

Inevitability 521

Chapter 521 Guidance of Fate?

When Batna turned his gaze back to Lumian, there was a discernible shift in his eyes.

The mimicry of Gehrman Sparrow and the apparent recklessness that characterized this guy seemed all too contrived. Beneath the facade lurked cunning and a hint of sinister intent!

Anyone falling for his act was in for a world of trouble!

Lumian chose not to dwell on how he'd managed to swindle a small fortune out of the swindlers. Instead, together with Batna, he meticulously surveyed the aftermath of the explosion, scrutinizing every detail.

Regrettably, even the official Beyonders, armed with their diverse Sequences and synergistic combinations, were at a loss, let alone the duo lacking any proficiency in divination or prophecy.

Batna absentmindedly ran his fingers over the finely crafted rapier hanging diagonally at his waist, letting out a sigh.

"I know it's a long shot, but I can't resist coming here, wasting my time. It's not about the bounty. What adventurer doesn't dream of overnight fame?"

Hunting down the Demon Warlock Burman wasn't the only route to fame. Assisting official Beyonders in tracking this wanted criminal, whose bounty rivaled that of a pirate admiral, was a noteworthy feat in itself.

"Wasn't your primary motivation to gather clues for the money?" Lumian inquired, a playful smile on his face.

"Uh, well, that's a secondary motive," Batna awkwardly defended himself.

Suddenly, he had a realization.

He never explicitly mentioned that his investigation aimed at accumulating clues for monetary gain. He merely thought about it!

Can he read my thoughts, or is he just bluffing? Batna scrutinized Lumian with a perplexed expression.

Lumian chuckled.

"Don't let your thoughts betray you. If you cross paths with a Spectator, your secrets won't stay hidden."

Batna instinctively lifted his right hand and touched his face.

Is my expression management that bad?

He vented his frustration with a muttered curse, "With the scene in this level of chaos and no traces left on the nearby streets, unless a deity blesses me, or I'm imbued with luck, finding any clues is like searching for a needle in a haystack... How about we grab a drink instead?"

Luck... Finding clues doesn't necessarily hinge on good luck; bad luck could work just as well... Lumian's heart stirred as he pulled a bandage from his pocket and calmly wrapped it around his eyes.

Batna Comté, utterly bewildered, couldn't help but ask, "What on earth are you doing?"

"Blindfolding. Relying solely on instinct to navigate the nearby streets eliminates external influences and unleashes the full force of luck," Lumian explained with a chuckle. "Perhaps today, luck is truly on my side?"

According to Franca, a mystical catastrophe detector like him didn't need conventional clues or intel; he might just stumble upon the person involved while strolling around.

In that case, Lumian decided to follow the whims of fate this time.

If he succeeded, he could use the Demon Warlock or related clues to claim a handsome bounty. If he failed, it would prove Franca's words to be nothing but baseless slander.

Batna couldn't help but wonder if Louis Berry had lost his mind. "Can you really do that?"

"There's no harm in trying," Lumian replied confidently, blindfolded and ready to step onto the street.

After a few paces, he abruptly halted.

Blindfolding, he realized, was useless for Hunters.

The path he had taken and the scenes he had observed while searching for clues were vividly etched in his mind, meticulously arranged according to their real-world locations.

Essentially, he possessed a high-definition mental map of the surrounding streets, allowing him to reach shops and buildings with uncanny precision.

With a Hunter's exceptional control over their body and direction, even without sight, coupled with heightened senses of smell and hearing, Lumian couldn't help but conclude that relying on the whims of fate was redundant.

After a moment of contemplation, he began to ponder his next move freely.

Demon Warlock Burman's elusive escapes hints at special abilities or possessions granting him such freedom...

Can he "teleport" away like me, alter his appearance and height at will, or perhaps even disguise himself as someone of a different gender?

Despite numerous bloody and cruel experiments, Burman has evaded capture, suggesting conventional methods and thinking wouldn't suffice...

Can I change my mindset and let him take the initiative to appear?

Yes, if we can't find him, we can make him come to us...

His primary concern is resurrecting his wife, Helen. If I can fabricate a few cases of resurrection or discuss resurrection at certain mysticism gatherings and provide verifiable mysticism knowledge in related domains, this Demon Warlock might very well follow the clues I left behind...

However, this plan faces two challenges. The official Beyonders might have attempted similar schemes, and Burman, being cautious, could see through them. Additionally, the time needed for setup and waiting could be weeks or even months, a luxury I lack in Port Farim... I can only weave the plan gradually into mysticism gatherings and bar conversations, occasionally revealing "secrets" to make it more realistic and my motives less apparent...

Lost in his thoughts, Lumian relied on Batna Comté for occasional support, preventing mishaps during their walk. When Lumian had a complete albeit time-consuming plan, he stopped, removed the bandage covering his eyes, and smiled at Batna.

"Where are we? My intuition says there might be clues about the Demon Warlock hidden here."

"It's a regular street with regular houses. The residents seem wealthy and powerful," Batna replied helplessly.

Lumian finally caught sight of the evening sun.

As Lumian adjusted to the evening sun, his eyes narrowed, and his heart quickened.

Although unfamiliar with many streets in Port Farim, his instinctive journey guided by fate had led him to a familiar place: 16 Rue Coreas!

The adjacent grayish-brown building, adorned with a sculpted outer wall, belonged to Fidel Guerra, the prominent merchant. Lumian had reserved Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard venom here last night and accepted a commission to hunt down Black Baronet Class Khizi!

"Termiboros, are you behind this?" Lumian's immediate instinct was to question the Inevitability Angel sealed within him.

Termiboros remained silent, leaving Batna, standing beside Lumian, puzzled. He couldn't fathom who Louis Berry was addressing.

If Termiboros didn't intentionally lead me here, then something in Fidel Guerra's house is aligning with my fate. Is it an item related to the Hunter pathway or connected to an evil god? Or could the clues to Demon Warlock Burman's whereabouts truly be found at Fidel's residence? Lumian's mind raced as he rapidly considered a series of possibilities.

Staring at Fidel's building, he evaluated the likelihood of the Demon Warlock's presence.

Burman, engaged in numerous resurrection experiments, likely struggled to complete his preparations alone. Snatching various resources would draw the attention of both official Beyonders and pirates who sought his capture. Only the assistance of other evil Warlocks could provide him with the necessary help.

If a well-connected merchant like Fidel supported him in secret, Burman wouldn't face difficulties obtaining experimental materials...

For Fidel, with a Sequence possibly not high enough, having a Demon Warlock reliant on him for covert protection is undoubtedly advantageous.

Considering Fidel's clandestine business, vulnerable to attacks from powerful pirates or adventurers, having a Demon Warlock at his disposal makes sense.

In case of future conflicts with authorities, the Warlock could shield him, enabling a change of identity and a fresh start in another city or country. According to Aurore's insights, such individuals often maintain fake identities and reserve assets in multiple places...

Last night, soon after I met Fidel, a mishap occurred involving the Demon Warlock's failed experiment...

Lumian averted his gaze. Lumian increasingly suspected that the merchant, Fidel Guerra, had motives to shield Demon Warlock Burman.

Of course, if Termiboros intentionally guided him here, the situation would only become more complex and serious.

"What are you looking at?" Batna inquired, following Lumian's gaze to 16 Rue Coreas.

"I met Fidel Guerra, a prominent merchant, here last night and received a commission from him," Lumian replied candidly.

"What commission?" Batna asked with curiosity.

Lumian responded with a smile, "Hunt the captain of the Golden Nepos, Black Baronet Class Khizi."

"Is the rumor true that Black Baronet Class hijacked Fidel's shipment? Fidel hired numerous adventurers to deal with Black Baronet..." Batna enlightened before lowering his voice. "Don't tell anyone about this."

"Why?" Lumian inquired with a smile.

Batna, stroking his neatly trimmed stubble, whispered, "These bounties and commissions don't necessitate actual acceptance, nor do they require success."

"Yes, if word gets out that an adventurer plans to hunt a pirate, and they're not too far apart, revenge from said pirate is inevitable. It's both a punishment and a warning.

"Baronet Black is a notorious pirate. If he catches wind that a newcomer like you is taking on a mission to hunt him and is spreading the news, do you think he'll take offense? He might track you down and use your demise as a lesson for other adventurers and Fidel."

Baronet Black is indeed in Port Farim... Lumian nodded thoughtfully.

"That's a smart approach."

Smart? Batna was momentarily taken aback.

In the evening, at a bar, Lumian, Batna, and the others had been reveling for nearly two hours, filled with joy and excitement.

Suddenly, Lumian lifted his glass and descended from the barstool to the floor. Addressing the adventurers and ordinary patrons around him, he declared, “Everyone, remember my name, Louis Berry!

“I'm on the brink of fame. I've accepted a commission from the prominent merchant, Fidel. My objective is to track down Black Baronet Class Khizi!

“When I succeed, the name Louis Berry will echo across the Five Seas!

“When that time comes, you'll proudly say you shared a drink with me!”

Ah... Batna froze on the barstool.

It felt like witnessing Louis Berry once again leaping onto the wooden platform and firing his gun the night before.

Chapter 522 Excellent Scheme

Amid the bustling scene, Lumian relished his drink until the clock neared midnight. Exiting the bar with Batna, they stepped onto the street, where the once-warm sea breeze had turned chilly.

Batna hesitated before asking, “Do you seriously plan to go after Baronet Black?”

Hadn't Louis Berry's performance been a repeat of the previous night's scheme, expecting Black Baronet Class Khizi to come looking for him?

Lumian turned his head, his green eyes devoid of any signs of intoxication. “Otherwise? If he doesn't seek me out, where am I supposed to find him? Sneak onto the Golden Nepos and take on their entire ship solo?”

Fair point... Batna conceded that Louis Berry's logic had merit.

Once Black Baronet made land, he would likely disguise himself, making him hard to track. At sea or on his own boat, a lone adventurer would find it nearly impossible to take him down. Even lions feared a wolf pack. Moreover, among the wolves, aside from Class Khizi, there were a few heads with Beyonder powers.

Batna had to admit that every head was no less formidable than himself.

After a brief pause, Batna sensed something amiss and blurted out, “Are you sure you can handle Baronet Black and the two or three helpers he might have?”

Lumian's lips curled into a smile.

“Every adventurer who comes to sea dreams of following in Gehrman Sparrow's great footsteps.”

It wasn't the first time he said this, but the tone was different. This time, Batna detected a calm and serious demeanor.

Is he for real?

Is he sly and cunning or just plain reckless?

At that moment, Batna had to reconsider his understanding of Louis Berry.

There was a method to his madness, a trap meticulously laid out, but the aspirations and strategies were impractical. What struck Batna most was that Louis knew it was unrealistic, yet he calmly and persistently pressed on to realize his grand dream.

How to describe this guy? Batna couldn't find the right words.

At that moment, Lumian had already reached the open-air market stalls. He dropped 5 verl d'or on fried banana slices, scones, roasted meat, roasted oysters, grilled fish, roasted shrimp, and sugarcane.

“You're still hungry?” Batna asked, surprised.

During their drinking session, they had already ordered fries, fish, meatloaf, and more.

Lumian smiled and replied, “Getting supper for my godson.”

Godson? At your age? Batna couldn't quite fathom this guy with a Savoie Province accent.

Maybe it's a trend in the mountainous province for young men to become godfathers?

After Lumian picked up the brown paper bags, Batna exhaled and remarked, “Your plan might not be effective. Adventurers boasting about their exploits are a dime a dozen. They might not consider your declaration a joke to spread it to others. It's too common.”

Lumian smiled and said, “No, they'll spread it like wildfire. In a few days, the entire Port Farim will know that a new adventurer has taken a commission to hunt down Baronet Black.”

“How's that possible? You can't control their mouths,” Batna retorted subconsciously.

Suddenly, he was taken aback.

“You can't really... control their thoughts, can you...”

Lumian scoffed and tapped his head with the paper bags.

“Use your brain and think carefully.

“They won't want to spread it. Someone will help me spread it.”

Batna had an epiphany.

“You want to secretly hire a group of people to help you publicize this matter..”

He paused for a few seconds before continuing, “There's no need for you to hire them. The merchant, Fidel, will help you achieve your goal once he finds out about your act. He has ample resources. But what if he doesn't know...”

“I'll pay him a visit tomorrow,” Lumian replied calmly.

It's meticulous and feasible. It's like iron chains, all interconnected... The more Batna thought about it, the more he realized that every detail of this plan had been considered, but overall, it exuded a sense of madness.

After a while, he instinctively assessed, "If Baronet Black leaves the Fog Sea, it might take months for him to hear the news. If he happens to be in Port Farim, perhaps he'll find out in two or three days."

Port Farim had a population of just over 100,000, including tourists. It might not even be comparable to a quartier in Trier. More people were scattered across Saint Tick Island's plantations and the Andatna Volcano Mines.

"I hope he's in Port Farim," Lumian said with a satisfied expression as he strolled through the night.

Batna fell silent, unsure of what to say.

Returning to the Flying Bird, Lumian entered Room 5 of the first-class cabin and found Ludwig enjoying the supper he had left for him. He placed the brown paper bags on the dining table.

The aroma of fried ingredients and barbecue filled the air.

Ludwig looked up in surprise before quickly devouring the food Lumian had brought back.

Lumian settled into a nearby recliner, rocking gently.

Finally, Ludwig let out a contented sigh and said, "You get tired of always eating cheese, bread, cakes, and crackers for supper."

A person who can even eat live rats raw doesn't have the right to say that... Lumian criticized and smiled.

"This proves that I haven't forgotten you, my godson.

"By the way, how long do you plan to follow me? I've already helped you escape the Church of Knowledge."

Ludwig pondered seriously.

"I'll follow you until I can earn my own living. N-now, I'm still a child!"

That's true. If this fellow doesn't have the money to buy food, something terrifying might happen... Also, before I go to the City of Exiles, the Church of Knowledge probably won't allow Ludwig to leave me... Lumian laughed self-deprecatingly.

"I, an unmarried underage man, have to support a child like you for a long time."

Ludwig muttered under his breath, "Not necessarily very long..."

Does that mean you can recover to the point of supporting yourself within this year or next? Lumian pretended not to hear Ludwig's muttering and gestured towards the servants' quarters with his chin.

"Has that guy been acting okay?"

Ludwig, acting as a spy, asked in confusion, "For Intisians, is flirting with women on the deck and in the bar under the pretext of attending to patients considered okay?"

"Yes." Lumian sighed helplessly.

You Intisians.

The next afternoon, amid rumors of the port closure possibly ending the following morning, Lumian disembarked from the Flying Bird and headed straight to Rue Coreas in Quartier des Black Pearls to pay an early visit to the prominent merchant, Fidel Guerra.

The previous evening, Lumian had received a letter from Franca, delivered by Jenna's Rabbit Chasel. The explosion in Port Farim matched Philip's intel, but there were more details.

By the time official Beyonders reached the scene, Demon Warlock Burman had already vanished.

Facing an undead monster made of limbs and corpse fragments, capable of awakening the deceased in Port Farim, official Beyonders had their hands full.

The hospital suffered casualties—patients fell victim to the monstrous horror...

In Fidel Guerra's study, Lumian met the man—a blend of Intis and Feynapotter blood, smoking a cigar with a grin.

“Did you come here because of the smell? I just received the Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard venom.”

Just obtained? I'm afraid it's been here all along. Considering my earnest efforts to draw out Baronet Black and fulfill your request, you're not suggesting you haven't secured the goods... Lumian ventured a guess, a smile playing on his lips.

“Seems luck's smiling upon me. How much?”

“3,800 verl d'or. My cut isn't much,” Fidel replied sincerely.

Lumian didn't negotiate. He produced a stack of banknotes and tallied out 3,800 verl d'or.

Observing this, Fidel signaled an attendant and gave instructions.

Soon after, the attendant returned, carrying a brown glass bottle.

Fidel directed the attendant to take the money and hand over the goods while he kept a distance of roughly ten meters from Lumian. “Metal containers won't do. The venom's potency can be affected by corrosion.”

Lumian nodded subtly, casting a glance at the brown glass bottle before stashing it away in his pocket.

After the attendant departed, Fidel grinned once more.

“I heard you replicated your act from the night before at the bar last night?”

This influential merchant showcased his well-informed nature.

“Indeed, we must employ effective strategies repeatedly,” Lumian tacitly concurred.

Fidel nodded.

“I appreciate a sharp young man like you. I'll help disseminate your message and ensure Class Khizi hears it promptly.

“Heh heh, the adventurers I assigned to this task previously were far too risk-averse.”

“No problem. That's precisely why I'm here today,” Lumian mentioned before making his way to leave.

After a few steps, he abruptly halted, turned around, and spoke thoughtfully, “Do you think Demon Warlock Burman is hiding here?”

Fidel was taken aback.

“What are you talking about?”

“What does the Demon Warlock have to do with me?”

“Not much. Just a wild guess,” Lumian replied with a smile. “Rue Coreas is very close to where the explosion occurred last night, and your establishment is quite suitable for hiding.”

Without waiting for Fidel's response, he took another step and casually exited the building.

Fidel observed Lumian's departure, furrowing his brow in confusion. He couldn't fathom why Lumian had uttered those words.

In the deep of night, the sound of waves echoed in the distance, and the Flying Bird swayed gently.

Lumian reclined on the bed in Room 5 of the first-class cabin, enveloped in a velvet blanket. His eyes shut tight, breathing deep, he was sound asleep.

Suddenly, a dark cloud materialized outside the window, obscuring the crimson moon and stars in the sky.

The room, draped in curtains, plunged into darkness. Even looking at one's hands, one could barely discern five fingers.

Within the shadows, something seemed to stir to life.

Chapter 523 Eye of Illusory

A lanky shadow emerged from the shadows in translucent form. Swiftly, it lunged at Lumian, as if eager to claim a new host.

Resembling the possession of Wraiths and evil spirits, this entity sought control but lacked the speed to complete the process in a mere blink.

In an instant, Lumian, previously dormant, transformed into a shadowy figure, melding seamlessly with the darkness, leaving the bed bereft of his presence.

This marked the manifestation of his newly contracted skill—Shadow Transformation!

An eerie hush enveloped the room, dominated by the tall, translucent shadow, erasing any trace of Lumian or his unseen assailant.

Suddenly, the darkness rifted, revealing a decaying, skeletal python oozing yellowish-green pus.

Empty-eyed, its fangless mouth resembled a vortex, emitting a hurried, piercing sound. A suction force tugged at the surrounding shadows, drawing them in.

It seemed like an undead creature, a specialist in consuming shadows and shadowy creatures.

Room 5 of the Flying Bird's first-class cabin's master bedroom assumed an otherworldly tableau. Despite the lingering dim light, shadows dissipated, leaving everything cloaked in pure darkness.

In due time, Lumian emerged from the shadows, resuming his human form against the backdrop of a lush carpet and an exquisite wardrobe.

Simultaneously, a towering figure materialized—a knight adorned in tattered black armor. Pale flames flickered in its eye sockets, putrid liquid seeping from the armor's crevices, with only sticky flesh clinging to its exposed skin.

With a broadsword raised, the dead knight advanced, slashing at Lumian, as if poised to shatter both bed and wardrobe.

Lumian's agile form shifted, maneuvering from facing the Death Knight, the Shadow-Swallowing Python, and the looming tall, thin shadow to flank them all.

Crash!

The broadsword of the Death Knight cleaved through the wardrobe, sending fragments flying. Lumian, reacting swiftly, crouched down, clenched his fists, and struck the heavy brownish-yellow carpet.

From the center, a multitude of crimson, nearly white flames burst forth, consuming every inch of the room. The inferno devoured the three undead entities suspected to be from the spirit world.

Rumble!

Within the roaring flames, fireballs materialized and shot out from Lumian's form.

They homed in on the Death Knight, the Shadow-Swallowing Python, and the lanky black shadow, or recklessly engulfed the sizable bedroom.

Rumble!

The crimson, nearly white fireballs detonated consecutively, tearing apart the three undead beings, pulverizing the bed, desk, and other furnishings. Pungent smoke billowed from the scorched carpet.

In this explosive turmoil, any entity lacking pure ethereality or possessing partial corporeality faced inevitable destruction in the confined space. The once steel-clad armor of the Death Knight crumbled instantly, and the Shadow-Swallowing Python fractured into a multitude of burning remains.

Though the lanky shadow fared relatively better, it too succumbed to the engulfing flames, dwindling in substance.

Rumble!

Although the Flying Bird boasted a steel structure, the impact of such force—

reminiscent of multiple cannons targeting a confined space—inevitably took its toll on Room 5 of the first-class cabin. Strangely, only cracks marred the inner wall, with neither the wall nor the door fully giving way.

However, the formless barrier enveloping the area shuddered violently, on the verge of disintegration.

As shockwaves rebounded from the walls, doors, and ceiling, Lumian, the catalyst of the explosion, suffered as well. It was akin to being struck repeatedly by a massive hammer, with his vision clouded by golden specks and a metallic taste of blood in his throat.

The air, instantly devoured by flames, left him with a suffocating sensation.

Amidst the tumultuous flames, a figure emerged from the darkness, standing near the window, adorned in a black robe with a loose hood. Numerous wounds marked his body, testament to the explosive waves and engulfing flames, leaving charred imprints.

Lumian observed that the man's once fine hairs had transformed into pale- white, nearly indistinguishable feathers. Some were charred, emitting a dark dense fog instead of thick smoke.

Rather than the usual red blood, a thick yellowish-green hue oozed from the wounds.

Under the raised hood, Lumian discerned a pale-white face and a few ulcers reaching down to the bone. Vague traces of pale-white fur adorned the wounds.

In the blink of an eye, Lumian locked eyes with his opponent, who sported cold flaxen-colored irises. Between the brows of the hooded figure, a crack swiftly widened, revealing an illusory vertical eye with a deep purple border that almost verged on black. Devoid of eyelashes or pupils, it seemed to harbor countless pale-white patterns.

This peculiar vertical eye instantly mirrored Lumian's figure.

His initial intention to “teleport” behind the hooded man and employ the Spell of Harrumph met an abrupt freeze.

The impact resonated at the spiritual level.

It was akin to Lumian's Soul Body losing the protective shield of his physical form and standing exposed to scorching sunlight. Instinctively, fear, stiffness, and lethargy gripped him.

Ordinarily, humans explored the spirit world through Astral Projection, rarely detaching their Soul Body—the core of their soul—from their physical being, always shrouded in protection.

The Arbiter pathway's Psychic Piercing bypassed the physical body, Ether Body, Astral Projection, and Body of Heart and Mind, directly influencing the Soul Body. It carried an almost undefendable reputation, affecting individuals to varying degrees.

Lumian suspected that the Spell of Harrumph shared these characteristics.

Within the assailant's dark-purple, nearly black vertical eye, pale-white patterns silently spun, as if seeking the essence of Lumian's Spirit Body.

The sensation resembled being scrutinized by penetrating rays of light, causing Lumian's Spirit Body to quiver slightly, impeding intricate thoughts.

Just as he was about to take the simplest action of sinking his consciousness into the Blood Emperor mark on his right hand, the hooded man emitted a sudden pained groan.

His head snapped back as if struck by a bullet, the once illusory, dark-purple vertical eye now blurry, oozing dark-red blood mixed with yellowish-green pus.

With a pained groan, the hooded figure swiftly turned and soared out of the window, dragged by an unseen force.

Observing this, Lumian didn't hasten to block the escape with Spirit World Traversal. Instead, he raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

Boom!

At the window, a crimson, almost blinding light erupted, and a violent explosion engulfed the hooded man.

Lumian had set this as a trap.

Before entering a state of "sleep," he had concealed the master bedroom within the Bottle of Fiction. There were two entrances, one by the window and the other by the door, accessible only to beings with superpowers. Both exits harbored delayed explosion fireballs.

Any trigger would unleash devastation.

Amidst the fiery explosion, the hooded man was propelled off his feet, crashing against the window frame. His limbs seemed on the brink of tearing from his body.

Without a moment's hesitation, Lumian "teleported" to the severely injured and unconscious man, harrumphing at his foe.

Two beams of white light shot forth, striking the target and rendering him completely unconscious.

As Lumian prepared for his next move, pairs of arms suddenly emerged from the darkness at the shattered exit of the Bottle of Fiction.

Some were covered in warts, some decayed to the point of pus overflowing, and some only displayed blackened bones...

These arms seized the hooded man's clothes and dragged him into the shadows, disappearing without a trace.

Observing this, Lumian refrained from an immediate transformation into a shadow creature to pursue them. Instead, he stood his ground, a slight frown creasing his brows.

The assailant shared an uncanny resemblance to Demon Warlock Burman as depicted on the wanted posters, but the non-human feeling was even more pronounced. The details suggested an undying monster rather than a human.

Lumian wasn't caught off guard by Demon Warlock Burman's appearance. It was one of the anticipated outcomes.

He had deliberately voiced suspicions about Fidel's connection with the Demon Warlock in front of him without providing clarity, fostering the illusion that Louis Berry, a bold adventurer with a penchant for conspiracies, was attempting to extort money from the prominent merchant.

Under normal circumstances, even if Fidel had something to hide, he wouldn't act so swiftly. He would likely observe closely for a few days to confirm the situation. Lumian, however, had “offered” him an opportunity this time.

Louis Berry, the adventurer, had made public the commission he accepted to lure out Baronet Black!

In such a scenario, it wouldn't raise eyebrows if he were killed by Class Khizi.

The death of an overconfident individual in Port Farim wouldn't spark trouble or suspicion.

So, why not nip the danger in the bud?

Even if Louis Berry's suspicions lacked evidence, they would still draw the attention of official Beyonders.

Lumian's “performance” at the bar the previous night seemed to bait Black Baronet Class Khizi, but in reality, it was bait for the merchant, Fidel Guerra!

If Fidel had no ties to the Demon Warlock, it wouldn't trigger an additional reaction. Lumian merely needed to pursue the superficial purpose of hunting Black Baronet. If there was a connection, he would promptly receive a “response.”

To Lumian's surprise, the abilities exhibited by Demon Warlock Burman shared similarities with the few divine pathways he knew, but there were also notable differences!

Chapter 524 Infighting

The illusory eye between the Demon Warlock's brows bore a remarkable resemblance to the Eye of Mystery Prying from the Warlock pathway. However, this entity took a unique form, manifesting as a vertical eye rather than the typical manifestation within the eye itself. Lumian had never encountered or heard of such a phenomenon before.

While a Mystery Pryer might experience similar abnormalities as a High-

Sequence Beyonder, it was clear that Burman hadn't reached the Saint level. Otherwise, Lumian would have been the one fleeing, not him. In such a scenario, Lumian might not have been able to escape even if he desired; his only hope would be that the residual aura of the Blood Emperor could momentarily distract Burman, enabling him to “teleport” away.

Considering the authorities' wanted poster, information from 007, and details gathered from Philip and others, Lumian had long concluded that a Demon Warlock like Burman couldn't be a Sequence 4—he certainly wasn't audacious enough to hunt a demigod.

Based on the illusory vertical eye and Burman's diverse, comprehensive abilities, Lumian sensed a true alignment with the characteristics of a Warlock. However, no Warlock's Eye of Mystery Prying resembled this. Not only did it grow between the brows and become a vertical eye, marked with pale-white patterns against a nearly black background, but it also possessed the ability to intimidate others' Spirit Bodies, revealing a perceived “truth.”

In that moment, Lumian felt as if he had been stripped of all externalities, leaving only his Spirit Body to resist Burman's. Yielding or failing would result in fainting or enslavement.

Fortunately, the “truth” on him was beyond the perception of Low- to Mid-Sequence Beyonders, and Burman was no exception. Before Lumian could activate the Blood Emperor's residual aura, the Demon Warlock suffered a backlash, nearly incapacitating him.

Moreover, Burman's command over the undead and the protection he received after fainting surpassed typical Warlock capabilities. Even if others could achieve similar effects with learned or invented spells, it wouldn't be to that extent, let alone so effortlessly.

Which evil god's pathway is this? Or has Burman, a Warlock, been corrupted and acquired abnormal traits? That would explain the non-human details on him. After conducting so many resurrection experiments, he wouldn't lack the kind that sacrifices to evil gods...

The illusory vertical eye was undeniably powerful and bizarre. I couldn't withstand it head-on. Were it not for the protection of Mr. Fool's seal, Termiboros, and the lingering aura of the Blood Emperor—all surpassing my current level—I might have met my demise at Burman's hands. Lumian's thoughts raced as he quickly made a guess.

Seizing this moment to counteract the impact of the explosion, he retrieved the golden straw hat from his Traveler's Bag and placed it on his head before disappearing.

Lumian “teleported” to 16 Rue Coreas, the entrance of Fidel Guerra's opulent residence.

While Demon Warlock Burman had the means to escape, the same couldn't be said for this prominent merchant!

If Burman had been in good condition when he fled, Lumian worried that he might return out of professional courtesy and rescue his employer. However, since Burman had been rendered unconscious and taken away by some undead creature, he wouldn't be returning to 16 Rue Coreas. He wouldn't even after waking up either. The more time passed, the more likely Fidel Guerra's house would become a trap for the Demon Warlock.

Hence, Lumian still had time to ponder Burman's Sequence and the non-human issues he exhibited.

His deliberate delay served a purpose.

If Demon Warlock Burman were to wake up promptly and flee with his employer, Lumian's calculated delay of a minute or two would ensnare both of them.

Standing at the entrance of 16 Rue Coreas, Lumian's brow furrowed slightly.

As a Hunter, he detected a faint scent of blood emanating from inside the house.

After a moment of consideration, Lumian gently pushed open the dark-blue door.

It was unlocked.

The door bore splatters of fresh blood that hadn't fully congealed. It seemed as though someone in a panic had sought refuge here, unlocking the door just before being pursued and torn to pieces.

However, there were no remnants of the corpse to be found.

Lumian halted at the doorway, listening intently. The entire house remained eerily silent.

Did Fidel act swiftly, eliminating those in the know and relocating to safety before Burman could strike me down?

In such a scenario, if Burman's operation proved successful and he uncovered the reasons for my suspicions and if there were others privy to the information, Fidel could use the pretext of a late-night attack by Black Baronet and other pirates, where he nearly lost his life. Escaping wouldn't have been easy before returning here. Alternatively, he might vanish forever, adopting a new identity to embark on a fresh business venture... Lumian pondered this mystery as he navigated past the blood-stained area at the entrance, intending to search the house for clues. His goal was to uncover the exact relationship between Fidel Guerra and Demon Warlock Burman.

Leaving the door slightly ajar, he proceeded towards the staircase, the scent of blood lingering in the air.

Perhaps sensing his approach, heavy footsteps suddenly echoed.

Amidst the rhythmic sounds of footsteps, a figure emerged from the basement, coming into Lumian's line of sight.

It wasn't human, or rather, it couldn't be deemed human any longer.

Standing three to four meters tall, its body comprised fragments from various human corpses. It possessed a mix of feminine curves and masculine traits, sewn together by linen threads, with blood-stained mucus dripping from the joints.

This "person" featured a relatively intact head, with only one source—Fidel Guerra, a mixed-blood Intis and Feynapotter.

The merchant's head didn't align with the body; it was as if a child's head had been placed on a half-giant's neck. Dark brown eyes, vacant yet still filled with fear and confusion, stared out.

Dead? Fidel is dead? Did he turn himself into a monster? Lumian pondered. Just as this thought crossed his mind, the stitched corpse lunged forward, dragging three human leg bones that seemed fused together.

A pale-white flame ignited on the colossal "bone sword."

Lumian's eyes narrowed, and his body abruptly vanished, reappearing instantly behind the massive stitched corpse.

"Ha!"

He opened his mouth and emitted a pale-yellow light.

However, the light struck Fidel's head, failing to disorient him, let alone render him unconscious.

It became apparent that the undead creature was immune to the Spell of Harrumph!

Almost simultaneously, the rapidly running sutured corpse forcefully pivoted, emitting a muffled sound from its throat—a language Lumian didn't understand or a word carrying magical effects.

Lumian's soul trembled, as if cowed by evil and death.

He momentarily froze.

The sutured corpse turned around, advancing with purpose. It raised the colossal “bone sword,” burning with pale-white flames, and slashed at Lumian's head.

Lumian, experienced in such situations, mostly stemming from encounters with high-level entities, found the current threat less severe than the consequences of the Demon Warlock's illusory vertical eye.

Just in time, Lumian “woke up,” activating the black mark on his right shoulder.

Amidst the howling wind, the colossal “bone sword,” engulfed in pale-white flames, struck the afterimage left behind.

This time, Lumian materialized close to the stitched corpse's back, stabbing the Symphony of Hatred retrieved from his Traveler's Bag into it.

With a pfft, the pitch-black bone flute, seemingly fragile, plunged into the stitched corpse's flesh.

The flaxen threads burst open, and chunks of flesh and blood peeled off, revealing a dark-red heart emitting pale-white flames.

Lumian extended his left hand, pressing it against the near-fatal wound. The crimson fireball, nearly white, compressed layer by layer as it was pushed in.

Utilizing the reactive force, Lumian abruptly flew backward, dodging the massive “bone sword” that slashed at him.

Rumble!

In midair, he witnessed crimson, nearly white flames erupt from the sutured corpse, tearing apart the beating heart.

Rumble!

The sutured corpse disintegrated, and the flesh and blood of various humans scattered on the ground.

Bang! Fidel's head landed in a pile of flesh and blood, the blankness giving way to a pained expression.

“Who turned you into this?” Lumian inquired, glancing out the window, sensing that the explosion would likely draw the attention of the patrolling police.

Fidel's head opened its mouth, words muffled and filled with hatred.

“It's—it's Burman!”

“Burman?” Lumian was taken aback. “Were you infighting?”

Fidel's head throbbed with pain as his voice trailed off.

“I thought you were testing me. I wanted to observe for a few more days, b-but he couldn't wait. He w-wanted to kill you tonight. I didn't agree, and he killed everyone in the house...”

“H-he's a true lunatic!”

At this point, Fidel's head lolled, his eyes closed, and he fell silent.

Demon Warlock Burman's mental state is quite problematic... Lumian thought. Is that why he killed his employer's entire household? If he really wanted to kill me, he could have acted alone... Lumian had previously considered whether Fidel would think he was baiting him. For this reason, he deliberately created the illusion that he was baiting Black Baronet to lull Fidel. As for the effect, Lumian didn't care too much. If Fidel didn't take the bait, he would use another method. "Fishing" wasn't the only method in his arsenal.

Unexpectedly, this triggered infighting between Fidel and Burman.

Lumian believed even he couldn't bring himself to do such a thing when his psychological problems were at their worst. That was unless Fidel provoked him, such as pointing out that only a lunatic would believe in resurrection.

Observing the corpse fragments for a while, Lumian noticed no signs of a Beyonder characteristic emerging.

Curse my luck. Burman must have taken it. He shook his head and walked towards the room where the safe might be.

Chapter 525 Repair Fee

Lumian wasn't sure if he should attribute the misfortune of Demon Warlock Burman taking the banknotes, coins, and gold from the safe to the Symphony of Hatred. After all, he hadn't arrived at 16 Rue Coreas and hadn't utilized General Philip's blackened bone flute. Its abilities likely weren't potent enough to rewind the past.

However, Fidel, living up to his title as a prominent merchant, had numerous wallets stashed in various clothes. Lumian conducted a quick search, revealing a total of 30,000 verl d'or.

This provided a modicum of relief for his "psychological injury."

Upon hearing the arrival of a carriage outside, Lumian left Fidel's bedroom and turned to the adjacent room. He suspected it was the patrolling constables here to investigate the recent explosion.

The room was clean and tidy, yet a faint, uncomfortable smell lingered—the stench of decaying corpses.

Entering the room felt like stepping into a catacomb, surrounded by the marks of his own kind and their deaths, creating an uneasy atmosphere.

This should be Demon Warlock Burman's room. It allows him to protect Fidel in the shortest time possible, heh heh, but he ultimately killed him... This story tells us that the most important condition for choosing a bodyguard is mental stability... Lumian mused as he surveyed every corner of the room.

At that moment, the constables had already pushed open the house's door, revealing spilled blood and scattered flesh.

One of them swiftly drew his revolver, while the other blew a whistle, producing a piercing sound.

Lumian's gaze focused on the blackened marks in the room. The blood, suspected to be old, emitted a sinister aura.

“Burman once killed a special creature in this room to complete a resurrection experiment?” Lumian muttered to himself.

He didn't assume it was Demon Warlock Burman's blood because he believed that the other party wouldn't leave behind such a crucial item when he had enough time.

If a Beyonder skilled in curses obtained it, Burman would be in grave danger unless he had a way to sever the connection in advance.

In contrast, Burman's blood and flesh were more likely to be found in the master bedroom of Room 5 of the Flying Bird's first-class cabin. The Demon Warlock had suffered severe injuries from the explosion and the flames.

Of course, the blanket explosion and subsequent intense combustion might have rendered the ingredients for cursing inactive.

Lumian crouched down and retrieved a glass bottle from his Traveler's Bag. He scraped away the black marks on the wall and stored them inside.

After completing his task, Lumian cleared any potential traces—hair, skin, and other items. He activated the black mark on his right shoulder and vanished from 16 Rue Coreas before more constables and official Beyonders arrived.

Upon returning to the Flying Bird, he immediately inspected the previous battlefield, now reduced to ruins, scattered with charred and shattered remnants. Metal walls bore marks of distortions and minor cracks, remnants of the intense encounter.

The lingering gasses from the burning carpet and items slowly dissipated through the open window.

After Burman triggered the trap at the exit, the Bottle of Fiction had dissipated.

Lumian focused on examining the windowsill, finding charred remnants.

Phew... Exhaling deeply, he departed Room 5 of the first-class cabin, descending to the deck.

Philip, the security supervisor, leaned against the shipboard, gazing at the night view.

Where's your lover?” Lumian approached Philip, resting his hands on the shipboard.

Philip sighed and replied, “Her destination is Port Farim. Apparently, she was heading to a relative's plantation to assist them.”

“Something to celebrate. This means you'll have a new lover,” Lumian said, adopting the tone of a Dandyism believer.

“Please allow me to be downcast for another two days,” Philip responded, not objecting to Lumian's words but emphasizing his invested feelings.

Of course, it was just a little.

“Did you just return from the port? Why didn't I see you board the ship?” Philip inquired, following his professional instincts.

“I've been in my room the whole time. There was a minor accident at the party just now that set the master bedroom ablaze. Many things were burned. Get someone to fix it promptly tomorrow,” Lumian explained, seeking Philip's assistance in resolving the situation. Despite the possibility of staying in the fire-damaged room, Lumian preferred to take action to rectify the situation.

Philip appeared confused. “Party... Ablaze... What did you do in the room? I didn't hear anything...”

Lumian grinned and responded, “A passionate guest made an appearance. Their actions were a bit extreme.”

“Really?” Philip inquired subconsciously.

“No,” Lumian admitted straightforwardly. “Do you want to hear the real reason?”

Philip fell silent. After a few seconds, he said, “There's a need for compensation for such damage. We'll charge you the repair fee.”

“Fortunately, we're still in Port Farim. We can replenish various items immediately. Otherwise, it would have been quite troublesome.”

Lumian handed over a stack of banknotes.

“This is the repair fee. I hope it can be completed by tomorrow. If it's too much, consider it a tip. If it's too little, ask me for more.”

Philip took the money, frowning as he weighed the stack of banknotes.

“What did you do to the bedroom?”

Why is he giving so much for the repairs?

Is this hush money?

Lumian smiled, turned around, and returned to Room 5 of the first-class cabin.

Observing him disappear through the cabin entrance, Philip counted the stack of banknotes under the crimson moonlight and the gas street lamps at the port.

“2,000 verl d'or? Did he blow up that room?” Philip was shocked and suspicious.

But I didn't hear anything...

That night, Lumian slept in a recliner in the living room.

Initially planning to summon Jenna's Rabbit Chasel and write Franca a letter about the Demon Warlock, seeking her help with Magic Mirror Divination to identify the source of the old blood in Burman's room. However, he remembered that Franca might still be awake while Jenna was already asleep.

Patiently waiting until the morning, Lumian set up the ritual using “Rabbit-

shaped spirit that wanders about the unfounded, a runner who pursues knowledge, a messenger that belongs solely to the Seven of Cups” to summon the book-holding transparent creature resembling a rabbit with powerful legs.

Today's Rabbit Chasel, unlike the last time, wore a pair of indistinct gold-rimmed glasses.

Handing the letter and the glass bottle containing the blood and powder to Rabbit Chasel, Lumian asked curiously, “Why are you suddenly wearing glasses? Is this the downside of knowledge?”

Behind the gold-rimmed glasses, Rabbit Chasel's eyes glinted sharply.

“No, I learned this from a novel given by the Seven of Cups.”

“What novel did she give you?” Lumian inquired, having a hunch.

“The last time I helped you deliver a letter to her, she didn't have any other books with her, so she could only lend me one of her newly purchased collections.” Rabbit Chasel adjusted its gold-rimmed glasses on the bridge of its nose. “That novel is called 'The Adventurer 1: First Show of Strength.'”

As expected, Lumian thought. So, that's why you learned to wear glasses? He didn't know how to comment on this matter.

After Rabbit Chasel left, Ludwig and Lugano woke up one after another, with the former casting a glance at Lumian's bedroom before eating his pre-breakfast snacks. Lugano, however, seemed puzzled.

“Was there a fire last night?”

Why don't I know?

Lumian chuckled.

“It happened while you were engrossed with a certain lady. I quickly resolved it.”

“Is that so...” Lugano reined in his disbelief.

Choosing to explore local delicacies in Port Farim rather than enjoying the ship's breakfast, Lumian disembarked.

Shortly after, Philip, the security supervisor, arrived with a dining cart.

Standing in the doorway of the charred bedroom, Philip was stunned.

You call this a minor accident?

Even if it was blasted by cannons, it couldn't be in a worse state, right?

Was he planning to dismantle the entire ship?

Uh, such destructive power actually didn't affect the room's exterior. Even the damage to the walls is within repairable limits... I didn't hear anything either...

What had Louis Berry done in the room last night?

No wonder he gave 2,000 verl d'or!

At that instant, Philip's blood surged into his brain.

In the Sun Square open-air market of Port Farim, Lumian enjoyed a tortilla filled with various fruit cubes and sipped a peculiar coffee laced with salt as he leisurely strolled through the stalls.

Occasionally, he treated himself to a roasted sausage, relishing the sizzling, oily delicacy.

Approaching the end of the open-air market, he encountered Batna Comté.

The well-dressed adventurer's eyes lit up as he approached Lumian and whispered, "Something happened to your employer!"

Curious, Lumian inquired, "What happened?"

He wanted to know how the official Beyonders had publicized this matter.

"It's that Demon Warlock. He killed Fidel's family and all his servants!" Batna's relief was evident; he hadn't been present yesterday and was glad to have avoided potential danger.

The evidence does seem to point toward the Demon Warlock... The authorities must have shared all the details... Lumian smiled at Batna and remarked, "So, everyone at 16 Rue Coreas fell victim to the Demon Warlock?"

"Yes," Batna confirmed with a solemn nod.

Lumian glanced at him and joked, "Remember how I blindfolded myself yesterday, hoping fate would guide me to uncover clues left behind by a Demon Warlock? Do you recall where we ended up?"

Batna was momentarily taken aback before muttering, "16 Rue Coreas..."

Suddenly, he looked up at Lumian in shock and fear.

Chapter 526 Resolution

Batna exclaimed in surprise, "Your blindfolded walk that day was quite effective..."

The destination was Demon Warlock Burman's next target!

Without waiting for Lumian's response, the adventurer mumbled to himself in puzzlement, "Are you a Blessed of luck?"

No, a Blessed of calamity... Lumian replied inwardly.

As thoughts raced, Batna suddenly formulated a new hypothesis.

Could this be Demon Warlock Burman himself?

He had investigated the explosion scene, returning to flaunt his prowess at the crime scene and blindfolded himself to randomly choose the next victim!

Such an explanation seemed far more plausible than being blessed with luck!

Lumian glanced at Batna's tense expression and smiled.

“Don't tell me you think I'm Burman? How long have I been in Port Farim?”

That's exactly it. Something happened the night you first arrived in Port Farim... Batna didn't dare vocalize it.

“When the Quartier des Black Pearls exploded, I was still praying in the cathedral,” Lumian said with amusement, providing an alibi.

Batna pondered for a moment and relaxed, but confusion still lingered on his face.

Lumian sighed and inquired, “Yesterday, I didn't expect to encounter anything related to the Demon Warlock while walking blindfolded. I just found it fun.”

He spoke the truth.

However, he couldn't shake the suspicion that the corruption caused by 0-01 might be more severe than he had imagined.

Of course, he couldn't rule out the possibility that Trier, a seal from the Fourth Epoch, had effectively suppressed the preexisting issues within him.

The excuse of finding it “fun” barely convinced Batna. He felt that Louis Berry was undoubtedly such a person.

Yet, the other party would sporadically set traps just for the amusement of it. Anyone treating him as an idiot would end up becoming one!

“Perhaps I was truly blessed by luck yesterday,” Lumian concluded.

He then recounted his hypothesis about the Demon Warlock's connection with Fidel and expressed regret, “Unfortunately, I didn't believe I'm that lucky.”

Lumian's reasoning convinced Batna that Demon Warlock Burman's continuous evasion and access to resources stemmed from his close symbiotic relationship with Fidel, a prominent merchant. The subsequent tragedy likely resulted from the pressure exerted by the official Beyonders' investigation, leading to internal strife.

This ruled out the possibility that Louis Berry was a Demon Warlock. He had just arrived in Port Farim a few days ago, and Burman had been here for a long time.

“What a shame...” Batna sighed. “If I had sold the clues about the Demon Warlock's close connection to Fidel to the authorities beforehand, I could've bagged a hefty bounty.”

It would've been at least 5,000 verl d'or!

Batna shook his head.

“No, without evidence, the authorities won't buy it. Can't tell them we stumbled on clues blindfolded, blessed by luck. They'd just cuff us for being fraudsters.”

A chuckle slipped from Lumian's lips.

“Can't you fabricate some evidence to back the clues?”

“Say you spotted someone suspicious at Fidel's back door, maybe the Demon Warlock. Let the official Beyonders confirm it themselves. They'll uncover the truth in due time.”

“T-That'd work?” Batna's mouth hung slightly agape.

“Why not?” Lumian grinned. “If you truly found the Demon Warlock, tell them not to sweat the details. Just ask if the clues are legit and if they helped capture the Demon Warlock. If they miss Burman, it's a small scam at worst. Few days of hard labor for you.”

“Official Beyonders can take tips from adventurers without solid certainty, right? They'd miss genuine info otherwise.”

Lumian's words left Batna silent momentarily before he blurted out, “Don't tell me you've got Islander blood?”

Deception seemed to be his forte.

Lumian casually replied, “Knew an Islander in Trier, quite the con artist with rich experience and techniques.”

With a flicker of interest, Lumian raised his left hand, pinching his left eye socket.

Glancing at Batna, he asked, “How long have you been adventuring? Why still so green?”

“Over a year,” Batna defended himself. “It's just that I stick to the rules with authorities. I'm more adaptable when dealing with pirates and others.”

“Adventurers slipping clues to authorities also dabble in deceit, right?” Lumian grinned. “They scam if they can.”

He suspected Batna's strict adherence to rules came from a well-bred background, a notion confirmed by the other party's attire and appearance.

Observing Batna's silence, Lumian finished his remaining salted coffee and glanced back at the lively open-air market.

“Try not to go to the morgue, cemetery, or other places for the time being.”

Just as Batna was about to ask why, he instantly grasped the advice's true meaning.

Without Fidel to provide resources, the Demon Warlock might feel compelled to take action!

At noon, Lumian returned to Room 5 of the Flying Bird's first-class cabin. He noticed the master bedroom had undergone a transformation with a change in carpet, bed, wardrobe, desk, and other furniture, replaced by various ornaments. However, the distortions and cracks in the metal walls had only been partially repaired, not fully restored.

Before long, his messenger, Penitent Baynfel, emerged from the void and handed him a letter.

Franca:

“Based on your latest account and my discussion with 007 last night, I suspect that Demon Warlock Burman had been compelled to switch Sequences.

“He was originally a Warlock, but to revive his wife, he switched to the neighboring Death pathway. He went half-mad, becoming half-human and half-monster.

“Though this could be explained as a Warlock receiving an evil god's boon, your situation doesn't align. No cases of Beyonders powers from two pathways fusing and mutating have been documented. This was evident in your clash with Burman. The Eye of Illusory you mentioned has the Eye of Mystery Prying, revealing the side of reality, but it also displays the Death pathway's suppression of the Spirit Body or even enslavement.

“As far as I know, the Death pathway gains an Eye of Death ability at Sequence 8 Gravedigger. Did it fuse with the Eye of Mystery Prying, forming that distinctive Eye of Illusory?”

As Lumian read, he suddenly recalled the appearance of the Eye of Illusory.

Embedded vertically in his forehead, illusory and blurry, a deep purple bordering on black, with numerous pale-white patterns—undeniably a fusion of the Eye of Mystery Prying and the Death pathway's abilities.

Lumian's gaze shifted downward as he continued reading.

“White feather-like fur, decaying wounds, control over various undead creatures, unstable emotional states, and extreme actions—all indirectly confirming my hypothesis...

“The origins of the old blood are rather peculiar. I've conducted Magic Mirror Divination several times and consulted various entities, but all I've gleaned is that it stems from the depths of the spirit world. No further information. It seems the irreversible half-mad Burman had some other fortuitous encounter.”

Unstable emotions... Extreme actions... irreversible half-madness... Lumian mulled over the descriptions and let out an inaudible sigh.

How determined and desperate must Burman have been when he chose to consume the Death pathway potion?

Wild Beyonders didn't know they could switch to neighboring pathways at a specific Sequence. They believed once a divine pathway was chosen, it couldn't be altered. Forced consumption of potions from other pathways led to madness or death.

Moreover, Mystery Pryer and Death weren't adjacent pathways that allowed switching.

Burman wouldn't have drunk the Death pathway potion without a resolve bordering on death, all to revive his wife, even at the cost of his sanity.

Lumian sensed he might have made the same choice in such a situation, hence his conflicting emotions.

Franca's letter ended with reassurance: "Don't fret over the aftermath. Burman's mental state will soon cause him to resurface without Fidel's support and restraint. He might succeed once or twice in gathering materials for experiments, but it won't last. Official Beyonders will eliminate him within weeks or even days."

Lumian glanced at Penitent Baynfel, yet to depart.

"Help me deliver my reply to the sender."

Swiftly, he penned a line: "I'll kill Burman as soon as possible."

Before long, Penitent Baynfel returned with Franca's reply: "Why?"

Lumian wrote on the same piece of paper: "I wish to punish him for his crimes..."

He paused for a moment before continuing, "And end his pain."

Folding the letter into a square, Lumian handed it to Baynfel and glanced at the messenger.

"Don't you find it troublesome to send letters back and forth?"

It wasn't concern but puzzlement.

After delivering the letter, Penitent Baynfel didn't leave immediately. Instead, he waited for a potential reply.

This time, Baynfel didn't remain silent. He replied in a deep voice, "Being busy makes me feel better. It's better to have something to do than always watch the darkness."

Lumian listened quietly without responding, watching Penitent Baynfel turn and walk into the void.

He empathized with those words.

Franca didn't stop Lumian. Her reply was concise and forceful: "Be careful!"

Phew... Lumian exhaled and walked to the living room window, casting his gaze at Port Farim bathed in the blazing sunlight and the distant Andatna volcano.

Chapter 527 Immersion

Under the sunlight, Port Farim appeared to be tinged with a golden hue, and the air seemed to carry the sweetness of cane sugar.

Lumian lingered by the window, contemplating the whereabouts of the Demon Warlock.

During his rescue the previous night, Burman had slipped into a deep coma, unable to direct the undead creature he controlled. Therefore, the undead being must have relied on its instincts and routines to transport Burman to a safe haven he frequented.

Ordinarily, Fidel's residence would be his top choice. Yet, when Lumian scoured the premises, there were no traces indicating Burman's return.

His initial assumption was that Burman had employed the undead creatures to eliminate Fidel's family, attendants, and servants. Recognizing 16 Rue Coreas as a battlefield and unsafe, they likely sought an alternate hideout.

Where could that be?

From his Traveler's Bag, Lumian retrieved the information Franca had provided about Burman and the rest of the details gathered from Philip, Batna, and the others. He read through it again, attempting to immerse himself in the mindset of the Demon Warlock, simulating his thoughts, actions, and motivations.

Burman hailed from Fog Province, also known as Winter Province, situated in the northern part of Intis. Bordering the Feysac Empire, the region had relatively rustic folk customs, with a penchant for strong liquor.

His wife, Helen, a Port Farim native without Islander heritage, had a grandfather who worked as a cane sugar merchant traveling between Port Farim and Port LeSeur. Unfortunately, he encountered pirates, losing most of his business and relying on a plantation he had previously acquired.

Born and raised on that plantation, Helen witnessed its sale due to conflicts among her father's generation after her grandfather's death. Her family received a portion of the money and relocated to Port Farim. After her father's passing and her mother falling ill, she became an adventurer and crossed paths with Burman.

Both had experienced fortuitous encounters during their adventures, gaining superpowers. They even acquired property in Port Farim, planning a future away from the adventurous life as they grew older.

Several years ago, they, along with a group of fellow adventurers, rented a boat to explore the seas for treasure. Unfortunately, they encountered sea monsters, and only Burman and two others survived.

Following this tragic incident, Burman's attempts to revive his wife took a progressively desperate turn.

“Treasure hunting at sea? Are there really that many treasures at sea?” Lumian mumbled, convinced that it was highly likely Burman was still in Port Farim.

This place held his dearest memories, remnants of the years spent with his wife, Helen. When selecting a hiding spot, he would instinctively lean towards this area.

With this in mind, Lumian continued reading the latter part of the intel.

As anticipated, Burman's past dangerous experiments had unfolded near the Fog Sea Archipelago, encompassing other islands and the villages and towns along the Northern Continent's coast. If he connected them into irregular concentric circles, the center would be in Port Farim on Saint Tick Island.

Burman uses Port Farim as a base for resurrection attempts in various places... Lumian pondered. He hasn't stirred trouble in Port Farim before, so why the exception this time? If I were Burman in

his half-mad state, I'd treat Port Farim as my spiritual home, a haven of beautiful memories. Typically, I wouldn't disrupt the order here. I might even secretly maintain it and handle some audacious pirates and adventurers on the sly... Lumian analyzed thoughtfully.

He had substituted Port Farim with Cordu. Believing that if his sister's death had no connection to Cordu and the peace remained, anyone daring to disturb Cordu's daily life and alter the situation would be his enemy!

Frowning slightly, he sensed there might be crucial details unclear about the previous night's explosion. There could be a reason why Burman killed Fidel and his family beyond a mere disagreement. Fidel, having collaborated with Burman for years, should have known about his unstable mental state. How could such a shrewd merchant not consider the potential repercussions of his words on the Demon Warlock?

Moreover, Burman aimed to eliminate the adventurer Louis Berry to conceal his collaboration with Fidel. If Fidel was already dead, why silence Lumian?

Perhaps, Fidel had assumed he could persuade Burman to wait a few days before acting, only to find Burman already in a deranged state, driven by instinct.

After careful consideration, Lumian decided to re-enter Port Farim and visit Burman and Helen's former residence.

Even though Burman had sold it long ago to fund his resurrection experiments and it was under official Beyonder scrutiny, there remained a possibility of discovering crucial clues.

What if the mad Burman insisted on returning to his previous abode?

Instructing Lugano to keep an eye on Ludwig, Lumian descended to the deck and encountered Philip.

The Flying Bird's security supervisor regarded Lumian with a mixed expression. Without mentioning the room that seemed to have been bombarded by cannons, he stated, "I'll distribute the remaining repair fees to the participating workers and attendants."

The implication was clear: "I've already compensated those who need to be silenced."

"You can take a share yourself," Lumian replied with a smile.

Philip shook his head and sighed.

"Not having any more incidents like that on the way from Port Farim to Port Santa would be the best reward for me."

"I'll do my best," Lumian sincerely assured him.

He refrained from making promises, acknowledging factors beyond his control.

He also looked forward to reaching Port Santa without trouble and beginning the hunt for the key members of April Fool's—Bard and Ultraman.

Philip gazed at Lumian for a few seconds, as if contemplating whether to report him in advance.

He sighed again.

“The port lockdown will be lifted tonight. The Flying Bird will set sail again tomorrow morning. Don't miss it.”

Lumian nodded and asked curiously, “The Demon Warlock has been apprehended?”

“No, but it's pretty much confirmed that it has nothing to do with the ships at the port. Nor is he hiding here,” Philip replied nonchalantly. “Burman even killed the prominent merchant Fidel's family last night. They seemed to be in a cooperative relationship. Perhaps Fidel wanted to betray him...”

At this point, Philip gave Lumian a sharp glance.

“Last night, the battle in your room—could it be related to this?”

“What kind of connection do you think there will be?” Lumian asked, amused.

Philip pondered for a moment and couldn't make the connection.

Observing this, Lumian waved his hand and donned his golden straw hat. He descended the gangway to the docks and left the port district.

As Lumian reached Sun Square, adorned with numerous wanted posters, he was approached by an Islander man with brownish-black skin, sunken eyes, and a deep-set gaze. The man handed him a folded book with a plethora of words and crude patterns printed on it.

“Traveler, this is Port Farim's travel guide. It lists scenic spots, unique delicacies, and sexual entertainment venues,” the Islander introduced with zeal. “It'll make your stay here more enjoyable.”

Lumian played along and asked, “How much?”

“It's free! I'll give it to you for free!” the Islander exclaimed in a high-pitched voice. “The government prints these for tourists, hoping for a positive impression of Port Farim.”

“Awesome.” Lumian accepted the guidebook with an expression of “pleasant surprise” and unfolded it.

The guide detailed scenic views and recommendations from various shops—sugar cane outlets, sexual entertainment venues, renowned eateries, and more.

Suddenly, Lumian swiftly drew his revolver and pressed it against the Islander's forehead.

The Islander froze, stunned. After a few seconds, he stammered, “No, no charge. I'm not lying!”

Was this minor situation worth a gun being drawn?

I'm going to call the police!

Lumian smiled and inquired, “What's the connection between these recommended shops and you?”

“No...” The Islander felt the chill of the gun and carefully changed his words. “Th-they paid us to recommend them. Some of them are owned by our partners.”

“How many are legitimate shops?” Lumian pressed, undeterred.

“90%.” Just as the Islander finished speaking, Lumian cocked the revolver's hammer, sending a clear message.

He hastily added, “90% of them are connected to us.”

Lumian chuckled, continuing with another question, “What about the scenery?”

“50%. Only the plantations and primitive tribes are connected to us.” The Islander trembled in fear.

Lumian shook the travel guide and smiled at the Islander.

“Show me the real ones.”

The Islander quickly pointed out different parts, worried that the gun might misfire.

Only then did Lumian stow away his revolver and take the guidebook to the open-air market on the other side of Sun Square.

He had engaged the Islander partly to frighten the swindler and partly because a new idea had struck him.

For Burman, who had resided in Port Farim for many years, were some of the delicacies and scenery here also part of his cherished memories?

During setbacks, when he killed his best partner and faced defeat in battle, would he, driven by madness and paranoia, seek out places with beautiful memories to draw strength and recharge?

Lumian believed if he were in Burman's shoes, he would have done the same.

Reason might suggest that he could be tracked and discovered, but half-mad individuals often ignored reason.

Therefore, whether it was the moonlit scenery of the lighthouse, the setting sun behind the volcano, Reptow minced pork, Gasparo seafood rice, or Saint Tick chocolate ice cream, all could attract the covert patronage of the Demon Warlock.

In his current state, there was a high chance that he wouldn't meticulously erase his tracks.

Adjusting his golden straw hat, Lumian made his way through the open-air market, heading toward the cliff mountain outside Farim, where Port Farim's lighthouse stood.

Chapter 528 Treasure Legend

The crash of azure waves echoed against the cliff's base, creating a cascade of white flowers in their wake.

Approaching the lighthouse, Lumian pondered its rumored history, a relic left behind by the Intisians upon their arrival at Saint Tick Island, his gaze fixating on the distant sea.

The night's crimson moonlight, still hours away, refrained from casting its dreamy glow, rendering the scene quiet and undisturbed by tourists.

Circling the lighthouse reminiscent of Roselle's era, Lumian observed for nearly fifteen minutes, fruitlessly searching for any sign of the Demon Warlock.

He didn't anticipate a direct encounter with Burman; it wasn't yet the time to admire the moon. Lumian simply sought to discern if Burman would visit to reminisce about the past and his wife after waking up last night—a moment of solace to steady his heart and find the strength to persevere.

The lighthouse guardian, with a pipe emitting the aroma of roasted tobacco leaves, offered a friendly reminder, “Kid, there's nothing much to see here during the day. It's a whole different story at night.”

Lumian smiled and inquired, “Do people come in the middle of the night?”

“Indeed,” the 50-year-old guardian boasted. “Those Trier playboys love bringing their dates here to bask in the moonlight.”

“Any mysterious figures, perhaps someone donning a hood and pretending to be a Warlock?” Lumian pressed on.

The lighthouse guardian's face betrayed a nostalgic expression.

“Sometimes. Thought it was a ghostly silhouette a few times.”

“Did such a figure visit late last night?” Lumian queried, a subtle curl forming on his lips.

There was nothing wrong with his speculation from his immersion!

Perhaps his similar experiences allowed him to better understand Burman's mental state and paranoid thoughts.

The guardian replied, “Can't say for sure. I didn't see anything.”

Lumian didn't press further. He decided to return in the early morning hours, the enchanting few hours beneath the moonlight.

Over the next three hours, he explored the truly renowned gourmet restaurants in Port Farim. Despite asking similar questions, Lumian obtained no valuable information.

It became apparent that Demon Warlock Burman exercised restraint under normal circumstances, avoiding impulsive actions. He seldom frequented crowded places, and when he did, his disguise was impeccable.

By 4 p.m., Lumian reached Port Farim's modest steam locomotive station. He spent 3 verl d'or for a ticket bound for the Andatna volcano mine.

If he aimed to witness the sunset there, the journey had to commence now.

Woosh! Clunk! Clunk! Clunk! The iron-black carriage belched thick smoke as it lumbered along the railway sleepers.

Gradually, it gained momentum, akin to a colossal giant overcoming inertia and mobilizing its components.

Seated by the window, Lumian held a golden straw hat, quietly admiring the vanishing plantations.

Shortly before 6 p.m., the train halted outside Andatna's volcanic mine.

Adorning his straw hat, Lumian bypassed the mine entrance, opting for a nearby trail leading to the volcano's summit.

As the greenery dwindled, grayish-black hues prevailed. Occasional red rocks punctuated the landscape.

Approaching the mountaintop, desolation intensified. Grayish-black gravel lay dormant in the hushed wind.

Without the shelter of foliage, Lumian's vision expanded. The peculiar grandeur of this place seemed to embody the vastness of desolation and silence.

Following the tourist-worn grayish-black path, Lumian advanced step by step toward the volcano's mouth, revealing coal-black surfaces with reddish depressions.

The temperature inside was notably warmer.

Unbridled winds stirred, sending grayish-black gravel airborne, causing human forms to sway.

In this spectacle, the nearly setting sun bathed the desolate surroundings in a golden-red glow, intensifying the sunken redness.

Pressing down on his straw hat, Lumian ventured two to three hundred meters along the volcano's crater.

Abruptly, the mountaintop wind subsided, and the suspended gravel settled in eerie silence.

Lumian immediately spotted a figure standing silently on the grayish-black diagonal wall outside the volcano's crater, bathed in the last radiant sunlight.

Cloaked in black robes and a deep hood, the figure attentively watched the gradual descent of the golden-red sun.

Lumian's expression remained unchanged as he advanced step by step, refraining from initiating an attack.

Sensing Lumian's approach, the hooded figure turned around, unveiling a pale-white face marked by decaying wounds and a wide swath of fur.

It was none other than Demon Warlock Burman!

Perhaps influenced by the serene scenery and haunting memories, Burman, known for his madness, spoke wearily, "You've actually found this place."

Lumian, who had been securing his golden straw hat against the strong wind, chuckled self-deprecatingly and responded,

"If not for my illusions and hope, and if I didn't have numerous enemies awaiting my discovery, I would frequently return to Cordu and the nearest high mountain pasture. The grass there is vividly green, vast and expansive, with pale-yellow flowers in full bloom. Countless sheep roam about. The sky mirrors the brilliance of gems, and the

occasional drifting white clouds resemble sheep grazing on the ground. At night, the stars emerge, densely packed like diamond gravel at the bottom of a clear river..."

Standing amidst the blazing sunlight and the vast, silent grayish-black surroundings, Lumian couldn't help but reminisce about Cordu Village and the alpine pasture.

Burman didn't interrupt. After Lumian finished speaking, he wore a dazed expression and uttered with a smile more pained than joyful,

"Helen and I thought we could come here to watch the sunset whenever we pleased since it's just a ticket away. But she never came again..."

And you don't even need to take the steam locomotive... Lumian sighed slowly and said, "What happened back then?"

Burman's face contorted in distortion, the agony evident in his expression.

"We were deceived. Something was wrong with the treasure map. We encountered real sea monsters!

"Damn the Islanders. Helen always believed they resorted to deceit and thuggery out of necessity. All the respectable positions were held by pure Intisians, but we treated them well and placed our trust in them. Yet, they colluded with others to betray us for money!

"I'll kill him, those deceivers, and every Islander!"

Lumian chuckled and remarked, "Some of the self-proclaimed noble Trieriens are swindlers, while others sell their bodies. I don't generalize against Islanders, but I remain cautious of specific individuals."

Suddenly, Lumian felt inspired.

"Was the Islander who betrayed you from the Marauder pathway?"

"Yes." Burman's face twitched with unrestrained anger.

Was it a Swindler acting? Lumian asked cautiously, "Did he have a tendency to wear monocles or pinch his eye socket?"

He pointed at his right eye.

"No." Burman seemed perplexed by Lumian's question.

Lumian heaved a sigh of relief.

"What's his name? Did you manage to kill him?"

Burman's pale face suddenly flushed, and decaying liquid dripped down.

"His name is Mark Benito! After that incident, he vanished. I never found him!"

Lumian chose not to provoke Burman further and inquired, "Which treasure were you seeking back then?"

“In the depths of the Fog Sea, there's an island. The inhabitants there don't age or truly die,” Burman recalled the treasure rumors he had gathered. “There's reason to believe that something incredibly precious is hidden on that island. We didn't want to become enemies with the islanders. Our only hope was to infiltrate the island and steal some ageless medicine.”

His words were somewhat disorganized, skipping over details.

“It bears a striking resemblance to the legend of the Fountain of Unaging,” Lumian remarked after pondering. “The Adventurer series has already hinted that the Fountain of Unaging is a falsehood.”

Ignoring him, Burman continued, “We found some evidence and obtained a treasure map to the island. To our surprise, the map was a forgery!

“The sea monsters wrecked our ship. In order to allow me to utilize that special witchcraft, Helen stood in front of me... I witnessed her torn into two by the sea monsters. I saw despair in her eyes...”

Burman panted heavily, unable to continue.

“And then, you switched to the Death pathway?” Lumian changed the topic.

Burman's icy flaxen-colored eyes gleamed.

“That's correct. Only Death, who controls the Death domain, can bring Helen back!

“In the treasure legend, many details suggest that only Death can achieve eternal life. Understanding the mysteries of death is the key to true resurrection! It's not that the islanders won't die; they can be revived!”

“Do you genuinely believe in that treasure?” Lumian already had an answer in mind after posing the question.

The partially unhinged Burman clung to every lifeline, trusting every rumor that promised to bring Helen back to life.

“I do.” Burman nodded and spoke with a deep voice, “That's because I encountered people from that island some time ago. There really is such an island. There are truly islanders who don't age or truly die!”

“Really?” Lumian blurted out.

Burman's eyes burned with fanaticism as he declared, “I wanted to capture him, but he defeated me. Instead of killing me, he sympathized with my plight and imparted some knowledge about the Death domain. There's a way to bring Helen back to life!

“That cursed swindler. Fidel's attendant is nothing but a swindler. I didn't intend to rush the resurrection ritual. I wasn't fully prepared, but since he's a swindler, I'll kill him! All Islanders are swindlers! They all deserve to die!”

Is he truly from that island? Or could he be another swindler? Lumian realized that the incident with the swindler, Roddy, had triggered Burman. There was also the influence of that islander... Lumian narrowed his eyes and inquired, “What's the islander's name, and what does he look like?”

Burman suddenly became cautious, scrutinizing Lumian.

“What brings you here?”

Observing Burman's reaction, Lumian sighed and, with abnormal composure, said, “I'm here to kill you.”

Burman was taken aback before bursting into laughter.

“For what? A bounty?”

Discarding the golden straw hat in his hand, Lumian lowered his body slightly and replied in a deep voice, “Punish your sins and put an end to your suffering.”

Burman ceased his laughter and raised his hands with a cold expression.

“Bring it on, then.”

Chapter 529 Irrational

Burman's raised hands released a sprinkling of fluorescent powder.

His body began to fade, growing more transparent, as if he had transformed into a being from the spirit world—difficult for ordinary people to perceive.

In the blink of an eye, the Demon Warlock vanished.

Lumian made no move to intervene or evade potential attacks. Calmly, he retrieved the Flog boxing gloves adorned with iron-black spikes from his Traveler's Bag and wore them.

Completing this preparation, he suddenly knelt on one knee, pressing his hands to the ground.

Crimson flames erupted in all directions from Lumian's body, accompanied by a series of explosions.

Amidst the rumbling, flames surged, dominating the grayish-black wilderness. Burman's black-robed figure materialized in midair.

He slowly floated towards Lumian, narrowing the distance between them.

Lumian's figure abruptly vanished, reappearing behind Burman.

Spirit World Traversal!

Without hesitation, Lumian, holding a crimson fireball in his left hand, harrumphed.

Two beams of white light shot out from his nose, targeting Burman.

Floating in midair, Burman didn't lose consciousness as before. His body swayed, forcefully turning around to observe Lumian descending into the sea of flames on the ground.

An illusory vertical eye, dark purple and nearly black, materialized between Burman's brows, reflecting Lumian's figure amid pale-white patterns.

Almost simultaneously, a lanky black shadow emerged from within Burman's body. Nearby, arms made of bones or decayed flesh and pus extended from the void, encircling Burman's transparent and thin form.

He hadn't used witchcraft to quietly approach Lumian and strike. Instead, he had clandestinely swapped his spirit with the undead under his command, setting a trap to entice the enemy into deploying that peculiar spell to attack his body.

In such a scenario, the absence of one's Spirit Body meant immunity to abilities targeting the Soul Body!

Burman could then seize the opportunity to use the Eye of the Spirit to intimidate the enemy and create an opening for the manipulated undead.

This time, he refrained from delving deeper into the secret of the other party's Spirit Body. His goal was to uncover its vulnerabilities, strike with a lethal blow, and absorb the corresponding mystical knowledge!

Having suffered greatly from the Spell of Harrumph the previous night, he had used this ability as a breakthrough from the beginning.

In an instant, Burman's spirit completed the exchange with the lanky shadow and returned to his body.

Simultaneously, Lumian experienced once again the sensation of his spirit being intimidated and suppressed, as if frozen. Terrifying arms covered in festering warts or with eyes extended from the void, reaching out for his body.

At that moment, the crimson fireball in Lumian's left hand erupted.

Boom!

The explosion's force was mostly mitigated by the Flog boxing gloves, but since they weren't fully covered, the exposed part of Lumian's left palm was turned into a bloody mess.

An intense and familiar pain shot through his brain and Spirit Body, bringing him back to awareness.

Seizing this moment of clarity, Lumian activated the black mark on his right shoulder again, vanishing above the sea of flames and disappearing from the strange undead arms extending from the void.

Likewise, he remained vigilant against Burman's Eye of Illusory.

The crimson, nearly white fireball in his left hand was structurally unstable. He had to divert his attention to maintain it, and he couldn't sustain it when affected by the Eye of Illusory, leading to its natural disintegration and a self-

inflicted awakening.

If this failed to disrupt the Eye of Illusory's intimidation, the sea of flames below served as Lumian's second preparation. The residual aura of the Blood Emperor in his right hand was his last resort.

Upon vanishing, Lumian reappeared behind Burman once more.

Prepared, Burman raised his hands and scattered a tree-like powder.

Crackling sounds followed as silver-white lightning struck Lumian's head, as though a storm ruler had unleashed divine retribution from the sky.

For most Beyonders, this would be enough to paralyze and make them tremble incessantly. Yet, Lumian showed no such signs. Instead, he appeared like a reflection in the water, shattered by the lightning.

The real Lumian was curled up at the bottom of the figure. Burman had struck the phantom created using the Niese Face!

The Niese Face was essentially an illusion, but it couldn't be cast on others or items. Lumian had to rely on himself, pretending to be a root system with branches and flowers above, forming a derived illusion.

There was no fundamental difference between this and using the Niese Face to make himself taller and bulkier.

Amidst the crackling lightning, two crimson fireballs materialized beneath Lumian's feet and behind him.

Rumble!

The fireball exploded, propelling Lumian towards the levitating Burman.

Burman, being close proximity, couldn't dodge the swift Lumian in time. He could only slightly turn his body as a bone spear sprouted from his shoulder, its tip unusually sharp.

A grin spread across Lumian's face. He didn't evade, allowing the bone spear to pierce his right chest.

With a resounding thud, he swung his left fist, delivering a powerful blow to the side of Burman's face. The Demon Warlock's head twisted, revealing deep blood-stained, pus-filled holes on his face. His eyes burned with rage, as if he were witnessing the murderer of his wife!

The black mark on Lumian's right shoulder emitted a dim light once more.

His figure vanished beside Burman, dissolving into the encircling lanky black shadows and other undead creatures, leaving behind the bone spear stained with his blood.

This time, Lumian reappeared dozens of meters away, at the edge of the sea of flames.

The wound on his right chest was grotesque, blood dripping from it. In his hand appeared a dark-red bone flute with a hole in it.

Symphony of Hatred!

Lumian brought the bone flute to his lips. As he retreated, he played a mournful and haunting melody.

Once again invoking the Eye of Illusory, Burman, who was on the verge of catching up, was frozen in astonishment. Even the undead ceased their movements.

Suddenly, blood and pus seeped from Burman's eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, as if a muffled and invisible explosion had occurred within him.

His anger, paranoia, and thirst for revenge were fueled by the Symphony of Hatred.

This inflicted a severe blow on him.

Lumian refrained from playing the Symphony of Hatred from the outset because Burman differed from other Beyonders. Others needed to identify the problem, but with Burman, there were too many uncertainties.

His mental state was extremely unstable, burdened by severe psychological issues. His overwhelming desire to revive his wife and seek revenge on the Islander swindler was palpable. His body had undergone modifications from the Death domain, and Lumian had inflicted significant injuries on him the previous night. There were substantial hidden dangers...

Faced with such an adversary, Lumian himself was uncertain about the outcome if he were to unleash the Symphony of Hatred through the shepherd's flute. It might be manageable if it only triggered desires and emotions, but if Burman's mental state lost even the most basic restraints, the Demon Warlock could potentially lose control on the spot, transforming into a monstrous entity with mixed abilities.

Such a monster would likely be even more challenging to deal with than Burman!

Hence, after the Spell of Harrumph failed, Lumian promptly shifted to using Flog boxing gloves to kindle Burman's corresponding desires and emotions. This strategic approach increased the likelihood that when Lumian eventually used the Symphony of Hatred, it would exploit the target's emotions and desires, inflicting severe harm.

Observing Burman descend into the sea of flames amid the eruption of emotions and desires, Lumian executed another Spirit World Traversal, appearing in front of him in an instant.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

He extended his arms, unleashing a relentless barrage of attacks on Burman's body.

On the surface of his Flog fists, a crimson fireball, almost white, compressed layer by layer.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Flog tore at Burman's flesh like a two-headed python.

Rumble!

Crimson fireballs erupted around Lumian, with no concern for waste. They formed a barrier, preventing the lanky figure, strange arms, and other undead from interfering.

One punch, two punches, three punches. Lumian's eyes were fixed on the mangled Burman.

At that moment, he reflected on the village destroyed by Burman and the innocent lives lost because of him.

How many were beloved wives, waiting husbands, dependent parents, and cherished children?

Cordu had been annihilated due to the ambitions of the evil gods. What about the innocent?

Lumian's eyes gradually turned crimson as he clenched his fists.

This time, he didn't empathize with Burman. Instead, he placed himself in the village he had destroyed and the lives he had taken.

Wasn't Cordu like this back then?

The ambitions of these evil gods are to blame!

In just a few seconds, Burman snapped out of his pain and emitted an evil, cold, and incomprehensible voice.

The sound seemed to peel away Lumian's flesh, exposing his Spirit Body to the perilous sunlight and the grayish-black gravel.

Lumian's movements slowed, and the grotesque arms finally reached in, dragging Burman away from the area.

Phew... Lumian exhaled and recovered.

He didn't pursue. Instead, he gazed silently at the void ahead, raised his right hand, and snapped his fingers.

Rumble!

Amidst the sudden eruption of intense flames, Burman's body materialized, shattering from an explosion.

Fire Infusion!

Hunter's Fire Infusion!

In truth, Lumian hadn't acted rationally. His optimal strategy would have been to seize the moment when Burman's emotions and desires were ignited and strike at his vital points with the Symphony of Hatred, delivering a decisive blow. However, he yearned to repeatedly pummel the "hidden" version of himself that terrified him!

With a thud, Burman's head clattered to the ground.

In his daze, he caught sight of a slender figure with black hair, blue eyes, and a delicate face.

It was his wife, Helen.

Y-you're back? Burman couldn't help but smile and extend his arm.

He no longer had an arm.

Gradually, he lost consciousness. Darkness enveloped his vision, as if sunlight lurked deep within.

Demon Warlock Burman—dead.

Chapter 530 Beginning

Lumian observed Burman's head, frozen in surprise and relief. He removed the Flog boxing gloves and the Symphony of Hatred, as well as ended the Niese Face.

Donning the silver Lie earring and retrieving a white bandage, Lumian wrapped it around the burned wound on his right chest and his bloody left hand.

Crimson flames surged around him, engulfing his dripping blood and splattering flesh.

Throughout this process, Lumian gathered the nearby corpse fragments that Burman had scattered and piled them beside the head.

He had been calculating the time. If Burman's Beyonder characteristic still hadn't materialized, he would have to move the corpse pile to the forest beside the Andatna volcano.

This was because the Flog boxing gloves attracted the attention of certain hidden entities, enabling them to command dangerous creatures to attack.

In the past, Lumian would have had to leave the scene as soon as he finished using the Flog boxing gloves, but the battle lasted only a short time. The Flog boxing gloves had already been stowed into his Traveler's Bag, allowing him to wait a little longer.

Lumian observed various colored light spots—light purple, pale-white, and pitch-black—emerge from Burman's head and the scattered corpse pile. Among the items on the ground and torn clothes, Lumian found a diverse array of objects.

There was a miniature brain, blood-dyed and resembling brass, a retractable pitch-black telescope, ointment and powder in metal canisters, a short bone scepter, a peculiar badge encircling the sun with bones, a soft-cover notebook in an iron box, an ordinary-looking golden ring, and scattered gold and silver coins...

The deposit certificates and paper cash had likely been destroyed by the explosion and the inferno.

Lumian carefully stowed each item away, sensing that three possessed superpowers. Merely coming into contact with them triggered various adverse reactions.

Thankfully, I had no intention of prolonging the battle with Burman from the start... Him using these mystical items later would have been troublesome... To deal with such a half-mad and resourceful enemy, I must end the battle swiftly and deny him a chance to recover... Some items were likely gathered by him, while others might have been taken from Fidel... Lumian concluded, finally picking up the dented and cracked iron box.

Inside the soft-cover notebook lay a blood-stained treasure map. With a brief glance, Lumian suspected it to be a sea map leading to an island in a specific sea area. It contained records of weather patterns and markings of safe sea routes.

Could this be the fake treasure map sold to Burman by Mark Benito? Lumian mused. Flipping to the first page of the dark soft-cover notebook, he encountered scrawled words:

“My mind isn't reliable all the time. I tend to forget many things. I must record all relevant knowledge and prevent them from being forgotten.”

Lumian refrained from delving deeper. He carefully stowed away the fake treasure map and the soft-cover notebook.

Lumian noticed an ordinary-looking golden ring adorning Burman's left ring finger in the corpse pile.

It bore a striking resemblance to the gold rings found in the pile of spoils. They varied in size, texture, and quality.

Lumian instantly grasped the situation.

He removed the golden ring from Burman's finger and tied it to another golden ring with a piece of wire he had on hand.

He approached the grayish-black volcano's crater and silently tossed the rings into the reddened depression.

At that moment, Burman's Beyonder characteristics fully materialized, merging with parts of his corpse, resulting in two distinct items.

One was a light-purple transparent left eye, while the other was a pale-white right eye veiled in darkness.

Lumian carefully stowed away the two Beyonder characteristics, taking hold of Burman's head before vanishing from the spot.

Silently, the remaining parts of Burman's body ignited, enveloping the grayish-black volcano in crimson flames.

More than 200 meters away, Lumian retrieved the golden straw hat that had been blown by the strong wind.

As he secured it on his head, he swiftly disappeared.

This time, he appeared on the road outside the Andatna volcano's steam locomotive.

Lumian glanced up at the grayish-black volcano's crater, witnessing the golden-red sunset, resembling flowing lava, receding faster than expected.

The mountaintop swiftly darkened.

In the cathedral of The Fool in Port Farim, not far from Quartier des Black Pearls, Lumian, adjusting his golden straw hat, approached the towering half-giant bishop donned in a half top hat and black trench coat. In a deep voice, he said,

“I want to repent.”

The half-giant bishop, with light-blue eyes and a towering stature exceeding 2.5 meters, regarded Lumian for a moment before nodding. “Follow me.”

He led Lumian into a specialized confessional—a windowless, pitch-black chamber.

“I don't wish to repent in the dark,” Lumian calmly said, removing his golden straw hat.

The half-giant bishop ignited the candles, sealing the door shut.

Pa! Lumian tossed a head with pale-white fur and vacant eye sockets to the half-giant bishop's feet.

“Did you commit murder?” the half-giant bishop inquired in a mellow tone, giving the head a brief once-over.

“No, I just want to help him repent.” Lumian gestured towards the bloody head, oozing yellow pus. “He's Demon Warlock Burman.”

“Burman?” Only then did the half-giant bishop closely inspect the head, recognizing distinct features.

He fell silent for a few moments before stating, “You want the Church to assist you in claiming the bounty from the Intis government?”

“As I mentioned, I'm here to repent for him. His bounty is part of his penance.” Lumian's voice remained unchanged.

The half-giant bishop struggled to comprehend.

Lumian retrieved most of the items acquired from Burman from his Traveler's Bag, leaving behind the dark soft-cover notebook and the fake treasure map.

Clatter. These items, some endowed with superpowers, some valuable, spilled onto the ground.

“They're also part of Burman's penance,” Lumian explained simply. “I want to use the bounty and the money exchanged for these items to establish a charity fund to compensate those who have been harmed by Burman, or their relatives. If there's any excess, please use it to help the homeless children.”

The half-giant bishop, sporting a top hat and trench coat, fell silent for a few seconds.

“The Demon Warlock bounty stands at 600,000 verl d'or. These items hold considerable value too. Together, they could fetch nearly 1 million verl d'or. It's a substantial sum for anyone. Enough to ensure you don't have to take further risks. Are you certain about donating it to us and establishing a charity fund?”

Lumian didn't directly answer the half-giant bishop's question. Instead, he reiterated, “This is Burman's penance.”

“Alright, since you trust our Church, we'll comply with your wishes,” the half-giant bishop, named Theis, said. “Remember my name and feel free to monitor the charity fund's progress closely.”

Lumian gazed at The Fool's Sacred Emblem in the confessional, pressed his hand to his chest, and gave a slight bow.

“Praise The Fool!”

He then closed his eyes and prayed, Great Lord, I implore you to punish the world for their sins and watch over our compensation. This isn't atonement; it's self-punishment...

Lumian repented earnestly for a while before straightening up. He opened his eyes and turned to leave.

“What shall be the name of the charity fund?” the half-giant bishop hurriedly inquired.

Lumian took a deep breath and replied, "Helen, the Helen Charity Fund."

"Do we need to inform the authorities about who killed Burman?" the half-giant bishop cautiously asked.

"No need, but there's no requirement to deliberately obscure the clues for me." Lumian didn't look back. He put on his golden straw hat and exited The Fool's cathedral.

That night, Lumian once again entered the bar beside Sun Square known as Pelican.

Batna Comté, as usual, sat at the bar counter, sipping on Golden Somme sugar wine. Beside him was a girl dressed as an adventurer with adorable facial features.

Lumian walked over and joined Batna and the other patrons. He smiled and snapped his fingers at the bartender.

"A glass of Golden Somme."

Batna glanced at him and remarked, "Someone's in a good mood."

"Indeed." Lumian received the golden syrup from the bartender and tapped the table with the bottom of the glass. Then, he stood up and raised the glass. "Everyone, I've encountered two things worth celebrating today."

He spoke with enthusiasm and joy, "The first is that I completed a commission worth more than 100,000 verl d'or!"

"Impossible..." Batna and the female adventurer beside him exclaimed in unison.

This bounty was even higher than Black Baronet's bounty. How could it be accomplished in a day?

Moreover, Batna knew that Louis Berry's employer, Fidel, was already deceased. How could he have received a new commission?

Lumian continued in a passionate tone, "To celebrate this, I'll treat everyone at the bar counter to a glass of Golden Somme!"

Nearly ten adventurers and patrons expressed admiration. One of them teased, "Regardless of the truth, I believe you!"

The others chimed in.

Lumian's smile widened.

"Second thing to be happy about—I've woven a tale to deceive a group of fools!"

Suddenly, the expressions of everyone at the bar counter froze.

Lumian glanced at them and continued, "But it's true that drinks are on the house!"

The adventurers and patrons booed, expressing that if they could drink for free, they didn't mind being fools.

Thus, Lumian spent 96 licks, or 4.8 verl d'or, treating the twelve people at the bar counter to a glass of Golden Somme.

Observing Louis Berry, Batna silently muttered, He's genuinely happy...

Late at night, aboard the Flying Bird, Room 5, first-class cabin.

Lumian returned to the barely habitable master bedroom, ignited the kerosene lamp, and retrieved the dark soft-cover notebook and the fake treasure map he had obtained from Demon Warlock Burman from his Traveler's Bag.