

Inevitability 771

Chapter 771 Pale-White Nation

Amidst the heavy tearing sound of a long-unmoved wooden board, the chestnut-brown door slowly opened outward.

The first thing Lumian noticed was the dim light, unlike the darkness typical of the deeper parts of the Underworld, emanating not from golden humanoid streetlamps but from all objects ahead.

He then got a clear view of the exterior.

There lay a cluster of palaces half-sunken into the void, with a majestic main hall, several high towers, and aerial corridors connecting them.

Deeper into the palace complex, the structures seemed to sink further into the void, while those on the periphery stood solidly on a barren wilderness.

Even so, the main hall in the core area towered much higher than the rest of the buildings.

Now, most of the structures were completely collapsed, leaving only ruins and broken walls. The relatively intact palaces and towers were concentrated on the periphery, with the only visibly towering structure in the core area being the main hall and its four attached spires.

At this moment, whether it was the broken palace complex or the surrounding wilderness and the sky above, all had faded to a dim, pale white, enveloping and infusing the entire world with pallor.

They brought light.

This pale-white world still retained a few other colors-gold embedded on the surfaces of buildings and the black at the bottom of the palace complex representing the void.

The latter had two other sources: one was the silently falling illusory dark River Styx from above, cascading behind the main hall, and the other was a creature long enough to be described in hundreds of meters, nestled among the four spires atop the grand main hall.

It was an exaggeratedly large bird, its wings woven from pale-white flames and mystical patterns, quietly sprawling on the roof of the main hall. Many of its pale-white fiery feathers had shed, revealing the black, decaying skin underneath.

Despite the considerable distance, and even with just a few fleeting glances, Lumian couldn't help but feel his "death" accelerating.

He lowered his head to look at his hands and found his already pale, dull, and withered undead skin now marked with spreading patches of blue-black decay.

These marks moved slowly, deepening continuously.

Moreover, his clothes were also beginning to be "infected" by the pallor of this world, all colors turning dim.

"What kind of monster is that?" Lumian dared not gaze at the distant giant bird anymore and could only look directly at the palace complex itself.

After a few seconds, the increasingly ethereal voice of the Knight of Swords, Maric, rang out: "It might be the corpse of Gregrace."

Gregrace? The Phoenix Ancestor, the ancient Death among the eight ancient gods of the Second Epoch? Lumian blurted out in astonishment, "Why would Her body be here?"

After posing the question, Lumian felt it was somewhat meaningless.

This was the Underworld, and it was not strange for any deceased's body to appear here. The Phoenix Ancestor-ancient Death-had perished before the Underworld anomaly.

On the other hand, the absence of the Eggers family's Death's corpse, hidden somewhere, was an anomaly.

Lumian didn't expect the Knight of Swords to actually answer his question.

"It might be that the ancestor of the Eggers family, the former Death, placed it here."

Uh... Does that mean the Eggers family's Death not only acquired the Beyonder characteristics of the Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace but also brought Her body back to the Underworld, hiding it somewhere in the palace complex? How did She, no-it end up on top of the palace? Is it just a corpse? Was it placed there initially? Or did the anomaly in the Underworld come from this ancient god's corpse? With the reigning Death dead, has the ancient god's corpse reanimated?

Lumian suddenly had some thoughts.

At that moment, he heard the Knight of Swords add, "Sharron just saw the egg."

The egg? The one the goat-faced Demon wants? Is Sharron referring to the temperance faction demigod within me? Lumian's heart leaped with joy before he quickly asked, "Where is the egg?"

"Below the belly of what seems to be the corpse of the Phoenix Ancestor. It has a pitch-black shell and is engulfed in pale-white flames, about a meter in diameter,' the Knight of Swords briefly described the egg.

Protected by the corpse of the ancient Death? Lumian's scalp tingled at the thought.

How am I supposed to retrieve it?

This might as well be no different from slaying the Devil Monarch, Farbauti!

Of course, for those of high stature, a living ancient god and a Beyonder-characteristic-lacking one reduced to a decaying corpse were not on the same level; the difficulty of these tasks was as different as heaven and the abyss. But for Lumian, they were equally insurmountable, both falling under the category of "impossible even with self-sacrifice."

Son of a sow, that goat-faced fellow really is a Demon turned undead!

Fine, if it can't be completed, then so be it. Just finish off the contractor as if there was no task at all!

As malicious thoughts spread throughout his body, the Knight of Swords added, "It's not entirely impossible to retrieve the egg. The state of the Phoenix Ancestor's corpse is somewhat strange."

Strange state of the corpse? Aren't there only two states for a corpse, eternal rest and reanimation? Lumian dared not use his own eyes to inspect the decaying corpse of the ancient Death, Gregrace, and could only inquire of Sharron, the only one present who could withstand looking at the body of an ancient god to some extent, "What's strange about it?"

The one responding was still the Knight of Swords.

"It's asleep, the kind of deep sleep that's hard to awaken from.

"This doesn't align with the current state of this Pale-White Nation."

Asleep? Dead and transformed, yet still needing sleep? Lumian frowned slightly and asked, "Why does that not align with the current state here?"

The Knight of Swords paused a few seconds before explaining, "From what we've seen, one of the reasons for the original anomaly in the Underworld was the reanimation of the Phoenix Ancestor. It destroyed Death's palace, killed all of Death's Blessed present, and turned this place into a pale-white nation.

"We've encountered a few demigods from the Death domain. Since the Underworld anomaly, they could still manage some affairs in the Underworld, even enter directly, but none dared to venture deep into the Underworld to search for the treasures within Death's palace. Their instincts told them it was too dangerous, absolutely not to be approached.

"But Sharron didn't have such a premonition for danger, so she agreed to come here."

That means, for a long time after the Underworld anomaly, the body of the Phoenix Ancestor still roamed this pale-white nation, keeping the high-ranked beings of the Death domain at bay, but now, it lies asleep... Lumian found the oddity from Maric's description.

"When was the last time a high-ranking Beyonder of the Death pathway felt danger approaching deep into the Underworld?" Lumian tried to determine the approximate timeframe.

"I don't know," the Knight of Swords answered promptly.

Don't know... It seems then, that the Phoenix Ancestor's body has only fallen asleep in recent years. Otherwise, the high-ranked Beyonders of the Death pathway entering the Underworld would have discovered that it's not so dangerous here anymore, and might have attempted exploration, not leaving without a trace nor without any news spreading... What happened in recent years? Lumian thought, unable to suppress his complaint.

"Why did the Eggers family's Death bring back the Phoenix Ancestor's corpse, leaving such a huge risk? As a true god, He could have directly destroyed this corpse!"

The Knight of Swords responded to Lumian's complaint, "The Underworld was established by the ancient Death in the spirit world, and as an ancient god, She wasn't limited to the powers of the Death pathway when She created the Underworld.

“It might not have been easy for the Eggers family's Death to initially take control of the Underworld; He might have needed to use the corpse of the Phoenix Ancestor. By the time He truly took control, His state might have changed, no longer concerned with such trivial matters.”

Does this mean the Eggers family's Death went mad later? The Underworld wasn't naturally formed, it was created by the ancient Death, Gregrace... Such a powerful ancient god, no wonder She could have undergone reanimation... Lumian reflected inwardly.

The Knight of Swords, sensing his sigh, simply said, “It's said that even among those mad ancient gods, the Phoenix Ancestor, Gregrace, was particularly fond of stirring things up, much like the Blood Emperor Alista Tudor of the Fourth Epoch.”

Now that you put it that way, I can understand perfectly... Lumian's gaze continuously shifted among the pale sky, the wilderness, and the collapsed palace complex, pondering whether to seize the opportunity of the ancient god's corpse being asleep to steal the enormous black egg burning with pale-white flames.

Suddenly, he spotted a figure still capable of movement.

It was a creature with a human head but the body of a giant bird.

The creature's limbs were bent, with nails that flickered with a cold light; its back sported wings covered in half pale-white, half chestnut-brown feathers. The development of its head seemed incomplete, resembling several infant heads slowly merging together.

“Oxyto's premature child? It's indeed here!” Lumian recognized the creature's identity.

That was the target he and the members of the temperance faction had been tracking!

At that moment, Oxyto's monstrous child was flapping its wings, continuously circling and stealthily drawing closer to the sleeping ancient god's corpse.

Its target appeared to be the enormous black egg pressed beneath the corpse!

“We must stop it! Sharron will handle cursing and controlling it, and we'll take care of the attack!”

The voice of the Knight of Swords echoed in Lumian's mind. “Okay.”

This time, Lumian didn't hesitate and sprinted out from the base of the pitch-black cathedral.

As soon as he stepped into that pale-white nation, his entire being was dyed pale-white, devoid of any additional colors.

This caused him to shiver both body and soul, wanting nothing more than to kneel down on the ground, lying prostrate and motionless.

Silently, Lumian drew the Sword of Courage.

The blade, now color-eroded by the pale-whiteness, suddenly ignited with a bright white flame tinged with blue.

Chapter 772 Curse

Filled with the courage to battle against the heavens and to strike at true gods, Lumian stood straight and tall, unflinchingly facing the ruined palaces within the Pale-White Nation.

Just then, his eyelids dropped uncontrollably, shielding his eyes.

Almost simultaneously, the voice of the Knight of Swords resonated once more in his ear: "Our target is Oxyto's child, not the ancient god's corpse."

This was to prevent Lumian from looking directly across the pale-white wilderness at the corpse of the ancient death god.

"There's nothing to fear!" Lumian quickly responded.

His voice, once it left his mouth, was also "infected" by the pallor governing this world, becoming weak, hollow, and devoid of emotion.

The Knight of Swords earnestly advised, "But this will affect our battle with Oxyto's child; we must resolve it quickly. Once that's done, you can do whatever you want."

Lumian fell momentarily quiet before responding, "Okay."

Honestly, wearing the Eggers family's golden mask and in his undead state, Lumian felt a bloodline-based fear and an awe towards the Phoenix Ancestor's corpse atop Death's palace, which the courage did not dispel and even somewhat weakened, creating a balance.

Otherwise, Lumian, wielding the Sword of Courage, would not have been so agreeable!

Immediately, Lumian ignited into a bright white flame, transforming into a long spear of light, hurling towards the still-intact buildings at the edge of the palace complex.

As the fiery spear cut through the sky, it too was eroded by the pallor, dissipating and dimming even faster, which meant Lumian only managed half the intended distance.

Finally, as the pale-white light extinguished, Lumian appeared mid-air, plummeting straight towards the ground.

He landed softly on the wilderness, making only a slight sound, and all around was deadly silence.

The bright, blazing spear of flame took to the air once again.

After repeating this five times, Lumian finally reached a high tower adorned with numerous golden patterns and stood at its top, with the figure of Oxyto's monstrous child becoming clearer in his sight.

Although the other did not display the potentially incomplete Mythical Creature form, merely seeing the bent human limbs, a head formed from several merged infant heads, and wings stretching from the torso with half pale-white, half chestnut-brown feathers, Lumian felt dizzy, accompanied by spasmodic pain.

Additionally, something inside him seemed to be calling, slowly gathering towards his abdomen.

It was the bloodline of Omebella!

Lumian felt no fear from this.

Wasn't this inevitable?

In the next instant, two figures materialized before him.

One figure wore a black Gothic-style court dress, complete with a matching petite bonnet and her light golden hair neatly bundled up; the other, slightly disheveled, donned a traditional black vest over a white shirt.

Temperance faction demigod Sharron and a member of the temperance faction, the holder of the Knight of Swords Minor Arcana tarot card, Maric!

As they approached their primary target, they finally detached from Lumian's body, ready to battle.

Indeed, both Sharron and Maric bore colors derived from the impressions left by Lumian, not truly manifested, appearing pale-white and dim.

Moreover, their bodies were transparent and ghostly, in a state of Wraiths.

If not so, they would have instantly died, becoming real undead creatures devoid of consciousness.

The monstrous child of Oxyto, hovering close to the belly of the ancient death god's corpse, sensed the proximity of Lumian and the others. From a distance of two or three kilometers, it half-turned its body and looked over with its twelve clustered eyes.

Lumian immediately felt the protective essence of his mind and consciousness, shielded by the Eggers family's golden mask, along with the life force deep within, showing signs of disintegration.

In his eyes, the temperance faction demigod named Sharron, using the reflective mirror effect of the pure gold surface, flickered twice between the crumbling palace and the high tower, coming within three to four hundred meters of the Phoenix Ancestor's corpse.

She opened her mouth towards Oxyto's child and emitted a piercing scream.

This was Lumian's first time hearing Sharron's voice.

Eroded by the pallor during its journey of over two thousand meters, the sound reached Lumian's ears as a faint echo, almost like an illusion.

Oxyto's child didn't see it that way. The feathers on its wings-half pale-white, half chestnut-brown-rapidly fell off. One by one, the eyes on its face burst open, the flesh on its uncovered body festering down to the bone, as if struck by a potent curse!

Seeing this, Lumian, fearless, transformed once again into the fiery spear of flame and hurled himself at the creature. Meanwhile, the Knight of Swords flickered forward on various reflective surfaces.

Oxyto's child let out a mournful howl.

Though distant and further muted by the dense pallor within Death's palace, the sound was soft when it reached Lumian, yet it still made him dizzy for a moment, a bloody stench of decay filling his nostrils, involuntarily causing him to revert from his fiery spear form.

With this howl, Oxyto's monstrous child morphed into a writhing, twisted, huge pale-white bud. The exploded eyeballs, festering flesh, and fallen feathers were all absorbed into the bud.

In a blink, the bud blossomed, sopping wet, and produced two children.

One was intertwined in pitch black and dark red, its sores festering rapidly until it stilled, turned pale, and fell to the ground; the other was an unscathed, massive bird-clawed monstrosity.

Through this transformation, Oxyto's monstrous child shed the curse and was reborn.

But Sharron seized the moment, her figure reflected within its clustered twelve eyes.

Oxyto's monstrous child froze mid-air, just a few dozen meters from the Death's main hall where the Phoenix Ancestor's corpse lay.

In its twelve gleaming beautiful eyes, the figure of Sharron, wearing her petite bonnet, flickered in and out of view, soon illuminated by intense, bright white light.

A flamboyant spear of flame shot forth, striking an ancient, partially collapsed tower nearby.

As the light dispersed, Lumian, single-handedly wielding the Sword of Courage, appeared.

He did not hesitate or feel fear. Despite the dizziness and pain in his head, his eyes turned an iron-black.

This iron-black shade emerged only to be eroded by the pallor, harmonizing completely with this nation.

This did not impede Lumian's observation of his target's weaknesses, though all he saw was pallor.

Compelled, Lumian relied on his Hunter kin senses to detect weaknesses, picking the most appealing and battle-raging spot among those pale hues.

Once again, he became the increasingly pale and dimming fiery spear of flame, positioning himself above Oxyto's monstrous child.

His figure outlined; he grasped the Sword of Courage, blazing with bright white and blue flames, and plummeted like a boulder towards the body of Oxyto's monstrous child.

As they drew close, Lumian struck at the monstrous bird-clawed infant's abdomen with his broadsword, now tainted with pallor.

He was using his Cull.

Before this, the Knight of Swords, Maric, appeared atop the half-collapsed tower, slipping on a ring carved in the shape of the sun god's bird.

In his hands, he quickly formed a lance as clear as pure sunlight.

This caused the nearby pallor to fade slightly, erasing shadows and causing the Wraith-like state of the Knight of Swords to melt inch by inch. Droplets of dim liquid fell like wax in a fire.

The droplets evaporated quickly, leaving behind a bit of dust that slowly dispersed.

Enduring the melting of his right side, Maric's expression twisted into one of madness as he hurled the lance of sunlight towards Oxyto's monstrous child.

Considering that Oxyto was a Shaman King of the Moon pathway, the temperance faction had prepared a Sun pathway Sealed Artifact in advance, which unexpectedly proved useful at this time!

This Sealed Artifact, both in effect and trait, would bring significant harm to the Wraiths.

The clean and bright spear of flame became an anomaly in this pale world.

It too was being eroded, but it was also dispersing the pallor, appearing to be able to strike the body of the monster child before Lumian's Sword of Courage could.

Although the monstrous child of Oxyto was possessed by the demigod Sharron and forcibly controlled, it wasn't completely turned into a statue to be slaughtered at will.

It struggled against the influence of the Wraith, as its “reborn” body slowly contracted, seemingly returning to an embryonic state, seeking the comfort of its mother's embrace, while unleashing its own Paramita.

The pale-white wilderness quickly engulfed the surrounding ruined palaces and the half-collapsed tower, also drawing the bodies of a few Blessed of Death who had died in this area into its scope.

In the deathly silence, a horrific giant snake, bearing only bones and some rotting flesh with exaggerated wings, sprung from the collapsed palace into the air, blocking the path of the Knight of Swords' spear of sunlight.

The blinding sunlight burst forth, filling Lumian's eyes.

His strike with the Sword of Courage did not slow down; he firmly slashed downwards.

The sunlight blackened his pale, dim skin, sparking a burning smoke.

A soft “clang” sounded as Lumian's Sword of Courage struck the head of the winged giant snake, splitting the target, which had become exceptionally fragile after absorbing most of the sunlight damage.

In a barely audible silence, the snake's bones either evaporated or shattered, completely losing their support and falling like rain to the ground.

With the help of the giant bone snake blocking a strike for him, Oxyto's monstrous child controlled by Sharron contracted even more fiercely.

Its half pale-white, half chestnut-brown wings and bent limbs had merged with its body, forming a sphere, with only its head, formed from several merged infant heads, still visible.

Its Paramita then encompassed the entire main hall of Death and the corpse of the Phoenix Ancestor.

Chapter 773 Cries

The pale-white light quickly engulfed the bird-clawed infant's Paramita, rendering the spread-out wilderness dull and indistinguishable from the surrounding ruined palaces, towers, and corridors.

This Paramita lost the features distinguishing the interior from the exterior, effectively withering and dying.

As the bone serpent collapsed, Lumian fell straight down, landing amidst the broken walls and debris scattered across the wilderness.

With a forceful bend of his waist and a forward flip, he landed firmly, not relying on his burning-white spear form to avoid the damage from such a fall.

In this pale-white nation, even the rules of the world seemed corrupted; falling from fifty meters felt no different than jumping from a five-meter building.

At this moment, the monstrous child of Oxyto retracted its head into the pale-white flesh sphere, forcing the temperance faction demigod Sharron to detach and hover in mid-air.

In the area near the main hall of Death, five or six terrifying undead creatures, influenced by Paramita, shakily rose to their feet.

Among them were two giant serpents with feathered wings and hairy corpses, a bloated, rotten giant, a humanoid mountain of white bones, and a woman with hair like thick snakes and a face two-thirds decayed.

Each of these risen dead, summoned by the bird-clawed infant, exerted immense pressure on Knight of Swords Maric.

As a Sequence 5 of the Prisoner pathway, he knew he couldn't control these corpses; attempting to wake them would only result in his own immediate dismemberment.

The undead, immense and horrifying, locked onto the temperance faction demigod, Sharron, but their movements were sluggish, as if hindered by an unseen force, unable to attack immediately.

Sharron, too, could control corpses and command the dead, and she was a true demigod with a higher rank than the premature bird-clawed infant!

Sharron's divided focus to influence the former Blessed of Death gave Oxyto's monstrous child a chance for rebirth. The pale-white flesh sphere bloomed like a flower, revealing a giant baby cleansed by pure water, while the sphere itself withered rapidly, turning pale and decaying as it fell to the ground.

Just as the giant baby spread its half-pale, half-chestnut wings, Sharron abandoned her control over the corpses.

In her pale-white eyes, the floating bird-clawed infant was reflected.

She opened her mouth and let out a scream that seemed to come from the depths of her soul.

The giant baby froze, instantly transforming into a lamb covered in pale fur. Unable to fly or use any Beyonders abilities, it plummeted towards the ground, towards Lumian, who stood with the Sword of Courage.

Transfiguration Curse!

Without the monstrous child's support, Paramita began to collapse.

The risen dead lost the foundation of their existence, gradually halting their movements and toppling over in the ruins.

The lamb covered in pale-white fur seemed corrupted from within; as it fell, its skin split, sprouting half-pale, half-chestnut feathers, and its belly swelled, as if nurturing new life.

No creature could escape the fate of being corrupted and nurturing new life, not even an ordinary lamb!

This was a trait of the Madame pathway, and the Transfiguration Curse could not strip corresponding Beyonders of these traits!

Sharron never expected to resolve Oxyto's premature child with just the Transfiguration Curse. Seizing the opportunity, she let her pale-white figure reflect in the mutated lamb's eyes.

The lamb's swelling belly began to slow, and the mutation caused by the corruption became less rapid.

It continued to plummet towards the ground.

Lumian, standing on the ground, looked up with a smile, raising the blue-hued blazing white Sword of Courage.

As the lamb entered his attack range, a spear of pure, intense sunlight shot from the half-collapsed tower.

Knight of Swords Maric, enduring significant pain and damage, once again projected the spear that illuminated the pale-white world.

This time, the bird-clawed infant, still in lamb form, could not evade or find a helper to block the spear. It could only watch as the golden spear of sunlight pierced its abdomen and exploded.

At this moment, as the scorching white sunlight engulfed the target, Sharron used Lumian's eyes and the pure gold in the nearby ruins to Mirror Jump away from the bright, sunlit, and fading pale area.

Although the lamb's body shielded her from the direct harm of the sunlight explosion, she, as a spirit-like Beyonder, still suffered significant impact.

When she reappeared in a golden pattern embedded in a wall hundreds of meters away, her figure had thinned noticeably, dripping waxy liquid like sweat.

Lumian stood close to the pale-white lamb, filled with courage, not dodging, but standing firmly, welcoming the spreading sunlight.

Wearing the Eggers family's golden mask, his entire body ignited, blackening and melting like a candle, bringing extreme pain.

Fortunately, he was not at the explosion's core, most of the damage falling on the bird-clawed infant, with Sharron taking some as well.

Otherwise, the sunlight spear might have purified him in one blow.

The Sword of Courage also absorbed half the damage, making his injuries not as severe as they appeared.

Clenching his teeth, Lumian advanced instead of retreating, running towards the falling bird-clawed infant with the eroded white broadsword in hand.

With a faint thud, the half-melted, ghastly pale lamb crashed onto the shattered stones.

Lumian arrived a second later, his eyes turning from iron-black to pale-white.

He swung the Sword of Courage with both hands.

Bright white and blue flames flared, the sharp sword striking the lamb's chest and abdomen.

The explosion was not loud, but the flames and the violent shockwave lifted the surrounding rubble, tearing a jagged hole in the lamb's chest and abdomen.

Boom! Boom!

Lumian swung the sword twice more, splitting the bird-clawed infant's lamb form into charred fragments.

The charred pieces were immediately eroded by the pale-white color, bringing a sense of dark, dead silence.

Just as Lumian was about to strike again, the pale lamb's abdomen exploded, scattering rotten flesh and liquid with a strange aura.

Instinctively, Lumian slashed the void ahead with the Sword of Courage, cutting through everything there.

Boom! Bright white flames and a violent shockwave formed a solid wall, blocking the rotten flesh and evil liquid.

As the pale lamb's abdomen exploded, a small, phantom figure with bird claws and wings, covered in a layer of pure water, flew out, heading straight for the black bird egg beneath the ancient Death's corpse.

This time, the bird-clawed infant, reduced to a phantom, was no longer cautious, no longer circling.

Knight of Swords Maric could not throw the spear of sunlight again, as it would cause his severely injured body to dissolve in the light.

Instead, he opened his arms, summoning a divine pillar of clean flame from the sky, aiming at the phantom heading for the main hall of Death.

The bird-clawed infant's figure first disappeared, then reappeared, evading the divine pillar's attack, but was immediately locked by Sharron's pale-white eyes.

Sharron transformed into a dim, stiff doll, encasing herself in layers of ice.

Simultaneously, layers of crystalline ice emerged around the bird-clawed infant, briefly fixing it in place, preventing its disappearance or progress.

The bird-clawed infant raised its head, letting out a howling wail within the ice cage.

The ice cage silently shattered.

The bird-clawed infant's body, covered in clear, pure water, splashed towards the ancient Death's corpse, forming droplets of faint golden liquid.

These droplets, drawn by an unseen force, converged into a river, carrying the bird-clawed infant towards the black bird egg burning with pale-white flames.

Seeing this, Lumian instinctively wanted to avoid the Phoenix Ancestor's corpse. He leaned back, raised his arm, and hurled the Sword of Courage.

The broadsword, eroded to pale but blazing with white and blue flames, flew like a conscious missile, covering hundreds of meters, leaving a trail of flames in the air, and striking the bird-clawed infant.

Locked on!

Rumble!

The sky near the black bird egg erupted with expanding white flames, forming a mushroom cloud.

Silently, charred shadowy fragments fell from the expanding flames and cloud, like a rain of dust. The dust turned pale before touching the ground, some blown by the wind onto the black bird egg. At that moment, Lumian heard an illusory shattering sound and felt his Reaper potion fully digest. He had no time to rejoice as his mind and consciousness, protected by the Eggers family golden mask, were overwhelmed by fear and dread.

He lowered his head, knelt to the ground, and hugged himself, trembling.

He only wanted to obey the orders of the Phoenix Ancestor's corpse.

As an undead, he lost his courage, his vision darkening.

Thump, splash... In extreme fear, Lumian heard the sound of a heartbeat and flowing blood.

It came from nearby, within this Pale-White Nation.

It resonated strangely with Lumian.

Faintly, Lumian heard a mournful cry: "Child!

"My child!"

Who is your child? Who are you? Lumian instinctively wondered.

The mournful cry continued:

"My child, where are you?"

The voice paused and then rose slightly:

"Omebella, where are you?"

Chapter 774 Resonance

The mournful cry seemed to draw closer: "My child, Omebella, where are you?"

Hearing the name "Omebella," Lumian shuddered violently, snapping out of his fear-induced daze.

Who? Who is looking for Omebella? Why are they looking for Omebella?

As he wondered, Lumian noticed the surrounding area growing darker, with a sense of confinement and imprisonment.

He reached out, his hands brushing against a cold, hard "wall."

He pressed himself against it, trying to peer through its cracks.

The "wall" was pitch black but semi-transparent, and Lumian could faintly see the pale-white sky, the collapsed towers, and the shattered palaces.

He also saw Sharron, the temperance faction demigod dressed in a small bonnet and a Gothic dress, floating nearby. She extended her hand, summoning the Sword of Courage, now pale from erosion.

Beyond Sharron, he looked down at the rubble-strewn ruins. A pale figure in tattered clothes was kneeling, bent over as if to crawl.

The figure was trembling all over, struggling to raise its head and straighten up.

It was a face wearing a golden mask-his own face!

Me?

If I'm outside, then who is here?

Already half-conscious, Lumian felt even more bewildered.

Almost simultaneously, he saw his outside self, with charred skin peeling off, sprouting half-pale, half-chestnut feathers. His belly writhed visibly, while wheat, mushrooms, and flowers grew from the sunlit wounds.

Silently, Sharron leaped onto the golden mask and appeared before Lumian, placing the Sword of Courage into his hands.

The surge of courage instantly dispelled the fear suppressing his mind and consciousness, making his vision pale-white and no longer pitch black.

The sense of confinement and entrapment around him also dissipated.

He raised his head higher, no longer seeing himself or using a top-down perspective.

His gaze fell on the black egg under the ancient Death's corpse at the top of the main hall.

He instinctively believed he had just been inside the egg, observing the outside through its shell!

No, it wasn't me inside the black egg, but the part of me that lost courage and was subdued by the ancient god's aura resonating with the creature inside the egg, sharing its senses.

So, I "saw" the scene outside the shell, "heard" the mournful cry for Omebella, and showed signs of corruption!

Thinking this, Lumian quickly looked down at his body, seeing the feathers falling off, mixed with wheat, mushrooms, and flowers.

They had all lost their color, turning pale and dim.

Lumian also saw his belly flattening, feeling his blood, meant to be solid as a deceased, flowing throughout his body.

Suddenly, he understood why Oxyto risked so much to nurture a fetus with undead traits and an aura of the Underworld.

Even with just a bit of Omebella's bloodline, suppressed by the ancient god's corpse, he could resonate and interact with the creature inside the black egg. How much more could the bird-clawed infant, with more of the Great Mother's gifts, fused with Paramita and the Underworld, and perhaps also with Omebella's bloodline!

If we hadn't taken out Oxyto's premature child in time, it might have used the resonance and interaction to merge with the creature inside the black egg, controlling it from the source, or completing its catalysis!

Hmm, the premature birth meant the bird-clawed infant lacked the rank and traits, requiring extreme caution. Even if it reached the final step, there was a high chance of failure...

Now, the question is, why could the creature inside the black egg hear the 'Mother's' call for Omebella...

Who exactly is Omebella's 'Mother'? It can't really be the Great Mother, can it? Isn't She always outside the barrier?

What is the relationship between the creature inside the black egg and Omebella?

As these thoughts raced through his mind, Lumian suddenly heard a faint cracking sound.

He looked up in astonishment, seeing the pale-white flames burning on the black egg dim significantly and peel away. The black egg itself developed a noticeable fissure.

It seemed to be disintegrating to some extent.

The next second, the entire Pale-White Nation began to tremble. A deathly aura from the black egg, where the ancient Death's corpse lay, started to emerge.

Even with the Sword of Courage in hand, Lumian couldn't help but freeze, trembling.

The surrounding palaces and towers, whether in ruins or half-collapsed, began to shake violently as if struck by an earthquake.

A thought flashed through Lumian's mind: The Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace's corpse is awakening... Run! Escape!

He shouted this in his mind but couldn't turn his body or take a single step.

The temperance faction demigod Sharron grabbed him, and in his eyes reflected the dim figure of the Knight of Swords, who looked much fainter than before.

Cracks appeared in the pale-white sky, extending towards the trembling ground. An overwhelming sense of dread was rapidly accumulating at the top of the main hall of Death.

Sharron, holding Lumian, initiated Spirit World Traversal.

This could be used in the Underworld but would trigger retribution.

Countless indescribable limbs reached out from the void, grabbing at the swiftly moving Sharron.

Sharron endured the damage from these limbs, continuing to head towards the pitch-black cathedral at the edge of the Pale-white Nation.

Her body ignited with pale-white flames, directly burning her spirit, causing clumps of powder to fall continuously.

Sharron could no longer sustain it any more than three seconds, interrupting the Spirit World Traversal and falling onto the pale-white wilderness outside the palace of Death, nearly a kilometer from the pitch-black cathedral.

Holding the Sword of Courage, Lumian, now outside Death's palace complex, no longer felt as afraid. He immediately pointed at himself, indicating for Sharron to possess him.

At the same time, he saw numerous jagged cracks rapidly spreading from behind, revealing a bottomless darkness, spheres wrapped in blood-red substance, and mountains filled with tombs...

Feeling achill within him, Lumian quickly ignited in blazing white flames, transforming into a magnificent spear, and launched towards the edge of the Pale-White Nation.

Above, below, and on all sides, countless cracks chased after him like shattered glass. Behind him, from the direction of the palace, a heavy sound emerged.

Amid the pale erosion, the flaming spear disappeared and reappeared twice.

Finally, Lumian escaped the Pale-White Nation, landing in front of the towering pitch-black cathedral.

Here, only the underground portion of the cathedral was visible, resembling a massive mountain.

Lumian passed through the heavy wooden doors, once again transforming into a flaming spear and launched upwards.

When the flames dispersed, he sheathed the Sword of Courage, climbing upwards using the collapsed stairs, peeling walls, and broken pillars, repeatedly jumping between them, sometimes leaping across support-less areas as a flaming spear.

Before long, the pitch-black cathedral began to shake violently. The already precarious corridors, stairs, walls, and pillars started to crack and fall.

Seeing himself about to be crushed and buried by the collapsing building, Lumian prepared to draw the Sword of Courage to carve out an escape route.

At this moment, he was surprised to find the stones and pillars above him seemed to have a life of their own, avoiding him and continuing to fall past his sides.

In such a dangerous situation, Lumian remained unharmed.

He guessed Sharron provided some help, not wasting any time, and continued his ascent, repeating the process.

After an unknown amount of time, the violent shaking abruptly stopped.

Lumian didn't relax, maintaining his pace and rhythm until he saw a pale green light above.

A blazing white spear shot out from the dark hole within the half-collapsed church.

With the flames dispersing, Lumian's figure appeared, standing firmly on the cracked stone slab.

Next to a broken wall embedded with several bone torches, a tall Demon with a human-goat hybrid face slowly turned, dragging a white bone leg.

At that moment, Lumian realized he hadn't retrieved the black egg, failing the Demon's commission.

Instantly, anger surged within him: Was this a task I could complete?

You were sending me to my death! Truly a Demon's commission! Fine, since completing the task is no longer an option, I have only one choice: destroy the commissioner!

Despite these thoughts, Lumian only reached into the Traveler's Bag, preparing to draw the Sword of Courage, without intending to fight immediately.

He was concerned that the ancient Death's corpse's awakening would cause mutations to spread here, preferring to leave the depths of the Underworld as soon as possible, especially given the unknown strength of the goat-faced Demon.

Hunched over, the goat-faced Demon staggered in front of Lumian.

It stared at Lumian silently before speaking in a hollow, decayed voice.

This time, it used Dutanese: "You've taken that egg for yourself!"

Before it finished speaking, the goat-faced Demon straightened its four or five-meter-tall body and swung the white bone leg at Lumian.

Chapter 775 Cunning

As the goat-faced Devil approached and stared at him, Lumian's hand was already gripping the hilt of the Sword of Courage.

When the white bone leg came crashing down, he swiftly drew the iron-black sword, burning with a bright white and blue flame, and met the attack head-on.

Clang!

The clash echoed loudly, and Lumian's palm split open, spilling blackened, coagulated blood.

The immense force from the goat-faced Demon's strike made him lose his grip on the Sword of Courage, sending him flying and crashing into a pile of rubble.

The goat-faced Demon stepped over the fallen sword in two strides, standing before Lumian and raising the bone leg again.

Suddenly, in its blood- and pus-filled eyes, the figure of Sharron, the temperance faction demigod, appeared. Its raised hands froze in midair.

Seeing the goat-faced Demon's movements slow down as if struggling against something, Lumian ignited with white flames, transforming into a spear and darting past the high-ranking undead to where the Sword of Courage had fallen.

Perhaps because the goat-faced Demon wasn't an undead created by the Death pathway, its intimidating effect on Lumian was weak. It lacked the ability to enslave his body and mind, allowing Lumian to muster the courage to fight back.

While retrieving the iron-black broadsword, Lumian released the spirituality he had accumulated using his Ascetic ability.

At the same time, his eyes turned iron-black, reflecting the many colors on the goat-faced Demon.

He quickly found a patch of pallor, took two steps towards the goat-faced Demon, and leaped high.

In midair, Lumian adjusted his posture, gripping the Sword of Courage with both hands and descending towards the slow-moving Demon, still battling Sharron.

This time, he used the Sword of Courage's Cull ability!

His spirituality surged into the iron-black broadsword, causing the bright white and blue flames to flare up and then condense inward.

With a heavy thud, Lumian landed on the Demon's back, stabbing the Sword of Courage into the junction of its neck and body. The blade sliced into the decayed flesh like butter.

As pus splattered, the flames on the broadsword poured into the goat-faced Demon's body.

Boom! A muffled explosion echoed, and Sharron quickly withdrew from the Demon's body.

The Demon disintegrated into a puddle of sticky black liquid, condensed from evil thoughts.

The liquid, scattered by the expanding flames and shockwaves, swiftly flowed into the dark hole leading to the Pale-white Nation, seemingly to reassemble itself.

Holding the Sword of Courage, Lumian felt his released spirituality deplete by two-thirds. He wanted to chase and fight the Demon again but felt his body stiffen and his soul trapped in an invisible cage.

“Retrieve your target item first,” the faint voice of the Knight of Swords echoed in his ears.

Right... Lumian agreed with the Knight of Swords' reasoning.

I don't fear the goat-faced Demon. I can totally grab the Abscessed Hand's body before it reassembles!

He transformed into a burning-white spear, darting to the bone torches. To better move the Abscessed Hand's body, he temporarily stashed the Sword of Courage in the Traveler's Bag.

Moments later, Lumian felt a pang of fear: I only have a third of my spirituality left, yet I was thinking of a life-or-death fight with the Demon?

And Sharron is clearly in poor condition!

Now isn't the time for that. Shouldn't I grab the target item and leave the collapsing cathedral before the Demon reassembles?

Thankfully, the Knight of Swords acted as a valve for my courage and found a convincing reason!

Without hesitation, Lumian grasped the Abscessed Hand's half-body, trying to lift it.

It was extremely heavy, like metal. Fortunately, Lumian was now a Sequence 5 Beyonder, from a pathway known for their strength.

During this process, Lumian worried the body might suddenly reanimate and deliver a fatal blow. However, the Abscessed Hand's half-body, after enduring years of cutting by the goat-faced Demon, seemed lifeless with no abnormal reaction.

Lumian placed the half-corpse into the Traveler's Bag, relieved to see it “sink” inside.

Living flesh couldn't be stored in the Traveler's Bag, and the Abscessed Hand's body had shown self-healing traits earlier. Lumian had thought if he couldn't store it, he'd carry it or have the Knight of Swords or Sharron possess it to make it move.

With the body stored, Lumian heard creaking sounds from the dark hole.

He immediately transformed into a blazing spear, darting out of the half-collapsed pitch-black cathedral.

With a swoosh, the white flames left a burning trail in the dark, spreading quickly into the distance.

Without the Pale-White Nation's erosion, Lumian flew far in one breath.

Under the golden humanoid lamplights, he repeatedly transformed into a blazing spear, finally reaching the shadowy River Styx.

He saw the gloomy, tattered boat reappear, slowly approaching as the boatman rowed.

Lumian waited anxiously, not daring to fly onto the boat as a spear.

According to the Knight of Swords Maric, doing so would make him sink into the river's depths, never to be saved.

Behind him, pale green flames burned quietly, sometimes swaying with the ground's tremors, sometimes shaking with some vibrations.

Lumian tensed, feeling an increasing danger, unsure if it was from the ancient Death's corpse awakening or the goat-faced Demon's pursuit.

He looked at the slow-moving boat, using a Hunter's method to calm his emotions.

He chuckled and spoke to the Knight of Swords Maric within him, "I thought the goat-faced Demon was powerful, just below the ancient gods, holding a grudge against the Devil Monarch and desiring the egg beneath the ancient Death's corpse. But now, it seems it's just at the Saint level, with only a corpse left, lacking Beyond character characteristics."

The Knight of Swords didn't respond.

Lumian continued, "The goat-faced Demon's initial request to kill the Devil Monarch was likely a bluff, making us more likely to accept the second condition, thinking it reasonable. If Oxyto's premature child hadn't interfered, we might have stolen the egg, only to face the ancient Death's wrath, unrelated to the goat-faced Demon.

"It also used the request to kill the Devil Monarch to build its image, making us think it was formidable, of high rank, preventing us from attacking it or abandoning the egg task.

"What a cunning Demon..."

Lumian then remembered the demon's accusation: "You've taken that egg for yourself!"

When did I take the egg? It's still under the Phoenix Ancestor's corpse. I only resonated with the creature inside, hearing and seeing what it did... Did the Demon mistake this resonance for me taking and breaking the egg? As an undead, even if it was a Saint-level Demon in life, it might have little brain left, acting on its cunning Demonic instinct... As Lumian pondered, the tattered boat finally reached the shore.

He jumped aboard, standing behind the boatman.

Though the boatman might attack later, compared to the goat-faced Demon's pursuit and the ancient Death's corpse's awakening, it was "friendly."

This was manageable.

The rickety boat shook as it left the dark shore, slowly heading towards the middle of the shadowy river.

Lumian looked back at the depths of the Underworld, seeing the intense darkness calm down, no more tremors or heavy sounds.

Everything was serene again.

Lumian relaxed a bit, instinctively sighing.

This Underworld trip was indeed “intense”...

Only now did he ponder the huge black egg issue: The creature inside seemed related to Omebella! From this, Lumian felt the Great Mother naming Her Child of God after the ancient god, Omebella, wasn't just for symbolic reasons to erode the Earth Mother's authority. The fallen Goddess of Harvest held significant secrets.

But Omebella wasn't one of the eight ancient gods ruling the sky and land, just the Giant King's queen, akin to an Angel. How can Her secrets affect the current era?

Ah, many key pieces of information are obscured by history's fog. Only a few high-ranking beings from the Second Epoch know a bit...

Lumian mused as he watched the dark land of the Underworld recede, until only the shadowy River Styx water filled his view.

He suddenly felt the matter had finally come to an end.

Chapter 776 Secrets

This time, the boatman didn't attack Lumian. Instead, he rowed the gloomy boat to the opposite shore.

Jumping onto the wasteland covered in withered blood flowers, Lumian, whose spirituality was nearly exhausted, ran towards the pile of bones and corpses on higher ground.

After running for a few minutes, he saw faint starlight piercing through the dim sky.

Next, the void tore open like transparent paper.

The tear blended with the starlight, forming a door of shimmering light.

Standing beyond the door was Madam Magician, dressed in a loose orange dress.

Madam Magician did not enter the Underworld but floated in the void outside the door, smiling at Lumian and the others.

Madam Magician... Lumian had expected another demigod from the temperance faction, bringing a Beyonder of the Death pathway to open the door to the Underworld to fetch him, Sharron, and Maric. But it was the Major Arcana card holder, Madam Magician.

She can find the Underworld?

She can tear through its barrier and create a door?

Suppressing his curiosity, Lumian took a running start and jumped through the starlit door.

He felt a wave of dizziness and his vision darkened before he saw the clear, pure Lake Dalsh and felt the thin air of the highlands.

He reflexively removed the golden mask of the Eggers family from his face to avoid becoming a true undead from wearing it too long.

During this, the figures of Sharron and the Knight of Swords Maric appeared beside him.

“Thank you,” the Knight of Swords politely addressed Madam Magician.

Wearing a small black and Gothic dress, Sharron nodded silently.

“It's only right,” Madam Magician replied with a smile. “It's a pity we couldn't catch Oxyto. The Great Mother's Bestowed are very vigilant and skilled at rebirth, making them extremely hard to catch.”

After a few pleasantries, the Knight of Swords said goodbye.

Before leaving, he and Sharron both nodded to Lumian, showing their approval.

Although the Knight of Swords' request was only to help find Oxyto, Lumian had far exceeded that by chasing Oxyto's premature child into the Underworld and eliminating it. In return, Sharron, despite being injured, helped Lumian control the goat-faced Demon, giving him a chance to defeat it and take the Abscessed Hand's half-body. Thus, neither owed the other, and no additional payment was necessary.

Of course, establishing a friendship and deepening his connection with the Knight of Swords was an added bonus.

After Sharron and the Knight of Swords left, Madam Magician looked at Lumian with a teasing smile.

“Wondering how I found the Underworld?”

“For a high-ranking member of the Apprentice pathway, the Underworld is just there. There's no question of finding it. Even if hidden, we can easily locate it by observing the Gatekeepers and master the ability to summon a door to the Underworld. But I didn't summon it; I just opened a door.”

“Then why did you say I had to wait for an opportunity to enter the Underworld?” Lumian asked reflexively.

As Mr. Fool's Angel of Stars, couldn't you just open a door to the Underworld for me?

What opportunity was there to wait for?

Madam Magician chuckled.

“Could you have retrieved part of the Abscessed Hand's body if I had sent you to the Underworld back then?”

“No...” Lumian answered softly.

Not only would he fail, but he might also die instantly from illegal teleportation.

This time, with guidance from the temperance faction and the help of a demigod, he had a chance to take the Abscessed Hand's body from the goat-faced Demon.

Of course, the risks had also increased significantly.

“I sensed an opportunity and advised you to wait,” Madam Magician said sincerely. “Not all abilities can be repeated; not using them and using them to change one's state directly is very difficult.”

Lumian didn't dwell on it, recounting his experiences in the Underworld with Sharron and the Knight of Swords.

Madam Magician listened attentively without interrupting, sometimes showing a thoughtful expression.

“What secrets are hidden in the body of the Second Epoch's Goddess of Harvest?” Lumian asked at the end.

Madam Magician replied, shaking her head, “I don't know.”

She paused for a moment before adding, “There are things I hadn't planned to tell you so early because it's not good for you. But since you've merged with Omebella's bloodline and experienced the Underworld, I can share a bit. Do you remember the relic of Omebella I mentioned?”

“Yes,” Lumian said, one of his reasons for merging with Omebella's bloodline being the hope of briefly using the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact formed from the relic.

Madam Magician continued, “Do you know where it is?”

Before Lumian could shake his head, she answered herself, “It's in the New City of Silver.”

New City of Silver? The Church of The Fool's headquarters? Lumian thought of the giant-like beings that made him feel like a dwarf.

Omebella's relic is a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact of the Church of The Fool's in New City of Silver?

Madam Magician pondered for a few seconds before saying, “First, you need to understand a piece of mystical knowledge. Marauders, the Angels of the Error pathway, can steal others' identities and destinies.

In other words, someone whose identity and destiny are stolen will no longer be recognized by their parents, spouse, or children, gradually becoming rejected by fate.”

Lumian recalled the Substitution Spell in the Inevitability domain, which also involved one's identity and fate.

Though different from Madam Magician's description and on a much lower level, it helped Lumian understand her words.

Seeing he had no questions, Madam Magician continued, “According to what we know, I suspect the Goddess of Harvest Omebella had Her identity and destiny stolen by a high-ranking member of the Error pathway and was killed by Her direct relatives.

“Up to this point, it sounds like nothing more than a horrific consOriginal, but think about it. Why would the body of the Goddess of Harvest, killed by Her direct relatives

and robbed of Her identity and destiny, end up in the former City of Silver, not silently in a battlefield corner?

“And more strangely, the ancestors of the City of Silver knew it was Omebella's body and Her true identity. At the time, the Steal effect was still present!”

Lumian sensed something amiss and frowned, “What's the City of Silver's records or speculations on this? Does Omebella's body contain Beyond characteristics?”

“None,” Madam Magician answered firmly. “The City of Silver's records are sparse due to the Ancient Sun God's rule in the Third Epoch. But their ancestors mentioned that the Goddess of Harvest walked to the City of Silver on Her own. Heh heh. Strange, right? You'll understand more when you can temporarily use that Grade O Sealed Artifact. Now is not the time.”

This confirms that Omebella held significant mysteries... Lumian asked cautiously, “What did the goat-faced Demon mean when it said I had taken the egg for myself?”

Madam Magician gazed at Lumian for a moment before saying, “There's no change in your body, but I temporarily can't confirm whether it's the same for the egg. It'll need some observation.”

Lumian tersely acknowledged her words and pointed to the clear, serene Lake Dalsh. “What's special about this lake? How is it related to the Underworld?”

Madam Magician laughed.

“The temperance faction had a King of Angels and Angels ruling here for a thousand years, but they couldn't uncover the lake's secrets. Why would I find out in a short time?”

“Even the direct descendants of the Eggers family don't know why Lake Dalsh is special.”

“From your Underworld trip, it seems the lake's uniqueness predates the Eggers' ancestor becoming Death.”

“Related to the ancient Death, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace?” Lumian inferred from Madam Magician's words.

Thinking of the huge black egg beneath the ancient Death's corpse, he found this explanation plausible for why Oxyto wanted the bird-clawed creature to be born with Lake Dalsh's help.

“Perhaps,” Madam Magician replied uncertainly.

Lumian was silent for a few seconds before changing the topic.

“Madam Magician, now that we have part of the Abscessed Hand's body, I want to go to Lenburg soon to find the City of Exiles, Morora.”

“You're feeling a sense of urgency, rather impatient as well,” Madam Magician remarked. “Relax for a few days, calm your mind, then go.

We'll follow up on the vortex matter. Your companions will investigate the Mirror People. You probably can't take your companions into the City of Exiles. Also, focus on learning languages. After dealing with the City of Exiles, prepare your team for the advancement.”

“Alright,” Lumian agreed, feeling he needed to adjust his state.

...

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

Lumian reunited with Franca, Jenna, and Anthony.

After recounting his experiences in the Underworld, Franca said with genuine emotion, “So that's what the Underworld is like. The River Styx really exists...”

Then she frowned immediately.

“You've fully digested your Reaper potion, but I'm still a bit short on my Pleasure...”

In this digestion, Lumian credited eighty percent to Madame Sharron, ten percent to the Knight of Swords, and only ten percent to himself.

Without pride and after some thought, he said to Franca, “Maybe I can help you quickly digest Pleasure.”

“Huh...” Franca raised an eyebrow while Jenna looked puzzled.

Lumian smiled and explained, “I've accumulated fate fragments from Moran Avigny's lust outburst. If we find a powerful Beyonder to take this fate, wouldn't it allow you to digest Pleasure significantly?”

“Hmm, Pirate Admirals out at sea would be perfect for this.”

Chapter 777 Traitor

Franca was dumbfounded. “Is that even possible?”

This can be recycled?

It's not like it's water!

I've already digested a lot of my Pleasure potion because of Moran Avigny...

“Why not?” Lumian said with a smile. “It's like wanting a powerful target to experience pleasure but needing my help to get close enough.

Pleasure doesn't have to be one-on-one, otherwise Browns Sauron's female orgies wouldn't make sense. What we're doing is like dealing with Moran Avigny while also affecting another target.”

“This... but...” Franca had to admit that Lumian had a point, and it was possible, but it felt like exploiting a loophole, like using a bug in a game.

At the same time, Franca complained to herself about Lumian, Have you been reading too many illegal books or watching too many orgies?

How can you talk about one-to-many so naturally... Also, borrowing your help for other things is fine, but when it comes to pleasure, this description is just too strange...

Under the watchful eyes of Anthony and the still somewhat puzzled Jenna, Lumian turned to Franca and asked, "Let's imagine a scenario:

You're experiencing pleasure with someone, and another person passes by and sees the scene, getting strongly aroused and experiencing pleasure themselves. Would that help you digest your Pleasure potion?"

"Yes," Franca answered with some certainty.

Based on her experience, pleasure didn't have to involve direct contact or a fixed method. As long as it met the basic condition of the target experiencing pleasure because of her, it worked. It was even better if it left the target deeply immersed and unable to extricate themselves.

Realizing this, Franca suddenly paused.

If this were my world before I transmigrated over, as long as one could abandon decency, shame, and morality, digesting the Pleasure potion would be incredibly easy. After the preparations, it might only take a few days or even hours to fully digest it.

Lumian responded with a smile, "What's the fundamental difference between the scenario I described and transferring Moran Avigny's fate fragment to a Pirate Admiral, causing a lust outburst?"

"None..." Franca was convinced.

She then sighed and said, "You're really good at exploiting bugs."

"What's a bug here?" Jenna asked, confused.

Lumian, having heard this strange word from his sister Aurore, helped explain, "Exploiting a bug means taking advantage of a loophole."

Franca clicked her tongue and nodded.

"You know, sometimes I think you'd be better suited for the Error pathway."

"Then I'd probably become an Amon by now," Lumian replied with self-awareness, laughing.

Franca, being an individual of action—otherwise, she wouldn't have drunk the Witch potion—immediately asked, "Which Pirate Admiral should we target?"

"Isn't it too dangerous? Each Pirate Admiral has their own fleet with many Beyonders and backing from powerful forces."

"We're just giving him pleasure, not doing anything else. What's there to worry about?" Lumian replied casually. "Even if we can't hold back and kill him, so what? We've already offended plenty of powerful forces."

These Pirate Admirals aren't exactly law-abiding citizens.”

Seeing Franca still wanting to say something, Lumian added, “This will also be a good test for our team. Trust me, the few of us together are as good as any Pirate Admiral's crew. Plus, we can find opportunities for Jenna to digest her Witch potion and for Anthony to digest his Hypnotist potion.”

“Alright.” Franca nodded. “Let's gather intelligence on the Pirate Admirals and see who we can locate.”

First, they needed to find someone!

Having settled that, Franca once again commented on Lumian's Underworld trip, “That ended so quickly. I couldn't contact 007 last night to give him Jenna's messenger summoning method. I thought I'd return to Trier tonight to complete this task. Who knew the whole mission would end so soon? We don't need to go to the Southern Continent or give 007 the summoning method.”

She had expected the mission to last several days, maybe a week or two, but it was done in one morning.

In Saint Viève Cathedral.

Angoulême, wearing a brown wool coat, stood at the door of the room, gazing up the stairs leading to the higher floor.

Yesterday, he and several colleagues were ordered to stay on night duty without being given a reason.

Angoulême could vaguely guess the reason, as he had provided the relevant information to the higher-ups.

As time slowly passed, a middle-aged man in a white robe with golden threads came up the grand staircase.

The man had black hair and brown eyes, an authoritative presence, and neatly trimmed mustache.

Angoulême recognized him. They had interacted a few times while handling some occult cases in the Trier region.

This was Peacock, Senior Deacon of the Purifiers and one of the heads of the Inquisition.

He wasn't Angoulême's direct superior, as he was in charge of the surrounding areas of Trier, essentially the entire Trier district except for Trier itself.

He was not a demigod of the Sun pathway but a Sequence 4 of the Lawyer pathway, a Earl of The Fallen.

Seeing Peacock, Angoulême averted his gaze and retreated further into the room.

He suspected that Peacock was a core member of April Fool's outside the Curly-Haired Baboon Research Society, who had orchestrated the release of the humanoid Sealed Artifact 1-147 from church control.

Angoulême's reasoning was simple: The April Fool's core member within the church had used a Broker's Under the Table transaction to get other Purifiers to release 1-147 for various purposes.

The Lawyer pathway was similar to the Broker pathway, adept at twisting terms in deals and agreements to achieve their goals.

This pathway's demigods had been involved in numerous shady transactions, making them most likely to come into contact with or be contacted by a Broker.

Before Overseer Perle was discovered, Peacock wasn't on the Eternal Blazing Sun Church's investigation list because 1-147 wasn't in his jurisdiction, and he hadn't left his Inquisition during that time. Despite knowing the location and information of most Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts as a Senior Deacon, he wasn't suspected.

Today, Peacock was at Saint Viève Cathedral for a meeting.

The official reason was to discuss disrupting the Mirror People's plans and eliminating these hidden rats. The demigods of the Trier district needed to meet face-to-face to finalize their strategy.

After Peacock's figure in the white robe with golden threads disappeared up the stairs, Angoulême slowly exhaled and became more vigilant about what might happen.

A minute or two later, Angoulême felt the whole cathedral gently tremble.

This lasted only a few seconds before stopping. Few noticed except those already on alert for such occurrences.

In a sunlit room near the dome.

Cardinal of the Eternal Blazing Sun Church and Archbishop of Trier, Plessy, with high cheekbones and blond hair turning white, stood beside a woman in a white robe, beautiful yet sacred.

She was Saint Viève, Trier's guardian angel!

Opposite them, near the door, Peacock's body twisted, mostly melted, revealing an interior seemingly filled with white wax.

The Senior Deacon of the Purifiers laughed heartily. "The Overseer informed me immediately that she was compromised. I've been using this wax figure to act for days!"

His real body hid in the shadows, observing without interacting with anyone from the Eternal Blazing Sun Church.

"Just as expected..." Trier Archbishop Plessy sighed.

This had been anticipated. The Overseer's escape made this development inevitable.

Though the church had kept the Overseer's escape secret, they hadn't held much hope.

The wax figure of the Earl of The Fallen Peacock quickly melted. Looking at Saint Viève's impassive face, his voice turned sharp as he laughed again.

"I made the only right choice.

"The Crimson will come. Only by submitting to the great existences can we Survive the apocalypse!

"The Crimson will come!"

After shouting, Peacock's wax figure completely melted into a half-solidified, half-liquid mess.

Saint Viève, dressed in a white robe with golden threads and no other ornaments, watched silently before speaking a few seconds later, "Who made this wax figure for him?"

"Probably acquired through a Broker," Trier Archbishop Plessy replied gravely.

Saint Viève, Her tone unchanged, said, "Few Beyonders can make such a wax figure."

"Yes, that's a lead to follow." Plessy nodded.

A wax figure that could initially fool an Angel's senses wasn't simple.

Finding its maker might lead to uncovering the Broker and the hidden Overseer.

Saint Viève continued, "Inform all bishops, padres, and Purifiers about Peacock's fall, but don't issue a wanted notice."

"Yes." Plessy agreed that a wanted notice for a demigod would be useless and might damage the Church's image among the public.

A few days later, Franca, Anthony, and the others used different channels to gather the latest sightings and rumored whereabouts of the Pirate Admirals.

Looking at the information, Franca patted the top sheet and said to Lumian, "How about this one?"

Lumian glanced at the name and read it silently: Admiral Deep Sea, Howl Constantine.

Chapter 778 Method of Arrival

Lumian had already looked through the information Franca had gathered and could guess her reasoning for this choice: Howl Constantine-Admiral Deep Sewith rumored sea monster blood, often went to an island called "Banamo" west of the Fog Sea for supplies. A few days ago, someone spotted Howl Constantine's flagship, the Newins, surfacing on a route to Banamo, allowing the crew to breathe fresh air and enjoy their precious freedom.

Based on the distance, speed, route conditions, and weather in the Fog Sea, it was estimated that the Newins would reach Banamo in about two to three days.

Among all the Pirate Admirals, he was the only one with a predictable trajectory in the near future!

"We can give it a try," Lumian responded nonchalantly to Franca's suggestion.

Having participated in battles at the demigod level and played a significant role, he felt that which Pirate Admiral they targeted didn't matter much as long as they could locate him.

Franca glanced at Lumian and mumbled, "I think there's something wrong with your attitude. You can't underestimate the best of the Sequence 5s. You're not a demigod yet, and your body is still fragile.

Underestimating Admiral Deep Sea could cost you dearly. There's a saying from my homeland: Strategically, you can underestimate your enemy, but tactically, you must respect them."

“I know. Aurore used to remind me of that, telling me not to underestimate the villagers' intelligence and think my pranks would always succeed without problems. After being chased by them a few times, I understood it well.” Lumian said earnestly, “Your homeland also has another saying: Weakness and ignorance aren't barriers to survival, but arrogance is.”

“Stop!” Franca grumbled. “As long as you know it; don't turn this into an exchange of famous sayings.”

Seeing they had decided on the target, Jenna spoke up, “The problem now is, how do we get to Banamo Island?”

Banamo, located in the northwest of the Fog Sea, was once a Feysac Empire colony. Later, as the Feysac Empire declined and the natives of Banamo resisted actively, the island gained independence.

It helped that Banamo lacked valuable resources and was only a base for exploring the Fog Sea's end. Giving it up wasn't a big loss.

After gaining independence, Banamo developed into a pirate haven, offering a place for pirates to trade and resupply.

Jenna's point was clear: Even with clear routes and good weather, it would take two to three weeks to sail from Trier to Banamo. Any issues requiring detours or delays could stretch the journey to a month. By then, Admiral Deep Sea would likely have left Banamo, and finding a Pirate Admiral on the open sea would be almost impossible without a stroke of fate.

Given the circumstances, only teleportation could ensure the team reached Banamo in time to wait for Admiral Deep Sea Howl Constantine. However, neither Lumian nor Franca had the spirit world coordinates for Banamo Island, making long-distance teleportation impossible without getting lost in the spirit world.

Lumian thought for a moment and asked Franca, “Can we contact anyone on Banamo Island?”

“We should be able to. There's a telegraph office on Banamo Island,” Franca answered thoughtfully. “We can ask adventurers who've been to Banamo to send a telegram to their friends on the island.”

Lumian chuckled. “Good. If everything goes well, we can arrive at Banamo Island tonight.”

...

Banamo Island in the Fog Sea, shrouded in perennial fog and gloomy weather.

In the island's only port, Mason, carrying a bundle of items, navigated through the bustling pirates and entered an abandoned warehouse.

The warehouse had been destroyed in a pirate skirmish and never repaired, becoming a desolate spot.

Mason was an adventurer who despised the brutal and ruthless pirates but couldn't leave Banamo because the pirate haven was full of opportunities.

Even if he didn't hunt down solitary, bounty-carrying pirates, he could wait for pirate feuds to end and take the remaining goods from the losers.

This was how he became a Beyonder, now a Sequence 8 Pugilist.

(Amonoculus' note: From the Twilight Giant Pathway)

Today, Mason took on a task supposedly very simple but with a reward of 1,000 verl d'or, seeking a secluded place to complete it.

He quickly cleared the pile of broken wooden crates, stacking them to form an altar.

Following the task description, he placed candles, incense, and essential oils on the altar.

After the preparations, Mason took out the neatly folded task description and read the next steps, "The most challenging part of this task is the necessary knowledge, including basic ancient Hermes and proficient Hermes. If you don't meet these conditions, don't take the commission..."

Fortunately, I learned some ancient Hermes and enough Hermes from other adventurers... Mason felt lucky for his past decision when taking this task.

It wasn't that he was more studious than other adventurers, but the items he had previously acquired involved Hermes. To understand their true value, he had paid an adventurer proficient in Hermes to teach him for a while.

After quickly reading the second half of the task description, Mason assessed the potential dangers and felt confident it wouldn't be a big problem.

He then arduously created a wall of spirituality, lit the candles, dripped the incense, and took two steps back, chanting in ancient Hermes, "I!"

This was one of the few words he knew in ancient Hermes.

He then switched to Hermes:

"I summon in my name:

"A creature wandering above the world, the penitent who awakens from the flames of pain, a messenger that belongs solely to Lumian Lee..."

As Mason finished, the candle flames surged, turning a deep green, almost black.

In the firelight, a tall figure in a black clergyman's robe emerged.

Mason took a step back in fear at the sight.

The figure's exposed parts seemed long scorched by flames, with blackened flesh and skin clinging to the bones. Its eye sockets were dark, burning with deep-colored flames, and its body was oozing a viscous black fluid like water.

It looked like an undead creature!

Mason had seen similar beings in Banamo Port, as some pirates were adept at communicating with corpses. However, the summoned Penitent made Mason instinctively fearful, sensing it was fundamentally different from ordinary undead.

Even the Pirate Admirals who had visited Banamo Port hadn't given Mason this feeling!

Seeing the dried corpse in a black clergyman's robe looking at him, Mason shakily handed over the letter.

His task was to deliver a letter to someone named Lumian Lee!

The blackened, burning corpse messenger took the letter and disappeared into the dark-green candlelight.

The abandoned warehouse returned to normal.

Mason wiped his cold sweat and muttered to himself, "This seems more complicated than I thought... I've heard of people being lured into special rituals, summoning evil gods or devils, destroying themselves and their towns... Was that what just happened? Is a catastrophe coming to Banamo Port? Is Lumian Lee the true name of an evil god or demon?"

won Mason had previously seen that the ritual only summoned a messenger, unrelated to evil gods or demons. As a Sequence 8 Beyonder, he had taken the risk, but the messenger made him uneasy.

Muttering to himself, Mason cleaned up the items on the altar.

Suddenly, he stopped and frowned.

"I think I've heard the name Lumian Lee somewhere before..."

He tried to recall but couldn't remember.

Before leaving the abandoned warehouse, Mason glanced back at the makeshift altar, seeing shadows shifting within the broken crates.

His heart tightened. Pretending he hadn't seen anything, Mason quickly left the warehouse.

In Trier, within Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, in the apartment rented by Franca and Jenna.

Lumian saw Penitent Baynfel step out of the void and hand him a letter.

He didn't even open it, knowing it contained only blank paper.

He asked his messenger, "Can you deliver a reply to the sender?"

"I can," Penitent Baynfel answered in a low voice.

Lumian smiled and pointed to himself.

"I am the reply."

In the foggy Banamo Port, Lumian leaned against the outer wall of the abandoned warehouse, watching the sender walk out with a fearful expression and quickly leave.

He smiled, took a golden straw hat from the Traveler's Backpack, looked at it for a moment, and put it back.

Having the famous adventurer Louis Berry appear here would arouse unnecessary suspicion and might cause Admiral Deep Sea Howl Constantine to change his destination and avoid Banamo Port.

Lumian straightened up, tightened his thick jacket, and walked slowly along the streets of Banamo Port, his hands in his pockets.

He planned to take a look around before returning to fetch Franca and the others.

Trier, late at night.

Angoulême arrived at the agreed-upon empty house to retrieve emergency contact information from Hidden Blade.

He quickly found the note and read its contents: “In case of emergency, summon my friend's messenger: “Rabbit-shaped spirit that wanders about the unfounded, a runner who pursues knowledge, a messenger that belongs solely to the Seven of Cups.”

Seven of Cups... From the Tarot Club? Hidden Blade, your friend is you, right? Angoulême muttered to himself.

He felt he understood why Hidden Blade always had so many troublesome matters.

Chapter 779 Pirate Haven

Banamo Port.

As Lumian strolled along the streets, he couldn't shake the feeling that he had arrived in Backlund, the capital of the Loen Kingdom. Although he had never been there, the foggy sky and damp, cold environment mirrored Trier's newspapers and magazines' mockery of Backlund.

Of course, the architectural style here was distinctly different from Backlund's. There were two main types: one was large yet not crude, with typical Feysac characteristics, and the other was a mix of stone and wood, simple and rough, often crowded together without any clear planning.

Most of the people on the streets were dressed like typical pirates, with short knives strapped to their waists and guns tucked into their belts, not bothering to conceal their weapons. In contrast, the locals with dark-brown skin always wore smiles, their faces full of deference.

Lumian fully understood the mindset of the natives. After all, angering a pirate could result in being dragged into a corner and killed, or having someone sneak into their home at night to murder them. The killer would then sail away on their pirate ship without a care.

The current rulers of Banamo Island were trying to recruit pirates and adventurers to maintain order and hoped the great pirates would agree on a pirate code to regulate behavior in the port. However, these measures had limited effectiveness.

This was because seasoned pirates couldn't suddenly start obeying laws and strict rules, even if they became sheriffs or police officers.

Moreover, there wasn't a strong enough force on the island to keep them in check. As a result, it was common for sheriffs to break the law and accept bribes to shield criminals.

The pirate code, agreed upon by the great pirates, wasn't mandatory.

Even if someone broke it, they would only face minor punishment within their own crew. No one would hand over their own men to be dealt with by others.

These measures' greatest effect was making Banamo Port appear somewhat orderly. As Lumian admired the bustling street scenes, he occasionally heard screams or gunshots from the alleys.

This place is perfect for a Hunter, he thought, genuinely appreciating it.

When two groups of pirates started a brawl in the middle of the street, Lumian had a sudden idea: A large-scale plague for a Demoness of Despair advancement ritual could work here...

But I would need to develop medicine to prevent infection or severe illness and secretly distribute it to the locals...

The only problem is that there aren't 30,000 pirates here. However, there are quite a few Beyonders among them. Infecting them and causing them suffering and despair should significantly reduce the number needed for the ritual...

As Lumian watched the pirate brawl with interest, he pondered the feasibility of holding the Demoness of Despair ritual in Banamo Port.

When the fight was almost over, the sheriffs finally arrived, dispersing the two groups and symbolically arresting a few people.

They were just waiting for the respective pirate crews to pay the fines!

As for the grievances between the two groups, the sheriffs didn't care. If they wanted revenge, they would have to settle it out at sea.

Meanwhile, adventurers and locals quietly dragged away some of the pirate corpses left on the street.

Lumian felt like applauding this kind of order.

Taking advantage of the remaining daylight and the sun filtering through the fog, he continued his leisurely stroll through Banamo Port.

Passing a stone house with a small square, he saw a dozen or so people gathered, mostly locals. A pirate wearing a bicorne hat and blue woolen clothes stood on a stone platform in front of them.

The pirate was shouting in Feysac, "You're just a bunch of pups fresh from your mother's embrace. If you want to become proper pirates, you need training. Today, I'll give you your first lesson: who you can and can't mess with at sea..."

Feysac was the language with the least difference from ancient Feysac.

Lumian, skilled in ancient Feysac, barely understood what the pirate was saying. He realized that the pirate crew was recruiting newcomers and providing basic training.

Why does this feel like a big company in Trier hiring new employees...

Lumian grumbled to himself as he watched the pirate display wanted posters and portraits, introducing the six kings, nine admirals, and notable adventurers.

This was exactly the information Lumian needed. He stopped and listened from a distance.

As expected, he saw a portrait and detailed introduction of Louis Berry.

At the end, the pirate with the bicorne hat pointed to a portrait and said, "His bounty isn't high, but you must never underestimate him, or even have any contact with him."

No contact at all? Lumian focused on the portrait, seeing a burly man in his thirties with thick brown body hair, wearing suspenders and a white shirt.

The pirate's tone became serious as he introduced the man to the new pirates, "His name is Frank Lee, the first mate of the Queen of Stars. He's a Druid.

"What is a Druid? I'll explain when we cover Beyond knowledge. For now, just know that a Druid is Sequence 5, on par with the Pirate Admirals. So, understand how terrifying Frank Lee is?"

"But that's not the main reason adventurers and pirates fear him. I don't know the exact reason either. I only know that every pirate and adventurer who's encountered Frank Lee acts like they've gone mad. They jump out of their chairs and sometimes vomit when his name is mentioned. They always warn me to stay away from Frank Lee and not to leave any blood near him or eat anything found around him..."

So, the legendary Druid Frank Lee is the first mate of the Pirate King...

But why are so many pirates and adventurers so terrified of him? Even if he has the strength of a Pirate Admiral and is ruthless, it shouldn't cause this reaction... Lumian silently mused as he listened to the pirate's introduction.

He was curious about what made Frank Lee so special.

After watching the pirate crew's recruitment, Lumian headed to the nearby Carnival Bar.

He pushed through the unapologetically pirate crowd and sat on a high stool at the bar, ordering a Lanti Proof.

The common language in Banamo Port was Feysac, but pirates spoke various languages, and few were multilingual. Those who spoke Feysac formed one circle, those who spoke Intisian another, and so on. Lumian chose the Carnival Bar because all its signage was in Intisian.

In the noisy, lively environment, Lumian took two sips of his drink, put down his glass, and asked the bartender loudly in Intisian, "Do you have detailed information on the nine Pirate Admirals? Something beyond the wanted posters."

Suddenly, the entire bar went silent. Every pirate turned to look at Lumian at the bar.

It became so quiet that the sound of someone swallowing could be heard.

The bartender's expression turned awkward and amused. He asked Lumian, "Are you an adventurer?"

An adventurer coming to a pirate bar to ask for detailed information on the Pirate Admirals!

Lumian didn't answer the bartender. He half-turned to look at the staring pirates.

Around him, one by one, crimson-white fireballs began to form and float in the air.

Lumian smiled, raising his chin slightly. "Even though your bounties are low and I don't want to bother, if anyone wants to give me money voluntarily, I won't mind accepting it."

The pirates' expressions changed, but Lumian's gaze remained steady.

He scanned their faces and sneered. "Anyone want to try?"

Silence. The entire Carnival Bar remained silent.

Everyone could feel the danger in those crimson-white fireballs.

Lumian stopped provoking them, pointing to a chair a few meters behind him.

“Don't appear behind me. Don't think about using the crowd to get close and assassinate me.

“If anyone crosses that chair, I'll kill them.”

After speaking, Lumian turned back, smiling at the bartender amid the fireballs.

“Now, you can answer my question.”

Seeing this adventurer not introduce himself or boast about his exploits, but show absolute confidence and a nonchalant attitude toward killing, the bartender forced a smile.

“We know about the same as the wanted posters. If you want more hidden details, ask the enemies of the Pirate Admirals. Emperor Roselle once said the person who knows you best is your enemy.”

“Tell me about each Pirate Admiral's enemies,” Lumian said, taking another sip of his Lanti Proof.

In the bar, the pirates resumed their conversations, while some quietly left, seemingly to find help upon seeing the adventurer easily maintain the fireballs.

Lumian didn't stop them or even look their way.

When the bartender finished, Lumian had a general understanding of who Admiral Deep Sea Howl Constantine's enemies were. This Pirate Admiral with sea monster blood was usually low-key and mysterious.

Besides doing pirate work in a bloody and brutal manner, he rarely clashed with other Pirate Admirals or major forces. However, the former Vice Admiral Dusk, now the King of Dusk, Bulatov Ivan, suspected Howl Constantine's two “submarine ships” came from a legendary sea treasure, the Lost Newins. He targeted Admiral Deep Sea, seeking information on the Newins, leading to multiple conflicts.

When Bulatov became a king over the seas, Admiral Deep Sea Howl Constantine had no choice but to avoid this powerhouse and his fleet.

Chapter 780 Primary Job

Lumian listened to the bartender recount the rivalries and grudges of the Pirate Admirals while the pirates behind him grew increasingly restless.

They were all hoping someone would make the first move, either by shooting or stabbing the arrogant adventurer, so they could all rush him at once.

But the threat of those crimson-white fireballs deterred them. They looked at each other, but no one dared cross the chair Lumian had designated.

They figured anyone this brazen had to be pretty strong, and the Carnival Bar was low-tier, with no high-profile pirates around. They could only hope those who had left would return with someone more formidable.

After about ten minutes, one of the pirates who had left pushed open the heavy wooden door.

Behind him was a middle-aged man wearing a tricorne hat and dressed in dark blue.

The pirates in the bar immediately straightened up, holding their breath. The noisy, lively atmosphere quickly returned to silence.

Some of them recognized the man, knowing him as Captain Flying Hadmagk of the Rosemary, a well-known pirate just below the Pirate Admirals, active on the Five Seas for over a decade.

The pirate who opened the door flashed a flattering smile and pointed at Lumian's back. "Captain, that's the adventurer I mentioned! He dared to provoke all the pirates in Banamo Port!"

Hadmagk, with his thick, dark hair and imposing presence, stared at Lumian's back for a few seconds. He paused before asking, "How long has he been maintaining those fireballs?"

"I don't know. They were there when I left the bar, but he might not have kept them up the whole time," the pirate replied. He grabbed a young pirate sitting by the door, pointing at Lumian and growling, "How long has he been keeping those fireballs up?"

The young pirate, a bit flustered, glanced at the old clock on the wall and stammered, "Almost... almost fifteen minutes."

Fifteen minutes? Flying Hadmagk's eyelid twitched, and he suddenly looked like he remembered something important.

He immediately cursed at his sailor, "Did you forget about our important deal at the docks? Bastard, is your brain filled with nothing but booze, women, and pride?"

Cursing, Flying Haddock turned and walked out of the Carnival Bar.

His sailor, though dumbfounded, instinctively followed him.

The captain is always right!

The Carnival Bar remained quiet as Lumian finished his Lanti Proof and stood up.

With those crimson-white fireballs still floating around him, he swept his gaze over the pirates once more.

Then he smiled, raised his right hand, brought his index and middle fingers to his lips, and blew softly.

It was like he was blowing away the smoke from a gun after shooting everyone in the bar.

As the pirates' eyes and expressions shifted, Lumian leisurely walked towards the door with his hands in his pockets.

One by one, the pirates instinctively moved out of his way.

Some felt aggrieved, some ground their teeth, and others consoled themselves with thoughts like, It's not fear; those fireballs are just too blinding!

Lumian seemed utterly unafraid of being ambushed as he walked out of the Carnival Bar, almost like he was receiving their admiration and welcome.

...

Late at night, in an inconspicuous hotel room in Banamo Port.

Leaning back in his chair, Lumian said to Franca, "Disguise yourself and spread the word that an unknown adventurer has been provoking all the pirates, claiming they're cowards with no real strength, and that he could crush any pirate's head under his boot."

Franca's mouth twitched slightly. "Fishing again? You're quite the expert at this..."

Lumian chuckled in response. "According to the information we've gathered, Admiral Deep Sea prefers to stay out of the public eye because of his sea monster bloodline. Even if he comes to Banamo Port, he'll likely stay on his flagship, the Newins. If he wants women or food, someone will bring it to him.

"In this situation, we'll have to risk sneaking onto the Newins. It's an alchemical ship from some ancient ruins, and we have no idea what traps or mechanisms it might have. Plus, there are bound to be many Beyonders pirates on board. As a Hunter, we should avoid fighting on someone else's turf.

"I deliberately provoked the pirates in Banamo Port because I know no Pirate Admirals are here right now. I have enough confidence to handle the other notable pirates. They should soon figure this out too. Expecting pirate crews to work together against me overestimates their trust in each other. Who would they rather rob?

"I don't expect the pirates to have collective pride, but they definitely want to show off their abilities and earn more fear and respect. The pirates in Banamo Port are waiting for a pirate strong enough to deal with me. At that point, when the Newins arrives and Admiral Deep Sea is here, what do you think will happen?"

Jenna suddenly understood.

"If Admiral Deep Sea leaves the Newins and takes action himself, that would be the best outcome. We would be fighting on our terms. Even if he isn't interested, his top men won't miss the chance. With Admiral Deep Sea as their backup, they won't fear failure and will be more willing to challenge you. This will reduce the number of Beyonders on the Newins, giving us our chance."

"Good psychological analysis," Lumian teased.

Jenna shot him a look.

"A good actor needs to understand people's minds."

"And then perform for the 'spectators'?" Lumian joked.

Anthony didn't react.

Franca scoffed. "What if a Pirate King's fleet arrives before the Newins?"

Lumian spread his hands and said, "That's why the adventurer is 'unknown. ' The benefit is that he can disappear without a trace. Change his face and appearance, and we can execute another plan."

"A Conspirer is really an outright schemer.." Franca muttered. "Alright, let's do it."

Lumian then discussed the possibility of using a large-scale plague in Banamo Port, emphasizing the need to secretly distribute preventive medicine to the locals beforehand.

Franca was stunned.

After a few seconds, she said, "You even thought of that... How about we start a plague company? Just kidding, there's some plausibility in this, but in this day and age, there are no vaccines-uh, preventive medicine?"

"Normally, we wouldn't have it, but we can turn to mysticism," Lumian replied. "The Apothecary path specializes in this. We just need to provide them with a number of infected individuals for observation, research, and experimentation. They should be able to create effective preventive or curative medicine. We won't have trouble finding an Apothecary. The Fool Pharmaceutical Company has plenty of them."

Lumian knew from Miss Magician that The Fool Pharmaceutical Company had many ties to the Tarot Club.

Jenna began to calculate.

"A medicine with mystical effects would cost at least 100 verl d'or per bottle. There are probably over ten thousand non-pirate residents in Banamo Port. We'd need to prepare at least a million verl d'or. We can't expect the Apothecaries from The Fool Pharmaceutical Company to work for free or cover the material costs."

One million verl d'or wasn't a small sum. Even a Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic only cost around 200,000 verl d'or.

"A million verl d'or to become a demigod is a good deal," Lumian suddenly laughed. "A million verl d'or is just an Admiral Deep Sea. Even if we can't kill him, his top men are valuable too."

Franca sighed and replied, "You're starting to sound a bit like Gehrman Sparrow. But while Gehrman Sparrow treated pirates as his piggy bank, only targeting high-bounty ones, you're aiming to eradicate them completely!"

A plague like that would likely affect thousands, if not tens of thousands, of pirates.

Before Lumian could respond, Franca self-mockingly laughed.

"Poor Admiral Deep Sea. Just sitting on his flagship, doing nothing, and suddenly he's our target."

Lumian chuckled, and said with some realization, “Nothing to pity. A Hunter's job is to create chaos and strife. And your primary job as a Demoness is to bring catastrophe and affliction. It's better to inflict these on pirates than innocent people.”

Franca and Jenna fell silent for a moment.

...

Achoo!

Banamo Port, Mason, sitting at the docks with a bottle of rye beer, suddenly sneezed.

He immediately thought of the messenger summoning ritual he had completed that afternoon and the unsettling messenger it had summoned, muttering to himself, “Could that sneeze be some kind of spirituality warning?”

“Am I really going to be the protagonist of some occult event, the fool who makes a mistake and attracts an evil god or devil?”

“Did the ritual I performed bring some kind of catastrophe to Banamo Port?”

“Have hidden dangers and problems started quietly spreading in the shadows?”

Gulping down a large swig of beer, Mason tried to reassure himself that he was just scaring himself.

From afternoon until now, there had been no signs of calamity or reports of strange phenomena!

It was just a messenger summoning. It should be fine!