

Inevitability 511

Chapter 511 Warning

Francesco let out a heavy sigh and spoke, "Back in the first half of the year, when I tended bar on another ship, we ran into pirates. Over ten of them were among the passengers. They seized control of the engine and boiler cabins right from the start, repelling any attempts by the crew to fight back. They waited for their pirate vessel to draw near.

"Thank you, Earth Mother. They only ransacked the cabins one by one, and as long as we didn't resist, they left us unharmed. Naturally, the beautiful ladies and gentlemen were excluded. You can't expect pirates to have high moral standards."

Lumian took a sip of mint-flavored absinthe, a smile playing on his lips.

"Aren't they worried that there might be someone like the adventurer Gehrman Sparrow among the passengers? What if they encounter a powerhouse unwilling to part with their money and ready to use force?"

Francesco was caught off guard by Lumian's question.

After a pause, he replied, "Being a pirate involves higher risks, doesn't it?"

"That does make sense," Lumian nodded in agreement.

Francesco went on, "Many merchant ships nowadays hire retired navy personnel, maritime adventurers, and professional mercenaries for protection. They're tough and can handle onboard disturbances. Plus, they make pirates think twice, leaving room for negotiation.

"There was a similar incident on a merchant ship before. Pirates had the upper hand, took control, but hesitated to take on a sailor team led by adventurers. They opted for negotiations, demanded a protection fee, and withdrew without looting the cabins."

Lumian chuckled.

"If I were a pirate, I'd start a security company in Port Gati, offering knowledgeable maritime mercenaries. If ships hire them, I'd earn some fees. If not, well, then it's time for a good old-fashioned plunder. Either way, I'd make a profit."

Francesco eyed the black-haired, green-eyed man in his twenties with surprise and muttered,

"Don't tell me you're an undercover pirate? The maritime factions are in chaos. Can your subordinates protect those who hire you from other pirates? Sigh, that's why I've never liked the sea. Stepping on the ground gives me a greater sense of security.

"Praise the Earth, praise the Mother of All Things!"

A pure Feynapotterian who believes in Earth Mother... Lumian smiled and asked, "If you don't like the sea, why are you still working as a bartender on the ship?"

Francesco's expression gradually became animated.

“Don't you find it romantic to have an independent kingdom, one that can hardly contact the outside world, floating out at sea? When you meet a beautiful lady here, you'll feel that only the two of you are left in the entire world. You can only rely on each other.”

Your ultimate goal is to find a romantic encounter? Sometimes, Lumian found it hard to comprehend the Feynapotterians and some Trieriens who resembled them.

At that moment, Francesco gestured towards a round table.

“That's Philip, the security supervisor of the Flying Bird. He claims to be a retired officer of the Fog Sea fleet. He destroyed numerous pirate ships with his cannons and personally captured many pirates with wanted posters.”

Lumian followed Francesco's finger, gazing at the hall illuminated by kerosene chandeliers.

A group of men and women gathered around a round table to the side. In their midst was a middle-aged man with short light-gold hair, light-blue eyes, and a weathered face. Despite his appearance, he didn't exude seriousness or formality.

Philip, clad in a dark-blue tweed crew attire, raised a glass of Lanti Proof and boasted, “When I served on the San Martin, I crossed paths with the Queen of Ailment, Tracy. Back then, she was only Vice Admiral Ailment. Tsk tsk, as expected of the most beautiful woman in the Five Seas...”

“I'll tell you this, if we ever encounter a formidable pirate, don't fret. I know them, and I have a certain level of friendship with them. At the very least, I can negotiate...”

“Haha, don't ask why naval officers have ties to great pirates. There are many things at sea you don't understand, and it's best not to delve into them...”

The men and women surrounding Philip listened attentively, occasionally expressing surprise at the mention of influential figures or when he narrated thrilling adventure stories.

At some point, Philip's left hand had wrapped around a girl's waist, and she didn't make any attempt to escape. Instead, she wore a shy expression.

Lumian averted his gaze and asked bartender Francesco, “Does he really know so many great pirates? Is he genuinely a retired officer of the Fog Sea fleet?”

Having finished wiping a cup, Francesco spread his hands and said, “Who knows? However, since he took over as the Flying Bird's security supervisor, we haven't faced any pirate attacks during our five trips out to sea in the past few months. I don't know if it's luck or if he truly knows many pirates and can spot spies at a glance, giving them an advanced warning.”

In the Five Seas, where pirates are a constant threat, the likelihood of avoiding encounters on five consecutive long-distance voyages is slim... Lumian turned his body again, scrutinizing Philip, whose skin bore the rough, red, and weathered marks of a seasoned mariner.

It was challenging to discern if this person was a Beyonder, let alone determine his Sequence. However, Lumian could deduce from the physical details that he had spent considerable time at sea.

Lumian focused and briefly observed Philip's luck.

It carried a hint of blood.

There's a possibility of combat and injuries in the future, but it won't endanger his life... Lumian frowned, finishing the absinthe in his hand and requesting another glass of Lanti Proof.

Before long, Philip left the bar with the girl still wrapped around his waist, his face flushed.

Lumian clicked his tongue and shook his head.

“You Intisians.”

After a while, rhythmic music filled the bar. Many customers stood up and rushed to the empty space in the middle to dance.

Lumian held the liquor, swaying gently to the rhythm, appearing lost in thought.

Since discovering that the evil god's bestowed beings were up to no good, he hadn't felt this relaxed in a long time.

The Hostel plan was now in the past. The investigation of April Fool's key members could only commence upon reaching Port Santa.

This was a rare vacation.

Estimating that it was time for Ludwig's second late-night snack, Lumian set down his glass and left the bar on the deck.

As Lumian made his way back to the first-class cabin, he suddenly whispered, “Temiboros, is there any way to identify Beyonders on the ship and the passengers disguised as pirates? I want to visit them one by one, warn them to behave, and not interfere with my enjoyment of the journey.”

If anyone refused to heed the warning, 007 could assist in collecting the bounty. The Beyonders' characteristics they produced could also be exchanged for money!

Temiboros's majestic voice echoed in Lumian's ears.

“Only when you become an Inevitability demigod or switch pathways will you have a solution.”

Without waiting for Lumian's response, the sealed Angel added, “With Alista Tudor's lingering aura and the slight corruption of 0-01, there's a high chance that you'll trigger a calamity if you really warn those people.”

Does that mean I'm the greatest calamity and just need to take care of myself? Lumian, who had hoped to reorganize the Flying Bird's dark world and ensure a pleasant journey, understood Temiboros's meaning. He had no choice but to give up.

At that moment, the Flying Bird had fallen into a deep slumber. Lumian walked across the solid floor, the faint creaks and muffled cries echoing around him.

Somewhere within the ship, a woman wept in heartbreaking sobs.

Lumian was no stranger to such despair. He'd often heard Miss Ethans, the object of Charlie's admiration at Auberge du Coq Doré, cry in similar anguish.

There are people who suffer everywhere. Sad people... Lumian, influenced by his writer sister, possessed a touch of the artistic spirit.

Shaking his head, he returned to Room 5, his first-class cabin.

Lugano had already retired to the servants' quarters, while Ludwig, clad in pajamas and a nightcap, awaited his late-night snack.

Lumian sighed and retrieved the easily preserved food from his Traveler's Bag, grateful he'd restocked at Port Gati.

He calculated the cost of Ludwig's daily meals—100 verl d'or, translating to almost 40,000 verl d'or annually. A wave of vexation washed over him. At this rate, Ludwig would deplete his savings within two years.

He couldn't help but wonder if Baron Brignais had breathed a sigh of relief upon confirming Ludwig's "disappearance."

After settling the two midnight meals, Lumian quickly washed and settled into the master bedroom.

As the gentle sway of the ship lulled him, his mind drifted off to sleep.

Lumian woke up at 6 a.m., feeling refreshed.

The dining table was bare, Ludwig and Lugano still asleep.

He pushed open the window and stretched, inhaling the crisp morning air.

Just before seven, the doorbell rang.

My breakfast was scheduled to arrive at 8:30 a.m.... Lumian opened the door and found Philip, the Flying Bird's security supervisor with his blond hair, blue eyes, and weathered face, standing before him.

Philip looked grim, a stark contrast to the jovial man he'd been at the bar the previous night.

"I've confirmed that your identification documents are fake."

How did he confirm it? Why did he specially check our identification? Lumian didn't feel that anything about them stood out after they boarded the ship.

Suppressing his confusion, he frowned and asked, "Are you attempting to extort us?"

Philip glanced at the living room and said solemnly, "I don't care who you were or what you plan to do. Just behave yourselves during your stay on the Flying Bird. Enjoy the journey, don't cause any trouble, and we'll all be fine."

He's really confirming if we are problematic... How did this guy do it? He's quite capable. He's not as frivolous and simple as he seems... Lumian replied calmly, not giving in, "I'm afraid I don't understand. Perhaps there's a misunderstanding?"

Philip locked eyes with him for a long moment.

"As long as you understand what I'm saying," he finally replied before turning and walking away.

Chapter 512 Strange Pirate Ship

Lumian watched Philip's retreating figure disappear into the distance, a silent chuckle escaping his lips.

This guy was competent, he had to admit. Gone was the frivolous, greasy, and undisciplined facade he'd displayed at the bar the night before.

It was a common trait among many Intisian men, Lumian observed. When not engaged in demanding work and surrounded by attractive women, they turned into preening peacocks, desperate to display their prowess. Becoming a Beyonder didn't change that fundamental nature.

Demonesses thrived in Intis, especially in Trier. This wasn't just due to the city's underground allure; there was a deeper, more harmonious connection with the society at large.

Lumian wasn't offended by Philip's warning, nor did he take it personally.

He'd planned to enjoy the voyage over the next few days, even considered lending a hand in maintaining order on the ship, becoming a shadow inquisitor of sorts.

But now, his primary concern shifted to how Philip had unmasked their true identities.

Lumian had meticulously combed through Aurore's grimoire, studying the abilities of Low-Sequence Beyonders across 22 pathways, and supplemented his knowledge with information gleaned from various sources over the past months. From this, he formed a preliminary hypothesis.

Philip is likely a Beyonder of one of three pathways—Spectator, Reader, or Arbiter.

One excels at observing minute details and reading people's true thoughts. Another is a master of deduction, their Sequence 7 even being called “Detective.” They can detect abnormalities from the most subtle clues. The third, at Sequence 8 Public Security Officer, wields extraordinary control within their jurisdiction, allowing them to sense and trace anomalies...

Given that we haven't spoken directly with Philip before, I can eliminate the Spectator option. Besides, Spectators aren't typically chosen as security supervisors, it's not their forte...

After discovering that there was a problem with us through his abilities and that our origins were unclear, Philip likely checked copies of our identification and sent telegrams to the issuing authorities. And he received confirmation that these three people didn't exist?

This explains the delay in his warning. He'd waited for the investigation and response before making his move.

This also implies he has a network of helpers across different regions, receives information and feedback, and possesses extensive connections.

Doing this alone wouldn't be possible. He has an organization backing him, something more official, perhaps? He did claim to be a retired officer of the Fog Sea Fleet, after all...

Such a person is indeed well-suited to lead the security on a heavily armed merchant ship like this.

Lumian turned away and closed the door, a wave of relief washing over him.

With such a capable security supervisor at the helm, issuing discrete warnings to potential threats, the journey ahead promised to be relatively safe.

Lumian spent the morning in the comfort of his first-class cabin, Cabin 5, indulging in a leisurely study of Highlander and breaking up his reading with bouts of exercise. Meanwhile, Ludwig, after

breakfast, had begged Lugano to take him on a tour of the ship, spending over an hour on deck playing like a genuine child.

Lumian, however, suspected the true purpose of this excursion was to meticulously survey the location and condition of the ship's food reserves.

Before lunch, drawn by the bright sun, Lumian descended to the deck. He rested his hands on the railing and gazed out at the vast, dark-blue expanse of the sea.

From the corner of his eye, he caught sight of Philip, back to his usual casual demeanor. He was now entangled with the girl from the previous night at the bow of the ship, whispering sweet nothings and laughing, the picture of a smitten couple.

You Intisians... Lumian shook his head with a chuckle.

After leaving Trier, he had adjusted his usual phrases to better reflect reality.

Philip and the girl continued their stroll along the deck, their laughter echoing through the air.

With the enhanced hearing of a Hunter, Lumian had no trouble making out the girl's name—Gozia. Though not conventionally beautiful, she exuded a youthful vibrancy that was undeniable.

Lumian watched as Philip's gaze darted beyond the ship's railing, his face hardening for a brief moment.

Following the security supervisor's line of sight, Lumian scanned the horizon, spotting a colossal shadow lurking beneath the undulating waves!

It disappeared as quickly as it appeared, swallowed by the surging sea.

Smaller than the Flying Bird, but far larger than any sea creature... Giant fish, or something more? Lumian mused, a spark of excitement igniting within him.

“My dear, what has captured your attention?” Gozia's voice broke through Philip's reverie.

“My sweetheart, just thinking about which first-class restaurant I'll treat you to later,” Philip replied nonchalantly.

Suddenly, a thin veil of fog crept upwards from the sea, obscuring the sun and dimming the surrounding environment.

The passengers and crew on deck remained unfazed, accustomed to such sudden weather changes in the Fog Sea. Although less intense than the Berserk Sea, the unpredictable nature of the region was ever-present.

As Gozia reveled in the first foggy day of their journey, Philip discreetly raised his right arm, gesturing towards the spot where the shadow had vanished.

He doesn't think it's a passing giant fish... Lumian admired the sea ahead with interest. He noticed several crew members ending their breaks and taking their positions, including the gunners.

The peaceful atmosphere was shattered by a loud splash as a monstrous iron-black behemoth surfaced from the depths.

It was a peculiar-looking “ship.”

It was covered in a layer of metal, with only thin pipes resembling snail eyes protruding from its hull.

As seawater cascaded off its sides, the upper half of the strange vessel split open, revealing a fearsome array of cannons and masts rising from within, creating a wide deck.

Dozens, perhaps even hundreds of pirates armed with firearms and swords were on the deck, filling the air with their intimidating cries.

A white sail unfurled automatically, right to the top of the mast.

Wow... Lumian marveled inwardly.

He had never seen such a magical vessel before, a vessel that could disappear and reappear from the depths of the sea.

Philip's expression grew increasingly grave.

Beside him, Gozia froze, her eyes wide with terror as she instinctively huddled closer to her lover.

“Which pirate crew is this?”

“Only one man commands such undersea vessels,” Philip replied, his voice devoid of its usual frivolity and heavy with grim certainty. “Admiral Deep Sea, Howl Constantine. Judging by the size of this vessel, it's not his flagship, the Newins. It's the Black Octopus, commanded by his most trusted subordinate, Bone Splitter Basil.”

Gozia's vision swam, and she nearly fainted.

The night before, during their conversation, Philip had mentioned the infamous maritime kings and pirate admirals who ruled the Five Seas. Among them, Howl Constantine, who had recently risen to the rank of Admiral, was shrouded in mystery.

Legend whispered of his monstrous heritage, claiming he possessed the blood of sea monsters. He had even ventured into the ruins of a sunken city, recovering the relics of ancient alchemists: two stealth boats capable of navigating the depths of the ocean unseen.

Inspired by these vessels, the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery had attempted to develop their own undersea fleet. However, they failed to mass produce them. Due to the reliance on higher Sequence Beyonders, only one or two of these vessels could be assigned to each Intisian fleet, each serving specialized functions.

Of Admiral Deep Sea's two undersea vessels, the first, the Newins, was a behemoth rivaling the Flying Bird in size. Inspired by a renowned maritime treasure legend, it served as Howl Constantine's flagship. The second, the Black Octopus, which had just emerged from the depths, was entrusted to his most trusted subordinate, Bone Splitter Basil.

He was an equally formidable figure, known for his cold-blooded brutality and ruthless tactics. He took pleasure in torturing his captives, and the bounty on his head, far exceeding that of most non-Admiral pirates, stood at a staggering 250,000 verl d'or.

The revelation of the Black Octopus and Bone Splitter Basil plunged Gozia into a pit of despair.

How could a mere armed merchant ship like the Flying Bird possibly stand against such notorious pirates from the Five Seas?

What horrors awaited them under Bone Splitter Basil's reign of terror?

Philip, however, had no time for his new lover's distress. His full attention was focused on the unfolding spectacle of the Black Octopus and its menacing cannons, ready to unleash their fury at any moment.

Standing a short distance away, Lumian felt a thrill coursing through his veins when he heard the name Bone Splitter Basil, the strongest subordinate to Admiral Deep Sea Howl Constantine. This was not nervousness, but the exhilarating feeling from catching a whiff of iron and blood.

This was one of the Hunters' belligerence.

Even after fully digesting the potions, a Beyonder would still be affected by them.

Lumian's emerald eyes, sharp as an eagle's, locked onto the bizarre iron-black ship as he formulated his next move.

Once Bone Splitter Basil emerged and the two vessels closed the distance, Lumian planned to “teleport” behind the infamous pirate and unleash the Spell of Harrumph.

If the Spell of Harrumph's effect proved insufficient and failed to incapacitate Basil, Lumian would don his Flog boxing gloves, instill a specific desire within his opponent, and “teleport” again, creating greater distance before activating the Symphony of Hatred, amplifying the instilled desire to a maddening degree.

With Bone Splitter Basil severely wounded and momentarily incapacitated, Lumian would seize the opportunity to unleash his full Hunter arsenal, striking the enemy down with devastating blows.

To prevent interference from the surrounding pirates, he could potentially create a Bottle of Fiction and isolate Bone Splitter Basil for a one-on-one duel...

A complex plan, complete with contingency measures, raced through Lumian's mind, causing a slight tremor in his body, as if anticipating the thrill of the coming battle.

Just as the tension reached a peak and a naval confrontation seemed imminent, the pirates aboard the Black Octopus turned as one, their eyes fixed in shock upon the stairs leading deeper into the vessel.

A few seconds later, the bizarre iron-black ship made an abrupt turn, altering its course and steering away from the Flying Bird.

With swift precision, the exposed sections of the Black Octopus retracted, sealing its interior once more.

In the eyes of Lumian and the others, the Black Octopus rapidly distanced itself, diving back into the depths of the foggy sea.

In the blink of an eye, it transformed into a mere shadow, disappearing completely.

“E-escaped?” Uttering the word after a long moment of dazed silence, Gozia turned to her lover, her voice filled with surprise and confusion.

Bone Splitter Basil and his Black Octopus were simply leaving?

Without a fight, without plundering?

Philip, himself bewildered, stared at the spot where the Black Octopus had vanished, forcing a smile onto his face.

“Didn't I tell you that I know many great pirates?”

Chapter 513 Worry

Gozia's gaze instantly turned fervent upon hearing Philip's response, her admiration evident.

Have they escaped? Lumian's lips twitched. The Black Octopus's abrupt change of course and sudden dive left him speechless.

The maneuver caught him off guard, leaving him frozen for a critical moment.

This incredible underwater ship, commanded by a great pirate with a massive bounty, simply turned tail and fled without even firing a single cannon?

How could one be a pirate with such puny guts?

Bone Splitter Basil? With a bounty of 250,000 verl d'or and a fearsome reputation? Don't even think about showing your face on the high seas again!

Lumian cursed under his breath, then frowned thoughtfully. Why had Bone Splitter Basil fled without revealing himself?

I could understand if it was the Blood Emperor's aura I activated that made you run so fast, but why now?

It couldn't be that he targeted the wrong ship, did he? The Flying Bird isn't the merchant vessel he wanted to plunder, so he was rushing to corner his real prey?

Did he somehow sense that hijacking this ship would lead to disaster?

If he truly possessed the power of divination or prophecy, they would have known not to come. He wouldn't have had to embarrass himself in front of the crew and passengers, only to turn back and drift aimlessly...

Danger Premonition? A Hunter's danger intuition wouldn't react so strongly until it's face-to-face with the threat...

Then it hit him. A Sequence that had him wary for months: Sequence 6 Devil of the Criminal pathway!

Beyonders at this Sequence possessed a unique ability called “Malicious Perception.”

If someone within their range intended to cause them lethal harm and acted on it within a specific timeframe, they could sense the source of the danger and identify their attacker.

Bone Splitter Basil... a Devil? His title and reputation certainly fit...

I had just formulated a hunting plan for him, intending to “teleport” over after confirming the situation. Did he sense my malice and confirm the extent of the danger before swiftly deciding to escape?

Hey, you're a Devil. Are you running away without a fight? I'm not even confident in defeating a Devil. Besides, you're on your alchemical boat with a large number of subordinates around you. You probably don't lack mystical items. Do you have to be so cowardly?

The plan I envisioned had a high success rate, so much so that Basil's ability to sense danger exceeded his endurance. Therefore, he didn't take the risk and chose the most effective and safest response—escape? The more Lumian pondered, the more he felt that this guess was close to the truth.

This amused him as well.

To be honest, his plan was quite idealistic. He didn't consider the Bone Splitter Sequence or the abilities of the surrounding pirates, nor did he consider how to use the Bottle of Fiction to single out Basil for a one-on-one battle. All of this depended on his subsequent observations of the Black Octopus

Hunters might not be the ones who charged forward to fight from the beginning. They might even be the last to appear and be responsible for harvesting.

But did such a simple plan and malice scare away a Devil in advance?

Lumian suspected that Basil might not be able to sense the specific plan. It was only because he had the Angel of Inevitability, the Blood Emperor's aura, Mr. Fool's seal, and 0-01's mild corruption, regardless of whether they were powerful or not, that they combined with a feasible plan and clear malice. It strongly agitated the Bone Splitter, making him feel that the impending danger was beyond his ability to handle. Hence, the scene just now.

Are all Devils so timid? Lumian cursed silently and left the deck in disappointment, returning to Room 5 of the first-class cabin.

At that moment, the exclusive attendant had arrived with lunch. Ludwig focused on the delicacies, while Lugano lingered by the window, his face filled with excitement.

Upon seeing Lumian's return, the Doctor exclaimed excitedly, “Just now, a great pirate appeared—Bone Splitter Basil, Admiral Deep Sea Howl Constantine's most formidable captain. He even operates the Black Octopus. H-have you heard of the Black Octopus? It's a mystical ship that can dive to the seabed!”

“I heard it from someone at the bar last night,” Lumian replied honestly.

Prior to this, he didn't know much about Admiral Deep Sea and his pirate crew. All he knew was that there was such a pirate admiral. After all, Howl Constantine was quite mysterious and rarely appeared in newspapers and magazines that recorded sea stories. His only appearance in The Adventurer series was his title and name, giving him a background without any plot lines.

Lugano didn't hide his emotions.

“I witnessed the mystical pirate ship with my own eyes. It truly surfaced from the seabed and can bloom like a flower!

“I thought we'd clash with the Bone Splitter and use your teleportation abilities to escape. To my surprise, Black Octopus chose to leave after observing for just over ten seconds.”

Over ten seconds? Aren't you looking down on Bone Splitters? It was a few seconds! Lumian retorted inwardly.

Lugano continued, “When I chatted with a few sailors this morning, they told me that the Flying Bird's security supervisor is a formidable retired officer who knows many great pirates. I thought they were boasting, but from the looks of it, that security supervisor isn't simple. It's really possible that he has ties to many great pirates. That's why Bone Splitter Basil didn't plunder the Flying Bird!”

“That's right, that's right,” Lumian echoed.

Rip... Ludwig tore off the oily skin and meat from a duck leg.

Lumian glanced at the boy, who was engrossed in his food, and suddenly had a new idea.

Could the malice and danger that Bone Splitter Basil sensed be more than one? Could it not be solely from me?

Ludwig might have swallowed hard upon hearing the word “bone dismantling”...

However, even though this walking bottomless stomach when compared to me appears high-ranking, he lacks the corresponding abilities...

To celebrate the fact that the Flying Bird hadn't been plundered by the Black Octopus, the captain hosted a party on the deck in the evening, featuring clowns, magicians, and beast tamers. He treated everyone to three glasses of beer.

Late at night, the third-class bar bustled with activity. Philip became the center of attention, surrounded by nearly all the patrons. They took turns praising him and treating him to drinks.

They were all grateful to the security supervisor for using his friendship with Bone Splitter Basil to persuade the great pirate to leave and prevent the passengers of the Flying Bird from suffering.

Lumian, seated at the bar counter and engaged in conversation with bartender Francesco, savored the Lanti Proof. His gaze casually swept across Philip's face, and he noticed a hint of seriousness and worry beneath the blond-haired, blue-eyed middle-aged man's frivolous smile.

In other words, he wasn't that happy.

Yes, I'm sure he didn't scare the Black Octopus away... Heh heh, you're still relatively clear-headed. It's not something to celebrate knowing that a huge problem approached your ship but abnormally chose to leave. This often means that there's greater trouble lurking on your ship... Lumian chuckled inwardly and averted his gaze. He continued to converse with bartender Francesco about the beautiful women in the third-class cabin.

After nearly an hour, Philip squeezed out of the drunken crowd and sat beside Lumian with his lover, Gozia.

He knocked on the table and ordered a glass of golden beer. Casually, he said, “You actually enjoy drinking in such a rowdy place.”

“The girls here are more enthusiastic than in first class.” Lumian could roughly guess Philip's motive for coming, but he didn't inquire further.

Philip chuckled. “That's true.”

Casually, he inquired, “What did you do when the Black Octopus arrived?”

“Don't you remember? I wasn't far from you. Don't you know what I did?” Lumian replied candidly.

Philip nodded slightly and didn't press further.

Lumian took a sip of liquor and asked with a smile, “Do you think there's a huge problem on the ship that scared off that little troublemaker?”

Philip turned his head and glanced at Lumian, not too surprised that he had made such a connection.

“What are you two talking about?” The tipsy Gozia couldn't quite grasp the conversation between the two men.

It was as if they were speaking in riddles.

“That's the most logical explanation I can come up with,” Philip replied, ignoring his lover's question.

Lumian asked with interest, “Who do you think is suspicious?”

From yesterday afternoon to noon today, the security supervisor must have warned many people.

Philip set down his beer mug and massaged his temples.

After some thought, he smiled. “I wanted to tell you, but I don't think that's necessary now.”

“Why?” Lumian inquired curiously.

Philip took another sip of his beer and chuckled.

“As long as that huge problem doesn't erupt on the ship, it won't be a problem for me.

“As you can see, it hasn't revealed itself and is quietly hiding. This means that it might just want to reach the archipelago or Port Santa without a hitch.”

At this point, Philip sighed and said with experience, “Many times, when you see an abnormality, there's no need to care or figure out the truth. Pretending not to notice and patiently waiting for the abnormality to leave is the best choice.

“The abnormality that didn't erupt isn't abnormal. Your investigation and investigation might agitate it, escalating the problem and causing the catastrophe to truly descend.

“As long as that abnormality doesn't truly harm us, try your best to maintain reverence and avoid stimulation. That's one of the key reasons why I've been able to survive at sea until now.”

Lumian nodded gently and said, “A relative of mine once mentioned that in certain events, those who can't see, hear, speak, or smell are more likely to survive.”

Philip smiled and extended his right hand.

“I'm glad you share that understanding.”

This was his true motive for coming to talk to Lumian. He wanted Lumian, who was using a fake identity, not to be curious and try to figure out the hidden trouble on the ship.

That might implicate the entire ship!

Understanding Philip's meaning, Lumian couldn't help but raise his eyebrows.

Does this mean there are other troubles on the ship?

Chapter 514 Huge Wave

Lumian took a moment to consider. He didn't think there was any real danger.

Philip's concern was based on Bone Splitter Basil's reaction, which only hinted at a potential problem on the ship. While Philip knew which passengers and crew members were suspicious, he couldn't pinpoint the real source of the trouble. He wasn't even sure if he was right, and wouldn't dare to be certain. Therefore, his suspect might not be the actual issue.

In other words, it was more likely that the real problem was actually sitting right beside him: Lumian and his new godson, Ludwig. However, Philip wasn't aware of this, and by excluding them, would mistakenly focus on other suspects.

Apart from Ludwig and me, whether there are other serious problems or not, Philip is right, Lumian thought, letting out a soft sigh. Before any major troubles surface, it's best not to investigate or provoke them. We'll pretend not to see, hear, or speak, and wait for them to reach their destination and leave the Flying Bird...

Of course, this depends on the situation remaining stable. If any abnormalities arise, we'd have to find a way to resolve them immediately. Sometimes, pretending not to see things doesn't prevent them from worsening. The Cordu catastrophe is a gruesome reminder of that... Lumian thought and sighed softly.

He turned around and extended his hand, briefly shaking Philip's with a smile.

“I'm glad we reached an agreement.”

Philip breathed a sigh of relief, retracted his right hand, and downed his golden malt beer.

He had been worried that someone like Louis Berry, who used a fake identity and was suspected of being a criminal, would be stubborn and adventurous. He was concerned that Louis wouldn't listen to reason and would insist on uncovering the “huge problem” that scared off the Black Octopus.

Philip felt no sympathy for someone who might die because of their own foolishness, but he didn't want them to endanger everyone else.

Thankfully, Louis Berry seemed like someone who could be reasoned with.

As Philip drained his beer, he kept assuring himself:

The Fog Sea Archipelago wasn't far from the Republic. In fact, its proximity was why Intis had chosen it as its first overseas colony. The Flying Bird wouldn't need to stop at other ports for supplies on its journey, allowing it to arrive directly.

Assuming the weather remained calm, the Flying Bird should dock in Farim, the capital of the Fog Sea Archipelago, by the following evening. If they encountered bad weather, they might need to slow down, change course, or seek refuge in another port. The latest they could arrive would be noon the day after tomorrow.

Perhaps that troublesome problem would disembark in Port Farim?

Even if something was brewing beneath the surface, it wouldn't fully erupt in just a day or two.

Endure, and it would be over!

Reassured, Philip—hugging his lover, Gozia—rose from his barstool and left the bustling bar.

Lumian continued sipping his Lanti Proof, seemingly unfazed.

With a smile, he turned to the bartender, Francesco, and remarked, "I've heard that many Feynapotterians are homesick. Even when they have to leave for work, they often return home, write letters, or send telegrams. You, however, chose to work overseas, on a ship that makes it difficult to stay in touch with the outside world."

Francesco raised his hand and gestured. "While I love my family dearly, families like ours, with generations living together, often face various problems and conflicts. My grandmother, a wise woman, manages us well, but it can be stifling for the younger generation. There are too many elders eager to share their life experiences.

"Furthermore, my home is in Port Santa. The Flying Bird docks there almost every month. So, for me, this job is both work and a trip home."

It's just like the book that described Feynapotterian customs. Feynapotterians enjoy living in large families spanning multiple generations. And in such families, the most senior woman who has given birth becomes the natural matriarch, controlling the entire family's affairs, regardless of whether her husband is alive. In a religious sense, such a woman is considered the embodiment of Earth Mother within the family... His chat with Bartender Francesco wasn't purely for relaxation. He had two goals: Firstly, he wanted to understand the passengers better through Francesco's eyes. His final destination was Port Santa, which was five to six days away. Paying attention to the various details of life on the Flying Bird was crucial. Secondly, he wanted to verify the information in his books and gain a grasp of local customs in the Feynapotter Kingdom. Missing out on important knowledge could lead him to misinterpret situations in Port Santa.

The night passed peacefully, save for a child waking up twice to eat, the rhythmic chewing noises hardly disturbing Lumian's sleep. The gentle rocking of the ship and the waves outside his window created a lulling atmosphere.

Just when he thought the Flying Bird would smoothly reach Port Farim, the capital of the Fog Sea Archipelago, by evening, the weather took a sudden turn.

The sea, previously veiled in a thin fog, began to seethe. Giant waves, like towering mountains, rose and fell in rapid succession.

The Flying Bird bobbed precariously on the waves, its air of colossal power replaced by vulnerability.

Now, it was a mere leaf tossed between the sky and the sea, a toy in the hands of a giant. Tiny and fragile, it seemed ready to capsize at any moment.

Oddly, the massive waves were not accompanied by darkness or torrential rain. Instead, the howling wind dispersed the fog above, revealing a clear azure sky.

A sailor scrambled down from the observation deck and, holding his telescope to Philip, shouted, "Boss, this wave isn't right!

"Only our area has waves this big! Everywhere else is calm!

"There's no rain here either!"

Philip, holding onto Gozia who trembled pale from the force of the elements, instinctively furrowed his brow.

Abnormal waves?

Had that "major problem" caused them?

No sooner had the thought crossed his mind than the Flying Bird was flung into the air by a monstrous wave, only to be slammed onto another.

Terrifying jolts and tremors reverberated through the air, eliciting screams of fear from many passengers.

They sensed the Flying Bird teetering on the brink of capsizing, a shipwreck imminent.

In first-class cabin number 5, Lugano stared calmly out the window, gripping the frame as the dining table slid across the room with the force of the storm.

He knew that if the Flying Bird couldn't withstand the tempest, Lumian Lee would undoubtedly "teleport" him and Ludwig to safety in Port Farim.

Lumian, gazing at the strangely calm azure sea beyond the monstrous waves, sensed something amiss.

He wasted no time, retrieving the Mystery Prying Glasses from his Traveler's Bag, hoping to uncover the hidden cause of this disaster.

As the brown, gold-rimmed glasses settled on the bridge of his nose, a familiar dizziness washed over him. He saw a chaotic montage of scenes around him unfold.

On deck, a tidal wave surged, tossing Philip. Clutching a rope in desperation, he descended rapidly with Gozia. He instinctively positioned himself below her, shielding his new lover from the fall. He landed with a heavy thud, the rope burning a gash into his palm, drawing blood.

Chaos reigned in the dining hall as plates, knives, and forks flew through the air; customers were flung around.

In one room, a blurry figure of a woman sat by the window, sobbing uncontrollably.

The boiler chamber was a scene of disarray, scattered coal littering the floor. Beneath it crawled a horrifying horde of creatures resembling seashells.

And beneath the deceptively calm azure surface, a peculiar fish gazed up at the beleaguered Flying Bird!

Its size rivaled that of a shark, its grayish-black body devoid of scales, replaced instead by numerous, pulsing meatballs. These strange orbs shimmered with an interconnected, faint starlight, forming cryptic symbols. It sported a pair of eyes on each side of its head, and its gaping maw was as sharp as a flagpole.

Surrounding this strange fish and numerous similar fish seemed to form a school.

With a sharp gasp, Lumian ripped off the Mystery Prying Glasses and stuffed them back into his Traveler's Bag, his chest heaving.

He suspected the strange fish were behind the violent waves, though it was unclear if the wind was a consequence of the upheaval or a separate cause.

Knowing the strange fish were submerged, Lumian discarded the idea of using a massive fireball to guide the Flying Bird's cannons towards them.

Instead, he activated the black mark on his right shoulder and “teleported” himself to the nearby patch of sea he had just witnessed.

As he did so, he retrieved the blackened bone flute adorned with dark-red holes.

General Philip's Symphony of Hatred!

Lumian materialized mid-air and, while descending, brought the bone flute to his lips.

He had learned the flute from shepherds during his time in Cordu, and over the past few days, he had been diligently practicing and refining his skills. Now, he began to play a melodious tune, one filled with a longing for home.

It was a favorite melody among the wandering shepherds.

The muffled explosions of fireballs churned the water, slowing Lumian's descent. But amidst his melody, a new tune, one that seemed to emanate from the depths of destiny itself, pierced through the seawater and reached the “ears” of the strange fish and their kind below.

Suddenly, the strange fish froze. A mountain-like wave descended, but no new ones followed.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The smaller fish surrounding the strange fish exploded from their heads, turning on their own kind in a frenzy. Others simply died and floated to the surface.

Lumian's descent accelerated as his feet, legs, and body submerged into the icy sea.

He continued playing the shepherds' longing melody, feeling the seawater reach his neck and threatening to engulf his mouth.

The next moment, dark-red blood oozed from the four eyes and multiple bumps on the shark-sized fish.

The terrifying waves subsided rapidly.

With only half his head above water, Lumian lowered the bone flute and smiled. He activated Spirit World Traversal once more.

Cough, cough, cough! As he materialized back in Room 5 of the first-class cabin, salty seawater spewed from his mouth.

In his eagerness to ensure the effectiveness of the music, he had stopped playing too late, ending up swallowing a mouthful of seawater. Additionally, fearing that too much commotion would disrupt the “teleportation,” he had held his breath until returning before choking.

Is this a form of unluckiness? Lumian mused.

Lugano, startled by Lumian's drenched state, asked, “Is it resolved?”

“Seems like it,” Lumian replied with a smile.

His shoes and trouser legs bore the marks of wear and tear, scorched and dripping seawater.

At that moment, cheers erupted across the Flying Bird as passengers and crew noticed the receding waves.

“Praise the Sun!”

“By steam!”

“Thank you, Mother of All Things!”

Chapter 515 Strange Fish

Philip, unlike the other jubilant crew and passengers, pushed Gozia away whilst ignoring the pain in his back and palms and dashed to the ship's side, eyes scanning the vast expanse of the sea.

He shifted relentlessly, searching for anything unusual, anything out of place.

Then, a muffled cry pierced the air.

Stunned, he pinpointed the source and sprinted towards the Flying Bird's bow.

The cry grew louder, more desperate. Philip saw a crimson stain blossoming on the distant blue, a large shadow shifting beneath.

The shadow rapidly materialized into a monstrous fish with four eyes—grayish-blue orbs replacing scales and a terrifyingly sharp mouth.

This wasn't a small fish. It writhed and thrashed, frantic flicks of its tail sending water droplets flying.

Waves surged around it, reaching heights of five to six meters even without the wind's aid, crashing down with thunderous force.

The shrill cries subsided momentarily, and the four-eyed monster, gripped by palpable fear, plunged back into the depths, swimming away with a speed that belied its size.

Its remaining brethren followed close behind.

In the first-class cabin 5 by the window, Lumian changed into dry clothes with the casual indifference of someone unobserved.

He knew the Symphony of Hatred had ignited the four-eyed fish's terror, which is why he opted for a swift “teleport” back instead of leaping into the air and unleashing another devastating attack while the creature surfaced.

Fear would drive the monster away and prevent it from unleashing its full fury and raising further havoc.

“Phew,” Philip breathed, relief washing over him as the four-eyed fish disappeared from sight.

“Thank goodness, thank goodness,” he muttered, his voice filled with gratitude. He spread his arms wide and exclaimed, “Praise the Sun!”

“Do you know that fish?”

A voice suddenly broke the silence beside Philip.

He turned in surprise to see Louis Berry, with his black hair, green eyes, and sharp features, standing beside him.

His lover, Gozia, stood hesitantly at the cabin entrance, wanting to approach but afraid of approaching the shipboard.

“It's the Mutated Bannerfish. Heh heh, that's what scholars call it. At sea, they have another name for it—Death Navigators,” Philip answered Lumian's question, pressing his hand against the shipboard for support.

“Death Navigators? Why haven't I heard of it?” Lumian asked, genuinely curious.

To be honest, his knowledge of Beyonder creatures was limited. His previous experiences mainly involved dealing with Beyonders, heretics, and Rampagers.

Philip glanced at him, exhaled, and smiled faintly.

“These fish-like creatures have only appeared in recent years. Many sailors call them the sea's demons.”

Only appeared in recent years... Lumian frowned thoughtfully.

Such descriptions often pointed towards the corruption of evil gods, environmental anomalies, or natural disasters.

“Has it only recently appeared in the Fog Sea, or was there no legend of such a fish in the Five Seas?” Lumian interrupted Philip's explanation, eager to clarify his doubts.

Philip pondered for a moment before speaking.

“I used to serve in the Fog Sea fleet. Apart from the Fog Sea, I've only traveled the North Sea. I don't know much about the Berserk Sea, the Sonia Sea, or the Polar Sea, but until a few years ago, I never heard any mention of such a strange fish from the crew, pirates, or colleagues from other fleets.”

Could they be fish corrupted by an evil god? Lumian suddenly felt grateful that he hadn't impulsively tried to eliminate the Mutated Bannerfish.

Not only would it have exposed his Beyonder powers to the many crew members and passengers, but it could have also led to unforeseen dangers. And for what?

A pile of trash that would only be good enough to feed Ludwig!

Seeing that Louis Berry was no longer fixated on the detail, Philip continued, “Mutated Bannerfish appear on fog-free nights, hovering upright as if silently observing the cosmos. Many sailors and pirates have witnessed this sight, believing the fish are summoning an evil entity.

“Think about it. The night sea is pitch black, the crimson moon barely visible, and only starlight illuminates the terrifying, distorted fish heads silently emerging from the water, motionless and arranged in strange patterns... It's enough to scare anyone!”

Gazing at the cosmos... Could they have been corrupted by an evil god's power for some reason? Lumian pondered for a few seconds before asking, “Why are they called Death Navigators?”

Philip rubbed his cheeks.

“After surveying the cosmos, the Mutated Bannerfish remain on the surface, forming two lines like an arrowhead that points towards a specific spot in the sea, as if guiding some unknown creature.

“Some pirates, adventurers, and treasure hunters believe this points to valuable items or hidden treasures, so they try to follow the Mutated Bannerfish to see where they lead.

“But none of the ships that attempted this ever returned, and the crew vanished.

“That's why we call them Death Navigators.”

Philip sighed and continued, “I once heard from sailors that the Death Navigators can control the waves. Judging by what we just saw, this rumor seems very likely, and it's much worse than I imagined.

“Right, that Mutated Bannerfish must have been relatively powerful even among Death Navigators.

“However, no Death Navigator has ever attacked a human ship before...”

A soft chuckle escaped Lumian's lips.

“Perhaps they attacked, but no one survived to spread the news.”

Philip was taken aback.

“That's true. In such a tidal wave, once a ship capsizes or shatters, only those with special abilities would stand a chance.”

He paused and muttered to himself, “Did that troublesome figure provoke the Death Navigators' attack?”

“It's possible,” Lumian replied sincerely.

After confirming that the Death Navigators hadn't returned, Philip turned to the passengers and crew huddled by the window and cabin entrance.

“The danger has passed! The weather has returned to normal!”

The humans, who had cheered earlier, erupted in relieved cries, praising their deities.

Philip looked away and pondered, “Did the Death Navigator ultimately succumb to that unknown threat? I could feel its immense fear.”

“It's possible,” Lumian replied with the same sincerity.

With this interlude, the Flying Bird increased its speed and arrived at Port Farim, the capital of the Fog Sea Archipelago, before nightfall.

The sun set behind Saint Tick Island, casting a crimson glow over the distant sea, vast forests, and the dormant brown volcano. The sight was magnificent and breathtaking.

Farim, in the native language of the Fog Sea Archipelago, meant “having fragrance and sweetness.” Saint Tick Island was rich in cloves, nutmeg, pepper, and sugarcane. Fruits were mainly bananas and grapes, while the rest of the land was planted with cotton.

Looking at the white-walled, red-roofed buildings lining the coastline, the masts, sails, and smokestacks emitting fog, Lumian chuckled and said, “Emperor Roselle, who named this city back then, probably didn't expect Farim to become the last bastion of the indigenous language.”

Under generations of cultural genocide, the current Islanders could only speak Intisian. Their native language had been lost long ago.

There might be elders in the primitive tribes living deep within the forest who still understood the indigenous language, but in all the colonial cities and surrounding plantations, one language reigned supreme—Intisian.

Of course, the Fog Sea Archipelago had its own unique dialects, a blend of Intisian and indigenous languages, rarely used by Intisians outside this region.

“Are you disembarking?” Lugano inquired of Lumian.

The Flying Bird wouldn't be leaving the port until the next afternoon.

“Of course,” Lumian replied with a hint of excitement. “Now that we're here in Farim, I can't miss the chance to try their famous Golden Somme! Would you like to lead the way, bringing me and Ludwig around, or would you prefer to stay here and keep an eye on him?”

The Fog Sea Archipelago was known for its superior sugarcane, and the sugar liquor produced from its syrup, called “Golden Somme,” was legendary.

Lugano's first instinct was to accompany his employer, as he felt safer around Lumian's capable and decisive presence. However, after a moment of reflection, the Doctor decided it would be wiser to stay on board.

While Lumian was undeniably formidable, his talent for attracting trouble was equally impressive!

Leaving Ludwig with enough food for dinner and two rounds of late-night snacks, Lumian disembarked from the Flying Bird, dressed in a white shirt, a black vest, a dark jacket, and matching pants.

In Trier, it was already early autumn, and the air was crisp with chill. However, the Fog Sea Archipelago seemed to be enjoying the tail end of summer. Though the air was warm, it was quickly dispersed by the refreshing sea breeze.

As Lumian strolled out of the port, he spotted a brown-skinned, wrinkled old woman with black features selling golden straw hats across the street.

These hats were woven from a local plant called Golden Leaves, which was favored by the believers of the Eternal Blazing Sun religion. Wearing one supposedly gave the illusion of having the sun shining directly overhead.

Intrigued by the idea, Lumian purchased a hat for 5 licks and placed it on his head. He then continued his leisurely stroll towards the nearby square.

In the heart of the square stood a Sun Obelisk, surrounded by numerous notices adorned with wanted posters.

Lumian stopped, his hands instinctively slipping into his pockets. Before the sun dipped below the horizon, he scanned the wanted posters and committed the bounties to memory.

“Queen Mystic, one of the maritime kings... Bounty of 100 million verl d'or.

“King of the Five Seas Nast, one of the maritime kings... Bounty of 20 million verl d'or.

“Queen of Stars Cattleya, one of the maritime kings... Bounty of 11 million verl d'or.

“King of Immortality Agalito, one of the maritime kings... Bounty of 4 million verl d'or.

“Queen of Ailment Tracy, one of the maritime kings... Bounty of 3 million verl d'or.

“King of Dusk Bulatov Ivan, one of the maritime kings... Bounty of 2.6 million verl d'or..”

Observing Lumian's intense scrutiny of the six maritime kings' wanted posters, an adventurer standing beside him couldn't resist cracking a joke.

“Looking to hunt the maritime kings, eh?”

Lumian whirled back to face the teasing man.

“Doesn't every adventurer who comes to sea dream of following in Gehrman Sparrow's great footsteps?”

The joking adventurer wasn't past his twenties. Curly brown hair topped a gaunt face, his Intis-blue eyes sparkling with amusement. Despite the unkempt stubble adorning his chin, he emanated a middle-class Trier air, refined in his details.

His attire: a thin blue coat, white pants, and brown boots. A large-caliber revolver and an exquisite rapier balanced his waist.

Lumian's retort and lofty aspirations seemed to surprise the adventurer. He chuckled after a moment, “Even Sparrow didn't manage to hunt down any pirate kings.”

“Wasn't Gehrman Sparrow the one who supposedly killed Barros Hopkins, the vanished King of Black Throne, one of the original Four Kings of the Sea?” Although The Adventurer series hadn't touched upon it yet, Lumian was a dedicated reader of maritime tales in newspapers and magazines.

The adventurer scoffed, “Unconfirmed. Only when it's inked into The Adventurer series is it truth. They say Fors Wall was specially hired by the Church of The Fool to promote Sparrow's exploits.”

Just as I suspected, the famous author, Fors Wall, operates under the protection of The Fool Church, allowing her to write without fear about the secrets of the great pirates... Lumian asked with interest, “So, the relationship between Gehrman Sparrow, the former Vice Admiral Ailment, and the current Queen of Ailment is real?”

“I'd bet on it. The Queen of Ailment herself has never denied it,” the adventurer replied, clearly enjoying the conversation.

After their chat, the adventurer, with his playful demeanor, found Lumian even more appealing. He smiled and asked, “How should I address you? After learning your name and you becoming a legend like Gehrman Sparrow, I can brag to other adventurers that I knew you before you became famous.”

His last sentence was laced with good-natured jest.

“Louis Berry,” Lumian offered his alias. “What about you? Perhaps you'll be the next Gehrman Sparrow.”

“Batna Comté.” The adventurer with the wide-aperture revolver and exquisite rapier chuckled and said, “I don't expect to end up like Gehrman Sparrow. I wouldn't mind becoming the next Blazing Danitz or even the former Strongest Hunter of the Fog Sea, Anderson. That would be quite satisfying.”

Quite ambitious... He doesn't seem like a newbie to the seas... Lumian quickly assessed Batna, unconsciously slipping into a Conspirer's mindset. He still believes achieving power like Blazing Danitz is possible after everything he's seen. That suggests a strong sense of self-belief... Could he be a Beyonder as well?

Adjusting his golden straw hat, Lumian smiled at Batna Comté. “Drink's on me. How about it?”

Stepping into Port Farim, the bustling capital of the Fog Sea Archipelago, Saint Tick Island, Lumian carried a double purpose: to unearth more pirate intel and acquire the remaining supplementary ingredients for the Reaper potion.

This mission demanded contact with Beyonders and local information brokers.

As his thoughts raced, Madam Magician's reward flickered across his mind:

“Reaper potion formula:

“Sequence: 5;

“Main ingredients: Gray Demonic Wolf's front claws, Forest Hunter's tongue;

“Supplementary ingredients: 80 milliliters of Gray Demonic Wolf's blood, two Forest Hunter's fangs, 10 drops of Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard venom, and 10 drops of hornbeam essential oil;

“Ritual: Plan and execute a successful capture of a target with a Sequence higher than your own. Flaunt the completed conspiracy before them, and consume the potion as they witness your victory, filled with fear and despair.

“Note 1: The increased number and higher Sequence the captured targets and the greater their fear, regret, and anger, the more potent the ritual's effect.

“Note 2: The two main ingredients can be substituted with Gardner Martin's Beyonder characteristic. His blood and two teeth can also replace the Gray Demonic Wolf's blood and Forest Hunter's fangs, respectively.

In other words, Lumian only had one sole missing ingredient: the venom of the Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard. This ingredient hinted at a rare creature. Fortunately, hornbeam essential oil, a common ingredient among mysticism enthusiasts, was already in his possession before he left Trier.

“Alright.” Batna Comté didn't reject Lumian's invitation.

The two walked towards a side street off the square, where a bustling open- air market unfolded.

Towering piles of fruits lined the roadside, while stalls brimmed with Golden Leaves straw hats, juicy sugarcane, sweet scones, savory roasted meat, native cigarettes, and fried banana slices. Brownish-black Islanders, foreign sailors, curious tourists, and seasoned adventurers mingled around barbecue stalls, sharing drinks and laughter.

Two nearby bars, their doors flung open, offered round tables spilling onto the sidewalk, inviting passersby to linger and enjoy a drink.

Batna surveyed the lively scene and cautioned Lumian, “Seems like this is your first visit to the archipelago. Remember, never trust an Islander.

“Their outward deference and meekness mask their true intentions. They dream of swindling our money and selling us for a hefty price. If you lack the strength and

intelligence to put them in their place, their evil thoughts will surely be put into action."

Lumian met Batna's gaze and chuckled.

"Did they take advantage of you when you first arrived?"

Batna fell silent, avoiding the question.

Lumian didn't press further. He spent two licks for a small bag of freshly fried banana slices. The crisp exterior gave way to a soft, sweet interior, bursting with flavor.

As he chewed, Batna muttered, "Those are just for children and women."

How could a grown man, determined to follow in Gehrman Sparrow's great footsteps, be indulging in fried banana slices?

In theory, at least, I'm still a minor... Lumian mentally dismissed the matter. As they continued through the market, he turned to Batna and asked, "Do pirates often enter Port Farim in disguise?"

"Yes, frequently," Batna replied without hesitation. "But hunting them here is hardly worth the trouble."

"Why not?" Lumian raised an eyebrow. "It would be easier to collect the bounty on their heads."

Batna chuckled and lowered his voice.

"Port Farim's officials tacitly allow pirates to come here, selling their plundered goods and buying supplies and pleasures in return.

"The pirate trade is a major economic force in Port Farim. Many, including the governor, the local fleet commander, and the garrison head, have amassed wealth through it."

"As long as the pirates keep a low profile, going after them in Farim is like challenging the local power players. If that happens, you and the pirates risk getting caught, but the pirates might find a way to 'jailbreak.'"

"Does Trier not have any objections?" Lumian asked, amused.

Outside Trier, people often referred to the Intis government as Trier.

"Who knows? Maybe those who know about the pirate trade are swimming in wealth from corruption. If they don't, they won't bother figuring it out," Batna chuckled.

"Either way, pirates are pretty chill in Port Farim and prefer avoiding trouble."

"Is that so..." Lumian pondered for a moment and said, "If a pirate attacks me, don't I have the right to defend myself?"

“Yes, but why would they initiate an attack on you?” Batna could sense this guy was trying to provoke the pirates.

“Perhaps they think I'm an easy target?” Lumian replied as he and Batna Comté turned to a nearby bar.

They entered it, choosing to sit inside instead of on the street.

It was equally lively inside, with a mixed-race woman dancing provocatively on the wooden stage at the hall's center. Her moves synchronized with the music, frequently lifting her legs and following the rhythm. Gradually, she shed her jacket and various layers, revealing ample areas of healthy skin and gentle curves.

As she placed her hand on her undergarment, the surrounding patrons responded with whistles and loud cheers, the atmosphere reaching its climax.

“How about this? In some ways, isn't Farim more open-minded than Trier? Not only can you see it, but you can also take it away with a sum of money,” Batna remarked with a smile.

Lumian raised his right hand and declared, “This only means that Farim is far enough from the reach of both the Churches and the Trier Avenue du Boulevard.”

“What do you mean?” Batna was momentarily taken aback.

Lumian adopted a pious tone, mimicking a devout believer in the Eternal Blazing Sun. “It's too far from justice to be bound by the law!”

Seeing Batna's expression freeze, Lumian smiled again.

“Just kidding! Out at sea, who cares about the law? Might makes right!”

Batna chuckled, relieved. “For a second there, I thought you were about to purify the place in the name of God.”

Taking their seats, they ordered the Fog Sea Archipelago's famous sugar liquor, Golden Somme.

Eight licks per glass was much cheaper than a Trier.

As the caramel-sweet liquor warmed his throat, Lumian launched into an enthusiastic conversation about Gehrman Sparrow, acting like a devoted follower. He chatted with Batna and even the bartender, drawing them into his passionate discourse.

After a while, Lumian finished his Golden Somme and stood up, drawn towards the central wooden platform where a new stripper had taken the stage.

Batna watched with a knowing smile. He assumed the lad couldn't resist the allure.

Lumian approached the platform, grabbed two patrons who were blocking his way, and effortlessly tossed them aside. With a powerful push against the platform's edge, he leaped onto the stage.

Under everyone's bewildered gaze, Lumian drew his revolver, aimed it at the bar's ceiling, and fired.

Bang!

Dust rained down, startling the stripper into a crouch. Patrons panicked, scrambling for cover. Some stood frozen in shock, others glared indignantly or frowned, and a few even sported expectant grins.

What is he thinking? What is he doing? Batna was dumbfounded.

Lumian blew on the revolver's muzzle and flashed a grin at the patrons.

“Everyone, may I have your attention. I have something to ask you.”

Chapter 517 Prominent Merchant

Lumian ignored the stunned silence that followed his question. A smirk played on his lips as he addressed the group,

“So, where can a fellow find some mystical trinkets around here?”

Upon hearing this question, Batna Comté couldn't help but raise his right hand and finish his remaining Golden Somme.

Where did this punk come from?

How could he ask such a question in public?

Even if nobody reported him, they'd only see him as a fool!

For a moment, Batna regretted accepting Louis Berry's invitation. This fellow would tarnish his reputation by association.

Noticing the odd expressions around the bar, Lumian gave a nonchalant shrug. He holstered his revolver and announced,

“Looks like you're all just ordinary folk, then.”

With that, he leaped off the wooden platform, navigating through the startled crowd back to the counter.

The two drunkards he'd thrown out, along with the others who had been frightened by him, measured his strength and weapons, choosing not to retaliate.

Back on his barstool, Lumian ordered a Lanti Proof with a grin at Batna.

“Port Farim is certainly more open than Trier.”

Batna studied Louis Berry with an “are you serious?” expression, forcing a smile.

“We must follow Gehrman Sparrow's career, not his actions.”

Is this fellow so obsessed with Gehrman Sparrow that he mimics his cold, reckless demeanor?

Gehrman Sparrow, at least, had the strength to back up his madness. What about you?

Furthermore, Gehrman Sparrow exudes a cold and indifferent madness, while you are reckless, foolish, and brainless. How can the two be equal?

Lumian ignored Batna's jab and turned the conversation to the recent surge in pirate activity in the Fog Sea.

After finishing his Lanti Proof, he bid farewell to Batna and headed out. Walking through the bustling open-air market, he made his way towards the harbor.

Just as Lumian returned to the square plastered with announcements, a sudden jolt sent him whirling around.

A male Islander, sporting a half-top hat and a dusty black jacket, approached hesitantly, a strained smile plastered on his face.

“I saw you at the bar earlier.”

“Cut to the chase,” Lumian urged impatiently.

The Islander, his brownish-black skin stretched over a lean face, leaned in and lowered his voice.

“Looking for mystical items, are we? I know just the place.”

“Really?” Lumian asked in disbelief.

“Can't promise anything, but it's worth a shot. Just don't buy anything if they turn out unsuitable.” The Islander's gaze flicked to Lumian's left armpit. “Besides, you're armed and dangerous. Not exactly an easy target for robbery, right?”

“That's true.” Lumian contemplated this for a moment, then gave a slow nod. “What's your name?”

“Carmel.” The Islander gestured towards a narrow street branching off the square. “Follow me. It's close.”

Lumian trailed nonchalantly behind Carmel, their path crossing two streets before they arrived in a district eerily reminiscent of Rue Anarchie.

Crumbling buildings huddled close, new construction jostling for space amidst the narrow road.

Carmel led Lumian into a dimly lit laundry shop, its interior draped with damp clothes. They navigated the maze of hanging garments, arriving finally deep inside the dark room.

There was a door there.

“Disguise yourself first,” Carmel instructed, retrieving two hooded black robes from a hook nearby. “Those who dabble in such things prefer to keep their identities secret.”

Lumian donned the robe, pulling the hood low over his face. Carmel then rapped on the door in a specific rhythm.

It creaked open, revealing a makeshift living room furnished with an old sofa, threadbare armchairs, and a mismatched assortment of furniture.

Six figures, cloaked in identical robes, sat in various positions, their faces obscured by the shadows.

Lumian politely closed the door behind him as Carmel made a brief introduction.

After the two pulled up a stool and sat down, a man with his hood pulled low leaned forward and whispered,

“I need a Royal Jellyfish's venom crystal. I can offer 5,000 verl d'or.”

Silence.

The next participant sold a Strange Sea Eagle eyeball he had procured.

Seeing that their discussion was on point, Lumian stood up and surveyed the gathering.

“I need a Sphinx's brain. Name your price.”

The man seeking the Crown Jellyfish's venom crystal's voice was carefully controlled as he replied, “I happen to have one. If you pay me 30,000 verl d'or, it's yours.”

“How can I be sure of its authenticity?” Lumian asked him directly.

The Strange Sea Eagle eyeball seller interjected in a raspy voice, “I can notarize it for you.”

“Excellent. Let me take a look at the goods first,” Lumian smiled, approaching the seller.

The man replied calmly, “Such a valuable mystical item, you wouldn't expect me to carry it around, would you?”

“I'll only bring it to you if you pay a 50% deposit first. It's upstairs. You can follow me and make sure I don't escape. You can even put the deposit with the Notary for safekeeping.”

“Very reasonable.” Just as Lumian finished speaking, he suddenly lunged at the trader with the speed of a cheetah, a right hook swinging through the air.

Bang!

The man crumpled to the ground, his teeth flying in a spray of blood.

The other participants, including the Notary and Carmel, were momentarily stunned before scrambling for the door.

None of them challenged Lumian's assault, nor attempted to use their powers. Their sole focus was on escape.

Carmel, closest to the exit, flung open the door and bolted.

In an instant, his vision blurred, and he found himself back in the simple living room, alongside two others who had suffered the same fate.

They all looked bewildered, as if witnessing a folktale come alive.

Bang!

A yellow bullet slammed into the exit door.

The hooded figures huddled down, covering their heads with practiced movements.

Lumian spun around, pulled back the trader's hood, and pressed the revolver's muzzle against his forehead.

“Not a bad scam,” Lumian said with a smile.

He had orchestrated an impromptu conspiracy, drawing attention with a gunshot in the bar and publicly expressing his need for a mystical item. This allowed him to identify any greedy pirates or local swindlers who might possess knowledge beyond the reach of ordinary citizens, including black market information.

It was also a way to digest the potion.

The seller was a typical Islander, with brownish-black skin, a long face, gentle features, and dark amber eyes.

“I wasn't lying to you!” he insisted anxiously and angrily.

“Really?” Lumian cocked the revolver's hammer.

Before closing the door, Lumian had created a Bottle of Fiction, setting a condition that only Beyonders could enter.

None of the participants had successfully “escaped,” which confirmed the absence of Beyonders.

If you're not a Beyonder, why mention the main ingredient of the Conspirer potion? Just for fun?

The seller trembled and stammered, “I-I'm sorry. We just wanted to scam some money. We-we can't survive otherwise!”

Lumian wasn't interested in their motives. He glanced at the neatly lined-up accomplices and tapped the trader's forehead with the gun's muzzle.

“What's your name?”

“Roddy,” the seller replied, swallowing hard.

Another tap to the forehead.

“Where did you hear about the Sphinx brain, Crown Jellyfish's venom crystal, and Notary?”

This information was inaccessible to ordinary people.

“I-I can't say.” A sheen of cold sweat appeared on Roddy's forehead.

Confidentiality agreement or other restrictions? Lumian studied Roddy for a few seconds and smiled.

“Then tell me who your master is.”

Roddy froze, his eyes widening in fear.

He hadn't expected the other party to be so certain he had a master, that he was someone else's servant.

“Three, two...” Lumian began the countdown.

“It's Sir Morgalla,” Roddy blurted out.

“Then take me there,” Lumian calmly requested.

Roddy's sweating intensified.

“No, no, I'm Monsieur Fidel's attendant.

“He's the vice president of the Port Farim Joint Chamber of Commerce.”

Participating in numerous mysticism gatherings organized by Fidel as an attendant? Although he can't divulge the corresponding information to others, he can use the information he obtained to swindle adventurers? Lumian stood up thoughtfully, dismantled the Bottle of Fiction, and led Carmel and his swindler accomplices out. He interrogated them one by one and confirmed that Roddy was indeed Fidel Guerra's attendant.

One of the vice president of the Port Farim Joint Chamber of Commerce's primary tasks was to assist pirates in handling sensitive and illegal cargo.

Port Farim, Quartier des Black Pearls, Governor-General's Office, 16 Rue Coreas.

Lumian patted Roddy, now donned in his red attendant's attire with gold trimmings and crisp white pants. A smile played on Lumian's lips as he spoke.

“Tell Monsieur Fidel that I'm interested in purchasing some mystical ingredients and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss it further.”

“Alright.” Roddy yearned to utter a single plea: “If you could kindly remove the revolver from my back, I would be eternally grateful.”

Leaning against the weathered wall of a nearby house, Lumian watched as the swindler nervously entered Unit 16, the four-story gray-roofed building adorned with numerous statues.

The moment Roddy stepped inside, escaping the revolver's direct aim, his first instinct was to bury the whole incident and forget it ever happened.

But then he remembered the chilling warning delivered by the man who fired without hesitation: a ten-minute silence from Fidel, and Roddy's true colors as a swindler would be painted loudly across the street.

Should I lie and claim Monsieur Fidel is unavailable? But he doesn't seem easily duped. A drastic reaction could be worse... Roddy, caught in a dilemma, clenched his teeth and rapped on the study door.

Fidel Guerra, a man descended from both Intis and Feynapotter blood, possessed curly black hair that had started to show signs of age, dark brown eyes, and skin darkened by the sun. Though once known for his refined demeanor, time had etched its mark on his face, leaving behind a mane of mottled white hair and prominent wrinkles.

Dressed in a crisp white shirt and a brown vest, he quietly sipped his wine as Roddy, trembling with fear, stammered out their confession. He spoke of their ill intentions, of their attempt to swindle the new adventurer.

As soon as Roddy mentioned Lumian leaping onto the wooden platform, firing a shot to attract attention, and boldly inquiring about obtaining a mystical item, the merchant sighed and interrupted his flustered attendant.

“There's no need to elaborate further. Does he wish to see me now?”

Chapter 518 Merchant's Entrustment

16 Rue Coreas.

Twirling the brim of his golden straw hat, Lumian stopped just outside the office door and met Fidel Guerra's gaze across the desk. Lumian's grin was anything but friendly.

“Made a decision, have you? Faster than I expected.”

Fidel Guerra, with his partially Feynapotterian features, turned to Roddy and let out a soft sigh.

“Didn't expect my attendant to be the ringleader of a scam syndicate.”

“Maybe the paychecks he receives from you don't quite match the lifestyle he sees on a daily basis,” Lumian shot back habitually.

Fidel ignored the jab. He studied Lumian, eyes narrowed.

“So that bar act was all for show? To dupe fools like him?”

“Let's say I'm grateful for their thousand verl d'or donation. Looks like Port Farim's got a bright future for con artists.” No shame in his banditry, not a flicker.

Roddy felt a swarm of regret gnaw at his insides.

Fidel nodded and inquired, “What's on your shopping list?”

Lumian, affecting an air of indifference, responded, “I'm in the market for a bottle of Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard's venom.”

Isn't it the Sphinx's brain? Roddy, who was listening, was taken aback.

For a moment, he couldn't help but wonder if he was the swindler or the man opposite him.

Clad in a white shirt and brown vest, Fidel contemplated for a moment before offering, “I don't have it in stock, but I can procure it for you. It might take two to three days. As for the price, it varies, usually between 3,000 to 4,000 verl d'or, depending on the seller. Need my assistance in acquiring it?”

“No problem.” Lumian, arms slightly spread, replied, “Praise the Sun. You're a gem.”

Fidel, suspecting mockery, frowned slightly.

He maintained his composure, stating, “I'm not charitable; I'm a businessman. Why not make a profitable deal? Besides, I find forming connections with adventurers like you beneficial. Given money and resources, certain matters are easier for you to handle.”

Fidel, smiling, questioned, "Aren't you concerned about counterfeit goods? How do you confirm authenticity on the spot?"

Lumian, with an approving smile, quipped, "I know you live here. That's assurance enough. The famous merchant Fidel? Gunned down six times in a row for pulling a fast one in a deal worth a few thousand verl d'or. Not the kind of rep you'd call respectable news."

He left the issue of confirming the Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard venom's authenticity unaddressed.

Fidel maintained his impassive gaze on Lumian before a smirk crossed his face.

"I can't recall the last time someone dared to threaten me like this.

"Interested in knowing what fate befell those who did?"

"Curious if I've got the nerve to make a move now?" Lumian's gaze narrowed a touch. His smile remained, but it chilled the room in an instant.

He met Fidel's gaze without hesitation.

After a while, Fidel sighed without anger and remarked, "Your approach reminds me of someone—the legendary adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow."

"Yes, I'm mimicking him," Lumian admitted candidly.

Fidel chuckled.

"Imitating his madness, then? So, underneath the act, you're a calm, rational, and cunning individual?"

Lumian shook his head, smiling, and replied, "No. If I don't imitate him, I'd be even crazier."

The atmosphere in the study became tense once more.

Fidel, picking up and sipping fragrant black tea from a bone porcelain cup, acknowledged, "You're quite the young firebrand. Your vigor even makes an old man like me a bit envious.

"How about taking on a commission? It can fetch you a hefty sum and earn you fame at sea, akin to Gehrman Sparrow."

Lumian, adjusting his golden straw hat, inquired, "What's the job?"

"Eliminate a pirate, Baronet Black, Class Khizi, captain of the Golden Nepos. The bounty is 65,000 verl d'or," Fidel stated calmly. "He used to be the third mate of the King of Dusk, Bulatov. Left the fleet, turned to plundering on his own. Four months back, he stole a batch of my goods on Saint Tick Island. It's likely sold by now. I don't expect to recover it. I just want him dead. Let everyone know that anyone who touches my goods meets their end."

Lumian, teasingly, asked, "What if it was the King of Dusk who did it?"

Fidel fell into silence.

After a brief pause, Fidel brushed off Lumian's question and continued, "I'll provide you with regular updates on Khizi—his characteristics, strength, ship location, and onshore whereabouts. As a bonus, I'll throw in an extra 25,000 verl d'or as a reward.

"If you manage to take down Khizi, I'll expedite the process to secure the full bounty through my connections and help spread your reputation. Everything Khizi owns will be yours.

"So, what do you say? Eliminate Khizi, and you'll become one of the most renowned adventurers at sea."

25,000 additional reward and intel support... Lumian thought for a moment and asked with a smile, "How many adventurers have you pitched this to?"

"Seven or eight, all of whom I hold in high regard," Fidel replied candidly. "There's no penalty for failure, as long as you survive."

Inwardly, Lumian mused, So, it doesn't matter whether I accept the mission or not? He nodded.

"Hunting pirates is the duty of every adventurer."

With a verbal agreement established, Fidel reached into a drawer, producing a brown paper envelope, which he tossed to Lumian.

Lumian deftly caught it with one hand, untied the thread, and extracted the information, swiftly flipping through it.

Abruptly, he looked up at Fidel.

"Has Khizi been seen in Port Farim recently?"

"Yes, I'm certain of this intel, though his exact hiding spot is unknown," Fidel replied with a slight nod.

Agreeing to return in two days for updates on both the Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard venom and Baronet Black, Lumian left 16 Rue Coreas and made his way towards the harbor.

Roddy, fearing severe punishment, was surprised when Fidel merely waved him off, instructing, "Go back to your room and reflect."

"Yes, Monsieur Guerra." Roddy, relieved, left the study and ascended the dimly lit stairs to the second floor.

Yet, as he walked, a chill overcame him, and he shivered.

The darkness around him deepened, and in the dim light, something emerged from behind his shadow.

Attempting to cry out for help, Roddy, gripped by terror, found himself forever voiceless.

Meanwhile, Lumian didn't head directly back to the Flying Bird. Instead, under the cooling night sky, he strolled towards a street he had recently passed.

There stood a modest cathedral—The Fool's Cathedral.

Having previously spotted The Fool's Sacred Emblem on the bell tower, Lumian had decided to offer a prayer upon his return.

As expected, Mr. Fool's faith seems prevalent at sea. Port Farim, being an Intis colony, boasts several cathedrals. Lumian gazed at the warm light emanating from the cathedral, removed his golden straw hat, and entered.

Inside, Lumian noticed around 20 to 30 individuals, likely homeless, resting at the edge of the wide hall. Some had tattered blankets, while others relied solely on their clothes for warmth.

The Fog Sea Archipelago wouldn't turn these tramps into ice statues this season, but rain lurked, ready to pour at any time. Finding shelter was a coveted haven for these tramps, and The Fool's cathedral offered solace.

Back in my vagabond days, when brutal weather hit or days without food wore me down, I'd roll the dice in the cathedrals of the two Churches. If the bishop or padre was decent, they'd toss a meal my way and a spot to crash for the night. But come dawn, I had to vanish, or I'd end up in those rotten relief centers... Lumian reminisced, found a seat, and started praying.

The Fool's cathedral embraced silence at night. Now and then, folks strolled in, muttered their prayers, and exited. Some wore merchant garb, others rocked a sailor's look, and a few even emitted a faint pirate vibe, but none disturbed the peaceful aura.

Lumian wasn't sure what to pray for. Back when he'd occasionally drop by the Eternal Blazing Sun cathedral, he'd just echo bits of scripture in his mind, tossing wishes like coins and hoping for corresponding blessings. What if they actually came true?

Now, he knew such rituals were futile, and he had few desires.

Most importantly, Lumian had only heard clerical teachings about The Fool a few times. He couldn't remember much from the Bible except for the eight Angels and Mr. Fool's authority. But did that matter now?

Recounting his journey from leaving Trier to arriving at Port Farim, Lumian's emotions gradually settled into a sense of tranquility.

“May Mr. Fool bless me. May all catastrophes be resolved. May Aurore be resurrected...”

After about fifteen minutes, Lumian concluded his prayer with a simple wish.

As he stood up, a distant rumble echoed. The cathedral's windows rattled, and the building creaked and swayed.

Lumian raised his eyebrows. Amidst the startled tramps, he walked to the door and gazed towards the source of the noise.

Near the governor-general's office, billowing smoke and flames rose into the sky, casting an eerie glow on the surroundings.

Lumian couldn't help but raise his right hand and stroke his chin. He muttered to himself, This shouldn't have anything to do with my arrival, right?

It seemed something significant had occurred in Port Farim.

Chapter 519 One Event A Day

The flames of Quartier des Black Pearls danced in Lumian's eyes, pulling him deep into thought. As a Conspirer, his mind instinctively dissected the possibilities.

The Resistance and civil independence factions were easily ruled out—they had no presence in this archipelago, Intis's first far-flung colony. The religious and cultural genocide, along with the assimilation efforts of successive governments, they had tirelessly worked to make it happen. Emperor Roselle's policies had transformed this place into something akin to Intis's overseas province—loose laws and weak security. The Islanders, having abandoned their original faith, now saw themselves as discriminated citizens in the Intis border regions. This discrimination mirrored the plight of Reemians in the south of Intis and Savoyards in the east. Regardless, Trier's citizens held a universal disdain for all foreigners. However, their vigilance heightened against Islanders notorious for scams and thuggery.

Did the pirate trade spark internal strife, or were Southern Continent organizations, seeking to overthrow colonial rule, deliberately causing trouble in the Fog Sea Archipelago? Perhaps some ambitious individual is following the lead of an evil god. Lumian's thoughts raced as he noticed a 2.5-meter-tall half-giant emerging from a room beside the cathedral, dressed in a black trench coat and silk top hat.

Addressing the bewildered supplicants and tramps, he assured them, “Don't worry. The Lord will protect everyone.

“Stay here and don't go out. Wait for the riot to subside. There won't be any danger.”

“Praise The Fool!” The believers of The Fool Church found solace, pressing their hands to their chests and bowing.

Their expressions softened, conveying a sense of security.

The tramps exchanged glances, but none dared to leave.

In the minds of most Intisians, a cathedral was a safer haven than any government, regardless of the Church it belonged to.

At that moment, golden sunlight descended into the area where the explosion had occurred, accompanied by a series of dense explosions, though not as deafening as before.

It was evident that the governor-general's office and the Beyonders of the two Churches were addressing the anomaly.

Simultaneously, Lumian observed the sky, once illuminated by moonlight and starlight, darkening. Despite no change in the weather, the street outside seemed cloaked in a thin, dark fog.

Ignoring the half-giant bishop's shouts after a moment of contemplation, Lumian opened the cathedral door of The Fool and stepped out.

The temperature outside had notably dropped, akin to Trier's autumn.

Beneath the gas street lamps' glow, Lumian retraced his steps back to the port.

Suddenly, a swaying figure emerged from a nearby alley.

The figure, clad in a thin shirt and pants with bare feet, had a pale, wrinkled face.

His eyes were more white than brown, and livor mortis covered his exposed skin.

Zombie? Lumian raised his eyebrows.

As the suspected zombie—an old man—staggered towards Quartier des Black Pearls, it seemed to detect a hint of spirituality and blood, abruptly turning to Lumian and emitting an inhuman sound.

Lumian promptly condensed a crimson fireball, nearly white, and sent it hurtling towards the zombie.

Amidst the rumbling explosion, the zombie's head shattered, and its body disintegrated. It met its demise once more.

No more movement.

Is that all you've got? Lumian had originally wondered if he had encountered a more dangerous undead creature.

Pressing on, he formed ten to twenty crimson fireballs above his head, behind him, on his shoulders, and at his sides, allowing them to follow his movements and maintain a relative suspension.

As Lumian rounded a corner, he spotted a young couple screaming in terror and fleeing.

Behind them, a zombie pursued, its dark-red heart and white intestines faintly discernible from numerous gunshot wounds.

A nearly white crimson fireball, unleashed by Lumian, flew past the couple and exploded on the pursuing zombie.

Rumble. The charred corpse scattered in all directions, accompanied by residual flames.

The young couple, halted in surprise, stared at Lumian surrounded by ten to twenty crimson, nearly white fireballs. Confusion and disbelief filled their eyes.

“Are you waiting for death?” Lumian cursed as he advanced. “Take the back street and enter The Fool's cathedral.”

“Alright, alright!” The young man and woman responded instinctively, as if facing armed police officers or adventurers.

The fireball was clearly more powerful than a gun!

As the couple entered the street where The Fool's cathedral was located, Lumian, resembling an envoy of flames, continued towards the port at a moderate pace.

Along the way, he encountered a few more waves of people emerging from bars, open-air markets, and other places, who had encountered zombies.

Lumian didn't say a word. He directed the crimson, nearly white fireballs around him to help them eliminate the revived corpses. Then, he instructed them to hide in the nearest cathedral.

The zombies' pursuit and the intimidation of the fireballs made his words persuasive. No one insisted on finding their own way.

If there were any, Lumian couldn't be bothered.

After several similar encounters, Lumian began to discern a pattern.

These zombies weren't reanimated from the living; they were originally deceased. The entirety of Port Farim's deceased had risen without any discernible cause.

These zombies instinctively headed towards the explosion site, but if they encountered the living on the way, they'd be drawn by both flesh and spirituality, leading them to pursue, kill, and gnaw.

With this understanding, Lumian no longer advised passersby to seek refuge in distant cathedrals. Instead, he directed them to avoid hospitals, graveyards, and similar places, urging them to stay for two to three hours in bustling bars, dance halls, or houses where no recent deaths had occurred.

After a series of halts and advances, Lumian returned to the port and reboarded the Flying Bird. He continued unleashing the crimson, almost white fireballs until only two remained.

Philip, leaning against the ship's rail, kept his eyes fixed on the governor-general's office.

“What happened?” he inquired of Lumian.

“How would I know?” Lumian replied, amused.

Philip swiftly changed the topic.

“Did you come across any anomalies?”

Only then did Lumian briefly recount the explosion near the governor-general's office and the sudden reanimation of the corpses.

“Zombie summoning?” Philip muttered to himself, a frown creasing his brow.

Without awaiting Lumian's response, he sighed and said, “It was smooth only on the first day of this voyage. On the second day, we encountered Bone Splitter. On the third day, Death Navigators attacked us at noon. By night, or rather in the early hours of the fourth day, another zombie calamity struck in Port Farim... We still have six days until we reach Port Santa...”

Lumian felt a pang of guilt.

In theory, his attraction to or attraction by calamities shouldn't be so frequent. When he was in Trier, he didn't encounter mystical incidents every day. If that were the case, 007 would have died from overwork.

Encountering one or two calamities throughout the journey would be understandable, but considering Dardel's Derangement, it's truly a daily affair... Could it be that some unclean entity is tailing me? Could it be the cause, the trigger, or the convergence? And is there essentially only one calamity I've encountered? The more Lumian pondered, the more he felt the urge to correspond with Madam Magician to investigate if there was an underlying issue behind such frequent calamities.

“Perhaps the zombie calamity was triggered by the initial trouble on the ship. Once we leave the Flying Bird, our subsequent journey might become peaceful,” Lumian casually consoled Philip.

He didn't hold much confidence in his words.

“Hope so.” Philip spread his arms slightly and prayed devoutly. “Praise the Sun!”

Lumian took his time before heading back to the first-class cabin. He lingered by the shipboard, surveying Port Farim.

The authorities' silent endorsement of pirate activities in the Fog Sea Archipelago had resulted in a certain level of chaos and misconduct. However, it had also led to a notable increase in the number of Beyonders compared to regular Intisian cities. Swiftly organizing a resistance, they cleared the streets of zombies, minimizing the casualties among citizens and tourists.

Whether pirates and adventurers exploited the turmoil to commit crimes or settle scores remained uncertain.

In less than half an hour, the turmoil near the explosion site subsided. Official Beyonders dispersed, addressing disturbances on other streets.

“Very good. Nothing major happened. They managed to control it in time,” Philip remarked, relieved.

You can say that, but I can't... Lumian laughed self-deprecatingly.

Only then did Philip feel at ease enough for casual conversation.

“Did you go into Farim for a drink?”

“That's right,” Lumian replied with a smile. “I happened to receive a commission.”

“What commission?” Philip asked casually.

“Hunting a pirate—Baronet Black.” Lumian didn't withhold any details.

Philip's eyes narrowed as he inquired with a frown, “Are you sure you're stronger than Baronet Black? He has a ship and over a hundred subordinates! Besides, even if you find an opportunity to assassinate him, aren't you afraid of the King of Dusk's retaliation? He's one of the maritime kings!”

“Just because I accepted a commission doesn't mean I'll definitely do it. I don't even know where to find Black Baronet Class Khizi. That's his name, right?” Lumian didn't mind the potential repercussions from the King of Dusk.

There were more than one Saint who wanted to deal with him!

Philip observed Louis Berry's nonchalant demeanor, realizing he had accepted a mission but would reconsider only if there was a chance to complete it. Thus, he didn't press further on the matter.

The next morning.

As the security supervisor finished breakfast, a subordinate sailor informed him: The governor-general's office had ordered the port to be temporarily closed, and all ships were prohibited from leaving!

Philip suppressed the urge to stand up and asked in a deep voice, “What are the soldiers at the port doing?”

“Searching ship by ship,” the sailor replied truthfully.

In Room 5 of the first-class cabin, Lumian observed the chaotic harbor where the army had entered and continued writing a letter to Jenna and Franca.

“Something seems to have happened to Port Farim on Saint Tick Island in the Fog Sea Archipelago. Ask that person and see if he knows the exact situation.”

At this point, Lumian raised his right hand and tapped his chest four times—up, down, left, right—like Mr. K. He whispered sympathetically, “Poor 007.”

Chapter 520 Demon Warlock

Trier, Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, 9 Rue Orosai, Apartment 702.

Franca awoke naturally, rising lazily from her bed. Her plans were simple—grabbing a piece of toast, anticipating a heavy lunch.

Lately, the absence of Mirror People leads had made her days relaxed.

Thank the Heavens, thank the Earth, thank Mr. Fool. Lumian, the jinx, has left Trier... Franca muttered in her pre-meal prayer.

As she sipped her milk, Jenna returned and pointed to the coffee table.

“Rabbit Chasel delivered a letter this morning. It's from Lumian.”

“Letter?” Franca's eyes narrowed as her relaxed body tensed.

The source of Dardel's Derangement was still at large. What had happened this time?

“He mentioned an incident in the capital of the Fog Sea Archipelago. He wishes to gather details and hopes you can inquire with your contact among the authorities. I refrained from waking you since you only reach out to that contact late at night, so I opted to read the letter immediately. It seems you can only make inquiries during the night,” Jenna explained concisely.

“How considerate. Lumian, that rascal, would undoubtedly knock on the door and jolt me awake!” Franca, who had experienced Lumian's disruptive wake-

up calls countless times, felt unusually touched.

She chuckled.

“Did something happen to Port Farim once he arrived? Even though it seems unrelated to him, but...”

Franca leaned back slightly and remarked, “What's up with the walking mysticism catastrophe detector?”

Since it wasn't urgent, she planned to ask about 007 in the telegram group later at night. After all, he was an official Beyonder of Trier. It was unlikely he would have immediate information about the

events in the Fog Sea Archipelago's capital. If she didn't initiate the inquiry, he might remain unaware.

Franca, with her penchant for instant messaging, set down the bottle of milk and wrote Lumian a teasing reply.

“If you want to know what's happening, investigate it yourself. A walking mysticism catastrophe detector like yourself doesn't need clues or information. Stroll through the streets of Port Farim aimlessly, and who knows, you might bump into the person involved!

“Hey, let's not turn letter-writing into work-related communication, using it only to discuss issues or ask for help. Can't you share the interesting sea tales and details of pirates' bounties?

“Heh heh, ever since you left Trier, everything's been calm and quiet. I can enjoy sleeping in again. Enjoy your sweet revenge. No need to rush back. Give us a heads up if you need assistance...”

Jenna observed Franca thoughtfully as she gleefully filled nearly two pages of the letter.

Inside Room 5 of the Flying Bird's first-class cabin in Port Farim, Lumian, confined to his quarters, sneered as he finished reading Franca's reply.

How many complaints has this fellow received from 007? She's blaming me for the frequent mysticism catastrophes.

Folding the letter, he brought it to Ludwig's lips.

The boy, who had just finished dessert, looked at Lumian and remarked, “I'm not a shredder.”

“I thought you eat everything,” Lumian replied casually as he lit the letter, watching it turn to ashes in the sea breeze blowing through the window.

Shortly after lunch, Philip knocked on the door, accompanied by four soldiers in blue military uniforms adorned with golden threads.

The officer, holding copies of Lumian and the others' identification documents, compared their faces to black-and-white photos.

“Like you, they came from Port Gati and only arrived last night?” the officer inquired, having confirmed Philip's reliability.

“Yes, I watched them board the ship. We met frequently in the past two days,” Philip replied, wisely choosing not to expose the fact that Lumian and the others' identities and information were fake.

Very wise... Otherwise, you'll witness true trouble... Lumian joked inwardly.

If his disguise were to be exposed, he would choose to “teleport” away with Lugano and Ludwig rather than make a scene and reveal the adventurer Louis Berry to the world. Lumian's only

devotion to Gehrman Sparrow, ready to hunt pirates when the opportunity arose. In truth, Lumian had no intention of becoming a true adventurer. His purpose for venturing out to sea was revenge!

After confirming Lumian and the others' situation, the officer led the soldiers to the next room, with Philip accompanying them.

Lumian observed that the investigation of the Flying Bird was thorough, yet not overly intense. The officers followed procedures meticulously without delving into further inquiries.

It made sense. The explosion in Quartier des Black Pearls and the abnormality of the corpses couldn't have occurred overnight. Even if it was an accident, it had been brewing for a while. The extensive impact suggested a prolonged development. Unless the person involved was a demigod, it was nearly impossible for ordinary authorities to trace any demigod-related traces.

This meant the Flying Bird, having arrived in Port Farim only the previous night, likely had no connection to the incident. The focus was on confirming the passengers' identities.

The possibility of a demigod being injured and unable to escape Port Farim was considered, warranting a comprehensive investigation, but there were no suspicious casualties on the Flying Bird.

The officers disembarked after nearly two hours, accompanied by 20 to 30 soldiers. Lumian, now on the deck, approached Philip and inquired, "What happened last night?"

Philip glanced around and lowered his voice.

"I heard from my former colleague that they're searching for Demon Warlock Burman."

"Burman?" Lumian expressed his ignorance.

Having only read a portion of the wanted posters the previous night, Lumian was not familiar with Demon Warlock Burman. His attention had been on maritime kings, pirate admirals, and other significant pirates. Then, he had shared a drink with Batna Comté.

"He's a wanted adventurer," Philip explained with a sigh. "Before I left the Fog Sea fleet, he was still normal. He chased bounties and treasures and met his wife, Helen, a female adventurer. Later, Helen died in an accident, causing Burman to go crazy. He wanted to revive his wife and did many things—both good and bad attempts.

"He mercilessly orchestrated the destruction of a 300-person town to fulfill the conditions for a resurrection ritual. He organized gatherings of evil Warlocks, aiming to use the lives of others, especially newborns, for cruel and bloody witchcraft to revive Helen. These events pushed his bounty to surpass Bone Splitter Basil, reaching 600,000 verl d'or."

In his quest to resurrect his wife, he was driven to become a cruel and cold Demon Warlock? Lumian suddenly sighed.

If Madam Magician hadn't found him back then, if Mr. Fool hadn't offered a glimmer of hope, and if the Tarot Club hadn't arranged for two formidable Psychiatrists to provide treatment, would he now resemble Burman and carry a Demon-prefixed moniker?

Moreover, simply treading the path of boons would expedite his growth. With Termiboros's aid, he could reach Sequence 5 Fate Appropriator within a few months. The obliteration of a 300-person town held the potential to elevate him to a Circle Inhabitant.

“600,000 verl d'or is nearly on par with Vice Admiral Black Tide Holle Sassen, who has the lowest bounty among pirate admirals,” Lumian remarked, drawing a comparison.

Vice Admiral Black Tide was a great pirate who had only gained fame in recent years. His bounty was 700,000 verl d'or.

Philip fell silent for a moment before adding, “Burman might not be weaker than Holle Sassen, but he doesn't have his own fleet. He's always alone and occasionally collaborates with those evil Warlocks. This allows him to escape authorities' encirclements and successfully infiltrate towns adorned with his wanted posters.”

From Philip's description, Lumian gathered that Demon Warlock Burman possessed diverse abilities, excelling at disguises.

With the elegance of a true Warlock, Burman combined it with mastery over the power of the dead, whether acquired through resurrection research or inherent in his original Sequence's contradictory description of both “comprehensive” and “specialty skills.”

The port blockade left the Flying Bird stranded in Farim, delayed from its scheduled departure.

At 4 p.m., Lumian found himself with nothing to do. Sporting his new golden straw hat, he disembarked from the ship, where passengers and sailors could now freely move. Once more, he stepped into Port Farim.

He planned to investigate the scene of last night's explosion. Perhaps he could unearth some clues.

What lay in ruins was a hospital. Nearly half of it crumbled, unveiling a massive pit leading underground. Corpses littered the remaining structures, amidst fresh blood and humanoid shadows charred by the blast.

With the ban lifted, numerous adventurers flocked to the site, seeking answers. Lumian blended into the crowd, discreetly observing.

“Louis, you're here too?” Suddenly, Lumian recognized a familiar voice.

It was Batna Comté, armed with a substantial revolver and an exquisite rapier. Meticulously groomed, he looked sharp and sophisticated.

“That's right,” Lumian replied with a smile. “As an adventurer, how can I miss the grand occasion of pursuing the Demon Warlock?”

Our main goal is to gather clues for a reward... Batna muttered under his breath.

As he investigated the battle remnants for leads, he casually inquired, “Did you come across those resurrected corpses last night?”

“I did. Besides being a bit eerie, there's nothing noteworthy about them,” Lumian boasted.

Batna glanced at him and suddenly smiled.

“Anything unusual happened to you after leaving the bar last night?”

Lumian replied nonchalantly, “I ran into a few swindlers and walked away with a small fortune.”

A small fortune... Batna was taken aback.

He suddenly recalled Louis Berry's actions at the bar and his words: “Perhaps they think I'm an easy target?”