

The Righteous Player(s)

Chapter 491: The Current Dmitri

“You're too kind, Ms. Bunyan.” The middle-aged man who always laughed a lot touched the back of his head and let out a hearty laugh, “In our customs, it should be me treating the guests.”

The lady with flaxen long curly hair and blue eyes nodded reservedly.

A well-hidden joy and satisfaction flashed in her eyes after hearing that she was called “Bunyan” instead of “Leona”.

Can she be satisfied just by being called by her last name?

Annan noticed the details, thinking silently in his heart.

Annan learned the tranquility and easygoingness that enabled him to get along well with anyone from the Prophet Wizard named “Ghirlandaio”... or rather the living sculpture that was given life.

It was the prototype of Annan's [The Last Work] curse.

But now, Annan noticed another person in the underground world through Lin Yiyi's eyes. The man named Nieusel had a clean, innocent, simple, and cheerful smile. So, Annan quickly absorbed and learned the relevant skills.

A marble stone statue was undoubtedly stiff, but “Ghirlandaio” was different.

It was not acting but the nature of the living marble golem imitating humans. It was natural, just like a cheetah knowing how to hunt and a goshawk knowing how to fly.

Then, Annan had a new expression to use.

Ms. Leona, who also had a smile, felt closely toward this stranger she first met.

—Naturally, it could not be because of the other party's out-of-town merchant's dress up.

The Bunyan family was not short of money.

Instead, it was because of that simple and cheerful smile.

Of course, Leona knew that a business person couldn't have a soul capable of showing such a smile. So it must be his disguise or acting.

But so what?

It was not like she wanted to marry him, let alone do important business with him. The nature of the other party had nothing to do with her. If it was just a fair-weather friendship, then choosing the one she got along happily was the right choice.

As for the wisdom in picking friends, Leona was well-versed in it.

Or rather, the Bunyans were excellent at it.

“In our Austere-Winter, there is no rule of having the guests treat the meal.” Leona smiled and poured Ghirlandaio a glass of pale, stale wine before filling her glass.

She raised her glass and gulped it down.

Then, he smacked his lips happily, turned the glass upside down, and gestured to Ghirlandaio.

Ghirlandaio's kind and cheerful smile never faded.

He just drank a glass of wine with a smile and put the empty glass back on the table without changing his expression.

“Compared to buying me a drink,” Ghirlandaio lamented, “I'm quite amazed at the fact that I'm drinking with a stranger for the first time in a conversation.”

“Of course.” Leona chuckled and filled her glass again, “Where do the Noahs like to meet strangers? Teahouses? Theaters?”

“Theaters sometimes, but we usually treat someone to a meal in our own family's manor. Strictly speaking, most people around us are acquaintances. During the social season, the nobles of the Noah Kingdom hold banquets two to three times a week.

“Everyone is either holding a banquet at their own home or on the way to someone else's banquet. At the banquet, we are already acquainted, so we're no longer strangers.” Ghirlandaio drank his wine and replied casually.

Leona also drank her wine without changing her expression. Then, she poured more wine with a chuckle, “Your Excellency Ghirlandaio seems to have excellent alcohol tolerance. I thought only Austerian liked to drink.”

“Our Noah Kingdom's drinking capacity is actually not that bad. Especially after practicing at the banquet.” Ghirlandaio said with a smile.

So, you want to make me drunk?

Sorry, it might be a waste of wine. I'm just a marble-stone golem.

A true heart of stone.

Leona frowned when she captured what Ghirlandaio meant, "Oh?"

The meaning behind his words was that "I often attend banquets."

So she followed the topic and asked, "Could it be? Which family's second son are you?"

In Austere-Winter Dukedom, the eldest son usually inherited the title and territory, and the other heirs would receive a share of funds after they reached adulthood. They relied on the connections they built when they were young and an initial fund to run their businesses.

They called this kind of heir who did not inherit the title and turned to business and politics, regardless of the birth order, the "second son".

Ghirlandaio just smiled.

He did not answer this question but asked politely, "Before answering this question, I also want to ask..."

"Bunyan—Is that the Bunyan I know?"

Of course, this was a pleasantry.

Sure enough, Annan had never heard of "Bunyan".

At least it must not be a prominent noble. Otherwise, Annan must have seen the name in a book.

When Leona heard this, the corners of her mouth rose.

However, before Leona could answer, Annan heard another familiar voice, "Bunyan... They are crazy hounds. Do you now have a name that you can be proud of?"

A man sneered, lifted the heavy leather curtain to shelter himself from the wind, and walked into the private tavern with a few customers.

Wrapped in the frosty wind, the man sat beside Annan.

Leona frowned when she heard his words, and her face suddenly turned cold.

However, when she saw the face of the person who came, she was taken aback for a moment. Nevertheless, she immediately stood up, paying respects to the person who arrived, "Your Royal Highness Dmitri."

It was Annan's elder brother, Dmitri-Austere-Winter.

However, he was slightly different from the Elder Brother Annan saw in the two nightmares.

The Dmitri in his nightmare dungeon was a stylish man with no one hair out of place. He had a well-proportioned figure, a straight back, and long pure black hair hanging down to his waist. There was no mess on his head, no stains on his body, and no dirt under his nails.

However, Annan felt Dmitri had become ten years older than in his dream.

His habitually frowning had developed three deep wrinkles. The wrinkled skin under the furrowed brow looked like a ghost-like totem.

He was wearing a heavy Frost Beasts fur coat with his arms, not in the sleeves. The shirt underneath was rolled up to the elbows, and he had a thick cigar dangling at his mouth.

His hands were clean, but bulging veins could already be seen on the back of his white and burly hands.

"Long time no see, Ms. Leona," Dmitri said in a deep voice, smoking a cigar.

Leona's complexion turned slightly pale.

In Austere-Winter, the standard way of greeting people should be to address them as brothers and sisters or as uncles and nephews. Because of the Old Grandmother, the Austerians consider each other family — at least in terms of etiquette.

If the address was not carried out in this manner, it meant "they were not close".

However, that was not the case with the Bunyans and the Austere-Winters.

His Royal Highness Dmitri seemed to be annoyed.

Leona did not dare to utter a word for a moment.

Dmitri sat on the right side of Annan, diagonally opposite to Leona.

His elbows leaned on the armrests as he crossed his hands and placed them in front of his stomach.

He spewed a puff of mist lightly, and the smoke from the cigar slowly spread around.

“I haven't seen you for about two years.

“But, you still keep the word 'Bunyan' on your lips.”

He nibbled on the end of his cigar; his voice was still so low and magnetic, “It seems that time can't change anything, can it?”

Compared to six years ago, Dmitri's voice had become a little hoarse due to excessive smoking.

Dmitri did not continue to trouble Leona.

He only gave a slight warning, and his tone softened. Then, he looked at Annan beside him—or rather, “Ghirlandaio”.

“Who is this?”

“Ghirlandaio,” the black-haired, black-eyed middle-aged man smiled. He sat on a chair while bowing slightly. He had greeted Dmitri politely, “My full name is Ghirlandaio David Buonaro, Your Royal Highness Dmitri.”

Hearing the name, Dmitri's pupils shrank slightly.

Report

Chapter 492: The Man Betting Against Deity

—Ghirlandaio David Buonaro.

Yes, Dmitri had heard that name from Maria before.

That was a few years ago, shortly after Dmitri's incident.

In that bet against the deity, Dmitri lost his ability to bear offspring because of his defeat. Subsequently, he lost the right to inherit the Austere-Winter Dukedom.

Although the matter was kept strictly confidential, the public statement was that “Dmitri was cursed because of the Rotten Man's plot”.

Of course, this was not a lie. Even the Edict Magic would judge that this statement was true. Dmitri had lost because the Rotten Man had pulled strings in the dark. Ultimately, the Rotten Man had taken away Dmitri's “bet”.

Others might wonder why the Rotten Man dared to make a move on the direct descendants of an upright deity.

However, they could only hide this doubt in their hearts.

After all, that was the Rotten Man!

It was a common awareness to be respectful to the deities. However, among the deities, there was obviously a gap.

It was not surprising that Rotten Man would do anything.

They would see Dmitri as a poor man who was attacked. No one knew what kind of excellent deeds he did when he was young.

After all, he was defeated.

As a result, he was forced to hand over the responsibility that was initially on his shoulders to his younger brother.

Of course, he did not blame Annan.

Dmitri was very clear that Annan's plan was indeed correct and effective.

However, Annan's capability was still incomparable to their father.

Even the precocious Annan still lost to Ivan Austere-Winter.

Although the [Winter Heart] curse had interfered, Annan could still show sympathy to others. He could use the power in his hands rationally and cautiously, and he had never misjudged any crime. Thus, he would be a king who rewarded and punished fairly, was compassionate to his people, and always rational. This was also why only one-third of the young people left when the Austere-Winter Dukedom succumbed to the winter year.

With only one and a half legions still able to participate in the battle, they relied on geographical advantages and strategic commander advantages to fend off the Noah Kingdom's aggression many times. However, Dmitri did not know why King Noah wanted to invade Austere-Winter and go for a sudden peace treaty.

In the end, except for the Freezing Water Port, a peace treaty was signed without paying any price. Even the given Freezing Water Port made the Noah Kingdom a little uneasy. Instead, that place felt like a spy in their kingdom.

Austere-Winter hardly paid any price, but the Noah Kingdom was greatly tormented.

Even when Ivan had to take over the Austere-Winter Dukedom during the "winter year", Ivan did not complain. Instead, the country was governed orderly, creating the lowest mortality rate in the winter year of all generations. It was even the first time that immigrants returned to Austere-Winter Dukedom before the winter year was over.

However, Ivan's excellent quality might have drawn the envy of fate.

He had an incurable disease.

The reason why it was incurable was that this "disease" came from Ivan's excellence. So instead of saying it was a disease, it was more like a gift.

His innate ability [Winter Heart] had long evolved to the ultimate form [Austere Winter's Blood] at the same level as Old Grandmother.

This was the central mystery passed down at the beginning of the world's birth.

It was the ultimate meaning of the Truth carried in the Old Grandmother's bloodline.

If Ivan was a Gold Rank transcender, he might be able to use this power to alter himself into a dragon.

However, the problem was that Ivan was not even a Transcender.

That was because of his clear self-awareness, knowing he did not have such strong desires and obsessions. Thus, he would not be able to set foot on the Gold Rank. Since he knew he could not reach his limit, Grand Duke Ivan had not embarked on this path from the beginning.

But it was simply not the strength that a mortal body could bear.

As a result, Ivan was plagued by illness, and heat would suddenly escape his body every few days. This had happened even though the Austere Winter's Blood in Ivan's body was relatively gentle. Those who came into contact with Ivan's blood would immediately suffer severe frostbite. The effect was like barraging liquid nitrogen onto the face.

The Austere-Winter family could withstand almost all types of damage, but only the "Frost" attribute damage would kill them.

However, as long as the Old Grandmother woke up, Ivan could be saved.

The "Wymrest" of the Old Grandmother was the covenant She established when She ascended, which She could not defy.

Every Wymrest would never exceed 80 years.

As long as Ivan could live for another 30 years, he could be saved.

But, obviously, he could not take it anymore.

Grand Duke Ivan's ability to move was getting worse. He occasionally vomited blood with ice shards in it. Also, his body would lose heat once every two days on average. His speeches became slurred. His body would tremble violently, and his thinking was in a mess as if he had Alzheimer's disease.

He could only persevere through the ritualist's medical treatment.

However, the Grand Duke, who was able to go to the front line to supervise the battle with high spirits, could never return.

Annan thought this was because Ivan possessed transcended strength at the Truth Rank level, but his mortal body could not contain it.

Among the many deities, the Cup-holding Lady could preserve a person's memory and revert the body to a newborn baby. The Pale Princess could alter a person into a sane ghost. The Motherly Moth could make another person inherit all the memories of the target person. Finally, the Rotten Man was able to make mortals "immortal". These were the solutions that could solve the problem.

The first target the Austere-Winter Dukedom picked was the Rotten Man.

This was also the most thorough solution — as long as they could win the bet.

The Rotten Man had to find seven sacrifices to complete his ritual. He did not dare to make a move on the people of the Austere-Winter Dukedom. In comparison, the Underground Federation had no king, and the "kings" of the Papal Kingdom were the seven upright deities' popes.

Even if the Rotten Man completed his ritual in the United Kingdom and the Noah Kingdom, the number was far from enough.

Thus, the Rotten Man had to accept the bet Dmitri made.

He used his "royal blood" to summon the Deity of Immortality and Heirless, Rotten Man and bet against him.

If Dmitri won, then Rotten Man would give the most outstanding immortality to the Austere-Winter's Grand Duke "Ivan III" and use the same immortal power at the Truth Rank to neutralize Ivan's strength;

If Dmitri lost, then Rotten Man would take away Dmitri's fertility.

Thus, if the Rotten Man lost, only one immortal would be added to His ritual's formula. This was equivalent to adding an Undying of the same level as himself. In fact, the last step of the Rotten Man ascendancy ritual was to kill all the Undying except Himself.

However, for each additional Undying, his power would amplify. Thus, it was a win-win situation.

As long as Dmitri won the bet, he would help Rotten Man progress in His ascendancy ritual.

No matter what, the Rotten Man suffered no loss.

It was just that Dmitri was inadequate. He hesitated for a moment at the last moment and lost to the Rotten Man.

Originally, Dmitri had to consider other methods.

Could he negotiate with other upright deities in exchange for this miraculous power?

Although he did not know any rituals, his brother Annan would.

Annan always knew everything.

He just had to pay the price whether it was fertility or longevity, kidney, hair or skin.

If you want to take it, you can do whatever you want.

How was Dmitri so free and easy?

That was because Dmitri-Austere-Winter was never afraid to “give”.

He was not a transcender nor a ritualist.

He was the Old Grandmother's bishop and would be the cardinal-bishop in the future. If all the bishops believed in him, he would also be the Old Grandmother's pope.

Since Dmitri was a child, he swore to give all his soul to all living beings.

There was no room for his own flesh and blood in the path he was destined to walk.

Report

Chapter 53: March 4, 1458

“Recently, the public security bureau arrested Mr. Amos Morrison, a famous artist and painter of Freezing Water Port, for consecutive homicides.”

“According to an anonymous letter, there were a large number of dead bodies hidden in His Excellency Amos Morrison's gallery. Although the sheriff, His Excellency Hiram, thought this might be a prank, our respectable Sergeant Hiram still brought his security

team and police with the assistance of several people relevant in the field to inspect Morrison's gallery last night.”

Eh?

Gallery?

Annan saw this and came into deep thought.

He looked up and saw that this newspaper was called “Recent Events in the North Sea,” which seemed to be a monthly newspaper.

After noting down the name, Annan unfolded the already somewhat easily torn newspaper and read carefully:

“Earlier, His Excellency Amos Morrison reported to the Freezing Water Port Police Station, claiming that his daughter Elle Morrison was missing inexplicably. Because of Mr. Amos's outstanding artwork, this caused an uproar.

“Our beloved Viscount Alvin Barber and honorable Count Geraint also inspected this matter for a while. The Freezing Water Port police bureau joined hands with the public security bureau in Roseburg, Whiteland, High Cliff Castle, and other places to jointly handle the case. They recruited many well-known detectives and those in the same field. Elle Morrison's whereabouts were not found in the end, albeit with the assistance of relevant personnel in the industry.

“This incident was once introduced to the capital as a case proving the North Sea Territory's weak governing power. Count Geraint severely criticized the incident. The former Freezing Water Port Police Chief, Job Boro resigned because of the unfavorable handling of the case.

“At 2:15 on March 4, Sergeant Hiram's investigation team was attacked in Morrison's gallery. Three police officers died, unfortunately. The two police officers also went crazy on the spot because the scene was too cruel, and they suffered a substantial mental shock. They then died of injuries a few days later.

“The perpetrator was killed on the spot. The police station recovered the dead bodies. The identity was reported to be a mercenary from the swamp. More details, including the number of perpetrators, were still under confidentiality.

“According to the testimony of a drinker who had just left Rotten Fish Bar, he heard a roar at about 2:30 in the morning. After he rushed to Morrison's gallery, he found that the police officers were talking to a burning person with flames all over his body. He was stunned in shock during the police's battle with a Giant Ball made of flesh. He shouted, attracting the attention of the Meatball emitting colorful light. Then, he was knocked out from the back.

“Later, Sergeant Hiram found multiple Elle Morrison's body pieces in Morrison's gallery. They were hidden inside the frame with the police dogs sniffing them out. Before that, Morrison's gallery had always prohibited pets from entering.

“Elle Morrison was originally named Elle Buckel. When she was seven, her biological father died. Her mother, Clara Buckel, remarried Amos Morrison, who was five years younger than her. Elle also changed her surname to Morrison at this time.

“When she was fourteen years old, her mother Clara died of illness for unknown reasons. In Morrison's gallery basement, a six-month-old stillbirth that had just been made into a specimen was found. The relevant personnel in security confirmed that the mother was Elle Morrison while the father was Amos Morrison. We have reason to suspect that there is an improper and unhealthy relationship between them.”

Below, there was a “Note: This specimen has been recovered by the relevant department” in a line of small letters.

A six-month stillbirth?

Annan paused.

If the year Elle died, and Amos was arrested, it was the second year of the nightmare.

He roughly calculated it. The month Elle was pregnant. It was almost the month when Amos's second plotline appeared in the ritual.

Annan felt a crippling horror crawling on his back.

But he didn't realize where this uneasy feeling came from.

He continued to read:

“Elle Morrison's body was confirmed to have died half a month ago by the relevant police and security team. It was exactly ten days after Mr. Amos Morrison reported the case.

“In addition, in the underground warehouse of Morrison's gallery, many corpses were also found. Most of them were vagrants, but the famous art critic Absalom Flagg was there too. He was a critic of Morrison's paintings in the past. But half a year ago, he became Morrison's fanatical supporter. Three months ago, he went to Freezing Water Port to participate in Mr. Morrison's painting exhibition, but he disappeared halfway.

“We have reason to suspect that Amos killed Absalom Flagg. His Excellency Amos confessed to this fact.”

“When asked about the other details in the gallery and the so-called Colored Meatball, His Excellency Sheriff Hiram said:

“Undoubtedly, the mercenaries from the swamp are fighting us. The police officers on the scene can attest to this. The reason for the abstract monster to appear on the scene can only be the effect of alcohol. We have nothing to comment on about what happened in the gallery related to confidentiality regulations. Mr. reporter, I sincerely tell you that it's a great blessing that you did not show up at the scene. I think anyone with a conscience and sound morals will cry for the tragedy in the basement.'

“At present, the public security team will lock down Morrison's gallery. The relevant persons involved are being interrogated one after another. His Excellency Morrison is under strict imprisonment control. It is reported that the feudal lord intends to dismantle Morrison's gallery shortly.”

Is this the end of Amos?

Annan wrote down all the other newspaper contents in the same period and then slowly closed the newspaper back.

Count Geraint.

Which Geraint forty-five years ago?

Is it Don Juan's father or his grandfather?

Also, is the Roseburg viscount mentioned in the nightmare – Alvin Barber?

Elle's previous last name, “Buckel.”

If Annan remembered correctly, in the cutscene cinematic graphics of the nightmare, Amos yelled, “Don't...Buckel...”

Who is he talking to?

Annan vaguely realized that these old news were connected. It was even possible that not just because of the prohibition of trade exports with Chilly Austere Dukedom, other reasons were contributing to the Freezing Water Port being abandoned decades ago.

So, Don Juan coming to this land might be more than simply because of “the harms in the capital.”

“Forty-five years ago.”

Annan murmured.

He silently wrote down this number.

In any case, something must have happened forty-five years ago.

“How is it?”

Salvatore on the side looked at Annan, looking solemnly at the newspaper, and couldn't help asking, “Are there any gains?”

“Yes. Do you still have the newspaper this year?”

Annan replied immediately, “I want the news on the previous year too.”

The current time was December 1503 in the new calendar. The Cold-Blooded Lady and the strict Old Grandmother protected the last month of the year. It would soon be 1504.

Then, it was 1458 forty-five years ago.

At this time, something must have happened.

“Such old newspapers are not easy to find. Their circulation is small.”

Salvatore scratched his head in trouble, “I only brought the newspapers related to Gerant family and Black Tower this time, mainly for fear of taboos. It may not be possible to find all of them. I will try my best.”

“Thank you, senior.”

Annan nodded.

It was better to let Salvatore help with the investigation than to run in like a headless fly.

Annan urgently needed to deal with another issue personally.

“My guards, what's the situation now?”

Report