

From Secret Clan to the Divine Dynasty

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Chapter 121: Chapter 116: The New Blood Receiver

Another year passed, and the Fischer family suddenly found themselves scorned by many nobles of the East Coast. The reasons were complex.

The initial stages of the naval war were not going well. The White Sea was dotted with thousands of islands, far too many to control, while the Cyart people's alchemical battle barques were too few in number.

The Cyart's alchemical Type-7 battle barque, known for its low hull, square sails, and cannons mounted on both sides, was celebrated in the Eastern Four Kingdoms for its alchemy-enhanced power and defensive capabilities, as well as its remarkable mobility and sturdy build.

Its downside was that the constant use of large alchemical magic arrays required an immense amount of resources, which considerably increased the construction cost, resulting in a scant number of battle barques the Cyart could produce.

The Rhea People's naval skills were abysmal; the Cyart had once heavily defeated them through naval superiority, and the Rhea even called the alchemical Type-7 battle barques "Devil's Ships."

However, the tables completely turned during the war between the Cyart and the Sea God Cult.

Tens of thousands of the Sea God Cult's followers lived scattered across over a thousand islands. Whenever an enemy approached, they would promptly escape into the sea with the aid of the sea tribe, avoiding direct confrontation with the Cyart army.

And when the Cyart forces were exhausted from their time at sea, the Sea God Cult would command the sea tribe to attack directly from the seabed, which resulted in heavy casualties for the Cyart in the early stages of the war.

Even as the Tempest Bishop, abandoning his previous apathy, rushed back and forth above the waves, launching strike after strike, he still couldn't annihilate the Sea God Cult, which fought using the terrain to their advantage.

There had always been an important rumor that a new Monarch Level power had emerged within the Sea God Cult, so the Tempest Church and the Cyart nobility had been on guard for a long time.

But after two whole years of war, no one had encountered any Monarch Level adversaries, and it was eventually dismissed as nothing more than a deliberate rumor spread by the Sea God Cult.

The reason the Fischer family became the target of the disdain from numerous nobles, of course, was because, while many noble families suffered casualties, they stayed comfortably behind everyone else, making a fortune.

During the two years of war, Fischer family factories operated almost nonstop day and night. Workers took shifts, with invigorating food and medicines for healing wounds delivered to the front lines every week.

The Garcia family and the Eagle clan constantly slandered and attacked the Lion clan in various situations, and the Fischer family had recently become their frequent target.

While everyone was fighting desperately on the front lines every day against the hideous sea tribe from the depths, the Fischer family, like a money-grabbing dog under the sick lion, kept draining the blood of the Cyart people!

To be honest, Byrne found such comments to be nonsensical; the military supplies produced by the Fischer family never cut corners and were always made responsibly.

Moreover, logistics were crucial in warfare. Although they only received a small portion of the military supply orders, the continuous production of military supplies by the Fischer family's factories could still significantly impact the front lines if it were disrupted.

However, the nobles who fought together on the battlefield naturally felt more empathy with each other. Public opinion quickly turned, leading the Fischer family to be scorned by the upper circles of the East Coast, even earning nicknames like "vampires" and "cowardly fishermen."

Just a short while ago, a viscount openly brought out a live fish at a banquet, hoping that "fisherman" Byrne could process it on the spot, causing laughter to erupt from the crowd.

Byrne, now thirty-one, didn't get angry. Making money came at a cost. Let them curse; after all, those who dared to insult him to his face were all enemies of the Lion clan and couldn't possibly be friendly with the Fischer family.

And while they laughed merrily now, their appearance when the sea tribe breached the hull of their ships at sea was indeed quite pitiful.

Finally, Yeager, Savoie, Inna, and Mormir, the four of them, returned from the military academy in Fein City.

Just as Irene had said early on, they were bound to return to the Fischer family.

Because before sending them away, Fischer had already tested their loyalty. If they were the sort who felt no sense of belonging to the family, they would have never been chosen in the first place.

Byrne and the others were not fools, so how could they possibly waste money and connections nurturing someone who wouldn't belong to the family?

Therefore, the new Lost Ritual was about to start, and the Fischer family would soon have new Blood Receivers.

—

In Irene's bedroom at the Fischer Manor.

Dressed in black, Irene sat calmly on the bed, looking at her younger brother Chris, who stood in front of her, already taller than herself and just a bit shorter than Byrne.

She reached out and took his hand.

"What are you really thinking, Chris?" she asked.

"..."

Chris remained silent. Irene knew he was the strong, silent type and didn't mind. Instead, she continued speaking.

"You're sixteen now, you've had your coming-of-age ceremony. Even though I've never talked to you about this before, it's something we must discuss now."

She hesitated for a moment before delicately saying:

"Do you like Vanessa? How much do you like her? Is it that you want to be with her no matter what, or is there room for compromise?"

The phrase "room for compromise" held many nuances, the understanding of which was left to the judgment of each individual's heart.

Chris remained silent, his gaze serene as he continued to look at his sister, the one who cherished him most.

"..."

Irene fell into silence for a while before she couldn't help but continue her advice.

"Chris, I hope you can have a child in the next two years. You know the situation our family is in; every additional child is really important."

"Byrne and Margaret's situation has been particularly worrying to me. He feels genuine, deep-seated guilt and would almost compensate her for everything except family interests. He certainly wouldn't force Margaret to give birth again."

"In fact, I feel very sorry for Margaret too..."

Sighing, Irene went on:

"And I know you too well to understand that when it comes to emotions, you're a thousand times more stubborn than Byrne and me, sigh."

"..."

The handsome Chris still didn't respond, maintaining his silence.

The atmosphere grew uncomfortably tense until Irene got up to leave, prompting Chris to finally ask slowly:

"I want her to become my wife."

Irene stopped in her tracks and looked at her brother.

She had intended to say something like "make her stronger" or "make her worthy of you," but seeing the determination in Chris's eyes, and recalling Vanessa's private sobs that she had overheard through the Secret Ear Technique, she suddenly found she couldn't say those words.

So, Irene's final response was, "Alright, but you two must find happiness."

As the siblings left the room and encountered many servants in the corridor, they were greeted with respectful salutations.

"Good day, Madam Irene," "Young Master Chris"...

Quickly, they arrived at the manor's basement to start preparing the items needed for the Lost Ritual—it would only be half an hour before members of the Fischer family would arrive one after another, and in two hours, the Lost Ritual would officially commence.

The third arrival was Mormir, who nodded in greeting before kneeling quietly to the side and began to pray softly with his eyes closed.

According to plans laid out by the Fischer family, the composed Mormir would later become a “police officer,” tasked with collecting relevant intelligence.

Irene felt that Mormir had a good chance of becoming a “Devotee.” His faith in the Lord of the Lost ran deep within his heart.

Mormir’s parents had both perished at the hands of a Spawn of the Abyss summoned by the Sea God Cult.

He himself greatly revered the Lord of the Lost, the nemesis of the Spawn, believing only His greatness could truly transform this increasingly chaotic and desperate world.

Yeager and Savoie followed, the two men who had been at odds a year ago now nearly inseparable—one smooth and easy-going, the other hot-tempered and belligerent—yet had become as close as brothers.

With sunshine-like blond hair and brimming with aristocratic demeanor, the ever-smiling Yeager was immediately drawn to the towering altar, attracted by the sacred object that had altered the fate of the Fischer family.

“Hospital Director Irene, I am honored. I’ve waited so long for this day—to finally see It, at last...” he said.

Byrne and Theo arrived next.

“Sorry, have I almost arrived too late? I’ve been so busy,” Byrne immediately inquired.

“Not at all, there’s still plenty of time,” Irene replied, shaking her head.

It was true that Byrne was incredibly busy, with the increasingly complex organizational structure of the Fischer family, he was clearly struggling to keep up.

Others, like Vanessa, Archibald, and Erik, also arrived one after another.

Chris and Vanessa exchanged glances.

The last to arrive was Inna, who looked extremely nervous and anxious, completely speechless.

Byrne and Irene quickly noticed her discomfort. Byrne gave a nod, and Irene took Inna to a corner, saying:

“Inna, the ritual is about to start—are you afraid? What’s the matter?”

Inna turned white and said, “I—I’m scared, sorry, Hospital Director, but I’m truly scared.”

Irene frowned slightly and asked in a low voice, “Are you scared of our Lord?”

Inna’s legs went weak, and her petite body nearly faltered as she quickly shook her head, her voice tremulous with sobs:

“No, no, no, I shouldn’t feel fear; I’m sorry, Hospital Director Irene. I know the Lord of the Lost is the greatest being; He will grant us strength, He will grant us everything!”

Irene fell silent for a moment, then spoke slowly:

“I’ve said before, that disappearance of the town wasn’t our doing, Inna. It was the work of those impostors who should drown in the abyss. Our Lord is not an Evil God... and you’re not here to be a sacrifice, either.”

Inna hung her head low, trembling, while Irene had already grasped what Inna was actually afraid of.

The notoriety of the Lost followers had spread through the newspapers.

People on the East Coast, and even most of the Cyart people, were aware there was a heinously evil cult—the Lost Cult—that had crazily sacrificed an entire town to an Evil God!

And she was the most suspicious child, fearful that everything over the past few years was a sham, and that she would soon joyfully become a tragic sacrifice to the Evil God.

In fact, this sort of deception was not uncommon among heretical groups, where many low-level followers unwittingly ended up as sacrifices to mysterious beings.

Although understanding, Irene was still displeased and stopped reassuring Inna with a stern face.

“Time is almost up, get ready.”

She said coldly, “Even if you truly wished to be a sacrifice, you wouldn’t be qualified.”

With half an hour left before the Lost Ritual’s start, just as Yeager and the others thought they were the only Blood Receivers, another person suddenly arrived.

The man was short in stature, clad in a black suit, sporting a small mustache, hair meticulously combed with respect shining in his eyes.

Grandma Narda’s eldest son, Moore Shelby, the leader of the Dagger Brotherhood.

Moore’s face was still smeared with blood, panting heavily, he immediately bowed and said to Irene:

"I apologize, Madam Irene, for my lateness, but I had to deal with some urgent matters in the East City District; however, I've now resolved them."

Yeager's smile slightly faded, realizing that the new Blood Receivers weren't only from Daybreak Orphanage.

Irene nodded and said calmly, "It's alright, Moore. Find your place, the ritual is about to begin."

Once Moore had taken his place at the back, she began to speak slowly:

"We shall lead you to the Spirit Realm in your dreams, to witness His most magnificent power. You will receive the blood of the Fischer family, filled with extraordinary destiny, and gain powers that transcend those of mere mortals!"

Chapter 122: Chapter 117 Consecution "Bard", "Sheriff

Irene did not ask what exactly had happened in East City, since Moore had already said that the matter was taken care of, she was willing to trust him.

She and Byrne were becoming increasingly aware of something, since they held high positions, there was no need to inquire into every little thing.

Everyone's energy was limited, if they cared too much about all the trivial matters, even thirty hours a day would not be enough, and they might even neglect important matters as a result.

The Lost Ritual began again.

Yeager, Savoie, Mormir, Inna, and Moore took the potion and followed Irene and Byrne into the Spirit Realm.

The Spirit Realm provided a shocking experience for everyone, and the next moment, they were astonished by the black glint hanging high in the sky, with Mormir even becoming incredibly excited, unable to help shouting out loud, he was completely unlike his usual indifferent demeanor!

Irene felt very clearly for a moment that her spirituality was boiling.

So it was, Mormir had witnessed the greatness of the Lord of the Lost and had evidently become a person of devotion.

He was the second one, but still not enough.

She knew very clearly that she needed more devoted people to reach the 3rd Rank.

Was it three people or four? Irene was not very sure.

After passing through the Gate of Shadow and completing the Lost Ritual, everyone returned to the real world, where the sacrifice of extraordinary materials formally began.

Every one of them waited with excitement.

Here it comes again, huh? Karl silently watched the five new recipients of the Fischer family's blood.

He pondered how to bestow completely different Powers of Consecution upon each of the five based on their individual personalities.

Yeager, the smiling blond youth, was someone who harbored ambition deep within and was also good at trading, suitable for both the Path of Conquest and the Path of Contract.

So, let him proceed on the Path of Conquest that suited him better.

Savoie was hot-tempered and easily emotional, undoubtedly a fit for the Path of Calamity.

Aside from that, Moore, the leader of the Dagger Brotherhood, was a man who valued rules highly, very suitable for the Path of World Order.

Mormir was very devout, and could walk the Path of Divine Sacrifice just like Irene.

As for the young girl Inna, her personality was not very outstanding, which somewhat troubled Karl internally.

She was not very devout; she became a Blood Receiver more in the hopes of proving to Irene and Vanessa that she was also making an effort and wished to keep up with them.

Apart from being rather skeptical, Inna's other personality traits were close to those of an ordinary person, and "skepticism" was not a trait required by any rank of the God Pantheon stairway.

The only thing that could be considered outstanding about her was craftsmanship; she had good manual abilities, could sew dolls, and possessed a certain aesthetic sense.

Then, let Inna embark on the Path of Wholeheartedness.

Karl once again arrived in the Spirit Realm, selecting the appropriate "constellations" to infuse into the new Extraordinary law.

In the “constellation,” stood a green Bard lost in self-admiration, completely engrossed in verses and poems.

That was the 1st Rank of the Path of Wholeheartedness.

The Power of Consecution “Bard.”

Finally, the Spiritual Radiance descended abundantly.

Everyone’s faces were filled with joy and excitement, as they, who were once ordinary people, suddenly acquired extraordinary power – perhaps there were not many things in the world more delightful than this!

“I’ve finally got it! Path of Conquest, Gladiator!”

Yeager couldn’t completely suppress the smile on his face, extremely excited with his shoulders even trembling slightly.

The tall and strong Savoie couldn’t help but laugh, saying heartily,

“Amazing! Hahaha! I’m no longer afraid of you, Archibald, you bastard! The power that I now possess is the same as yours, both of us are Gale Protectors!”

Archibald knelt beside him, snorting coldly as he watched the triumphant Savoie, who was stronger than himself.

He used to rely on the physical capabilities provided by his extraordinary power to win drinks against Savoie time and again, but the future was uncertain now.

“Praise the great Lord of the Lost! How great it is! I, I can hardly believe...”

Mormir, now a “Squire,” prayed joyously and continuously.

“Silence!”

Irene frowned slightly and glared at a few of them, who immediately dared not speak anymore, as they had just been unable to contain their emotions, causing them to speak before the ceremony was finished.

Although Inna and Moore managed to control themselves and did not speak, the joy on their faces was also about to overflow.

Moore had received the power of the “Guard” from the Path of World Order, the same as Vanessa, and he too was a person of principles and valued rules very much.

“Phew.”

Inna suddenly exhaled a long breath.

This skeptical and timid girl finally put her mind at ease, they weren't brought here to be sacrifices, but to genuinely become trusted members of the Fischer family.

"To even possess extraordinary power..."

Inna silently pondered while experiencing the extraordinary power called "Bard."

She hardly noticed any improvement in her physical abilities, a stark contrast compared to the increase in Spiritual Power, almost like a difference between one and nine.

At the same time, three Spells and one Extraordinary trait automatically emerged in Inna's mind.

The Extraordinary trait "Pass On" allowed her to convert words to sound over a long distance by consuming Spiritual Power, conveyed to others the "Bard" had once contacted; the farther the distance, the more Spiritual Power "Pass On" required.

The "Bard" also possessed three specialized Poetic Verses Magic: "Hymn Verse," "Bravery Verse," and "Elegy of Grief."

As long as the "Bard" recited the "Hymn Verse" completely, all listening allies would receive a buff, increasing the efficiency of their Spiritual Power recovery for the next two hours.

Chapter 123: 117th Chapter Consecution "Bard", "Sheriff"_2

Normally, Extraordinary Exponents with the Power of Consecution would need a full night's deep sleep to recover one hundred percent of their Spiritual Power, as their efficiency in recovery during battle was extremely poor.

However, the "Hymn Verse" could allow an Extraordinary Exponent, whose spirituality had been depleted, to recover a certain amount of Spiritual Power every hour. According to Byrne's calculations, this amounted to a recovery of 10 per hour.

The "Bravery Verse" also required the "Bard" to recite it in full for it to take effect, and all allies who listened would receive a buff. Similarly, within a two-hour timeframe, allies would collectively experience an increase in killing power.

Whether on the physical plane or the magical plane, they would all receive a conceptual boost in their attacks.

As to how much the boost would be, it depended entirely on how much Spirituality the "Bard" infused into it. If it were an Extraordinary Exponent of the Path of Wholeheartedness at a high level, they could significantly increase their attack power.

The amplification effect brought by the “Bard” wasn’t huge, but his ability had no limit on the number of people it affected, allowing him to enhance all his allies.

The “Elegy of Grief,” on the other hand, was starkly different from the previous two. It required the “Bard” to recite poetry at the enemies, and upon completion, it would randomly strip an enemy of one of their Extraordinary powers for thirty minutes.

However, if the enemy’s Spiritual Power was too strong, the “Elegy of Grief” wouldn’t have a significant effect, and the originally dominant “stripping” would merely become a “weakening.”

It generally took about a minute for all three verses to be fully recited.

Moreover, it was required that the “Bard” recite the poetry with proper intonation, full of emotion; otherwise, the Extraordinary effect of the Poetic Verses Magic would not be realized.

Inna was very satisfied with the supportive type of Extraordinary Power, as she had never wanted to engage directly with the enemy in combat, preferring to stay away from the front lines of battle.

Just as everyone thought the ritual was coming to an end, Irene suddenly called Vanessa forward.

“Her?”

Chris was momentarily stunned, having never expected it to be Vanessa.

She had successfully assimilated the 1st Rank of the Path of World Order’s Extraordinary Power, ready to advance further!

In the Spirit Realm’s “constellation”, a new Extraordinary law emerged—it was the 2nd Rank of the “Path of World Order”, represented by a man emitting white light amidst utter darkness.

The man was originally depicted in the classical image of being clad in armor and wielding a sword, but Karl suddenly noticed that it was slowly transforming.

The armor was gradually turning into a police uniform, and the blade was likewise slowly shifting into a pipe.

The Consecution power “Sheriff” could also be called “Inspector.”

Once all countries in the Claud World completed their reforms, the name “Sheriff” would be utterly buried in history, and the “constellation” image would also fully transform.

Although the Extraordinary Power possessed by the “Sheriff” and “Inspector” had no difference, the name of the Consecution power would indeed change at that time.

The “Sheriff”, or the “Inspector”, possessed two Extraordinary traits in total.

To activate “Patrolling”, one first needed to select a geographical range in advance, such as “Nasir Town” or the smaller “North City District”. Generally, the smaller the selected range, the less Spiritual Power was expended.

The Extraordinary Exponent themselves would become extremely sensitive within the chosen range, able to perceive the events around them, constituting an Extraordinary trait for enemy seeking.

Each time a new geographical range is selected, Spiritual Power must be expended again.

For “Arrest” to be activated, the Extraordinary Exponent must expend Spiritual Power to lock onto a target in their line of sight, then activate “Arrest”, causing the target’s overall speed to greatly slow down.

Vanessa took a deep breath and silently clenched her fists; it was all too wonderful, she had become stronger!

According to Lord Byrne’s calculations, the “Sheriff” brought about an increase of 14 in physical fitness, while the increase in Spiritual Power was 11.

Overall, she felt that the Path of World Order still tended toward the warrior category of the God Pantheon stairway, whereas she was actually a Spellcaster.

However, it also compensated for the inherent frailty of a Spellcaster, Vanessa thought it wasn’t a bad thing.

On the other hand, she had heard Mr. Byrne say that a better compatibility made it easier to advance in the God Pantheon stairway, and if she were to set foot on other paths, she might struggle to ascend to the 2nd Rank.

After the ritual had ended, Aunt Irene came to the yard to find her nephew Darren and niece Lilian.

Darren, now ten years old and dressed in black clothes, was still chubby and carried himself with a semblance of “seriousness,” looking like a “little adult” trying too hard to act mature.

The six-year-old Lilian, like a delicate doll, stood quietly next to her brother.

They were feeding a mysterious creature in the manor's pond, with two heads akin to a turtle's, using a bag of roasted beans.

Darren didn't actually like it that much, but couldn't stand up against the extremely animal-loving Lily who insisted on feeding the "turtle"; and since Lily found it too big and scary, she had pleaded with her brother Darren to feed it.

So, Darren picked up a handful of the roasted beans and tossed them at it, the beans rattling noisily on one of the "turtle's" heads.

A few servants stood behind the siblings; the mysterious creature was very docile, so there was no need to worry about it suddenly attacking its owners.

"Darren!"

Aunt Irene's sudden call startled Darren; he claimed to be fearless, but everyone knew he was actually very afraid of Aunt Irene.

"Aunt, Aunt Irene, what's wrong?" Darren asked immediately, hiding the beans behind his back.

Aunt Irene looked at Darren for a long time; he was different from Chris back then, not a child who could mature early, but rather still very childish.

Nevertheless, it was better to start education early, and it was time for him to be introduced to the great Lord of the Lost.

She took a deep breath and said, "Darren, there are some important matters about the Fischer family that I must tell you now, but remember, you cannot tell anyone else, not even your mother."

"Come with me, Darren."

Darren looked uncomfortable; he didn't want to be alone with Aunt Irene and quickly looked for an excuse, saying, "Uh, okay, but Lily, she insisted that I..."

Irene interrupted with a frown, "Lily, go back to your studies."

"Okay."

Lily let go of Darren's hand, which she had been holding, and obediently left the yard with the servants.

Darren was led away by Aunt Irene, looking displeased, wondering if Aunt Irene had found out about the prank he had played on Mr. Theo.

“Use this potion to wipe off the one on the back of your hand, and show your mark.”

Aunt Irene took Darren to the basement; the boy was astonished to discover such a structure beneath his own home, utterly speechless.

She said quietly, “Everything must start with Him, the great one who saved the Fischers.”

Chapter 124: Chapter 118: Sudden Enlightenment

“The great He...”

Ten-year-old Darren listened blankly as Aunt Irene recounted the events of the past.

He began with that stormy night filled with wind, rain, thunder, and lightning.

When he heard that Aunt Irene and Uncle Chris had been captured by the evil cultists, Darren couldn't help but clench his small fists, and when the Lord of the Lost appeared to save them, his chubby face beamed with joy. He listened wide-eyed in surprise as his grandfather and father arrived in Nasir Town, eager to learn what happened next.

When his grandfather died because of the Rhea People, he finally clenched his podgy hands and shouted angrily, “The Rhea People are too bad! These guys are too evil!”

The rest of the story was more roughly told by Irene.

She saw that Darren was excited, his face flushed red, as if he was very happy and pleased to learn about a “heritage completely different from ordinary people.”

Irene understood something very clearly, that Darren didn't understand the tears and blood behind those stories; he just found them interesting, amusing, and he was proud of his family's distinctiveness.

She could understand that not every child was as mature as Chris.

Irene reached out her hand and gently stroked Darren's hair, saying calmly,

“You are now a man of the Fischer family, from now on, you must remember to shoulder your responsibilities.”

“We are a secret clan that worships great deities, and our most important principles are caution and secrecy. The stories I have just told you, you must not even tell your mother, Margaret, do you understand?”

Darren was momentarily startled. His mother, though she rarely visited Nasir Town, always doted on him and his sister during her visits, bringing plenty of delicious treats and fun things.

Could it be that he wasn't even supposed to tell his mother about these things?

He felt a bit downcast but still nodded and said, "Yes, I understand, Aunt Irene."

Irene nodded. There was still much to teach Darren, and he would have many doubts on the road ahead, all of which she would have to personally answer.

She hoped that Darren could one day become a pillar of the family like Lucius and Byrne.

Although he was far from it now, with his pride, playfulness, and gluttony, he hardly had any virtues.

But Irene didn't see that as a problem, after all, Byrne as a child was also one who shivered in fear behind his father, too scared to talk, wasn't he?

She felt it was necessary to be "tough" on Darren next time.

As Darren left the basement, he took a deep breath, his mind excitedly pondering something.

His family was so powerful, to have the protection of a great deity!

What he learned today was so fantastic! So thrilling! Surely the Lord of the Lost must be more powerful than those True Gods! Even if He were to fight six of them, He would win!

And I, Darren Fischer, am also part of the Chosen Fischer family; I am born a Chosen one!

The thought filled him with immense excitement!

How wonderful!

—

In the guest room of Fischer Manor.

The once young Knight Verne was now in his early thirties, with a golden beard that made him look much more mature.

The “Spawn of the Abyss” incident had cost him his father, so in recent years, Verne had joined the Cyart Royal Army and become an official officer.

He smiled and gave a slight bow to Byrne.

“Then, it is decided, Lord Byrne, please be sure to attend my wedding.”

Byrne nodded and smiled, “Of course, I’ll be there.”

In Nasir Town, it was impossible to avoid each other; the Verne knight family had long decided to pledge allegiance to the Fischer family.

Today, Verne had come to Fischer Manor to discuss his wedding. He had decided to enter into a marriage alliance with a knight clan from the gold-mining town of Chevron, but he needed to seek Byrne’s opinion first.

Without the blessing of the Fischer family, the Verne family would not dare to complete the marriage alliance on their own.

Once Verne left the manor, Byrne pulled out a maroon stone from his pocket.

In a transaction with the Alchemy Council, exchanging knowledge of the Spirit Realm, the president gave him this mysterious stone filled with mysteries.

An alchemical tool and a Mysterious rare artifact, it was a fascinating little thing.

Byrne remembered the president’s claim that it could unleash considerable power when combined with intense emotional fluctuations, even comparable to the most top-tier treasures.

He knew that the next Alchemy Council meeting was only a few months away.

“Will there be stones like this next time?”

Holding the maroon stone, Byrne stared at it intently for a long while, finally deciding to try the “Deconstructive Perspective” again.

Actually, he had tried to deconstruct it a few years ago, but the side effects of that attempt lasted for days and were dreadful.

In Byrne’s eyes, a pale blue circle appeared, and his gaze penetrated deep into the very core of the maroon stone. In an instant, it was as if his consciousness had passed through countless purples and reds into chaos, hearing the wailing of hundreds and thousands around him.

Chaos!

Madness!

Despair!

Those pale blue orbs of various sizes all screamed in agony, wailing, roaring, crying; the infinite emotions from all the shattered souls surged into Byrne's mind.

His head throbbed, his body shook uncontrollably, and a great fear rose from the deepest part of his heart!

"Ah!"

Byrne suddenly let out a loud shriek, trembling as he flung the purplish-red stone to the side, took a deep breath, and his chest heaved rapidly.

He clutched his head tightly, the sights in his vision blurring as if the piercing wails and ghastly screams were still lingering in his ears for a long time.

Those things were souls!

Indeed, there was no mistake; what he saw last time was correct. Those pale blue orbs were fragments of souls that had been broken down and reconstructed into the fundamental substance of the purplish-red stones!

"So it's both an alchemical tool that contains magic power and a mysterious rare artifact that encompasses Spiritual Power. Now I see, it's because it's mixed with fragments of souls! That's why it contains Spiritual Power!"

With his eyes closed, Byrne's breathing gradually stabilized, although his forehead was still covered in a fine sweat.

He swallowed hard, reaffirming how extremely dangerous the president of the Alchemy Council was!

"How many people's souls has this crazed bastard used!"

In Byrne's mind, a very peculiar perception suddenly emerged concerning souls.

What exactly was Spiritual Power?

Undoubtedly, it was a power embedded in the deepest part of the soul, capable of affecting everything in the real world—unbelievably mysterious, unfathomable, and elusive.

All along, the Fischer family, despite continually using and developing the Power of Consecution, had never touched upon the essence of Spiritual Power.

He looked at the candle not far away.

“Flame Manipulation” could only manipulate the flames created by oneself but couldn’t control flames that already existed. Why was that?

Byrne slowly stood up and used a match to light the candle; the flame brightened a small area instantly.

That wasn’t a flame he created by consuming Spiritual Power, so it could not be controlled.

Byrne then raised a finger, creating a small flame that mirrored the light on the candle from afar.

“The flames I create contain my own Spiritual Power...”

He suddenly had an epiphany.

It meant that what I truly control is not the flame but the Spiritual Power; the so-called flame is merely a manifestation of Spiritual Power in the physical world.

Afterward, Byrne made a bold attempt.

He manipulated the flame at his fingertip to fly towards the candle, merging gradually with the fire that originally contained no Spiritual Power at all.

Soon he felt some kind of invisible resistance, then Byrne unhesitatingly increased the supply of Spiritual Power.

Then he laughed in surprise as the flame on the candle merged with his own—all of them now under his control!

“What I control isn’t the flame, but the Spiritual Power. Now I understand! I’ve got it!”

He was pleasantly surprised by his new discovery. Theoretically, if he infused more Spiritual Power, he could even take over the Kesse family’s black flame!

Byrne quickly took out his notebook and recorded his new understanding; then another realization dawned on him.

“Right, theoretically, anything with a soul, whether human or a creature, can possess the Power of Consecution!”

He thought of the “turtle”-shaped mysterious creature kept at home.

Perhaps, it could also become a Blood Receiver—there's certainly a theoretical basis for it!

Byrne also realized something else—the system of the Power of Consecution had only been developed a little so far, and the understanding of the Fischer family was still too superficial, relying solely on the fragment of mysterious knowledge given by the Lord of the Lost over the years.

Unlike the established systems of “power of Bloodline” and “Power of Spells” on the Ouden Continent, they had been studied for countless years, with various theories, extension techniques, and volumes of books on mystical knowledge written by predecessors, summarizing innumerable heritages.

The system of the Power of Consecution needed to be completely developed from nothing by the Fischer family.

As Byrne was continuously jotting down new notes, Vanessa suddenly knocked and entered the room, bowing elegantly.

“Head of the house, Baron Leander has arrived,” she said.

“Hmm?”

Byrne was somewhat puzzled as the relationship between the Fischer family and the Leander family had not been good since he last rejected the other's greedy request.

So, why was the merchant-like Baron Leander looking for him now?

“Invite him to the drawing room.”

Byrne nodded, put away his notebook, and decided to understand the other party's intentions before making a decision.

Vanessa nodded, turned, and left; after a while, Baron Leander arrived in the drawing room.

“Heh, it's been a long time, Byrne!”

His eyes were arrogant, his demeanor condescended; his plump hands shook slightly, almost nervously, as he kept laughing.

Byrne couldn't help but frown slightly, acutely aware that the once “merchant”-like Baron Leander had changed greatly!

What was going on with him?

“Byrne, heh, recently, I’ve made enormous gains in the Spirit Realm!” the Baron explained, sitting on the couch, his body trembling slightly, his eyes darting around.

“I’ve reached the middle rank of Transmutation!”

Chapter 125: Chapter 119 Waking up from Sleep

The drawing room was spacious and brightly lit. Byrne sat on the soft sofa under the crystal light, his heart shocked. Could the fat old man before him have already successfully reached the mid-level of Transmutation?

He knew that for traditional Extraordinary Exponents, starting from Level 2, it became increasingly difficult to grow stronger and reach higher levels.

Firstly, it required personal talent and persistence. Besides that, it also depended on resources and the support of legacies, and finally, even a bit of indispensable luck.

Baron Leander was someone who had hardly ever fought in his entire life, relying entirely on the Magic Potion’s family fortune to pile up to the Transmutation Level, reaching the low-level Transmutation was basically his limit.

Could he have really advanced to the mid-level? According to Leander himself, it was because he had obtained some immense benefit from the Spirit Realm.

Byrne had heard something, the hidden organization named “Black Eyes” was spreading methods on how to stably enter the Spirit Realm in Cyart.

The sea merchant John had once mentioned that it was possible to obtain, that stable method of entering the Spirit Realm, it must be the same approach.

It seems that Baron Leander must have also purchased the intelligence from “Black Eyes”. Byrne was sufficiently composed; his face did not reveal the slightest hint of his surprise and confusion.

“Baron Leander, congratulations! I believe you will not stop here and that there will come a day when you will take one more step, reaching the high-level Transmutation. By then, you will be able to sit as equals with those big shots of the East Coast Province!”

His words contained little sincerity, but Baron Leander listened with great pleasure, his eyes filled with uncontrollable glee.

“Heh, perhaps, who knows? There might really be such a day, after all, the world has changed from what it once was.”

“The major churches and pillar families control almost all the resources and legacies, yet the Spirit Realm is full of endless opportunities. Our future is unpredictable!”

When Baron Leander said this, his tone carried a sense of anger at the large powers' monopoly on advancement opportunities.

Byrne was well aware of the situation described by the other party. The important resources and powerful legacies of the Eastern Four Kingdoms were almost entirely held by the Ten Great Pillars and the major churches.

Everyone knew that Monarch Level powerful experts were extremely rare and had always only been born within pillar families, major churches, and secret organizations.

For a hundred years, members of certain small and medium-sized families, even if they possessed exceptional talent, astonishing wisdom, and perseverance, had no chance whatsoever of reaching Level 3.

They either married into large families or were absorbed into the church's clerical system, henceforth, under the watch of the deities, they separated from the worldly powers.

“They must be afraid of the existence of the Spirit Realm,” Byrne said in a deep voice, leaving Baron Leander at a loss for words.

He suddenly smiled and, looking at the puzzled Baron Leander, continued.

“For a hundred years, the total dominance of the Ten Great Pillars over the Ouden Continent's east will sooner or later be broken; the 'barriers' man-made have been breached by the existence of the Spirit Realm.”

“Those who reach Monarch Level without the support of the pillar families, major churches, and secret organizations, but through the gifts of the Spirit Realm will inevitably emerge!”

Baron Leander gaped for a while, then burst into loud laughter.

“Exactly! It's an era of unprecedented change! Those who have long decayed should be the ones afraid!”

“And once there is a first, there will be a second. Sooner or later, everything in Cyart, even the whole Ouden Continent, will change completely!”

Byrne smiled without continuing the conversation, as he had just voiced Baron Leander's inner thoughts.

In fact, even if one day there emerged a Monarch powerful expert that didn't belong to the major forces, it wouldn't be Baron Leander or have anything to do with him at all.

But these words truly exhilarated and delighted Baron Leander, who had just had his power and status enhanced through a breakthrough in the Spirit Realm, and whose emotions were somewhat unstable.

As a result, he found himself warming up to Byrne, even developing a peculiar illusion that the other could understand him.

Baron Leander narrowed his eyes to discuss serious matters: "In fact, I came to talk about something, I'd like to take some people to the forest near Ourde Village."

That forest is now controlled by the Fischer family. Without their permission, outsiders cannot enter at will.

Although Baron Leander had improved his strength to the mid-level Transmutation, he clearly had no experience in stealth and hiding.

He also didn't know if the Fischer family had set up warning barriers in that forest and didn't want to rashly intrude, accidentally causing a big fuss and then being caught by Fischer's people, causing a misunderstanding.

Byrne smiled, neither immediately refusing nor consenting, but instead he countered with a question, "Why? I need a good enough reason."

Baron Leander hesitated for a moment, then continued:

"Actually, a mysterious creature has run into that forest. I had been chasing it, but accidentally lost track, allowing it to run into the Fischer family's territory in the end."

"Hmm, it's a 'gray horn deer,' and its horns and skin are Class 2 Extraordinary Materials. I can share a portion with you."

He paused, then added, "After it hid in the jungle near Ourde Village, it never came out again, and to avoid conflict with you, I came here to communicate with you in advance."

Byrne nodded, feeling that Baron Leander seemed to be lying.

If it were the Baron Leander of the past, no one would have easily detected his lies, but now his hands shook continuously and his gaze was erratic. His expression twisted a bit as he had spoken the words just now.

The old man's demeanor was odd. Quietly mulling it over, Byrne was certain that something had happened to him.

Seeing that Byrne didn't respond, Baron Leander fell silent for a while, then suddenly said:

"The Spirit Realm is a marvelous place, you know? I actually died there once."

Died?

Byrne was slightly taken aback, knowing that there were many outcomes for one's consciousness after death in the Spirit Realm.

But none of them were good.

Some people would fall into a coma for several months and wake up mentally scattered, needing a long time to recover, while others would suffer a mental breakdown and become completely insane. In the most severe cases, a person's soul could be utterly annihilated, ceasing to exist in any world at all.

There was also a special case where some people would wake up and suddenly undergo a very peculiar mutation, falling into some mysterious existence.

They not only just died but were also contaminated and parasitized by the "residents" of the Spirit Realm.

The Spirit Realm contained all things unimaginable and endless secret treasures but was also fraught with equally considerable dangers.

"That feeling... was truly peculiar..."

Baron Leander, speaking to himself as if muttering in a low voice, sounded strange, and even gave off a spine-chilling vibe.

"After experiencing a wondrous death in the Spirit Realm, I awoke to find my family and friends all saying I had changed. Some even said I had gone a bit mad, but I feel good, better than ever, in fact."

"Some repressed, restrained, even fettered things in my mind finally broke free, and I feel lighter all over, all the time."

He stared into Byrne's eyes, his smile carrying an unhidden madness.

"It is said, some people become crazy or even turn into terrifying monsters when they wake up from death in the Spirit Realm."

"I think it's not that they have changed, maybe those people were merely slumbering in a daze for decades, and it was only after that they truly awoke!"

Byrne, sitting on the sofa, quietly listened to Baron Leander's words, feeling a slight chill down his spine. The old man with a bizarre smile in front of him was very strange.

In that twisted smile, there was definitely some sort of inhuman characteristic that was bone-chilling!

Is he really Baron Leander?

Or is it that the real "him" has woken up?

Byrne took a deep breath and nodded, "I agree to let you go to the jungle near Ourde Village to pursue that mysterious creature, Baron Leander, I don't want any reward. Consider it a gift to celebrate your successful reach to a new level."

"Is that so? That's wonderful! Hahaha! Thank you, Mr. Byrne!"

The old man appeared extremely joyful, his whole being seeming ready to leap for joy.

Byrne felt increasingly uneasy; this man's intent to enter that jungle was surely not as simple as just pursuing some common mysterious creature.

Exuberant, Baron Leander left, ready to call others to go to the jungle of Ourde Village to hunt the mysterious creature.

Byrne remained silent for a long time before having Vanessa summon Chris from the manor.

After Chris arrived in the parlor, Byrne mentioned the strange feelings he just had, then whispered:

"Chris, let's head to Ourde Village first, then wait there quietly for a while to see what exactly Baron Leander is looking for, or what he intends to do."

Chris, dressed in gray, nodded silently without any intention to ask further questions.

"Prepare for battle, Chris. Baron Leander, he might be looking to perform some sort of nefarious ceremony. I am very aware that his mental state is a bit abnormal."

Byrne even suspected that Baron Leander might already be a dangerous heretic of a secret cult.

"Fortunately, we are equally dangerous."

Chapter 126: Chapter 120 Spirit Realm Palace

Before leaving Nasir Town, Mr. Byrne first checked the barrier spell protecting the town.

Viscount Bast had once given him a bag of black stones, which were actually “barrier markers” created through alchemy.

He had buried the barrier markers around the town, and by chanting the spells inscribed on the stones, he could activate them.

Once activated, they would generate a barrier spell known as “Dark Mirror,” which would continuously consume the magic power inherent in the stones while manifesting strange black mirrors in various selectable locations within the barrier’s range.

In principle, it was a simple transport array that carried the power of a curse.

The activator could allow certain individuals to freely enter and leave through the Black Mirror, transporting them to different locations around the town, while the enemies within the barrier range would be persistently suppressed and weakened by the curse power of the Black Mirror.

Byrne was grateful to Viscount Bast; the “Dark Mirror” barrier spell wasn’t ordinary merchandise but a Level 2 magic barrier that even an ordinary baronial family couldn’t afford.

Although he knew Viscount Bast surely had his own motives, Byrne couldn’t help but feel grateful.

His weakness was always falling for an “emotional play.”

“Very well, the barrier can still be activated at any time. As long as they stay within its range, the Fischer family can even handle a mid-level Transmutation Extraordinary Exponent,” he said.

With the church divided and the emergence of the Spirit Realm, he who was well-read in history, knew that the collapse of the old order was just a matter of time and the world would become increasingly chaotic.

The Fischer family was still very weak, and the time they had to grow stronger was diminishing.

—

Ourde Village was a barren place, with its northern forest being the most noteworthy feature.

The forest itself was part of the vast northern expanse of Nasir, where a kind of flower that was completely invisible to human eyes during the day, called “Night Orchid Crystal,” would emit a pale blue glow at night.

It was a Class 2 Extraordinary Material and an annual steady source of income.

Beyond that, it would also attract mysterious creatures lured by the scent of the Night Orchid Crystals, occasionally even attracting low-level Transmutation magic beasts.

In other words, it produced Class 2 Extraordinary Materials regularly and occasionally yielded materials of the third classification, making it quite valuable.

The Kesse family even gradually perished in the struggle for the resources within this forest.

Byrne and Chris hid in the forest, silently waiting for Baron Leander to bring his men over.

"Honestly, the excuse he made had some basis, as the unique scent of the Night Orchid Crystals does occasionally attract mysterious creatures," Byrne said.

"But there were still flaws in his words. I've read a book about mysterious creatures, where it's mentioned that the gray horn deer is actually a pure carnivore that doesn't eat plants," Chris responded, silently listening.

Suddenly, Chris knelt down, carefully picked up a strand of light green hair from the ground.

It was almost indistinguishable from the weeds on the ground, very hard to spot, but Chris's keen perception still managed to find it.

"..."

He stared at the hair for a long time before shaking his head and passing it to Byrne.

"Chris, do you think this is the hair of some mysterious creature, or of a person?"

After Byrne received the light green hair, pale blue circles of light emerged in his eyes, and he began to deconstruct its composition through his "Deconstructive Perspective."

The results made him pause for a long moment, as an image he had not thought of for a long time surfaced in his mind.

The emerald figure with light green hair flowing like a waterfall, bright eyes, an elf of such beauty she seemed beyond the ordinary.

"It belongs to an emerald elf. It seems there are elves wandering nearby," Byrne murmured after a pause.

“You might have heard as well, Chris, about the rumors of elves frequenting the land of the four towns. And... I did truly see her when I was younger,” he added gravely.

“I’m not certain whether that elf harbors any ill will, but if, Chris, you determine the presence of hostility, we must kill her at the first opportunity!” urged Byrne.

An emerald elf that had roamed the East Coast Province alone for years was not to be trifled with, especially in a forest they favored. If there was any sign of hostility, the situation could become very tricky.

Byrne knew the importance of preemptive action, if the elf showed the slightest hostility, they would need to act immediately.

Eventually, Baron Leander arrived at the forest with two Bloodline Knights and several dozen guards.

He appeared to know exactly where his target was and immediately headed deeper into the forest.

Chris, using his “Tracking Senses,” and Byrne followed from hundreds of meters away, and during their movement, Chris, expressionless, found another strand of light green hair.

“It seems the emerald elf is indeed nearby,” Byrne nodded, even more confident in his assessment.

They continued along the trail indicated by the breath lines and footprints Chris’s “Tracking Senses” had observed, only to find that the men had stopped and were resting near a river.

Chris quickly sensed something was amiss—not everyone had ceased moving.

The men of Baron Leander stood by the river while he disappeared, continuing alone in another direction.

“They’ve split up,” Chris said calmly.

Byrne nodded lightly, making a judgment in his mind, and said,

“It seems that hunting the mysterious creature is indeed just a ruse. He even wants to avoid his own men, definitely up to something very secretive and important.”

He looked steadily at Chris and continued,

“Chris, distinguish Baron Leander’s scent and traces, and continue tracking. As for the others, don’t bother with them, they know nothing at all.”

Chris nodded, carefully discerning the scent unique to Baron Leander.

Afterward, the two circled around the people waiting by the river, following Leander's trail further, even reaching the edge of this stretch of forest, about to enter the vast jungle.

Finally, Byrne and Chris stopped in front of a cave.

Surrounded by an abundance of green vegetation, its interior emitted a strange aura. Looking from the outside in, not a trace of light or shadow could be seen, as if it were a terrifying demon's lair completely isolated from the real world.

"He went in," Chris stated calmly.

Frowning, he added, "A very peculiar power. The scent has vanished. Something mysterious..."

Actually, Chris didn't need to say it; Byrne also sensed it naturally.

He could distinctly feel the strong vibrancy of spirituality.

Ever since he had reached the 3rd Rank, his intuition had become increasingly sharp in response to various mysterious powers Byrne felt that the stronger the strength of a Consecution Extraordinary Exponent, the more intense the reaction to various mysterious powers.

So, what could possibly be inside the cave that caused such intense spiritual vibrations?

After pondering for a moment, Byrne shook his head and said, "Don't act recklessly, Chris. Wait while I search."

He calmly waved his hand in front of him, and the gasified spiritual power materialized out of thin air—solidifying and gathering into a mysterious existence identical to Byrne's appearance and form.

"Body Double."

Byrne commanded his Body Double to enter the cave with the strange aura first, simultaneously switching his own perspective to that of the Body Double.

The expressionless Body Double Byrne stepped into the dark, lightless cave, as if stepping into an entirely different world, his vision gradually succumbing to complete darkness.

Suddenly, Byrne felt a strong sense of unease!

“Chris...”

Just as he began to shout, he felt a heaviness in his head.

The next moment, everything around him underwent a complete transformation—the lush forest turned into crumbling ruins made of crystal, which emitted a luminescent glow. Byrne looked up in utter astonishment and saw a towering, awe-inspiring crystal palace!

The crystal palace was immense, each crystal clear and intricately carved with complex and exquisite silver patterns. Sunlight filtered through the crystal walls, causing the entire palace to shimmer with iridescent colors.

A broad and elegant crystal staircase wound upwards, leading to the higher floors of the palace. Mysterious golden materials formed the balustrades on either side, gleaming with a faint light.

The whole crystal palace radiated a sense of solemnity and sanctity that unavoidably shook one’s soul, as if witnessing the legendary realm of myths.

Byrne suddenly realized something—this place was the Spirit Realm, and he had arrived in the Spirit Realm in the form of a consciousness!

The real him was probably asleep. No, that wasn’t right—how could this be happening, why would there be a gateway connecting the real world to the Spirit Realm?

“What exactly is going on? I clearly didn’t drink the dreaming potion, nor did I travel through the Dreamwoods.”

His heart was full of shock and astonishment, and he instinctively wanted to look up at the glorious figure of the Lord of the Lost, but was startlingly unable to see Him due to the obstruction of the crystal vault.

Because he could not see the great Lord of the Lost, the unease in Byrne’s heart intensified.

“Eh, Mr. Byrne, why are you here too?”

The sudden voice made him turn abruptly, only to see the figure of Baron Leander appearing in the distance. The old man looked at him with surprise, his mouth twitching slightly, holding a very strange egg in his arms.

The egg was over thirty centimeters in diameter with a shell completely made of crystal around which scales had naturally grown, resembling an exquisitely lifelike work of art.

Byrne's gaze was immediately drawn to the crystal egg; of all known mysterious creature eggs, there's actually only one type that has scales growing on its shell!

A crystal... dragon egg?

However, he merely took a distant look when he suddenly heard Baron Leander's angry and near-mad yelling.

"Hey, hey, hey! Mr. Byrne! What are you looking at? This is mine, no one can take it away, hahaha! I knew it, you want to steal it, don't you!"

"Damn it, I knew it!"

Bad news—he's completely lost it!

Even if this guy doesn't go mad, he most likely won't let me leave here alive!

Byrne could feel the sweat drenching his back. Before he could even answer, he sensed that a profound danger was imminent!

Chapter 127: Chapter 121: The Mad Giant

The bloodline power passed down in the Leander family is the "Forest Dragon Mammoth".

They are capable of manipulating plants and can also enlarge their bodies, thereby gaining more formidable defensive abilities and monster-like strength!

The slightly overweight, aged Baron Leander's body visibly swelled up, his limbs, torso, and head rapidly expanding more than tenfold in a short period of time, his entire body covered with vine-like plants, resembling a tree giant over a dozen meters tall, standing on the crystal ground in front of the Crystal Palace.

"You filthy fisherman of Nasir! Die!"

He roared loudly, his voice majestic, spreading all around as he lifted his huge foot, intending to crush Byrne.

The size was too immense!

Byrne had never seen what Baron Leander's transformation looked like, but he could still guess that if it were merely a low-level Transmutation, Leander could not have become so gigantic.

Now, he had made a breakthrough to the mid-level Transmutation rank, and his strength had increased considerably.

If he really could take a step further and reach high-level Transmutation, Baron Leander's size after transforming might be several times larger than it was now!

Surpass!

Lightning sparks burst from his eyes, and everything in his vision slowed down, his expression grew composed as he continuously processed the vast information around him.

"Snap!"

The colossal foot of the giant had already stomped down heavily, Byrne didn't hesitate to snap his fingers and preemptively teleport using "Shape-shifting" to evade the attack that could have destroyed him.

A loud "boom" resonated, the ground trembling incessantly, and many damaged crystal structures also shook.

"Thankfully, speed and agility are not the strong suits of the Forest Dragon Mammoth bloodline power, and in this state, he cannot focus his will on smaller objects, so he is unable to use mysterious rare artifacts. It seems I can still hold out for a while."

Byrne's mind worked swiftly, quickly anticipating several "landing points" for his opponent's next most likely attack.

He had just felt the tremor on the ground, and deep inside, there was another firm judgment.

"I must not go head-to-head with him, that power is too much for 'Mirror Deflection' to withstand!"

However, although Byrne thought of many things, the towering Baron Leander, over a dozen meters in height, did not pursue him but suddenly burst into uncontrollable laughter on the spot!

"Hahahaha! What surging power! I am too strong now! Hahaha! Do you see!"

The transformed Baron Leander, now a giant, couldn't help but laugh out loud, his crazy joy overflowing, even manifesting as red Spirit Aura of happiness in the air.

This so-called Spirit Aura, also known as the "atmosphere of Spirituality", are essentially a derivative phenomenon of emotional power, able to fulfill certain ritualistic needs.

Materializing Spirit Aura in the real world is difficult, but this place is the Spirit Realm, where emotional power easily takes physical form.

Suddenly, numerous vines covering the green giant surged forward, snaking like pythons, thirsting for blood as they struck from all angles, trying to entangle Byrne's body.

"Snap."

With another snap of his fingers, half a second later Shape-shifting was activated again, Byrne didn't hesitate to put distance between himself and the green giant, then summoned another Body Double.

He planned to confuse his opponent by constantly swapping places with his Body Double.

"Who am I? Am I Leander, or Andersen, who am I? And who was Leander..."

Baron Leander suddenly made a confused sound, as if he had fallen into doubt and bewilderment, then he stopped moving.

The tense Byrne was taken aback, suddenly feeling that all his careful predictions might be inaccurate because Baron Leander's state was very strange, his mind filled with confusion and madness.

That mad old fellow might not even know what he would do next!

For some reason, he felt somewhat deflated, having an odd feeling of "all my meticulous calculations being completely ignored by a madman".

Although Baron Leander stopped his attack and fell into contemplation, Byrne had no intention of relaxing, thinking "If you let your guard down, I won't".

If the enemy is ill, then the enemy should be killed off!

He immediately expended Spiritual Power, summoning a sky full of firebirds that screeched towards the plant-covered giant Leander.

The firebirds touched the green plants and burst into flames instantly. Soon, large swathes of red fire covered every inch of the green giant's body, and Baron Leander could not help but howl in pain!

"Ahhhhhh! You despicable fellow! What kind of Spellcaster are you, that you can even summon flames?"

Byrne had already guessed as much, but after confirmation, he was delighted, good, his flames were particularly effective against him!

Even though there was a significant gap in raw power between them, Baron Leander was not at his best, and Byrne's abilities were a counter to his.

Perhaps he really could win a duel!

In fact, even if Baron Leander had been in perfect condition, this elder with virtually no combat experience would probably only have half the strength of William Garcia of the Garcia family, not nearly enough to crush Byrne quickly.

If he really couldn't beat his opponent, Byrne would have to use that purple-red stone that was said to be able to unleash the power of a top-tier Treasure-class mysterious rare artifact in a single burst.

Actually, when he planned to escape from the formidable William of the Garcia family last time, he had considered whether to use this one-time trump card.

Byrne murmured to himself, "But this time the advantage is on my side, even without using it, I should also have a chance to win."

However, he soon realized that he had oversimplified things.

The raging flames engulfing the green giant were about to extinguish, with the invisible life force flowing continuously within its body. In the blink of an eye, it spread to every part of its body, and a blood-colored mist quickly emerged from its surface.

Battle Skill 22: Surging Blood, the effect is to increase blood flow and muscle efficiency through the movement of life force, temporarily enhancing strength and speed in battle.

"Byrne! I won't let you take it from me! Hahaha! You're going to die here!"

Damn!

Byrne's complexion changed, even with his size greatly increased, Baron Leander was still able to use battle skills!

Just as he took out the purple-red stone and was about to activate it, a strange scene suddenly unfolded before his eyes!

The green giant, initially ready to fight to the death and wanting to kill Byrne, suddenly collapsed to the ground. Its massive body crumbled, gradually turning into pale white specks of light and vanishing into nothingness.

"I almost forgot about this..."

Byrne froze for a moment, and then realized what had happened.

On the Ouden Continent, traditional Extraordinary Exponents only cultivate life force and spiritual power, and their Spirituality barely differs from that of ordinary people.

And in the Spirit Realm, the more injuries a consciousness body sustains, the more Spiritual Power it consumes, until the depletion of the consciousness body's Spiritual Power is tantamount to stepping toward death.

"Consecution Power Exponents can withstand much more damage, but traditional Exponents can't do that; they are very likely to be one-shotted in the Spirit Realm."

The Blazing Fire had actually already exhausted Baron Leander's scarce Spiritual Power.

Thus, his consciousness body died easily in the Spirit Realm.

Although he exploited the rules of the Spirit Realm, he could count it as a success in defeating a powerful enemy.

"For Exponents of Consecution Power, the advantage of battling in the Spirit Realm is too significant, making it easy to trade injury for death."

Byrne took a deep breath, walked over to the Crystal Dragon egg, and with a light touch, confirmed it was an object that could be brought into the material world.

In fact, the Crystal Dragon egg was not an evolutionary subconscious thing, but an entity that existed in the material world!

"Someone actually put a real dragon egg from the material world into the Spirit Realm! And its shell is made of crystal, I've never even heard of a Crystal Dragon species..."

Although he was unclear about the true species of the dragon egg, he still lifted the Crystal Dragon egg, unable to suppress the excitement deep inside him.

Giant dragons need at least a hundred years to reach adulthood, but once they truly mature, they possess extremely powerful strength.

According to the books on mysterious creatures, the average strength of adult giant dragons is at the level of high-level Transmutation, and the stronger adult giant dragons can even hold their own against those Extraordinary Exponents who have reached the Metamorphosis Phase and are just a step away from Monarch Level.

"I wonder when it will hatch; at least a hundred years later, the Fischer family will witness its great power."

Byrne did not know when he would wake up from the Spirit Realm, so he began to observe his surroundings carefully and recorded everything with "Profound Memory."

The Crystal Palace in the distance continuously radiated an immensely powerful aura. Despite the distance, he could still feel an intense danger.

He felt like a tiny ant, while inside the palace seemed like the mouth of a volcano filled with lava and raging flames, where one step would certainly bring about certain death!

Absolute cannot go over there!

"I should come back to explore this place later; my current strength is completely inadequate; the Fischer family people are not in a rush."

Byrne slowly shook his head, his cautious nature made him curious about what was inside the Crystal Palace, but he still did not want to lose his life for curiosity's sake.

"Speaking of which, where did Baron Leander find this Crystal Dragon egg from? He couldn't possibly have entered the palace, could he? And why did he suddenly appear near me earlier?"

"Why is there a passage from the real world to the Spirit Realm in a cave that exists in the material world? Leander, why would he know of this Crystal Palace?"

There were too many mysteries surfacing in his mind, but Byrne guessed one thing: Baron Leander from the real world could no longer answer his questions.

Two consciousness deaths in the Spirit Realm would be enough to cause a complete mental collapse.

At that moment, he woke up.

"Whew..."

Byrne slowly opened his eyes, saw the trees of the forest and the bright sky, and found himself lying flat on the ground of the jungle, clutching the Crystal Dragon egg.

Chris, with his expressionless face, accompanied by a barely detectable concern in his eyes, soon appeared before him.

"I'm okay, Chris... Was it you who pulled me out from there?"

Byrne managed a faint smile as he slowly got up, noticing he was still tied with a rope—indeed, Chris had pulled him out of the cave with a rope.

Not far away lay a body.

That was Baron Leander, his mouth agape, eyes wide open filled with resentment and madness, staring dead into the sky, his raised hands with fingers twisted grotesquely reaching forward.

Chapter 128: Chapter 122 Emerald Elf

Byrne gently set down the Crystal Dragon egg in his hand, feeling amazed that he actually managed to bring it out of the Spirit Realm.

“I hope your parents won’t come looking for trouble. The Fischer family will help you grow and become strong, as long as you also become a member of the Fischer family.”

Chris, silent and wordless, stared at the Crystal Dragon egg for a long time but did not ask any questions.

He knelt down to carefully examine Baron Leander’s corpse.

Apart from the banknote, potions, flintlock, and miscellaneous items, he also found two Mysterious rare artifacts that Baron Leander carried with him.

“White Eternal Night Flower.”

Its appearance was of a ring ornament where a white flower took the place of the gemstone, a Collectible class Mysterious rare artifact, its effect was to slowly neutralize toxins within the wearer’s body; however, its potency was not high and would be rendered meaningless against powerful poisons.

“Dark Night,” a treasure class Mysterious rare artifact, looked like a black crucifix brooch that, upon being worn and softly uttering “into night,” would activate it— “Dark Night” would automatically become dark blades made of night colors, rapidly attacking all nearby targets with hostile intentions.

The effect of this “Dark Night” was quite good, capable of enemy seeking, with an approximate range of fifty meters, making it a pleasant surprise.

Its only flaw was that its attacking power was not strong and it would be of little use against enemies that could withstand it.

Among the limited number of miscellaneous items, Byrne examined them one by one and eventually found a piece of paper that looked very special.

It was crumpled, as if it had been flipped through many times, but there wasn’t a single word on it.

Well, that was obviously illogical.

After a moment of thought, he then pulled out his own notebook from his chest, which had signs of having been flipped through but also did not have a single word on it; the written text would only gradually appear after being smeared with a certain potion.

“It should be the same principle.”

The Deconstructive Perspective activated, and Byrne’s eyes shimmered with a pale blue light as he fixed his gaze on the blank piece of paper, figuring out that it had been treated with a common alchemy substance to make the writing invisible.

“Heh, simple.”

A faint heat emanated from his palm, and the blank piece of paper was instantly heated, with the previously invisible writing gradually appearing.

The paper featured several peculiar drawings and jumbled words; it was apparent that Leander’s mind was already very unstable as he wrote them.

“Who am I?” “Who is Andersen?” “Why do I often dream about Andersen...,” “That place is not on the Ouden Continent,” “Could it be that Andersen is my past self?” “He is in the Great Glacier!” “No, I must be going mad!”

The writing on the paper became more and more frantic, messy, and Byrne’s brows furrowed as he read, until the last sentence where the handwriting suddenly normalized and the text was much larger than the other words.

“So that’s it, it was Andersen awakening from within Leander; I finally understand everything.”

Andersen awakening from within Leander!

He felt a chill—what on earth could that name signify?

Why exactly did Leander repeatedly mention the name “Andersen”? Even going so far as to say “Andersen” was awakening from within himself?

“Andersen...”

Byrne found it incredible, yet he couldn’t grasp the meaning and could only continue reading. On the crumpled paper, there were several more bizarre drawings.

The first drawing was a large heptagram with an eye full of blood vessels drawn meticulously inside by Leander.

Although he did not understand, Byrne immediately grimaced, feeling a dangerous sensation rising within him just from glimpsing the intention behind the drawing.

“Damn it!”

He closed his eyes, refusing to look any further at the eye within the heptagram, and even hesitated to recall it carelessly.

“What exactly is that?”

Byrne felt a residual fright but still looked at the second drawing, which was a slender hand with spread fingers that seemed to belong to a woman, with the palm cut open and blood flowing continuously from it.

“What does this mean now?”

The last drawing was a mixture of an upright triangle and an inverted one, with three curved lines beside it symbolizing water, like waves.

He finally shook his head, sighing, “Such strange drawings; none of them make any sense. Baron Leander, you really were one to pose riddles.”

Suddenly, Chris extended his hand without expression and pointed solemnly at the “ferocious eye” in the first drawing.

“I, have seen It.”

He paused, then continued, “And then, the Lord of the Lost saved me.”

It?

Byrne immediately fell into thought; the oppressiveness brought about by the first drawing was actually stronger than the latter two, as if it directly pointed to some powerful and terrifying Evil God.

Even though the great Lord of the Lost would definitely be more powerful than It, the modest Fischer family should still be cautious, better not to provoke such powers, as the secret organizations that worshipped It were certainly not to be trifled with.

As for Leander, who had died once in the Spirit Realm, what he had come into contact with to learn about them, and whether that was why he went utterly mad, Byrne had no idea.

“What a pity, he died carrying so many mysteries.”

Byrne shook his head, put away the paper, and decided not to think about it anymore. It was time to leave this place, and the division of the Mysterious rare artifacts would have to wait until the family meeting.

He gazed at Baron Leander's corpse and stated resolutely:

"Leander's subordinates will come looking for him soon; we must dispose of the corpse first, otherwise, it would be bad if undead or prophecy-type spellcasters found the body."

Byrne raised his hand, unleashing flames to incinerate the body, then left with the Crystal Dragon egg, as the two of them took the various remains of the corpse to a hidden and secluded place for burial.

Just then, Chris suddenly felt something was amiss, as if he were being watched by someone in the shadows.

"..."

He took out a strand of light green hair from his small bag and used "Tracking Senses" to identify the faint traces of presence contained within it.

Chris saw the light green traces of aura winding in circles in mid-air, stretching continuously until they reached the top of a tree some hundred meters away.

Hmm?

He whispered softly into Byrne's ear, informing him of the issue with that tree.

Byrne slowly rose to his feet, his gaze fixing on the distant tree. After preparing thoroughly for battle, he said coldly:

"No need to hide any longer, elf lady who has turned herself into a tree."

Both brothers' gazes were fixed on that tree, not leaving it for a long time, until finally, the tree gradually began to transform within their view.

Byrne was slightly startled, the elven girl he had never forgotten once again appeared before his eyes!

Her features were delicate and gentle, her demeanor serene, her tall figure, her light green hair cascading like a flowing waterfall, unusually bright eyes filled with wisdom, her pure and pale skin.

She was still as beautiful as he remembered!

But now he was prepared for battle, ready to deliver a fatal attack the moment the elf showed any sign of hostility.

The elven girl gazed at them both for a long while before she slowly began to speak:

“Eastern Cyart people, I am an elf from the land of constellations in the west, you may call me ‘Marzo’.”

Her voice was soft and ethereal, giving off an extraordinary and otherworldly feeling.

Marzo?

Byrne and Chris exchanged glances, both finding it to be a very peculiar name.

She was a communicative elf, not a lurking enemy. Since they could communicate, the likelihood of a battle being triggered was vastly reduced.

However, he didn’t move closer rashly, instead, he calmly smiled and steadily said:

“Madam Marzo, the emerald elf, I am the patriarch of the Fischer family from Nasir Town, Baron Byrne. This forest belongs to the Fischer family’s territory, please provide an appropriate reason for your unauthorized intrusion here.”

Marzo pondered for a moment, bowed slightly with a hint of apology, and said very politely:

“I see, I was under the impression that this land had no owner, my apologies.”

“I need to forage for my own food and extraordinary materials in the forest, and I do not wish to leave this place just yet. Baron Byrne, how about we make a deal?”

Byrne quietly recalled the knowledge within his mind; emerald elves have a highly civilized social system and are accustomed to negotiating problems.

He nodded and continued to ask, “We can do that, Madam Elf, but I do not know what you wish to trade for the temporary right of residence?”

Marzo narrowed her beautiful eyes and promptly replied:

“I can hide the fact that you just killed that man, ensuring the secret won’t be leaked. How about that?”

She indeed knew the cause of Baron Leander’s death.

Byrne, being cautious, began to contemplate, his wariness towards Marzo growing inside him.

Marzo continued to speak, “Furthermore, I also promise not to disclose the secret of that cave.”

She even knew about the cave leading to the Spirit Realm!

The hostility deep within Byrne's heart grew even stronger. He was no longer the naive youth of his early years, and considering the need for secrecy, it would be best to capture or, preferably, kill the elf before him.

"What do you think of my offer?"

Suddenly, a dazzling green light appeared in Marzo's eyes, and all the surrounding trees rustled. Byrne and Chris immediately felt as if they were surrounded by numerous enemies from all directions, and the whole forest seemed as though it could transform into a frenzied force to become their deadliest foe in the next moment!

The elf's power was very strong, comparable even to William Garcia, and her strength in the forest could nearly reach high-level Transmutation.

If a battle broke out here, the best outcome for the brothers would be a lucky escape; defeating her was an impossibility!

Byrne made a decisive judgment and smiled subtly, nodding as if he had trusted her from the very beginning.

"As a civilized man, I am happy to negotiate. The deal is on, Madam Marzo! Please swear by your god, emerald elf!"

"Very well."

Marzo began to smile faintly, her stunning eyes swirling with a hint of mockery, as if she had seen through the human thought changes hidden deep within their hearts.

She then spoke again.

"Additionally, I wish to entrust you with an important task. I need your family to help me find something called 'New Green Constellation,' a sacred object venerated by generations of emerald elves containing immense power, which is now under the control of the Stars Embrace Order."

The Stars Embrace Order?

Byrne hadn't yet responded when Chris, who had been silent, suddenly had a solemn look in his eyes, recalling the black text on the body of the old man in the mine.

Embrace the constellations!

Chapter 129: Chapter 123 Chris's Wedding

Byrne, representing the Fischer family, reached a deal with the emerald elf March, and afterward, he returned to Fischer Manor with the dragon egg and Chris, his emotions in turmoil.

They immediately sought out Irene, and Byrne recounted the entire affair to her in detail.

The more Irene listened, the more astonished she became, whether it was Baron Leander's various obsessions and madness, the mysterious messages, or the content of the deal with the emerald elf at the end, it all seemed unbelievable.

After hearing everything, she couldn't help but express her many doubts:

"What exactly is the deal with that emerald elf? Byrne, I remember you mentioned that you saw her when you were still a youth, has this foreign race been lurking on the East Coast all these years just for that so-called sacred object of the emerald elves?"

"What exactly is this sacred object 'New Green Constellation' she has commissioned us to find? And the Stars Embrace Order she mentioned, is that a secretive organization that worships the Evil God?"

Faced with a barrage of questions, Byrne could only keep shaking his head, taking a deep breath before responding:

"Whether it's the existence of that sacred object 'New Green Constellation', or specific intelligence on the Stars Embrace Order, I am not very clear on either; perhaps we can inquire about these from the Alchemy Council."

He paused for a moment, lost in thought, then continued.

"As for that elf, I feel that she is nothing like what is described in books as 'a peace-loving and fragile race'; rather, this 'Madam March' gives me more the feeling of a mercenary."

As Byrne spoke, he couldn't help but recall his father's face, and finally at this moment, understood what that was all about.

To be precise, it was the trait of "lacking reverence for all things in the world, believing only in the power held in one's own hands"!

Even his father needed the companionship of family blood to alleviate loneliness; the emerald elf, however, seemed more like a cruel and cold lone wolf, trusting no one and not intending to rely on anyone, living solely for herself.

After listening, Irene could only sigh, "So it is, we still know too little."

Unable to figure out the pressing questions, everyone decided to leave them be for now. Irene gazed at the dazzlingly brilliant Crystal Dragon egg, incredibly surprised, becoming gradually mesmerized by its beauty.

It also looked quite valuable!

"It looks really good, how much can we sell this Crystal Dragon egg for? Maybe we could exchange it for various mysterious domain resources?"

Byrne was taken aback, having not anticipated Irene's line of thought, and immediately said, "Actually, I think it would be better for the family to nurture it gradually as it grows; in the future, we will have a very powerful dragon. If we sell it outright, it would be quite cost-ineffective."

Chris suddenly asked, "Can't it be eaten?"

Irene shook her head, and turned to look at Byrne, calmly explaining her reasoning.

"I still think selling it is better, perhaps to Viscount Bast or that Alchemy Council you joined."

"Even if we were to raise it to adulthood, we can't be certain it would see us as family; plus, I know the growth of giant dragons is extremely slow, the fruits of the future are too far off..."

She wanted to say her own life was limited, and that she definitely would not live to see the day it would grow into a giant dragon, but she paused and did not say it after all.

Byrne still shook his head, strongly opposing Irene's idea, and explained with a frown:

"I still recommend raising it; actually, most of the dragon tribe are filled with affection for the life that raises them, and what you're talking about almost never happens."

"Moreover, this giant dragon egg is quite extraordinary; I've read books about mysterious creatures, but there's never been any record of a Crystal Dragon egg. Its appearance might just be a rare opportunity for the Fischer family that only comes once in many years!"

Out of the blue, Chris spoke again, "Eat it."

While the discussion was at an impasse, Karl, standing on the altar with the transparent bottle, started to feel a strange attraction.

How odd.

He sensed that the life within the dragon egg, though still not fully formed, contained a significant amount of Spiritual Power. Yet, it was still far from complete, and the Spiritual Power it possessed was still growing.

To bring the Spiritual Power of the life inside the Crystal Dragon egg to its peak, it must be made to hatch and grow to its pinnacle; only then would it become immensely tempting to Karl.

Interesting.

“What exactly is the existence within this Crystal Dragon egg brought from the Spirit Realm by Byrne? Its species is clearly not one of the average dragon kind; perhaps it’s another type of mysterious creature similar to the dragon form.”

He found it very interesting and was eager to witness the growth of that life to its utmost limit, so he decided to communicate an order to Irene via telepathy.

Karl formulated a rather pleasant-sounding message in his mind and conveyed it:

[Let it grow until it can eclipse the sky and devour all things.]

In the basement, where a few were about to resort to the belief scales for a vote on how to deal with the Crystal Dragon egg, Irene’s expression suddenly changed.

Without hesitation, she knelt down, nodding her head and murmuring to herself for a long time.

“I understand, great my lord!”

Both Byrne and Chris were surprised, but soon realized what had just happened.

It was the great Lord of the Lost bestowing an oracle!

Irene finally stood up slowly and said solemnly, “The great Lord of the Lost has bestowed an oracle, the Fischer family must ensure its birth and growth, until it can eclipse the sky and even devour all things!”

She sighed and sincerely apologized, “Byrne, you were right, I almost made a grave mistake.”

At this, there were no further disagreements among them, and Chris appeared very disappointed.

The disappearance of Baron Leander ultimately did not stir up much commotion in the East Coast Province.

Many speculated that he had been abducted and killed by the Sea God Cult, while others guessed that the Lost followers were responsible, which in a sense, was somewhat correct.

One thing that surprised Byrne was that Assistant Priest Zayne did not come to investigate.

It seemed as though the Tempest Church no longer cared much about these matters, or perhaps they were too preoccupied internally; the church sent only a few low-ranking priests that Byrne did not recognize to conduct the investigation.

“This is bad, the current situation is such that even if a true noble disappears or is harmed, the Tempest Church hardly cares anymore... When the Kesse family was attacked last time, Zayne arrived at the scene very quickly.”

Thinking of this, his heart sank.

The order of the East Coast Province was like a thin sheet of paper, merely one final push from outside forces away, and the seemingly stable social order would completely collapse.

Of the Leander family, only Baron Leander was an Extraordinary Exponent at the Transmutation Level.

After his disappearance for some time, the family's lands were quickly encroached upon by the neighboring viscount families, who were supposed to be their protectors.

This time, the Fischer family chose to remain silent and did not fight for the land, their enmity with the Garcia family had become a foregone conclusion, and the land of the Kesse family had to be taken. Establishing new enemies now would not be advisable.

Moreover, the “Iron Blood” Oder family, which had annexed the land of the Leander family, was actually a long-term ally of the Lion clan. If the Fischer family wanted to contend for it, it would be difficult to gain the support of the Lion clan.

It was also because the Leander family was sheltered by the “Iron Blood” Oder family that they were considered peripheral members of the Lion clan's alliance, which was why Leander initially had Byrne approach Viscount Bast.

Three months later.

A wedding that astonished the people of Nasir Town quietly took place.

Many found it hard to believe that Young Master Chris of the Fischer family and the prospective housekeeper, Madam Vanessa, suddenly married.

“Do you really think that Madam Vanessa is worthy of Young Master Chris?”

Many people in the town were puzzled.

“I’ve heard that several families nearby made marriage proposals, even Viscount Bast hoped that Young Master Chris would marry one of his nieces, but Mr. Byrne refused them all.”

“Although Madam Vanessa is a nice person, she really is lucky to marry Young Master Chris!”

The rumors that Byrne had boldly refused marriage proposals from the Lion clan were actually true.

He almost knelt down to Lieutenant Colonel Abel who had come to propose; Abel was completely taken aback when the Fischer family rejected them!

Only when Byrne and Lieutenant Colonel Abel assured him that the next head of the Fischer family would definitely marry into the Lion clan, did Abel leave somewhat appeased.

Byrne and Irene both knew one thing very clearly in their hearts.

If Chris had set his mind on Vanessa, he would not change his mind, and Vanessa was not the type of girl willing to be just a mistress.

Furthermore, Byrne was not too enthusiastic about the Fischer family entering an immediate marriage alliance with the Lion clan.

The current gap in status between the two families was simply too vast, and if someone from the Lion clan came over and wanted to delve into their internal affairs, the Fischer family would struggle to cope.

Because of the situation with Margaret, the relationship between the Hoffman family and the Fischer family was now ambiguous, and Byrne had become extremely cautious about family alliances.

Who exactly the next head of the Fischer family would be, and whether there would indeed be a marriage alliance, could all be discussed anew at that time. At least for now, the matter could be brushed aside.

During the wedding, Vanessa appeared extremely happy, while Chris showed a rare smile.

“Thank you.”

They were both full of gratitude for Byrne's and Irene's permission.

The Fischer family invited the upper echelon from the four towns to attend the wedding; apart from the Garcia family, which did not show up, members from the remaining three baronial families and two viscount families came.

The Lion clan also sent an envoy to attend the wedding, signaling that they did not mind the Fischer family's refusal of the marriage proposal.

The Assistant Bishop, Assistant Priest Zayne of the Tempest Church, had initially promised to come, but unexpectedly did not show up in the end, later saying that there were important internal issues to resolve.

A few days after the wedding ended, Byrne, who was in the alchemy workshop deconstructing potions, heard from a servant that his son Darren had fallen unconscious and could not be woken!

"What happened?" he asked, extremely tense and shocked, rushing straight to Darren's room. He quickly saw his son lying unconscious on the bed and the crowd gathered around him.

Irene calmly asked everyone to disperse, saying indifferently, "Please leave us for a moment, I need to speak to Byrne alone."

Chapter 130: Chapter 124 Self-blame

Chris, Vanessa, and the others exchanged glances before all turning to leave, leaving only Irene, Byrne, and Darren, who lay comatose on the bed.

Irene stared at Byrne's anxious eyes for a long while before finally speaking:

"Darren tried to reveal the existence of the Lord of the Lost, but he met our Master's gaze, and so, unable to withstand such a great and supreme vision, he fell into a coma."

"What are you talking about?"

Upon learning the true reason behind Darren's coma, Byrne was stunned for a good while, a bit slow to react.

He still remembered the state of that old servant from years ago, knowing that even a mentally strong adult, if glanced at for a moment by the displeased, great Lord of the Lost, would be unable to rise due to immense fear, and would likely be haunted by it night after night.

For an ordinary child, such a mental burden was simply unimaginable!

“Irene...”

Byrne took a deep breath, seeing his son shivering continuously in his sleep, his face pale, and suppressing the emotions welling up inside him, he asked:

“Irene, did you know this was going to happen?”

“Yes.” Irene didn’t hide anything and calmly nodded her head.

“I told him a lot, and Darren indeed almost failed to keep the secret.”

Byrne clearly sensed something odd; the Irene before him was increasingly different from the one he remembered. The Irene of the past, knowing such a thing could happen to a family member, would never have allowed the situation to progress to this point!

“Why didn’t you reveal the family secrets little by little, starting with the smallest, or maybe, test Darren just as you do with the orphans...”

Byrne hadn’t finished speaking when he was interrupted by Irene without hesitation.

“No need to test him; he’s definitely not qualified!”

Byrne was dumbfounded, Irene shook her head, and continued.

“And what’s the purpose of testing those orphans at Daybreak Orphanage? It is to filter out unreliable people and prevent them from entering the core of the family.”

“But don’t forget one thing, Darren doesn’t need to be tested!”

Byrne clearly understood what Irene meant and took a deep breath.

She said calmly, “Because even if he’s unqualified, he must eventually enter the core of the family. It’s a destiny contained within the Fischer family’s bloodline; as a member of the Fischer family, there is simply no escaping it, and that applies not just to him but to Lilian as well.”

“Darren is just an ordinary child in personality. He’s a simple-minded aristocratic kid, and it’s not impossible for him to grow up as an ordinary noble, but he will surely be unable to bear heavy responsibilities in the future.”

“I think a significant lesson could potentially prompt unprecedented growth in him. Real, lived experience is always better than repeated verbal warnings.”

Byrne gazed silently at Irene, knowing deep inside that her words made sense.

Darren was utterly different from the two of them, having never experienced even the slightest hardship or difficulty since childhood, and being playful, gluttonous, and never learning to respect others.

He truly needed some hardships.

Byrne sighed, bent over, and slowly stroked his son's face with his hand, his eyes betraying apologies and guilt.

"As the head of the Fischer family, I lack the spare energy to properly educate you, Darren... I understand this is not an excuse a father should make."

"The great suffering you bear now is ultimately because I failed to fulfill my responsibilities. If only I could bear it for you."

He closed his eyes, praying in his heart to the Lord of the Lost for forgiveness and hoping He would protect his child in the future.

A few days later, Darren finally woke up.

His eyes were full of fear, he would scream whenever someone approached, and for a long time, he couldn't speak a complete sentence; he cried day and night, and Byrne even thought his son had completely lost his mind.

Are you not afraid that doing this could make Darren truly insane?

Byrne had wanted to question Irene when he suddenly remembered something—that she couldn't feel fear anymore.

He recalled how Irene, ever since losing her fear, had become completely unafraid to let Chris join battles.

So that was it; because Irene could no longer feel fear, she might lose caution in her judgments and no longer fear causing harm to her loved ones.

In the following nights, Byrne put aside his work on researching medicines and silently accompanied his son, who lay trapped in fear.

He felt deep inside that Darren was pitiable, having lost the care of his father and mother during his growth, and thinking that he would have to take on more of Irene's burdens in the future; she had already sacrificed too much for the family.

From beginning to end, Byrne never felt Irene or Darren had done anything wrong; he just felt an innate guilt.

"After all, it was I who did not do well enough..."

After more than ten days, Darren gradually came to his senses, and Byrne finally breathed a sigh of relief.

At night, he still shivered, afraid to remember the deep shadow in his heart, needing someone present to fall asleep.

One night, Darren suddenly felt very strange. Aunt Irene said she too had been gazed upon by Him, the great God of Lost, in her youth. Why didn't Aunt Irene faint like he had?

He suddenly figured out the reason: was it because the gaze Aunt Irene received didn't contain that displeasure?

His will filled one with endless fear!

Darren deeply felt it, the moment when all things were to be destroyed, and he himself was about to vanish in the collapse, he felt like he had gone through multiple deaths, terrifying beyond measure, and the next moment, he collapsed and lost consciousness.

"Great Lord of the Lost, I, I won't be careless with my words anymore; I'll be forever loyal; as your follower, I beg you not to destroy me, please! Please!"

He cried incessantly, tears streaming down, only hoping to receive the Lord of the Lost's forgiveness. That deep fear was planted in the darkest recesses of his heart, never to be dispelled.

The next day, Darren was taken to the courtyard by Byrne, puzzled as his father thrust a rough wooden sword into his hands.

Picking it up felt so harsh to the hand, he had no desire for this thing, and he subconsciously wanted to put the sword down.

Yet Byrne also picked up a wooden sword, calmly saying, "Darren, from now on I will carve out an hour each day to hone your swordsmanship."

"Let's start right away."

His father could spare the time to be with him!

He was subconsciously filled with joy, his eyes brimming with happiness, but soon realized what his father's words actually implied.

Honing swordsmanship?

I don't know the first thing about swordsmanship, Darren thought, still dumbfounded, when suddenly he saw his father calmly thrust the sword towards him.

“Ah!”

He immediately closed his eyes and screamed, instinctively throwing away the sword from his hand.

But the little chubby one was still stabbed, it hurt so much, even giving up the sword couldn't spare him from the fate of being injured.

Byrne squatted down with a gentle expression, smiling and said calmly, “Try again, Darren, pick up your sword.”

Darren suddenly felt very afraid, and very resistant, the coming hour, and every day thereafter, was he going to be beaten?

Four months later, the Tempest Church led the Cyart army into the White Sea, initiating another encirclement against the Sea God Cult.

This campaign ended in great success, their main forces severely damaged, they returned victorious!

Each of the twelve priests of the Sea God Cult was a high-level Transmutation individual; during the years of war, none of them had ever died in battle, yet in this encirclement, as many as five Sea God priests perished.

The morale of the Tempest Church and the Cyart nobility was greatly boosted, and the war against the Sea God was nearing its end.

Although eradicating the Sea God Cult completely was difficult, the main body of its force was nearly destroyed, and everyone understood that true victory was imminent.

Meanwhile, Byrne was about to attend the Alchemy Council once more, meeting those very mysterious individuals.

He returned to that lush green manor once again.

“Please wait a moment.”

Viscount Bast's personal servant, the flame descendant female, asked Byrne to wait in a dedicated resting room.

People from all over the East Coast Province came to seek Viscount Bast, many of them stood up on their own, greeting Byrne with tones full of flattery.

Unlike those waiting in line in the hall, Byrne could rest alone in the dedicated resting room, and the several servants in the room were ready to meet his requests at any moment.

The flame descendant female in the tailcoat bowed respectfully and said:

“Lord Bast is currently discussing with Lord Oder, please wait a little longer, Lord Byrne.”

This flame descendant woman named Autumn, as a personal servant, was highly trusted by Viscount Bast.

Over the three years of interactions, Byrne noticed that Autumn likely was also an Extraordinary Exponent of considerable strength.

She might possess Transmutation Level power, yet still contentedly served as a servant, loyalty unswerving, a method of managing subordinates worth learning from Viscount Bast.

After a short while, Byrne learned from Autumn that Viscount Oder had already left, and it was now his turn.

He had no good impression of the “Iron Blood” Oder family.

For the “Iron Blood” Oder family, who were supposed to be protectors of the Leander family, and considering that Baron Leander’s daughter was also one of Oder’s lovers, seized everything belonging to the Leander family immediately after Baron Leander’s demise!

Byrne found the act of striking down one’s own kin to be disgusting; even if Viscount Oder was an ally of Viscount Bast, he truly did not wish to meet that man.

Soon after, Byrne met Viscount Bast again.

He was a bit short in stature, of medium build, with neatly combed white hair, a white vest, and eyes twinkling with the cunning of a fox on the hunt.

When they first met, he was a fifty-three-year-old middle-aged man, yet now he still appeared as a relaxed and casual old man.

Viscount Bast was still sipping tea, smiling and saying:

“Three years have passed, I hadn’t imagined they’d fly by so quickly, another three years just like that, I seem to be getting older and older.”

He gestured for the servants to leave and laughed, continuing:

“And you, Byrne, seem to be getting steadier and steadier. The Fischer family is also developing quite well, perhaps one day, when I’m old and trembling, I will have to go to Nasir to seek an audience with Lord Byrne.”

Byrne knew well Viscount Bast’s character; he was always a joking old fox, and smiled in response:

“If that day really comes, I will certainly arrange a dedicated resting room for you.”

As expected, Viscount Bast didn’t take offense at the joke and smiled as he rose to his feet, slowly taking out the white mask of the Alchemy Council from his ring and gently placing it on his face.

“Heh heh, if that day really comes, I will certainly be delighted. I’ll thank you in advance, Lord Byrne!”

He reactivated the room’s mirror and led Byrne through it, ascending the pristine and majestic snow-covered mountain to enter the palace filled with a sense of the divine.

The Alchemy Council’s members were already waiting there, “Time Stasis Stone,” “Moon River Stone,” “Spirit Essence,” “Star Metal,” “Solar Gold.”

Besides them, there was Viscount Bast, codenamed “Dragon Crystal,” and “Mithril” Byrne.

Byrne couldn’t help but look towards the mysterious individual at the far end, the chairman of the Alchemy Council.

He was a dangerous individual who would use countless souls to refine objects of the extraordinary, wielding unfathomable power!