ran off with my boyfriend...

Amidst her thoughts, she remembered that Jenna hadn't handed over the grayish-white cloth bag she had obtained from the cyborg monk to the strange boy, Will.

Franca immediately turned her gaze to the coffee table, recalling that it had originally been there.

Seeing the grayish-white cloth bag vanish, the Demoness of Pleasure heaved a sigh of relief.

Jenna must have been “notified” by the strange boy, Will, to deliver the mission item somewhere and collect the corresponding reward.

And why did Ciel disappear?

Could it be that Will's request was for Ciel to accompany her?

Yes, after all, he was invited by Ciel's Major Arcana card holder, Madam Magician...

“Doesn't seem like a terrible thing?” Anthony Reid keenly sensed Franca's change in state.

“So far, that's the case.” Franca produced a palm-sized mirror. “I'll use Magic Mirror Divination to confirm.”

She retrieved Jenna's pajamas and caressed the mirror with her free hand.

Simultaneously, she recited in Hermes, “Celia Bello's current location, Celia Bello's current location...”

Although the name “Jenna” could also be used for divination, as Jenna had been using this stage name for a long time, and most people around her called her that, Franca felt that it would be more accurate to use her real name at a time like this.

In the gas-lit living room of the apartment, the lights dimmed, and the environment became oppressive.

The mirror's surface emitted an aqueous light, as if it had sunk into the depths of a river.

However, Franca saw nothing. Snowflakes kept appearing in the mirror like noise.

The divination yielded no results... Franca frowned again.

Could it be because of the presence of the strange boy, Will?

However, after handing over the mission item and obtaining the lucky gold coin, Jenna should have separated from Will. They shouldn't have been together for more than five minutes. Theoretically, it can't be such a coincidence...

Franca was cautious. “We'll try again in five minutes.”

Anthony Reid nodded gently and asked, “Do you need me to go to Auberge du Coq Doré and retrieve one of Ciel's clothes?”

“No need.” Franca shook her head without hesitation.

That fellow bears Mr. Fool's seal and the aura of the Blood Emperor. It would be strange if I could gain anything from divination!

Time ticked by, and finally, five minutes passed. Franca used the simple Magic Mirror Divination to inquire about Jenna's location once again.

There was still no answer, and no scene appeared.

That's not right... Franca immediately switched to the complete Magic Mirror Divination form of praying to certain entities.

In the dark mirror, an aged voice echoed, accompanied by the sound of water.

“Celia Bello is in an undetectable location.”

Undetectable... Franca began to feel that the problem might be more complicated and troublesome than she had guessed, so she asked, “Where is Lumian Lee now?”

Amidst the sound of water, the aged voice replied, “I can't see, I can't see...”

The voice gradually faded into confusion and disorder. Franca hastily ended Magic Mirror Divination.

She paced back and forth, feeling that she had to report this matter to Madam Judgment.

But before that... Franca clenched her teeth and said to Anthony Reid, “I want to use Magic Mirror Divination to pray to an unknown and hidden entity. The results of His divination are the most precise. Perhaps it can help us obtain an answer, but you have to swear to the God of Steam and Machinery not to divulge everything you hear later.”

“No problem.” Anthony, clad in military-green attire, gestured a Triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

After Anthony swore an oath to the deity he believed in, Franca didn't hesitate. She lit three candles in a ritualistic manner and extinguished the gas wall lamps in the room.

In the dim light, her right hand caressed the mirror's surface three times as she recited an honorific name in Hermes.

“Eyes that watch all living beings, the stigmata from the Primordial Land, the omniscient one who serves The Fool, the great Arrodes...”

The glass of the makeup mirror darkened, fluctuating and enshrouding at times, emitting aqueous light.

As a Psychiatrist, Anthony Reid suddenly felt a strong sense of unease, as if a pair of eyes had scanned him from top to bottom.

Franca finished her preparations and asked, “Where is my friend, Celia Bello, now?”

In the mirror, an aqueous light flickered, revealing an image:

It was a mine that was too blurry to see the details clearly.

Immediately after, the scene shifted, revealing a portion of Avenue du Marché.

Franca recognized it immediately as the Salle de Bal Brise area, but the building didn't exist. Instead, it was replaced by a dark and crystal-like barrier. Jenna, dressed in a light-blue dress, stood beside the barrier, her expression solemn as she observed an unrevealed part of the scene. Beside her was a figure suspected to be Lumian.

As expected, they're together... Where is this place? Just as these thoughts crossed Franca's mind, she saw a few lines of ancient Feysac words dripping with blood appear on the mirror.

“Based on the principle of reciprocity, it's my turn to ask a question.”

“If you answer incorrectly or lie, you will be punished.”

Franca closed her eyes, waiting for the question to be raised.

The blood-red letters formed another sentence: “Have you ever fantasized about doing Trieriens' favorite activity with Jenna?”

Thankfully... Franca breathed a sigh of relief.

The shame of this question depended on Jenna's presence. If she were present, Franca would rather slam her head against a wall. But now, there was only one Psychiatrist watching.

Is there a problem with telling a Psychiatrist that I have a psychological problem and like women, my good friend, so much so that I want to do that with her?

Franca couldn't help but blush, but she replied smoothly, “I did.”

Anthony Reid, who was observing, wasn't surprised at all. As a Spectator, if he didn't discover Franca's abnormal feelings and thoughts about Jenna, it could only mean that he wasn't up to standard.

He hadn't expected Franca to be relatively calm and not ashamed.

Franca then asked the magic mirror, "Where is the Avenue du Marché where Jenna currently is?"

This time, there was no scene in the magic mirror. Instead, bright red terms appeared: "A world in a painting."

A world in a painting... Painter, Pixie... Franca immediately made a connection and a guess.

On the mirror's surface, bloody words distorted and squirmed, forming new words:

"Based on the principle of reciprocity, it's my turn to ask a question." "Have you ever fantasized about doing Trieriens' favorite activity with Lumian Lee?"

"..." Franca's face burned. She could feel the temperature rising.

I-I haven't... She subconsciously wanted to respond, but then she remembered the pain of being struck by lightning.

She gazed at the magic mirror, striving to forget that there was a Psychiatrist beside her. Her lips quivered as she replied, "I-I have. Sometimes, just occasionally! I can't control myself in my dreams!"

Anthony Reid didn't allow his gaze to shift to Franca's face, nor did he allow his expression to change. It was as if what he saw and heard was ordinary.

This was the basic professionalism of a Psychiatrist.

Franca hurriedly concluded Magic Mirror Divination and entered the master bedroom. She organized information on Lumian, Jenna's disappearance, and the Magic Mirror Divination's response into written information and reported it to Madam Judgment.

After completing this matter and returning to the living room, she was about to discuss the situation with Anthony Reid when she heard a rumbling sound from the northwest of Trier.

It was as if multiple cannons were firing.

Chapter 469 "Reinforcements"

Quartier érase, Trier's garrison encampment.

Under the dim moonlight, a significant number of soldiers poured out of various buildings. They organized into teams with remarkable precision, either firing cannons at the distant roadblocks or shouldering rifles as they advanced toward Avenue du Boulevard in coordinated squads.

Among them were combatants equipped with steam-powered backpacks and massive firearms, strategically positioning themselves on elevated vantage points and in concealed spots.

Inside a building within the camp, Albus, his hair appearing to be dyed red, sat confidently in an officer's chair, his legs casually crossed at the edge of the table before him.

In his field of vision, disembodied heads dangled by bloody spines, almost like they had extended tails.

These severed heads soared toward headless bodies clad in blue soldier coats adorned with golden threads. They aimed for the vacant necks, inserting their bloodstained spines with precision.

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Crack! They completed their “integration” simultaneously, twisting left and right to acclimate themselves to their new hosts.

The freshly created soldiers promptly retrieved their weapons and charged out in an orderly formation, following mysterious directives.

Albus Medici clicked his tongue and remarked, “This is quite the reminiscent sight. Will this night turn into a bloodbath?”

Beyond the multitude of towering steeples and the golden-hued buildings, Magician and Justice were alerted by the distant rumble of cannons.

“An early uprising?” Magician, dressed in a crisp white collared shirt and a beige dress, gazed with starlight in her eyes, as if she had glimpsed through the veils of the spirit world and witnessed the turmoil at the military encampment.

Her prior astromancy predictions had suggested that the catastrophe was still some time away. However, when Jenna caught the cyborg monk and discovered their ties to the heretics and job of transporting paints and brushes, it was evident that destiny had shifted, setting the illusory gears into motion prematurely.

The catastrophe had begun without proper preparation.

Justice, garbed in a light-blue dress, listened to the booming cannons and responded with a composed tone, “Given the scale, it's clear that this won't topple Intis's current government. It can only incite a certain degree of temporary chaos...

“Could there be strikes, protests, marches, riots, and other forms of civil unrest colliding?”

“These are the strengths of the Iron and Blood Cross Order and the Carbonari. Perhaps Gardner Martin and some of his associates went into hiding to spark the flames, but it appears their coordination isn't strong enough. Without effective collaboration, they can't establish a connection.” Magician's gaze shifted toward the southeastern region, where Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, the market district, and Quartier du Jardin Botanique were situated.

Justice nodded in agreement and added, “This means that our efforts have yielded results. They were compelled to accelerate their plans. It's impressive they accomplished such a feat given these circumstances.”

As soon as she finished speaking, the “doll” messenger, dressed in a light-gold gown, materialized from the void and handed the letter from Judgment to Magician.

“Good evening, Miss Justice. A good day to you,” the messenger cheerfully greeted Justice.

She was a mysophobic, obsessive-compulsive creature from the spirit world with a penchant for beauty, and Miss Justice was the embodiment of her preferences.

On the other hand, her employer had many shortcomings that she found intolerable. Therefore, she often took on additional tasks herself. This, however, had built a strong bond of closeness and trust between them.

Magician unfolded the letter and quickly scanned its contents. Her expression underwent a subtle change.

“A world in a painting.”

“Did Arrodes use the lucky gold coin and The Fool's seal on Lumian to gain a vague glimpse of the scenes within the painting world?”

“Partial glimpses of Avenue du Marché...”

After murmuring to herself, Magician turned to Justice and said, “I have a rough understanding of what those heretics are after and why they are utilizing the Hostel's form and the essence of its rooms.

“We can't afford to waste any more time. Let's take action now. Control or eliminate Lady Moon before we search for the painting world.”

Justice nodded. “Agreed.”

She then smiled and added, “We should place our trust in our comrades and collaborators.”

“Very well.” Magician took a step toward the Sacred Heart Cloister, her beige dress hem billowing in the breeze.

She raised her hands, and a constellation of resplendent stars materialized around her.

They appeared both distant and densely packed, converging to create a night sky over the highlands.

The countless stars cast their radiance upon the surface of the Sacred Heart Cloister.

With a determined effort, Magician lifted the void in front of her, as if bearing a heavy burden.

Amidst the tumultuous yet silent vibrations, the Sacred Heart Cloister, along with its myriad steeples and the ground beneath it, was “projected” into a pitch-black void. Fierce hurricanes and layers of darkness encircled them.

Almost simultaneously, brilliant sunbeams illuminated the interconnected buildings, as if conjuring thousands of miniature suns.

They resisted the encroaching darkness, striving to reveal the concealed void.

Magician and Justice vanished, reappearing in a space that seemed to bend and contract, forming a dark sphere.

Close by, a crouching golden retriever activated Psychological Invisibility, carefully observing her surroundings and maintaining the highest level of vigilance.

Painting world, Avenue du Marché.

From the darkness that corresponded to Salle de Bal Brise, dark-red and rust-stained yellow skeletons emerged.

They exuded a palpable aura of death, and the strong scent of rust and blood hung heavy in the air. When gathered together, they created and intensified a frenzied and violent atmosphere.

This sensation was tangible, immediately shaking the crystal barrier enveloping the darkness. It produced numerous cracks before silently collapsing.

Witnessing this horrifying scene, the woman in the white halter dress who had brought the Sansons to Avenue du Marché and the various rooms with similar auras to Séraphine's brought over, certain words spoken by the "doll" messenger flashed through Lumian's mind.

Those old bones!

With a swift thought, he seized Jenna's arm with his left hand and immersed his consciousness into his right palm.

Bright red scars reappeared, and an exceptionally violent, maddening, and domineering aura surged from his body, causing the blue sky, white clouds, and the setting sun to visibly quiver.

Even Séraphine and the other "rooms," despite their experience, were taken aback and couldn't help but shudder.

The two pixies outside were even more terrified, convinced that a formidable presence had descended and that the painting world was on the brink of collapse.

The yellowish, ragged, and incomplete old bones creaked and turned, bowing their heads in unison to Lumian. They refrained from instinctively attacking the nearest humans.

Lumian raised his chin slightly and pointed his right hand with an icy determination at the "rooms" and the two pixies.

The old bones, clad in tattered armor and brandishing rusty weapons, transformed into dangerous incandescent fireballs that exploded towards every genuine target.

The blue-beret-wearing pixie's pupils dilated, and she abruptly extended her palm into the void.

Her form turned ethereal once more, suffused with even greater emptiness and indifference, as if she had hidden herself in another realm.

Boom!

The white-hot fireball merged with her form, resulting in a powerful explosion, but it couldn't reach the distant fantasy world and harm its intended target.

The Painter, donned in red pants, had suffered a severe fall, with fractured bones and a lingering sense of dizziness. There was no time to change his condition. His only option was to attempt a rapid repositioning, employing the maximum speed a Sequence 8 could muster. Yet, just as he sprang to his feet, he was struck by a blazing white fireball.

Boom!

The Pixie was left in a gory state from the explosion. His abdomen was torn open, internal organs spilled out, and his left arm severed. Severe burn marks covered his body.

He lost consciousness, his life ebbing away.

The incandescent white fireball hurtling toward Séraphine and Gabriel suddenly veered into the wilderness, distancing itself from the indifferent and vacant human models by several hundred meters.

The farther it flew, the weaker it became. After enduring for a hundred to two hundred meters, it eventually touched the ground and exploded.

Perhaps the most dangerous factor was the woman in the white halter dress, with curly black hair and a beautiful face. She appeared soulless as multiple blazing white fireballs were aimed at her.

However, the hazardous fireballs either bypassed the raised palms of the human model or exploded prematurely in a strange manner. Some even ascended into the air and transmuted into fireworks.

It was akin to Room 7 being impervious to attack.

Not far from Séraphine, there stood a stunning woman in a bright red dress. Her eyes held a vacant quality, and her aura appeared somewhat detached.

At that moment, she watched a blazing white fireball hurtling toward her like a meteor, remaining utterly motionless.

The blazing white fireball grew fainter and smaller. Just as it was about to collide with its target, it completely extinguished and reverted to a yellowish skeleton holding a rusty spear.

The skeleton swayed a few times before disintegrating, the withering sensation becoming more pronounced.

In the café diagonally opposite, an elegant plump lady in a black dress materialized. On one hand, she seemed to have lost her vitality and appeared unusually ethereal. On the other hand, she displayed a yearning expression and gaze. She opened her mouth as the incandescent white fireball approached and raised her hands, clutching a silver knife and fork.

With a whoosh, she sliced the blazing white fireball in half.

An illusory vortex filled with fanged phantoms formed in her mouth, devouring a portion of the fireball, “neutralizing” the threat.

Boom!

Most of the fireballs lost their course and veered off, shattering the café's glass and toppling tables, chairs, and nearby outer walls.

Beside the darkness of Salle de Bal Brise, Lumian watched the old bones transform into blazing white fireballs, attacking the various “rooms” and the two pixies. He didn't wait to see the final outcome or seize an opportunity to launch a surprise attack. He grabbed Jenna's arm, kicked with his right foot, and lunged towards Salle de Bal Brise's original location, where the old bones had emerged.

Chapter 470 Three Heads, Six Arms

Lumian and Jenna plunged into the darkness, the area that should have been Salle de Bal Brise before the Hostel's “rooms” and the blue-beretted pixie could escape the entanglement of old bones.

His vision plunged into darkness before specks of spiritual light emerged ahead.

They converged like resplendent stars, turning densely packed, akin to a black velvet curtain adorned with diamonds or countless grains of sand in water.

Amidst these spiritual lights, an ancient, heavy, illusory, and mysterious door materialized in distortion.

Iron-black, its surface marred by dark-red rust, as if a large amount of blood had spilled upon it.

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In Underground Trier, within the undetectable mine.

In his untouchable state, the Painter witnessed yellowed skeletons clamoring into the colossal oil painting on the rock wall. Iron-black and dark-red lines outlined themselves in the previously empty Salle de Bal Brise, forming a door that shouldn't exist in reality.

“It's not time yet, not time yet...” The Painter, with tassels adorning his trouser legs, stared blankly, unable to believe such a development.

Though he and his accomplices had been attempting to depict this imaginary door, they knew it was destined to fail. At most, they would complete a fifth of it before having to start anew. They persisted for the experience, anticipating that once the ritual commenced, they could draw the crucial parts swiftly.

Having already finished the main part of the Hostel oil painting, they had nothing else to do. Why not try a few more times? What if a miracle occurred?

Now, a miracle unfolded without their attempts!

The Painter gazed at the transformation before him, a mix of anticipation and shock.

He couldn't help but look up at the cave ceiling and silently mutter, Do we not need cooperation from aboveground to make the entrance appear?

Could the abnormality in the painting world be causing this?

If we don't coordinate with the surface in time, even if the entrance appears, we won't be able to bypass the seal and enter...

Lumian and Jenna descended as if through a dark pipe, uncontrollably approaching the void adorned with spiritual specks of light and the bloodied, rusted door.

Almost simultaneously, Lumian's left chest heated up, and terrifying ravings echoed in his ears from an infinite height and distance.

Familiar with this sensation, indicating the corruption of Inevitability in his body, Lumian knew Termiboros was up to something, and Mr. Fool's seal had been triggered.

However, unlike before, Lumian refrained from attempting to crack the seal to steal Inevitability's power. Consequently, he didn't enter a state of excruciating pain, just a bit dazed.

In his daze, Lumian saw Séraphine—Room 7—clad in a white halter dress. Other “rooms” with varied appearances and attire, yet nearly identical dispositions,

seemed to detach from the painting world and overlap with the fake Avenue du Marché.

The left chests of these “rooms” emitted a faint glow, suggesting they too had seals on them.

Lumian's head spun as a scene—whether real or fake—unfolded before him.

S raphine and the other 12 “rooms” stepped into the void and surrounded him, invisible and hidden connections intertwining.

Jenna, arm clutched by Lumian, sensed something and turned her head.

Flesh on Lumian's left and right shoulders writhed as two illusory heads emerged.

One head looked like a ten-year-old Lumian, covered in dirt, and his eyes filled with ruthlessness. The other, nearly thirty, with blood-red hair and iron-black eyes, looked violent and crazy.

Wh— Jenna felt as if she had entered a nightmare, witnessing her companion transform into a monster.

Lumian's body expanded, gripping Jenna like a palm-sized puppet.

Behind him, illusory arms sprouted from his ribs.

Lumian didn't neglect the changes in his body. He saw his current form in Jenna's eyes.

A three-headed, six-armed giant!

It bore a striking resemblance to the monster in Cordu's ruins!

However, Lumian didn't lose his mind. He was certain The Fool's seal on his chest and Termiboros were still intact.

An illusory collision reverberated as Lumian crashed into the ancient, heavy, and mysterious door, causing it to tremble and creak. It was about to open.

At that moment, the spiritual spots on the black velvet curtain lit up, stabilizing the iron-black door stained with blood and rust.

Witnessing and experiencing this, Lumian suddenly grasped what Hostel was, why they referred to him as Room 1, and the heretics' intentions and plans.

The concept of Hostel likely emerged after the Tree of Shadow disaster.

At some point, Maip  Meyer, ostracized, established contact with other cults, informing them of Lumian's existence and state.

They imitated the situation where an evil god's Blessed was sealed within Lumian's body, creating Hostel, Rooms 2 to 13. They invited various evil gods' Blessed to take up residence, establishing a mystical connection among them based on this systematic similarity.

When Lumian entered the painting world, actions taken on the other “rooms” of Hostel were equivalent to acts on Lumian.

When the Hostel took shape and all the “rooms” were pieced together, Lumian couldn't help but be affected.

Since the “rooms” displayed the levels of their residents, Lumian underwent a corresponding change.

The resident within him was an Angel, Termiboros!

After the mysticism-based Hostel ritual, Lumian, lacking the strength of an Angel or a true Mythical Creature form, had briefly attained the level of an Angel!

This explained why Voisin Sanson and company didn't leave the room and attacked Lumian directly.

Termiboros was sealed, so they naturally wanted Him too. They had to maintain this state until the ritual ended!

Of course, the heretics weren't kind enough to help Lumian experience the state of an Inevitability Angel. Their goal was to use this opportunity to enter Fourth Epoch Trier.

Opening the door using an Angel's level!

Hence, the Hostel had to align with some areas of the market district and exhibit environmental similarities.

Lumian speculated that the Salle de Bal Brise's underground corresponded to a weak spot in the seal. In the past, there had even been problems. Many old bones, guided by Alista Tudor's aura, had crawled out. The corruption leaked, affecting 13 Avenue du Marché.

This made Lumian wonder if his arrival in the market district and his stay at Auberge du Coq Doré had something to do with the attraction the underground area had on Hunters.

Due to this crucial information, the Salle de Bal Brise in the painting world remained blank and dark. The streets surrounding it and the people who often appeared nearby were replicated in appearance.

When the corresponding ritual truly commenced, the surface's market district and the underground market district would likely undergo a switch. Reality would become a fabrication, and fabrication would become reality, revealing or outlining the seal corresponding to Salle de Bal Brise, weakening it to the extreme.

When the time came, Lumian, an Angel, could “open” the door to Fourth Epoch Trier!

Maipú Meyer's return to the market district aimed to harness his Actor abilities, acting as different individuals. He would enter various houses and assist Pixies in grasping the specifics of these streets to complete the massive painting of Hostel.

Worried that Lumian, Franca, and others would notice in advance, he avoided their rooms, lacking sufficient knowledge.

Looking at the mysterious door beneath him, Lumian tried to distance himself, but he couldn't break free. It was as if a huge magnet was sucking him—now an Angel—behind the door, causing him to involuntarily squeeze inside.

Thanks to countless spots of spirituality in the surrounding darkness, the ancient door, stained with blood and rust, didn't open.

Lumian sensed that this was because the Hostel ritual hadn't fully commenced.

He and Jenna had barged into the painting world ahead of time, disrupting the heretics' arrangements!

Now, if the Hostel ritual was to be completed and the surface and underground switched, there were at least two key points that couldn't be matched.

Firstly, the subterranean seal, which could only be released by destroying Trier and eliminating most of the people here, now had the switch between reality and fabrication, a temporary acquisition of an angelic level, and the discovery of weakness in the seal; thus, the requirement could be significantly reduced. However, lowering the requirement further would necessitate a riot bringing chaos to the surface Trier.

Secondly, it was afternoon in the painting world, and the Sun was only westering. The sky was still bright, but in reality, it was the middle of the night. The moonlight was dim, and the darkness was dense.

Avenue du Marché, market district.

In a double-breasted brown coat, Angoulême de François noted the secret of église Saint-Robert's old cemetery on paper, placing it in the safe house provided by Hidden Blade, hoping she would discover it in time.

The Purifier deacon guided his robot toward Imre and Valentine, who awaited near Salle de Bal Brise.

At that moment, the rumbling salvos reached his ears.

Instinctively, he turned his head to see Trier's sky illuminated by flames.

An army rebellion? Angoulême furrowed his brow.

Now, most Purifiers from the dioceses were dispersed to quell strikes, marches, and protests after daybreak.

Unexpectedly, trouble arose in the military camp!

Was news of the massive strike deliberately sent to us, forcing a dispersion of forces and making it impossible for us to organize manpower to resolve the problem in a short period of time? A conspiracy by the Iron and Blood Cross Order? Angoulême instantly had a suspicion.

In Quartier érase, a wilderness emerged from the Sacred Heart Cloister that had been thrown into turbulence and darkness.

Lady Moon's voice resonated, her smile evident as she addressed Magician and Justice, "You might not have guessed who's sheltering us this time..."

Before she could finish, the sound of a baby crying echoed.

"Waaa!"

The baby's cries were vibrant, bringing forth endless golden sunlight.

The entire Sacred Heart Cloister transformed into a blazing sun, piercing through the turbulent storm and distorting space.

In the real Trier, the still-sleeping citizens were jolted awake by the sunlight.

In Apartment 601, Franca and Anthony Reid instinctively looked up at the suddenly bright sky.

A dazzling golden sun hung in the sky, positioned to the west.

