

From Secret Clan to the Divine Dynasty

Chapter 161: 154 Forbidden Rare Artifact "Countdown Timer"

The spirit rune "Thorns".

Unlike "Reverse Stab," which only causes mental shock, "Thorns" possesses a mystical power that goes a step further. It can grow a large number of black thorns directly on the body of the enemy, restricting their movement, and both the mental shock and black thorns can take effect on groups.

Chris was already very strong in terms of offensive capability. He didn't need any further enhancements in that area, but his defenses were relatively weak and in urgent need of reinforcement.

Therefore, Karl, in order to let this assassin "deliver damage while alive," ultimately chose the spirit rune "Thorns" for insurance.

With this, the overall strength of Chris Fischer had received an enormously significant boost.

Today, he transformed and officially became a true powerhouse reputable even among those on the East Coast, and the Fischer family too emerged as a force not to be underestimated on the East Coast.

"Next, the increasingly powerful Fischer family should be able to make even greater strides. In the next twenty-one years, who knows what the scene will be like."

Karl could feel that his breakthrough of the fourth seal was still a long way off.

"Fischer, hurry up and offer up another Forbidden class rare artifact. I can feel my soul desperately craving, that instinctual desire is simply irresistible."

Or rather, I don't want to resist it at all.

The emerging city on the East Coast Province, Phelps Port.

This city belongs to the Eagle clan and has also been the fastest-growing city on the East Coast in the recent decades.

As one of the Cyart Kingdom's top ports, Phelps Port's reach included the Eastern Four Kingdoms, the White Sea, and even the Aphotic Sea.

The patriarch of the Eagle clan, "Black Hawk" Xavier, was a man of great foresight. He vigorously developed industry and spared no effort to introduce foreign steam engines, offering convenient policies for various factories.

Although the processes of urbanization and industrialization brought about issues like chaos, violence, and diseases, the rapid development of Phelps Port was a "miracle" visible to everyone.

A black carriage made its way through the crowd. Upon seeing the Roarer clan's crest on the carriage, people would subconsciously keep their distance, not daring to get close.

Viscount Garcia, clad in a black military uniform, sat inside the carriage with a calm and composed expression, holding an odd black mechanical enamelled watch in his rough and heavy hands.

Timepieces of the current era on the Ouden Continent had already incorporated tourbillons and also the invention of a second hand. However, the mechanical enamelled watch in Viscount Garcia's hand was quite different.

It was apparently an older model, with only an hour and minute hand, and no tourbillon to offset the effects of gravity on the timekeeping mechanism's escapement.

In reality, this black mechanical enamelled watch was not actually a timepiece, but rather a powerful Forbidden rare artifact.

The Forbidden rare artifact number 4571 "Countdown Timer".

In order to increase the likelihood of success against the Fischer family, Viscount Garcia had obtained this Forbidden rare artifact called "Countdown Timer" a few months earlier by trading with the Carnians from the northernmost part of the Eastern Four Kingdoms.

All Forbidden rare artifact numbers were designated by the "Crimson Flame Library," one of the six ancient libraries. Generally speaking, the smaller the number of a Forbidden rare artifact, the stronger the mystical power it possessed.

The single-digit Forbidden rare artifacts, numbered up to nine, were even coveted by the powerful experts of Heavenly Enlightenment.

While it was only a four-digit number for a Forbidden rare artifact, "Countdown Timer," with a number within five thousand, contained very potent mystical power within.

Rumours about the Fischer family and the Romann family had spread throughout the East Coast Province. More and more commoners and nobles believed them, and many began to embellish the stories, with tavern-goers especially liking to hear those "rumors," "secrets," and "conspiracies."

However, Viscount Garcia still didn't believe it.

"But without a doubt, the latent power they hide is indeed troublesome. Rather than rashly attacking, Vina should investigate the internal situation of the Fischer family first."

"Is such caution really necessary?"

Viscount Garcia's younger brother, Andrew, furrowed his brow, feeling that his brother was being overly cautious.

"After all, the Fischer family is still just a small clan, and their power and influence seem laughable in the face of the Roarer clan."

"Even if the Fischer family has the backing of the Lion clan, what of it? We, the Roarer clan, also have the support of the Eagle clan."

"As long as they are not part of the direct lineage of the Romann family, they are nothing in front of the Roarer clan."

In truth, the core members of the Roarer clan were all aware that their patriarch, Viscount Garcia, was about to assassinate Byrne Fischer, the head of the Fischer family.

What they all couldn't understand, though, was why Viscount Garcia still held the Fischer family's potential and hidden strength in "high regard," even though he was convinced that there was no close relationship between the Fischer family and the Romann family.

Over the year, Viscount Garcia had spent considerable time, effort, and money to acquire Forbidden rare artifacts, all as a part of his preparations to kill Byrne Fischer.

"You simply don't understand, the power hidden within the Fischer family is absolutely formidable. With several strong individuals falling before them, even I can't guarantee that I will certainly kill Byrne."

Viscount Garcia looked at his brother, his eyes sharp and penetrative as if he could see through to one's soul.

"We must delve into the secrets of the Fischer family, research and prepare ambush locations, and also this Forbidden rare artifact—it's all crucial work we need to complete."

"Just like the war with the Rhea People back then, we can never afford to be careless on the battlefield or have you forgotten how the Tempest Bishop met his end?"

His tone became increasingly serious, and his gaze even turned icy cold.

"The Sea God Cult had hidden their strength at that time, and we knew absolutely nothing about it. We arrogantly expected an easy victory, yet the outcome is known to all, though some foolish ones never learn their lesson!"

Andrew swallowed hard, somewhat intimidated by his older brother.

"I understand."

The black carriage arrived in front of the Eagle clan's mansion and finally came to a stop.

The mansion was built entirely in the Lorne style, appearing grand and unique. Its colors were elegant yet vibrant, and the surrounding lawns were meticulously groomed and level, as if created by a Mysterious force.

Viscount Garcia arrived at the mansion, where he met Viscount Xavier who was still cloaked in a black robe, his demeanor austere, and with the appearance of a young man.

"Xavier, what are you doing?"

Upon entering, Viscount Garcia saw Xavier looking fascinatedly at a blueprint.

"This is an unprecedented invention. It's utterly captivating. Garcia, I'm looking at the future of Phelps Port."

Xavier lifted his head, took a deep breath, and then handed the blueprint to Viscount Garcia, who however, found mechanical industry blueprints utterly incomprehensible and could only shake his head after looking at it.

"What is this exactly? It looks like a ship?"

"It's a steamship. You can understand it as using the power of a steam engine to propel the ship on water, rather than relying solely on wind and alchemy."

Xavier's expression remained neutral, but his tone conveyed great importance to the contents of the blueprint.

"Its advent could even change the world. The steamship will sooner or later replace sailboats. They will be easier to navigate for long voyages, faster, and will lead to the flourishing development of Phelps Port."

Viscount Garcia didn't quite understand. Could steam engines really provide power for ships? And if everyone started using them instead of the power of sea winds, what would the Tempest Church think?

They would surely feel that the sacred object of the Reforging Church was trying to usurp the authority and domain of the Tempest Overlord, which would lead to great anger.

"It may not develop as smoothly as you think," Viscount Garcia shook his head.

"You still don't understand, Garcia. The East Coast Province could very well become the wealthiest province in the Cyart Kingdom in the future."

Zavier shook his head and replied, "The steam engines invented by the Reforging Church are truly magnificent. They are far more important than the exorbitantly priced and difficult to master art of alchemy."

"In no more than fifty or a hundred years, the existence of steam engines will change the entire world, and every aspect of people's lives will bear the trace of steam and machinery!"

Finally, Viscount Garcia could not help but laugh at this point, sincerely believing his old friend was having fanciful thoughts, and he laughed heartily:

"Hahahaha, Zavier, have you gone mad? That's simply impossible! The great churches will never sit by and watch the Reforging Church grow unchecked!"

"The steam engine is somewhat interesting, I admit it has brought change. Yet, it's merely ordinary in the face of true, powerful forces. I don't see anything special about it!"

Zavier suddenly realized his mistake; he shouldn't have discussed such matters with Viscount Garcia, a professional soldier who was completely out of his element with these topics.

So he nodded politely, and with a blank expression, he asked, "So, what do you need me to do, Garcia?"

Viscount Garcia's expression darkened as he said, "I need your help to kill Byrne Fischer!"

Zavier was not at all surprised by this answer, and after a long silence, he calmly said:

"Are you sure you want to kill that man? He's very cautious now, always keeping his whereabouts secret, and both you and I are well aware that the Fischer family

possesses some kind of hidden power. To act rashly against them could likely lead us into some sort of danger."

The situation was becoming increasingly tense after the maritime warfare. Many nobles learned to keep their movements secret, and public banquets became increasingly rare, making assassination attempts more difficult.

"I've made up my mind! Lend me your strength, Xavier!"

There was a wild beast-like intent in Viscount Garcia's eyes, his grip tightening on one hand as he pulled out the Forbidden rare artifact "Countdown Timer" with the other.

"At most ten years, maybe even five, and the Fischer family will become a great impediment before us!"

His words continued with determined conviction, trusting in his own judgment.

"Often, my judgments come not so much from intuition as from the accumulation of years of experience. If we let the Fischer family continue to develop, they will eventually become a beast capable of standing shoulder to shoulder with the powerful. That would be even more troublesome and dangerous!"

"Byrne Fischer, the lead of the Fischer family, must fall into death now!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 162: 155 The End of the Road for Irene

A new ritual was about to begin, and Chris headed to the study in the manor that belonged solely to his wife, to notify her, as usual, to go to the basement of the estate.

Upon entering the study, Chris quickly saw his wife, Vanessa, engrossed in writing something, her brows furrowed and the pain in her eyes was undeniable.

She had been anxious and worried as of late, unable to relax her brows, as though pondering some profound matter.

"Chris?"

Vanessa gently lifted her head.

Chris slowly approached, reaching out to caress his wife's hair, gazing into Vanessa's beautiful eyes, wanting to understand what tormented her so.

"Chris, I know what you want to ask."

Vanessa, as if telepathically in tune with Chris, knew what lay deep in his heart, her smile bitter, her eyes filled with defiance, pain, and sorrow.

"I've just suddenly realized the reason I can't make further progress on the 2nd Rank."

"It turns out, I have changed without realizing it."

After giving birth to the twins, she became increasingly aware of the affairs of the Fischer family, and Vanessa ultimately chose to silently accept even the darkest of these affairs.

Because her own husband was the one in the family responsible for the most innocent bloodshed!

She had always had a feeling, yet she never pondered it deeply, deceiving herself in the depths of her heart.

From that moment, Vanessa had broken the principles deep within her own heart.

Thus, she could no longer make any progress on the Path of World Order.

Lately, Vanessa kept recalling the day when Chris was promoted to "Sin Executioner."

The sudden appearance of the black Fire of Sin, even she instinctively feared it, and from that time on, she could no longer deceive herself.

The man who once spoke only of justice had now become a hypocritical liar!

Chris remained silent for a long time before finally embracing Vanessa, who was smiling through her pain.

"I'm sorry."

—

Lilian was in the yard, playing with the magic beast that looked like a double-headed turtle.

The former Lilian fed "turtle" beans, but now she had finally figured out that this magic beast preferred the meat of birds, so she switched to feeding it meatballs made from chicken and beans.

"Good."

She smiled as she played with the turtle, and after a while, a female servant approached and said with her head bowed respectfully:

"Miss Lilian, Madam Irene has requested your presence."

"Alright, I'll be right there, thank you for letting me know."

Lilian nodded politely, then followed the smiling servant to Aunt Irene's door.

She waited quietly for Aunt Irene to appear, mentally prepared for what was to come.

"Lilian, how have you gotten on with the things I asked you to memorize a few days ago?"

After the servant had left, Irene looked at Lilian calmly and seriously, as the young girl nodded gently and said earnestly:

"I have memorized the entire hymn of praise to the gods, Aunt Irene, I can sing it for you."

Irene reached out, gently caressing the girl's hair, and said indifferently:

"Very good, Lilian, you are to replace me as the new Priest of the family; the future of the Fischer family will be guided by your hands. You must believe more sincerely in the great Lord of the Lost."

"Yes, I understand, Aunt Irene."

Lilian was obedient, showing none of the mischief or impishness of children, always smiling respectfully.

Irene watched her calmly, sensing that Lilian was just too obedient.

Perhaps compared to her brother Darren Fischer, Lilian Fischer, as the sister, was even more hypocritical. Although still a child, she had already learned to ingratiate herself with adults by always being well-behaved.

If you were an ordinary person, you might not notice anything wrong with Lilian's character.

But Irene, having dealt with all sorts of children for over twenty years, knew all too well what kind of characters they possessed.

Lilian, she wasn't truly devout yet; she just accepted the faith in the Lord of the Lost.

In a different environment, Lilian could well be a follower of other gods. Essentially, she didn't recognize the greatness of the Lord of the Lost compared to the heretic false gods.

Because she was acutely aware that her family expected her to become a Priest, and if she couldn't fulfill this expectation, everyone around her would be disappointed.

So, Lilian strove to meet people's expectations.

Irene couldn't help but think that compared to the overly self-centered Darren, Lilian was too keen on pleasing others; in a sense, their personalities were polar opposites.

Indeed, many people lived like this, surviving by constantly pleasing others, and she was well aware of this.

However, if she were to truly become the Priest leading the entire Dawn Church, the extent of Lilian's devotion couldn't just stop here.

Irene mused silently, perhaps another event was needed to truly change this well-behaved child.

She needed to witness a miracle!

However, all decisions would have to wait until after today's anointment ceremony. By then, she would consider whether to allow Lilian to undergo transformation.

If the great Lord of the Lost did not bestow upon her the Path of Divine Sacrifice, Irene would have to abandon the idea of training her to become a Priest and instead consider having Rishia, a "devout person," marry Darren, to become the next Priest of the Fischer family.

"I leave it all to the great judgment of the Lord of the Lost," she murmured to herself.

Irene nodded gently and said, "Lilian, come with me."

Lilian nodded with a smile and followed Aunt Irene to the second floor of the basement.

She felt a bit uneasy inside, feeling that she had done nothing wrong, yet why couldn't she make Aunt Irene happy?

Lilian had an extraordinary sensitivity to the emotions of others and animals alike.

Despite having meticulously completed all of Aunt Irene's demands, why did she still seem a bit discontented?

What exactly wasn't good enough?

Lilian couldn't understand at all and felt increasingly agitated deep inside.

In the basement, she noticed that the family members were all looking at her, and she saw her brother Darren gazing at her with joy as if he were about to congratulate her.

What's going on?

Lilian was a bit unclear about what was about to happen, only feeling that it might be a significant event involving her, and then she knelt down with everyone else, as she had done on previous occasions.

During the ceremony, she was singled out by Aunt Irene to step forward.

"Lilian, come here."

So Lilian had to slowly rise and step forward, kneeling again in front of everyone while maintaining an outward appearance of calm and devotion, but feeling even more uneasy and fearful within.

At the same time, she quickly noticed another little girl she didn't recognize, who approached and knelt beside her with an expressionless face, grey scales upon her delicate features.

Rishia, a dragon descendant little girl from Daybreak Orphanage, a devout person.

Faced with Lilian and Rishia, Karl sank into deep contemplation.

Rishia's path ahead was undoubtedly the Path of Divine Sacrifice; it wasn't something that required consideration. She was a child with nothing else in her heart.

But what about Lilian?

"It seems I need to give this some careful thought," he said.

Karl was deep in thought.

"Irene's idea simply won't work; even as a devout person, Rishia can't replace her. That child isn't a blood member of the Fischer family, not one of my favored members; without the influence of the soul fragment I tore away, she can't complete the sacrifice."

"Then, among the others, I can only choose Lilian. Chris's child is still too young, and Darren's temperament makes it impossible for him to become a Priest."

Human nature is often complicated; in fact, many people are suited for different paths, such that even the gentle Byrne has a slight affinity for the Path of Conquest.

Lilian is suited for two paths; her most suitable path is actually the Path of Nature, and only then the Path of Divine Sacrifice.

However, affinity for the God Pantheon stairway can actually be changed later in life because over the long course of life, people's characters and behaviors tend to gradually change.

He made up his mind, taking a gamble on what kind of person Lily would become in the future.

Bestow upon her the Power of Consecration of the Path of Divine Sacrifice.

If she could become a devout person, she would naturally be able to advance further on the Path of Divine Sacrifice. Otherwise, she could only reach up to the first two steps at most.

Both girls of similar age were granted the power of the Path of Divine Sacrifice. Lilian's face showed some excitement and relief, while Rishia remained expressionless, silently praying.

Irene's heart grasped the will of God.

The great He had chosen Lilian.

So, she must find a way to make Lilian more devout, and she had to succeed in this before she departed from this world.

She had no sorrow at the thought of leaving this world, rather she felt more and more joyful.

Perhaps some members of the Fischer family were concerned about the afterlife, but Irene was quite certain her soul would return to God's embrace.

Even if Karl had never spoken to her about what came after death.

After the ceremony was over, Irene gently stroked Lilian's hair as they emerged outside, suddenly coming to understand many things.

"So that's how it is, I finally understand," she whispered.

What exactly was her final destiny during these last years?

Irene had long been perplexed and bewildered about this.

Time was running short.

She had fulfilled her obligations to her family with a clear conscience, but to the great Lord of the Lost, she had always done too little in return for His ocean-like benevolence.

What could she do at the end of her life to repay the great Lord of the Lost?

The woman who had been troubled and perplexed suddenly felt, as if guided by God, tears of realization flowing down her cheeks.

"I finally understand, that is what the great You had been expecting!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 163: 156: Murdering Byrne Fischer!

"I want to murder Viscount Garcia."

Byrne remained silent for a long while before finally speaking out.

The Fischer family had chosen to keep Chris's newfound strength a secret, telling no outsiders, all to take advantage of the information gap to kill Viscount Garcia.

"I cannot intervene."

In one of the Lion clan's estates, within the drawing-room, Viscount Bast, growing increasingly old, smiled as he savored the rich, intense aroma of the tea. He gazed at Byrne and slowly shook his head.

"In fact, not just me, most members of the Lion and Eagle clans cannot intervene."

He paused, laughing softly as he explained:

"Because we've taken 'The Oath' in the Tempest Church with the vast Tempest Overlord, swearing not to lay hands on each other's family members and allies. And in order for us to give 'The Oath,' the Thunderous Monarch even sacrificed a Class 5 Extraordinary Material."

Of course, Byrne was aware of "The Oath."

It was a special commitment sworn to the gods that only became effective if taken in a church. The higher the grade of the offerings, the more powerful the effect of The Oath.

Those who took The Oath could not easily break it, or they would face divine punishment.

"The Oath" had a time limit and had to ensure relative fairness to be effective. An oath that was one-sided, such as "One person promises another eternal loyalty and obedience to all commands," could not take effect.

Thus, "The Oaths" were often used by the Extraordinary nobility for various trades, alliances, and ceasefires.

Decades ago, the Cyart King and Rhea King took an oath for peace under the church's leadership, so neither king dared to break it lightly.

The Meyer family dared to invade because they were already in conflict with the Rhea Royal Family. They didn't care about the royal situation, and their actions wouldn't be judged as a breach of The Oath by the royalty.

Now, only one year remained until the peace agreement between Cyart and Rhea expired!

However, another rumor had spread—that all The Oaths had already become ineffective, and there was probably no need to adhere to them anymore.

But that would mean the power of the gods was no more, a thought undoubtedly unimaginable to the people, and the major churches were all forcefully quashing such rumors!

Byrne furrowed his brows, aware in his heart that the old fox surely had something left unsaid.

As expected, Viscount Bast continued.

"The only exception among the Transmutation Level Extraordinary Exponents of the Lion and Eagle clans is the 'Black Lion.' He has never been present in public sight, never took The Oath, and therefore can do anything without any concern."

"I can have him assist you, but there is one important condition."

Byrne let out a sigh of relief. Once it came to talking terms, everything became negotiable.

Viscount Bast became serious and spoke solemnly, "Within a year, I want you to accompany me to the Spirit Realm to search for something of utmost importance to me!"

"I need you to help me open a gateway!"

"Okay, I agree!"

Byrne nodded immediately, without the slightest hesitation, he agreed.

No matter what the original reason Viscount Bast had for helping him, his favor towards the Fischer family was incredibly difficult to repay.

And over the years, Byrne's heart had come to accept more and more the man who was both mentor and friend, Viscount Bast.

Deep in his heart, Byrne had already decided he could do anything for Bast that wouldn't harm the Fischer family or cost him his own life.

Beyond that, anything was possible.

"Hahahaha! Good! That's excellent!"

Viscount Bast finally burst into laughter, nodding repeatedly, his eyes filled with expectation and desire, hands slightly clenched. Even with white hair, he still harbored aspirations for the future.

"Byrne, I'm very fond of you, well done! Over the years, I have not mentored you in vain, and the Lion clan's care for the Fischer family has not gone to waste!"

His excitement grew as he spoke, his eyes brimming with longing.

Suddenly, Byrne felt that Viscount Bast's desire was extremely bloated, almost overflowing, but then it vanished as if he had been mistaken.

In fact, he felt that Viscount Bast was becoming more and more like his father Lucius.

Both men harbored great ambitions yet always masqueraded as amiable, always hiding their true thoughts and emotions in the depths of their hearts.

"I will help you, Lord Bast."

Byrne nodded slowly, his words filled with respect for the man before him.

"I must repay the kindness your family has shown to the Fischer family,"

—

The Fischer family had always been shrouded in mystery.

Their head, Byrne Fischer, not only possessed the strength of a Bloodline Knight but also had a transformative type of spellcasting talent, while Madam Irene Fischer boasted a formidable healing spellcasting talent.

As for Chris Fischer, he too possessed some sort of Bloodline Knight strength, but exactly which bloodline was something that had always remained unknown.

Many families would publicly claim what their bloodline power is, considering it was information that would eventually become impossible to hide over time.

However, there was no actual rule stating that a family must disclose the full extent of their bloodline power.

Therefore, what exact bloodline power the Fischer family possessed continued to be a mystery.

Viscount Garcia sent people to infiltrate Nasir Town and conduct thorough investigations. He also purchased various bits of intelligence about the Fischer family, striving to make ample preparations.

But information about the Fischer family was always vague, especially when it came to the nature of their bloodline power, which somehow remained elusive.

"How strange it is that the more we investigate, the more secrets the Fischer family seems to hide. What could they be?"

In recent years, Byrne had maintained a low profile, appearing and disappearing like a ghost, always highly vigilant.

Viscount Garcia had even considered ambushing Nasir Town to decapitate Byrne but felt it was very dangerous. The more he investigated, the more he felt the hidden power of the Fischer family was terrifying.

The deaths of the Meyer family members, the demise of the Spawn of the Abyss, and the Priest of the Sea God Cult could all very well be attributed to the concealed power of the Fischer family.

That is to say, they held some kind of powerful force capable of killing Extraordinary Exponents below the Monarch Level!

"However, that hidden force isn't invincible, or it comes at a considerable price; otherwise, they wouldn't have allowed so many people to die in Nasir Town."

He speculated that the hidden power of the Fischer family was a Forbidden rare artifact ranked in the three digits or even the two digits.

Unleashing a significant cost, it could burst forth with tremendous power to kill the enemy.

In the end, Viscount Garcia still felt it best to find an opportunity to assassinate Byrne when he was alone and away from Nasir Town since he might not always carry that Forbidden rare artifact with him. In such a case, the hidden power of the Fischer family might not be deployable.

One day, Viscount Garcia, who was in his mansion's hall, suddenly received crucial intelligence.

Byrne was going by himself to the Iron Blood Oder family to arrange his son Darren's marriage. He desired to betroth his son Darren to Viscount Oder's youngest daughter, forming a matrimonial alliance between the two families.

"Heh, a mere baronial family aspiring to marry into the Iron Blood clan, indeed, quite ambitious."

He sneered, muttering to himself:

"But if this is arranged by the Lion clan, it might not be impossible to achieve, given that the Fischer family is an important vassal to the Lion clan and the Iron Blood clan is an ally of the Lion, no, more like its lackey."

The route by which Byrne would travel to the town where the Iron Blood family resided was clear, and soon, Garcia's men figured out his exact travel itinerary.

To verify the authenticity of the intelligence, he also made a point of checking the status of the Iron Blood family and discovered that they were indeed preparing to receive guests, evidently having been notified in advance.

"An opportunity not to be missed."

Decisiveness on the battlefield is of utmost importance. After mulling it over, Viscount Garcia immediately decided to lay an ambush for Byrne Fischer somewhere along this route!

"He will die on his way to the Iron Blood clan, and when that happens, I can pin the deed on those Lost followers."

Lost followers, who are a group of exceptionally evil and insane individuals, worship the terrible Evil God, a symbol of the endless finality that is the Lord of the Lost!

In the past few years, Lost followers violently committed crimes throughout the Eastern Four Kingdoms, killing many. One year, they even sacrificed tens of thousands of people from an entire town to the Evil God in a dreadful act.

The horrifying tales about them are far too numerous, and even today, the Ten Great Pillars take rumors of the Lost followers very seriously.

Of course, Viscount Garcia knew the weak Fischer family was completely unrelated to the terrifying and powerful Lost followers, who had no reason to set their sights on such an insignificant group.

He simply wanted to attribute "Byrne Fischer's murder" to the Lost followers.

These Lost followers were mighty and mysterious beings that had not exposed even a single individual for many years. They would certainly not be easily traced or revealed by the church, meaning the true perpetrator would likely never be found.

"Let's go, Andrew, Gus."

Viscount Garcia changed out of his black uniform and donned an equally dark set of robes, masquerading as the notorious Lost followers. He took up the Forbidden rare artifact "Countdown Timer" and another Forbidden rare artifact borrowed from Xavier.

He led two of the remaining three Transmutation Extraordinary Exponents of his family to ambush Byrne Fischer, leaving only his son of low-level Transmutation back with the family.

Despite it being a case of a lion hunting a rabbit, he had no intention of underestimating Byrne Fischer. Instead, he planned to ensure the man would meet his end one hundred percent on the road to the Iron Blood clan!

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 164: 157: Putting Oneself in the Situation

The tranquil forest path was dappled with patches of sunlight that filtered through the leaves, casting mottled shadows upon the path that embellished the fallen leaves covering the ground.

The black carriage of the Fischer family slowly traversed the forest path; the curtain was drawn back, and Byrne gazed at the woods outside the window, his expression growing increasingly somber.

The one driving the carriage was none other than Theo, who had already reached the 2nd Rank of "Butler".

The enhancement of a "Butler's" physical capabilities is 12, and the enhancement of Spiritual Power is 13. Although Theo was gradually aging, his body was now stronger than when he was younger.

"Your Excellency Byrne, you must be careful."

Theo voiced a silent reminder, while in his mind, he pondered that this time His Excellency Byrne was using himself as bait in an arrangement, intending to lure Viscount Garcia into attacking; the danger was undoubtedly immense.

But he believed in the courage and judgment of Byrne Fischer, the patriarch of the Fischer family.

With the wisdom this man possessed now, he would not likely stumble here at the hands of Viscount Garcia; he could still lead the Fischer family forward!

Byrne sat calmly in the carriage, his mind active and alert to any potentially dangerous changes in his surroundings.

In fact, the alliance through marriage between the Fischer family and the Iron Blood Oder family was true.

It was because everything seemed so authentic that Viscount Garcia would not have any doubts after learning of it; he would certainly seize the long-awaited opportunity to kill himself!

Byrne was clearly aware that he himself was the best and most attractive bait!

Indeed, Irene had already used her ability "Listening for Malice" to identify the spies the Garcia family had sent to infiltrate.

However, they did not immediately eliminate the spy but instead used the spy to pass on various pieces of information, particularly those that seemed useful but did not actually compromise the core of the Fischer family.

Thus, over the course of several months, Viscount Garcia had come to thoroughly believe in the authenticity of the intelligence he had gathered.

And so, it was time for the fisherman to finally draw in his net!

He spoke slowly, instructing Theo to stop.

"Theo, this is it, stop here. This is the place I mentioned before we set out, the most suitable for an ambush. With Inna's Bravery Verse and Hymn Verse not yet worn off, I'm actually a little hopeful they'll come and attack right away."

"Chris and Irene have already been waiting here in advance."

Prior to this, Byrne had already given a Treasure class protective rare artifact to Theo.

He himself would not have any problems if ambushed, but if Theo were affected, it would be quite dangerous; Byrne did not want Theo, whom he had watched grow up, to come to any harm.

But to make the ruse convincing, Theo often accompanied him on his travels, and he could not be absent this time; they could not give Garcia any reason to be suspicious.

The carriage stopped.

"They're coming. If they don't come soon, we'll just have to prepare another ambush at a different location."

Byrne thought quietly to himself, taking a deep breath as his mind constantly revisited all his memories of the Garcia family.

Viscount Garcia possessed the power of Bloodline of the "Gale Wings Falcon," which was not the strongest bloodline of the Garcia family but merely that of a common magic beast.

Among "Roarer" Garcia's family, in addition to Viscount Garcia, there were three other extraordinary exponents at the Transmutation Level: Garcia's brother, cousin, and son.

The power ranks and Bloodline of the three were mid-level Transmutation of the high-level magic beast "Roaring Evil Beast," middle-rank Transmutation of the common magic beast "Gale Wings Falcon," and low-level Transmutation of the high-level magic beast "Fire-swallowing Earth Dragon."

"But we cannot dismiss the possibility that they have sought outside help, or that they have obtained some kind of powerful Forbidden rare artifact..."

Byrne was very clear about one thing: there is no such thing as perfect preparation in this world.

Even if his calculations were well-made, there could still be accidents, since the battlefield is ever-changing, and the numerous different abilities and rare artifacts could lead to situations unforeseen by the participants.

Hundreds of meters away, hidden inside the thicket of the forest.

Viscount Garcia closed his eyes, holding the Forbidden rare artifact "Countdown Timer" in his hands, silently sensing the constant movement of the wind direction.

"They're here!"

Viscount Garcia watched coldly from a distance, then ordered his cousin, who also possessed the Bloodline power of the "Gale Wings Falcon," to coordinate with his actions.

"Together with me, Gus!"

The Gale Wings Falcon is a small magic beast capable of manipulating wind and using Wind Blades for slashing attacks.

They resembled birds but lacked wings; instead, they rode on the wind to move about, their true size no larger than a human thumb.

The two of them leveraged the power of the wind to hasten their advance, rushing towards the location of the Fischer family's carriage in an instant, then halting at a distance of about a hundred meters and manipulating the wind drifting around them together.

In the blink of an eye, they transformed into countless Wind Blades, assailing every direction like a storm!

The many trees lining the forest path were instantly felled by the invisible Wind Blades, scattering haphazardly on the ground, creating a cacophony of noise.

"They're here!"

The watchful Theo snapped his fingers sharply!

In the next moment, the sturdy black carriage was destroyed, and Theo was involuntarily triggered by the rare artifact on his person, raising a protective shield-like defense.

He quickly swapped places with far-off objects, evading most of the Wind Blade attacks, and the few that hit him were mostly deflected by the defensive Treasure class rare artifact, sparing him major injury.

Despite this, Theo's body still displayed several gashes and bled profusely as he collapsed powerlessly to the ground.

"Without that Treasure class mysterious rare artifact, every Wind Blade would have had the power to kill me instantly..."

Then, some sort of healing green energy quickly took effect on his body and, gradually recovering, Theo rolled and crawled away from the battlefield, aware that the ensuing events were not something he could intervene in!

"Byrne" inside the carriage was struck by a barrage of Wind Blades, turned to smoke, and just dissipated into thin air.

It was a "Body Double"!

Viscount Garcia's brow furrowed instantly, noting something was amiss even from a hundred meters away, he called out in a deep voice, "That's a decoy, they definitely have an ambush!"

"Got it!"

His brother Andrew transformed in an instant, roaring as he turned into a more than ten-meter-tall evil beast, resembling a towering wolf beast standing upright, its body covered with thick grey-white fur, its agile form displaying an elegant pure violence, its eyes filled with pure murderous malice.

The Roaring Evil Beast.

It was the representative bloodline of the Garcia family, possessing extremely powerful strength and speed, and a terrifying life force that made it very hard to kill unless its vitals were destroyed.

"Byrne Fischer, is he really not here?"

Viscount Garcia muttered to himself, watching the carriage driver running off into the distance without acting rashly, instead sensing the movements of the wind around him.

At the same time, he extended his hand to release a powerful Wind Blade, cutting towards the carriage driver with extreme precision despite the great distance.

However, Theo, without even turning his head, once again activated his "Shape-shifting" ability granted by the "bestow," and completely vanished from sight.

Stunned by this eerie scene, the three Garcias froze.

"Why? How can any random coachman from the Fischer family possess such a level of ability?"

He closed his eyes, only to realize that the coachman's presence was fading away, and beyond that, Byrne Fischer's presence was completely untraceable.

Had the enemy used some method to erase their presences?

They were in the light, while the enemy was in the dark.

The more Viscount Garcia thought about it, the more he felt it was a trap, but deep down, he wasn't surprised, for Byrne Fischer was indeed a clever man.

"The people of the Fischer family, they shouldn't be far from us."

"Find them! And kill them!"

He had just issued the order when he lifted his head in shock, and next saw something falling rapidly from the sky!

It was a meteorite!

It released a dazzling light, like a magnificent firework blooming in the sky, and as it drew closer to the ground, thunderous roars and piercing explosions could be heard!

"Is this the hidden power of the Fischer family?"

All three of them were filled with astonishment and disbelief, then they immediately scattered and fled!

Viscount Garcia and his cousin Gus harnessed the power of the wind to move quickly, while Andrew, transformed into the Roaring Evil Beast, ran on all fours, bolting away, but in his panic, he headed in a different direction from the other two!

Just as he was about to escape the meteorite's impact zone, he suddenly seemed to be disrupted by some force, his speed noticeably slowing down!

That was the power of the "Arrest" by the sheriff.

"Ao!"

When the meteorite hit the ground, it lifted a plume of soil and rock, then formed a deep, vast crater with rising smoke that glowed with searing heat!

"Andrew!"

Viscount Garcia roared angrily, knowing Andrew must have been seriously injured by that hit, but relying on the terrifying life force of the "Roaring Evil Beast," he might not necessarily die.

So, he immediately used "Countdown Timer" amidst the smoke.

After thinking it over, Viscount Garcia wound the minute hand of "Countdown Timer" back by three minutes, so after those three minutes, everything living within a five

hundred meter radius of the "Countdown Timer," except for him, would be frozen for three seconds!

Three seconds were brief, yet in the combat between the strong, it was enough to be fatal!

At the same time, Viscount Garcia paid a hefty price.

His body trembled violently, suddenly spitting out blood, feeling part of the blood inside him vanish, offered as a sacrifice to the Forbidden rare artifact, his life force notably weakened.

Viscount Garcia calmly took medicine to treat himself, as the smoke before his eyes gradually dispersed.

"Fischer family, how many of you have come? It doesn't really matter, no matter how many there are, I will kill you all!"

No sooner had he finished speaking than he saw his cousin Gus slowly collapsing beside him, eyes wide open, trembling all over, as if he had seen something utterly unbelievable!

Viscount Garcia, battle-hardened, was familiar with most situations on the battlefield and immediately deduced his cousin's condition.

"A mental magic powerful enough to easily restrain a Middle Rank Bloodline Knight? Could the way they erase their presence also be the power of a powerful mental spellcaster?"

Or perhaps it was some kind of powerful Forbidden rare artifact?

Viscount Garcia shivered, the meteorite from earlier and the mental magic at this moment increasingly unsettling him.

The hidden powers of the Fischer family were truly too numerous!

"Because they know I possess a Mysterious rare artifact that counters mental magic, they did not attempt to control me, did they?"

He reacted swiftly, immediately reaching out to take out an alchemical tool specially designed to counter mental magic to lift the special condition affecting his cousin, but suddenly felt a danger had already approached!

Who!

Unbeknownst to when, Chris, brandishing a pair of daggers, had appeared out of nowhere about a dozen meters away from Viscount Garcia.

The next moment, he arrived expressionlessly in front of him, swinging his daggers, aiming for Viscount Garcia's throat!

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 165: 158: The Forbidden Rare Artifact "Chains of Reversal"

"The Black Lion," the elder in the black robe who was completely concealing his face, was employing mental magic to control Viscount Garcia's cousin Gus, while also using a mysterious rare artifact to mask the presence of several people in the area.

He had been muttering to himself calmly as Chris charged forward.

"It won't be that easy."

Chris launched a daring assault, his blade flashing with a silvery glow!

His speed was extraordinarily fast, as he unleashed an unstoppable force and thrust his dagger swiftly towards Viscount Garcia's neck.

As soon as the fight began, wind barriers were always ready around Viscount Garcia for protection, but they couldn't completely fend off Chris's attack. The dagger instantly pierced through the invisible wind barrier, about to touch the opponent's body.

Had he succeeded?

Byrne, Irene, Theo, and Vanessa all felt a surge of surprise in their hearts as they witnessed this scene!

Just as Chris's dagger was about to touch Viscount Garcia, his body uncontrollably moved backward, and the movement became faster and faster!

What's going on?

Chris immediately realized something was amiss, sensing with his powerful perceptive abilities that it was not just his own issue, but that some invisible mysterious force was affecting the whole situation.

Vanessa desperately wanted to stand up, yet she found herself squatting down uncontrollably.

While intending to thrust forward, he found himself involuntarily moving backward, the distance from his opponent growing greater. And the more he tried to move forward, the more he moved back. Could it be...

Viscount Garcia also swayed in place in all directions for an instant as if adapting to some change. The next moment, he charged forward, raising his hands to instantly unleash a flurry of wind blades around him!

Meanwhile, Byrne, who had realized what was amiss, shouted:

"It's our movements! They've all been reversed!"

When Viscount Garcia faced a fatal threat, the forbidden rare artifact he borrowed from the Eagle clan, the "Chains of Reversal," had automatically activated!

At the cost of one year of his life, within a 300-meter radius centered on him, everyone's movements would be completely reversed!

Each invisible wind blade was immensely powerful and undoubtedly a lethal attack. Combined with the eerie effect of the "Chains of Reversal," the enemies in Viscount Garcia's mind were as good as dead!

Chris, who seemed about to be sliced by the invisible wind blades, suddenly moved with an incredibly strange and agile posture, dodging numerous invisible slashes as if he were a nimble cat.

No, that was even more agile than any cat!

Viscount Garcia was shocked to his core.

That young man not only adapted to the reversed movements in a short time, but he could also sense the flow of air, dodging the numerous wind blades with extreme precision.

"Are you really Chris Fischer?"

He couldn't imagine that the young man before him was the same extradimensional being of low-level Transmutation mentioned in the reports.

Impossible!

Even a high-level Transmutation Bloodline Knight would hardly be able to dodge such attacks with such agility under those circumstances!

"Fire!"

Byrne had already released a multitude of flaming birds, attempting to attack Viscount Garcia when he suddenly heard the roar of a ferocious beast!

The werewolf creature that had been nearly killed by a meteorite had surprisingly stood back up, as if a mysterious rare artifact on its body had activated, quickly replenishing its life force.

The Roaring Evil Beast, full of rage, first backed up a few steps, then took large strides forward, rushing towards Byrne and the others!

Byrne frowned slightly, acutely aware that it was up to him and his companions to deal with this beast, as the "Black Lion" must be controlling Gus.

At the same time, Chris had become entangled in a duel with Viscount Garcia.

To adapt to the effects of the "Chains of Reversal," the Garcia family had already undergone training in advance, so although Viscount Garcia's speed was slightly reduced, he remained lethal.

Every time he raised his hand, he would send out a flurry of invisible wind blades, with Chris barely dodging each time, but unable to close in on him.

Getting closer would mean he couldn't dodge the attacks anymore; at that distance, it wasn't a matter of agility but a complete lack of space for a perfect dodge.

Chris maintained his distance, engaging in a one-on-one duel with Viscount Garcia.

Viscount Garcia's gaze was determined and focused, keenly aware of his opponent's every move, his robust body moving quickly because of the wind's power.

Each time he swung his hand, a myriad of invisible wind blades formed half a meter in front of him, then burst forth at speeds surpassing a flintlock bullet.

While Chris dodged the wind blades with deadly precision, he also danced with his silvery dagger, drawing elegant arcs in the air. With each flash of silver light, his fighting spirit soared. Each swing of his dagger carried astonishing power and speed, as if slicing through time itself.

The Reaper seemed to have woven his footsteps into a certain rhythm, alternating between attacks and evasions, their dance filled with contradictory provocations and restraints.

Yet because of the numerous invisible wind blades, he could never truly reach Viscount Garcia.

Moreover, that powerful Reaper would occasionally take to the air, attacking from mid-flight.

However, flying demanded his attention to control the airflow and maintain flight, which greatly reduced the number of slashes he could release, serving only to disrupt the rhythm of the battle.

Viscount Garcia calculated the time silently within the depths of his heart, thirty seconds swiftly passed—that was the "Chains of Reversal" duration!

Information gap!

He knew when the "Chains of Reversal" would expire, while Chris was utterly unaware, and this moment could decide victory or death!

Battle Skill 15, "Charging Force"!

As the "Chains of Reversal" expired, Viscount Garcia suddenly charged forward.

His arms spread wide, his expression incredibly cold, like a demon's embrace, releasing a sky full of invisible Wind Blades to the greatest extent!

And Chris, not knowing when the "Chains of Reversal" would end, his body uncontrollably lunged forward, and it was too late to dodge perfectly!

One after another, the invisible Wind Blades came at him, and even as Chris tried to dodge as best as he could, bursting with incredible speed, he was still slashed by one of the invisible Wind Blades, severing his left arm!

His face was expressionless as blood spurted wildly from the severed arm!

"The victor is decided!"

Unable to contain himself, Viscount Garcia burst into maniacal laughter, admiring Chris's exquisite skills and superb agility. Had it not been for the Forbidden rare artifact, he might not have been able to win.

Then he reached out his hand, intending to kill Chris immediately.

Despite losing a lot of blood, Chris remained calm with a dagger in his single hand, planning to release the Fire of Sin and use the Eyes of Conviction.

He was convinced he could turn the tables on his enemy in the next moment.

Suddenly, a wooden arrow shot from afar with alarming speed, exceedingly sharp!

Viscount Garcia hadn't even reacted before the arrow pierced his waist, and he suddenly felt the seeds within the arrow taking root and sprouting in his flesh, rapidly corrupting his flesh and blood!

"Damn it!"

Immediately assessing the situation, Viscount Garcia realized that if he didn't find a place to deal with the effects of the arrow, he would surely die within minutes!

Hundreds of meters away, a stunning emerald elf stood there, slowly lowering her bow, her gaze calm.

She was Elf March, a powerful ally the Fischer family had hidden for years. Had Chris not been in crisis, she might not have chosen to act.

At that moment, Viscount Garcia saw his brother Andrew fall again, devoid of any signs of life.

"Andrew!"

Viscount Garcia roared in madness and extreme grief. Although Andrew was always foolish, he was undoubtedly an important family member to him.

Then, to his utter astonishment, he saw the expressionless young man before him regenerating his severed arm at a visibly fast rate under some healing power!

"How is this possible!"

Viscount Garcia was incredibly shocked, unable to believe it—that healing power was undoubtedly terrifying, and basically, only the Forbidden rare artifact or a Monarch Level healing-type Spellcaster could achieve such a feat!

He took a long look at his cousin Gus lying on the ground, eyes wide open and still unable to move, realizing deep down that this battle was lost.

Thus, Viscount Garcia decisively abandoned Gus and, manipulating the wind, flew up high, escaping at incredible speed!

Chris picked up the dagger that had fallen from his severed hand without a moment's hesitation and gave chase!

He knew very well that if Viscount Garcia escaped, this ambush would be meaningless. Moreover, as an enemy, Viscount Garcia knew too much about the Fischer family and had to die today!

"Stop chasing, Chris!"

Vanessa couldn't help but shout out, very concerned about Chris's solitary pursuit.

Chris ran swiftly, covering an immense distance in an instant.

"He can't possibly catch up with me,"

Viscount Garcia flew with all his might high in the sky, his speed even more astonishing, quickly reaching the horizon.

He flew several kilometers away to a wooded area and began to manipulate his life force stream, clearing the terrible seeds from within his body.

"Why would an elf intervene? Where did she come from?"

Viscount Garcia never believed that Chris could catch up with him, quietly beginning to heal while taking out the "Countdown Timer" and sighing.

"Too bad, the fight didn't last three minutes, 'Countdown Timer' couldn't come into play; I was too greedy. If I had set it to just one minute, although it would only have stopped the enemy for one second, it should have had a great effect."

That was the mechanism of the "Countdown Timer."

It could be set for a minimum of one minute to a maximum of an hour, correspondingly freezing all targets within range for at least one second to a maximum of sixty seconds at the end of the countdown.

At the same time, Chris was still quietly tracking Viscount Garcia's whereabouts using "Tracking Senses."

There were many trails of fresh blood in the air; he could completely lock onto the opponent's position from afar and knew that Viscount Garcia had momentarily stopped.

Chris had decided to not let Viscount Garcia live and make it back.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 166: 159 Dark Village

Chris silently stared at the "threads" formed by the various currents in the air, among which the most crimson one was undoubtedly the scent left by Viscount Garcia's blood.

Viscount Garcia must die today, or all the extensive preparations of the Fischer family would be for naught.

Chris silently tracked the scent, continuously moving through the forest, and quickly realized that his target seemed to have noticed the pursuit, moving swiftly once again.

Had he been discovered?

He recalled the intelligence on Viscount Garcia, the man who could determine the location of his enemies by sensing the flow of the wind.

Usually, members of the Fischer family would ensure a successful ambush by hiding their scent with the Mysterious rare artifact of "Black Lion", but now Chris was acting alone, and even with his exceptional stealth skills, he could still expose himself as long as Viscount Garcia remained vigilant.

Chris knew that continuing the pursuit would pose significant danger.

But he did not give up and continued to push deeper into pursuit.

Both parties moved swiftly, and by the dark of night, Chris gradually sensed more human presences around.

He deduced that there was a small village ahead, likely not belonging to any viscount family's territory but to some baronial family, with not many villagers.

After Viscount Garcia took refuge in the village, he stopped moving, as if waiting for Chris to arrive.

"..."

Chris calmly and silently slipped in, concealing himself in the shadows and gazing at the silent village in the night.

He indifferently listened to the villagers while they enjoyed their dinner, whispering about the taxes to be paid this winter, how to prepare food for the coming cold, girls softly speaking words of love to their beloved, and elders soothing crying children.

Chris once again found the scent of blood in the air, but discovered it had scattered from a certain point, spreading in all directions, making it impossible for him to pinpoint Viscount Garcia's precise location.

So it was, the seasoned Viscount Garcia had figured out that he was being tracked by scent.

Thus, Viscount Garcia silently used the wind to spread the scent of his blood throughout the village, diluting the trace from his body.

So, could Viscount Garcia lock onto his position?

Chris was very clear that Viscount Garcia used airflow to sense location, and therefore, he should also be unable to distinguish between himself and the villagers.

As long as he didn't isolate himself on the rooftops.

Therefore, Chris immediately climbed down from the rooftop and entered a room where a couple was already asleep, stealthily crouching beside them, pretending to be one of the villagers.

In the quiet darkness of the village, neither saw the other, yet they had already engaged in an unseen match of wits.

Chris hid next to the couple, silently contemplating in the dark.

The Eyes of Conviction required nearly two seconds of mutual gaze to activate, but the recent exchange between them was too fast, the movements too vast, completely beyond the limits of human capability, leaving no chance to activate the Eyes of Conviction.

The Fire of Sin was kept hidden by Chris; he intended to use it when his opponent was most confident, followed immediately by the Eyes of Conviction, but he hadn't expected Elf March's move to prompt Viscount Garcia to flee.

"..."

A peculiar feeling suddenly surged from deep within Chris, wondering why his opponent was waiting for him to come to the village. What kind of trap had he set?

After Viscount Garcia used the wind to scatter his scent, making it difficult for Chris to track him, he hadn't taken the offensive, which was completely out of character.

Unless, he was buying time waiting for something, perhaps the activation of some Forbidden rare artifact?

With this thought, Chris knew he had to take the initiative to attack.

No, there might be other options.

"Huh, the Countdown Timer is almost ready... Chris Fischer, pursuing me alone was a fatal decision you made."

In a corner of the village, Viscount Garcia, who had already expelled the seeds brought by the arrows from his body, silently looked at the "Countdown Timer" pocket watch in his hand.

Indeed, the moment he stayed in the village, he had already activated the Forbidden rare artifact "Countdown Timer" twice in advance, then started to wait for Chris to catch up.

This time, Viscount Garcia set the Countdown Timer for five minutes. When the five minutes elapsed, all living things within five hundred meters of it, except for himself, would freeze for five seconds.

Five seconds was enough to decide life or death!

There was one and a half minutes left until the Countdown Timer finished!

In his heart, Viscount Garcia didn't believe that Chris could find him and kill him in the last minute and a half of the Countdown Timer.

That young man from the Fischer family was strong, but the survivor would be himself.

And in those five seconds when everyone else was frozen, he was confident that he could kill the young man hiding in the village.

Did Chris Fischer really think he could successfully hide among the villagers?

Too naive; apart from him, which villager would move from the rooftop to inside a house with such speed?

Yes, Viscount Garcia was well aware that Chris Fischer was hiding three hundred and seventy meters away in that house.

"He's waiting for death."

In the darkness, time ticked away.

After dinner, the ignorant villagers continued to worry about their future lives, happiness, and the two "hunters" hidden in the darkness, each regarding the other as the most important "prey".

Deep down, they both felt an inexplicable excitement!

In the final minute, Viscount Garcia in the darkness took a deep breath.

Having started killing at the age of ten, he had been fighting incessantly, for the Fischer family and for the Cyart people, through numerous life-and-death challenges, enjoying countless honors but never stopping.

Some said he was a killer, some said he was too cruel, others claimed that aside from being able to fight on the battlefield, Viscount Garcia was nothing but a brute and a fool.

In reality, he didn't care about what those ignorant fools thought; he just wanted to seize victory time after time!

All conflicts and struggles in the world eventually end in violence, so what was wrong with wanting to wield the strongest violence?

Ten seconds, five seconds, three seconds...

The excitement deep within him surged all the more; the moment of hunting the strong was precisely what every warrior craved!

Time was up!

Viscount Garcia suddenly burst forth, the "Countdown Timer" of the Forbidden rare artifact activating instantly, and a grey, invisible domain swiftly enveloped everything within a five hundred meter radius, freezing the bodies of all living creatures, making them completely immobile!

"I won! Chris Fischer! You were a respectable and powerful opponent! I will never forget you in my life!"

The first second.

Viscount Garcia suddenly exploded with his fastest speed, riding the power of the wind towards the cabin three hundred and seventy meters away!

The second second.

He had reached the cabin, extending his hands like a frenzied demon, beginning to unleash one wind blade after another!

On the third second, a multitude of wind blades instantly destroyed the whole cabin, everything breaking apart and scattering, as Viscount Garcia saw Chris Fischer inside, his face stricken with intense fear!

The young man was instantaneously sliced by the invisible wind blades, cut to pieces; his head and body were torn asunder, dead beyond the possibility of death!

On the fourth second, Viscount Garcia finally exhaled in relief, but then he felt something was wrong!

Because he saw a card torn in half on the ground, and the figure drawn on it seemed to be Chris Fischer!

What?

Something wasn't right!

On the fifth second, without any hesitation, Viscount Garcia also killed another woman in the room, only to discover that the male owner, who should have still been there, was nowhere to be found!

He didn't understand the capability of the "fake-spirit card", but still instinctively made an assumption—could the "Chris Fischer" he just encountered have been a fake?

The next moment, the grey domain was already retracting into the Countdown Timer, and everything within its scope returned to normal as a figure suddenly burst out from the cellar of the room!

Chris, transformed into the appearance of a passerby, was expressionless as he charged towards Viscount Garcia at top speed!

Just earlier, he had ordered that man to change his shape, while he himself slowly crawled into the cellar. Although at first he did not understand the other's contingency, it seemed now that the "Body Double" had evidently worked.

"What?"

Viscount Garcia froze for an instant, staring at his opponent incredulously, his heart filled with complexity at not achieving victory with the kill move he was sure of.

Chris Fischer!

He stared at his opponent, about to launch the "Chains of Reversal" again, combined with the invisible wind blades, when suddenly, Chris Fischer's eyes changed.

Eyes of Conviction.

Suddenly, the world seemed to plunge into the deepest darkness, as if unending sins were penetrating deep into Viscount Garcia's soul. The people he had once killed, one by one, stood up as if returning from hell, like ghosts seeking to drag Garcia down with them, and each ghost was filled with the deepest darkness, malice, and despair.

They furiously condemned him, demanding his immediate repentance!

"I..."

As Viscount Garcia muttered in a trance, Chris's dagger struck his chest, and then the Fire of Sin spread to every part of his body.

Chris took a deep breath, having shattered Viscount Garcia's heart, and the Fire of Sin was set to completely consume him.

It was over.

At that moment, he suddenly heard Viscount Garcia roar with a power, force, and anger!

"I am a demon from the cruel pits of hell! No one can judge me!"

Viscount Garcia, with lifeless eyes but still, with the Battle Skill 7 "Shatter" and the power of the wind reinforcing his body, threw a punch with an extraordinary will at Chris's head with an unhesitating force!

Chris reflexively retreated, expressionless.

The fist stopped before his face.

The "thorns" of rune power had been triggered, and Viscount Garcia suffered another devastating mental blow. Blood poured from his lifeless eyes unflinchingly, his standing form bound by masses of black thorns, and the Fire of Sin grew more intense.

He had utterly lost all signs of life.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 167: 160 Mental Secret Words

Cyart Kingdom, Emerald Lake Province.

Located in the southernmost part of Cyart, it was as affluent as Elphinia Province, which was under the complete control of the Royal Family. They were the two most important provinces in the entire kingdom.

One third of the Emerald Lake Province's land was occupied by the Romann family, another third by many minor nobilities, and the last third was owned by the Middell family.

One of the Ten Great Pillars of the Eastern Continent, the "Ruins Song Spirit" Middell family, the most powerful branch of their family was within the territory of Cyart, with most of their members residing in the most important city of Emerald Lake Province, Wight City.

Within the Middell family manor, Marquis Middell, known as "the Ghost," was nearly fifty but still handsome. He comfortably sat in a white chair, calmly watching the children of the family frolicking on the lawn in a white tailcoat.

"Your Grace, your letter."

A subordinate dressed in white servant attire slowly approached, elegantly and respectfully handing over the letter. Marquis Middell nodded slightly and calmly began to read the letter.

Afterward, Marquis Middell set the letter down and pondered for a moment.

"Boone Garcia is dead, I remember him. That man's father once brought him to our family. He was a crude and impolite fellow, not much like his father."

He smiled gently, calmly instructing his subordinate:

"He has disappeared, but it is very likely he's already dead."

"Although I do not like him, this matter must be investigated thoroughly because the previous head of the Garcia family had been an important confidant of my father. Given the relationship between our two families, the Middell family cannot stay indifferent."

"We must make the murderer pay the price; otherwise, the prestige of the Middell family within the nation will be eroded bit by bit."

Marquis Middell paused, mulling over the content of the letter, which detailed the likelihood that Viscount Garcia and other important members of the family met with mishap due to an ambush on a Fischer baronial family.

And the head of that family was named Byrne Fischer, who was the target that Viscount Garcia and the others had intended to kill.

"The Fischer family, eh?"

Byrne Fischer.

He made a mental note of the name.

East Coast Province, Chevron Town.

Within the Garcia family, everyone was gathered, looking somber and keeping silent, their eyes filled with bewilderment, as if the sky had fallen and yet they did not know what to do.

Every one of them was well aware that Viscount Garcia and two significant family members were in trouble!

They had been missing for days and were very likely dead by now. As for who killed Viscount Garcia and the others, it was all too easy to guess—it must be someone from the Fischer family!

The reason was simple, as the intent of the family head and others was to ambush Byrne Fischer, something well-known among the core members of the Garcia family.

"It's not only the Fischer family's doing. They alone couldn't possibly have taken care of our family head and the others. It must also be with the aid of the Lion clan!"

"But would the Lion clan violate 'The Oath'?"

"Who knows, they say 'The Oath' isn't completely void but from various bits of information gathered, its force seems to have decreased significantly."

"What's the situation now with Viscount Xavier? The Eagle clan must take a stand!"

"What should we do? Our family's status may not be preserved, and in the coming decades, it's uncertain whether Young Garcia could achieve high-level Transmutation."

"Quiet! We should first seek the Middell family's opinion and also the World Order Church, as our Lord Viscount had connections before..."

"They might not be dead, just missing, don't use 'before his death' to describe it!"

"You're still clinging to hope? Accept the reality!"

In extreme anxiety, repression, and despair, the members of the Garcia family finally broke out into a full-fledged argument.

At this moment, the son of Viscount Garcia, the only remaining Transmutation Extraordinary Exponent in the family, Young Garcia, finally stood up.

"Silence!"

He bore no resemblance to his father, Viscount Garcia, but looked more elegant and even had a scholarly air.

"From this moment on, I am the acting family head! If my father returns, then my role as acting head will naturally be invalidated. Otherwise, starting today, I will lead the entire Garcia family!"

The crowd was stunned for a moment, then each one of them lowered their heads, realizing that, both reasonably and emotionally, Young Garcia should lead the Garcia family.

He was the son of Viscount Garcia and also the only Transmutation Extraordinary Exponent currently in the family.

No one could shake his position.

"Our family must give up some interests."

Young Garcia took a deep breath, clasped his fists tightly, and made a very difficult decision, which everyone understood was also a necessary one!

He would marry a daughter from the Viscount Xavier's Eagle clan, then hand over the entire horse gambling interests in Black Mountain Town to the Eagle clan in exchange for protection of the family's future, while the Garcia family would only retain the most important gold mining town of Chevron and the impoverished town of Fiera.

"Proceed immediately with the marriage alliance to the Eagle clan, then cede the interests of Black Mountain Town."

"I have made a decision! And from now on, everyone's share of the dividends within our ranks shall be adjusted too; we must get through the family's most challenging times together!"

Although everyone felt indignant after hearing this decision, deep down, they couldn't bear to let go of the benefits, yet they were completely helpless.

In this realistic world, even if the relationships between Viscount Garcia and Viscount Xavier were excellent, during times like these, to obtain enough shelter, they had to hand over sufficient benefits; otherwise, the Eagle clan would also become dissatisfied with Viscount Xavier.

Once the meeting had ended, Young Garcia came to the manor's balcony in silence, gazing into the distance.

"Father..."

Lately, the pressure on him had been immense, and he consistently felt a bit dazed.

My head hurts so much!

Pain!

Young Garcia clutched his head for a long time, unable to help but let out a low growl, feeling some sort of imprint etched deep in his mind causing a throbbing pain!

"Aaaaah!"

He roared like a savage beast, yet he was still powerless against the force of the "Mental Secret Words" in his mind; his eyes gradually becoming lifeless, recalling the instructions once given by Irene.

Who am I again?

"I am a member of the Dawn Church, I must dedicate everything to the great Lord of the Lost; for now, I must still masquerade, not letting anyone detect me, all matters must proceed in the dark..."

His lifeless eyes slowly returned to normal, and Young Garcia was stunned for a moment, then smiled as if the previous anomaly had never existed.

After a while, a servant of the family knocked on the door and respectfully entered.

"Master, the Middell family has arrived, claiming they will ensure our family's continuance at all costs; they will also help us thoroughly investigate the murderer."

"However, they also said that if this matter were to be dealt with publicly, in reality, it would be the Garcia family who initiated the conflict without justification; they would prefer to help us retaliate in secret."

"Hmm, I understand, you may go. I will be right there."

He nodded slightly, and long after the family servant had left, he muttered to himself:

"The Garcia family will rise again... under the power of my god, it will indeed rise again!"

In the basement of the Fischer family manor, Irene stood atop the complex ritual Array, her eyes closed, sending out a long-range command formed by Mental Secret Words.

Byrne and Chris silently watched her, not truly knowing whether the effect of the "Mental Secret Words" would be as good as anticipated.

"It worked!"

Finally, she breathed a sigh of relief, reopening her eyes with a look of satisfaction on her face.

"Great, that's fantastic! Now we don't have to worry about Middell family's revenge anymore. Originally, there was barely any evidence, and with Young Garcia under our control, we can refuse the Middell family's secret actions."

Standing to the side, Byrne couldn't help but laugh out loud, overwhelmed with joy deep within.

Henceforth, they could use Young Garcia's power to gradually erode the remaining Garcia family.

An utter extermination of the Garcia family was impossible, unlike the up-and-coming baronial families, most viscount families had much stronger foundations, with ties to many other families within the country.

And even if they killed off the Garcia family, the Fischer family could not reap the most benefits.

"Next, the Garcia family will apparently shift from being allies of the Eagle clan to becoming their vassals. In reality, they will secretly become an important pawn for us."

"In one year's time, the truce between the Cyart and Rhea nations will have completely expired, and the movements of the Rhea People are also of great importance; the Garcia family might serve as our shield by then."

A battle between the Lion and the Eagle clans is inevitable!

Nearly everyone on the East Coast shared this consensus; there were supposed to be churches mediating between them, but ever since the demise of the Thunderous Monarch, the Tempest Church's stance became ambiguous, seemingly not intending to prevent the impending deadly conflict between the two forces.

"When our great battle with the Eagle clan comes, the Garcia family will become a crucial force. We mustn't tell anyone about this besides ourselves, it must be kept completely confidential!"

Following that battle, they and the "Black Lion" watched the bodies burn together to prevent subsequent investigations, and Byrne wasn't very concerned about the discovery of Marzo, as this was a secret exchange.

The Fischer family knew of the "Black Lion," and the Lion clan learned of Marzo's existence, further deepening the relationship between the two families.

After sorting almost all of the matters, the two families divided the spoils of war; the Lion clan took away the Forbidden rare artifact "Chains of Reversal" and other extraordinary treasures, leaving the "Countdown Timer" for the Fischer family.

Undoubtedly, the "Countdown Timer" was the most important of all the booty; its value alone equated to the total of all other artifacts combined.

The Fischer family certainly didn't feel shortchanged; as vassals, they were almost equally sharing the spoils, which was considered generous of the Lion clan.

Byrne couldn't help but glance at Chris, internally astonished by his immense power to catch up alone and then kill the formidable Viscount Garcia.

After all, that man was considered quite strong among those of high-level Transmutation, and also possessed two Forbidden rare artifacts!

Irene calmly looked at Byrne, her voice steady and forceful, slowly saying:

"Let's begin. The Fischer family needs to offer a new sacrifice, thanking God for his protection... Once this sacrifice is over, Byrne, I have something important to discuss with you alone."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 168: 161 Genius

One month later.

The sky was a clear azure, dotted with leisurely drifting clouds. Warm sunlight spread across the land, and a gentle breeze caused the leaves to sway softly.

The entire kingdom had heard about Viscount Garcia's disappearance, and whispers about the Fischer family proliferated in private.

The Middell family also inquired privately if they intended to seek revenge, offering their support, but Young Garcia ultimately declined.

In the Garcia family's graveyard, Young Garcia nodded in gratitude, struggling to maintain his composure as he said,

"Mr. Samuel, I am grateful that you came to visit my father. Thank you... If my father knew, he would definitely laugh and embrace you."

Samuel nodded gently and said, "I would like to speak to him alone if I may."

"Of course, you can. You were one of my father's best friends and naturally have that right."

With a sigh, Young Garcia turned away with teary eyes, leaving only Samuel in the Garcia family's graveyard.

"If your father knew my true identity, he would certainly tear my flesh to shreds."

Samuel's expression suddenly became complex, his eyes held a terrifying chill as he continued speaking.

"Garcia, it's a pity you had to die that day. Bast couldn't let you live until the day we truly squared off against the Eagle clan."

The "Black Lion" stood calmly in front of the Garcia family's tombstone. This time, he did not wear a black robe nor a mask. Instead, he appeared openly in his public persona at the Garcia family's home.

His true identity was none other than the owner of the "Red Wine Club," a good friend whom Viscount Garcia deeply trusted, an important member of the covert intelligence organization "Black Eyes," and the "best wine connoisseur on the East Coast," Mr. Samuel!

He was also the one who spread rumors about the Fischer and Romann families.

"Decades ago on the battlefield, I saved you on Bast's command, thinking it was just a play that would last a few years, but I didn't expect our acquaintance to span several decades."

"I am a bit, confused about whether I'm still acting or not."

After staring at the tombstone for a long time, Samuel suddenly let out a long sigh and continued,

"Actually, I had thought about this day coming, and it indeed came, just later than I had expected."

Viscount Garcia could never have imagined that a friend he had known for decades was actually the deepest buried blade of the Lion clan.

Decades ago, they fought together against the Rhea people, risking their lives and saving each other numerous times on the battlefield.

He could not understand why decades ago, Bast, who wasn't yet a viscount and known as the "Fox," was already contemplating how to plant the seeds of conspiracy.

Samuel gazed at the tombstone and chuckled, saying,

"Bast just loves to play idle chess too much. Whether it's me or Byrne, he has many more 'pawns' he can use on the East Coast, and some 'pawns' may never come into play in their entire lives."

"But at critical moments, he always manages to easily control the situation from behind the scenes, guiding things in the direction he desires."

Samuel considered himself the person who knew best just how fearsome Viscount Bast was.

Therefore, he firmly believed that the Eagle clan would be completely defeated in their final confrontation. He had never doubted this outcome from the beginning.

"The Eagle clan has no chance of victory because Xavier is a far-sighted and intelligent man, but Viscount Bast is a cunning devil!"

Nasir Town, Fischer Manor.

The sacrifice began.

Nearly all members of the Fischer family were by now very familiar with the entire process of the sacrifice.

The new Forbidden rare artifact "Countdown Timer" was finally offered up. An apparently old pocket watch was abruptly absorbed by an unseen force, then withered and disintegrated into black ashes before vanishing from sight.

Karl silently felt the influx of new Spiritual Power.

This was the most significant amount of Spiritual Power provided by any of the Mysterious rare artifacts to date, even twice the amount of the previous "meteorite."

He felt as if non-existent taste buds were being intensely stimulated, akin to savoring a seafood feast—an unforgettable freshness that left a deep longing for more, so much so that the desire could not be quenched for a long time.

Such a pity, yet unsatiated.

While the Spirituality contained within the artifacts still could not make Karl feel completely satisfied, he was nonetheless pleased with the Fischer family's sacrifices.

"It's been over twenty years of recovery, but I still feel that my soul cannot split again."

"It seems that a long-term bond with the Fischer family is inevitable, for a very long time I still cannot look for a second favored clan."

After pondering, he began sensing the new runes deep within his soul, resembling a black-grey pocket watch that seemed broken, its hands continuously moving backward.

Who exactly ought to be given the "Countdown Timer"?

Karl was clear that it would be best to give the "Countdown Timer" to Chris since it was a very useful power for him.

Although the effect of the "Blade of Silver Radiance" was also good, it always relied on a precious rare artifact as its base for rune power, which truly paled in comparison to the Forbidden rare artifact's "Countdown Timer."

"With this, Byrne, Irene, and Chris, each carrying rune powers based on 'Forbidden rare artifacts,' will be complete."

"Only currently, the essence of the runes is still insufficient to evolve Byrne and Chris's Forbidden rare artifact-based runes. If they could be upgraded to spirit runes, the terrifying power they would possess is unimaginable."

Chris soon felt the power he mastered had changed once again.

He took a deep breath and slowly raised his hand, yet the silver light no longer emerged.

Instead, what appeared were the hands of a pocket watch in Chris's eyes.

The new rune power "Countdown Timer" allowed him to freely set the timer, and at the end of the countdown, he could cast a time stasis on all beings around him, except himself.

The longer the countdown, the more extended the subsequent stasis, with a ratio of sixty to one, and the limit of stasis time reached a full sixty seconds!

And there was no cost whatsoever!

Chris was acutely aware of the might of his new rune power—undoubtedly, time stasis was a top-tier force in the battle against the strong!

With its power, Chris had the ability to contend with anyone below the Monarch powerful experts!

Byrne was greatly excited, a strong sense of relief emerged deep within him, even a touch of serene freedom, as the massive pressure he had always borne seemed to lighten.

"The Fischer family finally has the power to gain a foothold on the East Coast!"

From now on, everything was going to be completely different!

The people of the Fischer family were all thrilled. Darren looked up at his great-uncle Chris with eyes full of admiration and excitement.

He, too, wished to possess the mighty rune power, but did not yet know when that would be.

After the priestly ceremony was over, Irene found Byrne.

Before she could speak, Byrne said,

"The powerful force possessed by Chris need not be completely concealed anymore. Becoming a viscount family is crucial for the Fischers, and next, we need to seek dual verification from the kingdom and the church."

Irene was silent for a long time before she said earnestly,

"I want to take Lilian away from Nasir Town for a while."

Byrne, upon hearing that Irene wanted to take his daughter away, was momentarily stunned and furrowed his brow, asking,

"Why? What's the matter?"

Irene continued calmly.

"She can't feel the power of God here. Lilian needs change, Byrne. Your children are different from you in many ways, but they have one thing in common with you—they all need to train and grow."

"You really have a way with words..."

Byrne was at a loss for words, understanding the true message behind Irene's words. Lilian was not yet qualified to become a family priest, and there would be no one to take over once Irene passed away.

"But Irene, if you leave Nasir Town for a long time, is that really alright for the family?"

Irene nodded slightly, then continued,

"I will return to the family once every year. Then, I'll handle those priestly matters. As for the day-to-day affairs, Rishia can handle them... Don't worry. In these final years, I must nurture enough qualified Dawn Priests for the great Lord of the Lost; that is undoubtedly the most important task."

The order must have its priests.

Byrne could see the determination in Irene's eyes; she wanted to thoroughly train Lilian to be a successor, a woman who could continue to lead the family forward.

"I understand. Irene, follow your heart and do as you wish."

"Moreover..."

Irene paused for a moment and then lifted her head to say, "I can sense that I shouldn't stay in the family forever."

"I want to properly reevaluate the doctrines of the Dawn Church and consider where our future is headed..."

Before long, the Fischer family approached the Acting Bishop Zayne, to report that Chris Fischer had reached high-level Transmutation.

"Ah?"

Zayne's face revealed an incredulous expression, and after pondering for a while, he frowned.

"Such jokes aren't funny. You came to me because there's a real matter, right?"

He was busy and couldn't afford to waste time.

"Really?"

Byrne nodded gently, speaking with great seriousness,

"Yes, Bishop, it's true. Actually, at the end of the naval battle, Chris had reached mid-level Transmutation, and now he possesses the strength of high-level Transmutation. He might just have a good talent."

Zayne's expression grew very complex. Was it true or false?

Even though Zayne's strength had improved at nearly the same rate, he was a man of many resources, and undoubtedly, his talent also bordered on genius.

If an upstart from a small family could advance so quickly, it seemed a bit too exaggerated!

Could it be that Chris Fischer, like Duke Romann, was an actual genius?

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 169: 162 Viscount Family!

The Fischer family of the East Coast has officially become a viscount family.

After a maritime war, the Spirit Deer clan became extinct and was henceforth removed from the Cyart Kingdom, leaving only six viscount families on the East Coast in recent years until now when the seventh viscount family emerged once again.

The Fischer family!

People were utterly shocked and incredulous at the birth of a new viscount family!

Their influence in the field of medicine was immense; the highest quality and best-selling medicines on the entire East Coast all originated from the Fischer family's factories, and additives for stimulant foods developed by Fischer also secured extremely high profits.

In the area of shipping, numerous maritime merchants led by the John family all served the Fischer family.

Thanks to the channels provided by the Lion clan, part of the military logistics for the Royal Army was also the responsibility of the Fischer family.

The various small clans affiliated with the Fischer family increased every year; now they have seven knight clans, and many merchants and influential figures from all walks of life depended on them.

In the dark shadows unknown to the people of the East Coast, the Fischer family also possessed a force that called itself "Daybreakers," as well as the Dagger Brotherhood, both of which quietly exerted a profound influence over the entire East Coast.

The rise of the Fischer family was astonishing; in just over twenty years, they had become a force on the East Coast not to be taken lightly!

The original territory of the Spirit Deer clan was Black Mountain Town, which was later claimed by the Garcia family, who then handed over their interests in Black Mountain Town to the Eagle clan in exchange for future protection.

But then came the Royal decree—the "Divine Blood clan" from the Adley Royal Family had decided to bestow Black Mountain Town and the adjacent eleven villages to the Fischer family!

The Fischer family showed no cowardice and settled into Black Mountain Town without hesitation, appointing officials and working with the Lion clan to drive out the people of the Eagle clan!

The territory of the Eagle clan was simply too far from the four towns; disadvantaged geographically, they quickly abandoned their claim to Black Mountain Town due to the enormous difficulty, especially since the Garcia family, under Young Garcia's leadership, was secretly aiding the Fischer family.

As for the disappearance and murder of Viscount Garcia, Xavier maintained silence throughout, as if the matter had never existed, and nobody truly knew what he was thinking.

Nor did anyone know if he really cared about his friendship with Viscount Garcia.

The port town Nasir, the horse racing hub Black Mountain Town, the Garcia family's territory Fiera Town, and the gold mining town Chevron Town.

The whole region of the four towns gradually fell under the shadow of the Fischer family.

Their formal elevation to a viscount family was an event that shook the entire East Coast, leading the Fischer family to host a grand banquet of significant scale.

The most powerful Extraordinary Exponent would become the head of the family; this system established by the Extraordinary nobility avoided many family disputes, where a family member with strong abilities yet a low position would end up harboring resentment, effectively reducing such incidents.

According to the rules of the Extraordinary nobility, Chris had already become the official head of the Fischer family in name.

He had to attend the banquet, although for Chris himself, socializing with a bunch of disorderly people was quite a horrifying prospect.

Chris would rather have a few more bouts with Viscount Garcia than be the center of attention at the banquet.

"..."

Chris couldn't be bothered to talk to people; in most social situations, the eloquent Byrne would handle it on his behalf.

Viscount Bast from the "Lion clan," Viscount Oder from the "Iron Blood clan," and twelve barons who sided with the Lion clan also arrived, as well as nearly a hundred members from various knight clans who flocked to the banquet.

As for the Tempest Church, Acting Bishop Zayne from the Tempest Church himself came in person, accompanied by a dozen or so Priests.

"Tsk, it's actually true," Viscount Oder, holding a glass of red wine, couldn't hide his surprise at the banquet.

"If that's the case, this arranged marriage is indeed entirely feasible."

Bast had ordered an arranged marriage between two families; initially, he was averse to an alliance with the Fischer family, but now he felt it was a good thing again, a chance to form a good relationship with the newly ascended viscount family, the Fischers.

The white-haired Viscount Bast wanted to embrace Chris but was dodged, then without taking offense, he turned to embrace Byrne, saying with a smile:

"Hahaha! Very good! The Fischer family is progressing smoothly, eh? Byrne Fischer, your relatives are all very promising! Perhaps in the future, they could become people who change the dynamics of the East Coast!"

Byrne took a deep breath and replied with a smile:

"Without the support of the Lion clan, the Fischer family would not be where it is today, and I truly think so."

He said it sincerely, not solely to flatter the other party, and upon hearing it Viscount Bast laughed again, nodding lightly and whispering into Byrne's ear:

"Don't forget our agreement."

There were many attendants at this banquet, far more than at the initial celebration of Byrne's barony, and merchants, barons, and knights from the East Coast Province who didn't deal with the Eagle clan almost all wanted to attend this event.

Darren spied a somewhat familiar merchant happily chatting with knights; it was his ex-girlfriend's father, who wouldn't have obtained an invitation at all if the girl hadn't pleaded with him a few days earlier.

The banquet invitations were said to fetch a high price in the market, with some merchants even willing to take out loans just to secure an invite.

But Darren knew that the so-called "transferable invitations" were fake; how could those not invited be let in? Yet indeed, there were fools who believed in it.

He slipped out of the banquet skillfully, and a tall, beautiful girl with gray hair stood outside, watching Darren coldly and said, "Why haven't you seen me for the past two months?"

Darren sighed and said, "Because I'm about to enter an arranged marriage, we have to part ways. Wasn't I clear in the letter?"

"Who? Which family's girl are you marrying? Tell me clearly!"

The gray-haired girl's father was also a very wealthy knight. She had been pampered by servants since she was little, and men from other knight clans also did their best to please her, with some even reciting love poems to her every week for a year.

The gray-haired girl had never suffered the humiliation of rejection. Unable to help herself, she glared at Darren with her chest puffed out in indignation.

"The Oder family, that Iron Blood clan."

As soon as Darren finished speaking calmly, the gray-haired girl took a step back, her eyes showing a hint of conceding to difficulties, yet she still bit her lip, not wanting to leave Darren.

He might one day be the heir to the Fischer family, and everyone knew what that meant.

She reached out and grabbed Darren's arm. Darren initially wanted to shake her off, but after thinking about it, he didn't.

A thought crossed his mind that apart from a few elders in the Fischer family, almost all the nobility had lovers. Why couldn't he have one?

All of a sudden, Darren held the girl and started kissing her. He had completely mastered the Power of "Scapegoat," and he decided to visit his ex-girlfriend again in a few days, or perhaps he could start by talking to her avaricious father.

At the banquet, everyone suddenly learned of another very surprising piece of news!

The Romann family had arrived!

"The Romann family?"

Acting Bishop Zayne raised an eyebrow. The Frosac family had a decent relationship with the Romann family, while the relationship between the Tempest Church and the Romann family was not that good, and he quickly contemplated what attitude and stance he should adopt in dealing with the Romann family's people.

Everyone present was aware of the Romann family's status—as top-tier nobles just below the Royal Family, their every word and deed could determine the life and death of countless people.

"Why would the Romann family come here?"

"Have you forgotten the relationship between the Fischer family and the Romann family?"

"My God, is that really not a rumor?"

The faces of many barons changed color, their hearts shook, and they wondered if the news was indeed not a rumor!

Byrne was also surprised, because the Romann family hadn't indicated any intention to come beforehand, and he hadn't sent an invitation to them, considering they were far away in another province. So, this was essentially the Romann family showing up uninvited.

"A very strange occurrence, one that clearly doesn't conform to the visiting etiquette among nobility, especially by those who, being high nobles, should value it even more."

In the eyes of all those watching, a young Amos Romann walked in.

His youthful and handsome face shone under the light, with golden hair reflecting a faint glow that bestowed a mysterious and charming allure, wearing a perfectly tailored dark blue tailcoat with a carefully matched bow tie adorning his neck.

"Blazing Fire" Amos Romann, the most outstanding of Duke Black Iron's great-grandchildren, was regarded as a genius, having reached the Metamorphosis Phase at a young age, and was very likely to become the successor of the Romann family.

Of course, Extraordinary nobles who could reach the Metamorphosis Phase were not few in the Ten Great Pillars clans, but the number who eventually became Monarch powerful experts was actually very small.

Many so-called geniuses never lived to that time, or ultimately could not break through that "gate" to step into the "palace."

Byrne quickly greeted him with a smile, saying warmly, "Mr. Amos, welcome. I didn't expect your sudden visit, I apologize for not making the proper preparations to receive you!"

Amos Romann shook his head gently and immediately said:

"It's nothing. Those tedious etiquette rules can't constrain me. I came here just to see for myself the Extraordinary who reached high-level Transmutation in his twenties, despite being from a small clan—who exactly is he?"

He gazed at everyone before raising his voice and adding.

"My visit does not represent any opinion of the Romann family, so let's not read too much into it!"

Then, at the banquet, every person who wanted to speak with Amos Romann was rejected by a wave of his hand, as he quickly made his way toward Chris with the silver hair.

Everyone exchanged glances, smiling superficially, feeling dissatisfaction deep inside, but they didn't dare to voice any objections outwardly.

Byrne smiled, feeling that "Blazing Fire" Amos Romann had a rather straightforward character. It seemed like there were no wrong nicknames, only mistakenly called names.

Just then, Byrne learned from a servant that more of the Romann family had arrived!

"Ah?"

He paused for a moment, then quickly realized that the "Blazing Fire" Amos Romann was indeed someone who had come covertly, and his attitude did not represent the Romann family's stance.

But now, the coming of the Romann family's member would likely represent the true attitude of their family, and he had to be even more attentive than before!

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 170: 163 Marriage Alliance

The member of the Romann family who arrived was a mid-level Transmutation prowess of the family, an uncle of Amos Romann but not a very significant figure within the Romann family itself.

The focus was not on the man himself but on the precious gift he brought from Duke Black Iron, the head of the Romann family.

"Black Blade."

It was an incredibly valuable enchanted dagger, crafted through top-tier alchemy, covered with complex and intricate spell inscriptions, possessing destructive power beyond the norm.

Such top-tier alchemical weapons were very rare on the East Coast, highly valuable, and while not as precious as Forbidden rare artifacts, they were nearly at the level of top-tier treasures.

The value of the gift spoke volumes about the Romann family's stance, and everyone at the banquet understood this.

Byrne's expression was filled with gratitude and surprise, and then he said,

"The Fischer family is very thankful for Duke Romann's gift, and when Duke Romann's birthday arrives later this year, the Fischer family will certainly pay a visit to celebrate!"

The visitor from the Romann family found Byrne and started a conversation with a smile, reminiscing about the time Byrne Fischer met with the Romann family and pledged loyalty to them.

"In fact, Duke Black Iron, he hasn't forgotten about that either and would often praise the bravery of His Excellency Lucius!"

Did they really remember the Fischer family from back then?

Byrne knew very well that it was merely a polite gesture—if the Fischer family had not risen in status, Duke Black Iron would undoubtedly have forgotten such an insignificant matter.

He could understand, for those in high positions face so many daily affairs that they are simply too busy to keep up.

Byrne took a deep breath, aware that this was the moment to choose sides, for which he had been mentally prepared.

"I will always remember that day, the day that changed the Fischer family's destiny. The kindness of Duke Black Iron is something the Fischer family can never forget."

While the Romann family wielded immense power, that didn't mean they lacked opponents and enemies; taking sides also meant sharing risks.

In fact, the situation amongst the Eight Great Families within Cyart Kingdom was tending toward a delicate tripartite equilibrium.

The first major force was the Royal Family, the Adley family, a powerful "Divine Blood clan" unquestionably the unparalleled force in Cyart, with the Cyart King himself being the most likely to achieve high-level Monarch status.

The second major force was the "Dark Night" Romann family and the power represented by Duke Black Iron; their relations with the "Wasteland Beast" Frosac family and the "Wrathful Angel" Jones family were incredibly amicable.

The third major force was the alliance between the "Fog" Abernathy family and the "Flaming Blood" Castleton family, both top-tier families among the Eight Great Families of Cyart, each possessing mid-level Monarch top-tier powerhouses.

The Lion clan had amiable relations with the Romann family, and coupled with the favor Byrne had once received from them, it wouldn't be problematic for the Fischer family to formally join under the Romann family's banner.

It was crystal clear to everyone that the Romann family was looking to invest in the Fischer family, not just because they were a newly ennobled viscount family, but more so because Chris Fischer's magical talents were simply too astonishing!

It was extraordinary!

A mid-twenty-year-old high-level Transmutation Extraordinary Exponent, such level of genius had only occurred about thirty-some times in Cyart over the last hundred years!

And nearly all of them were members of the Ten Great Pillars, with those truly possessing better talents than Chris Fischer numbered less than the fingers on one hand.

He stood a great chance of reaching Monarch level!

Even if there was a slight possibility, it was well worth the investment from top-tier families. If Chris weren't already married, the Romann family would likely have pushed for a forced marriage.

In fact, in recent years, the number of girls who've thrown themselves at Chris, hoping to be his lover, was not small at all; the temptations he faced were tenfold that of Darren's, yet Chris ignored all of them.

People could only marvel at Vanessa's good fortune. She was just an orphaned Spellcaster with a disability, but her husband held an esteemed position, possessed an Angel-like appearance with immense strength, and was incredibly loyal to love.

Many young girls couldn't help but fantasize in their dreams that they might be the next Vanessa.

Viscount Oder found himself lost in thought in a corner, muttering, "It seems the Fischer family truly is a descendant of the Romann family! In that case, the marriage alliance between our two families must happen!"

Then, he saw Baron Adrian approach Byrne Fischer with his daughter Evangeline, taking the initiative to come forward.

With a smile plastered across his face, Baron Adrian said ingratiatingly, "Your Excellency Bain, I remember that you once mentioned a desire for our families to enter into marriage; I have always kept that in mind."

"Hmm?"

Byrne paused, taking a moment to process, before he noticed the little girl standing next to Baron Adrian, which was Evangeline whom Chris had once "received" into their family.

He nodded slightly and smiled, saying:

"I apologize, Baron Adrian, our family does not have any other eligible members at the moment; I am truly sorry about this matter."

He still remembered when he had casually brought up the idea of a marriage alliance, and Baron Adrian had reacted very strongly, refusing to consider using the talented Evangeline for such purposes.

Now this fellow's attitude had changed quite a bit, probably due to Viscount Garcia's tragic mishap, which made him very wary.

However, back then, Darren and Evangeline were about the same age, and there indeed was a possibility for marriage. But now, Darren was already required to enter into marriage with the "Iron Blood" Oder family.

Baron Adrian looked embarrassed, pondered for a while, then continued to speak with a smile:

"That's how it is, but no matter; perhaps we could let Evangeline stay at Fischer Manor for now. Isn't the marriage alliance with the Oder family not yet final? Perhaps Darren and Evangeline will hit it off better?"

Evangeline looked at her father blankly; she didn't want to leave home.

No sooner had Baron Adrian finished speaking, he prompted Evangeline to step forward and speak; then, he suddenly shut his mouth.

Because he saw Viscount Oder, whose expression was unpleasant, slowly approaching.

"In a few days, our two families will be engaged, Baron Adrian; you're too late, you know?"

Viscount Oder's tone was unabashedly impolite, the look in his eyes as he stared at Adrian was full of annoyance!

Baron Adrian's face was covered in sweat; he immediately bowed his head and said, "Okay, I understand! Sorry! Viscount Oder, I hope you won't take it to heart!"

After a while, he couldn't help but start thinking again; Darren seemed to have a sister. Which of his sons could marry into the Fischer family with Lilian? Or perhaps it would also be good to arrange a marriage directly with Chris's child?

Adrian knew time was of the essence; he had to hurry up with the marriage alliance, or the children of the Fischer family would sooner or later all be spoken for!

"If all else fails, having a child of my brother marry Mr. Theo's daughter wouldn't be too bad either!"

At the banquet, Amos Romann was very interested in Chris. He approached alone and began inquiring about matters of becoming stronger.

"You're Chris Fischer, aren't you? I'd like to discuss with you about the power of Bloodline. In fact, I am quite astonished by the speed at which you've become stronger;

you are not from a major family, and yet you managed to reach high-level Transmutation at such a young age. As far as I recall, there are only a few in Cyart who can compare to you..."

Chris remained silent, feeling extreme aversion to this incessantly chattering visitor deep inside, but he also knew that the other party was an honored guest whom he could not simply walk away from.

The Fischer family members had previously memorized quite a bit of the mysterious knowledge about the power of Bloodline, so he was not completely at a loss for words, but he just didn't want to say too much.

Yet if he did so, he might neglect this honored guest, which filled Chris with helplessness.

When the banquet was nearing its end, Amos Romann also exchanged many words with Acting Bishop Zayne. Both were considered geniuses, the future of the two great families, and might possibly become Monarch Level individuals in the future.

The two seemed to get along extremely well, as if they had met a kindred spirit for life, and they did not give up on communicating with Chris either.

Byrne sensed that Amos Romann might not be straightforward or entirely lacking in social skills, but rather, he had his own mode of interaction.

Amos Romann had no interest in mingling with those who had no chance of reaching Monarch Level, deeming it ineffective socializing, and he paid great attention to every Potentialist, even taking the initiative to approach them.

As the banquet concluded, people began to leave the Fischer family manor one after another, while Byrne kept busy bidding farewell to the honored guests, suddenly realizing something quite significant.

The Fischer Manor seemed a bit small.

"Perhaps when the opportunity arises, we could expand it a bit, at least to be on par with other viscount families and not to be looked down upon."

Byrne took a deep breath, his face filled with satisfaction; the Fischer family had finally obtained a ticket to enter the top circles of East Coast Province!

The efforts and struggles of twenty-one years had never been in vain.

Yet there was one thing he truly couldn't put his mind at ease about.

"With just over half a year left, the peace agreement between Cyart and Rhea is coming to an end, that time is so close..."

Byrne's eyes were filled with unease; he clenched his fists tightly as the tragedy of his father's death was still before his eyes, the deeply ingrained hatred had never diminished by even the slightest measure in the depths of his heart!

"The Meyer family - for that alluring object, they will surely come to the East Coast once more!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 171: 164: Black Mountain Town Strategy

The Fischer family took over the residence in Black Mountain Town which had once been occupied by the Spirit Deer and Roarer clans.

The locals all deemed it to be ominous; within just a few years, two powerful families had met their downfall due to the residence—one destroyed and the other fallen into misery—surely there must be some kind of curse.

However, the Fischer family had always been non-superstitious.

In their hearts, they considered themselves proxies of God and looked down with disdain upon the rumors of a curse. Besides, how could we, the Fischers, not know the reasons behind the Garcias' decline?

The new residence in Black Mountain Town was named Black Mountain Manor, and its architecture was somewhat antique, though much larger than Fischer Manor.

The main residence was a five-level building, with three levels above and two below, forming a concave-shaped structure. It had enough rooms to house four to five hundred people, in addition to two expansive basement levels.

Flanking the main residence of Black Mountain Manor were two shorter, three-story buildings that could also house four to five hundred people, but these were specifically for the servants' quarters.

Every morning, a legion of servants had to rise before dawn and immediately rush to the main residence to complete most of their tasks before their masters awoke.

Irene had already taken Lilian away, and no one knew where they had gone.

Rishia began to take charge of the daily maintenance of the sacrificial hall, and the young girl was quite eager to do so.

Byrne, Chris, and Darren were holding a new family meeting in the basement. Though it was called a "family meeting," it was essentially the latter two listening to Byrne talk for half a day.

"Chris, you and Darren stay in Nasir Town. Most of the affairs here no longer require your attention; they have been set in motion and just need to be overseen for normal operations," Byrne said.

"Darren, you should observe the overall functioning of the family more closely and understand the various trades. Do you understand?" he added.

"I'm going to Black Mountain Town to sort things out there," Byrne declared.

Black Mountain Town was a famous gambling haven, known across the East Coast Province especially for its horse betting events—even people from other provinces came to gamble. Many criminals and villains frequented the place, and the town's public order was actually rather precarious.

Furthermore, with Garcia's influence gone, many smaller powers within the town were still in a state of unease facing the newly arrived lord.

Byrne himself had to go to represent the Fischer family and give the people an explanation.

"Then Theo and I will take people and leave immediately. Chris, if there's anything, just let Vanessa handle it. Whatever she asks you to solve, you solve," Byrne said.

"I know you don't like to think about these boring matters, which I actually consider quite right. After all, thinking too much will affect your progress in becoming stronger, and that is the foundation of the Fischer family!" he continued.

When Byrne said this, he felt a shortage of manpower deep down.

In over twenty years, the Fischer family had expanded too quickly, reaching their influence to all four towns, yet they had far too few reliable hands at present.

With Irene temporarily gone and Byrne headed to Black Mountain Town for a while, he even had to reactivate Vanessa to handle the affairs of Nasir Town.

"It seems the Fischer family needs more reliable hands and vassals," Byrne thought.

Currently, the only baronial family vassalized to the Fischer family was that of Baron Adrian, and the knight clans loyal to them were only five out of eleven villages, all of which had been taken over from the Spirit Deer clan.

The current number of vassals was actually very few among the larger viscount families, of course, this did not account for "Daybreakers," the covert ecclesiastical power.

Black Mountain Town.

The heads of two knight clans, four major merchants from guilds, the leader of the local Glover Gang, and an elder of the local silver descendants clan, eight figures who were great personages in the eyes of ordinary folk, were exchanging words in the luxurious box at the horse racing track.

The silver descendant elder furrowed his brow and asked, "What kind of man is this Mr. Byrne from the Fischer family that you speak of?"

The head of the tailors' guild expressed his worries, "It doesn't matter who this Byrne Fischer is; what's important is, will he overturn the agreements we had with the Garcia family and ask for the moon?"

An old knight shook his head uncertainly, "He shouldn't, right? The reputation of the Fischer family is said to be good, and they're not known for being overly harsh on their subordinates."

The Spirit Deer family had initially set low cut rates in various industries, to which everyone had grown accustomed; however, when the Garcia family came along, they doubled the rates!

Eventually, someone couldn't stand it anymore and even considered seeking justice from the church, but they were secretly murdered by Viscount Garcia, along with their entire family.

Since then, every merchant in Black Mountain Town dared to be angry but did not dare to speak out, only able to keep their heads down and live in submission.

The head of the carpenters' guild sighed and exclaimed, "What if the Fischer family actually raises the rates again? We won't have any profit margin left! This can't stand! Is there really nothing we can do?"

The silver descendant elder mockingly said, "What can you do, what can any of us do? The Garcia family has fallen, and do you plan to make an enemy of the powerful Fischer family? Do you want to be murdered in the streets and have your children reduced to selling themselves?"

"Alas..."

Sighs of despair echoed through the room. In truth, a stable environment for making money was more important than anything else, and everyone was well aware of this.

Standing against the Fischer family was even more impossible; everyone combined could not defeat the hand of Chris Fischer alone!

Cyart's local forces wield tremendous power, and even the Royal Family faces great difficulties when attempting to reform.

Even the gang leaders fell into deep thought; they had always been in charge of maintaining the security of the racetracks, but ever since the Garcia family arrived, their people had been replaced.

Furthermore, with Viscount Garcia's iron fist, other revenues of the Glover Gang were forced to decrease. They would have probably been dead by now if they hadn't knelt down quickly.

Just then, the door was pushed open.

Byrne Fischer, in his black clothes, entered with Theo, smiling as they came in from outside.

"So everyone's here, that's good. Looks like there's no need for me to call you over then."

Everyone was startled! They had absolutely no idea how Byrne Fischer had found them!

"Your Excellency Byrne!"

"Hello, welcome, Your Excellency Byrne!"

"I've always admired the Fischer family, and I've even dreamt of your heroic image..."

Each person was stunned, then quickly stood up and greeted Byrne Fischer with great politeness.

The crowd didn't resemble bosses from various industries as much as they did top students from an etiquette academy, their faces even breaking out in cold sweat.

Byrne waved his hand, indicating they could stop.

He first addressed the local gang, the head of the Glover Gang, and said coldly:

"I don't care about your protection rackets or maintaining security at the gambling dens, but as of today, all your loan sharking and people controlling practices stop! I'm not suggesting, I'm ordering!"

Black Mountain Town, as a holy land for gamblers, had a thriving sex business and was a notorious gold sink, hence crimes were rampant.

Byrne knew that disbanding gangs was unrealistic, and he also valued the business interests of the gold sinks; someone needed to manage them, and it was best to have familiar people in charge.

The leader of the Glover Gang immediately bowed, sweating profusely, and said:

"Okay, Your Excellency Byrne, I understand! Understand!"

He had heard that His Excellency Byrne was a kind yet fierce person. Given the serious tone, it was best to obediently follow the order.

However, what the head of the Glover Gang didn't know was that Byrne had long planned to gradually have the Dagger Brotherhood replace their position and would publicly judge him in a few years.

On one hand, it would dissolve the anger of the local poor, and on the other, it would garner reputation for the Fischer family.

Even less did he know that his demise would be due to Vanessa's secret investigation.

She had discovered that the Glover Gang controlled dozens of pitiful girls with usurious loans and banned drugs, and notably, amongst them were children from Nasir Town.

Byrne had once known that little girl's family in Nasir Town, had even held her; knowing this, his heart had already decided the fate of the Glover Gang.

As for whether this would affect the interests of the Fischer family?

Not at all, because the Dagger Brotherhood would fill the vacancy left by the Glover Gang's management, the future income would not decrease, and their control over the area would only grow much stronger.

Now as long as they don't go against the opinions of all the smaller forces, the powerful Fischer family could dispose of any local small force at will! Act with complete impunity!

If they did go against the opinions of all the smaller forces, if they incurred the wrath of many, then they would just have to... replace all the leaders of these small forces.

"I will lower the cut taken by the Garcia family by a bit, but it won't be as low as the rates originally set by the Spirit Deer clan."

Byrne looked at the people who were anxious inside but simultaneously relieved, smiling as he threw out his olive branch.

"The Fischer family is going to establish four new factories over the next few years, all around the vicinity of Black Mountain Town! I welcome everyone to invest together! I'm sure you all have used products from the Fischer family before, haven't you?"

As soon as these words were spoken, the eyes of everyone present lit up, for it signified new benefits! Now everyone was very clear that setting up factories meant harvesting money!

Byrne understood one thing very well: winning people over essentially involved appropriate rewards and punishments, as well as leading everyone to share in profits. Any more idle talk was utterly meaningless.

If the factories of the Fischer family could lead everyone to make money, they would be willing to obey him, and then it was just a matter of getting rid of the "thorns," and the matter would be nearly settled.

As for many details, they need not be handled by him at all; if he had to do everything himself, what was the point of having so many people in the family?

Byrne fell into contemplation, the profits that could be made from Black Mountain Town were high, the family's funds would grow more and more, and a dream he once had might now finally be realized.

He wanted to establish new residential areas, hospitals, theaters, and civic plazas in Nasir Town, and finally, a comprehensive university that occupied a vast tract of land!

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 172: 165: War Breaks Out!

More than half a year later.

The first elementary education literacy school in Nasir Town was finally built, and all underage local residents could attend school for free as long as they paid a minimal food fee.

"His Excellency Byrne has done a great deed!"

"In the future, there will definitely be many scholars emerging from Nasir Town, and even the gods will be pleased with the achievements of the Fischer family!"

"From now on, the children of Nasir Town will also have the opportunity to recognize words!"

On the day the school was officially established, many people who came to the fundraising charity banquet praised the Fischer family and Byrne, but how sincere they were was unknown.

In the past, members of the Fischer family often heard slander and dissatisfaction, but after becoming a viscount family, they heard it almost no more; everywhere in their lives was filled with people's praise and respectful expressions.

Nowadays, most of the primary education schools within Cyart Kingdom were established by the church, and the most important part of their curriculum was undoubtedly the theological class, and the church schools were also not open to everyone.

Often it was the families of status and wealth whose offspring could gain the opportunity to enter these schools.

On the Ouden Continent, the opportunity for ordinary people to receive an education has always been rare.

Then there were the secondary education grammar schools and civil service schools, also part of Nasir's construction plan, and finally, the university area Byrne truly wanted to establish in Nasir Town.

He knew that establishing a higher learning institution was not an easy task, as Nasir Town was not yet able to provide the necessary environment, and the university would also have difficulty operating normally after it was built.

Currently, within the entire Cyart area, there were actually no higher education institutions aimed at commoners, and many higher education institutions were merely places that imparted existing knowledge and cultivated civilized gentlemen.

Byrne's heart hoped to establish a new type of university that would adhere to academic freedom, prioritize talent, and pursue knowledge as the key principle!

Most importantly, it would recruit students from all backgrounds, regardless of whether they were poor or wealthy, of noble birth or humble origins! As long as they had the sufficient grades, they could all enter the university to study!

He deeply knew the importance of the transmission of knowledge to the world, and he was also very clearly aware that many scholars in Cyart lacked places to discuss and study academia.

Byrne, deep in his heart, disapproved of the practice of higher education institutions only nurturing the nobility.

The Fischer family was not a noble-born family, but had received an opportunity granted by godly grace, coupled with their own efforts, to finally achieve some accomplishment.

Many commoners could also shine with their own light, if only they had always been given the chance!

"The Fischer family will provide them with an opportunity, a chance to try, on behalf of the great Lord of the Lost," Byrne thought.

When the primary school was completed, Byrne suddenly felt that he had a greater grasp of his Power of Consecution, and his heart was immediately filled with excitement and surprise!

"So it is, the method of assimilating the Path of Knowledge is actually not just learning, but establishing places to spread and share knowledge is also a very effective method!"

That's great!

Byrne's face broke into a smile, for he had originally estimated that fully mastering the power of the 3rd Rank would take a full ten years, but now he had a new way, and the pace of breakthroughs would clearly be much faster than before!

"The path of knowledge lies in study and inheritance," he mused.

Looking at the elementary school before him and its first group of students, mainly from Daybreak Orphanage, he thought about how education in Nasir Town and everything else was still very simple, but at least there would be a good start and a future.

"Nasir Town will change completely sooner or later, even if it doesn't happen in my generation, it will one day become a city that surpasses Fein City..."

I look forward to this and truly believe it.

Finally, the decades-long peace treaty between the people of Cyart and the Rhea came to its limit.

It was a sleepless night when countless people from both nations, and even many people from the other two nations of the Eastern Four Kingdoms, Carnia and Vallere, couldn't sleep.

If these two nations were to go to war, it would undoubtedly affect the entire situation in the east.

Months ago, the military forces all over Cyart were already on alert, fearing a lightning-fast surprise attack by the Rhea the day the peace treaty ended.

But days passed, and the invasion by the Rhea, as assumed in various scenarios, did not come at all.

Just when countless people breathed a sigh of relief, even feeling a bit puzzled, they finally heard a shocking piece of news!

A civil war broke out within Rhea Kingdom!

Led by the "Adranus" Meyer family, many extraordinary nobility once again challenged the Rhea Royal Family, the 'Fog Wayfarer' Abernathy clan, on the grounds that the Rhea Royal Family had decided not to attack Cyart to reclaim their lands.

More than half of the nobility collectively rebelled, believing the Rhea Royal Family, who did not wish to attack Cyart by marching southward, no longer deserved to be the royal clan for the Rhea people, thus they wanted to nominate the pro-war Meyer family to become the new king of the Rhea!

War had erupted in an instant!

The prevalent World Order Church and Salvation Church within Rhea territory supported the two sides respectively; the World Order Church hoped that the "Adranus" Meyer family would become the new Rhea kings, while the Salvation Church supported the existing Rhea Royal Family "Fog Wayfarers" of the Abernathy clan.

At least for the short term, the Rhea people would no longer have the capacity to invade Cyart.

The Cyart people mostly breathed a sigh of relief, the common folk even believed that the war would not come their way, rejoicing with great delight, yet the Cyart upper-class nobility still felt the situation was tense.

For inside Cyart, the great nobles were discussing what to do next.

"Do we sit idly by and ignore the internal conflict of the Rhea people, or choose to support the Rhea Royal Family in attacking the Meyer family, or perhaps invade Rhea completely?"

"What exactly must we do?"

The possibilities brought forth by the three choices were numerous, and the Cyart upper-class nobility bickered endlessly, day and night, without reaching a decision in the short term.

Everyone was acutely aware that this was a choice that would determine the fate of the nation, so each person, declaring their own viewpoint as the correct one, argued vehemently while also hoping that the clan they represented could scoop up more benefits.

For example, within Cyart, the "Fog Wayfarers" branch of the Abernathy family, were very much hoping to lend their support to the master Rhea Royal House "Fog Wayfarers."

Decades ago during the war between the two countries, the "Fog Wayfarers" even found reasons not to engage in mutual slaughter—the idea that family was greater than the nation still dominated the thoughts of many nobles on the Ouden Continent.

"War, huh..."

Byrne took a deep breath; he had once again arrived at Viscount Bast's estate.

No matter whether Cyart would ultimately march troops into Rhea, he must first repay the kindness of the Lion clan, fulfilling the agreement made several years ago.

In the brown study room filled with bookshelves, Viscount Bast, with his snow-white hair, chuckled as he rose to his feet, looking sternly at the aging Byrne and nodded:

"You've finally arrived, Byrne, everyone on our side has gathered; it's time to enter the Spirit Realm together!"

He couldn't help but sigh, tilting his head up and lamenting:

"At last, the day has come, Byrne, I am indeed too old, too aged, haha!"

Viscount Bast glanced at his own aged hands and said slowly: "I can't wait any longer, Byrne, if not for the treasures within the Spirit Realm, I'm afraid I will disappear from this world in a decade or two!"

"I can't reconcile with that!"

"The years are unbearable, time is the most ruthless Grim Reaper; I believe with your age you have already grasped this truth."

Byrne nodded gently, his heart becoming a bit heavy as he remembered Irene, whom he hadn't seen for some time.

"Yes."

Time is the most ruthless Grim Reaper.

"Byrne, it is said that some of the miraculous treasures or Forbidden Knowledge in the Spirit Realm possess the potential to extend one's lifespan."

Upon these words from Viscount Bast, Byrne suddenly lifted his head, then realized he was too excited, which wasn't good, as it could easily allow others to take advantage of him.

He was usually a very composed person, but for some reason, he always became less adept at concealing his feelings around Viscount Bast.

"Hehe, come with me."

Viscount Bast laughed, then led Byrne down to the basement of the estate.

In the dark and vast underground space, a long black floor-to-ceiling mirror already had fifteen or sixteen people waiting before it, their numbers quite considerable. Moreover, several were mysterious individuals hiding their identities, unwilling to reveal their true faces, possibly illegal Extraordinary Exponents, church members, or even heretics.

Apart from the always enigmatic "Black Lion" who had not shown up, Bast's two brothers, the police chief Renzo and Colonel Abel, had also arrived.

"Excellent, all of us have gathered; there's no need to wait any longer, let's enter the Spirit Realm together."

Bast gazed at the people present and said slowly:

"Our target this time is a long-sealed palace, a Spirit Realm palace constructed from purple crystals..."

Byrne was startled, finally realizing the gravity of this foray into the Spirit Realm; Viscount Bast had actually summoned so many Extraordinary Exponents in one go!

And he could feel that all the Extraordinary Exponents present were Transmutation Level powerhouses! In a certain sense, this lineup was potent enough to potentially obliterate the powerful Eagle clan entirely!

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 173: 166: The Amethyst Palace

The Spirit Realm had been accessible for over twenty years, and by now, many on the Ouden Continent had mastered stable methods of entry. However, the methods varied greatly in quality, with some even resulting in death upon entry. It seemed that entering was possible, but not always necessary.

Viscount Bast stood before the black mirror in the cellar space of his mansion, which radiated an eerie power, allowing people to travel directly from reality to the world of dreams.

He slowly glanced at the crowd and led the way through the black mirror into another world.

"Follow me, everyone. Our voyage through the Spirit Realm is about to commence."

One by one, the crowd followed Viscount Bast's lead into the all too familiar landscape of Dreamland Forest.

Among those headed for the dreamland, there was a man wearing a dog-faced mask who silently watched Byrne's figure and lowered his head to follow the others inside.

Then the old viscount took out a mystical, ancient bronze pointer, constantly fiddling with and adjusting it, till he determined a location. He then led everyone through the illusory dreamscape towards the bounds of the Spirit Realm.

Everyone was curious. What exactly was the pointer that Viscount Bast held?

Only Byrne knew in his heart that it was a Spirit Realm secret treasure obtained through trading "Spirit Essence" with the Alchemy Council, specifically used to locate "objects whose positions and shapes were already known."

In fact, similar treasures from the Spirit Realm were becoming increasingly common.

The Spirit Realm seemed like a massive and terrifying trap with its own consciousness, always craving explorers, luring them with the promise of great opportunity. Yet, they were more likely to find death or even fates worse than death.

The crowd dared not lift their heads as the cross of black light in the sky hung ominously, each person filled with reverence towards its presence.

"What exactly is that?"

"No one knows. Perhaps it's a great deity..."

"Even the church is silent about its existence, but fear can always be seen in many people's eyes."

Extraordinary Exponents from all over the world had long known about the black cross luminance in the sky of the Spirit Realm, all holding certain reverence towards it.

"That is..."

My God, Byrne silently prayed to the Lord of the Lost deep in his heart.

He believed that the Great Lord of the Lost would protect him just as it had always favored the Fischer family, a deity deserving of profound and genuine veneration.

Eventually, the expedition led by Viscount Bast entered the Spirit Realm.

"We've arrived!"

Viscount Bast took a deep breath and slowly said,

"Next, we just need to pass through the Gates of Nature, World Order, and Authority, and then we have a thirty percent chance of reaching the amethyst palace!"

Nature, World Order, Authority... a thirty percent chance...

Byrne silently memorized the route, noticing that the others had also memorized it; clearly, Viscount Bast wasn't at all afraid of them doing so.

Why is that?

Was it because under normal circumstances, a lone Transmutation Extraordinary Exponent wouldn't stand a chance of adventuring in the palace on their own?

Soon, they encountered monsters within the Spirit Realm, but the expedition's strength was sufficient, and they dispatched the creatures with relative ease.

Without much obstruction along the way, they soon found the first gate, the Gate of Nature.

It was a gate encircled by deep green vines, its inner "vortex" brimming with the vibrant essence of spring, appearing full of vitality and renewal.

"Incredible, this is my first time seeing the Gate of Nature."

"Really? I've seen it more than once. Encountering the Gate of Nature in the Spirit Realm is a great fortune!"

The members of the expedition became especially excited in front of the Gate of Nature, chatting animatedly, and they also noticed the other two gates that appeared alongside it, the Gate of Shadow and the Gate of Revelation.

They particularly wanted to avoid the Gate of Shadow, with its sense of despair almost tangible and devoid of any hope.

"Let's go!"

Viscount Bast led the way through the Gate of Nature.

Every person who passed through the Gate of Nature felt completely at ease, as if any exhaustion from dealing with monsters or any accidental injuries had vanished.

The power of the gates in the Spirit Realm was always extraordinarily miraculous.

The next gate was the Gate of World Order.

This gate was completely different from the others; it wasn't a vortex but rather a rectangular door made of metal and gems, emanating a very majestic aura.

One of Viscount Bast's brothers, Chief Renzo, fell into contemplation.

"Is this the Gate of World Order? Such a rare gate."

He felt a natural affinity toward the Gate of World Order because the order in Fein City was gradually deteriorating due to the excessive population spike in the past twenty years. It seemed like nearly all the farmers from the East Coast Province were flocking to the city, causing law and order to spiral out of control.

Even with the police working themselves to the bone, they couldn't cope with it all.

"Alright, we're almost there!" Viscount Bast spoke again.

After passing through the Gate of World Order, many fell silent, but others burst into laughter.

Because the moment they left the Gate of World Order, they saw all the sins they had committed. Some with troubled consciences cared, while others didn't in the slightest.

Byrne saw much as well, falling into a long silence, while Viscount Bast remained cheerful, seemingly completely unaffected by the Gate of World Order.

He looked at Byrne and said,

"Don't mind those illusions, Byrne, you must have realized this long ago."

Then came the third gate, the Gate of Authority.

It was a gate inlaid with many gems, and the "vortex" was as smooth and transparent as a mirror, reflecting everyone who approached.

Anyone who came to the Gate of Authority would see in the "vortex" all the temptations reflected there, in which they would gain immense power, enjoying countless treasures, strength, and beauties.

Many stopped and looked at the Gate of Authority, unable to resist watching more.

They all knew those were false, but they couldn't help wanting to dream.

"Stop looking!"

Viscount Bast's voice suddenly resonated in everyone's ears, causing each person to startle. The old viscount's voice seemed to hold a magic power that sobered many up.

"The longer you look, the greater the impact you'll experience after passing through the Gate of Authority! It's just a dream, nothing more! Don't overthink it!"

People stopped watching and passed through the Gate of Authority one after the other.

As long as one passed through that Gate of Authority, each would randomly receive a curse. The ones who looked the longest received the most severe curses, while those who looked briefly merely ended up with a toothache.

Thankfully, because of Viscount Bast's reminder, the majority didn't feel much impact.

Soon, Byrne saw a palace appear before his eyes, feeling immense shock!

"Is this the palace we're looking for?"

A palace made of purple crystal stood in a tranquil valley. Its walls were made of countless pieces of transparent purple crystal, each glittering faintly. It exuded a mysterious and majestic aura as if hiding many unknown secrets.

The palace's main gate consisted of two huge purple crystal doors. Through the cracks of the doors, one could see the interior space filled with a faint purple glow.

The entire palace seemed to leap out of a fairy tale, making people marvel at its grandeur and mystery, inspiring desire and awe.

Viscount Bast couldn't help showing his excitement, raising his hands high, shouting with an infectious voice,

"Hahaha, we're here! We came in following that path and arrived here in just one go! Lucky, aren't we? You all see it, don't you? This purple crystal palace is our goal! There are various palaces in the Spirit Realm, and each hides a vast amount of forbidden knowledge and Spirit Realm secret treasures!"

Each palace contains a vast amount of forbidden knowledge and Spirit Realm secret treasures?

Byrne couldn't help but recall the crystal palace, as well as the Spiritual Dragon egg Baron Leander obtained from it.

He could feel that the standards of that crystal palace were even higher than this one! The power and secrets it contained were probably at least a level higher!

But the Fischer family currently didn't have the power to explore it...

Viscount Bast suddenly stopped talking and stared at the purple crystal palace in silence, his face filled with immense excitement and joy, his eyes brimming with greed.

The next moment, he turned to look at Byrne Fischer.

"Byrne, the time has finally come."

Byrne nodded slightly, then listened as Viscount Bast continued.

"Let me be clear, you'll need to act as the 'key' to open the palace doors."

"First, I must tell you outright that becoming the 'key' will consume your lifespan, and only by doing so can you open the doors to this purple crystal palace."

"It won't take your life, but it will certainly affect you, and I didn't want you to be unaware of this."

His tone was very calm, without the slightest hint of coercion, leaving the choice entirely to Byrne.

"If you're unwilling to be the 'key,' you can leave now. I will not stop you, nor will I take my anger out on your family. The Fischer family will still be an ally of the lion!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 174: 167: Spiritual Tunic Secret Priory

Byrne took a deep breath.

Almost from the beginning, Viscount Bast had informed himself that this was a mutually beneficial transaction, and he had not once deceived himself. Moreover, the Lion clan had indeed helped the Fischer family greatly.

Without the assistance of the Lion clan, the Fischer family would never have been able to develop to its current state, and everyone knew this.

He also understood the urgency of the other party. Even though Viscount Bast had not shown any trace of coercion in his tone just now, so many people were waiting here; how could he possibly not open the door? It would undoubtedly offend everyone.

"Lord Bast, how could I possibly not repay the kindness you have always shown to the Fischer family?"

He took a deep breath, slowly stepped forward, then turned his head to look at Viscount Bast, his eyes filled with determination.

"Please tell me what to do."

Viscount Bast nodded lightly and said calmly, "It's simple. You just need to come to the palace doors, extend your hands to push them, and then stay still."

"No matter what happens, you mustn't move. Trust me!"

He paused for a moment before continuing:

"Your Destiny's Trajectory is 'Treasure Key.' You may not yet know the mysterious knowledge about destiny, but let me make it clear, 'Treasure Key' is a very important destiny. Whether it is breaking through various challenges or playing a crucial role at key moments, you will find it much easier than ordinary people."

"And in the Spirit Realm, your destiny 'key' further materializes. It can consume lifespan to exert its true effect... to open all doors, with lifespan as the price."

My destiny is the 'Treasure Key'?

Byrne carefully recalled everything he had experienced before, and it seemed to be true; every time he faced various challenges and bottlenecks, he was always able to break through relatively easily.

So this was the special aspect of his own destiny.

"I understand."

He nodded slowly, approached the majestic palace made of amethyst, and extended his hand to try pushing open the doors of the amethyst palace.

Suddenly, Byrne felt a strong attraction emanating from the palace doors, and something within him seemed to be slowly draining away.

The feeling was terribly frightening, and instinctively, Byrne wanted to retreat.

But recalling what Viscount Bast had just said, he resisted the urge to step back.

White strands gradually appeared in Byrne's hair, his temples turning progressively grey, as years upon years of his lifespan were absorbed by the amethyst palace.

"Creak!"

In the astonished eyes of everyone, the majestic amethyst palace doors slowly opened!

The suction finally disappeared.

"It worked..."

Byrne released his hands and knelt on one knee, feeling extremely uncomfortable all over, as if the most fundamental strength had been sapped away by something invisible.

Then, a strong, aged hand gently pulled him up.

"Come, Byrne Fischer! Our great hero, stand up!"

Viscount Bast smiled, gradually helping the kneeling Byrne to his feet, his gaze showing much affection.

The weakened Byrne took a deep breath, feeling a sudden sense of relief deep inside. At last, he could be sure of one thing.

Even if his usefulness had ended, Viscount Bast's preferential treatment towards him and the Fischer family would not change.

Although it had been a relationship of mutual use from the beginning, Byrne now faintly felt that deep in his heart, Viscount Bast also held genuine affection for him.

As people entered through the palace doors, they arrived in a huge hall supported by purple crystal pillars. The ceiling of the hall was adorned with sparkling crystal chandeliers, casting enchanting purple light and shadows into every corner.

The palace's interior design and decorations were all of purple crystal, richly luxurious and mysterious, with walls inlaid with crystals of various shapes, full of unpredictable luminescence.

In the center, they found a purple crystal throne endowed with endless power, so lavish and majestic that it made people hesitate to look at it for too long.

"We've entered, this Spirit Realm palace truly seems to be a sacred and extraordinary place! Do they really not belong to anyone? Could there be people living here?"

"There are pathways leading down on both sides of the hall. Which way should we go?"

All the Extraordinary Exponents were filled with excitement; this was their first time in the legendary Spirit Realm palace. It was said that within every Spirit Realm palace lay many Forbidden knowledge and Spirit Realm secret treasures, and obtaining even one or two of these would be an immense gain!

Viscount Bast gazed deeply at the amethyst throne, murmuring to himself.

"This is the palace."

"All these years of planning, and finally, the wait is over... splendid, hehe."

He suddenly reached out and grabbed Byrne's shoulder.

"Byrne, thank you. Before we proceed, there are things we must do."

"Hmm?"

Byrne immediately sensed that there was something off with Viscount Bast's eyes, which were filled with a severity that had never been there before.

Then, Viscount Bast slowly turned to face the dozen or so Extraordinary Exponents present.

His eyes were steely, sending chills deep within everyone's hearts.

People realized that even though they might be high-level Transmutation Exponents in the Metamorphosis Phase, no one had ever possessed the terrifying aura of Viscount Bast!

Besides Viscount Bast's two brothers, everybody else's complexion changed.

Although there were a dozen Transmutation Extraordinary Exponents present, they felt as though they were collectively surrounded by Viscount Bast alone, and none dared to make a move.

The old man with silver-white hair let out a cold chuckle, then said loudly:

"Among you, there are those who have betrayed me, cast aside their pitiful scraps of dignity, and despicably defected to the Eagle clan's 'Viscount Black Hawk' Xavier!"

"I cannot forgive betrayal, and I will judge the traitors among you right here!"

In another part of the Spirit Realm, on a Spirit Realm island.

A group of Extraordinary Exponents was searching for the Gate of Nature; they were using "Path Divination" from the prophecy spell to locate it, much less efficiently than Viscount Bast's magical pointer.

A female Extraordinary Exponent asked:

"Nature, Order, Authority - after passing through these three gates, can we reach the amethyst palace?"

Another Extraordinary Exponent dressed in a dark blue robe, who was the leader of the group, shook his head slowly and said calmly, "No, it's not that simple."

"Even if we get through those three gates, we only have a thirty percent chance of reaching the palace in the end."

"However, according to the prophecy spell, today's alignment of stars is known as the 'Lone Wolf Aspect,' undoubtedly the best day to head to the palace in the last several decades."

"So, we must make the most of our time today."

This five-person team of Extraordinary Exponents belonged to a top-level secret organization spread across the Claud World called the "Primordial Tree," primarily active in the Seven Stars Empire and the Lorne Empire through the "Spiritual Tunic Secret Priory."

A middle-aged man dressed in a blue robe, with short even hair and six symmetrical patterns on his face, occasionally had blue flames flickering in his eyes.

This man was the deputy leader of the Spiritual Tunic Secret Priory, with the strength of a low-level Monarch. Even within the Seven Stars and Lorne empires, he was considered a formidable power.

The Spiritual Tunic Secret Priory was a wickedly secretive organization, founded only a short decade ago, its members comprised of outlawed Extraordinary Exponents and defectors from the church.

Their leader, known as the "Spiritual Tunic Sage", had obtained a terrifying piece of forbidden knowledge from the Spirit Realm a decade ago—the "Spirit Suppressing Straitjacket."

The members of the Spiritual Tunic Secret Priory had also learned this forbidden knowledge taught by the "Spiritual Tunic Sage", gaining the horrifying power to craft souls into spiritual tunics for their own use—the "Spirit Suppressing Straitjacket."

By activating different "spiritual tunics," they could transform into the likeness of the deceased, and even wield the most powerful extraordinary powers the deceased had in life.

Although the level of those extraordinary powers greatly diminished, and the "spiritual tunics" had a limited number of uses, the "Spirit Suppressing Straitjacket" remained a dreadfully horrifying piece of forbidden knowledge!

They had become highly active both in Lorne and the Seven Stars, already the target of a severe crackdown by both empires and several large churches.

Among the five members of the Spiritual Tunic Secret Priory, a bald member suddenly turned to the deputy leader and asked:

"Speaking of which, if today is the best day in decades to head to the palace, and so many people in the Claud World venture into the Spirit Realm, is it possible that others also know of its existence and will arrive there on the same day?"

"There is indeed such a possibility."

The deputy leader didn't deny it; he simply nodded calmly and said:

"No matter, if we encounter other competitors, we'll just kill them all."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 175: 168 Trial and Treasure

Everyone looked at each other in dismay, some even began to argue, asserting to Viscount Bast that they were absolutely faultless, or confessing certain minor wrongdoings, hoping for forgiveness. There were also those who fell silent, their eyes betraying their anxiety, while some resolutely supported Viscount Bast's decision, showing no fear for the consequences to come.

Byrne gazed silently at Viscount Bast, who stood not far away, wondering what he would ultimately do.

The next moment, Viscount Bast slowly extended his hand.

"No matter your performance, it's useless. I trust my own ability to judge character. For those few traitors, their fate ends here," he said.

The Lion clan possessed two advanced Bloodline inheritances: the "Bronze Lion" and the "Graystone Giant Ape," and Viscount Bast's power of Bloodline was that of the Bronze Lion.

That formidable Bloodline power granted him extremely terrifying strength, speed, and defensive power. Besides simply enhancing basic combat abilities, an Extraordinary Exponent with the "Bronze Lion" Bloodline power could also become immune to various negative states and Curses, hardly controllable by abnormal circumstances.

After Viscount Bast finished speaking, everyone simultaneously turned their gaze toward him.

Suddenly, he appeared behind a middle-aged man, grabbed the man by the neck, and the Extraordinary Exponent tried to struggle, but after a moment, he stopped moving.

"Ugh..."

Under the watchful eyes of all, the person Viscount Bast grabbed began to disintegrate into points of light, completely vanishing.

Although dying in the Spirit Realm didn't necessarily mean death in the real world upon awakening, the impact on the soul and spirit was still tremendous!

At the same time, everyone understood one thing: after entering the Spirit Realm, their physical bodies were currently in the dungeon beneath Bast's estate.

Most likely, the real-world body of that person wouldn't meet a good end either, and might have already been dealt with by the Lion clan!

Except for Renzo Leone and Abel Leone, who were members of the Lion clan and remained expressionless, everyone else felt a chill.

If the people of the Lion clan wished, they could utterly kill everyone here!

Byrne had already realized the reason why Viscount Bast was dealing with traitors in the Spirit Realm – their bodies were asleep in reality, and they couldn't run even if they wanted to.

The next moment, a middle-aged female Extraordinary Exponent suddenly knelt down, pleading desperately:

"I didn't mean to betray you, Lord Viscount Bast! I am willing to offer everything my family has, please forgive my actions! Please give me another chance!"

Viscount Bast showed a look of grievance, turned his head to the woman, and said:

"Ah, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. You should have spoken sooner. What's the point of saying these things now? Look at the situation. I've already told everyone that you would be judged, how can I go back on my word and still act as the leader of the pride of lions?"

His tone shifted, becoming very serious:

"I know it was you who betrayed a member of the Lion clan, leading to his death, and that child was Renzo's son, a very promising member of our clan."

"Sorry, you must die, and it's not just you who will die. Your family can't survive this either. I will find a reason to send your children to the island prison, where the criminals are especially fond of 'tender care'!"

The kneeling middle-aged woman looked up after hearing this, staring at Viscount Bast with anger and despair.

Renzo came over coldly and smashed the unresisting woman's head with a punch.

Everyone fell into silence, no one spoke, and they were inwardly relieved that they had not betrayed the Lion clan.

Just then, a man wearing a mask suddenly couldn't help but step forward. He took a deep breath and looked at Byrne with a tremor.

"Byrne Fischer! Save me!" he exclaimed.

Upon hearing this, everyone turned their attention to Byrne. He was stunned for a long while, not understanding what was happening. Who was the man wearing the mask?

"Hahahaha, at this point, do you still think struggling will do any good?" Viscount Bast burst into laughter and slowly walked up to Byrne's side.

The trembling man took off his mask, revealing a face that was both familiar and strange to Byrne, which immediately changed his expression.

It was Baron Hoffman!

The brother of Margaret...

Baron Hoffman had aged a lot, his eyes weary, and his tone was full of despair.

"It was a moment of carelessness that let Black Hawk Xavier catch me, forcing me to pass on some information. Then, with their help, I advanced to mid-level Transmutation..."

Baron Hoffman looked at Byrne, shaking all over, his eyes filled with a complex mix of emotions: anger, plea, despair.

He reached out slowly and continued:

"You know, the Fischer family wronged Margaret. Byrne, find a way to save my life, after all, our two families are related by marriage."

Byrne was at a loss for words for a moment, and Viscount Bast, standing beside him, listened silently for some time before patting his shoulder.

"What do you think?"

"Kill."

Byrne's tone was very calm, knowing that he couldn't have even a moment's hesitation, he immediately answered, "I have always hated those traitors, he must be killed!"

Baron Hoffman's face twisted instantly, filling with rage as he roared:

"Byrne Fischer, you damned bastard! If it wasn't for my agreement, you, born of a lowly family, where would you have had the chance to marry Margaret? Your Fischer family wouldn't have had the chance to reach where it is today!"

"Bastard, slut, the scum of the East Coast! You're nothing but toe lickers of the Lion clan, that's how you got to where you are now!"

Viscount Bast smiled and said, "I'll leave it to you, Byrne."

"Okay."

Byrne nodded slightly. Baron Hoffman burst into laughter, continuing to say:

"Hahahaha! Many people say that you, Byrne Fischer, are a man of sentiment. Now I see clearly, you're nothing but a despicable villain!"

A cold smile emerged on Byrne's face as he shook his head, his eyes coldly stating:

"You betrayed the Lion clan, and if the Lion clan falls, the Fischer family will be finished too. Since you don't even care about Margaret's child, why should I save you?"

Flames emerged around him, instantly engulfing Baron Hoffman.

Baron Hoffman knew there was no chance of escape here, and just kept cursing Byrne and Viscount Bast, until he was finally engulfed by the raging flames and perished in despair.

Byrne took a deep breath.

Before Byrne could speak, Viscount Bast preempted, "Don't worry, I won't touch the other members of the Hoffman family, I will just support my own people in their ascent."

"And you don't have to worry about your wife's affair, Byrne, she will never know it was you who acted."

Byrne nodded lightly, barely smiling as he acknowledged: "Yes, I understand, thank you."

Viscount Bast laughed heartily, then spoke very amiably and affectionately to the silent crowd:

"Well, the traitor has been executed, let's continue with our next itinerary!"

He calmly told the crowd:

"If we obtain Forbidden Knowledge that isn't limited to a certain number of individuals, all of us will have the chance to share it, and if we obtain the Spirit Realm secret treasure, the Lion clan will exchange valuable things with you, not letting anyone be mistreated."

The crowd immediately became motivated, bursting with joy, the forthcoming profits mattered far more than the recent events!

Deep inside, Byrne couldn't help but reflect that Viscount Bast was indeed a powerful leader who managed his punishments and rewards comprehensively.

Anyone who betrayed the Lion clan would face the most brutal punishment, while those who followed the Lion clan would receive the rewards they deserved.

Gradually, everyone's hearts were unwittingly grasped by Viscount Bast.

"Let's take the right path, I prefer the right," he said.

The elder stretched out his finger, pointing.

There were two passages on either side of the Amethyst Throne, and without hesitation, Viscount Bast pointed to the right one.

Thus, everyone followed his orders, heading down the passage on the right, delving deeper into the palace.

The surrounding walls were made of amethyst, carved with many complex patterns, though no one could discern their meanings.

Byrne too could not recognize them, but he silently memorized the patterns, perhaps they would be useful in the future.

Viscount Bast walked silently in the lead, followed by Renzo and Abel, his younger brothers, who were always vigilant, keeping their eyes peeled for danger.

At last, they reached the bottom of the palace, where indeed there were treasures!

Almost everyone couldn't help but take deep breaths as they entered the underground space of the palace, where three black-purple pillars stood, and atop each pillar floated an "item."

These were the Forbidden Knowledge, the Spirit Realm secret treasures, the hidden treasures of this palace.

Seeing the treasures before them, the greed in everyone's heart surged, but with Viscount Bast present, no one dared to take them arbitrarily.

Unbeknownst to anyone, the patterns on the exterior walls suddenly lit up, and something terrifying was about to be summoned!

Viscount Bast finally showed a smile too. He reached out his hand, murmuring to himself, "The key to breaking through to the Monarch Level lies right here, there can be no mistake!"

"Finally, the moment I've been waiting for! Hahahaha! I will soon have more time! Bast Leone will not stop here!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 176: 169: The Ambush of the Monarch Powerful Expert!

Two Spirit Realm secret treasures! One piece of forbidden knowledge!

One of the two Spirit Realm secret treasures was a pure black crucifix brooch, while the other was a transparent ring, both containing mysterious powers.

Viscount Bast stored away the "crucifix brooch," one of the Spirit Realm secret treasures, and handed the transparent ring to Byrne.

That crucifix brooch was placed right in the middle of the three treasures, as if it was something of significant importance. A glimpse of uncontrollable excitement flashed through Viscount Bast's eyes.

After composing himself, he looked towards the others and said, "No objections, right? I was the one who found and led you all here, while Byrne sacrificed his own lifespan to open the door."

"As for this piece of forbidden knowledge, it can be known by ten people, after which it will disappear... Who among you wants the forbidden knowledge?"

The forbidden knowledge of the Spirit Realm is of two types, one being weaker forbidden knowledge that can be spread without restriction, their contained mysteries not very powerful.

The other type, stronger forbidden knowledge, can only "parasitize" in a limited number of human minds. If known by too many people, they will naturally fade away, and even those who originally knew of them will forget as well.

There were still fifteen people present, excluding the other two from the Lion clan, leaving only ten who chose to gain the forbidden knowledge. The remaining three would receive a Treasure-class rare artifact as compensation after leaving the Spirit Realm.

After receiving the Spirit Realm secret treasure, Byrne also desired the forbidden knowledge and traded with another Extraordinary Exponent, exchanging three Collectible-class mysterious rare artifacts for a spot.

He and the other nine each lightly touched an amorphous blob of light, and suddenly, fresh mysterious knowledge emerged in everyone's minds.

It was a very special Ritual Spell called the "View of Arnos," which required a certain symbol to be marked on a target beforehand. Then, by gathering several kinds of offerings to form an Array, as long as the symbol wasn't erased and the Array wasn't destroyed, the spellcaster would be able to continuously observe the surroundings through the target's view.

The target marked with the symbol could be a person or an object, and it was extremely covert, hardly detectable.

Unfortunately, it wasn't a method to extend life.

"Ah, Irene..."

Byrne couldn't help but sigh. His greatest hope for participating in this Spirit Realm voyage was actually to find a way to extend Irene's lifespan.

Unfortunately, could there really be no way to let Irene live longer?

Byrne had also inquired with the President of the Alchemy Council, who possessed the technology to take away lifespans. However, the President also said that he could only seal the taken lifespans into containers, but not bestow them in reverse to others.

He shook his head and looked at the Spirit Realm secret treasure he had acquired.

It was a transparent ring, capable of storing within it lifeless and soulless objects. It could hold up to no more than one ton of material, and the items stored inside would never succumb to decay from the ravages of time.

An undeniably good item, although it didn't compare to forbidden rare artifacts, it was still considered top-tier among Treasure-class rare artifacts.

"Eh? Be careful!"

Viscount Bast raised his head and suddenly issued a warning; all present immediately became alert. They quickly saw a purple glow emerging within the hardworking achievers space.

At that moment, a purple crystal leopard monster began to materialize out of thin air.

Its body was sleek, its crystal-built musculature distinctly visible. Its gait was elegant and swift, its eyes deep and sharp, every step radiating power, and its sharp teeth betrayed a lethal ferocity.

"It's roughly equal to a high-level Transmutation-powered monster, and can be considered a formidable enemy; let's all go together!"

Viscount Bast nodded slightly and issued the command while standing behind everyone.

In the next moment, over a dozen Extraordinary Exponents took action, with Colonel Abel Leone in the lead, who was also a high-level Transmutation Extraordinary Exponent and possessed the power of the Bronze Lion, alone capable of fully suppressing the monster.

Although the purple crystal leopard monster indeed had considerable strength, it was still swiftly defeated and shattered, unable to retaliate against such a powerful formation.

"We did it!"

"That was no pressure at all!"

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief, even feeling joy.

Only Viscount Bast and Byrne remained uneasy, both looking down at the remnants of the leopard monster.

Exchanging glances, they both nodded, sensing that things probably weren't that simple and that the palace likely contained even greater power.

At the next moment, sure enough, the remnants began to reassemble and slowly rise again, with more purple crystals sprouting on their shattered bodies, multiplying in number.

Right before their eyes, two purple crystal leopard monsters of identical strength suddenly emerged!

"What's going on?"

They were astonished and launched another attack, barely smashing the two dreadful creatures, but to their horror, they found that the remnants were still stirring back to life!

No matter what measures the group tried to stop the resurrection process, they were unable to interrupt it!

Byrne took a deep breath.

"This is bad!"

Resurrected once more, three cheetah-like monsters, whose bodies were composed of purple crystal and nearing high-level Transmutation, stared ferociously at the many Extraordinary Exponents gathered, ready to charge at any moment.

Viscount Bast said calmly.

"Run."

"Those creatures are opponents that we cannot wholly defeat, and their numbers will only increase. Escaping is the best option."

Since Viscount Bast had given the order, everyone else stopped contemplating other options and all turned to flee through the passage, while the three purple crystal cheetahs charged forward in unison.

"Heh."

Viscount Bast did not flee first but stayed behind alone, as if to cover everyone's retreat.

"According to the contract, entangle them!"

He extended a finger unhurriedly, calmly pointing at the three cheetah monsters as a dozen terrifying creatures with wholly dark bodies and various shapes suddenly emerged from the shadows at his feet.

They were like shades from hell, brimming with an eerie aura, and Viscount Bast stood in the dark shadow, his face blurred and dark, his eyes devoid of any trace of human emotion.

That ancient finger seemed like a baton of death, effortlessly commanding the truly evil creatures to entangle the purple crystal "cheetahs."

"The bodies of three Transmutation Extraordinary Exponents as a sacrifice, that should roughly satisfy your appetites for a while... Truly a profitable deal!"

Viscount Bast shook his head and turned to leave.

Byrne had already reached the palace with the other dozen or so Extraordinary Exponents. However, they suddenly sensed a terrifying presence just outside the palace!

"Monarch! It's a Monarch-level Extraordinary Exponent!"

"Why is there a presence of a Monarch powerful expert here?"

Everyone inside the palace was profoundly shocked; they were so frightened they could barely move, and soon the Extraordinary Exponents stepping out of the palace saw it.

Outside the purple crystal palace stood five unfamiliar Extraordinary Exponents.

The leading Extraordinary Exponent was a middle-aged man wearing a blue robe with six symmetrical patterns on his face, and blue flames erupted from his eyes.

What should we do?

People exchanged glances, and Byrne wanted to step forward to negotiate, but Lieutenant Colonel Abel Leone beat him to it.

"Sir, may I ask which Extraordinary Exponent you are, to which country you belong, are you also from the Ouden Continent? The situation inside the palace is somewhat complex, perhaps we can communicate and cooperate..."

Lieutenant Colonel Abel's face paled as he asked his question. He immediately felt an intense sense of suffocation erupting from the middle-aged man, filled with pure murderous intent!

In an instant, Byrne understood the Monarch powerful expert's intention.

He wanted to kill everyone here!

"..."

The deputy leader of the Spiritual Tunic Secret Priory remained silent, simply stretching out his hand to don the completely invisible and intangible "spiritual tunic," as if it never existed.

He transformed into the form of an elderly woman, dressed in a black robe and holding an old bronze pendulum in her hand.

"She" merely had to gently shake the bronze pendulum, and instantly an Extraordinary Exponent from the Lion clan died, turning into blue specks of light—everyone was stunned, not even knowing how that Extraordinary Exponent had died!

Byrne took a deep breath, realizing that the opponent had long been prepared to kill, otherwise they wouldn't have offered not even a chance for dialogue.

Viscount Bast walked out of the palace with an unrestful expression. He had harbored a slight hope, but when he truly saw the man outside blocking everyone's way, his expression finally changed completely.

He shouted loudly, "Let's split up and run!"

Of course they had to run. Byrne immediately used shape-shifting to exchange his position with a distant pile of rubble.

And the Monarch Extraordinary Exponent's hunt began. He watched as the numerous Extraordinary Exponents scattered in all directions, switching his "spiritual tunic" again, transforming into a bald middle-aged man, then murmuring to himself, closing his eyes, as the ground beneath him began to glow with rotting black light, summoning many powerful undead creatures out of thin air!

A flood of undead creatures began chasing the fleeing Extraordinary Exponents, and in the blink of an eye, two low-level Transmutation Extraordinary Exponents were surrounded by the undead creatures and quickly killed.

At that moment, three purple crystal cheetah monsters ran out of the palace. They immediately launched a fierce attack on the nearest Monarch powerful expert, leaping up to bite.

"Hm?"

The deputy leader of the Spiritual Tunic Secret Priory paused, then shifted his "spiritual tunic" again, turning into a beastman, and transforming into a colossal, immensely strong creature, shattering the three nearly high-level Transmutation "cheetahs" in a short time.

But they quickly revived and reformed into four purple crystal "cheetahs," causing the deputy leader to fall into thought.

Byrne looked back for a moment to see two knights in black armor riding spectral warhorses, approaching rapidly through the air towards him, each with strength comparable to mid-level Transmutation.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 177: 170: Help Me Become King!

...

The tattered cloak of the Black Knight shimmered with dark purple light, as if it were the presence of something from the void, and from within the facial armor leaked a faint green gas, resembling a life form from another dimension.

Each wielding a scythe and a spear, they were surrounded by a bewildering haze of black clouds, beneath which their skeletal warhorses trod upon the clouds in pursuit, and from the numerous clouds emerged pale skeletons, their bony hands reaching out viciously as if to grab Byrne.

Byrne kept fleeing, and when the skeletons drew close, he immediately controlled the flames to burn away a large number of skeletons, his heart filled with vigilance.

Those two Black Knights, summoned by powerful Monarch-level Extraordinary Exponents through Necromancy, possessed the powerful strength of mid-level Transmutation, and even dealing with one Death Knight would be difficult for him, let alone two.

He was very clear, his current situation was extremely bad!

And just as Byrne was preparing to fight to the death, he suddenly heard a voice calling out in his mind.

"Wake up..."

He suddenly felt the world beneath his feet trembling slightly, and immediately realized that he was about to wake up; someone in the real world was calling him to come back to consciousness.

So that was it, Byrne thought, suddenly enlightened, that had to be the backup left by Viscount Bast!

Although he didn't know the details, he could guess a bit in his heart.

Viscount Bast could communicate with someone in the real world in some way, and once any change occurred in the Spirit Realm, the people there would be responsible for waking the sleeping Extraordinary Exponents.

But waking up still took time, and although it might be just a few seconds or even an instant in the real world, in the Spirit Realm it would clearly take longer.

Suddenly, Byrne had a premonition and snapped his fingers.

"Snap!"

A Death Knight, full of the stench of death, swung its massive scythe, and in the next instant, a black crescent of pure death energy swept towards him.

"Whoosh!"

After shape-shifting to evade, the black crescent sliced through where he had just been standing, its power so great it carved a deep trench.

Byrne almost broke into a cold sweat, but before he could recover, the attack from the other Black Knight came as well.

It raised its spear, and hundreds of skeletons burst forth from the black clouds, accompanied by wails and desperation.

"Flames!"

He gathered flames in front of him again, thwarting the skeletons' assault, while the spear-wielding Black Knight charged towards Byrne's position!

Byrne was about to snap his fingers again, but suddenly noticed something terrifying!

Simultaneously, the other scythe-wielding Black Knight raised its black scythe again, but didn't immediately strike, as if waiting for Byrne to evade before launching its attack.

This is bad!

Fear rose in Byrne's heart, and he knew one thing very clearly, that he couldn't continuously teleport without interruption, and it was indeed dangerous being surrounded and attacked in coordination by two mid-level Transmutation monsters, he was very likely to die in the Spirit Realm!

"Wake up!"

Suddenly, Byrne's eyes shot open, and he took deep breaths.

He stared at the pitch-black unfamiliar ceiling, realizing he had woken up, the Black Death Knights, the black clouds, and the skeletons seemed as if they had never existed.

"Did you wake from a dream?"

An old, yet strong palm appeared before him.

Byrne saw Viscount Bast standing by the bed, smiling, the white-haired old man reaching out to him.

So he grabbed the old man's hand and slowly rose.

There were many other Extraordinary Exponents still in slumber, each lying on different beds, eyes shut, bodies occasionally trembling, and looking extremely unwell.

And some masked black servants were continuously bending over to use strange incense in the underground space, attempting to awaken those still sleeping.

Suddenly, a tall red-haired man woke up, howling in agony, his body shaking violently.

"I am Andersen! I am Andersen!"

Hearing "Andersen" again, Byrne was startled, knowing deep down that the man must have died in the Spirit Realm to be shouting "Andersen"!

Some who died in the Spirit Realm would dream of "Andersen," then become increasingly insane.

And then, he saw that man suddenly attack the still sleeping people!

"Hahaha!"

Frost erupted from the man's body, as if intending to freeze everyone around him, and his bloodshot eyes flashed with madness!

Byrne immediately realized something was wrong; the sleeping people had no capacity to resist, but he was too late to intervene!

Suddenly, he vaguely saw something like a liquid emerging from Viscount Bast's shadow, absorbing all the frost released by the man, devouring it, and then disappearing.

What was that?

Byrne was taken aback, feeling an ominous presence emanating from that entity.

"This fellow's in a bad way, eh!"

...

Viscount Bast, while speaking, had already calmly approached the man and casually pressed him down, completely neutralizing any attempt by the man to struggle or resist.

"Ah, ah, ah, ahhhhhhh!"

The man kept wailing loudly, his eyes bloodshot, attempting to resist Viscount Bast's power, but it was to no avail.

Byrne walked over and couldn't help asking, "What exactly is Andersen?"

Viscount Bast released a stronger force from his hand, and in the blink of an eye, he had knocked the man unconscious.

The elderly man turned his back, calmly shaking his head.

"I don't know; it feels like some sort of mental contagion, or something similar... It's only occasionally contracted by those who have died in the Spirit Realm. Basically, once someone is entangled by 'Andersen,' that person gradually becomes more and more insane and eventually even believes that they are 'Andersen'."

"If it comes to that final stage, then the case is completely hopeless."

Viscount Bast looked at the still unconscious people, including Renzo and Abel of the Lion clan and his own two younger brothers who had not yet awakened.

Yet, there was no hint of worry in his gaze.

"Let's leave this place first, Byrne. I have something to discuss with you... As for them, who knows how many will eventually wake up."

"Don't worry; I've already taken precautions. Even if another madman emerges from this group, there won't be any problems."

After speaking calmly, Viscount Bast then left the underground space, with Byrne following him.

After leaving the underground space, Viscount Bast led Byrne into a study room in the mansion, which was very luxurious and spacious. There were more than a dozen huge brown bookshelves, each seven or eight meters high, filled with all kinds of books, and even special wooden ladders for the servants to use for fetching the books.

At this moment, there were no servants in the study—just the two of them.

Viscount Bast took out a black crucifix brooch and showed it to Byrne, then said with a smile:

"Byrne Fischer, thank you for your sacrifice. At last, I've gotten hold of this 'Time Crucifix.' It contains the potential for further advancement, offering additional time for cultivation. Originally, my talent was not enough to reach the Monarch level, but with it, I now can!"

Byrne, gazing at the black crucifix brooch, was well aware deep inside that this Spirit Realm secret treasure was the most important gain from this foray into the Spirit Realm.

"Chris Fischer from your family also has a good chance of reaching the Monarch level, and even you might have a slight possibility."

Viscount Bast paused for a moment, his tone suddenly shifting, becoming more exuberant.

"Once I truly achieve the Monarch Level! Byrne, I will help you reach higher levels as well. Then, I will lend this Black Crucifix Brooch to the Fischer family for their use..."

Upon hearing this, Byrne couldn't help but be filled with gratitude and immediately nodded, saying, "Lord Bast, the Fischer family, and I, will be forever thankful for your generous help!"

Viscount Bast chuckled, shaking his head as he continued.

"Simply being grateful isn't enough, Byrne. What do you think of our nation, Siyat?"

Byrne was silent for a long while before he finally said:

"Our nation can only be considered a weaker one among the Eastern Four Kingdoms, unable to compare with the mighty Carnia to the far north, and gradually falling behind Vallere, Lorne's 'pawn'."

Indeed, Carnia, the northernmost of the Eastern Four Kingdoms, was undoubtedly the most powerful, and although the founding Monarch of Carnia had retired behind the scenes, he still held a god-like prestige in the hearts of the people.

Below Carnia, Vallere, originally the weakest among the four nations, borders the western Lorne Empire and has rapidly risen in the past thirty years with the support of the Lorne citizens.

As for the old nemesis Rhea, there is no need to mention them; the Cyart people still believe themselves to be stronger, although the Rhea People also think they are stronger than Siyat.

Viscount Bast sighed deeply, a look of helplessness in his eyes, and said, "You probably don't know, but back in the day, I was a classmate of 'Black Hawk' Viscount Xavier, and with the support of the Royal Family, we once studied in the most powerful Lorne Empire on the continent."

Byrne couldn't help but recall Robert Taylor and his message, "The dumbest moment for a person is when they ask, 'But you promised me'."

Viscount Bast looked towards the distant west and spoke slowly, "Those years of studying abroad, both of us will probably never forget, the gap between nations is just too large!"

"The strength of the Lorne people is at a level of civilization; they can make cities float in the sky and build huge cities underground. They can even expand into other continents

or even other worlds, and nobles can enjoy the fruits of labor produced by the lives of countless sub-humans without even leaving their homes."

"Even what sets us most apart isn't something as straightforward as 'power'."

"If it weren't for the gods' constraints, they would have easily unified the entire Ouden Continent, and I fear those constraints won't last much longer..."

Byrne fell into deep silence. As someone who enjoyed reading, he had long heard about such matters.

Lorne had long been not just the most powerful empire on the Ouden Continent but also a colonial empire that made people in various places throughout the Claud World tremble at the mention of its name.

The old man's eyes seemed to flare with fire as he reached out and grabbed Byrne's shoulder, his tone filled with power and determination!

"Byrne, you are a smart man, and you can see the various predicaments of Siyat. The history of Siyat is already determined, but its future is up to us to change together!"

"I want you to help me become king!"

Byrne looked up in astonishment, seeing Bast Leone silently staring at him, his eyes devoid of their usual casualness. In their place was dignity and pride, and the lofty ambition of a lion!

"Byrne! As long as I can reach the Monarch Level, my lifespan will increase greatly, and the future we desire won't be impossible to achieve!"

It was at this moment that he finally understood the terrifying ambition that lay at the very depths of Bast Leone's heart. Somewhere deep inside, a passion and ambition of his own began to surge forth.

Byrne also looked intently at the aged Viscount Bast, and with certainty, he gave his response:

"The Fischer family will always serve you, clear the path for the Leone Lion clan, and I, Byrne Fischer, will look forward to the day you become the new King of Siyat!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 178: 171 Hovern Sudden Change

Cyart, Glenborough Province.

The Hovern family's hundreds of core members hid in a secluded mountain range, and the Hovern people had erected powerful barriers near the cave ahead of time, with all the family members waiting for Earl Hovern's successful ascend to the Monarch Level.

Should he reach the Monarch Level, the teetering Hovern family could continue to hold up.

To avoid being attacked, they had sought two powerful allies of low-level Monarch strength, one was "Axe of the Highland," the next head of the Hovern branch from Vallere, and the other was a tall, masked, and mysterious woman known as "Destruction Lady."

Earl Hovern did not choose to break through to Monarch at the family residence because it was too conspicuous, even though the barriers at the residence were stronger, but it still made for a huge target, sitting there waiting for trouble to come knocking.

The present decision was somewhat risky, but they indeed had not been discovered by the family's enemies for an entire year.

At the entrance of the cave, an impatient man paced back and forth.

"Axe of the Highland," a low-level Monarch strongman, was only in his thirties, dressed in a straight black suit with an annoyed expression and tightly furrowed brows.

"Your branch is really quite pitiful, all the other big families within Cyart's territory actually isolate your existence..."

"It's been a year; why hasn't that old guy succeeded in his breakthrough yet, and why hasn't he failed either..."

He looked at the blood relatives of the Hovern family and couldn't resist complaining; the Hovern people responded with awkward smiles, not daring to rebuff his remarks.

Even though the two Hovern families have been separate for many years and established roots in two different countries, they still maintained contact, and "Axe of the Highland" was actually Earl Hovern's nephew.

Otherwise, no matter how many resources were offered, he wouldn't have come over to help so readily.

In fact, only the "Adranus" Meyer family and "Aether Giant Dragon" Wilson family hadn't split, while the other eight pillar families had branched out across the Eastern Four Kingdoms, but the supportive branches that could rise were still few.

A hundred years ago, everyone was an alliance against the Lorne citizens, intermarriage was normal, so it's routine for them to cohabit mixedly.

Therefore, during the Fifty Years War of the Eastern Four Kingdoms, the casualty rate of the nobles was very low, just as Old Ramon once said—nobles rarely kill other nobles easily; it was the commoners who suffered the most fatalities.

It was from the generation of Viscount Bast that the nobles of the Ten Great Families completely turned against each other, and the initial bonds of alliance finally faded away.

"I really can't wait any longer; there are many things I need to deal with over there!"

The complaints of "Axe of the Highland" were justified—they established "The Oath" to come here and help, and they couldn't leave until they saw the results.

None of them expected that Earl Hovern would be this enduring and drag things out, attempting to breakthrough for over a year without any sign, yet he never completely failed either.

It was as if "Axe of the Highland" was trapped in Cyart Kingdom, unable to return home, which put him in an aggravated mood.

The woman standing alongside, known as "Destruction Lady," was a figure wrapped in a black cloak, who had not uttered a word for more than a year and kept silently waiting for the outcome.

There were hundreds of extraordinary exponents in the cave, and even a dozen who had reached the Transmutation Level, all of them direct blood relatives of the Hovern family—as for the extraordinary exponents from subordinate forces, they were not called here by the Hovern family for secrecy's sake.

In the past, the members of the Hovern family waited anxiously every day, but now they too were somewhat relaxed and numb.

"Hahahaha!"

Suddenly, a loud laughter echoed through the mountain range, causing everyone to freeze before tensing up and becoming vigilant!

"Finally found you. Earl Hovern, hiding here for a year, is something many people didn't expect."

After a moment of silence, "Axe of the Highland" spoke in a cold voice, "Things aren't looking good, seems like the madmen from the Stars Embrace Order have found us."

The next moment, he had stepped out of the cave, instantaneously activating the powerful blood of a demi-god from the First Era, the Shattered Giant!

The giant, hundreds of meters tall, was covered with cracks and scars, as if he had survived countless brutal wars, and each crack released a wave of unsettling energy; the pale light seeping between the torn skin evoked thoughts of death and destruction.

Its eyes, as dark as abysses, held no emotion, only a cold void, and the giant's form was shrouded in deep shadows.

With every step the Shattered Giant took, the ground trembled with thunderous roars, as if the entire world was affected by its presence.

"Shattered Realm!"

In the next instant, "Axe of the Highland" opened up his bloodline domain without hesitation, unleashing a terribly white force that spread all around him.

Unlike spellcasters who actively choose "Precise Inscription" spells, the domain power of Bloodline Knights was derived from their own bloodline traits.

The barriers within the mountain had been activated, an endless shield enveloped the whole range of the mountain, and any enemy would be greatly suppressed.

After activating the barrier, the people of the Hovern family felt an endless fear because, before the mountain-like Shattered Giant, all hopes seemed insignificant.

Each breath from the Shattered Giant seemed to release an ominous sign, filling people's hearts with despair. The terrible Shattered Giant was like a harbinger of the apocalypse, its very existence a prophecy of disaster!

It was said that a true Shattered Giant had a body tens of thousands of meters tall, becoming broken after challenging the superior gods. Just by breathing, it could release a power of calamity unimaginable to humans.

"Axe of the Highland" was constantly on guard, scanning every position. Where was the lunatic from Stars Embrace Order? Why could he not sense his presence at all?

The next moment, a powerful and terrifying force appeared out of nowhere, as if an invisible giant eye stared at "Axe of the Highland" through the sky.

"Sinners, you do not understand the greatness of our god. Naturally, there is no need for redemption," a voice declared.

Extraordinary Exponents from all directions gradually appeared, and among the people who came to attack Earl Hovern, there were even more than one at the Monarch Level!

In the valley, a barrier slowly rose up, and the members of the Hovern family were extremely tense while "Axe of the Highland," transformed into the "Shattered Giant," resisted the invisible scrutinizing force and prepared to act without hesitation.

He swung a massive axe made of mountain stone and runes that, with just one motion, stirred the unsettling pale energy and instantly shattered the distant mountain peak.

Even the "Destruction Lady," who had been silent for over a year, emerged from her cave.

A melee involving several Monarch powerful experts was about to erupt!

However, at that moment, everyone felt a subtle change; a power and momentum that had been building up seemed to dissipate unintentionally.

"Axe of the Highland" and "Destruction Lady" were the first to realize that their Oath was complete, yet Earl Hovern, who was about to break through to the Monarch Level, had not emerged from underground.

"It seems, in the end, he has failed," said "Axe of the Highland," disappointedly shaking his head and sighing.

The leader of Stars Embrace Order, still at an unknown location, slowly transmitted his voice:

"We, too, have wasted a year's time. The sinner's failure is, in fact, something to be expected. Earl Hovern's own talents were insufficient; he risked everything on a dangerous method from Forbidden knowledge, foolishly trying to force his way through, hoping to step into the palace."

"The chances of success were indeed too slim. Unable to break through the gates, without the ability to step into the palace, dying outside the splendor is undoubtedly his ultimate fate."

Stars Embrace Order chose to withdraw, and "Axe of the Highland" and "Destruction Lady" had no intention to pursue.

"Destruction Lady" immediately vanished, while "Axe of the Highland" let out a roar that echoed through the mountains.

"Payment has been made; we will no longer concern ourselves with matters in Cyart. If you wish to leave Cyart and join my family, I would welcome that... After all, our surname is Hovern."

Afterward, he burrowed into the ground and left.

The two Monarch powerful experts who had decided to watch from afar also left, choosing to track the traces of Stars Embrace Order and immediately contact the powerful forces of True Gods Church to deal with that group of lunatics.

In the end, only the weeping and wailing people of the Hovern family remained.

After that day, Byrne returned to the Fischer family, and a month had passed in the blink of an eye.

By using the Extraordinary powers of "Deconstructive Perspective" and "Self-Extracted Formula," he had recently improved the special Magic Potion used in the Lost Ritual called "Shadow of the Lost." Daybreakers who consumed the "Shadow of the Lost" would now further sense the radiance of the Lord of the Lost.

Not only the low-level Extraordinary Exponents, but the influence of "Shadow of the Lost" would now be effective for any level of Exponent.

Savoie, a junior officer in the Royal Army and a Daybreaker, now a Lieutenant, had finally reached the 2nd Rank of the Path of Calamity, "Thunder Attendant."

Mormir, the chief of the Fein Police Department, had also smoothly reached the 2nd Rank of the Path of Divine Sacrifice, "Listener."

Among the second generation of Daybreakers, only Inna of the Path of Wholeheartedness had yet to make a breakthrough.

That day, the calm Byrne picked up a popular book in the study. The black-covered book bore the title "The Greatest Emperor of the Seven Stars."

Although the Lorne Empire was already the most powerful and terrifying empire in the world, the Seven Stars Empire had suddenly brought forth what might be the strongest Extraordinary Exponent many decades ago—the Seven Stars Emperor, known as the "Military God," who managed to lead the Seven Stars Empire in resisting the combined assault of the Lorne Empire and the neighboring countries with his own power.

At that moment, the study door opened, and Darren, who was engaged to a girl from the Oder family, walked in with his head lowered.

The young man hesitated, struggling to speak, but eventually asked with a smile:

"Father, tell me, if my children are mortals and do not consume the Knight's awakening potion or grasp the Power of Consecution for their entire lives, can they procreate without any restrictions?"

Without even putting down the book in his hands, Byrne simply shook his head and replied:

"Of course not. Otherwise, what would be the point of the gods' limitations? Your children too have the latent bloodline, and even without activating it, they still will be bound by the laws."

After hearing the explanation, Darren subconsciously touched his own face to ease the awkwardness and said:

"Oh, I see. Well, then it seems that every offspring of the Fischer family is indeed very important."

Suddenly, Byrne put down the book in his hand, gazed intently at the somewhat panicked Darren, and felt a not-so-good premonition deep inside.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 179: 172 Father and Son

Byrne Fischer sat in the carriage, silent for a long period, while Darren sat opposite him, head lowered and not making a sound.

Because Byrne always had a good temper within the family, the atmosphere between father and son had never been this tense. Darren had thought he'd be scolded fiercely, but instead, there was nothing. His father remained as calm as ever.

The sound of the carriage wheels rolled on incessantly, and at last, the aged butler Theo spoke with his old voice:

"We have arrived, Your Excellency."

Byrne nodded lightly and then waited for Theo to open the carriage door. He and Darren alighted from the black carriage one after the other.

In front of them was a grey villa in the wealthy district of Nasir Town, which could hardly be called luxurious, resembling closely the Fischer family's very first residence.

"Your Excellency Byrne, you have come, you finally came! Hahahaha!"

A merchant from the villa approached with ecstatic delight, his body trembling with uncontrollable greed and surprise at the sight of Byrne and Darren!

Because of "Profound Memory", Byrne also remembered this man who he had barely met a few times, an insignificant fabric merchant who couldn't touch the social circle of the Fischer family, having only attended a few banquets hosted by them by chance.

"Mr. Ken, hello, may I see your daughter Fayer, if that's possible?"

That His Excellency Byrne actually remembered his name, the merchant named Ken was even more thrilled and excited.

"Yes, yes, of course! Please come in first. Just wait a moment, I'll have someone call my daughter out right away, hahaha!"

Merchant Ken immediately invited Byrne and his son into his villa, then shouted for someone. With utmost sincerity, the house's four servants ushered the daughter out from inside.

The golden-haired maiden Fayer emerged slowly from within, first looking at Darren with deep affection before noticing the black-clad, distinguished figure of His Excellency Byrne.

She instinctively lowered her head, unable to meet his gaze, clutching the corner of her dress, unable even to utter a word.

Even before Byrne had really arrived, her father had taught her many times how to please the important figure, attempting to secure her place within the core circle of the Fischer family, but she just couldn't do it.

Fayer was uncontrollably frightened deep down, after all, that important figure was someone who could decide her fate with just a casual remark!

How could she not be afraid?

Byrne couldn't help but give his son Darren a stern look, took a deep breath, and calmed himself.

He activated his Deconstructive Perspective and soon sighed deeply. The slight bulge in the golden-haired girl's abdomen couldn't be concealed from his eyes.

In his heart, Byrne truly felt that his son's seventeen years were very different from his at that age.

Back then, he himself was still lost in a sea of knowledge, never even having touched a woman's hand, oblivious even when girls approached him.

Come to think of it, when had Darren grown so tall and strong? In Byrne's heart, images of that chubby child still lingered.

It was only at this moment that Byrne realized Darren was entirely different now, even capable of becoming a father.

Merchant Ken was still all smiles and subservience.

"Please take a seat, both of you. I've prepared some very high-quality tea, and we can chat while we drink."

Byrne, unlike the fussy nobility, nodded lightly and took his seat.

And when all four were seated, he finally began to speak in a calm, gentle tone:

"Your name is Fayer, right? I am here simply to better understand you and the matters concerning our two families. Miss Fayer, could you tell me about how you and Darren met?"

Fayer hesitated, completely unprepared for His Excellency Byrne's gentle tone. He seemed completely different from Darren, and much of the heavy tension and awe in her heart lifted.

"Yes, I will tell you everything..."

"Uh..."

Darren's complexion worsened, as if he realized something.

"We met during the town's Harvest Festival celebration..."

Byrne listened silently to Fayer's story. At first, it was bearable, but soon his expression began to darken.

Because in her description, Darren had mostly been with a certain grey-haired girl over the last year, only occasionally seeking her out, which was far more preposterous than the idea of "two young people opposing a family-arranged marriage for love."

Oh Darren, you little rascal!

He quickly noticed that Fayer's father, Ken, showed no displeasure; on the contrary, there was a hint of pride, perhaps he felt that the pregnancy had been a successful counter-attack, that the grey-haired girl amounted to nothing.

Even Fayer herself seemed to have reached some sort of "peaceful coexistence" with the grey-haired girl.

Darren's expression was a bit unsightly, but he didn't betray any signs of restlessness.

What's going on, do I care alone?

He couldn't understand.

A thought involuntarily rose from the depths of Byrne's heart, perhaps he had to change Darren's environment to achieve growth and change.

"That's how it is, I, I got pregnant by accident..."

After Fayer finished speaking, she looked down, stealing glances at Darren and Byrne's eyes.

Darren didn't dare make a sound, while Byrne, after a long silence, finally sorted out everyone's situations.

The case of the mischievous son need not be said, the most common thing in a noble family. As for the grey-haired girl and Ken, they probably fancied the Fischer family's power and cozied up to Darren.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 180: 172 Father and Son_2

Only Fayer in front of him, she was a pitiful girl with love on her mind.

He finally said tenderly,

"Miss Fayer, I hope you can give birth to the child, after all, every child is an extremely important family member to the Fischer family, only there's one thing the Fischer family must impose on you."

"Darren is already engaged to the Oder family, and if the engagement is broken, the two families might become enemies, a matter of great significance, so the affair between you two absolutely must not be made public, and I will compensate you in other ways."

"Very well, we agree!"

Fayer nodded gently, her father's beaming smile indicated he knew this was most likely the outcome.

Byrne and Fayer signed an agreement, and afterward he assigned Theo's eldest daughter to the Fayer household to take care of Fayer and keep watch over the place.

Before leaving, he suddenly came to an understanding, staring at Fayer as he nodded gently.

"I wish you happiness."

On the way home in the carriage, Darren had thought he'd have to explain the matter of the grey-haired girl, but his father didn't ask him at all, only maintaining silence and contemplation.

The atmosphere became more oppressive, and Darren finally couldn't help but ask,

"Are you very disappointed in me?"

Byrne was silent for a while, then said calmly,

"I know this is how you are, from the moment you stepped onto the Path of Shadow, I had actually understood, as for disappointment..."

He paused, then said with a smile,

"I might also have some defect, for I always find it hard to get angry with my loved ones over their mistakes, and I prefer to find the fault in myself."

"The slightest kindness from friends and I think of giving back more, and I'm willing to believe in the importance of emotions, I've even suffered quite a few losses along the way."

Darren was slightly stunned, his father had never spoken to him in this tone, as if he too was a real adult.

Perhaps he really was an adult now, after all, he already had a child.

He suddenly felt a bit absurd, how had he inexplicably ended up with a child?

Byrne continued calmly, looking into his son's eyes.

"I just feel helpless, I have made some efforts all along but still neglected your growth, but you still have a chance, Darren..."

"The person I once was, was also a coward, even afraid to speak to others."

However, Darren interrupted him, his tone filled with incredulity, asking the doubts that had been hidden in the depths of his heart for a long time.

"Is that really true? The more I grow up, the harder it is to believe, Father, in the eyes of the common people you are virtually a legend, a great figure who rose rapidly like the protagonist of a story."

"Was your childhood really so terrible? I even think that it's something concocted by some people to slander you."

Byrne nodded gently, affirming very surely, "It's true, Darren, but anyone can grow and change."

Byrne had to say this to inspire his son, though in reality, most people don't change much.

And indeed, there were also people like Chris who were impressive from birth, they simply didn't need much personal growth in terms of character.

He had made a decision to send Darren to train in the Cyart Royal Army for a few years, as currently, in the Royal Army there were only connections like Savoie and Colonel Abel, it was indeed lacking a direct blood relative of the Fischer family.

As for whether Darren would encounter danger, Byrne had already come to understand one thing.

The Fischer family had never truly avoided danger in this vast and gloomy dark forest, so there was no need for them to flee from it.

Darren was lost in thought when he inadvertently saw his father's hair had become speckled with grey, and feelings of guilt surged in the depths of his heart.

A month later, under Byrne's arrangements, Darren left Nasir Town to report to Colonel Abel's infantry, starting from the very bottom as a soldier.

He was to serve for two years, after which he would return and marry the daughter of the Oder family.

Before leaving, Darren said farewell to his two girlfriends but didn't linger long at the grey-haired girl's place.

He kissed Fayer and said calmly, "Your plan has succeeded, Fayer."

Fayer smiled sweetly and nodded excitedly, "I don't have to leave you anymore, how wonderful! Darren, come back early!"

This matter was never an accident from the beginning.

Moreover, after a pause, Darren said, "I feel as if my father has sensed the truth, guessing that you were the mastermind, though he never said it outright."

Fayer looked a bit surprised and asked in confusion, "Then why is he still so kind to me?"

Darren didn't voice his thoughts, initially believing it was because of the child in Fayer's womb, but later felt that wasn't the case.

It was more likely because his father saw the deep love in Fayer's eyes.

A month later.

Shocking news from the East Coast reached the ears of the Fischer family.

The East Coast Governor, Earl Hovern, failed to surpass the Monarch and died beyond saving.

Just half a month earlier, two bishops from the Silver Moon Church and the Tempest Church had stepped forward, accusing the Hovern family of colluding with the heretical cult "Lost Cult." Now, the Hovern family was undergoing a strict investigation by the Church.

If the charges were proven true, their fate would be extremely tragic.

In reality, only three scenarios could lead to the seizure of land from the great nobles: extermination of the family line, treason, and collusion with heretics.

Others might not be fully aware, but the Fischer family knew for certain that the charge of the Hovern family colluding with the "Lost Cult" was a setup.

After all, their cult's name wasn't even "Lost Cult"!

"Why do I suddenly feel that everyone is starting to enjoy pretending that His followers exist somewhere and then blaming the evils on His believers, so that all the bad things are announced as 'our' responsibility..."

Byrne put down the newspaper and muttered to himself helplessly, while a terrifying realization finally dawned on him deep inside.

The gradual decline of the gods' influence would lead to a significant detriment: no longer would there be anyone to restrain the many powerful ones of the True Gods Church!

Once, even if the churches occasionally acted unjustly, they wouldn't dare to indulge in such egregious misconduct like framing others under the watchful eyes of the deities.

After all, those were the times when divine retribution truly existed.

But now, the churches, once aloof and above the fray as the Hand of God, were gradually transforming into several huge secular powers, and with it, their terrifying powers were being unleashed.

"After the gods have fallen silent, the churches have all been liberated, and even those powerful ones who were meant to be judges are driven by self-interest..."

The same night.

An unexpected person from the Fischer family returned to Nasir Town.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.