

Inevitability 641

Chapter 641 Information From Eating

Lugano, who had been observing from the sidelines, was taken aback when Lumian handed the thin aluminum foil to Ludwig and inquired if he wanted to eat it.

Despite Ludwig's previous display of abnormal eating habits, including drinking a tube of human blood in front of Lugano, revealing all the corresponding information, Lugano still harbored reservations about feeding Ludwig just anything, especially something as unconventional as aluminum foil.

After all, Ludwig was still a child!

In the blink of an eye, Lugano witnessed Ludwig silently accepting the old, thin aluminum foil, stuffing it into his mouth, chewing, and swallowing.

“...” Lugano found himself in a daze.

Once Ludwig finished consuming the aluminum foil, he calmly turned to Lumian and inquired, “Which details do you need—information on the cocoa beans used, the precise quantity, additional ingredients, the origin of the aluminum foil ingredients, the production factories, or the individuals most in contact with it?”

Lumian shook his head slowly.

“No need.”

This information wouldn't help track down Hisoka. Hisoka had touched the thin aluminum foil while wearing gloves, leaving behind no corresponding personal details. The patrol team had already confirmed that the chocolate packaging was common in Port Pylos, and there was nothing distinctive about the taste.

As Lumian responded, a mix of amusement and surprise washed over him.

He can even extract such information from eating?

As expected of a monster capable of recovering just by eating and gradually breaking free from the seal's constraints!

Ludwig seemed to relish the delicacy. After a few moments, he remarked, “The residual chocolate has a hint of depravity.”

Depravity? Could it be that Hisoka had carried it for an extended period, corrupting it? That doesn't make sense. Unless one was a demigod, Beyonder auras couldn't reach such a level. The only possibility was that they were on the brink of losing control, deep in a state of depravity. However, such a Beyonder's body would undoubtedly display various abnormal details. They wouldn't be able to leave the house; stepping out would lead to discovery and pursuit by law enforcers. Could he rely on the human skin Bram mentioned for disguise? Lumian was initially puzzled, but then he asked with anticipation, “A decadent aura from the Devil pathway?”

Ludwig licked his lips, savoring the taste of the chocolate residue.

“Yes, at least a Demon's.”

“Demon's?” Lumian was taken aback and couldn't help but frown.

Having extensively studied Devilology, he knew that Sequence 4 of the Devil pathway was known as Demon, representing a demigod.

If the chocolate slightly tainted with a decadent aura came from a Demon, it clearly didn't belong to Hisoka.

Lumian wasn't arrogantly dismissing Hisoka's potential to have advanced to Sequence 4. Instead, the aluminum foil and chocolate marks represented the state four years ago. Hisoka couldn't have been a Demon back then, unless he had become a Desire Apostle upon transmigration. If that were the case, his targets for the serial murders should have been Sequence 6 or 5 Beyonders.

Although Beyonders at this level were rare in Matani, Devilology didn't specify that serial murders could only occur in one location.

“Are you certain?” Lumian looked at Ludwig for confirmation.

Ludwig replied earnestly, “A Demon's decadent aura has a completely different texture from Low-to Mid-Sequence Devils.”

Upon hearing his godson's response, an image suddenly surfaced in Lumian's mind.

Hisoka standing within the wall of spirituality, engaged in a special ritual to establish a connection with a Demon. Throughout this process, a few pieces of chocolate wrapped in thin aluminum foil remained in his pocket. They were slightly tainted by the decadent aura permeating the altar, subtly and silently transforming...

Yes, when I perform a ritual, I don't remove all my belongings in advance and leave them outside the altar unless there's a specific mention in the ritual requirements that I should avoid... As a Conspirer, Lumian quickly made a guess and asked Ludwig, “Can you tell which Demon's decadent aura it belongs to?”

Lumian's current idea was that if Hisoka couldn't be found in the future, he would exhaust his resources and seek the help of the New City of Silver's Demon-Hunter experts. He would set up a ritual and summon the Demon who had established a connection with Hisoka. He would have it beaten up before interrogating it for information about Hisoka.

Ludwig shook his head.

“I can't absorb such subtle information yet. All I know is that the decadent aura belongs to a family called Nois.”

Nois, one of the three Devil families... The Demon responding to Hisoka's special ritual is from the Nois family? That's peculiar. How can a Demon respond to a ritual remotely? It has to be at Sequence 3, or even at the Angel level... According to Devilology, Serial Killers can summon projections of Abyss Demons because those Devils can use the special properties of the Abyss to respond, not because they have reached the corresponding level. However, the Nois family is a Devil family active in the real world and hasn't entered the Abyss... Lumian made many connections from the Nois last name.

He concluded by listing three possibilities:

Firstly, the Demon responding to the Hisoka ritual was none other than the Nois family's Angel.

Secondly, it had reached Sequence 3 and was located in Port Pylos, near Hisoka.

Thirdly, the Nois family had a close connection to the Abyss. They could borrow the Abyss's properties to some extent. Even a Demon could respond to prayers from afar.

Lumian pondered for a moment and asked Ludwig, "Any other information?"

"No," Ludwig replied, disappointing Lumian.

Lumian handed over the remaining piece of aluminum foil.

"Try this one too."

Ludwig didn't hesitate. Like many children drawn to the sweetness lingering on wrappers, he popped the thin foil stained with chocolate into his mouth and chewed.

After a moment, while Lugano snapped back to reality, Ludwig looked at Lumian and remarked, "There's more to this one."

"What kind of information?" Lumian knew that Ludwig's special mention had to be of some value.

Ludwig responded with the air of a connoisseur, "This thin aluminum foil rested on a table marked by old blood and a splash of coffee. The blood belonged to a deceased male. The spirituality was initially potent, and the coffee was Fermo blend, unsweetened, distinctly bitter yet fragrant."

Upon hearing Ludwig's account, Lumian's mind painted another vivid scene.

A few pieces of chocolate wrapped in thin aluminum foil lay nonchalantly on a table, soaked in old blood and spilled coffee. They seemed to share an intimate connection for an extended period. Then, a hand reached out, snatched them up, and swiftly pocketed them before making a hasty exit.

Connecting the dots, Lumian strongly suspected that the table had served Hisoka in a dwelling he once occupied.

"Do you have detailed information on the male deceased?" Lumian probed Ludwig for more insights.

Ludwig shook his head once more.

"No, unless I consume the blood directly."

14:53

The bloodstains likely belonged to one of the victims, Lumian Directly support the authors on WebNovel!

surmised. He pondered whether this information was documented in the case file or elsewhere. Was Hisoka using "No, unless I consume the blood directly."

The bloodstains likely belonged to one of the victims, Lumian the table as an autopsy platform or perhaps an altar? Lumian mused inwardly, a tinge of disappointment clouding his thoughts. Nevertheless, he refocused his attention on the Fermo coffee.

He mumbled to himself, Does this mean that Hisoka has a penchant for coffee, specifically the Fermo blend from the Paz Valley...

The Paz Valley, nestled in the Southern Continent, boasted the renowned Fermo coffee, comparable to Feynapotter's highlander coffee and the Southern Continent's own version. It was a luxury enjoyed mainly by the middle class for extended periods.

In Matani, where both East and West Balam produced high-

quality coffee beans, such occurrences were rare. The locals had access to a plethora of excellent coffee beans. Those unfit for export were sold at affordable prices, favored by both colonists and natives.

Lugano, now fully attentive, cautiously added, "I've heard that those who frequent Fermo coffee appreciate its bitterness and fragrance. However, those who prefer it without sugar are a rare breed."

In essence, Hisoka's unique taste in coffee is uncommon here... Lumian smiled at Ludwig and remarked, "Well done. If I apprehend the target in the future, I'll give him to you."

When the time came, Lumian would likely be a Sequence 5. Moreover, he wouldn't give Ludwig the Beyonder characteristic. Lumian could ease his grip on the boy.

Give... The notion sent a chill down Lugano's spine, a hint that his imagination might have run too wild.

To others, gifting a Beyonder of the Devil's Pathway might relegate the recipient to a life of servitude or worse, becoming an ingredient. However, with Ludwig...

Lugano involuntarily shuddered.

He didn't dare to think about it!

Ludwig nodded, his eyes gleaming with anticipation.

Lumian turned to Lugano and said, "Don't you have a good grasp of Dutanese? Check Port Pylos this afternoon and find out which shops sell Fermo coffee. It's preferable if it's one that has been operating for four to five years or longer."

"Alright." Lugano suddenly felt a surge of usefulness.

In the evening, he returned to Suite 7 at B3 and reported to Lumian, "There are only three shops selling Fermo coffee. One is on Cania Street in Resurrection Square..."

"You mentioned Cania Street in Resurrection Square?" Lumian interjected.

"Yes, Unit 21 on that street. It's called Matani Import and Export Shop," Lugano confirmed.

Lumian fell silent.

Isn't it close to Port Pylos's patrol team?

In Port Pylos, on the third floor of the building housing the patrol team.

Camus received the bounty and gave a fifth to his two companions.

He then entered the telegraph room and inquired of the telegrapher, "Do you have a telegram for me?"

He had previously sent a telegram to inquire with certain friends if they had any information on Louis Berry, the adventurer.

Since they were in collaboration, he needed to ascertain the other party's situation first!

The female telegrapher, wearing a sweet smile, straightened up and responded, "Yes! From Farim."

Chapter 642 Visit

Camus extended his thanks to the telegrapher, retrieved his telegram, and swiftly scanned its contents.

"Louis Berry, Intisian, hailed as the most renowned adventurer in the Fog Sea over the past six months. Sporting a distinctive golden straw hat, he successfully hunted down the Demon Warlock Burman, earning a hefty bounty of 600,000 verl d'or. Furthermore, he collaborated with the Earth Mother Church in Port Santa to address the crisis surrounding the Sea Prayer Ritual. However, the precise details remain elusive..."

Upon perusing the telegram, Camus released a silent sigh and remarked to himself, He's truly a great adventurer. It's no surprise he managed to handle that Serial Killer...

Camus couldn't gauge the Demon Warlock's true strength, but the substantial bounty spoke volumes. The sum of 600,000 verl d'or was a testament to the Demon Warlock's threat level. Even if Louis Berry's fame stemmed solely from his encounter with such a formidable adversary, he undeniably stood among the great adventurers.

It wasn't lost on Camus that Bram, the perpetrator of numerous murders that had kept the patrol team occupied for nearly two weeks, only carried a bounty of 50,000 verl d'or. Such figures tempted Camus to consider collaboration with Louis Berry.

Reflecting on the substantial 600,000 bounty and comprehending Louis Berry's generosity, Camus tucked away the telegram and graciously commended the female telegrapher with an exaggerated flying kiss.

Running his fingers through his tousled brown hair, Camus descended to the hall below.

The evening had descended, and it wasn't his night for duty. He could head home and take a break.

Out of the blue, Camus's gaze focused as he spotted the handsome Louis Berry, sporting black hair, green eyes, and a laid-back demeanor, seated on the sofa, casually playing with a golden straw hat.

Approaching cautiously, Camus inquired, "Is there anything else?"

Lumian ceased twirling the straw hat, sat up straight, and grinned.

“I've got something else to talk to you about.”

Realizing that one of the three shops that could buy Fermo coffee was on Cania Street, not far from the patrol team, Lumian's immediate thought was:

Could Hisoka be hiding within the patrol team, perhaps as one of its members?

Is the most dangerous place the safest?

After careful consideration, Lumian considered it a possibility, though not particularly likely.

On the one hand, among the seven Beyonders who were killed, including the Death believer in Port Pylos, the Rose School of Thought's peripheral member, and the spy left behind in Matani by the Intis Republic, were secretive individuals, blending in with ordinary people. Without substantial information sources, it would be challenging for Hisoka to identify them as Beyonders and target them.

This suggested that either Hisoka had a unique ability to discern Beyonders from ordinary people or possessed a mystical item granting him such insight, or he had control over an extensive information network. The patrol team, being intimately familiar with Matani and Port Pylos, might have already detected something amiss with the Death believer, the Rose School of Thought's member, and the Intis spy and been conducting surveillance.

Hisoka's membership in the patrol team would explain his ability to uncover a Beyonders hidden identity and carry out the murders.

On the other hand, if Hisoka, a Devil pathway Beyonders, had joined the patrol team, suspicions would undoubtedly arise once the serial murders occurred—unless he concealed his true pathway from the start. However, the patrol team differed from the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society. Hisoka would need to use his abilities frequently during daily missions, making it difficult to conceal them for months or years.

There was no room for mishaps. It wasn't feasible for him to meticulously prepare before each mission, adorning the corresponding mystical item solely to reveal his abilities in that specific situation, right?

Even as a Devil, he couldn't pull it off!

Given that many missions had no specific target, Devils couldn't foresee imminent danger.

Driven by suspicion and uncertainty, Lumian took a special trip to the patrol team, visiting Camus to unearth new clues or gain inspiration to either confirm or eliminate the corresponding possibilities.

“What do you want to discuss?” Camus furrowed his brow.

Is this guy scheming to use the morning's bribe as leverage to threaten me?

The dossier isn't particularly important. Even if I lose it, it's just a minor punishment!

Wearing his golden straw hat, Lumian rose with a smile. Pointing at the door, he suggested, “How about a cup of coffee?”

After a brief contemplation, Camus responded in a deep voice, “Fine.”

Exiting the patrol team's entrance, Lumian made his way toward the Matani Import and Export Shop.

In the fading dusk, he immediately spotted Port Pylos's police headquarters diagonally opposite the patrol team.

Numerous individuals clad in dark-blue police uniforms moved in and out, some holding cups of coffee.

Wh— Lumian's heart stirred.

Could Hisoka not be a member of the patrol team but a high-ranking police officer at the police headquarters?

At a certain rank, the police collaborated with official Beyonders to access a wealth of information. Many official Beyonders' investigations were conducted through the police due to limited manpower.

If Hisoka held a significant position at Port Pylos's police headquarters, it was plausible for him to identify the three concealed Beyonders. Additionally, there would be no risk of exposing his pathway during routine missions, and acquiring his favored Fermo coffee beans would be a breeze.

On the other hand, it was precisely because the Matani Import and Export Shop offered a variety of coffee beans that Hisoka fell in love with the pure, bitter, and fragrant Fermo coffee without sugar.

However, this was just one possibility among Lumian's speculations. For instance, Hisoka, being a bold and self-assured individual, might have visited Cania Street specifically to buy Fermo coffee, relishing the incompetence and frustration of the patrol team. Alternatively, Hisoka might not be a Beyonder of the Devil pathway but simply possessed the corresponding Sealed Artifact and had mastered a unique ritual to appease Devils. There was also the chance that Lumian was mistaken—Hisoka might not be linked to the serial murders four years ago.

With these thoughts in mind, Lumian contained his excitement and entered the Matani Import and Export Shop alongside Camus. They reached the section where various coffee beans were on display and secured a seat in the attached coffee shop.

“Highlander coffee with milk and two cubes of sugar,” Camus ordered from the waiter with a sense of familiarity.

Lumian, on the other hand, opted for a cup of fragrant Intis coffee.

While waiting, Lumian casually observed the coffee choices of other customers. Turning to Camus, he inquired, “Judging by the name, are you a Feynapotterian?”

Camus hesitated briefly before truthfully responding, “My full name is Don Givré Camus Castiya.”

He was willing to share his full name as the telegram mentioned Louis Berry having a good working relationship with the Church of Earth Mother.

Lumian chuckled.

“So, you're a noble lord.”

The name Castiya belonged to the royal family of the Feynapotter Kingdom, and “Don” at the beginning of Camus's name signified “Honorable,” representing his noble status.

Camus smiled wryly and remarked, "If I were truly a nobleman, why would I join a local patrol team in the Southern Continent?"

"Our branch has long dwindled, but I can't deny that this last name and the Don prefix have provided me with advantages beyond those of ordinary people. I received a potion upon reaching adulthood, achieving Sequence 9 Beyond status. However, my subsequent advancements were the result of my own efforts."

Accepting my 50,000 verl d'or bribe is part of your efforts? Lumian teased inwardly. He glanced at the two cups of coffee brought by the waiter, feigning casualness as he asked, "Don't you want to try some other coffees? Is highlander coffee your only choice?"

Camus raised his cup and took a sip. "I'm accustomed to its taste."

Lumian removed his golden straw hat and took a sip, smiling as he replied, "Fair enough. Just like how I can never acclimate to Fermo coffee. It's too bitter with regular sugar, and too cloying with too much. Some people appreciate the bitterness and fragrance of Fermo coffee, opting for just a hint of sugar."

Lumian anticipated Camus to respond with, "Yes, some even drink Fermo coffee without sugar." However, Camus's reply didn't align with his expectations.

"That's how it goes. What's on your mind?"

Internally exhaling, Lumian spoke openly, "As you can tell, I'm deeply intrigued by the serial murder case from four years ago. It's my sole purpose in Port Pylos—a highly valuable assignment."

"Highly valuable? It's just a Serial Killer." Camus let out a sigh of relief upon realizing Louis Berry was interested in discussing this matter.

Even if he were blind, he could tell Louis Berry's genuine concern about the serial murders four years prior.

Lumian vaguely explained with a smile, "This case holds secrets beyond your wildest imagination."

For example, transmigrators, or that Celestial Worthy...

Camus took another sip of his highlander coffee and reflected.

"I arrived in Matani over five years ago. At that time, the Intisians had just departed, and the kingdom and the Church's forces had completed their initial infiltration. I sensed numerous opportunities, thinking I could leverage my last name to secure a prominent position. Hence, I took a ship across the Fog Sea. The outcome differed from my expectations, but it was still acceptable."

Camus, in his mid-twenties, sighed as he recounted the past.

He continued, "When the case unfolded, I was merely a Sequence 8. Alongside a few teammates, I followed Vice-

Captain Reaza to investigate."

He paused, offering Lumian a smile that seemed to convey, "If you want more information, show more sincerity."

In that moment, Lumian was contemplating another question.

If Hisoka truly belongs to the Devil pathway and has joined the patrol team, is there a way for him to conceal his identity?

Putting himself in those shoes, Lumian realized that concealing the abilities of the Hunter pathway wouldn't pose a problem.

Most situations could be handled with the Ascetic pathway's abilities and a couple of items.

Of course, the usage of an Ascetic's abilities was suspicious.

Could it be that Hisoka is indeed a bestowed individual who typically exhibits powers from the boon pathway? Lumian raised his cup and took a sip of coffee, avoiding delving into the details of the serial murders. He gazed at Camus thoughtfully and inquired, "Do you have members in the patrol team skilled in divination or decryption?"

Chapter 643 Target Suspect

Camus couldn't comprehend why Louis Berry had abruptly changed the topic and neglected to charge for the pertinent information. Recollecting, he mentioned, "Yes, there's a Magician. He was initially an officer of the Admiral Guard but later got transferred to the patrol team."

Later... Lumian frowned slightly.

"When did he transfer to the patrol team?"

"Why do you ask? Last year," replied Camus. He had no clue about Louis Berry's inquiry, making it unclear what information was vital.

Last year... It doesn't seem to be Hisoka, judging by appearances... Although possibilities can't be completely ruled out. Serving as an officer in Admiral Querarill's guard provides opportunities for gathering intel. Perhaps he didn't purchase Fermo coffee from this Import Export Shop. It could be one of the other two cafes... Even so, there's a logical reason for buying it here. Yes, to relish watching the incompetence and frustration of the patrol team... Lumian temporarily placed the Magician on his suspect list.

He didn't dismiss the possibility that the other party was Hisoka just because they were a Sequence 7. This was because the level of a boon might not be the same as the level brought about by potions.

Furthermore, Lumian had vaguely perceived changes beneath Matani's surface from the Magician's departure from Admiral Querarill's guard to joining the patrol team.

Beyonders of the Seer pathway either originated from the Church of The Fool or were associated with Intis's Bureau 8 or secret organizations supporting Bureau 8, like the Secret Order. While there were wild Beyonders, very few evolved into Magicians. Coupled with Matani's history as an Intis colony, Lumian reasonably deduced that the Magician had close ties to the Intis Republic, a fact well-known to Admiral Querarill.

He retained the Magician in the guards to maintain a specific connection with Intis and handle the new Feynapotter Kingdom. By achieving a balance of power, he could better sustain his rule.

The Magician's departure from the Admiral Guard last year might indicate that Admiral Querarill had truly gauged the Feynapotter Kingdom's stance after years of collaboration and had sided with them.

Lumian's speculation didn't eliminate the suspicion that the Magician might be Hisoka. Loki, from Intis and a Secret Order member, held a mid-management position in Bureau 8. It was entirely possible for him to use the proper channels to involve Hisoka in Bureau 8's overseas section and recruit him into the Secret Order.

After contemplating for a moment, Lumian inquired, "Does that Magician have a fondness for Fermo coffee?"

He didn't directly ask about the other party's name and characteristics.

Camus shook his head.

"He doesn't appreciate coffee. His preference leans towards sweet drinks like Gwadar."

Gwadar, a well-loved local beverage in West Balam, was crafted from locally grown berries and contained a certain amount of caffeine. It had the same impact as coffee in enhancing mental strength and combating fatigue. However, its hue was orange-yellow, with a hint of sweetness amidst the sourness. It served both to alleviate the sweltering heat and quench thirst.

Prefers sweetness... Lumian felt a sense of disappointment.

Four years ago, Hisoka had no inkling that he would confront a monster like Ludwig in the future. It was unlikely for him to deliberately splash some unsweetened Fermo coffee on the table with the chocolate. Lumian cautiously believed now that Hisoka truly enjoyed bitter coffee.

In that case, the Magician, with a sweet tooth, probably wasn't Hisoka. Unless Hisoka meticulously maintained the traits of each identity, consistently playing the role of a Magician who relished drinking Gwadar on a daily basis.

He wasn't an Actor who needed to meticulously perform every aspect of his daily life!

Moreover, he had no reason to digest Faceless!

As he contemplated, Lumian's heart skipped a beat.

Actor...

If Hisoka is genuinely a Beyonder of the Devil pathway, apart from his belief in the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings due to transmigration, he might also be influenced by the Mother Tree of Desire in his daily life.

Could it be that the boon of the Hisoka pathway doesn't come from one of the Celestial Worthy's Seer, Apprentice, or Marauder, but rather from the Mother Tree of Desire?

The current Celestial Worthy desires the invasion of evil gods into the world within the barrier. It's not implausible for Him to collaborate with the Mother Tree of Desire and tacitly permit Hisoka to exploit the Mother Tree of Desire...

With a fresh train of thought, Lumian observed the now-silent Camus and took a sip of Intis coffee, offering a smile as he changed the subject.

“Any Beyonders from the Prisoner pathway in the patrol team?”

He had long suspected that the Mother Tree of Desire was an evil deity at the pinnacle of the Criminal, Prisoner, and Scrooge pathways. The corresponding boons likely originated from one of them or were intertwined.

Lumian refrained from asking about the existence of the Scrooge pathway because it was even more suspicious than the Criminal pathway, also known as the Devil pathway. It didn't belong to the twenty-two paths of the divine.

It was akin to a thief being apprehended by the police and asking in confusion, “I clearly disguised myself and left no traces. How did you quickly lock onto me,” only to receive the answer, “This isn't Trier. No ordinary person would disguise themselves as a turkey and hide in a secluded alley.”

“Do you think there's a spy from the Rose School of Thought in the patrol team?” Camus believed Louis Berry was casually raising the issue of the Rose School of Thought's interest in Port Pylos. “No, definitely not. He adheres to temperance and doesn't indulge at all.”

Lumian smiled.

“In other words, there really is a Beyonder from the Prisoner pathway?”

“Yes, a Sequence 6 Zombie...” Camus confirmed.

Lumian interjected suddenly, “Don't disclose who he is, what he looks like, or his characteristics. Answer a few questions first.”

“What questions?” Camus, feeling a bit disoriented from the rapidly changing topics, planned to decide when to ask for benefits later.

Lumian held a porcelain cup filled with Intis coffee and casually said, “When did he join the patrol team?”

“Half a year after me,” Camus recalled.

You arrived in Matani over five years ago and joined the patrol team shortly after. Half a year later means that the Prisoner was already on the patrol team when the serial murder case occurred four years ago... Lumian's spirits lifted as he pondered for a moment.

“Did he face a catastrophe in the past and nearly died?”

“No.” Camus shook his head. “At least, I don't know.”

Lumian maintained his smile, showing no signs of disappointment, and said, “Does he have a liking for Fermo coffee?”

“Yes, he adores Fermo coffee and is the type who doesn't add sugar,” replied Camus without much thought. Then, he remembered Louis Berry's inquiry about the Magician's preference for Fermo coffee in the patrol team.

He quickly formed a guess.

“Is there an issue with the ones enjoying Fermo coffee? Does the culprit of the serial murders four years ago have a taste for Fermo coffee? There are very few places in Port Pylos where you can get Fermo coffee. This is one of them. Even cafes selling Fermo coffee procure the beans from here... Are you suspecting that the murderer from four years ago is part of the patrol team?”

Impressive. You reacted swiftly and identified the core issue... Lumian inwardly praised Camus. Simultaneously, a surge of joy filled his heart.

In Matani, Fermo coffee was a rare commodity, and those who preferred it without sugar were even rarer. Moreover, this individual was on the patrol team and seemingly from the Prisoner pathway!

With so many conditions aligning, Lumian felt like he had caught Hisoka by the tail!

To avoid triggering any sense of malice and danger, Lumian refrained from asking about the patrol team member's name, appearance, identity, or characteristics.

Feigning ignorance about the enemy, Lumian casually asked, “Is he from around here?”

Observing Camus's silence, Lumian added with a smile, “I won't claim the official bounty.”

Camus's expression eased.

“He's a local of Port Pylos, born in Tizamo Town, which is part of Port Pylos.”

Though the patrol team wasn't as stringent in member recruitment as the various Churches and governments, they still gathered basic information and conducted verifications. Otherwise, Admiral Querarill might have to worry about being assassinated by a patrol team member investigating a Beyonder case one day.

Tizamo Town... the location of one of Hisoka's pranks... It fits! Lumian controlled his excitement, preventing the corners of his mouth from curling up. Regrettably, he told Camus,

“Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the target.”

This was to prevent Camus from investigating the target.

This could potentially alert the other party to the corresponding malice!

“Alright.” Camus shrugged.

Curious, he inquired, “How did you find out that the murderer from the serial killings four years ago liked Fermo coffee?”

“I was already aware of such a person before starting the investigation,” Lumian replied with a meaningful tone.

He chose not to disclose that the information came from the thin aluminum foil wrapping of the chocolate. Revealing this might prompt Camus to believe he could uncover more clues and reignite the investigation, potentially drawing Hisoka's attention.

With this realization, Lumian understood something.

I should now be a target for Hisoka, but fishing has its benefits...

Louis Berry, adorned with a golden straw hat, had bribed members of the patrol team to examine the files of the serial murder case from four years ago. Other team members paid little attention, but if the Prisoner was indeed Hisoka, he would have detected Lumian—his adversary's investigation into the four-year-old serial murder case.

Hisoka refrained from taking action likely because Lumian openly presented himself as Louis Berry, making no effort to hide his identity. This led to the suspicion that Lumian was fishing, making Hisoka cautious of stepping into a potential trap. There was no sense of malice or danger perceived, as Lumian didn't possess details about the suspect's identity. Lumian was merely preparing for a potential surprise attack from a Devil or Desire Apostle.

Before, I fished to catch fish, but now my fishing is a bluff... Lumian's thoughts clarified as he looked at Camus and said,

“Keep an eye out for anyone at the police headquarters who enjoys Fermo coffee.”

“Alright,” Camus agreed, thinking that Louis Berry had identified the suspect as a member of the patrol team and the police through details he wasn't aware of. For now, the possibility of the patrol team members was tentatively ruled out.

After finishing the remaining Intis coffee and settling the bill with the corresponding *verl d'or*, Lumian donned the golden straw hat and maintained his smile. He left the Matani Import and Export Shop and Cania Street, step by step.

Passing by Port Pylos's police headquarters, he deliberately cast a few glances.

Chapter 644 Patrol Team

Camus stood at the entrance of the Matani Import and Export Shop, casually smoking a cigarette as he observed the passing customers. Despite his watchful eyes, he didn't spot anyone purchasing Fermo coffee.

As the gas street lamps gradually illuminated the surroundings, casting a dark blue hue across the sky, Camus extinguished his cigarette and tossed it into a nearby trash can. He then made his way back to the beige four-story building that housed the patrol team.

Originally planning to indulge in an Intis feast in a neighborhood frequented by foreigners to celebrate his unexpected windfall of 40,000 *verl d'or*, his plans were disrupted by Louis Berry. By the time he returned, it was already late, and he couldn't be bothered to wait for a top chef to prepare something special. Instead, he decided to return to the patrol team, pool money with his close teammates, and order takeout from a nearby restaurant. After satisfying his hunger, he intended to relax at a bar or dance hall.

While crossing the hall, Camus spotted a teammate with dark brown skin, thick lips, and a height exceeding 1.8 meters. Curious, he inquired, “Why did the guy in the straw hat come looking for you again?”

“Heh, I heard you and the others caught a Serial Killer and got a bounty of 50,000 verl d'or?”

In Matani, the currency was commonly denoted in verl d'or and Delexi copper coins, a system ingrained during Intis colonization. Despite Admiral Querarill's control, there were no significant changes in this aspect. The only difference was a partnership with the Feynapotter Kingdom's bank that facilitated the free exchange of verl d'or and gold risot.

If he were one of the two teammates—either the Magician or the Zombie—whom Louis Berry had asked about, Camus would undoubtedly be on high alert. However, the person standing in front of him was Sow, a Sequence 8 Pugilist of the Warrior pathway. Sow had joined the patrol team as an adventurer just last year and was known for having a pleasant personality. Besides a bit of laziness and a love for enjoyment, there were no significant issues.

Camus laughed and said, “That's my informant. Without him, I wouldn't have received that much bounty.”

Sow, with his single eyelids, had a realization.

“Did he come to you just now to get his share?”

Camus thought for a moment and replied, “That's one reason. The other reason is that he's still investigating the serial murders from four years ago and wanted to ask me for some details.”

He had kept the case dossier hidden from the captain and vice-captains of the patrol team, but he couldn't keep it from his teammates. Therefore, he had no intention of concealing Louis Berry's investigation into the serial murders from four years ago. Moreover, he planned to monitor the police headquarters to identify anyone who enjoyed Fermo coffee and seemed suspicious. He would need his teammates' assistance to some extent.

“Any progress? Any chance of claiming the bounty?” Sow, dressed in a pleated shirt and carrying a broadsword, displayed visible interest.

Camus wasn't ready to provide detailed information at the moment. He vaguely responded, “He suspects that the murderer might be hiding at the police headquarters from four years ago. I plan to investigate discreetly.”

“Why do you think the murderer is a police officer?” Sow looked puzzled.

Camus hadn't discussed this with Lumian earlier, so he pondered for a moment and explained, “Consider this. In the case four years ago, only Beyonders were targeted. Several of them usually concealed their identities. How could the murderer accurately locate them and know that they were Beyonders?”

“Only us or those from the police headquarters at a certain rank can access that kind of information. It's easier to verify if there are Beyonders of the Devil pathway on the patrol team.”

Four years ago, during their investigation, Vice-Captain Reaza had proposed this idea. However, he only suspected that the Serial Killer was hiding within the patrol team and hadn't considered the police headquarters or the Admiral Guard. Subsequently, the patrol team conducted an investigation and found no suspicious individuals, leading them to shift their focus.

"I see a glimmer of hope and smell the fragrance of verl d'or," Sow said with anticipation. "If you need help, feel free to look for me. I heard that Kolobo and the others just followed you to the scene and each got 5,000 verl d'or!"

"No problem," Camus readily agreed.

Then, he walked past Sow and along the corridor toward his office.

At the door of his office, Kolobo poked his head out, observing the conversation between Camus and Sow.

Kolobo, about the same age as Camus, in his mid-twenties, had dark hair, azure eyes, and a slender figure. He held a pair of black sunglasses in his hand.

He lowered his voice and said to Camus, "Stay away from Sow for the time being."

"Why?" Camus asked, surprised.

Observing Sow vanish through the door leading to the hall, Kolobo averted his gaze and explained, "I have a feeling that something bad will happen if one interacts with him during this period."

"Then why didn't you warn him?" Camus frowned in confusion.

As a Sequence 8 Robot of the Monster pathway, Kolobo possessed formidable spiritual perception and could vaguely sense certain things.

"I warned him. He thinks everything's fine. I even reported it to the Captain." Kolobo shrugged.

As he spoke, the thin Beyonder recalled something.

"That adventurer, Louis Berry, is also dangerous. When I arrived at the scene this morning, I didn't dare to look directly at him. Occasionally, I would glance at him and see large amounts of blood, flames, and death.

"I didn't want to tell you at first. I felt that if I said it, fate would suffocate me. Phew, it actually seems okay to say it now. It seems I'm too sensitive."

That dangerous? As expected of a great adventurer who received a bounty of 600,000 verl d'or at once... While Camus, who knew about Louis Berry's deeds, wasn't overly shocked, this was the first time he had heard a Monster like Kolobo describe someone in such a way.

Camus patted Kolobo's shoulder.

"Thank you. I'll be careful."

With that settled, he asked curiously, “Was Louis Berry the first person to give you such a feeling?”

“No, there's another one.” Kolobo shook his head.

“Who is it?” Camus was surprised.

Kolobo's expression suddenly turned serious.

“I can't say. I'll die if I say it. I'll die!”

With that, the thin Beyonder swiftly left Camus's office.

Upon returning to Hotel Orella, Lumian headed straight for the master bedroom.

In the subterranean suite, even during the scorching season, a refreshing coolness lingered in the air.

On the desk in the master bedroom, a neatly folded letter awaited Lumian.

Madam Magician's response... Lumian picked up the letter and began reading.

“Excellent. You have a good understanding of yourself.

“The Rose School of Thought and the Numinous Episcopate will be managed by dedicated personnel. No need for you to take unnecessary risks. Concentrate on dealing with Hisoka. If they request your help, you may cooperate.

“The Beyonder characteristics left behind by members of the Rose School of Thought, especially those of the Devil and Prisoner pathways, come with a certain level of troublesome corruption. It's advisable not to sell them or randomly seek out an Artisan to craft items. If you need to, you can sell them to me or let me find an Artisan. Keeping them in the Traveler's Bag is also fine. Compared to the Shadow Branch boxing gloves, Mr. Fool's seal, and the attention and influence of other items on you, they're as weak as an ordinary newborn baby.”

Relieved by this response, Lumian took a breath and activated the black mark on his right shoulder, vanishing from the room.

After a while, he materialized atop a bell tower on Avenue du Boulevard in Trier.

Directly support the authors on WebNovel!

Gazing at the luxurious Champs-Élysées in the distance and the already lit lamps, Lumian couldn't hold back any longer. He needed to carefully consider the information he had just obtained from Camus.

With the Berserk Sea, the Feynapotter Kingdom, and half of the Intis Republic between them, Lumian could devise a plan to hunt Hisoka without worrying about the enemy sensing malice and danger!

Perhaps only an Angel could sense over such a distance.

Though Lumian lacked specific information about his target or Hisoka's identity and had no concrete plan, caution was paramount when he had the ability to be cautious.

Relying on his Ascetic trait, he endured, putting aside thoughts of the corresponding matters. Only when far from Port Pylos and the Southern Continent did he carefully consider details, allowing his thoughts to run free.

After an indeterminate amount of time, Lumian vanished from the bell tower.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The pendulum clock struck 7 p.m.

The next morning.

Upon entering the hall, Camus spotted Louis Berry, adorned in a golden straw hat, seated on a sofa in the reception area.

Why is he here again? Recalling Kolobo's warning, Camus frowned and approached with concern.

“What can I do for you this time?” he asked calmly, keeping his emotions in check.

Lumian chuckled.

“I need some information, but it won't be from you. Find a reliable teammate who isn't privy to our discussion yesterday evening. Meet me at the Matani Import and Export Shop.

“I can offer 5,000 verl d'or for this.”

A peculiar request... 5,000 verl d'or. How generous... Is he trying to avoid a Devil's danger premonition? Camus, an experienced official Beyonder, quickly made the connection.

He refrained from overthinking and pondered for a moment before responding, “Agreed.”

Heading into the office area, Lumian rose and departed, making his way to the Matani Import and Export Shop nearby.

Soon, a man sat opposite Lumian, who was savoring his coffee.

The man, with dark hair and a relatively thin build, was a member of the patrol team who had accompanied them to the scene yesterday. Today, he wore dark-black sunglasses, giving him the appearance of a blind individual.

“I'm Kolobo. Camus mentioned a chance to earn 5,000 verl d'or,” the patrol team member introduced himself in fluent Intisian.

Amused, Lumian observed Kolobo's demeanor. Taking out a pen and paper, he counted out 5,000 verl d'or notes and slid them over.

“Write down the Prisoner pathway Beyonder's name and details from the patrol team. Ensure I don't catch sight of it. Fold it into a square after writing.”

Kolobo, almost as if blind, fumbled for the banknotes.

He bent down and counted, nearly burying his head under the table.

“Why aren't you looking at me?” Lumian asked with curiosity.

Trembling, Kolobo replied, "I fear I might truly go blind."

Are you able to see something you shouldn't? From the Monster pathway? Lumian pondered but refrained from probing further.

Kolobo turned around and swiftly wrote down the corresponding information on the table behind him, folding the paper and passing it to Lumian.

Without a second glance, Lumian promptly received the information and stowed it in his Traveler's Bag.

After settling the bill for his coffee, he headed to the washroom.

His figure vanished once more.

Chapter 645 "Gifts"

After Louis Berry left the coffee area, Kolobo breathed a sigh of relief. He removed his sunglasses, retrieved the 5,000 verl d'or, and counted it again.

His gut told him this deal would work out. That's the only reason he dared to risk coming to the Matani Import and Export Shop. Still, his whole body had been trembling with fear. He couldn't even keep his eyes open most of the time, and his hands were shaking so badly that he was surprised it was legible.

Trouble always waits until it's ready to explode, he thought, clutching his sunglasses.

He stood up and headed for the door.

Something was wrong. He could feel it. His body tensed with some kind of danger sense he couldn't explain.

His heart raced as he scanned the place professionally, trying to pinpoint the danger. Kolobo's footsteps changed—sometimes fast, sometimes slow. He'd zip off in one direction only to stop short a few paces later.

Kolobo took in the morning sun, the quiet shop that had just opened its doors, and the handful of customers scattered about. Not a single pair of eyes seemed fixed on him, and there was no one lurking in the shadows, observing his every move.

Yet, following his instincts, his feet carried him back to the coffee shop area. That's where he finally stopped, in front of the bathroom sign.

Two years as a Beyonder taught Kolobo the most important lesson: trust your gut. Without thinking, he yanked open the heavy wooden door and walked inside.

The Matani Import and Export Shop wasn't some back-alley dive. This restroom was big. Three urinals, three stalls, and gas lamps flickered on the clean tile.

Kolobo headed to the sink to splash cold water on his face. Maybe that would shake this weird danger feeling that was creeping all over him.

As he looked up, a face stared back at him in the mirror.

But it wasn't his.

The face was freakishly white. The guy looked late twenties, with light brown skin and eyes that flashed a dark, sickly green. He stared at Kolobo with dead, cold eyes.

Kolobo's brain short-circuited as recognition hit.

Twanaku Tupiñ, the only Prisoner pathway Beyonder on their patrol team. The guy had become a Sequence 6 Zombie last year.

He was also the first guy to ever make Kolobo's skin crawl. If he told anyone else, he gut told him he'd end up dead!

When Lumian asked Kolobo to spill the beans about the Prisoner pathway Beyonder on his team, something about it felt wrong. He'd almost bailed on the whole deal. He'd counted that huge 50,000 sum not out of distrust but because he needed time to think, to weigh the risk.

He decided to trust his gut, but he hadn't told Lumian about this feeling, this fear of Tupiñ...

And now, here Twanaku Tupiñ was, reflected in the mirror.

This is a Sequence 5 Wraith power. When did he advance? Kolobo could barely think over the growing horror. Suddenly, his body felt like it'd been dropped into an icy lake.

Twanaku Twanaku's face in the mirror vanished.

Kolobo could barely move. An icy coldness gripped him, the kind that chilled you to the bone.

It wasn't his own hands that were moving—they lifted without him wanting them to. A voice drifted through his ears, flat and emotionless.

“Looks like my cover is blown. You were actually asked to provide my information.

“I'll get out of Port Pylos, but I'm going to leave two gifts for Lumian Lee.”

What did that even mean? What kind of gift? And who the heck was Lumian Lee? Kolobo's thoughts were a jumbled mess. His own hands were tightening around his neck.

Then, with a sickening jolt, he realized what “gift” the voice was talking about.

Twanaku Tupiñ was going to kill him and leave a gift—his dead body!

But he said two gifts. What was the other one?

In the four-story beige building of the patrol team.

Camus sipped his Highlander coffee and read the West Balam Telegraph, contemplating the deal between Kolobo and Louis Berry.

If successful, as an intermediary, he would receive 20% of the amount.

Knock, knock, knock. A gentle rap echoed on Camus's office door.

“Please come in.” Though not particularly young, Camus had ample experience, leading one of the patrol team's operations teams. If there were a vacancy for the vice-captain position, his only competition would be Twanaku Tupiñ of the Prisoner pathway.

The Southern Continent was a chaotic place, especially in an area torn between multiple factions. Whether dealing with the bloodthirsty Rose School of Thought, the ominous Numinous Episcopate, ambitious adventurers, spies from various countries, or missionaries, danger lurked at every corner. Some would take the initiative to assassinate patrol team members, while others would rebel and escape. Meticulous planning was not uncommon, and even the patrol team members found themselves as targets. Consequently, the patrol team faced casualties every year, leading to a constant need for new recruits.

Encountering more attacks had its advantages. Victorious confrontations often yielded valuable items and Beyond-related ingredients. Many of the patrol team's advancement formulas and potions were acquired in such situations, creating a noteworthy trend.

Compared to cities of similar size in the Northern Continent, Port Pylos had an even greater number of official Beyonders, especially Mid-Sequence Beyonders. However, they lacked higher levels of power or corresponding Sealed Artifacts.

Camus found himself in a tight spot financially due to his rapid advancement outpacing his cousins.

Arriving in Matani State and Port Pylos as a Sequence 9 Arbiter, he had swiftly climbed to a Sequence 7 Justiciar in just five years. His goal was to advance to Sequence 6 and become a Judge, and he had recently been gathering the funds to purchase the necessary materials. If the opportunity to become a vice-captain arose, the patrol team would certainly contribute resources to aid his advancement.

Spoils of war weren't always suitable for him; sometimes, he needed to trade with teammates or sell them to the patrol team for money. He patiently waited for the potion formulas and Beyond ingredients corresponding to his pathway to appear.

The patrol team, being relatively new, hadn't accumulated substantial reserves. Camus needed to find a way to purchase practical mystical items, regularly replenish charms, potions, and other essentials to stay prepared against assassinations and conflicts.

In such a situation, money was naturally scarce.

Chaos was a path to hell but also a ladder to the top!

Pugilist Sow entered.

With his brown braids gently swaying, Sow, clad in a sky-blue shirt and beige pants, approached Camus with one hand in his pocket, smiling as he asked, "Have you seen Kolobo? I need to discuss something with him."

Camus had already prepared a reason.

"He went to the Import and Export Shop to buy coffee beans."

Sow tersely acknowledged, "Then I'll wait for him to return."

"What's up?" Camus asked casually.

Sow took two steps forward and smiled.

"There's an investigation we would like to involve him in. Maybe he can uncover clues that others can't."

“You bastards, aren't you concerned about Kolobo getting hurt?” Camus replied with amusement, lifting his coffee and taking a sip.

At that moment, Sow withdrew his right hand from his trouser pocket, holding a poker card flickering with a metallic gleam between his thumb and index finger.

The card portrayed a grayish-white clown.

With a swift motion, Sow hurled the poker card at Camus's head.

In the men's washroom of the Matani Import and Export Shop.

Kolobo finally caught his reflection in the mirror.

His skin had turned a sickly green, and his hands were locked around his own neck, the pressure making his bones crack. Twanaku Tupián stared back at him from his bright blue eyes.

Kolobo tried to scream, but nothing came out. He wanted to run, but his legs wouldn't move.

It was like his body wasn't his anymore—it was killing him.

Ugh... A choked sound finally escaped Kolobo's throat, too quiet for anyone to hear.

Fear and despair tightened around his heart.

Then, Kolobo's fingers slipped.

A figure emerged from the shadows by the bathroom vents.

Lumian—black hair, green eyes, all dressed in black and white with a golden straw hat.

A flicker of surprise crossed his face, then understanding. He held a black bone flute to his lips.

A hum resounded, accompanied by a melancholic tune echoing from the dark red holes.

Symphony of Hatred!

Why did I only sense malice and danger now... Just as this thought crossed Twanaku's mind, Twanaku's murderous intent exploded, fueled by the haunting melody.

Silently, a figure peeled away from Kolobo's body. It was Twanaku Tupián, his light brown skin gone deathly pale.

Blood vessels bulged in his yellow eyes, threatening to burst.

The Symphony of Hatred tore into Kolobo, already weak with fear.

His heart almost stopped. He crumpled to the floor, barely alive.

Lumian stopped the melody. Holding the black bone flute, he slid back into the shadows and under the vent.

A moment later, he reappeared behind Twanaku Tupián, who was practically vibrating with murderous intent. Lumian lifted the flute, its blood-colored holes gleaming ominously, and took a breath.

Finally, you're here!

Chapter 646 Indoor Fight

Twanaku Tupián's ears rang, his eyes stinging with blood. His mind burned, his thoughts scattering like sparks. For an agonizing moment, he couldn't process his situation, couldn't even think about the enemy closing in.

Blood, smelling strangely metallic, trickled from his eyes and nose. His pale skin darkened ominously.

“Ha!”

Lumian spat a blast of pale-yellow light, hitting the suspected Hisoka from barely two meters away.

Twanaku's eyes slammed shut, and he collapsed. Before he hit the ground, Lumian's Symphony of Hatred, a black bone flute, jabbed towards his neck.

Instantly, the tiled bathroom floor dissolved into a vast, muddy expanse of darkness. Arms burst upward.

Some were stripped of skin, all raw muscle and glistening tendon. Others twisted and ghostly, pale and transparent. Some bore bulging eyes that spun madly, others sprouted thick green growths...

The grotesque limbs tore at Lumian and Twanaku, clawing and dragging.

This was Twanaku's spell, a death-type enchantment once called Vengeful Wraith's Entanglement, meant to summon an undead horde to paralyze his targets.

But as a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Devil pathway, his power twisted the spell into something new—the Fallen Abyss!

He could alter a space in advance, allowing undead or fallen creatures to lurk beneath the surface. Anyone unfortunate enough to step inside would be grabbed by unseen arms and dragged into the muddy, pitch-black depths. The Abyss would slow and weaken its victims, the icy touch of the undead stealing their strength with agonizing speed. If they were pulled all the way under, they'd be corrupted and lost.

Twanaku had cast this spell in the bathroom before attacking Kolobo. He hadn't wanted any nosy employees or customers to stumble on the scene, but it turned out to be a lucky break. That's why he'd appeared in the mirror instead of right inside Kolobo's eyes.

Lumian's attack with the Symphony of Hatred came to an abrupt halt.

Countless arms wrapped around his ankles, calves, hips, and torso. A wave of icy stiffness washed over him, his movements turning sluggish.

It was the same for Twanaku. With the Wraith and Desire Apostle unconscious, the Fallen Abyss slipped from his control, leaving him vulnerable. His limp body was seized by the strange arms and dragged to the ground.

Nearby, Kolobo, badly injured and out for the count, was pulled into the muddy, pitch-black depths of the illusory Abyss.

A burst of crimson flames exploded from Lumian's body, surrounding him like a blazing cloak.

The flames roared, scorching most of the arms into retreat. Still, some remained unaffected, their grip relentless. A creeping coldness numbed Lumian's body, but he regained a sliver of his former agility.

Before, he could have simply lunged forward, thrusting the black bone flute towards his enemy's neck. But now, the target—the one he believed was Hisoka—was about to vanish into the ground.

Thud!

Twanaku slammed into the ground, the impact jarring him awake. The Spell of Harrumph's grip faded, and he finally regained his senses.

His toughest moment, that relentless surge of desire, was behind him.

Lumian lowered his head, a single scornful sound escaping him.

“Hmph!”

Twin beams of white light shot out while Lumian retracted his hands, fingers slipping back into his Traveler's Bag.

The beams missed their mark, but horrifying, bloody arms sprouted from the ground, a gruesome forest that blocked Twanaku from their path.

With a flash of awareness, Twanaku seized control of the Fallen Abyss spell, shielding himself and attacking his enemy.

The arms hit by the Spell of Harrumph softened, sinking back into the pitch-black mud as if drained.

Twanaku took his chance. His body twisted, morphing into a dark, oozing malevolence, a shape born from the darkest shadows of his heart.

Silently, Twanaku transformed into an illusory, viscous, and foul black liquid, merging with the muddy Abyss and vanishing.

The evil arms, unfazed by the flames, clung to Lumian, limiting his movement.

His hands flew to his Traveler's Bag, pulling out a suit of gleaming silver armor.

He set the armor beside him, sinking it firmly into the pitch-black mud.

Pride Armor!

Evil, writhing arms erupted from the illusory Abyss—and the corresponding spirit world. Guided by the spell, they lunged for the Pride Armor, seizing its ankles, legs, torso, and back.

The Pride Armor struck back, a broadsword of pure light flashing in its hand. Blinding, holy light flooded the washroom.

The shadowy arms recoiled with hisses of black smoke, retreating into the depths.

The pitch-black mud dissolved, revealing the bathroom's stone tiles.

Kolobo, who'd been on the brink of sinking into the Abyss, lay unconscious on the floor.

Just meters away, near the washroom door, a figure of viscous black liquid prepared to flee.

Now free, Twanaku came to a swift decision.

He wouldn't waste time trying to possess Lumian Lee. Instead, he'd abandon the Matani Import and Export Shop—and Port Pylos!

It was a trap. He had to escape before it closed around him. Staying to fight back was foolish—he couldn't risk lingering just to satisfy his rage and murderous desire.

That would be far too dangerous!

Twanaku was glad he'd chosen to give Lumian Lee those two “gifts”. He'd even divided his favorite mystical items to do it. The patrol team should be in chaos by now, focused on a false target.

The distraction would give him his chance to escape.

Before, Twanaku hadn't been focused on killing Camus. His priority was taking out Kolobo and escaping. If everything went smoothly, there shouldn't be problems for either side. Any chaos caused by Camus's death would be a bonus—

distracting the enemy by having the other passing off as the real deal.

He'd sent that extra “gift” as a precaution, not some bloodthirsty urge!

In Camus's office, nestled inside the patrol team's beige four-

story building, a poker card shimmered with metallic light as it hurtled towards him. Coffee was the last thing on his mind. He dove behind his desk with a surge of adrenaline, planning to send the table flying back at Sow before blasting him with Psychic Piercing.

The joker-faced card soared over Camus's head, missing its target.

But then, as if it had a mind of its own, the card swerved and plunged down, aiming for Camus's back.

It seemed to melt right into him, vanishing in a flash.

Sow's grin stretched wider. He strode to the desk, yanking the broadsword from his back.

Inside the men's bathroom of the Matani Import and Export Shop.

A figure made of thick, black liquid slipped through the crack under the door then strangely reformed in its original spot.

Bottle of Fiction!

The moment Lumian harbored malice and took out the Symphony of Hatred from the Traveler's Bag, Lumian had used this bathroom vent as a base, using the Bottle of Fiction to set one condition: only females could enter or exit!

That way, innocent customers wouldn't stumble into the dangerous Beyonder battle. And Hisoka couldn't escape without destroying the Bottle of Fiction first!

The black, liquid figure spread toward the vent, dodging the two white beams from Lumian.

Twanaku was done with dodging. His body swelled and warped, transforming into a monstrous giant almost three meters tall.

The monster's skin turned a dull, dark shade, and a pair of curved goat horns marked with strange patterns sprouted from his head. Colossal bat wings wreathed in blue and crimson flames lashed out, releasing a stinging, sulfurous stench.

Devil Transformation!

This was the signature power of a Sequence 6 Devil from the Prisoner pathway—a boost to strength, speed, defense... everything.

Lumian knew his target, the one he thought was Hisoka, was on high alert, braced to dodge his Spell of Harrumph. He stopped using it.

He decided against the Symphony of Hatred too. The situation was different.

Before, his enemy had been fueled by bloodlust in his murder attempt on Kolobo, a perfect trigger. Now, there was only a cold, emotionless focus.

With no guarantee that the Symphony of Hatred would work

—or that it wouldn't backfire—Lumian wasn't taking that chance.

Instead, a crimson spear sparked into existence. From a few meters away, he hurled it at the suspected Hisoka.

The second the spear left his hand, Lumian vanished.

He couldn't stay put. Possession by the Wraith, a mind-

shattering psychic blast from a Desire Apostle, some twisted desire spell—any of those were a risk!

Chapter 647 “Inexplicable Action”

In the face of the flaming spear, Twanaku's eyes, now crimson from the Devil Transformation, reflected dancing and burning crimson flames.

He remained unfazed. Instead, he conjured an aberration—a broadsword made of crimson magma and pale-blue flames.

Swiftly turning, Twanaku exposed his back to the flaming spear. With the magma broadsword in hand, he slashed at the foe who had seemingly teleported behind him, launching an attack.

The broadsword, adorned with crimson magma and pale-blue flames, sliced through the air but missed Lumian. It left only an exaggerated mark on the wall behind, a testament to its destructive force.

Had it not been for the Bottle of Fiction's protection, the bathroom wall would have been split in half. Even so, the bottle visibly trembled, bearing some damage.

The nearly white flaming spear also struck Twanaku's back, piercing a little before being halted by the elastic dark skin and sturdy flesh. It failed to penetrate the Devil's body, leaving only blackened traces from the resulting inferno.

Devils, armored in thick and tough natural protection, were resistant to flames, poison, and curses to a certain extent. Twanaku, in his Zombie state, possessed a steel-like body that could withstand bullets and cannonballs. Lumian's flaming spear and fireball attacks, as well as the Fire Ravens'

onslaught, posed little threat. Standing still, Twanaku could endure repeated attacks without suffering severe injuries.

Additionally, his ability to transform into a Wraith allowed him to evade explosions effortlessly.

“Hisoka” Twanaku believed that, without the support of the Tarot Club, the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, and powerful demigods, he could have tortured Lumian to death. Even with teleportation, spells rendering him temporarily unconscious, and mystical items, most of Lumian's attacks were ineffective against Wraiths and Desire Apostle Beyonders. The Psychic Shock and Desire Detonation further restrained him, leaving him vulnerable to the assaults of Wraiths and undead creatures.

Having missed his strike, Twanaku noticed Lumian's figure reappear in midair.

As anticipated, Lumian had chosen to teleport behind and launch an attack. However, there was a notable change compared to previous encounters.

Hovering near the ceiling and the vent, Lumian opened his mouth and emitted a harrumph.

The moment a pale-yellow light shot out, Hisoka Twanaku's figure faded and vanished.

In Lumian's pupils, a devilish figure materialized—dark skin, long goat horns, bat wings on its back, and no longer wielding the Sword of Lava.

Swiftly, Twanaku transformed into a Wraith, leaping into Lumian's eyes, deftly dodging the Spell of Harrumph's attack.

Devil Transformation didn't impede his Wraith abilities!

Lumian's face paled, a dark-green hue tinting his features. His hands involuntarily rose, reaching for his neck, and his body plummeted to the ground.

Prepared for such a situation, Lumian didn't resist. While he could still struggle, he didn't halt his hands or resist the Wraith's control. Instead, he sank his consciousness into his right hand.

The frenzied, bloody aura of superiority dissipated slightly, causing Twanaku to instinctively tremble.

He subconsciously detached from Lumian's body and leaped onto the sink.

Lumian activated the black mark on his right shoulder, vanishing before crashing to the ground.

This time, he appeared behind the motionless silver-white full-body armor.

Behind!

The Pride Armor spun around abruptly, raising the broadsword of light and slashing at Lumian in the not-too-small bathroom. Lumian employed Spirit World Traversal once more, vanishing from the silver armor's path.

Within the mirror, “Hisoka” Twanaku was somewhat bewildered.

Why did Lumian Lee provoke his Sealed Artifact and engage in combat with it?

Am I not his enemy target?

The negative effects of a Sealed Artifact?

Though he didn't understand what was going on, Twanaku sensed danger instinctively.

His Danger Premonition, along with a possible insight from Emperor Roselle—"If something shows signs of abnormality, there must be an abnormal factor hidden. Such factors often signify danger."

Without hesitation, Twanaku left the sink and leaped to the bathroom door in his colossal Devil form.

Conjuring a dozen or so light-blue Sulfur Fireballs, he directed them at the wooden door in unison.

Twanaku, who had shaken the Bottle of Fiction with his sword, knew that the current seal could be broken by brute force. There was no need to find the true exit or kill the enemy who had constructed the seal.

For this reason, he chose to forgo teaming up with the full-body armor to assail Lumian.

He reckoned that any further delay, even if Lumian Lee were to fall on the spot, would lead to him being surrounded, facing a lethal blow with no chance of escaping alive.

In such a scenario, killing Lumian Lee would render the effort meaningless!

Certainly, Twanaku wasn't about to let Lumian off easily. Following the Sulfur Fireball assault, he clenched his fists and spoke a word in Devil language filled with depravity and filth.

"Slow!"

This was a manifestation of the Language of Foulness, capable of stiffening and even halting the movements of targets within a seven- to eight-meter radius for approximately two seconds.

Considering the bathroom's size, this radius covered the entire area.

Lumian's form reappeared.

Once more, he teleported behind the Pride Armor, conjuring a crimson fireball almost white in his hand.

Influenced by the Language of Foulness, both Lumian and the Pride Armor moved sluggishly. One "slowly" launched a fireball, while the other struggled to turn around, as if its joints had rusted.

Rumble!

The Sulfur Fireballs erupted against the bathroom door.

A translucent, illusory membrane materialized on the bathroom's side. Like glass, it shattered inch by inch, leaving crisscrossing marks that teetered on the brink of collapse.

The wooden door appeared charred and pieced together, reminiscent of a child's broken toy hastily glued back together.

Observing this, "Hisoka" Twanaku grasped that another strike could completely shatter the seal.

This time, he gathered seven to eight light-blue Sulfur Fireballs.

On the opposite end, Lumian's fireball finally collided with the Pride Armor's back, assisted by the explosive waves.

Amidst the rumbling and clanging, the silver armor stiffened.

Lumian activated the black mark on his right shoulder once more and teleported away from his current location.

Almost simultaneously, the Pride Armor overcame the effects of Slow with abnormal swiftness, swiftly turning around.

However, it still couldn't lock onto its target.

Twanaku felt a surge of amusement bubbling within him but maintained an unusual vigilance. His only wish was that the relentless bombardment would shatter the seal completely, granting him an avenue for escape.

In the next moment, the Sulfur Fireballs collided with the wooden door at the bathroom entrance. Twanaku witnessed the silver-white full-body armor squat down, driving the broadsword of light into the ground.

Wh— Twanaku's pupils dilated as he instinctively readied himself to transform into a Wraith.

Yet, he held back, exercising restraint. Aware of the potential consequences within the Warrior pathway, he understood the risk of subjecting himself to even greater harm.

Rumble!

Simultaneously with the explosion of the Sulfur Fireballs, the Sword of Dawn, embedded in the crevice in the stone tiles by the Pride Armor, disintegrated into fragments of light. Densely packed, they formed a flickering, violent, and sharp hurricane that swept in all directions, filled with the intent to annihilate everything.

Hurricane of Light!

Since it couldn't lock onto the backstabber, it opted for a wide-ranging assault!

The sharp and terrifying storm of light enveloped Twanaku and Kolobo on the ground. Lumian materialized in front of the latter, crouched down, shielding vital points. He faced the formidable hurricane head-on.

The washroom bore the brunt of the assault. The urinal was wrecked, and the cubicles silently collapsed, shedding a layer of bricks.

As a depraved creature, Twanaku had nowhere to hide. All he could do was endure the damage, his eyes flickering with a sharp light.

In the radiant blades' storm, Lumian's figure cracked inch by inch, shattering into numerous mirror fragments.

Mirror Substitution!

With his obstruction, Kolobo avoided fatal injuries but couldn't escape multiple bleeding wounds.

In Camus's office, within the beige four-story building housing the patrol team.

Crouched behind a table, Camus's face turned pale, tinged with a dark-green hue. It was as if a grayish-white clown laughed exaggeratedly in his eyes.

Camus strained to ignite bolts of lightning in his eyes, piercing Sow's mind. His betraying teammate grimaced in pain, causing his broadsword to lose strength and direction, crashing into the desk and failing to hit Camus.

In that critical moment, Camus drew a silver revolver from his right hand, aiming it not at Sow but at himself.

Across the street, in a room facing Camus's office,

Jenna, holding a telescope, huddled by the curtain, closely monitored Camus's condition.

Seeing the other party under attack and struggling, she swiftly grabbed the loudspeaker she had prepared and brought it to her mouth.

“Camus has been attacked!

“Camus has been attacked by the Rose School of Thought!

“Camus is being attacked in his office!”

The loudspeaker's sound reverberated through every room of the patrol team.

Chapter 648 Teamwork

On the top floor of the beige building belonging to the patrol team, a middle-aged man in a thin black suit heard Jenna's voice.

Without bothering to trace the source of the shout, he stood up abruptly and retrieved a white human skull, seemingly carved from crystal, from his hidden pocket.

The man, a mix of Intis and West Balam lineage, held the crystal skull and recited a mysterious language with a strong sense of death.

In the next moment, a decaying palm extended from the void in front of him. Its joints were thick, and its skin was bleeding, revealing signs of decay.

The palm belonged to a corpse that looked vaguely human but, upon closer inspection, resembled a monster.

Over 1.8 meters tall, its face concealed by a rusty bronze mask, and its torso composed of corpses from various species, including lions, tigers, black wolves, baboons, giant serpents, vultures, and humans themselves—all in a severe state of rot.

The corpse's bronze mask flickered with dark-red lights in its eyes as it took a step forward, arriving in Camus's office.

Faced with Camus, who had a revolver in his right hand, staggering toward his forehead, the monstrous corpse removed its bronze mask.

Underneath the mask, there was no nose, flesh, or bones. Only two dark-red balls of light and a mouth that occupied four-fifths of the head.

The mouth opened wide, revealing a pitch-black interior.

A terrifying suction force emanated from the mouth, affecting Camus's spirit but having no effect on the documents, newspapers, and other items on the desk. It only caused Camus's spirit to surface, as if pulled by an invisible force, about to be plunged into hell.

As Camus's Spirit Body materialized, the grayish-white clown seeped out of his flesh, revealing its complete form—a magnified, illusory poker card.

The poker card had no body of its own and was swiftly drawn out by the pitch-black mouth beneath the bronze mask. Camus's Spirit Body struggled.

Smack!

The poker card materialized and fell to the ground, emitting the sound of a heavy object colliding with solid bricks, but there was no metallic sound.

In the Matani Import and Export Shop, the male bathroom lay in ruins. The door and the wall facing the corridor crumbled into fragments, scattering for several meters, as if a storm had passed through.

The Bottle of Fiction had lost its effect.

Amidst the residual fragments of light and the lingering sulfur smell, Twanaku rolled out in his Devil form.

His pitch-black skin bore hideous wounds, and his flesh seemed to evaporate. Half of the two curved goat horns on his head were gone, and viscous black liquid flowed from the cracks.

The bat-like wings on his back were tattered and drooping.

With Twanaku's formidable physical strength, the Hurricane of Light from the Pride Armor shouldn't have caused such tragic and severe damage, but he was a Devil.

The Hurricane of Light possessed the unique ability to destroy evil creatures and undead beings.

It was like Twanaku undergoing purification while being sliced by a fragmentary blade. What made it more potent was their collaboration. Purification weakened defense and inflicted harm on the evil creature's spirit and flesh, while the fragmentary blade utilized purification to weaken defense and cut through flesh. The more wounds and the deeper they were, the better the purification effect.

Had Twanaku not resisted in his Devil form and instead transformed into a Wraith, he might have faced severe injury, teetering on the brink of death, or even elimination.

The Hurricane of Light could vanquish Wraiths and injure evil spirits.

Despite being severely injured, Twanaku, still capable of combat, calmly suppressed his tyrannical and bloodthirsty emotions. Realizing he had escaped the seal, he prepared to transform into a Wraith and escape through the surrounding mirrors.

Just as he made this decision, a sudden sense of Danger Premonition struck him.

The malice came from behind, and in the shadows outside the bathroom, Franca, dressed in an Assassin suit, emerged, raising her left hand.

On her left thumb, she wore an iron-colored ring with a thick band and a surface covered in small spikes—Ring of Punishment!

Franca's lake-blue eyes flickered with lightning, moving many times faster than the fastest bullets, shooting out silently with

Psychic Piercing!

Hidden Blade... Why do I only sense her malice now... The severely injured Twanaku couldn't dodge in time and suddenly heard an illusory shattering sound.

The shattering sound echoed from Twanaku's Spirit Body, and intense pain flooded his mind, compelling him to raise his hands to cover his head.

Seizing the opportunity, Franca swiftly took out a mirror and reflected Twanaku in his Devil form.

Black flames ignited in her left palm as she smeared it across the mirror's surface—

Demoness's curse!

Black flames erupted from Twanaku's body, but nearly two-thirds were suppressed by his flesh and blood, leaving only a portion of the colossal Devil's Spirit Body to be incinerated.

Being a Devil, immune to curses to a certain extent, helped Twanaku endure the Demoness's curse better, given his already ravaged state from the Hurricane of Light.

Finally free from the influence of Psychic Piercing, Twanaku, with his Spirit Body engulfed in black flames, transformed into a pitch-black, viscous liquid.

These liquids seemed to originate from the darkest corners of the human heart, representing the most sinister and shadowy desires and emotions.

Twanaku abandoned Wraith Form, choosing Desire Apostle's Desire Incarnation because Demoness's black flames targeted the Spirit Body more.

Before the pitch-black viscous liquid could fully elongate into a human figure, he fled into the nearby darkness, sensing a strong Danger Premonition in his heart.

At the corridor's entrance, Anthony Reid, donned in military-green attire, appeared in a blind spot.

His eyes took on a faint golden hue, transforming into vertical pupils—Psychological Invisibility! Frenzy!

Twanaku's mind buzzed, instantly breaking free from his Desire Incarnation state. Bloodshot eyes and livor mortis appeared on his body, emitting sulfurous blood.

He entered a frenzied state. Already grievously injured and subjected to Psychic Piercing and the Demoness's curse, he was on the verge of losing control.

Rumble!

Light-blue sulfur fireballs pelted the surroundings, propelled by Twanaku's wild instincts.

Franca's form quickly shattered into mirror fragments, while Anthony's body sprouted grayish-white dragon scales. He leaped toward the wall for cover.

Rumble!

Using up Franca's Mirror Substitution, Lumian teleported behind the frenzied Twanaku.

Having already unleashed the accumulated spirituality and strength within him, Lumian's spirituality surged, no longer drained.

Enduring the scorching sulfur flames and the blast's impact, Lumian focused on the oblivious, frenzied Twanaku. He harrumphed.

Two beams of white light shot from his nose, hitting what appeared to be Hisoka.

Twanaku collapsed, and the signs of madness began to fade.

Lumian didn't allow him to reach the ground. Extending his right hand, he grabbed Twanaku by the shoulder and teleported him into the spirit world!

In seconds, Lumian materialized at the edge of the primitive forest near Port Pylos.

Even during this process, he let out a harrumph. The pale-

yellow light emitted from his mouth knocked Twanaku out again, preventing him from regaining consciousness.

At that moment, a woman stood at the edge of the primitive forest. It was Hela, dressed like a black widow but not as distant as before.

Observing Twanaku, no longer in his colossal Devil state but emitting a sulfuric scent, with dark patterns on his skin, Hela nodded at Lumian and said, "It should be Hisoka."

Every time Hisoka participated in the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, he only disguised himself superficially. If Hisoka's true identity was targeted, Hela, who was responsible for providing the gathering venue and entrance method, could still recognize him.

"Ha!" Lumian chuckled and added a new Spell of Harrumph to Hisoka.

Hela seized his arm and chanted an incantation.

The two of them, along with Hisoka, vanished like pencil drawings erased by an eraser.

In the ancient and dilapidated palace of the Nation of the Evernight.

As Lumian emerged from his concealed state, he harrumphed.

Two beams of white light descended, and Hisoka remained unconscious.

Hela's tone chilled as she remarked, "I'll let you enter the same dream."

"Thank you." Lumian released Hisoka, reclining against a broken stone pillar.

Moments later, his thoughts blurred until he heard Hela's voice.

"It's done."

Lumian snapped back, gazing into the interrogation room where Hisoka sat opposite.

This member of the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, Twanaku Tupián, bore light-brown skin, a blend of Northern and Southern Continent descent. His eyes gleamed flaxen, his hair dark. While not unattractive, his demeanor exuded indifference to life.

At the sight, Lumian's lips curved into a smile.

He had sought Hela's assistance primarily to craft an environment where he could safely unveil his plans after capturing Hisoka alive.

Otherwise, restraining Hisoka's resistance would have posed a significant challenge. Communicating with him would have been impossible if he remained unconscious until his demise. Destroying Hisoka's frontal lobe would strip away frustration, pain, and resentment, making it difficult to fulfill the requirements of the Reaper ritual.

Upon spotting Lumian, Hisoka suddenly struggled, but an invisible force held him back, preventing his transformation into a Wraith.

This was a dream controlled by Hela.

Hisoka calmed down and gazed at Lumian, posing the greatest question on his mind, "How did you manage to evade my Danger Premonition?"

Lumian's smile deepened. He looked down at Hisoka and said casually, "No need for a Demon Hunter's assistance. A sufficient distance and a Hypnotist would do the trick."

Chapter 649 Conspiracy Showcase

Sufficient distance and a Hypnotist... Hisoka repeated Lumian's words as if he had realized something.

Lumian stood in front of him, looking down, and questioned, "Do you think that, apart from Demon Hunters and higher-level Beyonders of the corresponding pathway, Devils mainly get killed based on chance encounters in battles?"

Hisoka regarded Lumian with indifference and remained silent.

Lumian pulled up a chair and sat down, crossing his right foot over his left knee. Casually, he said, "I've read a mysticism book about Devils. It's filled with numerous cases of hunting Devils.

"It's clear that Beyonders of most pathways rely on chance encounters to kill specific Devils. That's what I believed back then. However, when I revisited the detailed description of Devil abilities, I found a contradiction.

"This is how the mysticism book describes your Danger Premonition:

"Danger Premonition, also known as Malicious Perception—if an enemy can soon cause lethal harm to a Devil and takes clear action to do so, a Devil can sense the danger in advance and grasp the source. They can target it, kill it, take revenge, or escape, but it's impossible to know the exact details of the plan. Different Devils have different intuition ranges—from a few minutes to a day, from a few kilometers to as wide as a city."

“What's the contradiction between this and a battle encounter?” Hisoka asked, sitting upright, cold and curious.

“According to this description, Devils can indeed sense a battle encounter,” Lumian said with a smile. “For example, even though I only intended to have a cup of coffee today and suddenly encountered a Devil, and had no choice but to kill him. For that Devil, it's literal. He should have sensed that my coffee-drinking at the café would pose a fatal danger to him in advance and that it would happen, but that's not the case in reality.”

Observing Hisoka's thoughtful expression, Lumian clasped his hands together.

“This means that a Devil's Danger Premonition doesn't stem from fate. If it were a powerful Beyonder of the Monster pathway, there's a high chance they would suddenly feel that coffee isn't suitable today and avoid danger. But you can't.

“Since a Devil's Danger Premonition doesn't stem from precognition of fate, where does it stem from?”

“Once, a high-ranking Demon enlightened me about the concept of the Abyss. According to its perspective, the Abyss holds two dimensions. The first is physical, with an entrance hidden somewhere in the real world. The second is in the mind, with an entrance nestled deep within everyone's hearts.

“Considering this insight, I believe we need to tweak the foundation of a Devil's Danger Premonition.

“It kicks in only when an adversary has a well-defined plan capable of inflicting fatal harm on a Devil soon. That's when the Devil can sense it beforehand.

“Got it? A more distinct thought process or intent.”

Lumian adopted the cadence of Madam Magician to taunt Hisoka, weaving the narrative of his conspiracy.

“In the beginning, I probed bit by bit and investigated step by step. When I stumbled upon crucial information, I purposely skirted around it, leaving me in the dark about who I was dealing with and without a rough plan to handle the target.

“In simpler terms, I didn't have clear thoughts or intentions, and there was no effective plan to cause lethal harm to you anytime soon. Everything was vague, chaotic, and uncommitted, filled with variation and accidents, ensuring you couldn't naturally sense danger.

“However, your position alerted you when I delved into the serial murder from four years ago. Since then, you've been using a Wraith's ability and the patrol team members under your control to keep a vigilant eye on this matter, right?”

Hisoka listened coldly, showing no intention of responding.

Lumian smiled and continued, “After figuring out that you were hiding in the patrol team as a Zombie Sequence Beyonder, I resisted my urges and tried my best not to dwell on such matters. When I returned to the hotel, I immediately teleported to Trier.

“At this distance, you won't be able to sense that I'm formulating a plan and putting it into practice.

“After coming up with a preliminary plan, I went to Hidden Blade and my two other companions to discuss a detailed plan. It was just past 7 p.m. Trier time.

“The next move involved assigning tasks. Each of us had a role to play. We underwent a Hypnotist's Hypnotism, erasing our true purpose from memory. Only when a Devil like you emerged would we recall the specific details.

“My mission was to use teleportation, making it seem like I left, only to return stealthily using shadow concealment. I trailed the patrol team member I interacted with, believing that I was checking if there was anything problematic with him.

“Hidden Blade's mission was to tail me, providing necessary vigilance and support. If I activated the Bottle of Fiction ability, she'd preemptively don the Ring of Punishment and lie in wait outside. The reason for her ambush eluded her until she laid eyes on you. With her combat prowess and intelligence, she instinctively knew what steps to take. No need for me to give detailed instructions.

“The Hypnotist's mission involved using Psychological Invisibility to wander the vicinity, just aimlessly wandering.

“As for the other Demoness, her duty was to monitor the patrol team and promptly report any issues to the authorities. Before your arrival, she too was unaware of the real reason behind her actions. She simply thought we had plans involving the patrol team.

“Before the Hypnotism wore off, none of us had intentions of confronting you. Our individual actions couldn't pose lethal harm to you, ensuring you couldn't foresee it.

“This was a premeditated encounter, a clash pitting you against multiple adversaries.”

With that final sentence, Lumian suddenly heard an illusory shattering sound.

He sensed that his Conspirer potion had been fully digested.

He also felt Hisoka's seemingly cold expression, vexation, and regret growing, gnawing at his heart.

Lumian's smile widened. He stood up, leaned forward, and inched his head in front of Hisoka. He looked into Hisoka's bloodshot flaxen-colored eyes and said, "Your biggest mistake was not leaving Port Pylos ahead of time and sticking with the patrol team."

"Why are you so certain I won't track you down?"

"How do you know I enjoy Fermo coffee without sugar?" Hisoka inquired instead of answering.

Sensing his intense anger and killing intent, Lumian straightened up and replied with a smile, "My sister always says that wherever you go, you leave a trace, and I have an expert at finding traces with me."

"Heh heh, Emperor Roselle must have said something similar. You must know what it means."

Hisoka's hands tightened on the chair's armrests as he asked again, "Why were you so sure I'll kill Kolobo?"

Lumian replied with a sense of satisfaction, "I wasn't certain."

"Didn't I mention I had a Demoness companion monitoring the patrol team?"

"Hidden Blade and I believed that if you ultimately choose to escape, you will definitely do something to vent your murderous desires. Otherwise, something might happen to you, considering your Devil and Prisoner pathways. And since you want to kill someone, it's either the patrol team member who traded with me or Camus who gave me the information. It's either at the Matani Shop or in the patrol team."

At this juncture, Lumian guessed with a smile, "You took the gamble of staying in Port Pylos and the patrol team because you wanted to seize an opportunity to kill me? Under the watchful eyes of the Tarot Club and Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, finding a chance to eliminate a promising young man like me and escape unscathed can satisfy your twisted mind to the fullest extent?"

Hisoka subconsciously licked his lips.

"I initially planned to bide my time, waiting for your patience to wear thin and an opportune moment to present itself. But it seems you didn't seek the assistance of the demigods; you only reached out to Hela."

"I should have struck last night."

Hisoka didn't conceal his frustration.

Lumian didn't immediately address the topic. After a few moments of contemplation, he said,

"Waiting for an opportunity... You're quite confident in concealing your identity. Unafraid of normal investigations,

“Is it because the higher-ups of the patrol team allowed a Sequence 6 of the Prisoner pathway to join?”

Hisoka sealed his lips, responding with silence.

“Seems there's a significant secret lurking here.” Lumian suddenly sensed a conspiracy. “Is the opportunity you're waiting for connected to this secret?”

Hisoka maintained silence, his eyes transformed, now bloodthirsty and filled with a desire to kill.

“Not willing to share?” Lumian chuckled. “No problem. Let's discuss something else first.”

He bent down again, looking at Hisoka.

“In this operation, I sought only Hela. Firstly, to guard against the Nois family Demons who had made contact with you. Secondly, to create an environment for a quiet conversation with you.”

At the mention of the Nois family's Demons, Hisoka's gaze subtly shifted.

“How do you know?”

Lumian didn't reply. The corners of his mouth curled up even more.

“I chose Hela because I wanted to capture you alive, relying on my own strength and that of my companions.

“Each of us is weaker than you, and each of us is someone you think you can easily kill. However, as a team, through teamwork, we've put you in a tight spot. You'll descend into hell.”

Hisoka shattered the chair's armrest, but he couldn't attack Lumian.

Observing his bloodshot eyes, Lumian retrieved a golden straw hat from his Traveler's Bag, pressed it to his chest, and bowed.

“I'll excuse myself for a moment,” he said with a smile.

In the next moment, Lumian left the dream.

Swiftly shifting his sitting position, he leaned against a broken stone pillar. From his Traveler's Bag, he retrieved Gardner Martin's Beyonder characteristic, teeth, blood, Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard's venom, hornbeam essential oil, and other items.

He had genuinely sensed Hisoka's fear, anger, and frustration. Although it occurred in a dream, it was reflected in Hisoka's brain and body, real and intense.

He was about to concoct the Reaper potion.

In the ancient, crumbling palace of the Nation of the Evernight, Lumian carefully poured Gardner Martin's blood into a measuring cylinder and added the unusually sharp, small white bone blade that emitted a cold light.

During this process, he moved swiftly, paying no attention to the bone-blade-shaped Beyonder characteristic slicing his fingers and causing blood to flow. Instead, he ignited crimson flames, helping the wounds contract and preventing the white bone blade from entering the potion with his blood.

The physical pain heightened Lumian's clarity and excitement. He added Gardner Martin's two teeth, the Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard's venom, and the hornbeam essential oil into the bright red blood.

Bloop! Bloop! Bubbles bubbled in the blood, and the items mysteriously dissolved.

Soon, black iron dregs emerged from the bright-red blood, as if an iron weapon had shattered inside.

Lumian glanced at the still-slumbering "Hisoka" Twanaku, picked up the measuring cylinder, and poured the liquid into his mouth.

The pungent smell of blood, the unfamiliar taste of rust, and the burning sensation instantly filled Lumian's mouth and pierced his brain.

It felt like being caught in a chaotic war, constantly facing blades, firearms, and relentless enemy assaults. Wounds appeared all over his body, throbbing with pain.

Son of a sow, am I being attacked by a potion? Lumian muttered, bewildered, as he found himself locked in combat with a swarm of oncoming adversaries.

Fireballs, Fire Ravens, and blazing white spears shattered, tore through, or impaled the enemies, turning them into torches that illuminated the battlefield.

After an unknown span of time, Lumian felt his strength waning, his spiritual energy on the brink of exhaustion. The accumulated spirituality of an Ascetic had long been unleashed.

In that moment, a colossal figure materialized before him, radiating a formidable and intimidating aura.

Despite Lumian's weakening state, he sensed the colossal figure's fear, hatred, and frustration.

He's afraid of me... Lumian realized suddenly. Summoning the last shreds of his courage, he condensed a blazing white flaming spear and hurled it at the colossal figure.

A blinding white flame erupted, piercing through the colossal figure's head.

Rumble. The giant figure exploded from within, shattering into countless fragments.

Rumble. The entire battlefield crumbled.

Lumian shook off the daze and found himself in front of a crumbling ancient palace, its stone bricks weathered by time. Hisoka Twanaku still slumbered, and Hela stood silently by his side.

Sweat dripped from Lumian's body, bursting into crimson sparks.

Eventually, the sweat returned to normal.

Phew... Lumian let out a relieved breath. His spirituality was rapidly recovering.

He had advanced to become a Reaper.

Having completed the ritual of capturing a higher Sequence enemy alive and revealing his conspiracy, Lumian had consumed the potion and advanced to Sequence 5, a Reaper of the Hunter pathway.

Compared to his previous Sequences, Reaper bestowed three additional abilities:

The first, Weakness Investigation, allowed Lumian to discern the target's vulnerabilities and weak points in their defenses from a mystic perspective.

The second, Cull, could be infused into any attack to harvest the target's life. Any part struck by Cull was akin to an assault on vital points and weaknesses, dealing significant damage.

If Cull hit a genuine weakness or vital point, it could deliver a fatal blow, making it challenging for the target to withstand three consecutive attacks.

It could even inflict real damage on demigod-level creatures, provided they didn't block or successfully evade, and refrained from using mystic defenses.

The third, Precision, enabled Lumian to precisely target a predetermined location and manipulate fireballs, Fire Ravens, and other spells that had left his body.

He could split a colossal fireball into hundreds, striking different targets with precision, achieving effective areof-effect damage.

It was a far cry from a blanket explosion, being more efficient and effective.

Both Cull and Precision demanded a substantial amount of spirituality, rivaling Lumian's current usage of teleportation.

The exception was the combination of Precision and Fire Raven, as Fire Raven could allocate a bit of spirituality and was easily manipulated. Even with Precision, its consumption of spirituality wasn't significant.

Lumian also felt a significant enhancement in his spirituality. His mind cleared, and his life force intensified. He could compress flames to a blazing white state in an incredibly short time, merging with flaming spears and swiftly covering dozens to hundreds of meters. Ignoring the spirituality consumption, he could travel using this method.

While Lumian's strength, speed, and physique had improved, he was still not resilient enough to withstand a bullet with his body.

At the entrance of the mostly collapsed male bathroom in the Matani Import and Export Shop, the silver-white full-body armor burst out, wielding a light-condensed hammer in both hands.

It searched left and right but couldn't locate its target. Gradually, it seemed to "calm down."

From a nearby shadow, Franca emerged, her eyes assessing Kolobo within the half-collapsed bathroom. His life wasn't at risk, but his injuries were significant, and he appeared weakened.

He'll be Pride Armor's next target... Franca thought quickly. Seizing the moment while Pride Armor was still on the lookout for the backstabber and hadn't chosen a new target, she swiftly approached. Franca grabbed the motionless silver full-body armor and deftly stowed it into her Traveler's Bag.

“Meet up with Jenna!” Franca called out to Anthony, positioned outside the corridor.

In an instant, she melted into the shadows, disappearing from sight.

Surveying his newfound abilities, Lumian felt a surge of delight. Is this Reaper... If I were to confront Hisoka now, breaking through his defenses wouldn't be a concern. My craving for combat and slaughter has intensified... Having adapted to the changes in his body, Lumian turned to Hela and expressed his gratitude.

“Thank you.”

Hela, not seeing any cause for gratitude, sighed and commented, “Your team's teamwork is impressive.”

“Madame Hela, the ritual has succeeded, but I wish to enter Hisoka's dream again and inquire about something else,” Lumian requested.

Hela nodded in agreement.

“The ritual requires him to remain lucid. He might lie, but the questioning doesn't need him to be lucid.”

As she finished speaking, Lumian suddenly closed his eyes, slumping to the ground against a dilapidated stone pillar.

The corners of his mouth remained curled up, and his expression gradually turned calm.

In the dream's interrogation room, Lumian took a seat across from Hisoka and addressed the captive, whose malice and desire to kill were no longer concealed.

“Thank you for your help. I've become a Reaper.”

Hisoka, leaning forward, seemed to forget that he could attack.

“So what if you're a Reaper? In a duel, I'd still kill you easily!

“If you hadn't joined forces with Hidden Blade and relied on numbers, you would have been dead!”

No longer lucid, he's finally revealing his true thoughts in the dream... Lumian chuckled and responded, “If I can create an opportunity to fight with numbers, why should I face you one-on-one?”

“My companions are also a part of my strength.”

Hisoka spoke with malice, “Do you truly trust that Hypnotist?”

“It's very dangerous to open up your body and mind to a Hypnotist. Aren't you afraid that he'll take the opportunity to leave some hidden cues that will unknowingly bring you under his control?”

Lumian gazed at Hisoka for a moment before breaking into a smile.

“Perhaps that's why I defeated you. No wonder Mad Lady said you weren't pure enough.

“Firstly, I do trust him. We've been through life and death together.

“Secondly, I'm willing to take such a risk to kill all of you!”

Straightening up, Lumian locked eyes with Hisoka, enunciating each word, “Even if I plunge into the Abyss, even if I descend into hell, I shall witness your tragic demise!”

Hisoka fell silent.

Lumian eased back into his seat, composed himself, and casually inquired, “I learned from Devilology that a Devil requires a ritual to advance to Desire Apostle. It's best if it's a special serial killing ritual. However, other than the one four years ago, there's only been one in Port Pylos recently. Furthermore, I've already killed the murderer. How did you advance?

“With a boon? You couldn't have become a Desire Apostle four years ago, could you?”

Hisoka responded with a smile, “Just because you don't know doesn't mean it didn't happen.”

Lumian's heart stirred.

“Was one of those two pranks to cover up your advancement ritual?”

Lumian ventured, drawing from the scattered information he had gleaned from the peripheral members of April Fool's. They were like scattered pieces of a puzzle, each offering a fragment of the truth but lacking the full picture.

The tales spoke of chaos unleashed: a disappearance of gold in the depths of Devise, and a clash between townsfolk and a primitive tribe in Tizamo Town, resulting in tragedy.

Lumian suspected that Hisoka's advancement ritual had been shrouded within the chaos of Tizamo's prank.

Hisoka's eyes sparkled with approval, his tone paternal.

“You're quite perceptive.”

Lumian seized the moment to shift the conversation.

“What's up with the Nois family's Demon?”

He treaded cautiously, sidestepping the Celestial Worthy and the Mother Tree of Desire, for now.

Hisoka's expression turned cold.

“I aimed to utilize him to acquire something and carry out a ritual to appease him repeatedly, but he only formed a connection with me. He only granted me an opportunity two years ago.”

Something... Two years ago... The pranks in the gold mine city and the town of Tizamo took place after this. One happened at the close of the preceding year, while the other unfolded at the close of last year... Lumian started suspecting that these two pranks might have motives beyond concealing the advancement ritual.

Before he could delve deeper, Hisoka asked vehemently and frenziedly, “Why didn't you seek the Tarot Club's assistance this time?”

Lumian arched his eyebrows and inquired with confusion, “Why does it matter to you? Even without the Tarot Club's aid, I could have successfully dealt with you.”