

## Inevitability 741

Chapter 741 "Appraisal"

"What else does it do?"

Lumian, seeing Ludwig pause as if he had concerns, pressed for an answer.

Ludwig stared at the piece of umbilical cord in front of Lumian and hesitated before replying, "It could somewhat alter your aura and lineage, making certain creatures without the necessary wisdom perceive you as a divine child of the 'Great Mother.'"

Lumian's expression grew more solemn.

"So, you're saying it could actually integrate the Child of God's lineage into mine, even if it's almost negligible?"

And this would fool creatures of low intelligence or those acting purely on instinct?

"Yes." Ludwig nodded earnestly. "That bit of lineage won't change anything for you, and only creatures directly created by the 'Great Mother' or those who have received Her boons could sense it."

This doesn't sound very useful, but in special circumstances, it could be incredibly crucial.

Compared to curing infertility or enhancing self-healing, it has more room for imagination...

Lumian weighed his words and asked, "What are the side effects?"

Could it change my gender? After all, the Great Mother's' Child of God, Omebella, seems to have been female.

Ludwig's greedy gaze shifted from the umbilical cord back to Lumian, and he said regretfully, "For someone else, it might cause the 'Great Mother's' Child of God to start developing inside them, but not for you. You just have to worry about the 'Great Mother' setting Her sights on you, really watching you."

Lumian was silent for a good twenty seconds before slowly stowing Omebella's umbilical cord remains back into his Traveler's Bag.

He wasn't in a hurry to have Ludwig use the remains to create food with special effects, planning instead to consult Madam Magician's opinion before deciding.

He was willing to take risks, but he wasn't reckless.

"Can I have it now?" Ludwig looked eagerly at the matte Deprivation Bullet.

"One last question." Lumian smiled again, pulling out another item from his Traveler's Bag.

It was a small glass vial containing ancient bloodstain powder.

This came from Demon Warlock Burman, who was guided by a visitor from Resurrection Island named Harrison. He summoned a spirit named Arden from the depths of death and easily killed it, collecting its blood for a future ritual. Lumian got some of this bloodstain powder from his room.

Previously, Lumian had Franca conduct an investigation using Magic Mirror Divination, confirming that it truly came from the depths of the spirit world but yielded no further insights. Now, he wanted the Gourmet to taste it, to see if he could glean more important information.

He remembered clearly; the people of Resurrection Island claimed they could die and revive repeatedly, never aging, and the secret was in their control over the markings from the depths of death.

This might truly be a way to revive the dead.

“Is it edible?” Lumian maintained his smile as he pushed the glass vial with the ancient bloodstain powder towards Ludwig.

Ludwig carefully examined the powder for a while and then opened the bottle cap, touching it a few times with his fingers.

“Yes,” he replied, not too eagerly.

“Then eat half of it.” Lumian watched expectantly as Ludwig sprinkled a small amount of the ancient bloodstain powder into his mouth, leaving just a bit behind.

Ludwig chewed and tasted it for a while before starting his “gourmet review”: “It has a rich aroma of death and eternal rest, originating from the depths of the spirit world.

“It comes from a man in his thirties, with traits of both the Mystery Pryer and Death pathways, in poor mental state, highly prone to emotional instability...”

Hearing this, Lumian raised an eyebrow.

This sounds like it's describing Demon Warlock Burman himself!

But this bloodstain powder is from the evil spirit Arden killed by Burman, right?

“From Intis's Winter Province?” Lumian confirmed his guess.

“Yes.” Ludwig smacked his lips.

He shared other insights drawn from the bloodstain powder, each aligning with the Demon Warlock's situation.

This couldn't possibly mean that Burman summoned himself, killed himself, and then collected his own blood, could it? Lumian felt an eerie thrill.

The ancient bloodstain powder surely wasn't left by Burman due to some other issues, as both Franca and Ludwig had confirmed the blood was closely linked to death and the spirit world. Lumian had fought the Demon Warlock twice, believing him to still be alive at those times.

Using the method taught by Resurrection Island's Harrison, Burman summoned an evil spirit from the depths of death that was himself, er, his own marking?

He killed his own marking in the depths of death and found it very weak?

This is hard to believe...

What exactly does Harrison from Resurrection Island want, and what hidden truths lie behind the islanders' resurrections?

Lumian's thoughts raced, feeling that the mysteries of Resurrection Island were no less profound than the high-level events he had experienced before.

"Can you give it to me now?" Ludwig looked again at the Deprivation Bullet, very eagerly.

He handed back the small glass vial with the remaining bit of ancient bloodstain powder to Lumian.

"Yes." Lumian tossed the Deprivation Bullet to Ludwig.

Ludwig caught it, and stuffed the matte bullet into his mouth.

"Eating it directly?" Lumian asked with a chuckle, "Aren't you going to cook it first? Maybe mix a cocktail?"

Ludwig replied with a muffled voice, "No need for that, I can absorb it directly."

As he spoke, he sucked on the Deprivation Bullet like it was an ice pop, pulling it from his mouth again.

Compared to before, the bullet's matte metal casing had noticeably thinned, the intricate symbols etched into its surface now pitted and marked with teeth impressions.

Ludwig sucked on it three times, then finally, when the inside gunpowder was vaguely visible, he put the bullet in his mouth, chewed it with a crackling sound, and swallowed.

Lumian watched with a grimace, gaining a deeper understanding of the various changes hunger could bring.

After eating the Deprivation Bullet, Ludwig closed his eyes, savoring the taste and longing for more.

Lumian felt a pang of regret for the extraordinary bullet he had obtained from Jebus.

The Weakening Bullet, Deprivation Bullet, and Implosion Bullet had not served their intended purposes, while the Poison Bullet, Putrid Bullet, and Impregnating Bullet had been given to Franca.

"How do you feel?" Lumian inquired.

"Delicious, a familiar taste," Ludwig responded, half-closing his eyes.

After reflecting for a moment, he snapped his eyes open, their gaze sharp and alert.

"G-Godfather, can you quickly find out who made that bullet?"

You little rascal, that's the cult following your deity... But I can't blame you, you're brainless now.. And for an evil god, sacrificing any number of bestoweds is worthwhile if it frees an angel from its bonds, returning to an Angel's belly is like returning to the deity's heaven...

Lumian muttered silently to himself, nodded slightly in agreement, and slowly stood up, heading back to his bedroom.

Lying in bed, he stared at the dark ceiling adorned with a chandelier, feeling no trace of sleepiness despite the lingering scent of absinthe.

After staring silently for who knows how long, Lumian chuckled self-deprecatingly, trying to use Cogitation to help himself fall asleep.

He slowly visualized a crossed-out sphere that grew an eye in his mind.

His state settled, and drowsiness began to creep up.

Just then, Lumian was taken aback.

Cogitation was taught by his sister, and the Cogitation pattern was also casually drawn by her...

Lumian laughed softly to himself, his laughter shaking.

Minutes later, he indulged in reminiscing about his life in Cordu, including those interactions in the dream.

Even those, now looking back, carried a certain indescribable warmth.

As his thoughts wandered, Lumian remembered his sister's contracted creature, White Paper.

I wonder what state White Paper is in...

Strictly speaking, Aurore isn't completely dead, so her contract with White Paper should still exist...

Pity, contract creatures aren't messengers, only the contractee can summon them, otherwise, I'd summon White Paper to see its condition...

Using Aurore's words, seeing something left behind makes you think of that person? Or, liking someone so much you even like their pets?

Eh, it's not that I can't summon, since the Termiboros sealed inside me and I are one, Aurore's soul shard must be too, my summoning is as if Aurore is doing it... Thinking this, Lumian abruptly sat up.

In the darkness, he set up an altar and chanted the spell in the appropriate language: "I!

"I summon in my name: "The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, a friendly creature that can be subordinated, the weak ball that can telepathically connect with me..."

As the incantation echoed, the candlelight flickered gently, but nothing happened.

With Spirit Vision active, Lumian didn't see White Paper that had appeared in his dreams.

Sigh... He lay back down, disappointed.

As time ticked by, the sleepless Lumian suddenly became alert, feeling not the slightest fatigue.

It was six in the morning.

Lumian got up silently and began to clean up the altar.

Just then, a "doll" messenger in a light-gold dress emerged from the void, dropping a dark coin pouch and a folded square letter onto the table.

Is this the reward from Miss Magician? One of them is a Traveler's Bag? Lumian perked up, grabbing the dark coin pouch.

The “doll” messenger glanced at him, pinched her nose and said, “Drunkard! Your clothes stink!”

Uh... Lumian, who hadn't bathed or changed clothes last night, cleared his throat awkwardly in embarrassment and thanked her.

After the “doll” messenger left, he continued to check the rewards.

## Chapter 742 Rewards

That dark coin pouch was indeed a Traveler's Bag, containing three items: One was a sheepskin parchment of a brownish hue, another was a nearly invisible triangular spike, and the last was a mechanically intricate black revolver.

Lumian didn't rush to take out the rewards but instead unfolded the folded square letter.

“Prize Descriptions: “Ironblood Knight potion formula: See for yourself.

“Traveler's Bag: No need for further introduction, right?

'Wintry Blade: A mystical item crafted from the dust of ancient vengeful spirits and residual spirituality.

“Any creature pierced by it, even without a visible wound, will fall into an icy rigidity and uncontrollable thoughts, as if possessed by a Wraith.

“Moreover, as the battle persists, the targets of the Wintry Blade, even without direct contact, will gradually find their thoughts slowing and movements becoming stiff and awkward.

“The downside is that the bearer gradually loses body heat, turning toward a necrotic state.

If this exceeds the necessary time limit, the process becomes irreversible.

“Placing it in the Traveler's Bag effectively avoids the negative effects of carrying it. You only need to ensure the battle doesn't exceed three hours. Of course, as a Sequence 5 of the Hunter pathway, a burning Reaper, you could endure the negative effects for at least four hours without other countermeasures.”

Reading this, Lumian immediately thought of the Eggers family's golden mask.

That mask could also turn the wearer into a dead being, providing protection for the spirit and consciousness to remain alive until the mask was removed, allowing the wearer to easily revert to their original state.

While wearing Death's golden mask, could I use the Wintry Blade completely unaffected?

I'm already an undead, so the gradual necrosis doesn't apply... No, wearing that golden mask for too long means real death once removed, resulting in instant death... Lumian found no exploitable loophole and sighed in disappointment.

He continued reading the last part of the letter: "Winter is Coming: This revolver was found at the site of a secret but failed ritual while investigating the Order of All Extinction cult. It was meant to be a collectible firearm, but it became a formidable weapon with a limited number of uses due to corruption during the ritual.

"The bullets it fires carry that corruption, producing two effects: "One ensures the bullet hits its target; even Saints, unless they use special abilities to dodge, will be hit. For beings below demigods, unless they switch with a substitute or the shooter is under an illusion and unable to aim, the shot will hit its intended target, and any substitutes will fail.

"Two, ensures death; even Saints, lacking certain traits and abilities, once hit, will suffer great trauma and gradually die. For beings below demigods, a hit means certain death.

"These two effects cannot coexist; a choice is made for each shot.

"The number of times it can still carry these effects is four. Once used up, Winter is Coming will revert to a normal revolver and begin rusting and deteriorating. However, until then, its normal shots will also spread ailments with each wound, with the type of disease being unpredictable.

"After each use of Winter is Coming, you must seek treatment from an Apothecary or Doctor within the following week, even if no symptoms appear.

"If not treated in time, you will inevitably contract a terminal illness that lower-sequence Apothecaries and Doctors cannot cure due to mystical factors."

This is a weapon that can harm demigods...? After the Overseer Perle's painted self incident, are Miss Magician and her peers consciously providing us with items that can affect demigods, with bearable side effects? Doctor... Lumian half-turned his body, casting his gaze toward the door.

Lugano had already woken up and was preparing Ludwig's first breakfast.

After confirming the rewards, Lumian reached into the Traveler's Bag and pulled out the brownish sheepskin parchment, written on in dark red ink:

"Potion name: Iron-blooded Knight; "Sequence: 4;

"Main ingredient: Magma Giant's core, Stone of Catastrophe; "Supplementary ingredients: 80 milliliters of boiling magma, 20 grams of flora powder corrupted by a Stone of Catastrophe, 20 grams of soil soaked in soldier's blood from a large battlefield, one acorn; "Ritual: Form a team of at least 30 people, cultivate deep comradeship with them, allowing them to grow stronger together with perfect

synergy, understanding the leader's intent through eye contact and gestures, nearly as one entity, then have them perform the ritual (the stronger and more cohesive the team, the better the ritual's effect)."

While reading, Lumian felt a strong burning sensation from the dark red inked words and thought he could smell rust and blood.

Phew... Lumian had just finished reading the Iron-blooded Knight potion formula and quickly set it down on the table, feeling as if he was sinking into a hell of flames and blood.

Such a strong mental impact...

Is it because the Sequence 4 potion formula inherently possesses such traits, or because it was written by an Angel, or perhaps a combination of both?

Boiling magma... Does this mean drinking magma directly, and if you don't advance, you die?

Lumian memorized the Iron-blooded Knight potion formula in his mind, occasionally opening the parchment to ensure there were no mistakes.

In the morning, at 702 Apartment, 9 Rue Orosai.

Lumian placed the new Traveler's Bag and the two weapons on the coffee table and went into detail about the latter two.

"Only three items?" Franca asked, puzzled.

Lumian chuckled.

"There's also the Iron-blooded Knight Sequence 4 potion formula for the Hunter pathway, but that's meaningless for you."

"Who says so? At Sequence 4, a Demoness can switch to the Hunter pathway!" Franca retorted, her eyes sparkling.

She almost said that before joining the Demoness Sect, her dream was to obtain the Iron-blooded Knight potion formula to turn herself back into a male.

Before Lumian could respond, Franca eagerly pleaded, "May I see it? It's not like you'll lose anything" This way, if I become a Demoness of Affliction and something forces me out of the Demoness Sect, I could consider advancing to Iron-blooded Knight!

"Sure." Lumian replied nonchalantly.

He knew what Franca truly desired.

He then took the brownish parchment out of his Traveler's Bag.

Seeing this, Jenna asked, curious yet hopeful, "May I have a look too?"

This was a potion formula that could unlock the gates of godhood!

"Uh..." Franca turned to Jenna, wanting to stop her but finding no suitable excuse.

Is it really appropriate for a female Demoness to look at the Iron-blooded Knight potion formula?

Lumian didn't help Franca dissuade Jenna, and freely unfolded the brown parchment, placing it on the coffee table surface, and casually cautioned, "For every paragraph, take a look then close your eyes and rest for a few seconds—it has a strong mental impact."

After a while, Franca, Jenna, and Anthony felt as though they had been roasted by a fire all night long, their sweat long since dried.

"It requires at least thirty people... That's a bit difficult," Franca said, empathizing with Lumian's challenge.

Lumian chuckled.

The stronger the team members, the better the effect. And if you have members with godhood in the team, the number required can be significantly reduced."

Franca and Jenna thought of a name simultaneously and said in unison, "Ludwig?"

"I'm trying to teach him." Lumian gave a godfatherly smile.

Franca said no more and turned her attention to the three items: the Wintry Blade, Winter is Coming, and the Traveler's Bag.

She generously smiled and said, "Jenna, Anthony, you pick first. Just don't leave the Traveler's Bag for me—I already have one."

She was worried about lacking a powerful or special effect item. Both the Wintry Blade and Winter is Coming perfectly met her needs—any would do. As an Assassin, her hidden blade was a normal weapon that could rely on Witch powers to attach black flames, while the Cannon Gun was akin to a portable mini-cannon, nothing special.

Anthony immediately looked at Jenna, signaling her to choose first.

This was not out of courtesy—he wanted the Traveler's Bag, and he wanted the other two items as well.

Jenna looked at the Hypnotist, lacking direct attack capability, then at Franca, whose gaze moved back and forth between the Wintry Blade and Winter is Coming. She picked up the ark coin pouch and said with a smile, "I've always wanted a Traveler's Bag."

This wasn't a lie—many Witch spells required casting materials, and some items, even just by carrying them, could have negative effects, which could be barely avoided by placing them in the Traveler's Bag, such as the Beyonder characteristic of the Dream Stealer.

Once Jenna took the Traveler's Bag, Anthony quickly made his decision.

"I'll take Winter is Coming."

Without a Traveler's Bag, carrying the Wintry Blade would be a significant burden.

Franca looked at the nearly transparent triangular spike and smiled broadly.

"I'll see if I can have it made into a hidden blade."

These are all suitable rewards for us. Madam Judgment and company are so thoughtful...

Lumian watched his companions distribute the rewards, nodding thoughtfully.



That evening, back in the rented apartment, he met Madam Magician again.

This Major Arcana card holder spoke bluntly, "Head to the Blue Avenger now."

#### Chapter 743 Exploration

On the dark expanse of the sea, the antiquated Blue Avenger bobbed gently with the undulations of the waves, enveloped by an unending mist.

Lumian once again came face to face with Alger, the Stormbringer.

The bearer of The Hanged Man card stood on deck, his deep blue hair a wild mess, seemingly under constant assault from the sea winds. His attire had changed from his previous sailor's garb to a captain's coat adorned with golden embroidery on a blue background.

"Explore it yourself," Alger said to Lumian, who was standing beside Magician, nodding firmly.

"I don't have any wisdom to impart that would help; if I did, I'd have already uncovered all the secrets of this ghost ship."

These matters had been confirmed by Madam Magician, leaving Lumian without doubts. He thanked Alger and began walking forward, his steps echoing on the wooden deck.

He triggered the residual aura of the Blood Emperor in his right palm without hesitation, but felt no ominous sensation spill forth.

Instead, his palm felt ice-cold, while deep within was a pain like fire scorching his flesh.

Lumian lifted his right hand and noticed that the faint red scar had brightened slightly, but the skin covering it had turned paler, more deathlike.

I wonder whether the Underworld Daoist's seal would prevent activating the key special characteristics of this ghost ship... Lumian circled the Blue Avenger's cabin with a mix of anxiety and trepidation.

During his exploration, he encountered no attacks from ropes or any other disturbances.

It seems the residual aura of the Blood Emperor still serves some purpose, or else it wouldn't be this tranquil... Lumian muttered to himself as he stepped into the cabin, exploring each room in turn.

The Hanged Man, Alger, did not follow but stayed at the front of the deck, watching from afar.

As Lumian's figure disappeared deeper into the ship, Magician raised her right hand and drew a circle in mid-air with her index finger.

A sprinkle of brilliant starlight emerged, initially forming a transparent crystal orb, then expanding into a circular, dreamlike veil.

On the veil, Lumian's figure appeared, wandering around the captain's cabin, occasionally extending his right palm to touch various objects.

"There should be some findings," Magician stated with a charlatan-like tone.

The Hanged Man nodded slightly, not asking what might be found or what changes it could bring, since even Magician could not divine a certain future, and Ma'am Hermit could only see vague images.

After Mr. Fool's slumber, the Major Arcana card holders had explored the Blue Avenger multiple times but had not unraveled the ghost ship's core secrets or located the treasures left by the Tudor dynasty.

With the Apprentice pathway's speciality, Magician only managed to help The Hanged Man uncover other secrets, unable to reach the deepest level.

Mr. Star's explanation was:

“The Blue Avenger is not only influenced by the Lawyer pathway's Distortion authority but also possesses notable traits of errors, spatial transposition, and grafting.

And this aligned with the actual circumstances of the Tudor dynasty: Under Blood Emperor Alista Tudor, among the five great nobles, Amon was the Marauder, the King of Angels of the Error pathway, later becoming a true god; the ancestor of the Abraham family, Mr. Door, was the King of Angels of the Apprentice pathway; and the ancestor of the Antigonus family was the King of Angels of the Seer pathway. The Jacob and Tamara families had one Angel from the Error pathway and one who had been an Angel of the Apprentice pathway.

They clearly possessed strong abilities to utilize errors, alter positions, and graft spaces.

If not ensuring the preservation of the Blue Avenger and its treasures unharmed and intact, Magician felt she could unravel the ghost ship's deepest secrets, but doing so would reduce the Blue Avenger to irreparable fragments.

Under the watchful eyes of two Major Arcana card holders, Lumian searched every room on the upper deck without triggering any anomalies.

He intermittently came across seven or eight sailors, all instructed by the captain not to interfere with his exploration.

Approaching the stairs leading to the lower decks, Lumian glanced down into the pitch-black abyss below, maintaining the stimulated aura of the Blood Emperor as he descended the creaking stairs.

As he walked, he suddenly detected an unusual scent.

He had been descending for thirty to forty seconds, which under normal circumstances should have brought him to the lower deck's floor.

The distance between the Blue Avenger's upper and lower decks couldn't possibly be so vast that a Reaper couldn't traverse it in dozens of seconds!

To this, Lumian responded not with alarm, but with elation.

An anomaly was exactly what he needed!

Had there been no anomaly, it would have meant the sealed residual aura of the Blood Emperor could no longer function properly!

Lumian exhaled, calming his nerves while maintaining a steady but unhurried pace, continuing the creaky descent into the darkness.

After an indeterminate amount of time, he saw no more wooden steps ahead; his feet now touched cold, black stone slabs radiating a metallic chill.

Have I arrived? Just as this thought flickered through Lumian's mind, his vision was flooded with blazing white light.

He saw a barrage of white-hot flame spears flying densely toward him, obscuring everything above.

It was like facing an army, each soldier hurling a flame spear from their hands.

There was nowhere to hide, no way to dodge.

Instinctively, Lumian was about to swap places with his shadow, hoping to use this rapid ability to survive the initial volley and then seek a chance to teleport away.

But just then, he had an idea—an extremely daring idea.

Lumian's expression took on a tinge of madness as he faced the overwhelming barrage of flame spears, not using any abilities and not even attempting to dodge.

He straightened his back and thrust forward his right palm.

The right palm, sealed by the Underworld Daoist and carrying the residual aura of the Blood Emperor—both were fully activated.

The dense, rain-like barrage of white-hot flame spears instantly froze in mid-air.

They stopped, neither advancing nor falling.

Seeing this, Lumian let out an uncontrollable sigh of relief.

He had made the right bet!

Gradually, the white-hot flame spears began to extinguish, slowly fading until they completely disappeared.

Before Lumian could take a closer look, clusters of bright flames lit up on both sides.

They resembled wall-mounted lamps, piercing the dense darkness and revealing the surroundings.

He found himself in a deep, wide hall that was smaller than he had imagined.

When the white-hot flame spears were hurled at him like a flock of endless crows, it felt as though he stood on an ancient battlefield, vast enough to be measured in kilometers. However, the hall before him was merely the size of the grand prayer hall of the Saint Vive Cathedral.

At a glance, Lumian's gaze froze, and his heart seemed to stop beating.

At the far end of the hall, there stood a colossal throne made of black iron.

The surface of the throne bore patches of red, either from the corrosion of ages or from old bloodstains.

There was a figure on the throne!

This figure was giant-like, draped in a deep red ceremonial robe and wearing an iron-black crown, with its right elbow resting on the armrest, supporting its bowed head.

The flickering blood-red long hair draped down, hiding the figure's face.

Lumian was familiar with this figure; he had seen it at the Samaritan Women's Spring, though the attire was somewhat different now.

It was the figure of Blood Emperor Alista Tudor!

However, this figure lacked the terror, violence, and madness seen at the Samaritan Women's Spring, devoid of the aura of war and destruction, and the tangible oppressiveness and sense of conquest; if it weren't visible, Lumian would have believed there was nothing on the iron throne.

A phantom? Lumian closed his eyes, relying solely on his other senses and intuition to feel.

In this perception, there was nothing above the iron throne marked with red stains.

Lumian's heartbeat gradually normalized, and he reopened his eyes to look at the iron throne.

The figure remained motionless.

Lumian resisted the urge to observe any weaknesses in the figure or to activate the Eye of Calamity. Instead, he shifted his gaze and surveyed the rest of the hall.

Below the nine steps leading up to the iron throne were five mottled stone chairs—two on the left and three on the right.

Why couldn't there be one more, for symmetry? Lumian couldn't help but criticize to himself.

He knew these five stone chairs likely represented the five great nobles of the Tudor dynasty.

These ancient, mottled chairs appeared smashed by someone; some were completely split by cracks, some shattered into countless pieces yet barely holding their original shape, some had broken backrests, some were missing their seats, and others seemed melted by intense flames as if burnt for a long time.

Had there been a battle here? Lumian tried to find corresponding marks on the black stone floor, the giant supporting columns, and the surrounding walls, but found nothing.

No objects either... Weren't there supposed to be treasures from the Tudor dynasty hidden here? Had they been stolen? Hmm, Termiboros had said earlier that if I'm not of high enough level, forcibly exploring the Blue Avenger could lead to the resurrection of Alista Tudor within me... This suggests there should be something here, or some arrangement... Lumian started walking forward again.

All the while, he kept his eyes on the figure on the iron throne, observing every detail.

Suddenly, he saw a pair of eyes, iron-black and cold.

The figure on the iron throne slowly raised its head.

Chapter 744 Approach

The moment Lumian saw those iron-black eyes, his mind went completely blank.

When he came to, he was shocked to find himself walking step by step toward the massive iron throne without any intention to do so.

He could feel his body trembling uncontrollably, yet he was powerless to stop his legs from moving. It seemed as though his body was no longer his own, obeying unknown commands and directed by someone else!

This scene, coupled with the figure on the iron throne possibly being Blood Emperor Alista Tudor, instantly reminded Lumian of two past incidents: One was at the Samaritan Women's Spring, where both he and Hela lost consciousness due to the violent reactions of the Blood Emperor's apparition, walking back to the edge of the spring as if they were puppets being manipulated or soldiers absolutely obeying orders.

The other was in the depths of the Red Swan Castle's underground labyrinth, where he, Albus, and Elros lost consciousness after hearing a phantom roar from Vermonda Sauron in Fourth Epoch Trier, and they all wandered away from the core area, each towards a different wax sculptors.

Could this be a similar situation now? Is this a capability at the Hunter's angelic level? Lumian forced himself to calm down to find a way out of his current predicament.

Compared to those two times, at least his consciousness recovered quickly this time!

Right, why did my consciousness awaken first this time, while my body still accepts control?

Is the figure of Alista Tudor here weaker and less powerful, or is there another reason?

Perhaps this anomaly holds the key to overcoming the control.

Lumian strained to extend his will towards his limbs, trying to regain control over them.

This had some effect; his steps toward the iron throne began to slow.

He also took the opportunity to get a clearer look at the figure of Alista Tudor on the throne: The Blood Emperor had a stern face with sharp, chiseled features, resolute lips, a prominent nose, and long hair gleaming with a faint blood-light, his iron-black eyes cold yet filled with ultimate madness.

Suddenly, Lumian felt an urge to submit, to give up resistance.

This impulse did not fade quickly but instead swelled rapidly, filling his mind.

No, I can't resist...

There's no way to resist...

Submit, submission will grant everything...

If He becomes angry, I will be destroyed, and Franca and Jenna will also be destroyed...

Give up, give up, kneel down and beg for forgiveness, accept the command...

Such thoughts surged in Lumian's mind, turning into violent waves that battered his clarity, rationality, and will.

He clenched his teeth, as if any relaxation would break the final dam, and the flood would completely drown his will and soul.

His previously slowed steps quickened again.

On the deck of the Blue Avenger.

Magician and The Hanged Man were both staring at the dreamlike veil suspended in midair.

Against a backdrop of starlight, Lumian's figure on the translucent curtain had already become blurred, the surrounding darkness rendering everything else invisible.

This obscurity compared to the previous clarity indicated that something unusual was happening.

The eyes of Magician and The Hanged Man saw Lumian's body growing increasingly rigid, yet his pace quickening.

They also noticed his black hair slowly lengthening, tinted with a blood-like glow.

“Something's off,” The Hanged Man Alger, said, turning to Madam Magician beside him.

Magician nodded slightly, preparing to pull out a Sealed Artifact.

This would help her precisely locate Lumian and allow her direct entry into the hidden extradimensional space.

In the dim surroundings, Lumian walked forward with a blank, rigid expression.

Yet his soul was struggling, crying out in pain:

I can't give up...

J mustn't give up...

If I lose my resolve, I will no longer be myself...

Dogshit...

Son of a sow...

Lumian exerted all his strength, but felt an increasing desire to submit.

Suddenly, the dam holding his will collapsed, and surrender and submission completely overtook him.

Lumian's mind went blank again.

In this state, he had no concept of how much time had passed, until a deathly cold and rot-like pain shot through his right palm.

Death... cold...

Rot... pain...

Pain...

Lumian was jolted awake, suddenly regaining his thoughts and a measure of control over his body.

Before him was not the nine-stepped dais or the huge iron throne marked with red, but a mirror.

An antique full-length mirror, framed with elaborate silver designs!

The mirror reflected Lumian's figure.

In the mirror, Lumian saw his face contorted with pain, looking like he might give up at any moment, while his facial contours slowly sharpened and his nose became unnaturally prominent.

At the same time, his black hair grew inch by inch, dyed with a bloody glow, and his blue eyes turned colder, edging toward iron-black.

Jam turning into Alista Tudor...

This realization dawned on Lumian.

Without thinking further, while his body still somewhat obeyed his commands, he immediately lunged to the side, trying to escape the reflection of the silver mirror.

A dive followed by a roll quickly took him out of the mirror's reflective range.

The next second, he heard a phantom roar, a mad scream.

His mind blanked out again.

As his thoughts gradually returned, he found himself still crouched on the ground, the endpoint of his roll.

His body hadn't moved toward the mirror on its own, but it couldn't stop shaking, as if his blood had frozen.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

It seemed as if something inside the mirror was madly pounding, making the mirror clatter as if it were about to shatter and release a monster.

And with each bang against the mirror, Lumian's mind felt the impact, over and over.

This gripped him with fear, nearly solidifying his thoughts.

After a while, the pounding inside the mirror gradually subsided, and the surroundings became eerily quiet.

Lumian's body stopped shaking, and he began to understand and reflect on his current situation and recent ordeal: If had really approached that full-length mirror, and the reflection had completed the transformation, would that mean that Blood Emperor Alista Tudor would be resurrected within me?

But as long as I'm not reflected in that mirror, and my image isn't cast upon it, the impact will be minimal, and neither my will nor my body will lose command...

Is the trigger for this transformation entering the range of the full-length mirror's reflection?

It seems calm now...

Lumian slowly supported himself up, cautiously observing his surroundings.

He realized he was not in a somber hall, but in a bizarre starlight-formed space where the floor appeared semi-transparent, revealing endless darkness below, and no dome above, only twinkling yet ethereal stars.

On either side were doors of starlight, erect in the darkness, forming a wide, somber corridor that ended with the silver full-body mirror.

At this moment, Lumian had reached deep into this corridor, only about fifteen meters from the mirror.

Was the hall I saw earlier, the stone chair, the iron throne, and the figure of the Blood Emperor all illusions?

Was their purpose to make me submit?

No, if I had been reflected in the mirror, the one emitting the roar I just heard would have achieved their goal...

In a flash of insight, Lumian guessed: Perhaps, the illusions I saw earlier—the iron throne, the figure of Tudor, the broken stone chair— were resonances caused by the residual aura of the Blood Emperor within me and that silver full-length mirror, which also triggered a response from the Underworld Daoist's brand, helping me briefly escape the controlled state and the mirror's reflective range.

Thinking this, Lumian raised his right hand, looking at his palm.

There, the pale red scar was vibrant as if just entered into his body, while the pale skin around it showed clear signs of decay, leaking a pale yellow fluid, and revealing the bones beneath.

This preliminary confirmed Lumian's suspicion.

He once again turned his gaze toward the silver full-length mirror facing him.

Having dealt with the Mirror People multiple times, he slightly furrowed his brows: Does the Blood Emperor want to use that mirror and His residual aura within me for resurrection?

There must be something hidden inside that mirror.

The Blood Emperor's s resurrection setup actually involves the mirror world...

Yeah, that's not unusual, whether it's the special mirror world itself or the Mirror People from that world, they are all related to this Blood Emperor's Fourth Epoch Trier...

I had thought the special mirror world was a relic of the War of the Four Emperors, but Moran Avigny from the Tamara family said their connection to the special mirror world was established before the War of the Four Emperors...

Dammit, that special mirror world couldn't have been created by the Blood Emperor, could it?

How many problems has He left for this world?

As expected of the Blood Emperor known for His madness...

But clearly, the special mirror world can't avoid the Primordial Demoness...

Could it be that the Demoness Sect secretly lured the Tamara family, trying to subtly influence the Blood Emperor through the special mirror world?

In the end, it was used by the Blood Emperor?

Fourth Epoch Trier is indeed full of mysteries...

As Lumian pondered, he suddenly understood why Termiboros had initially prevented him from exploring the Blue Avenger.



To explore here, one would need either the Underworld Daoist's brand to seal the Blood Emperor's residual essence or some corresponding artifact or authority to counteract that domination; otherwise, one would become a puppet of Alista Tudor, allowing Him to resurrect within.

For Termiboros, this was definitely not a good thing.

Lumian's gaze shifted, focusing on the doors of starlight.

Did they represent different treasures?

Chapter 745 Three Items

Having checked his physical condition, Lumian slowly moved along the wall of the spacious corridor.

During this, he almost cleared his mind, not thinking or analyzing, focusing solely on whether he would be caught by the silver full-length mirror at the end of the deep corridor.

Finally, following his instincts, Lumian stopped.

He hoped to use the Law of Beyond Characteristics Convergence and a Fate Appropriator's sensitivity to fate to find the most "suitable" room among the doors of starlight.

There might be high-level items from the Hunter's path there, even the main ingredient for the Iron-blooded Knight potion!

Looking at the translucent door formed by brilliant starlight beside him, Lumian, in a hushed tone, asked, "Termiboros, do you think there's great danger inside?"

After the ordeal with the School of Truth, Lumian grew more cautious and vigilant towards the Angel of Inevitability, but that didn't mean he wouldn't seek His opinion under the right circumstances and conditions, as Termiboros could still offer valuable advice.

As it was now, with Madam Magician outside, Termiboros had little hope of breaking His seal; his death or mutation would only worsen His situation, likely prompting Him to warn of any danger.

Lumian couldn't see changes in his own fate, but Termiboros could!

Termiboros remained silent, not answering Lumian's question.

Unfazed, Lumian placed his right hand, still pulsing with the Blood Emperor's residual essence, on the handle of the starlight door before him.

He slowly turned the handle, poised to push the door open, waiting for any reaction from Termiboros.

The door of starlight gradually opened, and Termiboros gave no warning.

No response is also a response! It means the danger inside is bearable, or likely manageable...

Lumian calmly pushed the door wide open and walked into the room dominated by shadows.

Suddenly, a bluish-white blaze lit up, and an iron-black sword engulfed in terrifying flames struck down towards his head.

Prepared for such surprises, Lumian quickly activated the black mark on his shoulder and teleported to the side of the room.

Bang!

The black sword, covered in bluish-white flames, struck the translucent starlight floor, leaving a deep crack.

Inside the crack, some of the starlight melted, appearing like flowing magma.

Using the sparks, Lumian saw who his assailant was.

It was a nearly 2.5-meter tall suit of iron-black armor, the interior of its visor a swath of darkness, as if uninhabited, with no fiery glow of an undead's eyes.

With a swift motion, the iron-black armor turned and faced Lumian, raising the large sword covered in bluish-white flames once more.

Before it could strike, Lumian's blue eyes had turned iron-black.

He spotted the weak points in the half-giant armor, the pale-white spots at its joints.

As the black sword struck with its fiery blade, Lumian teleported away again.

With a bang, the bluish-white flames scattered, and Lumian's figure outlined behind the iron-black armor.

He leaped up, his right fist igniting with white flames.

A resounding clang echoed as Lumian punched the joint between the helmet and body armor of the iron-black armor.

Cull!

After landing the punch, Lumian immediately teleported away, dodging a waist-high slash from the half-turned iron-black armor.

In this manner, using the high mobility of teleport, he continuously appeared behind his target, striking the same spot with Cull, never overreaching, completing a single hit with each teleport.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

After five consecutive Culls, the iron-black armor stood frozen in place.

Gnarly cracks spread rapidly from the joint between its helmet and body armor, soon covering its entire body.

Crack!

The iron-black armor completely shattered, its metal fragments falling like rain onto the starlight-condensed floor, making a pattering sound.

Clang. The large sword covered in bluish-white flames followed, hitting the ground.

It has no intelligence, moves stiffly, and is stronger than a Sequence 6 but weaker than a Sequence 5. However, that sword hits incredibly hard. If it struck me, unless I substituted with an animated shadow, I would've been killed instantly or lost limbs. That's only because it didn't hit my torso. And yes, it's very durable, even more so than the Guardians I encountered at the Dream Festival, Lumian mused, glancing at the shattered armor while using the remaining light from the black sword to scan the room for other dangers.

The room was quite empty, featuring only an altar-like stone platform with a small, transparent glass bottle on it, containing a semi-solid yellowish-red substance, topped with a thick black wick.

A mystical candle? Lumian speculated roughly. I wonder what it's used for...

By now, he was fairly certain there were no other surprises, and he turned his attention back to the pile of fragments from the shattered iron-black armor.

Among the debris, he found a peculiar piece of leather.

The leather was about the size of half a towel, creamy white, and finely textured, appearing so enticing that even from a distance, Lumian felt it must have belonged to a beautiful woman.

Human skin? he muttered, frowning as he approached.

He didn't immediately pick up the black sword, whose flames had mostly died down, or the alluring piece of leather. Instead, he drew a dagger from his Traveler's Bag.

Using the dagger, Lumian picked out the leather, holding it up before him.

The first thing he saw was a few words in ancient Hermes script:

“Despair...”

“Sequence 4...”

Suddenly, Lumian's breathing grew belabored, his head spun, and his physical condition visibly worsened.

He quickly looked away and used the dagger to lift the delicate white leather, stuffing it into his Traveler's Bag.

His discomfort gradually subsided.

A potion formula for the Demoness of Despair? Lumian mused over what he had just seen.

And the leather it's written on was peeled right off a Demoness of Despair, hence its special and dangerous nature? Truly a relic from the Tudor dynasty, harboring such items...

Lost in thought, Lumian's gaze shifted to the black sword, whose bluish-white flame was dimming, no longer as brilliant as before.

He pondered for a moment, deciding not to risk determining the item's abilities, effects, and negative impacts just yet. Instead, he placed it into the Traveler's Bag, setting it aside in a corner clear of other items.

Using the same method, Lumian also packed the strange candle in the glass bottle into the Traveler's Bag.

He planned to consult Madam Magician about these items once outside, rather than experimenting on his own!

After ensuring the room had nothing else of interest, Lumian returned through the door of starlight to the deep, spacious corridor.

Just as he was about to continue using the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Convergence and a Fate Appropriator's sensitivity to fate to choose the next room to explore, a faint, distant voice suddenly echoed in his ears: "For you, the other rooms are too dangerous..."

This was the voice of Madam Magician.

Mr. Hanged Man and her are indeed watching... Did her words mean that the exploration is to pause here? This confirmation steadied Lumian considerably.

He thought for a few seconds, deciding to do one more thing before leaving this extradimensional space.

Slowly, bit by bit, he circled towards the silver full-length mirror at the end of the corridor, his focus intense, ready to turn and leave at the first word of discouragement from Madam Magician.

Until he reached the side of the silver full-length mirror, Madam Magician had not spoken out to stop him.

Lumian took a deep breath and carefully moved his right palm towards the front of the silver full-length mirror.

He didn't know whether the mirror would react again when reflecting only a palm.

As his palm moved slowly, Lumian's nerves were taut.

Finally, he touched the surface of the mirror, feeling its brittle yet firm coldness.

Immediately after, Lumian activated a power from his contract with Bloody Jack—Mirror Mark! He wanted to test whether he could still sense the mark left in this hidden space once he returned to the outside world.

Blood seeped from his palm into the mirror, forming an inverted image.

While waiting, Lumian suddenly had a thought: Did my recent encounters stack on negative effects from the Mirror Mark contract? This does indeed pertain to mirror-related anomalies and bizarre dangers...

In the blink of an eye, Lumian had set the Mirror Mark.

Having done this, he began to retrace his steps, avoiding areas where the silver full-length mirror could reflect him, and walked up the wooden stairs.

Before long, Lumian's path brightened as he saw the wall lamps on either side of the ship's cabin and the dim firelight.

He had returned to the Blue Avenger.

Upon reaching the front deck, before Lumian could ask Madam Magician to retrieve the three items from his Traveler's Bag and perform their appraisal, he heard the Major Arcana card holder chuckle and say, "As expected of a Hunter with the status of a fake Angel and Tudor's remnant aura. You obtained three items closely related to Hunters and Demonesses in an instant.

"That sword is what you were hoping for—it's made from the Iron-blooded Knight Beyonder characteristic."

## Chapter 746 Corpse Wax Candle

A mystical item made from an Iron-blooded Knight Beyonder characteristic? The Law of Beyonder Characteristics Convergence sure is handy... A Fate Appropriator's sensitivity to fate must have contributed a bit... Or, could it be the result of some arrangement? Lumian was first surprised, then felt the aftereffects of a traumatic bestowment.

Madam Magician seemed to sense his thoughts and chuckled, saying, "I don't know if this is a bestowment from fate, but even if it is, it's the kind we were hoping for and can certainly accept."

Lumian silently nodded.

Mr. Hanged Man, speaking calmly, said, "Don't overcomplicate your thoughts, just consider two things: "First, you now have no ability to escape this arrangement. Sometimes, what you think of as resistance or rebellion might actually be a predetermined part of the process, and Mr. Fool's Angels aren't always available to protect you. Remember, accepting reality isn't a sign of weakness; finding opportunities within such realities is a true act of courage.

"Second, maximize the benefits that this bestowment of fate brings. Work hard to improve yourself. This doesn't mean giving up but rather tests your wisdom and determination.

When you sense danger or anything unusual, remember, we will always stand by you.

Remember, Mr. Fool can interfere with those plans, but as you know, He isn't fully awake and can't frequently provide protection—only at critical moments."

After listening intently, Lumian slowly nodded, finding a different kind of resonance and persuasiveness in hearing these ideas voiced by someone else.

Mr. Hanged Man thought for a moment, then added, "What you need to be most wary of is the attempt to resurrect the Blood Emperor through you. You must be extra cautious in similar situations going forward."

"I'll remember that, thank you, Mr. Hanged Man," Lumian replied sincerely.

Madam Magician then steered the conversation back on track.

"You can take out the items you've gathered, and I'll help you evaluate their powers and any negative effects."

With the promise of support, Lumian reached into the Traveler's Bag and grasped the hilt of the dark, iron-black broadsword.

Suddenly, his inner worries, like clouds in the sky, were scattered by a terrifying wind, vanishing in an instant.

Why fear a bestowment from fate?

Why fear the arrangements of the gods?

To hell with them all!

May they all go to hell!

In that moment, Lumian was filled with courage, feeling as though he could swing his broadsword at the True Creator Himself if He appeared before him right then.

He drew the black broadsword, its flames extinguished yet still radiating intense heat, and handed it to Madam Magician.

Madam Magician looked at him, took the sword, and joked, “How about we call it the 'Sword of Courage'?”

“The Sword of Courage...” Lumian paused for a moment.

As the black broadsword left his grasp and was taken by Madam Magician, he shivered violently.

What was I thinking?

I nearly blasphemed His sacred name...

How could I believe I was capable of deicide?

In a moment of fright, Lumian's eyes returned to the black broadsword in Madam Magician's hands.

Could it be its negative influence?

Could it really inspire the courage to commit deicide?

Stars sparkled in Madam Magician's eyes as she gazed at the sword and explained, “This sword fills its bearer with courage, ensuring they are not knocked down by fear or paralyzed by fright. If you had held this sword earlier, even if you were ultimately 'conquered, you could have endured a bit longer.

“It's extremely durable and sharp, capable of blocking direct attacks from demigods and significantly impacting their defenses. It can also enable you to perform Cull at the level of an Iron-blooded Knight, but this will consume a great deal of your spirituality, roughly two-thirds of it in one go.

“The sword can also absorb half of the damage for you. That is, even if you fail to block an attack and suffer a fatal wound, it can reduce the severity of that wound from fatal to grave.

“Each strike carries high-temperature flames, and depending on your will, these flames can spread from your weapon to your enemy's body upon contact, and each strike can cause massive explosion.

“If the sword is coated with your target's blood or if they've been scorched by its flames, you can throw it up to five kilometers into the sky. It will wrap itself in flames, fly toward the target like a live artillery shell, lock on, and then crash down, creating a violent explosion that can destroy everything in a typical public square.

“The maximum range is five kilometers, and it won't return to you on its own; you'll need to retrieve it.

“There are two drawbacks. First, excessive courage is a lethal poison. Human fear and apprehension are among the key reasons humans have survived to this era. A person who only knows courage and not fear will likely lose their ability to judge and analyze, leading to a swift demise.

“Second, it needs companions. You'll need to prepare at least thirty ordinary broadswords to place around it to complete the sealing process. Otherwise, within about fifteen minutes, it will start attacking everyone nearby indiscriminately, including you. Don't think about using the residual aura of the Blood Emperor to avoid or deter this, as this sword doesn't have living characteristics; it's a manifestation of its destructive godhood.

“It also constantly emits high temperatures, causing ordinary broadswords around it to gradually melt. So, you'll need to regularly replace its companions. Similarly, for you as the Reaper, it means enduring a progressively intensifying burn injury.

“That's about it. If you don't mind, we can call it the 'Sword of Courage.'”

Lumian nodded and replied, “Can the negative effects of being filled with courage be avoided if it's carried in the Traveler's Bag?”

“Yes,” Madam Magician nodded gently.

Lumian pondered further and asked, “In the room where I found this sword, there was only one piece of armor, an altar, and two other items. Why didn't it destroy those things?”

“That suit of armor is its companion,” Madam Magician replied promptly.

Lumian did not inquire further and began to consider how to use the Sword of Courage: / must fully assess the situation and make the right judgment before drawing the sword...

This isn't a commander's scepter; it's a bugle for the charge...

/ts use must not exceed fifteen minutes...

While thinking, Lumian reached out and took hold of the Sword of Courage.

In the next second, he felt he didn't need to overthink: Fear of this, fear of that—all of that only leads to failure!

One should not be overly cautious or indecisive, just do it!

What is there to fear?

Madam Magician reached into the void and, from nowhere, produced dozens of broadswords with slight variations in design, letting them fly towards Lumian.

After placing the Sword of Courage among these broadswords and stuffing it back into the Traveler's Bag, Lumian snapped back to his senses.

He couldn't help but silently scoff at himself.

An Ascetic's abilities don't work in this case...

Then, he took out a piece of pristine, fine leather and a half-solid, pale yellowish-red candle housed in a transparent glass vial.

Stars again twinkled in Madam Magician's eyes as she took the two items and examined them for several seconds.

“This is indeed the potion formula of the Demoness of Despair, but the human skin carrying it comes from an ancient Demoness of Despair and contains strong, mystically powerful viruses, bacteria, and fungi. It causes those who touch or gaze upon it to gradually contract various diseases. If contact and observation don't exceed ten seconds, recovery will occur on its own,” Madam Magician briefly explained about the pristine leather.

Her gaze then shifted to the peculiar candle.

“This is a corpse wax candle, made from the corpse oils of an Iron-blooded Knight and a Demoness of Despair mixed with other substances.”

Corpse wax candle... And from two demigods' corpse oils... Although Lumian had seen much of the world, he still found the candle somewhat eerie and terrifying when he looked at it again.

“What is its use?” he asked, more concerned with this issue while feeling strangely uneasy.

Madam Magician deliberated before responding, “Once lit and used in pacts and Cogitation, it should probably be paired with a ritual, but the specific details and ultimate effect are unclear. Hmm, you have the residual aura of the Blood Emperor, maybe you can try it directly without a ritual.”

Lumian didn't hesitate. “Alright, I'll try it now.”

With an Angel and Saint watching over him, if anything went wrong, they could save him.

Why wait to try it alone when he got back?

Neither Magician nor The Hanged Man stopped him.

Lumian took the corpse wax candle from the glass jar and sat cross-legged on the deck.

Snap-his fingers produced a blazing white flame, and he immediately lit the black wick of the corpse wax candle.

Then, he closed his eyes, visualized a pattern, and began to Cogitate.

In the tranquil state of dispersion, a hint of dark fragrance entered his nostrils, causing his marrow to itch as if it were about to ignite.

Lumian didn't try to endure this sensation; he simply concentrated on maintaining his cogitative state.

After some time, a dark mist suddenly appeared “before” his eyes.

He seemed to be standing in this mist, on the edge of a barely visible street.



Across the street, various not-too-tall buildings appeared as if they were mere shadows.

Ding-ding—a vehicle resembling a steam train came from the other end of the street. It had few segments, just two, with no distinctive chimney but a strangely shaped bracket extending from the top, connecting to something in midair.

Wh—Lumian's memory was instantly triggered.

He had seen a similar scene in Fourth Epoch Trier!

It heralded the appearance of the second level in that special mirror world.

## Chapter 747 Pact Experience

Ding-ding.

The object resembling a steam train whizzed past Lumian, its presence nearly obscured by the thick, dark mist. Yet, Lumian managed to discern some details: both carriages were blue and seemed to be crammed with passengers standing and facing the street, their expressions blurred and their forms lacking clear outlines.

This is more than what I had witnessed in Fourth Epoch Trier—it isn't powered by steam. As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Lumian noticed someone at the other end of the street, hunched over, pulling a black, two-wheeled cart with a canopy.

A lady sitting in the cart, holding a round fan and dressed in a long skirt, was hidden by the thick mist, which obscured the finer details of her and the puller's attire.

Lumian found himself staring as the black cart approached.

At that moment, the lady in the cart lifted her fan to her face, turned slowly, and looked back at Lumian.

As if the mist had thinned, Lumian could see the back of the lady's hand holding the fan: swollen and shiny with dark, bluish patches.

The puller, with a towel around his neck, stopped, and the lady, who seemed about to step down from the peculiar cart, looked towards Lumian.

A wave of fear washed over him, instinctively repelling any contact with the lady.

Then, he heard a panicked whisper—it was his own voice, although he harbored no such thoughts!

Standing on the edge of the street, enveloped in the dark mist, Lumian felt a sharp tension as if his true self wasn't entirely present.

Lumian's heart tightened as he attempted to step back.

He suddenly found himself floating up, soaring into midair.

He saw the core of the dense mist, a vast city with a bizarre, shadowy high tower beneath which lay unspeakable horrors and gloom.

Unwillingly, he flew towards it.

Almost at the same time, he saw specks of starlight appear.

Lumian abruptly exited his Cogitative state; the city and tower wrapped in the dark mist, the segmented train, and the lady with the floral fan vanished from his “vision.”

He opened his eyes to see Madam Magician and Mr. Hanged Man.

“You were a bit off just now, showing signs of losing control, so I had to wake you,” Madam Magician briefly explained.

Lumian thanked her, extinguished the enticingly fragrant corpse wax candle, and detailed the scenes and characters he had witnessed during his meditation.

Madam Magician nodded thoughtfully and remarked, “It's similar to a pact-making ritual.

“This has established a connection between you and some unknown entity, progressively aligning with it. However, unlike a true pact ritual that is directed towards deities, angels, demons, or evil spirits, your pact seems to be with a city.

“If I hadn't interrupted the process earlier, you might have accessed some higher knowledge or power through this pact experience, though it likely wouldn't have been something positive.”

Lumian, no novice in mysticism, understood the nature and implications of such rituals.

He pondered and then countered, “So, you're saying that the city in the fog, closely related to Fourth Epoch Trier and very special, has formed a connection with me through this corpse wax candle, despite the vast distances and the layers of seals between us?”

“Yes, it's not an illusion,” Madam Magician replied, looking towards the candle encased in a small glass vial with a light yellow and red hue. “Besides the corpse oils of the Iron-blooded Knight and Demoness of Despair, this candle likely contains some special materials to which its origins I'm not aware of. There are two other locations where it could be more effective, allowing you to see and experience more. But those are far too dangerous; you already showed signs of losing control, so I wouldn't recommend trying it now.”

“The other two locations...” Lumian's curiosity piqued. “Is one of them Fourth Epoch Trier?”

In Fourth Epoch Trier, he could already partially see that misty city. Lighting the candle and entering a Cogitative state would surely reveal much more sights and experiences!

“Yes,” Madam Magician affirmed Lumian's guess.

“And where is the other place?” Lumian inquired further.

Unless the School of Truth's vortex project could unlock Fourth Epoch Trier's seals, it would be a long time before he could re-enter that version of Trier.

Madam Magician eyed Lumian for a few seconds before simply stating, “Bansy.”

Bansy... Bansy Harbor? The harbor that had been destroyed by the Church of Storms due to some corruption, where no one had escaped? That was also the former home of Red Angel Medici... Lumian nodded almost imperceptibly.

Considering the Red Angel's gains in Fourth Epoch Trier and the pathways He took, Lumian had no doubts about the special nature of Bansy Harbor being akin to that of Fourth Epoch Trier.

"Of course, it must be a specific place in Bansy Harbor, not just anywhere," Madam Magician added, then continued, "There's another place I'm not sure about for the candle's efficacy."

"Which place?" Lumian asked, then had a sudden insight, "City of Exiles, Morora?"

"Correct, you're now clearly seeing the connections between things," Madam Magician praised him, sternly advising, "If you do decide to venture to those places and use the corpse wax candle to aid your Cogitation and complete the pact, make sure someone is with you at all times to monitor your condition and wake you immediately if anything unusual occurs."

"I'll remember that," Lumian promised earnestly.

As Madam Magician gestured for Lumian to pack away the candle, she thought for a moment and said, "Use the Sword of Courage as a Sealed Artifact for now. When it's time to concoct the Iron-blooded Knight potion, I'll revert it into a Beyonder characteristic.

"By the way, the Sealed Artifact crafted by Hisoka's Beyonder characteristics should be completed in a few days."

"Thank you, Madam Magician," Lumian expressed his gratitude sincerely.

Although obtaining the Iron-blooded Knight main ingredient so easily felt somewhat unreal, when he thought about how the Blood Emperor's residual aura came to be, which played a key role in it, and the issue of the Underworld Daoist's seal, he realized it wasn't that "easy" after all.

Lumian then discussed the remains of Omebella's umbilical cord and Ludwig's three processing methods, finally asking, "Can I consume that piece of umbilical cord to gain some of the Great Mother's Child of God's bloodline?"

Madam Magician's expression turned slightly strange as she looked towards The Hanged Man Alger, seemingly seeking his opinion on the matter.

The Hanged Man looked at Lumian and asked seriously, "This will indeed bring you some opportunities, but with them, corresponding risks as well. We can help you, but we can't be there every moment. You need to consider whether you're willing to take this risk and if it's worth it."

Madam Magician added, "While the Great Mother's attention might sound nebulous and not tangible enough to have a real effect—after all, you're already under the scrutiny of the being known as Inevitability—having one more such entity's attention might not seem like a big deal. However, remember, the Great Mother's interference and permeation in our world far exceed those

of the Inevitability entity. If you do consume Omebella's umbilical cord remnants, you might face unknown influences or attract special enemies without even realizing it.

“Of course, there's only a potential risk, not a certainty.”

What concerned Lumian more was another point.

“Madam Magician, Mr. Hanged Man, it seems you've already confirmed that consuming Omebella's umbilical cord will bring some opportunities?”

This must be a significantly useful opportunity; otherwise, Madam Magician's expression wouldn't have become strange, nor would she have consulted Mr. Hanged Man.

There's no need to hesitate on matters with only downsides; it's the presence of significant potential benefits that causes Madam Magician to pause!

Madam Magician weighed her words carefully before responding, “The vortex project might involve a location tainted by the Great Mother's power, teeming with monsters spawned from this corruption. If you possess the bloodline of the Great Mother's Child of God, theoretically, you wouldn't need to worry about attacks from them, and you might even be able to command them simply.

“That's one aspect. Another is that once you meet two other prerequisite conditions, you should be able to touch and briefly use a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.”

Grade 0 Sealed Artifact... Extremely Dangerous. Not to be inquired, disseminated, described, or spied; capable of destroying a country or even the whole world... Lumian's spirit lifted at the mention.

So far, he had indirectly encountered two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts: 0-01 and 0-05.

“What's the number of that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact?” Lumian curiously asked. “Why would having the Great Mother's Child of God bloodline allow me to touch and briefly use it?”

Madam Magician glanced at Lumian and said, “I can't tell you the details yet. All I can say is, it's not the Child of God bloodline of the Great Mother that allows you to touch it, but rather the integration of Omebella's umbilical cord remnants with you that helps you access it without facing severe danger, because it originated from Omebella's remains.”

Omebella's remains... Omebella had remains before being born? No, that's normal, as there are already remnants of the umbilical cord before She was born... Ah, the one that shares the same name? No, obviously, it's more than just sharing names... Lumian pondered and then asked, “Are you referring to the remnants of the Goddess of Harvest from ancient times?”

times?”

## Chapter 748 Despair Ritual

Madam Magician confirmed Lumian's guess, “Yes, the remains of Omebella, the Goddess of Harvest.”

The remains of the Goddess of Harvest... a Grade O Sealed Artifact... contact should be possible and briefly usable... Lumian asked eagerly, "What are the other two prerequisites, besides merging with the remnants of Omebella's umbilical cord?"

Magician laughed self-deprecatingly and said, "I really shouldn't have told you this; it's spurred you to truly consider taking risks.

"Of course, as a high-ranking Astromancer, I can't say I didn't foresee this. Telling you everything and letting you decide is my choice.

"The two prerequisites are: "First, you must have been betrayed by a direct relative; second, you must be female."

Wh—This clearly disappointed Lumian.

He felt he met the betrayal requirement, as his biological father had abandoned him and his mother, leading to his grandfather's bankruptcy. But why did he have to be a woman?

Madam Magician seemed to guess his thoughts.

"You barely meet the betrayal criterion. As for being female, in the world of mysticism, there are ways to temporarily transform you into a woman, such as a special mystical item from the Demoness pathway, which doesn't necessarily require a high Sequence.

"That's true..." Lumian thought of the Lie earring.

Although it couldn't change his gender, its ability to alter appearances or adjust height was equally magical.

If such items existed, then surely there must be artifacts that could change one's gender, which, given Lumian's understanding of the Demoness path, he believed to be almost certainly existent, albeit rare and special.

Lumian's hope was rekindled about accessing Omebella's remains.

That was a Grade O Sealed Artifact!

Madam Magician, with a quirky expression, gave another reminder. "If you truly consume Omebella's umbilical cord remnants and possess the bloodline of the Great Mother, you will forever be unable to approach Pride Armor.

"Your backstabbing of it would fade over time, but once you become a false Omebella, it will target you first and always, unless there's someone more special present who's worth targeting."

Is this a manifestation of Pride Armor's hatred for the Earth pathway? In future battles, if I'm nearby, Franca and the others won't be able to use Pride Armor... However, between Pride Armor and a Grade O Sealed Artifact, any sane person knows which to choose, even if the latter is only for temporary use... Lumian nodded, indicating he understood.

Madam Magician didn't continue the topic.

“The deal with the Eternal Blazing Sun Church can move forward. Let me know the agreed time and place for the transaction.

“That Sealed Artifact can't be transferred by you; it's too dangerous. Have the Purifiers prepare to seal it on-site; she will appear herself.”

“Alright.” Lumian took this opportunity to relay other information he had gathered in the past few days.

Hearing that the Demon Warlock Burman was influenced by Harrison from Resurrection Island, wanting to touch the mark of deep death, and the evil spirit he summoned and killed was suspected to be himself, Madam Magician turned her head towards Mr. Hanged Man.

Lumian had previously heard from Madam Magician that the Tarot Club was already investigating Resurrection Island, specifically Mr. Hanged Man and Ma'am Hermit.

The one known as the 'Stormbringer' among the Major Arcana cards thoughtfully said, “This is related to something I'm investigating.

“I can't reveal the specifics yet, but you should know Harrison is likely to appear in places closely linked to death, darkness, dusk, and decay. If you encounter someone of unknown origin in such scenarios, remember to tell me.”

Death, darkness, dusk, decay.. Truly someone from Resurrection Island... Lumian wasn't surprised by Mr. Hanged Man's hint.

He was more concerned about whether Resurrection Island's 'resurrection' was indeed a true resurrection.

Madam Magician could read what he was pondering.

“I've said before, we aren't Beyonders of the Death pathway, so we don't fundamentally understand the situation on Resurrection Island, and it's difficult to have a precise view of their so-called 'resurrection.' Maybe a direct encounter with Harrison or another islander will provide the insights you're seeking.

“The only thing I can say now is, think about Demon Warlock Burman. His condition had clearly worsened since Harrison led him to kill what seemed to be his own evil spirit. The

inhabitants of Resurrection Island likely have issues.

“Heh, I was right last time when I said the Arden evil spirit might still be alive after the related ritual.”

Lumian fell silent.

Upon returning to Trier, Lumian promptly made his way to 9 Rue Orosai and knocked on the door of Room 702.

“Why are you here again?” Franca opened the door with a look of disdain.

He had left less than an hour ago!

Fortunately, it was daytime. She hadn't been planning anything yet—what if she had been scared out of her wits?

Lumian glanced at Jenna, who was curled up on the living room sofa with a book, propping herself up to look at him. He smiled at the two Demonesses and said, “I've managed to obtain the potion formula of the Demoness of Despair.”

“Ah?” Franca looked puzzled.

Hadn't he just acquired the Iron-blooded Knight potion formula?

Or had he accomplished something significant in the few minutes since he left?

Jenna was equally baffled, thinking Lumian was joking at first.

Despair was a Sequence 4 potion formula that contained the method humans used to pry open the gates to godhood. How could it be obtained so easily?

In a flash of thought, Franca and Jenna asked in unison: “Did you go to the Blue Avenger?”

“Have you finished exploring the Blue Avenger?”

“Just a preliminary exploration,” Lumian squeezed past Franca, smiling as he spoke.

“You got the Demoness of Despair potion formula from just a preliminary exploration?”

Jenna asked, somewhat incredulously.

Lumian chuckled.

“That's one of the Blood Emperor's legacies. A Sequence 4 potion formula should be considered pretty normal among the treasures.”

“What else did you find?” Franca asked curiously after closing the door.

Lumian casually took a seat on an armchair and recounted his adventure aboard the Blue Avenger, including his interactions with Madam Magician and Mr. Hanged Man from start to finish.

“That corpse wax candle sounds rather sinister,” Franca genuinely exclaimed.

Jenna nodded in agreement, feeling like she had just heard a horror story.

As a Beyonder of the Demoness pathway, friend of a Hunter, hearing that the candle was made from the corpse oils of an Iron-blooded Knight and a Demoness of Despair always made her inadvertently think of herself, Franca, and Lumian.

Just as Jenna felt Franca had voiced her own thoughts, she heard her female companion eagerly propose, “Last time in Fourth Epoch Trier, I barely saw what that misty city looked like. You didn't describe it clearly enough. Can I use that candle to make a pact and see the misty city from inside or from the air?”

“You guys be my guardians!”

“That candle burns very quickly. I only tried it once, and it used up a fifth of it,” Lumian thought aloud, “Let's wait for a chance to visit Bansy Harbor or enter Fourth Epoch Trier, then you can try it. Besides, Madam Magician said that without the Blood Emperor's residual aura, a specific ritual is needed to assist, and no one knows yet what that ritual is like.

Maybe once we're in Bansy or Fourth Epoch Trier, influenced by the environment, we won't need the ritual anymore.”

“That'll do,” Franca relented.

A corpse wax candle that could only be used four more times obviously needed to be reserved for the best occasions.

Franca turned to Lumian. Franca, brimming with enthusiasm, said to Lumian, “Let's see the Demoness of Despair's potion formula.”

“What's my reward?” Lumian joked.

Franca clicked her tongue.

“I'll keep an eye out at the Demoness Sect for any mystical items that can change gender and give it to you for free.”

With that, Franca's smile grew even brighter, her eyes sparkling.

“I really look forward to that day.”

Jenna imagined it for a moment and found herself also a bit excited.

Considering the potential consequences of debating over this topic, Lumian pretended to be at a loss for words and quickly took out a sheet of delicate human skin from his Traveler's Bag and laid it on the coffee table.

The three only glanced at the potion formula before swiftly moving away, taking a moment before returning to continue.

After a few repeats, the contents of the Sequence 4 potion formula fully emerged in their minds: “Name: Despair; “Sequence: 4; “Main ingredients: Plague Mother Serpent's venom sac; Silver Hunter's crystal; “Supplementary ingredients: 10 milliliters of Plague Mother Serpent's bile, three fragments of the Silver Hunter, a fresh branch of mistletoe, and 10 milliliters of blood from seven victims who died from different plagues.

“Ritual: Involve over thirty thousand people in a severe plague. The more who die, the stronger the despair and suffering, the better the ritual effect.”

In a brief silence, Franca hissed, “Isn't this ritual too evil? I can't do such a thing!”

She felt that if she succumbed to the urge to advance, to become a demigod, and caused such a plague, she would truly fall and truly become a Demoness!

Jenna shook her head, her face full of fear.



She couldn't imagine becoming that kind of person.

She would rather stay forever at the Demoness of Affliction Sequence!

“It's not just about being evil, it's obviously more difficult than the Iron-blooded Knight's ascension ritual,” Lumian said from another angle.

Using the capabilities of the Demoness of Affliction along with auxiliary media and items, turning a contagion into a plague that swept through thirty thousand people wasn't too challenging. However, in any city with such a large population, official organizations existed, and they would likely notice the outbreak soon after it began. That would lead to targeted interventions and possibly even identification of the disease's source—the Demoness of Affliction herself—leading to her elimination.

If she avoided cities and spread the disease from one small town or village to another, it would take an exceedingly long time. The longer the process dragged on, the greater the chance of various mishaps that could cause the ritual to fail. For example, discovery by the official Beyonders, natural containment of the disease, or other unforeseen events.

Compared to this, the Southern Continent might be more suitable for the Demoness of Affliction to advance.

“Yes,” Franca said with a pained expression, “Is there no way to bypass this ritual? Or is there an equivalent, less evil ritual?”

Jenna racked her brain but couldn't think of any shortcuts that didn't involve killing innocents.

Lumian, with a carefree smile, said, “It's simple. After you reach Sequence 5, you could switch to Iron-blooded Knight. If you care—or rather, prefer to remain a Demoness—you can then check whether the ritual of the Demoness of Unaging is evil. If it isn't, you could switch back.”

“Uh...” Franca and Jenna were stunned.

## Chapter 749 Conjugate Captain and Members

After her initial shock, Franca pondered thoughtfully, Maybe this idea isn't so bad after all...

Wasn't I originally aiming to become an Iron-blooded Knight? But then there's Jenna...

Seeing Franca silent, Lumian said with a meaningful smile, “There's no need to take some things too seriously. We've all used Lie before and changed our appearances, adapting quite well, haven't we? I once even turned into a dog without any lingering trauma. As long as it's not permanent and you can change back, occasionally switching things up can actually be quite fun. Remember, you're just acting.”

Lumian knew Jenna was already aware that the Demoness pathway led to changes from male to female, whereas the Hunter's pathway did the opposite, occurring at Sequence 7 Witch and Sequence 4 Iron-blooded Knight.

He also knew Franca suspected Jenna was aware of this.

But since the Demoness of Pleasure wanted to continue deceiving herself, he didn't mind helping a bit by keeping his words vague.

“Temporarily... If the ritual of the Demoness of Unaging isn't evil, I can switch back...

A

Demoness of Unaging doesn't sound so evil...” Jenna muttered to herself before saying, “! think Lumian's suggestion is worth considering.”

Franca nodded in agreement, on the verge of saying more but stopping herself.

Jenna chuckled self-deprecatingly, “I'm only at Sequence 7, just a Witch. Why am I even considering becoming a demigod and switching back and forth?”

“Dammit, it feels like when I first became Showy Diva. Though I was always saving money to pay off debts, it didn't stop me from dreaming of becoming a famous actress, earning thousands of verl d'or a year, and wondering how I'd spend all that money...”

“Me too, me too,” Franca echoed, attempting to explore the feasibility, “If we switch, how do we complete the ritual for a thirty-person Iron-blooded Knight team?”

Lumian clicked his tongue and continued, “You'd better pray that by then I've become an Iron-blooded Knight. Having an Iron-blooded Knight as a team member can significantly reduce the number of people required. Besides, we already work well together.”

“Is that possible?” Franca first instinctively felt there was a problem, then muttered to herself, “A ritual is just a ritual. After it's done, there's really no need to maintain the previous state, meaning the captain and team members could swap places and form anew team again. What do you call that? That's called recycling, sustainable development!”

The more Franca thought about it, the more excited she became.

“Once I also become an Iron-blooded Knight, Jenna will have two demigod teammates, plus Anthony and Lugano. She shouldn't need to look for anyone else.

“If Ludwig is still with us by then, not having broken his seal, things will be even simpler; we could be his godmothers!”

We'd be Ludwig's godmothers, and Lumian would be his godfather... Although this isn't anything amazing, there are many similar examples, but still.. Jenna glanced at Franca, wanting to remind her of something, but ultimately decided against it.

The more they discussed the details, the more awkward it got, so it was best to leave them be.

With a new strategy to avoid the Demoness of Despair's ritual, Franca and Jenna felt much better.

The former said to Lumian, “There's a mysticism gathering in a few days. Touch base with the Professor and others to probe whether any members of the Moses Ascetic Order are among them.

It's not too urgent since Madam Judgement told me that the Tarot Club has informants inside the Moses Ascetic Order who can provide the necessary information. But I'm not sure if that informant belongs to the Trier region and knows the local circumstances, while the Mirror Person, Griffith, is definitely in Trier.”

Lumian nodded and replied, “I also need to ask about the Harvest Priest potion formula and corresponding materials. Boosting the team's strength will help us complete the ritual later.

Jenna listened quietly for a while before interjecting, “Can you help sell that Dream Stealer Beyond characteristic for me? The level of the mysticism gatherings I attend aren't high enough; nobody can afford an item of that Sequence.”

She was thinking about the Demoness of Pleasure potion materials she was about to receive from the Eternal Blazing Sun Church. Franca's Pleasure was almost digested, and it wasn't too good to still owe her companion money. After all, she couldn't use the Dream Stealer Beyond characteristic herself.

Lumian could probably guess Jenna's thoughts, subtly gesturing towards his Traveler's Bag.

His implication was clear: you've seen my Iron-blooded Knight and Demoness of Despair potion formulas; how come you haven't thought about owing me a substantial debt?

Lumian hoped this approach would make Jenna worry less about owing money, suggesting she borrow more and hire an Artisan to turn the Dream Stealer Beyond characteristic into a mystical item for use.

The stronger you are, the easier it is to repay debts!

Sitting on the sofa, Jenna scoffed at Franca, gesturing towards Lumian.

Her message was clear: when I need to use those two potion formulas to advance, I'll pay you back!

“I'll keep an eye out,” Franca said, unaware of the silent conversation between Lumian and Jenna.

She then said, “We can start gathering some supplementary ingredients for Iron-blooded Knight and Demoness of Despair now, like the mud soaked with soldiers' blood from a major battlefield and the blood of seven victims of the plague, just to be prepared in case we're short on time later. Who knows, by then, we might find another way to bypass the plague ritual. Let's get ready now.”

Hearing about the preparations for the potion, Lumian nodded and then remembered something.

He stood up and walked over to the full-length mirror in the room, pressing his right hand against it.

He then activated the contract ability from Bloody Jack, sensing the mirror imprints he had left behind.

Soon, Lumian used the mirror and its otherworldly connection to detect two imprints from afar— one clear and one blurry.

The clear one belonged to the full-length mirror in Moran Avigny's study, while the blurry one changed on its own, shifting positions and making it hard to track.

I can sense it... That must be the imprint on the mirror inside the Blue Avenger's vault... Using the link between the imprint and myself, no matter how it blurs or shifts, I can teleport directly to it, as

long as I can step through the mirror, Lumian pondered for a while but decided not to borrow Franca's Mirror Cufflink for an experiment.

This was because his spiritual intuition and a warning from fate told him that if he teleported to that imprint now, he might never return, or he might return as Alista Tudor.

Withdrawing his hand, Lumian shared the results of his attempt with Franca and Jenna.

Afterward, Jenna left to visit various hospital morgues. This was both to look for opportunities to act as a Witch and to see if there were any bodies that had died from severe contagious diseases.

With the Order of All Extinction and the Sick Church not yet eradicated in Trier, there definitely were deaths from the plague, just not many that could cause a widespread outbreak.

Standing by the window, Lumian saw Jenna appear on the street and turned to Franca, saying, "You might have to become a Demoness of Despair, so it would be good to think about how to find an alternative to that ritual."

"Why must I?" Franca responded, clearly astonished.

Lumian chuckled. "Have you noticed that all the high-ranking members of the Demoness Sect are Demonesses? Do you think it's because they can't get their hands on the Iron-blooded Knight potion formula and Beyond characteristcs?"

"But the Demoness Sect doesn't prohibit Demonesses from switching to the Hunter pathway..."

"That's indeed a contradiction," Lumian speculated. "I suspect that those angelic-tier Demonesses can't find higher Sequence Hunter pathway Beyond characteristcs to change back into men, so they're not keen on seeing their subordinates regain themselves.

It has become an unspoken rule. You know, most of the high-ranking Demonesses are twisted in spirit, psychopathic, and enjoy seeing others in pain while hating to see them happy."

According to the intelligence Lumian and Franca received from Madam Magician and Madam Judgement, starting from Sequence 4, Hunters and Demonesses could switch pathways, with gender determined by the highest Sequence attained, and consuming potions of the same Sequence but from neighboring pathways to enhance one's strength could cause significant problems.

Franca was silent for a long moment before saying, "If I digest the Affliction potion and still haven't found an alternative to the Despair ritual, I'll request to end my mission with the Demoness Sect from Madam Judgement. She should understand and wouldn't allow me to carry out something like spreading a horrific plague."

After saying this, Franca relaxed and muttered, "Besides, wouldn't it be odd if Jenna becomes an Iron-blooded Knight and I remain a Demoness by then?"

"Life is short, why not give it a try?" Lumian jested.

Before Franca could react, Lumian leaped over the sofa with a stride and headed out the door.

Bursts of black flames shot through the wooden door, chasing after Lumian's back but gradually veering off target and dissipating into the air.

Franca's curse still rang clear in Lumian's ears, "If you have what it takes, try it yourself!"

With a grin, Lumian stepped out into the street.

Watching Ludwig eat, he pulled up a chair opposite him and casually asked, "What ingredients or spices are needed for the third method of cooking those umbilical remains?"

By the side, Lugano was taken aback. "What umbilical remains?"

Lumian smiled. "The umbilical remnant of the Child of God that Father Montserrat was carrying."

Lugano's expression froze.

## Chapter 750 Source of Life

After a few seconds, Lugano stuttered, "Can you actually eat that?"

What happens if you do eat it? What are the changes?

Does it cause the Child of God to be born?

Lumian glanced at Lugano's arm and said, "What can't be eaten?"

Lugano suddenly felt a sharp phantom pain and shook his head vigorously. "No, never mind!"

He wanted to get away from Ludwig and Lumian but couldn't think of an excuse on the spot.

After Ludwig swallowed a mouthful of cheese bread, he spoke slowly, "Top-tier ingredients don't need much accompaniment or seasoning. We just need to give it a symbol. That includes nine main staple ingredients: wheat, oats, rye, rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, cassava, and any other kind of bean. Cook them with the umbilical remains in cow's or sheep's milk for half an hour, and it's ready to eat. This dish is called 'Source of Life.'"

Are you cooking or performing a mystical rite? Lumian muttered under his breath.

Of course, a Gourmet pathway's Chef, who concocted alcoholic beverages and cooked various dishes, was essentially conducting corresponding mystical rites.

Thoughtfully, Lumian asked, "Actually, it doesn't have to be these nine ingredients, right? As long as the concept of main ingredients and their quantity is satisfied? Likewise, other kinds of milk would work too?"

Ludwig shook his head. "No, this way tastes the best."

So, what you're saying is, the method I mentioned would work but won't taste as good? No wonder it's the Gourmet pathway, always chasing culinary perfection... Lumian stood up and instructed Lugano to buy some of the ingredients.

Lumian's Traveler's Bag only contained dry rations that could be eaten right out of the package.

For Trier, a leading global metropolis, the ingredients Ludwig needed were easily collected, and by noon, Lumian and Lugano had returned to see Ludwig placing the main ingredients along with the umbilical remnant into a stew pot filled with several hundred milliliters of milk.

These steps had to be completed by a Chef himself, to endow them with mysticism, to coax out the designated uniqueness of the ingredients and maintain them to a degree conducive to absorption. Done by anyone else, the dish might have no effect or turn into poison.

After simmering for a while, Lumian smelled the starchy aroma mixed with the milk and saw dense milky white steam rising above the pot.

The steam did not disperse but condensed in midair and slowly settled back into the pot, carrying a tantalizing scent tinged with blood.

At that moment, Ludwig turned to Lumian and licked his lips, asking, "Do you want to add sugar or salt?"

"What differences do they bring?" Lumian asked cautiously.

Ludwig responded seriously, "The taste, one is sweet, the other is salty. Which do you prefer?"

Lumian, sensing the choice, relaxed and asked with a smile, "Which do you prefer?"

"I can't eat it..." Ludwig said regretfully, mumbling, "Sweet is tasty, salty is good too. If only it could be split into two parts, one sweet, one salty..."

As he spoke, the young boy, seemingly agitated, sprinkled some salt and then tossed in some sugar. Lumian watched amusedly, not stopping him.

For him, the taste of the Source of Life was not important; its effect was.

Finally, Ludwig instructed Lugano to extinguish the flame and removed the contents of the pot.

It was a palm-sized piece of starchy congealment, white and soft, sticky and gooey.

The surface of the food was covered with red spots, as if blood had seeped out from within.

"It's ready to eat." Ludwig tried hard not to drool.

"Will it be effective with just one bite, or do I need to eat it all?" Lumian asked, his curiosity reminiscent of his days learning various experiments, which often frustrated Aurore with his questions.

"All of it," Ludwig said with a look of disappointment.

Lumian picked up the steaming, slightly scalding food, brought it to his mouth, and took a bite.

The sweet and salty flavors melded together, offsetting each other's intensity in a unique way that relieved Lumian of any mental burden. He quickly devoured the Source of Life.

"Will it work right away?" an eager Lumian asked, already resolute in his intentions.

Ludwig pointed to the master bedroom.

"You'll need to sleep first."

Sleep? With a slight sigh, Lumian left the dining table, returned to his room, and lay down on his bed.

Closing his eyes, he felt his body gradually warm up, his consciousness becoming heavier and heavier...

In the darkness, Lumian heard soft sobs.

He turned his head, carefully discerning the sound.

It was of a little girl whispering, "Mommy... Mommy..."

The voice grew louder, more mature, and more piercing.

"Mommy! Mommy!"

The cries drew closer, as if they were right beside Lumian, resonating within him.

"Mommy! Mommy!"

Inside my body... Lumian suddenly jolted awake, regaining his senses.

The darkness shattered, and sunlight pierced his eyes.

He sat up abruptly, freeing himself from the dream.

The cries of "mommy, mommy" still echoed faintly in his mind.

Did I hear the Child of God crying? Lumian looked down at himself.

He undressed and found nothing unusual, but he knew something about him was different now, an indescribable change.

He didn't feel the Great Mother's gaze, which made him even more cautious.

Dressed again, he left his room to find Lugano sneaking glances his way.

"Are—are you alright?" Lugano, who had been caught red-handed, asked instinctively.

Lumian chuckled. "It's okay, I won't become the Child of God of the Great Mother."

Seeing Lugano eyeing his stomach, Lumian added, "Nor have I conceived Her."

After speaking, he left the still-concerned Lugano behind and walked out of the apartment.

The afternoon sun was perfect, and with nothing much to do in the next couple of days, Lumian decided to stake out a particular spot.

That place was the Trier catacombs.

Knowing that Harrison from Resurrection Island might appear at places associated with death, darkness, dusk, and decay, Lumian's first thoughts were of the Dream Festival and the Trier catacombs—locations rife with death and dark mysticism.

In the first level of the catacombs, by the "Entrance to the Old Ossuary" leading deeper below, Lumian sat next to a withered, scattered skeleton with a lit white candle, quietly observing each visitor descending into or returning from the depths.

Soon, a group of students passed by, spotting Lumian sitting alongside the catacombs bones.

The leader, a tall, thin man with glasses, asked Lumian curiously, “Why are you sitting here?”

Lumian casually responded, “I've been down to the lower levels many times and lost interest. Now, I just want to sit here quietly and watch everyone and everybody that comes and goes, to see who never leaves.”

“That sounds interesting,” the students said, holding their white candles. They decided to sit down too and observe if any of those returning from the depths showed signs of fear.

The tall, bespectacled man chose to sit beside Lumian and struck up a conversation.

“Do you really think not lighting a white candle here could lead to mishaps?”

Lumian glanced at him and chuckled, “You could try it, and we'd all see what happens.”

Before the students could respond, Lumian spoke in a relaxed tone, “I didn't believe in these things before, but then...”

He suddenly lowered his voice.

Two of the female students blurted out, “What happened?”

“Then...” Lumian wore a reminiscent expression, “I met someone who had encountered the Montsouris ghost. You know the legend of the Montsouris ghost, right?”

The students nodded together.

You really know Trier's spooky tales well... Typical of Underground Trier creatures—students...

Lumian sighed, “His immediate family all died, and he thought he could escape it. But one day, when I went to see him, I found him hanged from a window frame.

“Since then, I've been strictly following every rule of Underground Trier.”

The students looked at each other, a bit frightened by the tale told by a peer.

“It seems we really shouldn't extinguish this candle,” the tall student with glasses said regretfully.

Lumian lowered his voice again, “Have you ever encountered such a thing? There are extra books, blankets, and clothes in your dorm—none which belong to you—but the administrator tells you that no one else lives there.”

Two students turned pale, as if hearing the most terrifying ghost story.

As if they were seeking a lifeline, they asked, “Yes, that happens, do you know why?”

Lumian shook his head and sighed, “I heard those are the people who extinguished their candles here. They completely vanished, with no one remembering them.”

Hearing this, the tall student shivered instinctively.



Suddenly, he felt something tap his shoulder.

He turned to look and saw a ghastly pale skeletal hand.

“Ah!” He screamed, jumping up.

Lumian pulled back the bone hand he had picked up somewhere, his smile mocking. “You’re really scaredy-cats! Scared already?”

The students were stunned, and after a while, they forcefully said, “No! That was just a reflex!”

As they seriously considered whether to beat up the prankster, someone came up the stone steps to the second level.

He wore a blue top and yellow pants, his face deeply wrinkled and his white hair sparse and dry, holding a short lit white candle.

It was an elderly catacombs administrator.

Lumian slightly frowned.

He had seen this catacombs administrator before in the giant tomb chamber housing the Samaritan Women’s Spring, but the administrator hadn’t used a white candle then.