

Inevitability 731

Chapter 731 Another Good Job

In the depths of the shadowy cathedral, Loki conjured a figure out of thin air. The scene unfolding beside him was vividly reflected in the eyes of the Major Arcana card holders: Magician, Judgment, and Hermit.

On the wall of aqueous-black stone bricks, a painting depicted a woman in a bright red dress adorned with intricate embroidery and lace. Her black hair was styled in an elegant high bun, and her face bore a mysterious, frozen smile. Her brown eyes seemed transfixed on the vivid, illusory ball of yarn before the Hermit and the peculiar golden lamp connected to its other end.

The woman remained within the mural, silently observing the scene.

At the same time, the mature lady with a golden crown, exuding the allure of a Demoness, was pulled from the air by Loki. She turned her piercing blue eyes towards the Hermit, who had just entered the cathedral's depths through the starlight door.

As her long, chestnut hair billowed, each strand thickening, she too seemed fixated on the Hermit.

Prophesying a grim future, the Hermit quickly shielded herself with the Magic Wishing Lamp.

Then, arching her back slightly, she sprouted pure white, illusory feathers reminiscent of a swan's.

Fairytale magic, Ugly Duckling!

Even an ugly duckling could transform into a swan!

This power allowed Saints who had not yet reached the Angel level to reveal their incomplete Mythical Creature forms.

The pristine swan feathers abruptly turned a grayish-white and hardened into falling rocks. The Hermit's exposed skin split open, revealing grotesque, sinister crevices.

Within the crevices, flesh and blood writhed, giving rise to black and white eyeballs.

The eyeballs petrified and fell away, only to be replaced by new ones. Yet, the Magic Wishing Lamp before the Hermit remained untouched.

The black-clad empress's body suddenly became ethereal, her form dissipating into a torrent of knowledge that surged towards Magician, dressed in white with golden embroidery.

Magician appeared beside Loki in an instant, but a deluge of information immediately emerged from the void behind her.

Vanishing, the Magician reappeared "simultaneously" in nine different locations throughout the cathedral, her form flickering incessantly.

Upon realizing that their target was the woman in the wall painting, she attempted to escape the shadowy cathedral by force, but each effort led her back to where she began.

The black-clad empress's incarnation continued to pour forth information from behind the Magician's nine figures, seeking to infiltrate the target's mind and denying her the time to tear through the void.

Smiling, Loki rose from the black wooden armchair and reached into the void with his right hand, as if grasping someone's arm once more.

Seizing the moment, Judgment reached the cathedral's dome and pressed down with her right palm, like chaos descending from the heavens to the earth.

In ancient Hermes, she solemnly declared, "Mystery weakens here, while reality grows stronger!"

As the silver Pride Armor raced towards Overseer Perle, Franca activated the Seven-Stone Bracelet on her left wrist.

The crimson, blood-like gem on the bracelet, adorned with three diamonds and four uniquely colored gems, burned with a fierce light.

In a flash, Franca appeared behind the Demoness of Black.

She refrained from joining the Pride Armor in confronting Overseer Perle, having learned from Lumian's encounter that their attacks would have no effect on the Overseer and only invite proportional punishment.

Instead, she resolved to eliminate the Demoness of Black, a Punisher lacking godhood and exhibiting rigidity. The Demoness was merely equivalent to a stronger Sequence 5 Beyonder, making it possible for Franca to deal with her.

As for Overseer Perle, the outcome depended on the changes and effects brought about by the Pride Armor, a Sealed Artifact devoid of "sin" and pragmatic intelligence.

Materializing, Franca raised her left hand, already adorned with the Ring of Punishment.

In her lake-blue eyes, two bolts of lightning suddenly ignited and shot forth.

Crack!

The Demoness of Black's figure shattered into countless fragments.

Dammit! Mirror Substitution is such a nuisance! Franca couldn't help but curse inwardly.

At that instant, Lumian had just endured the punishment for attempting to escape, the flesh cloak transformed from Mr. K's finger shattering and splattering on the ground.

He watched as the silver-white Pride Armor rushed to Overseer Perle's side, raising a broadsword forged from pure light.

Perle maintained her friendly smile, undaunted by the imposing presence of the massive, heavy armor.

An Overseer was impervious to attacks from those lacking godhood!

This was the sacred significance of overseeing.

As for daring to strike an Overseer lifeform, the consequences would be dire!

Perle could already envision the armor-like Sealed Artifact turning on the Demoness who had summoned it in the next moment.

As the Overseer contemplated this, the silver-white Pride Armor swung the Sword of Dawn in its grasp.

It remained unaffected!

Perle's pupils dilated as her figure in the bright red dress transformed into a pitch-black shadow.

The broadsword of light descended, cleaving the shadow in two.

The divided shadows took form, replicating multiple similar shadows that scattered in all directions.

The Pride Armor genuflected and drove the Sword of Dawn into the ground.

The broadsword shattered, unleashing countless sharp fragments of light that swept across the area.

The entire quarry cave was bathed in illumination. To Franca's surprise, the Demoness of Black, whose outline had been visible nearby, rapidly faded and vanished.

Likewise, Jenna and Anthony, who had been cornered by the clergyman of the Eternal Blazing Sun Church and the Trier police incarnations, found themselves no longer under attack or pursuit.

Bewildered, they observed as the Punishers, who had exerted immense pressure upon them, melted away like frost under the sun's rays.

Lumian was astonished by the Pride Armor's performance.

He had harbored little faith in the Sealed Artifact's ability to challenge Overseer Perle. Yet, to his pleasant surprise, it had exceeded his expectations!

Furthermore, he had noticed several peculiar details since Perle's arrival.

The Overseer's feet had not shifted an inch!

She stood beside a protruding rock with a fixed entrance to the mirror world, never pursuing or approaching. Instead, she exerted her influence upon them from a distance.

Could this be an inherent trait of an Overseer? Might the Pride Armor's capacity to strike her stem from the abhorrence and hatred imbued within it by a deity before His demise? Were only attacks infused with godhood or a corresponding level of corruption capable of harming an Overseer?

Lumian frowned, pondering these possibilities.

Snapping out of her daze, Franca shouted to him, "Moran Avigny's makeup mirror!"

She knew that the Pride Armor could not so easily vanquish Overseer Perle. They had to seize this fleeting, uninterrupted window to escape the extraordinary mirror world.

Before Overseer Perle's appearance, the dark light emanating from Moran Avigny's makeup mirror had led Franca to suspect it might be the exit!

Franca trusted that Lumian grasped the full import of her concise words and refrained from elaborating further. The blue gem on her Seven-Stone Bracelet emitted a selike glow.

In an instant, she materialized beside Jenna, grasping her arm.

A diamond on the Seven-Stone Bracelet illuminated.

Teleport!

Franca and Jenna teleported to Moran Avigny's corpse and the nearby makeup mirror.

Meanwhile, Lumian readily understood Franca's message.

He activated the black mark on his right shoulder and teleported to Anthony's side. Without hesitation, he grabbed his teammate's arm and teleported once more.

Their destination: Moran Avigny's already open makeup mirror!

However, upon appearing near Moran Avigny's corpse, Franca and Lumian were stunned to discover that the makeup mirror had become illusory and unreal, as if it were a mere projection of the original item.

At that moment, they heard Overseer Perle's voice once again.

“You stand guilty! You have harmed an Overseer!”

As her voice echoed, the silver-white full-body armor ascended, and the void behind it ruptured into darkness.

Propelled by an unseen force, the Pride Armor plummeted into a centipede-like crack resembling a void scar, falling into a pitch-black abyss that extended as far as the eye could see. It vanished entirely from Lumian and his companions' sight.

Judgment: Exile!

Fragmented shadows swiftly converged beside the protruding rock with the fixed entrance to the mirror world. Overseer Perle, garbed in her red dress, reappeared.

Holding a makeup mirror in her hand, she smiled and said, “Did you believe I would leave the exit intact? I replaced it with a counterfeit long ago!”

Lumian, Franca, Jenna, and Anthony's expressions shifted slightly.

As these thoughts raced through his mind, Lumian, already grasping Anthony's arm, swiftly activated the black mark on his right shoulder.

He and Anthony vanished in an instant beside Moran Avigny's corpse.

Franca made a similar effort, causing the emerald in her Seven-Stone Bracelet to emit a transparent green light.

However, just as she Blinked with Jenna to a corner of the quarry cave, Perle's Words of Order resounded in her ears.

“You stand guilty! You attacked an Overseer!”

Franca was the one who had unleashed the Pride Armor!

As Franca prepared to use the Seven-Stone Bracelet to depart her current location, she suddenly witnessed the surrounding void freeze and transform into layers of amber, encasing her and Jenna within.

This was a “cage” from which even teleportation could not provide escape.

It encompassed the entire area, and even if Franca and Jenna attempted to employ Mirror Substitution, they would remain confined within its boundaries.

Judgment: Confinement!

Overseer Perle averted her gaze, searching for Lumian and Anthony.

She surveyed the surroundings but found no trace of the two.

Perle swiftly focused and took her Overseer position, carefully observing the different sections of the quarry cave.

The area was shrouded in darkness, with only a carbide lamp lying on its side providing a faint bluish-yellow light.

As she looked around, Perle spotted Lumian and Anthony.

They were both located at the quarry cave's exit, which marked the isolated boundary of this unique mirror world. It wasn't a viable escape route, leaving them trapped.

Lumian stood facing Perle, wearing the Flog boxing gloves with iron-black spikes. He gripped a brass revolver in his hand.

Anthony took cover behind him, their backs almost touching.

The Hypnotist, however, wasn't standing. He was down on one knee, using a blank sketchbook propped on his right thigh as a surface to quickly draw something with a short pencil.

Bottle of Fiction!

Lumian and Anthony found themselves inside a Bottle of Fiction, formed from the quarry cave's exit.

But this was pointless against Perle, who had a complete overview of the current mirror world. She could easily see where Lumian and Anthony were hiding.

As she watched the scene unfold, Overseer Perle felt a strange, unsettling aura, as if it involved a gray domain.

Lumian, as the team's leader and most powerful member, appeared to be buying the Spectator more time.

Whether he was gambling on her unwillingness to kill him, hoping to capture him alive, so he could be used as a shield, it was evident that the Spectator's actions were critical. Lumian believed it could either harm her—an Overseer—or help them evade an Overseer!

Without hesitation, Perle fixed her gaze on Lumian and Anthony within the Bottle of Fiction and declared in the Words of Order, "An Overseer sees all secrets!"

The moment she uttered those words, the Bottle of Fiction at the quarry cave's exit quietly disintegrated.

However, Perle noticed that while Lumian was no longer shielded by the Bottle of Fiction, Anthony still remained inside one. The Overseer's words had failed to dispel it!

Confirming this detail, Lumian smiled.

The Bottle of Fiction surrounding Anthony was created using him as a base.

His spread legs and the ground created a symbolic doorway.

Lumian's body arched slightly as he faced Overseer Perle. His smile twisted as he muttered under his breath, "Yes, Anthony is carrying out a crucial task under my guidance.

"But to break the Bottle of Fiction made from a living person like me, you must defeat me first. Anyone trying to harm Anthony will have to go through me!

"I am now Anthony's shield. I am the wall that protects him!"

Perle's smile diminished slightly as she regarded Lumian with a grave expression.

"You stand guilty!

"You murdered someone!"

Murder... Lumian's heart skipped a beat.

He wasn't surprised by the fact that he had killed someone, but he didn't expect Overseer Perle to charge him with such a crime.

No matter the form of the ensuing punishment, the ultimate outcome was set in stone.

A murderer met his end!

Doesn't she want to take me alive? Lumian had voluntarily become Anthony's shield, believing that Perle wouldn't risk killing him. This would limit many of her abilities. He hoped to buy time until Anthony finished the sketch on the Beyonder painting album he had gotten from Bard. The album's purpose was to bring drawings to life or manifest special effects for a period.

Unexpectedly, this plan fell apart from the start.

Of course, Lumian didn't bet everything on the possibility of the Overseer only wishing to capture him alive. It was impossible for him to defeat a demigod, but he had some hope at buying time.

A muffled thunderclap resounded in the low ceiling of the quarry cave. Silver-white lightning serpents sprang forth, intertwining into a tree of lightning as wide as a barrel, aimed at Lumian.

Before the thunder echoed and the lightning struck, Lumian had already lifted his hand, pointing the brass revolver at the world's punishment.

His blue eyes turned iron-black, but he couldn't perceive any weakness in the terrifying lightning.

His only option was to channel blazing white flames into the revolver and the bullet about to be fired.

Bang!

As the threatening silver-white tree of lightning hurtled down, a bullet glowing with dark green flames shot from the muzzle, colliding with the immense lightning bolt.

Weakening Bullet!

This was the Weakening Bullet he had obtained from Jebus!

Instantly, the barrel-thick lightning bolt shattered the dark-green bullet and the blazing white flames encasing it. A blinding silver-white light engulfed Lumian.

Boom!

A horrifying roar assaulted Anthony's ears, causing his body to shudder involuntarily, nearly deafening him.

He remembered the night the cultists attacked the army camp. Gunfire, cannon blasts, screams, and shouts came from every direction, overwhelming him with panic and fear. It had left a profound psychological scar that took years to heal.

Now, he felt as if he had been transported back to that moment.

Anthony gathered himself and looked at the blank sketchbook before resuming his sketch. The pencil in his hand rustled as it moved.

He could still vividly recall Lumian's body language: "Unless I die and someone steps over my corpse, no one can harm you!"

Compared to the helplessness and terror of that night at the military camp, where everyone was in peril, Anthony felt the current situation wasn't as dire.

At the very least, I have a dependable companion!

At the very least, someone is willing to risk their life to protect me!

Amidst the innumerable silver lightning serpents, Lumian's body first fractured into mirror shards, then charred and crumbled into dust—the Mirror Substitution Jenna had provided him!

Lumian's figure reappeared, standing firm in his spot with his legs slightly parted.

Rumble. The thunder in the sky didn't fade with the previous punishment. A new round of execution was brewing.

Since the Overseer had prosecuted, the punishment would persist until the target was well and truly dead!

Lumian's scalp prickled, and his black hair stood on end from the lingering electricity in the air.

Seconds later, an even more magnificent and terrifying colossal lightning bolt silently descended.

Already clenching his teeth, Lumian tossed aside his revolver and raised his hands, allowing the Flog boxing gloves with iron-

black thorns to precisely meet the lightning's tip. Blazing white fireballs materialized above him.

The Flog boxing gloves could withstand an attack imbued with godhood at the cost of shattering or cracking!

Boom!

Amidst the abrupt, devastating explosion, the silver-white tree of death, composed of lightning, stopped at Lumian's fist and the Flog boxing gloves.

Rumble. Blazing white flames burst forth, driving the tiny lightning serpents back.

The lightning punishment quickly subsided, but the muffled rumble in the air lingered.

With multiple resounding cracks, Lumian's Flog boxing gloves turned charred and cracked, shattering into countless pieces that rained down.

Seeing a fresh round of lightning about to form, Lumian knew he shouldn't, but he couldn't resist urging Anthony inwardly, Why isn't it done yet? I can only hold on a little longer!

After a brief, suffocating silence, a silver-white giant lightning serpent abruptly struck from midair, illuminating the entire quarry cave and the smile on Overseer Perle's face.

Lumian only had time for one thing.

He animated his shadow and switched places with it.

Boom!

Amid the sharp and urgent thunderstorm, the giant lightning serpent consumed the shadow, instantly vaporizing it without a trace.

At last, this round of punishment concluded, and Lumian reappeared in front of Anthony. His legs were slightly apart, and his back was somewhat hunched, but no shadow remained under his feet.

Why isn't it finished yet? Lumian thought anxiously.

He considered dismantling the Bottle of Fiction and teleporting Anthony around.

However, he could tell that the Overseer's prosecuted punishment wouldn't end simply because he changed positions. With the speed of lightning, he couldn't depend on teleportation to evade it.

It wasn't a matter of teleportation being too slow, but rather the time he needed to activate the black mark on his right shoulder.

Rumbling thunder resonated in Lumian's ears, heralding the impending punishment.

Behind Lumian, sweat the size of soybeans formed on Anthony's forehead as he crouched on one knee, drawing on his right thigh, which served as a table.

The sketch's first half was successful and completed quickly, but for some reason, the final stroke suddenly became challenging.

The painting album influenced the pencil, causing it to greedily absorb Anthony's spirituality. However, even this substantial amount of spirituality could only inch the black lines forward slowly.

At the same time, the edges of the blank drawing page gradually curled, igniting with transparent flames, as if struggling to contain what Anthony was about to draw.

Anthony was well aware that this painting album was not meant to display such a thing, but he had complete faith in Lumian's judgment and persevered.

Rumble!

The muffled thunder intensified, and Anthony, within the Bottle of Fiction, could hear it clearly.

Despite being a Psychiatrist, he found himself unable to control his emotions. Nervousness, impatience, anxiety, and panic surged within him.

He composed himself and continued the final stroke.

Seeing the terrifying silver lightning on the brink of taking shape and Anthony still silent behind him, Lumian felt a wave of despair.

Am I about to die?

Very well, I'd like to see what Termiboros looks like!

Death... Suddenly, a flash of inspiration illuminated Lumian's mind.

He retrieved an item from his Traveler's Bag.

It was a golden mask adorned with several dashes of oil paint.

He had obtained this golden mask from Hisoka, and it originated from Death!

Lumian swiftly put on the golden mask, his body rapidly growing cold as his aura gradually dissipated.

The terrifying lightning punishment brewing in midair abruptly came to a standstill.

Lumian gazed up at the silver-white electric serpents that no longer converged, his lips curling beneath the golden mask.

He had become an undead creature!

One of the golden mask's purposes was to transform the wearer into an undead being while preserving their intelligence!

Since Lumian was now "dead," the punishment had fulfilled its purpose. It naturally came to an end!

Witnessing this, the Overseer was momentarily taken aback before grasping the situation.

She chuckled, but her composure remained intact.

While the punishments descended, she had not sat idle and had prepared for any unforeseen circumstances.

She used a coin bag to execute an Under the Table transaction.

Her right hand was about to withdraw.

Behind Lumian, Anthony watched as the curled-up edge and invisible flames rapidly spread to the center of the painting page, intensifying his despair.

Even if he managed to complete the final stroke, the drawing paper would be rendered useless—nothing effective would come out of it.

Anthony gritted his teeth, choosing to trust his companion and Lumian.

He recalled Lumian's instructions: "Draw Monette first before drawing Madam Magician!"

Monette, the Islander swindler Monette... The instant this thought crossed Anthony's mind, he was astonished to see the painting paper's edge halt and the invisible flames temporarily freeze.

His pencil movements became smoother.

Mustering his spirituality, he finished drawing a monocle outlined by simple lines on the right eye of the thin-faced Islander with sunken eyes, thick lips, and slightly curly black hair.

Chapter 733 Praise You

Finishing the last stroke, Anthony sighed in relief, confirming he still lived.

Though unsure if Amon's incarnation—Monette's drawn form—could help turn the tables and find a way out of the mirror world, he had obeyed his partner's orders and done his part.

Almost at once, Anthony saw the corners of Monette's sketched mouth turn up, eyes appearing to come to life.

But the curling paper and translucent flames stirred once more.

In an instant, the drawing of Monette condensed into a ball, devoured by clear flames and absorbed into the dim Bottle of Fiction.

Wh— Had it failed? Anthony's heart squeezed tight again.

Even a disciplined Hypnotist found it hard to stay calm in the face of this.

Right then, Overseer Perle, still next to the jutting rock, pulled her right hand from the Under the Table bag of coins.

The transaction was made; Lumian's group would teeter on the edge of sleep!

Perle looked back at her target. Lumian stood firm, wearing a gold mask painted black and white. His aura was gone, body radiating an icy breath of death.

But Lumian's now blue eyes stayed open.

As an Overseer, Perle knew something was wrong.

About to act, a thick darkness swallowed her, snuffing out the carbide lamp.

Perle's eyes shut as she swayed unsteadily.

She fell asleep.

Somehow, the sleep effect meant for Lumian's team had hit her instead, leaving them untouched.

Seeing this, Lumian felt shock, then immense joy.

He sensed a strange power pulsing from the Bottle of Fiction he had made with his body.

Did it work?

Had Anthony done it?

As expected, the entity's prior actions sought to help His father.

And His father is on our side against heretics!

Lumian quickly deactivated the Bottle of Fiction, ready to teleport to the sleeping Perle. He would get Moran Avigny's mirror and try to escape through the mirror world's set entrance.

If he could just get out, he could find help to make Perle leave.

Just then, Perle's coin bag and Moran Avigny's mirror fell to the ground.

Smack!

Moran Avigny's mirror broke, cracking the entire mirror world barrier. Perle, driven by flaming ambition, woke up with a start.

As Lumian's hopes sank, a shadow raced out of the shattered mirror.

It combined with strewn bits of flesh and blood, instantly reforming into Mr. K in his black robe.

When the mirror world took damage, the Aurora Order Oracle felt his finger and teleported on instinct, turning to shadow to slip through the cracks.

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In the dark cathedral in an unknown location, Magician Blinked over and over, unable to shake off the flood of random information.

As she Blinked, starlight filled her eyes, solidifying into a weird, ancient stone wall clock.

Clang!

Grand, majestic chimes echoed in every nook of the cathedral.

An old, mottled phantom appeared in the air—a stone wall clock split into twelve sections, each crossing grayish-white or bluish-black symbols.

Clang!

The chimes carried an unspeakable, invisible torrent through long ages past, freezing all present.

The horrifying torrent of information froze. Hermit, changed into an incomplete Mythical Creature, stopped cold. Judgment, floating over the cathedral, turned to a statue.

Loki's hand, reaching into the void, also paused, failing to pull out a silhouette.

In this frozen state, the starlight in Magician's eyes changed again.

Countless complex mercury symbols appeared, quickly joining into a huge, unreal, scaleless serpent.

The silver-white giant snake, layered with dense patterns and symbols, made connected cylinders with different markings.

The next second, the mercury serpent bent to bite its tail before it began slowly turning.

The massive torrent of information started to reverse, going back the way it came until it turned back into the woman in the black dress with the gold crown.

The black-dressed woman faded, becoming a ghost and a floating, oddly captivating tarot card. In the end, both went back to the void and disappeared.

Fallen rocks flew back to Hermit's body, turning back to eyes or pure white. Hermit quickly lost her terrifying look that would make anyone go mad.

Judgment returned to the surface, going back past the “door” as the mystery-weakening limit faded.

Loki drew back his hand, settling into the pitch-black wooden chair.

In the fractured special mirror world, Overseer Perle saw the hooded, black-robed Mr. K and his many sins upon waking up.

Oddly, the criminal who had done worse things than Lumian only had a small gray spot.

This suggested that finishing an Under the Table transaction with Mr. K would be hard, as if it needed certain conditions.

It seems to come from extreme devotion. All Under the Table transactions can only keep going with the permission of the one he has faith in... As Perle's mind raced, she glared at Mr. K and said with the Words of Order, “You stand guilty! You murdered someone!”

The space over Mr. K went dark at once as something awful took shape.

Having heard Lumian talk about Jibus's powers, he knew a deadly punishment was coming. He quickly changed his Grazing target, using Devil Transformation and Rose Bishop's flesh and blood magic to endure the unknown attack.

But in a flash, the growing penalties vanished, as if going to an unknown place.

The scary pressure, like thick smoke, blew away in fierce winds.

Mr. K was stunned for a moment before exploding in crazed laughter.

“Haha! Hahaha!

“I'm guilty, but the Lord carries my sins!”

“I'm innocent. I'm innocent to this world!”

Amid the laughter, Mr. K changed Grazing targets. Layers of unreal doors showed up in his eyes.

Many doors to different places came together, turning into ghostly books.

The book materialized in front of Mr. K, pages flipping fast.

“I came, I saw, I recorded.”

As the ethereal voice rang out, the illusory book stopped on a page.

In an instant, Mr. K turned into a two- to three-meter-tall half-giant in cold black armor, holding a pitch-black sword.

He sprinted towards the Overseer.

“Praise you!” Mr. K roared, slicing down with the Sword of Darkness.

Perle's face went grim, seeing the prosecution had no effect on Mr. K.

Of course, as a demigod, though caught off guard, she knew what to do.

Amid Mr. K's wild laughter, she stressed with the Words of Order, “An Overseer is protected!”

The black-armored half-giant used all his might, slashing at Perle's head with the dark broadsword, but an unseen barrier blocked it.

The barrier cracked. Mr. K's body quietly fell apart. A clean cut took off his right arm and shoulder, dropping them to the ground.

Though Mr. K used recorded demigod powers and had a bit of godhood, he still faced punishment for attacking a "clearly" protected Overseer.

This was a freshly done crime, not yet borne!

The flesh on Mr. K's shoulder writhed, as if a new arm would grow. But he ignored it. His left hand grabbed the falling dark sword, yelling again, "Praise you for creating everything!"

As the rough voice echoed, the dark broadsword slashed at Overseer Perle.

With Perle's former protection, the dropped coin bag floated back to her hand.

She quickly made an Under the Table deal aimed at everyone there.

Crack!

As the dark broadsword swung, the unseen barrier guarding the Overseer fully shattered.

Mr. K's left arm came off his body, showing a huge cut.

In the cut, blood-colored flesh tendrils grew fast, as if alive, as if a new Mr. K would emerge.

Overseer Perle wasn't happy. Based on the Under the Table deal, Mr. K, Lumian, and the rest should have gotten much weaker.

But in truth, nothing changed!

Could it be that I'm unlucky? The person who made the deal was a fraud who never meant to keep their end? Perle's heart sank as she couldn't move for some reason.

Then she saw the armless Mr. K bow in an exaggerated way.

The Aurora Order Oracle's mouth opened as wide as it could, corners going to his ears. Blood churned where it tore, flesh tendrils thickly covering the spot.

Using his stretched mouth, the black-armored Mr. K bit the dark sword's handle.

He jumped high, voice ringing from his chest.

"Praise you for bearing the world's sins!"

Amid hoarse yells, Mr. K fell, a straight dark sword using himself as the grip, slashing at Overseer Perle.

Chapter 734 My Weapon

Lumian stood at the quarry cave's exit, wanting to work with Mr. K to take on Perle, but unsure of how to proceed.

Past experience had shown him that without godhood, any action against an Overseer would only come back to haunt him, without affecting the demigod at all.

With his golden mask removed, Lumian could only remain in place, considering what items he possessed that might be useful and effective. He was left with no option but to watch the fight between Mr. K and Perle unfold as a mere spectator.

At the same time, he scanned the area, looking for a way to utterly destroy the existing mirror world.

Anthony kept his posture and continued drawing on the blank painting album, which was missing a page.

His current subject was to be Madam Magician.

As he observed Mr. K's movements and listened to each slash, Lumian sensed a slight corruption creeping into his mind.

It surprised him that Mr. K could hold the Overseer at bay to some degree, unafraid of her accusations and armed with a means to harm her.

Lumian silently hoped that even if Mr. K couldn't defeat Perle, he would at least be able to drive her off.

Mustering strength from his waist and core, Mr. K swung his upper body as he descended, bringing the dark broadsword down on Overseer Perle's head for the third time.

Perle remained motionless, not using any Mirror Traversal-like ability to evade, nor rolling to the side. She stood firm beside the jutting rock, her body turning pitch-black and dissolving into a constantly dissipating shadow.

The dark, enigmatic broadsword plunged down abruptly, silently cleaving the shadows in two.

The shadows rapidly encircled the protruding rock, perpetually moving and merging once again. They writhed, striving to reassemble Overseer Perle's form.

Where the Sword of Darkness had cut through, the shadows struggled to form proper connections, barely managing to stack together into a humanoid shape riddled with cracks and misaligned parts.

Mr. K sprang up, ready to swing the dark broadsword gripped in the gaping crack of his mouth.

Suddenly, his body shrank rapidly, the cold black armor encasing him vanishing.

He reverted to his original form, dressed in a black hood and matching robe.

The precariously assembled shadow gradually shed its black color, revealing human skin and a vivid red dress inch by inch.

In the shadowy cathedral at an undisclosed location, the mercury giant serpent phantom hanging in midair slowly faded away.

The Reboot was finished.

Perched on a black wooden armchair, Loki abruptly thinned and shrank, transforming into a paper figurine.

The paper figurine and chair then crumbled, disintegrating into dust.

Loki materialized in a far corner of the cathedral. Magician, appearing to still be airborne, quickly conjured an alternate self behind him.

As Loki reached into the void to pull out an assistant, his jet-black eyes suddenly shifted to blue.

The blue rapidly stained black, then reverted to blue, the two colors continually alternating.

Loki was paralyzed, unable to summon an aide, allowing Magician to stretch out her right hand and grasp with all her might.

The dark void warped, swallowing Loki. Then, the two shattered into fragments, ultimately buried in a bottomless abyss.

Throughout this, Loki's body instantly became ethereal, unreal, as if he were a projection or puppet that had been swapped at some moment.

Hermit, Judgment, and Magician simultaneously heard a regretful sigh and witnessed the shadowy cathedral itself turn ethereal and slowly disintegrate.

It, too, seemed to be a projection.

An aged, ethereal voice then echoed from the distance.

“My wish is for all the demigods present to be lost for three minutes.”

The shadowy cathedral fully collapsed, and darkness engulfed the surroundings, devoid of starlight or boundaries.

In the special mirror world, realizing Mr. K could no longer maintain his godhood-enhanced half-giant state and Overseer Perle was close to returning to her human form, Lumian's first instinct was to shape-shift into a shadow being and flee through the growing rift in the mirror world to find other allies.

However, he was unsure if Mr. K had employed any mystical items upon entry, and whether Shadow Transformation alone would allow passage through the mirror world's fissure.

As Lumian watched Overseer Perle's face gradually come into view, her eyes and nostrils both vertically misaligned, a sudden realization struck him.

I, too, can wound an Overseer...

If Mr. K can do it, so can I!

My fate is intertwined with Termiboros. To a degree, we can be considered one. I've long known I possess a fake angelic level!

The powers and items I wield won't hold godhood and can't touch an Overseer, but I should be able to do it myself.

I will become my own weapon!

These thoughts raced through Lumian's mind as a slightly manic grin spread across his face. His blood seemed to boil, as if set aflame.

In a flash, he disappeared and reappeared before Overseer Perle.

His eyes had already taken on an iron-black tint, revealing a few pale spots that marked Perle's vulnerabilities.

One such spot was just below the left side of her face!

Before Perle's shadows could fully reconstruct the Overseer, a multitude of incandescent white flames burst forth from Lumian's body.

Like a rushing current, they poured out from Lumian's eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, skin, and pores, completely enveloping him, transforming him into a raging inferno.

Let's do this!

Let us burn as one!

Let us explode together!

Lumian, now one with the blazing white flames, swung his right fist at Perle's left cheek.

Perle's vertically-misaligned eyes betrayed a flicker of confusion before understanding dawned.

But it was too late for her to protest or react. She had not even fully returned.

Bang!

Lumian's right fist collided with Perle's left cheek, caving it in.

As he struck, a ghastly wound appeared on his own chest and abdomen, but it was quickly consumed by the blazing white flames.

Perle felt the pain, but it was not a mortal blow.

At that instant, Lumian's face, wreathed in blazing white flames, displayed a sinister and frenzied smile.

It actually works!

I can truly use myself as a weapon to strike an Overseer!

Boom!

He detonated his right arm, using the incandescent white flames he had pre-injected to make it explode.

His right fist, propelled by a fierce, blazing white wave of flames, pierced Perle's left cheek and penetrated her skull.

Cull!

Crack! The special mirror world, with its dark barrier and numerous cracks, let out a shattering sound. It rapidly disintegrated and fell apart.

Lumian's head took an invisible blow, his skull caving in and teeth falling out.

Deprived of his right arm, he was hurled through the air, his entire body wreathed in blazing white flames.

His face twisted in agony, yet his eyes shone with elation.

Success!

He beheld a horrific, blood-red wound on the left side of Overseer Perle's face. Within the wound, a pale-white fog intermingled with the grayish-white brain. The shattered fist had ripped it asunder and set it ablaze.

As the blazing white flames faded, Overseer Perle's remaining right eye dulled, and her body slowly crumpled.

The cage imprisoning Franca and Jenna quickly disintegrated.

Mr. K, observing this, nodded approvingly.

Lumian is like me!

The fighting style is quite alike!

The only shortcoming is that he did not loudly praise the Lord during the final blow.

At the same time, Lumian's head buzzed, and he nearly blacked out. He collapsed to the ground, on the verge of losing consciousness.

He managed to stay awake only because he had undergone significant digestion of the Reaper potion. It felt as if he had completed another massive cull by the ancient tomb during the Dream Festival.

Wh— Lumian was initially thrilled, but then he forced himself to stand, shocked and suspicious.

He knew the digestion must have resulted from his Culling of Overseer Perle, but shouldn't a demigod suffice for him to fully digest the Reaper potion?

Lumian extinguished the incandescent white flames burning within and without. With his left hand, he retrieved the healing agent and Lie earring obtained from Jebus from his Traveler's Bag, all while examining Overseer Perle's corpse.

Just then, the special mirror world completely collapsed, and they found themselves back in reality, inside the quarry cave with a fixed mirror world entrance.

Next to the protruding rock where Perle had stood, there was no corpse or white fog to be seen.

Lumian spotted an oil painting hanging on the corresponding rock wall.

The painting looked torn and ruined, but one could faintly discern that it had once portrayed a woman in a red dress.

Perle?

We weren't facing the true Overseer, but a painted figure she created using a Pixie pathway item?

This oil painting grants the depicted demigod a short lifespan, but no freedom of movement?

Is that why Perle never budged and always took the attacks head-on?

Amid his bewilderment, Lumian drank the healing agent Jebus had procured from the Great Mother's followers to ensure he would survive past 6 a.m.

At that moment, Perle's smiling voice resonated from the depths of the shattered oil painting.

“I didn't anticipate my painting person failing.

“But no matter. What's important is that the vortex is about to manifest. It won't be long before you're officially consumed.

“Everyone will be caught up in it...”

Perle's voice gradually faded into the depths of the oil painting, thwarting Mr. K's attempt to track her through teleportation.

Chapter 735 I Have Sinned

The healing agent's effects and the incineration of the original flames had largely stemmed the bleeding from Lumian's wounds. Flesh and blood had even started to regrow and form scabs over his skin.

Putting on the Lie earring, Lumian tried to shift the gruesome hole in his chest and abdomen to a less vital location. As he did so, he stared intently at the oil painting hanging on the rocky wall, his thoughts racing.

As an Overseer, Perle is unlikely to directly engage in combat herself?

Has her true form been lurking in the shadows this whole time to avoid any potential mishaps?

But if she had personally intervened, perhaps we would have been defeated long ago, with no chance for any slip-ups...

Furthermore, Perle doesn't appear overly concerned about capturing me alive. Doesn't the failure of her painting version indicate that the Under the Table deal she initiated didn't meet the requirements? She's bound to face severe consequences for that in the future.

It's not as if she's a fraud...

Coming to this realization, Lumian suddenly came up with a guess:

Perle was the sole person to mention capturing me alive. There's no other evidence to support it...

While this may indeed be a request from the other party in the Under the Table transaction, it's probably not the only one. It's likely one of multiple requests and the least critical. That's why, after creating the special mirror world, Perle immediately left this painting behind, allowing her painting version to handle us while she went off elsewhere.

Was she going to carry out the most vital and important requirement?

I can't fully trust a Broker's words either...

Based on her tone, she seems to have succeeded. This strongly suggests she's confident the vortex is on the brink of taking shape. It won't be long before it entraps everyone...

Apparently, she wasn't in the vicinity at all. She merely used the link to her painting self to briefly speak remotely before vanishing completely. We have no way to track her.

Lumian felt his theory could account for Perle's actions and certain details from the prior battle. This realization made his heart sink.

If his suspicions were correct, the School of Truth's vortex hadn't been successfully halted and was about to manifest!

What would transpire after some time had passed?

Right then, Mr. K approached Lumian, his gaze locked on the tattered oil painting.

In a hoarse voice, he spoke, "I have sinned. I failed to discover the School of Truth's scheme beforehand, letting the issue escalate until it was on the verge of erupting."

As he talked, the flesh on Mr. K's shoulders writhed, and two pale, slender, damp arms gradually grew out. The black robe, its sleeves severed, was beyond repair.

Not waiting for Lumian to respond, Mr. K turned his head and said, "The disturbance here will soon be noticed. We shouldn't stay. Meet me tomorrow morning."

"Got it." Lumian glanced at his companions, who had concealed themselves in the shadows or used Psychological Invisibility, and nodded subtly.

He also intended to head to the safe house as quickly as possible to avoid any accidental attacks by official Beyonders.

Once Mr. K teleported away, Franca, Jenna, and Anthony came out of hiding.

"We should get back to the safe house now," Lumian said decisively.

Franca nodded and said with regret and sorrow, "I wonder where Pride Armor was sent. It would be such a shame if we truly lost it."

If Pride Armor hadn't hit Overseer Perle's painted self, compelling her to alter her life form and indirectly making the transformed Punishers disappear, even if Lumian could have still found a way to lure out the Islander swindler, Monette, they wouldn't have survived the following stages. In that case, he would face not only Perle's punishment but also Anthony's Punisher.

For Lumian and the others, Pride Armor had performed exceptionally; it was a Sealed Artifact of tremendous value. Nobody wanted it to be lost.

"If it were human and smart, it could find its way back. But now..." Lumian sighed, grasping Anthony's shoulder with his left hand.

Suddenly, dazzling starlight emerged from the void, rapidly forming a dreamlike door.

The door opened, and out came Magician, Judgment, and Hermit.

Surveying the scene, Magician noticed Lumian's dire condition, one arm missing. With an odd expression, she asked, "You were attacked?"

As she spoke, the quarry cave, lit solely by the carbide lamp's glow, darkened, as if an unseen curtain had been pulled around it.

"Yes," Franca replied on behalf of Lumian, who had only gained enough reprieve from his injuries to avoid imminent death. She concisely recounted the whole situation.

"The one who attacked you came from Perle's painted self. Her true form departed to do something else?" Magician sought confirmation.

“That appears to be the case,” Lumian responded.

Magician exchanged glances with Judgment and Hermit, their eyes meeting without hiding their bewilderment.

After a short pause, Magician offered no explanation. Starlight gathered in her eyes, as if tracing a pattern.

A gentle rain fell, soaking Lumian's body and fully healing his wounds.

Nourished by the rain, Franca and the others felt their weariness melt away.

It closely resembles the power Madame Night used in the dream... Lumian drew a connection.

Magician nodded and instructed, “Provide me the details in writing tomorrow.”

With that, she disappeared along with Judgment and Hermit.

As the darkness around them lifted, Lumian realized they had returned to the safe house in the administrative district, where Jenna had summoned Judgment's messenger.

“Madam Magician and the others are perplexed that we were attacked by Perle's painting self,” Anthony remarked while putting away the blank painting collection, voicing his thoughts.

Lumian nodded and replied, “What's perplexing shouldn't be Perle attacking us. It's not unusual for an Overseer with an Under the Table transaction at the heart of it all to do something like that.”

“So what were they perplexed about?” Jenna and Franca couldn't figure out an answer.

Anthony tried to analyze the situation.

“They're not perplexed by Perle's attack itself, but why we were targeted by her painted self specifically.

“They seem to think we wouldn't be attacked by Perle directly. Whether she had such intentions or acted on them is irrelevant.”

Lumian and the others became lost in thought.

Abruptly, Franca exclaimed.

Looking at Lumian and the others, she slowly withdrew her hand from her Traveler's Bag in astonishment.

“Pride Armor is in here. It's returned!”

“Did Madam Magician help locate it?” As this thought crossed Lumian's mind, he noticed Franca's actions.

He instantly shouted, “Stop!”

He couldn't allow Franca to retrieve the Pride Armor!

This is a confined room, and I'm present!

Franca's expression froze, and she immediately stopped moving her elbow.

In the mirror world created by dark void tunnels, Overseer Perle continuously moved from mirror to mirror, searching for her final destination.

Her expression stayed calm, thrilled that the calamity had instead accelerated the vortex's formation.

On the other side of the dark, vacant tunnel, a vibrant ball of yarn quietly trailed her, leaving a concealed path.

The next morning, having sent the letter to Magician, Lumian reached Psychic's headquarters and met Mr. K in the basement.

Both their limbs had been restored.

Clad in an enormous hood and black robe, Mr. K disregarded this. In a grating voice, he told Lumian, "Come with me somewhere."

"For what purpose?" Lumian's demeanor toward Mr. K had become more at ease after their collaboration the previous night.

Mr. K nodded and explained, "First, I wish to atone for this incident. Second, through the idol, I want to notify the Lord that you've grown and can serve as His envoy. He will make preparations when the moment is right. Have faith in the Lord, and trust Him completely."

Just going to a location with the True Creator's idol? That's okay... It would be problematic if I actually had to encounter a god... Lumian bowed his head humbly and said, "It would be my honor."

Mr. K came up to him, grasped his arm, and transported him into the spirit world via teleportation.

Traversing dense layers of colors and innumerable indescribable transparent beings, the pair arrived at a cathedral.

The cathedral seemed to be located in a deep valley. Its surface was a watery black, decorated with many human bones. The top resembled the Eternal Blazing Sun Church's cathedral, forming a hemispherical shape.

Mr. K silently entered through the open door, his back slightly hunched.

Lumian followed closely behind.

Then, he saw the vast but dimly lit prayer hall and an enormous, pitch-black cross standing in the cathedral's depths.

A naked male idol hung upside down from the cross. Rust-colored iron nails jutted out from various parts of its body, each nail stained with vivid red blood.

Is this the True Creator's idol? Lumian's heart raced as he quickly averted his gaze.

What he had seen in the Church of The Fool, the Eternal Blazing Sun Church, and the God of Steam and Machinery Church were merely Sacred Emblems. There were no idols. He had assumed Mr. K was referring to the Sacred Emblem as an idol.

Mr. K walked until he was four to five meters from the idol and halted.

Lumian trailed slightly behind and stopped.

As he made his way from the entrance, he got a clear look at the hanging idol's face.

Its nose, mouth, and ears were quite blurry, with only a rough outline. However, its eyes were very distinct and tightly closed, as if enduring all the pain and guilt.

Mr. K drew a cross on his chest and cried out in a raspy voice, "Praise you! Praise you for creating everything! Praise you for shouldering the world's sins!"

Lumian followed suit in offering praise.

Abruptly, his head spun, and his eyes burned with a sense of familiarity.

Wh— Lumian's spiritual intuition alerted him that the negative effects of the Baynfel contract had been triggered. The effect was: In scenes intimately connected to Baynfel's past, he would witness truths better left unknown.

This place is closely tied to Baynfel's past? Was he once a clergyman of the True Creator? Lumian suppressed his curiosity as he continued to focus on the ground.

Suddenly, his eyes froze.

He spotted a blurry, lizard-like creature.

It was the lizard-like elf that had appeared in his dream about Cordu. The same one that had crawled out of Aurore's mouth!

It might have influenced Aurore, stopping her from seeking Hela's help in time!

At the conclusion of the Tree of Shadow incident, the lizard-like elf had also made an appearance.

Why was it present now, in the True Creator's cathedral?

As Mr. K sprawled on the ground, pressing his face firmly against the watery black stone bricks, Lumian instinctively looked up.

He witnessed the huge pitch-black cross transform into an illusory shape, as if it loomed over a mountain range's peak. On the indistinct figure hanging upside down, lizard-like elves crawled in and out, circling and dancing...

Lumian watched the scene in a daze as Mr. K's slightly muffled voice resounded in his ears.

"Oh, merciful Father, I implore your mercy for the transgressions I've made."

End of Volume—Sinner

Chapter 736 Night

Can you accept such an outcome?

Inside an empty house in Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, Angoulême de François, wearing a lion headdress, stood by the window, gazing down at the gas streetlamps below, patiently waiting.

After losing contact, he and Hidden Blade had switched emergency communication methods. They aimed to quickly re-establish contact, even without Madame Hela's messenger.

Early the previous morning, as soon as he had wrapped up the Moran Avigny case, he immediately tried to locate Hidden Blade.

Finally, Hidden Blade Franca, dressed in her assassin outfit, emerged from the shadows.

Angoulême cut right to it and asked, “Did you take down Moran Avigny?”

“Otherwise?” Franca replied with a smile.

Although Overseer Perle's vortex warning hung over Franca's head like a sharp blade, preventing her from relaxing just because Moran Avigny was dead and she had the intel, Franca wouldn't let it ruin her mood or make her solemn or anxious.

The Major Arcana card holders would naturally worry about something so serious, and she and the others just needed to follow orders and complete the missions. No point fretting.

Plus, the intel they obtained was crucial and valuable. Either the Eternal Blazing Sun Church or the Demoness Sect would definitely be grateful!

Franca was filled with anticipation over this.

“It really was you guys...” Angoulême couldn't help but sigh.

Hidden Blade and her team really acted fast. They had mentioned dealing with a government minister, and not long after, they actually attacked and succeeded.

Franca covered for Lumian, saying, “We were waiting for Moran Avigny to walk into the mirror himself. Surprisingly, the Aurora Order suddenly assassinated him, forcing him into our trap early.”

Combined with the scene details, Angoulême slightly nodded and said, “So it was just a coincidence...”

This aligned with what the Purifiers had confirmed.

Angoulême then asked, “So where's Moran Avigny now?”

“Dead,” Franca said with a tongue click. “He was definitely a Mirror Person, and gave us lots of important intel.”

“What intel?” Angoulême quickly asked.

Franca chuckled and raised her right hand, gently rubbing her thumb and index finger together.

“Where's my informant fee?”

Angoulême said in exasperated amusement, “Don't forget I contributed a lot to the Moran Avigny operation. Even if I don't get spoils, it's no problem to hear the intel, right?”

Franca, who always prided herself on fairly “splitting loot,” awkwardly cleared her throat.

“Just kidding. Just kidding. But that intel is super important. Your superior will definitely reward you. Don't forget to help me collect my fee!”

“Get to the point,” Angoulême replied in a deep voice.

It wasn't that he was stingy about the fee, but Hidden Blade had twice emphasized how crucial the intel was, making him eager.

Franca omitted Tarot Club and Aurora Order details, but started from capturing Jibus to Overseer Perle's painted self appearing and Lumian's theory about the whole situation.

Initially, Angoulême stayed relatively composed. Mirror People problems barely factored into Purifier expectations. But when Moran Avigny was tricked into revealing Roselle Gustav led the Mirror People, Angoulême's head started buzzing louder and louder.

Why do Hidden Blade and the others always get mixed up in such major situations?

How long has it been since the Hostel incident? Why is there another “vortex”?

After Franca finished, Angoulême couldn't help but raise his right hand and pinch his throbbing, headdress-concealed forehead. His emotions were so scrambled he was speechless.

Franca smugly asked, “How's that? Project Vortex, the Mirror People, and intel about a hidden traitor—pretty important stuff, right?”

Noticing Angoulême's grave gaze and slightly moving, teeth-grinding mouth, Franca instinctively added, “Don't blame me! We're not causing these problems, Trier's just uniquely prone to all kinds of chaos. We're victims too!”

Angoulême slowly exhaled and said, “I'll... submit this intel... tonight. I won't forget to pass along my informant's reward request. What do you want?”

At the mention of “tonight,” Angoulême's emotions surged and he paused a moment.

He had just finished his workday an hour ago and left Saint Viève Cathedral. Now he had to return!

I'm Agent 007, not some societal slave working from midnight to midnight every damn day! Angoulême inwardly cursed, but still appeared calm, reliable, and emotionally stable.

Franca deeply pondered and said, “All the Pleasure potion ingredients.”

She had considered her Affliction potion could be rewarded by the Demoness Sect, but not Jenna's. She could only rely on the authorities.

“Aren't you already at Pleasure?” Angoulême muttered, giving up asking. He nodded, “I'll help get it.”

He didn't ask about Hidden Blade's Pleasure potion preparations, just as he didn't ask how she and her crew survived facing a demigod's painted self.

Franca was overjoyed at 007's promise.

Getting Pleasure from the Church and Affliction from the Demoness Sect, surely Madam Judgment would reward me too. I sold this one intel three times... I can now understand Lumian's glee at triple-dipping mission rewards!

Angoulême rubbed his temples and muttered, “There are Cardinals not from the Sun pathway, and way more diocese bishops. I really don't know what we'll uncover next. I just hope the impact isn't too massive.”

He meant the April Fool's insider in the Eternal Church. With a clear lead, it wouldn't be hard for that party to be discovered, even if they worked through a Broker.

Without waiting for Franca's reply, Angoulême pondered a moment and said, “The humanoid Sealed Artifact transaction is approved. Let me know the transaction details anytime.”

“It's finally approved...” Franca criticized the bureaucracy and curiously asked, “What's the story with that humanoid Artifact?”

She had encountered the humanoid Sealed Artifact during the sea prayer ritual and knew its abnormal power.

Angoulême shook his head. “I'm not cleared for that intel. All I know is she used to be a Sequence 4 Spectator demigod. Later she suddenly went insane, but I don't know if she went mad before an evil god corrupted her, or because of the corruption.”

“It was probably the latter,” Franca said thoughtfully. “Aren't Spectator Beyonders usually emotionally stable and hard to lose control?”

Angoulême rejected Franca's statement. “From what I know, Spectators normally don't have issues. But when they do, it gets really messy.”

“True,” Franca thought of I Know Someone.

After chatting a while, Angoulême bid Hidden Blade farewell and left the empty room.

Before leaving, he quickly reviewed the intel, then inwardly sighed with a heavy heart.

Aren't there way too many mystical incidents in Trier?

In the market district, Jenna seized a chance to act as a Witch again.

Wearing a black cloak and dark dress, she walked the shadowed street, pondering new acting directions as she looked for an opportunity.

I can't just equate Witches with bad deeds. Sinister, dark acts aren't necessarily bad...

Among the Witch legends I've gathered so far, many focused on Witches using mystical and sinister dark powers to help others fulfill desires, tempting them to stumble...

These legends likely contain remnants of acts by Demonesses posing as Witches. I could try imitating them. Plus, tempting others into depravity is a deeper way for an Instigator. Pleasure's acting also corrupts the target...

Yes, the mystical powers of sinisterness and darkness, tempting depravity and depravity brings calamity...

Jenna's thoughts gradually became more clear.

With these in mind, she turned onto Rue Anarchie, intending to find a chance to act as a Witch on this chaotic street.

After a few steps, Jenna suddenly heard someone singing hysterically, “Trier, a city dressed in gold,
“A ball that endures 'til dawn unfolds;
“Chicken roasted, dripping with oil's grace,
“A castle cake to fill each eager embrace.
“A bow-tied attendant glides 'mongst the guests,
“Merrily dancing with joy and delight.
“My beloved, hidden 'midst the crowd,
“Among them, my love resides,
“In the Capital of Joy, forever Trier!”

This voice... Jenna peered from the shadows at Auberge du Coq Doré and saw Lumian, in a thick brown jacket, sitting on the third floor windowsill, holding a green liquid-filled bottle.

Hadn't he gone to the Aurora Order and never returned? Jenna frowned and stepped out of the shadow.

Lumian noticed her and smiled. He leaped down from the third floor, landing steadily before her.

“Why are you here?” Jenna asked with concern.

Lumian smiled casually. “I suddenly missed this place. Came back for a drink.”

Sensing Lumian's strange excitement, Jenna pondered a moment then asked, “Did something happen?”

“No,” Lumian denied quickly. He emphasized, “I'm fine.”

With an absinthe bottle in hand, he headed towards Rue Anarchie's exit. Jenna trailed closely behind, not inquiring further.

Under the crimson moonlight and scattered gas lamps, the silent Lumian suddenly smiled and announced, “I'm about to start blaspheming. No, it's already begun.”

He didn't turn around and kept walking.

“Haven't you been blaspheming all this while?” Jenna cautiously probed with Lumian's usual self-deprecation.

Lumian's gaze stayed fixed ahead as he smiled. “It's different this time.”

He quickened his pace and didn't mention it again.

Jenna glanced at Lumian's muddy leather boots and the dirty but dry surroundings. She pursed her lips and didn't press further.

Lumian continued walking, occasionally humming a tune, occasionally chatting with Jenna and joking with a smile.

He made his way back to his rented apartment and entered his room.

Jenna stood quietly in the living room, watching Lumian close the bedroom's wooden door.

In the dark room, lit only by crimson moonlight, Lumian sat at his desk, unfolded a piece of paper, and picked up a fountain pen.

He didn't light the gas wall lamp, nor create a blazing fireball. In the pitch-black, he positioned the pen under the faint light.

Amidst paper rustling, Lumian's smile faded, and his wrist slowed.

Finally, he penned the unusually brief letter: "Honorable Madam Magician, I'd like to meet you."

Chapter 737 Opinion

After having the messenger dispatched to deliver the letter, Lumian sat at his desk, gazing at the dark curtains that seeped in the crimson moonlight, patiently awaiting Madam Magician's arrival.

After an indeterminate period of time, a resplendent starlight emerged from the dark room, coalescing into the figure of Magician.

She had changed into a brownish-yellow cotton dress with white trimmings.

"Good evening, Madam Magician," Lumian said with a glance around. "I have something important to discuss."

Magician grasped his meaning and immediately condensed the surrounding darkness into an illusory glass barrier, curling up to block out the infiltration of the crimson moonlight and the sounds from outside.

"What's so important?" Madam Magician inquired once secrecy was ensured.

Lumian conjured a blazing white flame to use as a chandelier. After a few moments of silence, he said, "I've confirmed the origins of the lizard-like elf."

"It's not an evil god from outside the barrier?" Madam Magician wore a thoughtful expression.

Lumian's lips curled into a slight smile. "An evil god in a way, but one not from outside the barrier."

Magician frowned and said, "Give me the details."

Lumian recounted in his deep voice his pact with Penitent Baynfeld and the corresponding negative effects. He described seeing the True Creator idol and a lizard-like elf in the secret cathedral of the Aurora Order, as well as the illusory scene suspected to be a divine kingdom.

Madam Magician didn't interrupt him, listening attentively. Then, she let out a long sigh and said, "In fact, I had suspected that the lizard-like elf was related to Him, but whether it was the Spectator pathway's Mythical Creature form or the Hanged Man pathway's Mythical Creature form, they were clearly different from that elf. Nothing similar had manifested in the past five to six years. Additionally, the two experts at decrypting and deciphering dreams were more inclined to believe that the elf came from an evil god outside the barrier. This led me to abandon that guess."

“From the looks of it, that entity had been involved in Cordu's catastrophe for a long time.

“That's the only explanation that's complete. How could He, who's been listening and watching, not notice such a major incident that has been unfolding for so long and involves members of the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society? How could He not take advantage of the situation?”

“What does He want?” Lumian's expression subtly contorted.

Magician stared at Lumian for a few seconds before sighing again.

“I can only confirm one goal. That is to create a Beyonder capable of rapid digestion and rapid advancement along the Hunter pathway.

“Think about it. It's been just over half a year since you became a Hunter. You're already a Sequence 5 Beyonder, and your Reaper potion has been greatly digested. Perhaps in two to three months, you can consider breaking through to godhood and advancing to Sequence 4, becoming a demigod.

“On this 'journey,' whether it was the fake Angel status brought about by sealing Termiboros, the obtained boons of the Inevitability pathway, or some tempering and digestion opportunities filled with calculated arrangements, they all contributed significantly to your growth.

“He wants a Red Priest and is pushing for a decisive battle between the Red Priest and the Primordial Demoness.

“I was worried that your advancement might be going too smoothly, but now it seems that a price has already been exacted for what fate bestowed, and a deposit has been paid.”

Under the blazing white flames, Lumian spoke in a deep, raspy voice, “I'd rather remain an ordinary person.”

Madam Magician shook her head with a complex smile.

“As the apocalypse approaches, with Aurore's background and condition, even if no catastrophe had occurred in Cordu, it's inevitable that you'll encounter one eventually. Have you forgotten the helplessness and pain of being an ordinary person in that catastrophe?”

Lumian clenched his fists involuntarily and lowered his head. “I-I just don't want to obtain power this way.”

Madam Magician didn't dwell on the topic and said, “He definitely has ulterior motives. For example, a humanoid Sealed Artifact like you can effectively gather evil god influences around you wherever you go, exposing their schemes in advance and giving us more time to deal with them.”

Lumian remained silent and didn't respond.

Madam Magician glanced at him and asked with an obvious sigh, "What's your next move?"

Lumian's body trembled slightly, as if he couldn't suppress his emotions.

Gritting his teeth, he said, "I want to punch Him!"

Upon saying this, Lumian's eyes turned bloodshot.

To be honest, he had never harbored a firm desire to seek revenge on a deity. His original plan was to eliminate the key members of April Fool's and the Sanson family of the Sinners organization. Then, he would work hard to become an Angel and extract most of Termiboros's strength. Then, he would release the weak Angel of Inevitability and kill Him.

He knew that the source of Cordu's catastrophe was actually the entity known as Inevitability. However, due to the vast disparity between them and his natural fear of deities, he had only occasionally cursed and spoken harsh words. He hadn't truly put the other party on his revenge list.

And now, he wanted those damned deities to fall from heaven, like meteors streaking through the night sky!

Madam Magician looked at Lumian with a serious expression and asked, "Do you know what you mean by that?"

"I know," Lumian nodded slowly. "I've been waiting all day before requesting to meet you because I've been questioning myself seriously."

He had questioned himself again and again, sometimes in anger, sometimes in sorrow. When he calmed down a little, he questioned himself again.

Madam Magician regarded him with a familiar pity in her eyes.

This time, Lumian knew clearly what she was pitying.

A human yearning to punch a deity.

Lumian gazed back at the Major Arcana card holder, his gaze unwavering.

After a while, Magician nodded slightly and said, "You're telling me the target because you want me to provide effective advice on your idea and make it a little more feasible?"

"Yes, my suggestion is that before Mr. Fool awakens to some extent, endure your impulses and work hard to improve yourself. Only by becoming a demigod can you have a chance to sit at that table of cards—of course, that depends on whether you appear there in the form of cards or chips. Don't be disheartened. It's the same for you, me, and the other demigods. Our will and choices can also play an important role at critical moments. We can also exploit the card players."

Lumian asked in a deep voice, "Will Mr. Fool—will he help me?"

Madam Magician nodded solemnly. "Yes."

Unknowingly, her eyes grew brighter. "Mr. Fool will protect us. All of us are willing to make sacrifices for this world, but we can't be sacrificed."

Lumian suddenly let out a sigh of relief, as if he had lost all strength. He couldn't stand steadily, and his body swayed slightly.

He had been suppressing his emotions with all his might until now.

Madam Magician looked at him and pondered for a moment before saying, "I must remind you that that entity should already be aware of your thoughts. This is because you displayed an abnormality in front of His idol.

"I'm not criticizing you; I'm just stating a fact. In that situation, even Clowns and Spectators would find it difficult to control their emotions and expressions, let alone an Ascetic like you."

"I know..." Lumian replied with difficulty.

Before Madam Magician exposed him, he had harbored a glimmer of hope.

Magician chuckled and said, "That's also a positive thing. The fact that you're still alive suggests that you're still useful to Him and can be used. You haven't repaid the full price that fate has exacted of you. As long as you don't give up on yourself or participate in actions that can disrupt His important plans, He will ignore your hatred. He might even continue to allow you to encounter opportunities and obtain things until you step onto the stage He has decided for you.

"It's frustrating, but that's the reality. In the eyes of an existence like Him, you are currently just a speck of dust. He can reduce you to dust at any time without worrying about your thoughts."

After a long silence, Lumian asked in a slightly hoarse voice, "You mean, before Mr. Fool awakens, I'm to make full use of that entity's arrangements?"

Magician nodded slightly and said, "Using an enemy's resources to strengthen yourself is also a way of seeking revenge. Of course, this requires greater caution and restraint. As I mentioned earlier, a price is always exacted for what fate has bestowed. You have to weigh whether you're willing to pay the corresponding price in the future."

Lumian looked down at the floor illuminated by the incandescent white light and said, "Okay."

He then asked, "When will Mr. Fool begin awakening?"

"No one knows," Madam Magician replied with a smile. "But there's no need to be disheartened by this answer. I foresee that we tarot card holders will play an important role in this matter. Let's work hard together."

"How do we?" Lumian pressed.

Madam Magician pondered for a moment and said, "First, focus on yourself. Then, wait patiently for the right opportunity."

The right opportunity? Lumian couldn't fathom how they, the Minor Arcana card holders, were involved in awakening Mr. Fool. All he could do was cautiously ask, "Madam, did you deliberately place Penitent on the messenger list?"

Without Baynfel's negative influence, he wouldn't have had a chance to see the lizard-like elf in the True Creator's hidden cathedral.

“Yes and no,” Madam Magician replied. “I know he has a certain connection to that entity. I believe our collaboration with the Aurora Order is fragile. You were sent as an undercover agent, not a true member. You might encounter certain problems in the future, and there's a chance that he will bring about new possibilities. That's why I placed him on the messenger list to see if fate will allow you to choose him. I never expected this to unveil a very important mystery.”

Lumian had long grown accustomed to Madam Magician's cryptic responses. He swiftly filtered through her thoughts.

He spoke in a deep voice, “Madam, I wish to explore Mr. Hanged Man's Blue Avenger soon.”

Chapter 738 Original Arrangement

Magician concurred tersely. “No problem. I understand the urgency. I'll bring you there once Mr. Hanged Man and I confirm the time.”

Lumian fell silent for a moment before saying, “Thank you.”

Madam Magician pondered for a moment and reminded him, “But don't be too hasty. Emperor Roselle once said, ‘More haste, less speed.’

“It's not just because impatience blinds you and affects your judgment, causing you to make wrong choices in many matters. It's also because consuming the potion to advance has a requirement on your mental state. You should be well aware of this.”

“I understand,” Lumian said with a sigh.

Madam Magician glanced around and joked, “You were really tense just now. We've been talking this whole time, but you didn't even remember to invite me to sit down.

“Yes, the School of Truth's vortex clearly involves higher-level forces. We'll take over the subsequent investigations. Your primary mission is to locate the relatively important Mirror People according to what Moran Avigny had shared. I suspect that something in the special mirror world is an important part of the vortex.

“This time, you've obtained crucial information. We Major Arcana card holders won't be stingy with the rewards. Of course, it's for your team, not just you. The exact distribution is up to you.”

Upon hearing the last sentence, Lumian suddenly fell into a daze. He muttered to himself, “Again...”

“Is this also what fate has bestowed?”

"I can't say for sure that's not the case," Madam Magician replied with a self-deprecating smile. "Your psychological and mental state are better than I expected. You haven't reached the point where you need treatment again, but you seem to have suffered from the aftereffects of the trauma known as Fate's Bestowment. Everything you see seems arranged as if by fate's hand."

Without waiting for Lumian's response, she added, "Actually, there's no problem with that. It's good to be vigilant, but don't put too much pressure on yourself. Your mind is like an eraser. If you're too tense, it'll snap. You can be vigilant about details, but you have to relax. Think about it. You can't resist a real arrangement anyway. Why make yourself unable to sleep well, eat well, and become more and more neurotic?"

"Yes." Lumian had to admit that Madam Magician had a point.

Magician expressed satisfaction at Lumian's ability to self-regulate.

"Of course, once you discover any arrangements that are clearly problematic, remember to inform me immediately by reciting the honorific name.

"For the reward this time, I'll include the Sequence 4 potion formula of the Hunter pathway, facilitating your quest for items on the Blue Avenger. As for the rewards for the Two of Cups, Seven of Cups, and Four of Swords, I don't know either. It mainly depends on what Judgment, The Hermit, and the others will offer."

Lumian had no objections to this arrangement. Even if Madam Magician didn't mention it or believed that the information about the vortex and the Mirror People wasn't worth the demigod-level potion formula, he would take the initiative to request that the other party provide it first before making up for the missing contributions.

As Lumian regained his composure, a question crossed his mind.

"Madam, Mr. K of the Aurora Order has already divulged my contributions in front of the True Creator's idol, requesting Him to put me up as a candidate Oracle. When an official Oracle falls into danger, I will become the prime candidate to replace them. When the time comes, will I truly become a certain Mr. of the Aurora Order?"

"In addition, Mr. K also promised material rewards in the next few days."

Magician nodded slightly and said, "The Aurora Order's organizational structure is quite peculiar. Although Oracles have a Saint directly above them, most Oracles can directly hear the ravings of that entity and His instructions, giving them strong autonomy. Yes, they still follow the orders of their Saint superiors and to them on most matters, but there are a few matters that completely bypass their superiors. Recommending a candidate Oracle is one of them.

"An oracle of God can only come from God's revelation."

After a brief sigh, Magician chuckled and said, "As long as there's no major problem with the screening, feel free to accept the material rewards. You've already received enough of fate's bestowments. Any more and there won't be any substantial changes.

“I don't think being an Oracle will happen. The Aurora Order's Oracles have a fixed preaching area. It can't beat letting you run around and trigger various hidden dangers of evil gods. It will help you digest the potion. Uh...”

At this point, Magician's expression gradually turned odd.

Lumian wasn't in a hurry to inquire. He waited for the Major Arcana card holder to take the initiative to explain.

After a few seconds, Magician maintained her expression and hesitantly said, “Perhaps, that person's original arrangement was for you to be a certain Mr. for a while.

“The Hunter pathway's Sequence 4 is known as Iron-blooded Knight. It makes all consumers transform into men. Its ritual requires the formation of a team of at least 30 people. They should be able to comprehend your intentions based on your gaze and actions after long periods of nurturing—as though all of you are nearly one. The higher the team's strength and tacit understanding, the better the effect of the ritual.” Think about it. What's the most striking characteristic of the Aurora Order? It's fanaticism.

“After becoming a certain Mr., you will undoubtedly have your own jurisdiction and a large number of subordinates. They are fanatical and will completely follow the orders of a deity's oracle like you. With some training, they can fulfill the requirements of the ritual. What you need to worry about is how to increase their strength and tacit understanding to make the ritual more effective.”

Wh— The original plan was for me to become an Oracle after digesting the Reaper potion, allowing me to establish a team to complete the ritual as quickly as possible. How can I carry out this ritual now? Franca and the others are without a problem, but there are too few of them... Lumian couldn't help but frown.

Upon seeing this, Madam Magician chuckled and said, “The Church of Knowledge, well-versed in the Hunter path, offered an alternative.”

“Of course, the prerequisite is that you can tame Ludwig. Angels can offset most quantity requirements.”

“Angel level?” Lumian finally obtained information about Ludwig's power from Madam Magician.

“Yes.” Madam Magician didn't elaborate further.

Taming Ludwig? All I can do now is “bribe” him and give simple commands... Lumian fell deep into thought.

Madam Magician glanced at him and said, “You can wait until you digest the Reaper potion and visit the City of Exiles, Morora, before deciding which method to use to meet the ritual's requirements.”

“Right, let's discuss the vortex details through letters.”

Lumian nodded and watched as Madam Magician vanished into thin air.

Gazing at the gradually expanding dark border, he closed his eyes and recalled everything he had seen and heard that day.

Unbeknownst to him, he clenched his fists tightly, and blazing white flames surged from his fists, burning fiercely.

Jenna sat in an armchair in the living room, quietly waiting for Lumian to open the door and leave. The sound of gnawing and chewing echoed from the dining room.

Lumian carried the unfinished bottle of absinthe to the balcony, settled into a chair, and took a sip.

Jenna approached him with light footsteps and observed him for a few seconds. “You're in better shape.”

“You can tell that too?” Lumian asked nonchalantly without turning his head.

Jenna pulled up a chair and sat down, sneering.

“Your silent and reserved demeanor makes me feel more at ease than your previously excited and talkative demeanor.”

Lumian gazed at the night outside the balcony and remained silent for a long time. Jenna didn't ask any questions either.

Suddenly, Lumian spoke in a deep voice, “I saw that lizard-like elf.”

Jenna had heard him talk about Cordu and understood what it meant. She said in surprise, “Didn't you go to the Aurora Order to meet Mr. K? Why... Is that lizard-like elf related to the Aurora Order?”

“It stems from the one they believe in,” Lumian's voice seemed to emerge from the depths of darkness.

“No wonder...” Jenna suddenly understood Lumian's previous state. “Madam Judgment mentioned that the one the Aurora Order believes in is close to Mr. Fool in power...”

It wasn't something mortals could face directly, let alone exact revenge on!

After a brief silence, Jenna understood and said, “Did you just meet Madam Magician?”

“You've grown quite smart after drinking the Witch potion,” Lumian turned to Jenna.

Jenna couldn't help but ask, “Can't Hunters speak nicely?”

She paused for a moment before adding, “What did Madam Magician say?”

“She said to endure it for now and wait for Mr. Fool to wake up before considering what to do next,” Lumian replied simply.

Jenna tersely acknowledged, momentarily at a loss for words.

After a moment, she stood up and went to Ludwig's side in the dining room to retrieve a glass from the balcony. She snatched the bottle of absinthe from Lumian's hand and poured a third of it for herself.

Jenna had just taken a sip of the dreamy green liquid when her face instinctively furrowed.

“Heck, why do you people like to drink absinthe? It tastes awful!” As a former Showy Diva, Jenna had drunk plenty of alcohol, but she still couldn't accept the taste of absinthe.

Lumian scoffed but didn't offer an explanation.

Jenna casually chatted, “I once read a book about a writer whose name I can't remember. He said that those who enjoy absinthe either use it to pretend they are experienced or use it to reminisce about their experiences...”

Lumian listened quietly, picked up the bottle, and took another mouthful.

The slightly burning alcohol slid down his throat, leaving behind a familiar bitterness.

Chapter 739 Reminder

In the Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, Apartment 702 on 9 Rue Orosai.

Franca waited a while for Jenna to return.

She sniffed and asked in confusion, “Have you been drinking?”

Didn't Jenna say she was going to the market district to find an opportunity to act as a Witch?

Could it be that she had been deliberately drinking and engaging in sting operations to carry out law enforcement?

Jenna removed her black cloak and said to Franca with a solemn expression, “I ran into Lumian.”

“Huh?” Franca was taken aback. “He's in the market district? Didn't he go to the Aurora Order to meet Mr. K? I thought he hadn't returned because he was being tested and preparing to choose a reward...”

Jenna didn't hold back and recounted Lumian's condition and words in almost complete detail.

“Is that so...” Franca's emotions became complicated.

She understood Lumian's current feelings and sympathized with the plight of Muggle Aurore. She still remembered that the Ancient Sun God, suspected to be from the Third Epoch and whom the Aurora Order believed in, had returned in some form. There was a high chance that the Ancient Sun God was an earlier transmigrator, a transmigrator like them!

Transmigrators harming transmigrators... It's the way of the April Fool's group; likewise for the Ancient Sun God... Franca sighed silently and decided to summon Madame Hela's messenger later. She would inform the vice president of the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society about the

School of Truth's vortex operation and the True Creator's role in the catastrophe at Cordu, and request a gathering of all members soon.

It wasn't that she wanted to publicly warn all members of the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society at the gathering about the True Creator and the Ancient Sun God. Certain matters could become catastrophic if people below a certain level knew about them. After all, that entity possessed the ability to know whenever He was mentioned.

Franca hoped to raise the vigilance of Hela and the other organizers of the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society before indirectly alerting the other members through them.

Furthermore, Franca found the Overseer of the School of Truth formidable, but that wasn't the most terrifying aspect about her and her accomplices.

Franca's greatest unease stemmed from the Broker's ability and willingness to unite the evil god sects, which had been in disarray, fighting independently and even attacking each other. The Hostel plan was the embryonic form of such a change, and perhaps the vortex incident represented the outcome in a stepped sequence.

Facing the evil god cults that had begun to collaborate, Franca wanted the factions she associated herself with to take action and collaborate as well. To this end, she was willing to share information about the vortex and the Mirror People with Madame Hela, a demigod likely backed by the Evernight Church, free of charge.

She had already written and sought Madam Judgment's opinion on this matter, and her response was affirmative.

"How is he now?" Franca asked with concern, contemplating whether to drink with Lumian until dawn to express her support and comfort him.

"He's fine for now," Jenna replied after a few seconds of contemplation. "Perhaps it's also because the one the Aurora Order believes in is far superior to him. Although the hatred is real, it's very intangible and can't be acted upon for a long time."

She had authority to speak on such matters.

Franca tersely acknowledged her words and contemplated her next move.

At dawn, Franca visited Clarice immediately and led her encounter to the Demoness of Black. The latter expressed her approval and inquired about Franca's recent needs. Franca didn't stand on ceremony and mentioned her desire for the ingredients for the Affliction potion.

Back then, the Demoness of Black didn't agree or reject her request. She only instructed Franca to visit in two days and to find the Mirror People that Moran Avigny had mentioned as soon as possible. She could provide any assistance Franca needed.

As for the Mirror People that Moran Avigny had mentioned—Griffith, Palia, and Caratanza Tamara—none of them used their real names in reality. They could only rely on their unclear identities to investigate. Franca hoped to obtain official "assistance" through 007, and she also wanted to see if there were any members of the Moses Ascetic Order in the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society. This was one of the reasons why she had requested a full-scale gathering soon.

The only Mirror Person who could be identified was Trier's Deputy Commissioner of Police, Sport. Franca had investigated the situation before dawn and realized that the Mirror Person had vanished. It appeared that the fleeing Overseer had used some method to alert the Mirror People. For example, news of Moran Avigny's accident had quickly spread.

After downing the last of the absinthe and saying goodbye to Jenna, Lumian rubbed his temples and headed back to his bedroom.

Under the crimson moonlight pouring through the curtains, he noticed a folded letter on the table. Madam Magician? Didn't she just leave not too long ago? Lumian frowned and picked up the letter. It was indeed from Madam Magician, with a few short paragraphs:

“I forgot to mention we ran into Loki while tracking the School of Truth's Overseer.

“His condition has changed significantly. It seems something went wrong during his resurrection after the sea prayer ritual. This led to the owner of Castle Dylan, the former Secret Order leader, being resurrected inside him somehow.

“Zaratul has come back from the dead and become the Celestial Worthy's attendant. Right, but He hasn't fully taken over Loki's body, and Loki hasn't died completely. This has turned them into an unstable, stitched-together monster in mind and soul.

“For now, don't try finding Castle Dylan and expending Loki's remaining resurrection. It's best to avoid any situations where he could track you down.”

Zaratul... Franca had said the former Secret Order leader played a major role in Emperor Roselle's rise, but ultimately betrayed the Emperor... The Sauron family's Vermonda Sauron seemed to have gone insane from His and the Emperor's schemes, prompting Him to enter Fourth Epoch Trier alone... Is Loki considered half-dead now? When Zaratul fully controls his body, he should be completely dead. What a shame... Lumian regretted not finishing off Loki's final life himself, but didn't feel too disappointed or indignant.

He had already caused Loki's demise twice, after all!

After burning the letter, Lumian pondered for a moment, then left the bedroom. He sat across from Ludwig, who wore yellow cotton pajamas and a matching nightcap, watching the boy quickly nibble on a cold bone-in steak.

Ludwig stayed unfazed by Lumian's gaze, continuing his feast.

After nearly a minute, Lumian probed, “Are you willing to call me Godfather?”

Ludwig glanced up at him, then lowered his head, scooped up some banana puree, and spooned it into his mouth.

Lumian changed the question. “Are you willing to follow my orders, accept my commands, and build a tacit understanding here?”

This time, Ludwig didn't even look up, his mouth constantly moving.

Lumian silently watched as he slowly took something out of his Traveler's Bag.

It was a mercury eyeball in a glass jar—a Sequence 7 Lucky One Beyonder characteristic of the Monster pathway. It had re-condensed after the Flog boxing gloves shattered.

Ludwig immediately looked up.

Ignoring Ludwig's gaze, Lumian leisurely pulled out the Serial Killer Beyonder characteristic and a few other items, placing them on the dining table in front of him.

Then, he smiled at Ludwig, who wore the yellow cotton nightcap, and said, “Are you willing to call me Godfather?”

Ludwig fell silent for a few seconds before saying in a low voice, “Godfather.”

Lumian probed further, “Are you willing to follow my orders, accept my commands, and build a tacit understanding here?”

Without hesitation, Ludwig replied, “I am.”

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As he spoke, his eyes were fixed on the pile of items before Lumian.

Sigh... Lumian sighed silently.

He could rely on “food” to control someone, but couldn't rely solely on “food.” Otherwise, it'd be so easy for Ludwig to ignore him when there was no “food” around. This likely didn't meet an Iron-blooded Knight's ritual requirements.

Deep in thought, Lumian pointed at the pile and smiled.

“Since you've admitted to being my godson, you can choose one item.

“But there's a condition. You have to answer two or three of my questions.”

Ludwig hesitated a moment, then spoke with a stern look, “Okay.”

“Which one do you want?” Lumian asked kindly.

Looking around, Ludwig yearned for every item, but was reluctant to abandon any.

Finally overcoming himself, he pointed at the Serial Killer Beyonder characteristic and said, “That one!”

You really want that Beyonder characteristic... Can it be turned into some magical dish or cocktail? Lumian put away the other items and smiled at Ludwig.

“First question:

“What pathway does your Beyonder power belong to? What are its characteristics? What's your rough Sequence level?”

He hoped to gain inspiration for taming the sealed Angel based on Ludwig's Beyonder pathway information.

Ludwig muttered under his breath, “That's three questions.”

Lumian pretended not to hear.

Seeing his protests were futile, Ludwig could only pick up some beef and mutton to munch on. He mumbled, "Yes, yes..."

It seemed he couldn't recall the original name, so he had to find another term for it.

"It's the Gourmet pathway."

Lumian wasn't surprised at all. "No wonder you're always acting like you're savoring delicacies and ingredients."

Ludwig added earnestly, "To put it simply, it's a way to get superpowers by being hungry and eating."

"What corresponds to your Sequence 9 is Tramp. You lose everything and are always searching for food, barely surviving."

Could you be the ultimate Tramp embodiment? You'd even lost your mind, only never forgetting to eat... From that description, I can't tell what abilities a Tramp has... But Lumian didn't mock him.

Rather than detail the Tramp Sequence, Ludwig said, "Sequence 8 is Glutton."

Chapter 740: Depriver

"Glutton?" Lumian said approvingly, "Quite the image."

Ludwig ignored Lumian's mockery and continued with the brief introduction, "At this Sequence, hunger truly becomes ingrained in our bodies, allowing us to evolve around it."

"What kinds of evolutions are there?" Lumian was concerned that Ludwig would only mention this about Gluttons, just as he had described the Tramp Sequence.

Therefore, he took the initiative to inquire.

Ludwig paused for a few seconds to swallow his food.

Then, he stuffed a small piece of lemon cake into his mouth and replied in a muffled manner,

"Internal organs that are better suited for digesting food and absorbing energy. Stronger, more powerful teeth, a bite force and appetite that exceed normal limits..."

"This will help us obtain different abilities from food more efficiently. We won't have to worry about being affected by the toxins, viruses, and bacteria that food brings."

"In other words, even if it's highly toxic, as long as you consume it with your mouth and treat it as food, you won't die from the poison?" Lumian suddenly felt that Ludwig would make a suitable assistant for Apothecaries.

Ludwig took a sip of milk and shook his head.

"We can't exceed a certain limit. Many Gluttons die from eating random stuff."

And you're not eating random stuff? Lumian scoffed inwardly.

At the same time, he inwardly sighed.

This guy is quite honest. He's indeed like a child most of the time. He actually forgot to protest that I had asked additional questions.

Ludwig set down the milk bottle and picked up a box of cookies.

Amidst the munching sounds, he continued, "The corresponding Sequence 7 is Gourmet.

"At this level, our digestion and eating abilities will improve further. We can discern which ingredients are edible, which are inedible, which ingredients can bring about special effects, and which ingredients need to be combined with others."

Lumian thought seriously before asking, "Is extracting the corresponding information from the consumed food one of a Gourmet's abilities?"

This ability had helped Lumian a great deal.

Ludwig, donning a thick yellow cotton nightcap, nodded obediently. "Yes."

He didn't elaborate on the corresponding abilities.

"Although a Gourmet is useful, I can sense that at this Sequence, you lack sufficient combat strength. Yes, perhaps Tramp will grant you a certain level of street fighting abilities," Lumian commented from his own perspective.

Ludwig didn't argue, nor did he bother to. How could delicacies already in his mouth or subsequent delicacies be less important than what he was talking about?

He peeled a lollipop and placed it in his mouth, a hint of enjoyment on his face.

"Beyond that is what you call Sequence 6—Chef."

"I thought it was Bartender," Lumian teased.

Ludwig pondered seriously and said, "Chefs cover a wider range. It's not like they can only make cocktails."

Lumian nodded pensively.

"Is a Chef's ability to use special ingredients to create mystical dishes, pastries, drinks, and cocktails?"

Ludwig had displayed this ability numerous times.

Ludwig couldn't help but reveal a smug expression.

"That's right. Every Chef has different characteristics and abilities due to the ingredients they've obtained and the food they've prepared.

"Chefs have one thing in common: they have excellent skills in processing ingredients. This includes finding weaknesses and techniques like cutting, chopping, and slicing."

Only at this Sequence would one from the Gourmet pathway truly possess combat strength... However, a Chef is similar to a Contractee. Their actual combat strength depends on their synergy of abilities. The upper limit is very high, and the lower limit is very low... Lumian, thinking of a Contractee, asked curiously, "Is there a limit to the number of permanent effects a Chef can obtain through various mystical foods?"

As for the negative effects, Lumian, who had eaten Ice Lemon Fish fillet before, had a deep understanding.

Depending on the ingredients and finished products, mystical dishes or cocktails brought different negative effects, but they were significantly weaker than those a Contractee experienced.

"No." Ludwig quickly shook his head. "As long as you fully embrace hunger and greed, there won't be an upper limit."

This upper limit is a little crazy... However, this also means that there's no limit to the number of negative effects. Even if each one is far inferior to the ones brought about by a Contractee, they will undergo a qualitative change after stacking... Lumian pondered for a moment and looked at Ludwig, who had roughly finished his meal.

"That first time we met, when I saw you chowing down on rats, were you just a Glutton or a Gourmet?"

Ludwig didn't try to hide anything.

"Gourmet."

Indeed, he'd been critiquing the dishes 1 served him... Lumian pondered for a moment, then said, "Did you recover to Chef status during that Batings Black Insect incident?"

Ludwig curtly confirmed it.

"I was just short to begin with. Eating a Batings Black Insect was all it took to advance."

"What's the next Sequence?" Lumian steered the conversation back on track.

Ludwig dredged up the memories.

"It's Depriver."

"Depriver?" Lumian immediately thought of the Deprivation Bullet he'd gotten from Jebus.

Could this be a transaction from the cult of the Gourmet pathway?

Ludwig thought Lumian wanted him to explain the Depriver's abilities. He recounted, "A Depriver can strip one to three abilities from a target for a period of time. If they then consume part of the target's flesh, they permanently gain one of those abilities, and the target permanently loses it unless they drink a potion again or kill me—no, the corresponding Depriver.

"At Depriver, our recipes get way more range. A ton of formerly inedible things become food. We can consume things we previously couldn't."

“Give me an example?” Lumian wasn't sure his interpretation matched Ludwig's intentions.

Ludwig looked at him and offered two examples.

“Corruption to a certain degree, as well as fireballs, lightning, and other energy forms.”

They can eat way more dangerous stuff and consume things that shouldn't even be considered food... Lumian thought of an enemy he'd faced at the Hostel and something Ludwig just mentioned. He asked for confirmation, “So that ability to process ingredients includes those ingredients too?”

“Yes,” Ludwig admitted candidly.

Lumian pulled the matte Deprivation Bullet from his Traveler's Bag and set it on the dining table.

“This is from a Depriver?”

Ludwig's eyes lit up.

“Yes.”

He said anxiously, “Can I... can I use it as a prize? I don't want that Beyond character anymore!”

“I think Beyond characteristics are way more valuable,” Lumian deliberately provoked him.

Ludwig looked sad and said reluctantly, “But I can only choose one.

“1 can't actually consume Beyond characteristics yet. 1 can only use them as ingredients for now.”

Is that right... Lumian eyed Ludwig and organized his thoughts.

“How much more do you need to eat to recover to Depriver?”

“The further along I go, the harder it gets. I can't just eat a ton. I need higher quality, higher energy foods.” Ludwig pointed at the Deprivation Bullet. “I'd need at least 200 of these bullets to reach Depriver.”

Lumian chuckled and whispered devilishly, “What if you ate the Depriver who made this bullet?”

“I could recover immediately!” Ludwig's eyes lit up.

Lumian's smile widened.

“You don't seem to have strong offensive abilities. I can help you get the stuff to capture the corresponding Beyonds, but you gotta listen to me and do what I say before 1 become a demigod. We need to be totally in sync.

“That's my promise. You gonna hold up your end of the deal?”

Ludwig hesitated a moment before reluctantly nodding.

“Deal.”

Phew, stay calm... This is just the start of the “taming,” not the end. Long process ahead... Lumian suppressed his smile and asked curiously, “Who were you following back then?”

“No need for the full title. Just call them something like ‘the Great Mother.’”

Ludwig was caught off guard.

His expression shifted a few times before tears streamed down his face. He wailed like a child.

“I-I don't remember!

“I've forgotten. I've forgotten everything!”

Hearing his cries, Lugano emerged from the guest room in a thick coat.

The Doctor immediately noticed Lumian and asked in confusion, “Why is he crying?”

Is this really the terrifying cannibal from the Dream Festival?

Lumian chuckled in response.

“I showed him delicacies but didn't give him any.”

“Alright...” Lugano looked between them in confusion before retreating back to his room.

Lugano's brief appearance made Lumian remember an item, and he had a dangerous thought.

He pulled the remains of Omebella's umbilical cord from his Traveler's Bag and “consulted” Ludwig, who'd gradually stopped sobbing.

“What dishes and cocktails could you make with this?”

That umbilical cord left behind by the Great Mother's Child of God was thought to be just an ingredient for charms, mystical items, and Beyonder weapons. But now Lumian figured a Gourmet might see it differently.

Looking at Omebella's umbilical cord remains, Ludwig licked his lips.

“It could make three types of food with different mystical effects.

“One food would completely cure infertility.”

“Don't need that,” Lumian said in amusement. “What about the other two foods?”

Ludwig said professionally, “One grants potent self-healing abilities, though inferior to a Vampire's.

“And another...”