

From Secret Clan to the Divine Dynasty

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Chapter 41: Chapter 40 Margaret

Leaving Mr. Gold's villa, Byrne didn't head back immediately but instead strolled through the bustling center of Fein City. People around him hurried by, always with many things to do, seeming far busier than the folks in Nasir.

He could fully sense the vibrancy and vitality of the city, yet he also faintly perceived that overly rapid development wasn't necessarily a good thing.

And those dirty piles of garbage scattered everywhere brought back memories of the plague he had experienced in his childhood, triggering many terrifying recollections in his mind.

"Sooner or later, the development planning of Fein City must be thoroughly intervened by the city hall, otherwise, it will definitely lead to chaos."

Suddenly, as Byrne walked along the street, he was drawn to a tailor's shop.

Displayed in the tailor's shop were clothes of considerable quality, evidently made with fine craftsmanship suited for high-status individuals, which held his gaze for a long time, unable to turn away.

Byrne lowered his head to glance at the clothes he was wearing. Although they were fine garments, the details were not meticulous enough, making it easy to identify the wearer as someone from a lesser-known place.

He remembered Lucius saying that clothes make the man and that people are more willing to listen to someone who looks good, so investing in a more respectable outfit was indeed worth it.

Byrne then entered the tailor's shop and quickly saw a tall, thin old man with prominent cheekbones and a stern expression, who walked towards him with precise steps.

The old man, dressed all in black and wearing a monocle, sized up Byrne and after a moment shook his head firmly and said,

"Sir, forgive me for being blunt, but your temperament and your clothes completely mismatch. I can tell you have talent, but that outfit is nothing but trash."

Byrne was stunned by the other's straightforwardness but smiled and asked, "Then what kind of clothes do you think would suit me?"

"You are a noble, or at least a knight, and the high society of Cyart these days is wearing tailcoats that come from the Lorne Empire."

The old man's voice was serious, professional, and left no room for doubt as he bowed and continued,

"Our shop will provide the East Coast's most professional clothing recommendations and tailoring. We will not disappoint you."

"What you need is a suit of Lorne-style navy blue tailcoat, not the Seven Stars style. All the clothes in our shop are made to measure, so please allow me to take down your measurements."

Byrne grew more interested, but before getting measured, he prudently asked about the price and then was shocked by the quote of thirty silver coins. Nevertheless, after some hesitation, he decided to go ahead with it.

Just after his measurements were taken, he suddenly heard a woman's voice from outside the door that had just been pushed open.

"Shopkeeper Hawley, how is my brother's outfit coming along? He is soon to attend Viscount Bast's banquet and must not fall behind others in appearance."

The woman who entered the tailor's shop was dressed lavishly, with light golden curls flowing down her smooth forehead, her eyes sparkling with youthful vivacity.

Seeing Byrne, who was putting on his coat, she paused for a moment and then greeted him with a smile, "Hello, sir, my name is Margaret, of the Hoffman family."

Byrne nodded to her with composure and politeness, a slight smile on his lips as he said, "Good day, Madam Margaret, I am Byrne of the Fischer family."

Margaret made a mental note of the name, Byrne, Fischer family.

But she lacked the courage to initiate further conversation. Shopkeeper Hawley finished jotting down Byrne's measurements, then calmly stated,

"Madam Margaret, please come again tomorrow. The clothing for Baron Hoffman is not yet fully ready, as you know, perfect craftsmanship always takes time to show."

"All right."

Margaret nodded indifferently, stealing glances at the young and handsome man, silent for a long while, and after Byrne had left, she immediately asked Shopkeeper Hawley about the tailor's store.

"That young man, I can't believe I had never seen him before. I know all the nobility and members of knight clans in Fein City. Shopkeeper Hawley, do you know where he is from?"

Shopkeeper Hawley revealed a rather playful smile and, shrugging his shoulders, said, "I don't know, madam."

Margaret felt immediately deflated, but she couldn't help fantasizing about the identity of that handsome young man in her mind, feeling inexplicably that he must be someone remarkable.

Continuing in a leisurely tone, Shopkeeper Hawley said, "But he will come back to our shop, and then I can ask him for you. Many things you want to know."

After leaving the tailor's shop, Byrne returned to Nordivar Bank and with great solemnity, took out a black iron box to store in the bank's specially made safe. He had to pay a preservation fee of five silver coins every year.

He suspected that the Meyer family might still find a way to locate them, and if they were to send powerful individuals to cause trouble again, the safety of the Fischer family would be quite problematic.

But storing them in the banks of Fein City would be much safer; this city even had the presence of a Level 3 "Monarch"-class powerhouse, namely the regional Tempest Bishop of the East Coast. The Meyer family, no matter what, wouldn't be able to come and plunder by force.

"One day I will take it back. The Fischer family will eventually find all the remaining components," Byrne muttered to himself as he left the bank.

A few days later, Byrne visited the tailor shop again to make further fitting for his tailcoat.

Some time later, as he was about to leave, he received a letter. A baron, closely associated with the Romann family, had heard about the affairs of the Fischer family and invited him to attend an upcoming high-society party in Fein City.

Byrne was pleasantly surprised; his clothes would be ready just in time for the party.

All attendees of the party were members of Fein City's high society. The host was the city's lord, Viscount Bast, and the two most important guests were the Earl Hovern, the East Coast Governor, and the regional Tempest Bishop.

They held the power of life and death over millions of people in the East Coast Province.

When the graceful and handsome Byrne entered, he quickly caught the attention of numerous female guests.

His features were extremely refined, his appearance brimming with sunshine, yet there was a touch of melancholy in the depths of his eyes, especially when he smiled, his lips were utterly charming.

Byrne had no chance to converse with Earl Hovern and the Tempest Bishop, the two focal points of the event; he could only silently memorize their appearances.

Earl Hovern resembled his nephew, Baron Hovern, tall and slim, very sociable, only his smiling face showed clear signs of aging and his temples were grizzled.

The Tempest Bishop, on the other hand, was a 'strange person' wearing a long robe of blue and purple, reeking of alcohol.

His cold face twitched now and then; he never greeted anyone proactively and even his speech was somewhat incoherent when talking to others, which made Byrne, who had heard so much about him, quite taken aback; he would've believed that this guy was a drunkard about to be thrown out of a tavern.

Soon he learned the reason behind it; apparently, the Tempest Bishop had used a "Forbidden class" mysterious rare artifact in his early years and had paid a "price" that forced him to drink heavily every day to gradually become what he was now.

At the party, Byrne saw the lady with pale golden hair he had encountered the other day. While all the other girls were still watching, she had already approached politely.

Looking up, Margaret smiled and said, "Mr. Byrne, it's been a while since we last saw each other. I am Baron Hoffman's sister. Do you still remember our last encounter?"

Byrne was slightly startled, and he replied with a smile, "Madam Margaret, it's an honor to see you again, a perfect coincidence. The person who invited me here is Baron Hoffman."

Margaret feigned unawareness and showed a look of surprise.

"Is that so? How perfect! Really, what a coincidence!"

Byrne smiled gently, vaguely recalling that he had also "encountered" other girls in town a few times, all of whom seemed to have identical demeanors.

Hmm, he always felt that something was not quite right.

Chapter 42: Chapter 41 Death and Rebirth

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At noon, under the bright sunshine, many people attended Old Ramon's funeral.

Nasir had only a few blacksmith shops, and Old Ramon's skill was acknowledged to be top-notch, surpassing even his younger and stronger son.

A few years ago, the once robust and dignified elder began to lose himself to age, fading away as if vanishing into thin air, and even Irene couldn't heal "aging" itself.

The funeral took place in the Sun Church's cathedral, and very few people in Nasir believed in the Sun Church, hence the Sun Cathedral wasn't very large either.

Old Ramon lay peacefully in his coffin, his aged face showing the marks of time, silver hair like silken threads covering his pale head. Deep wrinkles were etched between his forehead and the corners of his eyes, making it seem like he was free of fatigue and worries, comfortably waiting for the gods to take away his soon-to-pass soul.

When it was time for everyone to say their final farewells to the man in the coffin, Irene, dressed in a black robe, serenely stepped forward.

The girl who had once been young was now the head of a secret clan, but Old Ramon died without ever knowing the secret behind the sudden rise of the Fischer family.

Irene looked down at the old man she knew so well, her eyes slightly red, as if she was whispering to herself or praying:

"Mr. Ramon, good afternoon. I hope you find eternal peace in the tranquil world. The great Lord of the Lost will protect your soul."

Byrne and Margaret were also present, having become a couple well-known to all.

In a little over a year, many people in Nasir were impressed by Margaret's boldness, assertiveness, and arrogance, but now her most noticeable feature was her protruding belly.

In fact, many in the Hoffman family behind Margaret disapproved of the marriage between the two, and even the support of her brother, Baron Hoffman, wasn't enough.

Aside from the siblings, the other family members felt that Byrne, who was only a knight, wasn't a good match for Margaret, not to mention that what so ever about the Fischer family, they were just upstarts from a small place after all.

In this day and age, the importance of bloodline, status, and matching social ranks was self-evident, and Byrne's "upward behavior" made many scoff behind his back.

However, the headstrong Margaret had a simple and clear method of rebelling against her family – she got pregnant on her own.

When she brazenly revealed this, she directly caused her own mother to faint on the spot, and if Byrne hadn't run fast, he nearly would have had his legs broken by his future father-in-law right there and then.

He really wanted to say he was forced by Margaret, but probably very few people would believe it.

Hugh, tall in stature, talked in turn with the people attending the funeral, his eyes reddened.

When he saw the members of the Fischer family, he forced out a sad smile with much effort.

"My father was very grateful to you all, truly. In his last moments, he was alert again and he appreciated all the help you've provided to the Ramon family over these past few years."

Irene nodded and said, "These were all things we should do. You've worked hard, Hugh."

"No, it's nothing..."

Hugh had barely finished speaking when he suddenly couldn't hold back and burst into tears, and the people around rushed to comfort him.

"Ah!"

Suddenly, Margaret screamed, her eyes closed, as she uncontrollably clutched Byrne's shoulder tightly, the pain making Byrne clench his teeth as well.

"My belly, it hurts so much, my belly!"

Everyone was stunned for a moment before they all hurriedly became a bustle of confusion.

Quickly, Irene confirmed something through the power of healing runes: Margaret wasn't suffering from a sudden illness, but was indeed going into labor!

She hurriedly said, "Sorry, we must leave now, really sorry!"

Of course, Hugh understood, and the Fischer family left the scene in a hurry, rushing to the only hospital in town.

It was earlier than expected; Margaret was supposed to give birth in half a month, but for some reason, it started earlier.

Irene went to help with the delivery, along with the doctors and nurses.

Continuous cries of agony echoed, and the servants and guards of the family all waited anxiously outside. Byrne paced frantically back and forth, taking deep breaths over and over, his mind a complete blank like never before.

“Calm down, Byrne.”

Chris, only six years old, suddenly reached out and grabbed Byrne, saying expressionlessly, “It’s not like you’re the one giving birth.”

Byrne was momentarily stunned. Chris, the boy who rarely spoke, always managed to make people feel that he truly was an odd child whenever he did.

““

Time seemed to slow to a crawl as Byrne stood there, drenched in sweat, silently waiting for the arrival of the new member of the Fischer family.

The events of the day had given him a strangely wonderful and unusual feeling.

Death always comes hand in hand with new life.

Perhaps that was the true meaning of “legacy.”

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to anyone, a calm gaze from the sky went unnoticed.

Carl’s consciousness, intangibly overlooking the Fischer family from above, saw the diligent Irene, the anxious Byrne, and the composed Chris.

He could feel a brand-new consciousness growing increasingly connected to his own.

It was a curious sensation, a life coming into existence out of nothing, entering a world not yet ready for its arrival—and he himself was utterly unprepared to embark on his own journey.

The blood-destiny passed down through generations of the Fischer family was one of predecessors passing and new generations being born.

Generation after generation would walk through history, marking the name Fischer in its annals, ultimately bringing about a true resurgence for themselves.

At last.

“Wah wah wah wah!”

A loud cry abruptly filled the hospital, and the people of the Fischer family burst into cheers!

Byrne’s face became incredibly excited, he murmured endless thanks to his wife and cousin, his smile glowing ever brighter.

The child born to Margaret was a boy, looking like a very fragile little creature with a red, complex mark on the back of his hand.

As had already been decided, the boy’s name would be Darren Fischer, meaning “one with the potential for great undertakings.”

The others thought the so-called great undertakings meant turning the Fischer family into a truly noble house.

Only Byrne, Irene, and Chris understood just how complicated and ambitious the “great undertakings” implied in that name were.

The new generation of the Fischer family had finally arrived, and everyone, from top to bottom, was immersed in joy. Byrne went to Lucius’s grave and spoke many calm words.

In just over a year, Byrne had successfully developed a new potion, specifically designed to restore people’s energy, with very low production costs and a broad sales market, perfectly winning the bet with Mr. Gold and subsequently expanding the pharmaceutical business.

Now, the Fischer family could count on a stable income of about seventeen Gold Coins each month, and after deducting various expenses, the family currently had a total of one hundred seventy-five Gold Coins in assets.

Unfortunately, neither Byrne nor Irene had yet managed to assimilate the current Magic Potion.

Moreover, ascending the first two ranks of the Power of Consecution was relatively easy, but starting with the 3rd Rank, one needed not just Extraordinary materials but also a “ritual,” making the climb much more difficult.

As for granting the Power of Consecution to Chris, they still felt he was too young; waiting until he was ten would be better for mastering Extraordinary power.

Several days later, on a quiet night, Irene and Byrne discussed a serious matter in the basement: whether or not to tell Margaret about the Fischer family's secrets?

With a soft voice, Irene shook her head and said calmly,

"If it had been a few years ago, I would have agreed without hesitation to disclose everything, even thinking that drinking 'blood' was inconsequential. But with more experience, I wouldn't agree so readily."

"The Six Great True Gods Churches despise the heretical cults to an extreme. If she were to report us or accidentally leak the secret, every member of the Fischer family would be completely eradicated."

She paused, then continued firmly and without sentiment,

"So, I still adhere to the principle we established from the start: consent from three core family members is needed to bring a new member into 'Dawn,' and all followers of the cult must partake of the blood of the Fischer family."

Byrne was stunned for a moment, then couldn't help but ask, "The consent of three core family members is needed, you mean we have to wait until Chris grows up?"

Irene nodded and continued calmly, "I believe that with Chris's maturity, he will be able to participate in decision-making in a few more years."

Byrne couldn't deny that point, Chris was quiet and reliable, sensible, and even to some extent peculiarly so.

"Alright, we'll wait a few more years on this matter, given its utmost importance. For now, we need to gauge her views on faith first."

After their conversation, he quickly returned to his wife's side. Unless absolutely necessary, Byrne hardly ever wanted to be far from Margaret and their child.

Chapter 43: Chapter 42 Daybreak Orphanage

Since Lucius's death over a year prior, Byrne often experienced nightmares. Sometimes he would find himself standing in a snow-covered forest with his face covered in blood, an uncontrollable sense of loneliness arising within him.

In the forest, there were several corpses with eyes wide open in death. They were Irene, Margaret, and Chris, making Byrne feel utterly cold.

Lucius's questioning and disdainful voice would come from behind him.

"You failed to protect them, Byrne. I was wrong about you,"

A profound sense of fear and guilt would engulf him instantly, and it was often at this point that Byrne would wake from his nightmares.

Death was never far away. There were just over sixteen and a half years left to prepare for the almost inevitable war between Cyart and Rhea.

If nothing was done, during the war, the tragic situation of the Fischer family being at the mercy of others would repeat itself.

On the northeast side of Cyart, the East Coast would be the first place ravaged by looting and slaughter if the Rheans invaded. Many of the elders in Cyart still vividly remembered the Rheans' brutal and savage acts.

In a silent and tidy basement, Byrne and Irene, the siblings, discussed various countermeasures.

Byrne took out paper and a pen and placed them on the table, starting to draw circles and write to illustrate the current situation.

"In the upper echelons of East Coast society, the two most prominent and powerful figures are Earl Hovern, the East Coast Governor, and the Tempest Bishop from the Tempest Church,"

"Both have reached the level of low-level Monarchs, and behind them, their major families, the Hovern family and the Tempest Church on the East Coast, boast a dozen Transmutation class Extraordinary Exponents."

Irene nodded in agreement. Both the governor and the Tempest Bishop were in such exalted positions and wielded such immense power that they could decide the outcome of most matters with a single word.

Byrne continued to detail as he wrote and drew uninterrupted:

"Next are the seven viscount families and numerous True Gods Church forces on the East Coast. Currently, the strongest viscount family is Bast's Lion clan of Fein City, which is under their control. Bast himself is also an upper Transmutation class Extraordinary Exponent."

"Then, there's the Eagle clan controlling three towns on the East Coast. There are five Transmutation Extraordinary Exponents in their family, with the leading figure being 'Black Hawk' Viscount Xavier. He is quite poised to challenge the Lion clan's authority, and they also have an excellent relationship with Earl Hovern, the governor."

The ongoing struggle between the Lion and Eagle clans had already lasted several years and was a topic of gossip within the entire East Coast's elite.

Their confrontations had initially been relatively civil, but in the past year, their methods had taken a drastic turn for the worse, escalating to the point of assassinating each other's supporters.

The Eagle clan was very keen to drive out the Lion clan and take over the rapidly developing Fein City, their tactics growing more reprehensible by the day. And Earl Hovern, the East Coast Governor, seemed to be subtly in favor of this.

At this point, Byrne paused and said somewhat helplessly, "We've already chosen a side because of the cooperation between the Fischer family and Mr. Gold."

"Mr. Gold has his channels and connections precisely because Viscount Bast is his brother-in-law. Now, to the upper circles in the East Coast, we are seen as 'supporters of the Lion.'"

Irene also sighed and said, "When we decided to cooperate, we had no understanding of the entire situation on the East Coast. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been so hasty."

Domestic noble infighting included assassinations, but it wasn't to the perilous extent where death loomed at any moment, yet the threat was real.

"Now the Fischer family has a lot of surplus funds, and we currently don't have a significant need for Extraordinary materials. It's time to purchase some Mysterious rare artifacts and sacrifice them to the great Lord of the Lost."

"Besides, I'm considering establishing an orphanage to shelter those homeless orphans from Nasir."

An orphanage?

Byrne pondered for a moment, knowing she wasn't proposing this purely out of sudden altruism, so he seriously asked Irene:

"What's your plan?"

Irene looked towards the sheet detailing divisions of power and quietly revealed her scheme:

"I will hire people to teach them knowledge, personally instruct them, and pick out the useful children to give them blood, so they can join the ranks of the Dawn. We still have too few reliable hands right now,"

She paused for a moment before stating firmly, “I believe that children who have been trained and educated from a young age will be more reliable than ordinary followers.”

Byrne nodded, then crossed his arms and fell silent as if hesitating over a significant matter, before finally speaking slowly:

“I am still researching how to strengthen the influence of the Fischer family’s blood.”

“If the blood could control Extraordinary Exponents, we could make magic potions according to the formula and give a portion of our followers low-level Powers of Consecution too.”

Both of them were very clear about one thing; the ability to create Extraordinary Exponents was the Fischer family’s greatest advantage.

However, back when Lucius was still around, several members of the Fischer family had discussed this issue, and Lucius was firmly against giving the Powers of Consecution to those without blood ties.

Because currently, the Fischer family’s blood could only influence ordinary people and not Extraordinary Exponents, and so if they did this, they would only be creating beings that they could not control at all; if any of those beings harbored thoughts of betrayal, the entirety of the family’s efforts would be ruined.

“Prudence” and “secrecy” were the mottos of the Fischer family; they couldn’t just pin the loyalty of others on intangible things like “trust between people” and “cultivating gratitude.”

The breakthrough in the whole affair lay with Byrne, who held the Power of Consecution of the “Pharmacist.”

He had a hunch that the effects of the Fischer family’s blood could be strengthened and had been conducting research on blood all this time.

At this point, Byrne suddenly picked up a pen and drew a fresh circle on a piece of paper.

“Right, almost forgot to mention, aside from the overt forces, there is also a formidable heretical power on the East Coast, the Sea God Cult with quite an ancient heritage. Within their ranks are Transmutation-class Extraordinary Exponents.”

“It is said that the Tempest Church and the Sea God Cult were originally one force, but later on, they split and developed extreme enmity towards each other,”

“Because the Sea God Cult does not recognize the Tempest Overlord as their Sea God.”

Three months later, the first orphanage in Nasir City was established, and the new town chief came with great pleasure, leading the locals of status to offer their congratulations.

The orphanage was named "Daybreak."

In the whole Nasir City, there were more than thirty orphans under the age of twelve eligible to join the orphanage, and part of the reason for the loss of their parents was the sudden winter invasion by the Rhea people; naturally, they felt a favorable impression towards the Fischer family for having resisted the Rhea.

The Fischer family's cost to establish the orphanage was around thirty-five Gold Coins, and each month an additional six Gold Coins were required to maintain basic operations, necessitating the arrangement for the older children to learn trades and earn money.

The orphanage was spacious yet dim, its thick stone walls bearing the traces of the years. Irene led a few caregivers here, where the first batch of children had been waiting for some time.

"Children, from today onwards, I will be your caretaker,"

Irene looked calmly at the children who were yearning for the future yet filled with trepidation, their eyes curiously and uneasily surveying her.

A gentle warmth began to surge from the depths of her heart.

Yet at the same time, Irene was acutely aware of something; love should be selective.

Chris and Byrne and Darren were the most important people in her life, and beyond that, everything about her body and soul belonged to the great Lord of the Lost.

At that moment, she suddenly felt the will of the mighty Lord of the Lost!

It seemed to be guiding her, directing her attention to one of the little girls among the children. Irene immediately looked over.

It was a girl with light green hair, sporting an optimistic smile different from the rest, but her right leg had a highly apparent severe disability.

Was she special?

Chapter 44: Chapter 43 Naughty Child

Chris stood calmly with his hands clasped behind his back in the open space outside the orphanage, looking toward the group of children who had come out to play.

He seemed out of place, his eyes looking too much like those of a grown adult, as if he were a staff member there to look after the children.

“Hey, isn’t there anyone for you to play with?”

A girl with light green short hair and a crutch came over, slightly older than Chris, her pale and chubby face all smiles.

Her right leg had a congenital severe deformation, the cause of which was extremely strange, such that even Irene could not cure it.

Chris simply looked over at her with his hands behind his back, without speaking.

“My name is Vanessa. I came here because my parents abandoned me. Hello.”

Vanessa introduced herself enthusiastically, not showing any sadness even when mentioning her abandonment.

Suddenly, she noticed Chris’s clothes were completely different from theirs, with an entirely different look and texture, probably worlds apart in price, and laughed:

“You don’t seem to be from here! I might have misunderstood, but you can play with us if you want!”

Chris shook his head in refusal, and Vanessa was puzzled as to why he just wouldn’t speak.

Suddenly, a little chubby kid came running over with a few other children and surrounded Chris, the chubby kid shouting angrily.

“You pushed me from behind last time! Don’t think I won’t dare to hit you just because you are the director’s brother!”

Chris silently, with his hands still behind his back, hopped back rhythmically and deftly dodged all attacks, then quite naturally stuck out his foot,

and with a yelp, the chubby kid tripped and fell face-first into the ground.

Vanessa quickly intervened, frowning and shouting, “Stop, no fighting! Why did you push him from behind before?”

She wanted to hear the explanation from the director’s brother. The director was the kindest person in the world, and surely her brother had a reason for pushing someone.

Chris said a word after a long silence.

“Interesting.”

Vanessa was furious, seizing Chris’s collar filled with a sense of justice.

“Then you apologize! In my eyes, Hospital Director Irene is like a sister to me, so you’re like a little brother, which means I have to take responsibility for you. You must apologize!”

Chris didn’t like being touched by anyone other than Irene, and he glanced coldly at Vanessa, but she wasn’t at all afraid of him and was determined that he should apologize.

For some reason, a complicated emotion rose in Chris’s heart, not just anger, and he suddenly pushed her down and turned to run away.

“Ah!”

Vanessa hadn’t expected such an outcome and fell to the ground in a sorry state, sweating coldly from pain.

Chris, hearing the noise, stopped a short distance away and turned back to glance at her, hesitating, but when he saw the chubby kid and others starting to throw stones, he swiftly turned and ran off again.

The children were all angry, hurriedly helping Vanessa get up, as they all liked Vanessa, who always helped others and was forever optimistic.

“That’s terrible; that boy is awful. I can’t believe the director has such a horrible brother!”

“Yes, he’s dreadful. He actually pushed Vanessa over.”

After the children helped Vanessa up, her face still breaking out in cold sweat, she shook her head and said:

“Next time I see him, as his sister, I will thoroughly teach him a lesson.”

She paused and then smiled, “Sister Irene always said that every child can be taught well, that there’s hope for any child, and I believe that in my heart too.”

A few children who had stolen things in the past bowed their heads, unable to forget Irene’s teachings, believing they could all grow up to be useful people.

Vanessa, full of aspirations for the future, murmured to herself as she looked at her deformed and unsightly right leg, smilingly saying:

“My leg is bad, so I want to learn to read and do math to be able to repay Sister Irene and the Fischer family when I grow up.”

“Good people should receive good fortunes.”

That evening, Vanessa, as usual, came to the hospital director’s room of the orphanage, where Irene calmly used her healing power to ease Vanessa’s pain.

Vanessa’s deformed right leg was the result of a curse placed on her parents or ancestors or a deal made with a mystical being. Therefore, it was fundamentally the influence of extraordinary power and not a disease that could be healed.

All Irene could do was alleviate the pain. Now, Vanessa was sitting on her lap, serenely feeling that verdant power that was like a breath of spring.

Even though she couldn’t be cured and become normal, Vanessa felt profoundly grateful to Hospital Director Irene from the bottom of her heart.

“Did you meet Chris today?”

Irene had long been using the “Secret Ear Technique” to create several ring-like patterns around the orphanage, which she used to eavesdrop on events there, and she basically had a good grasp of the daily happenings.

“Yes, I did.”

Vanessa was initially keen to report on Chris but quickly felt it might not be right and hesitated.

Irene wanted to know if Vanessa would lie to her. Smiling and caressing the girl, she asked, “Tell me then, what happened between you two?”

After thinking for a bit, Vanessa nodded and said, “Okay.”

She recounted the events truthfully but still hoped that Irene wouldn’t blame Chris, feeling that Chris too could reform.

Irene had noticed that Chris was becoming increasingly strange-tempered of late, but she could never quite manage her brother, unlike how she maintained her seriousness with the children of the orphanage.

Vanessa was a very special girl, not merely because of her physically disabled form.

It was extremely rare, but Vanessa possessed undeveloped spellcasting talent with potential that was considered above average.

The world of spellcasting contained wild and varied types, but ninety-nine percent of spellcasters had talents that fell into one of the eight main categories.

They were “Element,” “protect,” “prophecy,” “alchemy,” “Summoning,” “undead,” “Transformation,” and “Mental.” One could only learn spells corresponding to the category of their spellcasting talent.

Her spellcasting talent category was “Summoning.”

However, for the time being, the Fischer family lacked the tradition of summoning spellcasters, and they also didn’t think it was good to train a spellcaster who could not be controlled too early.

Irene thought it wise to first build a closer relationship with Vanessa and cultivate her character.

After observing for a while, she found that, despite her tragic fate, Vanessa had a remarkably cheerful and sunny disposition. However, the little girl also had one big flaw.

That was, her sense of justice was too strong, and she was too dismissive of her own safety.

Once Irene left Daybreak Orphanage and returned home, she went down to the basement, where Byrne and Chris were already waiting for her.

Tonight they were about to conduct a new ceremony to sacrifice a mysterious rare artifact given by an out-of-town merchant to the great Lord of the Lost.

The merchant had once been cured of an illness by Irene. At the time, he had been short of funds and was unable to repay her, but had recently kept his promise by acquiring the mysterious rare artifact to repay his debt.

Irene glanced at Chris, who, as usual, appeared calm.

She nodded her head and said, “Let us begin the ceremony and offer our sacrifice.”

The offering prepared by the Fischer family that night was a collectible class mysterious rare artifact shaped like an exceedingly dark bracelet, set with irregular, scattered diamonds.

“Blade Bangle,” it contained extremely peculiar powers. Whoever wore the bangle on the right hand could transform anything they touched into various weapons at will.

However, all the transformed weapons were ordinary, without extraordinary power. Thus, at best, it was only a collectible class mysterious rare artifact.

Karl sensed the aura of spiritual power and slowly absorbed it into his soul, gradually assimilating it. During the whole process, the second seal became increasingly loose.

Ultimately, the mysterious rare artifact acted as the final straw. After complete absorption, he clearly felt the second seal within the depths of his soul shatter completely!

Brand new memories began to surge from the deepest parts of his soul, instantly unlocking a starkly different set of possibilities for Karl!

Chapter 45: Chapter 44: The Second Seal

The blood steeped in the spirituality of the soul for so long naturally produced extraordinary power within the bloodlines of some powerful and mysterious life forms.

In the last era, humans suddenly attempted to consume the flesh and blood of mysterious creatures during a certain period, leading to a reduced lifespan and elimination for many, but a few survivors gave birth to descendants who gradually possessed a minuscule amount of extraordinary power.

Nowadays, humans no longer use the high-risk method of indiscriminately consuming the flesh and blood of mysterious creatures.

Instead, only a select few with an inherent extraordinary bloodline create specific magic potions using the flesh and blood of related mysterious creatures to activate their latent bloodline potential, naming the method of mastering this power the “Knight Bequest.”

Compared to the more random talent of Spellcasters, the inheritance of bloodline power is much more stable. Over ninety percent of noble families are knight clans, while pure Spellcaster families have always been few and far between.

The power obtained by their ancestors acts as a bond through the bloodline, awakening through eons, resurging within their descendants after thousands of years.

After the second seal was undone, Karl’s restored memories contained not only more about the God Pantheon Consecution but also new and extensive mysterious knowledge, specifically about the theory of bloodlines.

He had gained a body of knowledge on how to purify recessive bloodlines into dominant ones, how to increase bloodline talent grades, and even how to completely elevate the power of Bloodline.

However, the methods mentioned in this mysterious knowledge were complex, intricate, and demanding, especially the ritual for fully elevating bloodline power. The conditions were exceedingly difficult to meet.

"It's nearly impossible for the Fischer family to achieve the last feat, given their current state," he mused.

In addition to acquiring new mysterious knowledge, he also transformed the newly obtained Mysterious rare artifact into the rune "weapon." Its extraordinary effect remained the same: transforming the touched item into an ordinary weapon, although there was no recipient for the blessing yet.

In theory, he could bestow it upon Darren, but he chose not to.

Giving extraordinary power to a child too young often does not bode well, as uncontrolled extraordinary power can even lead to disastrous accidents.

After finishing his contemplation, Karl bestowed the newly acquired mysterious knowledge of bloodline power upon Irene.

Kneeling and praying slowly, Irene's eyes suddenly brightened.

She felt a surge of mysterious knowledge suddenly appearing in her mind, followed by a familiar dizziness, and she closed her eyes instinctively.

She swayed from side to side as if on a ship, her body teetering, nearly falling to the ground as if about to lose gravity.

Byrne and Chris watched Irene with concern but did not interrupt, both acutely aware that the situation was not an accident but another instance of the great Lord of the Lost bestowing important mysterious knowledge.

Irene had mentioned her experiences of receiving mysterious knowledge several times before.

In fact, to make Dawn more formal, Irene had meticulously recorded everything that happened during each sacrifice, even the initial encounters with the Lord of the Lost, attempting to reconstruct them as best as possible.

The booklet that documented all these events was secretly stored in the basement, corresponding to the visible family history compiled by Byrne, which contained all the information accessible to outsiders.

Finally, the girl gradually recovered, her eyes filled with excitement and adoration, her voice tinged with an incredulous tone.

"I have witnessed yet another new possibility shown by our Lord. All of humanity will tremble before it!"

"It is the glory of Dawn, and also a gift to the Fischer family!"

The girl, no longer the naive child in the Extraordinary Realm, understood the significance of the mysterious knowledge about bloodline power.

On the Ouden Continent, only the rarest and most precious Knight Bequests included methods to increase bloodline talent grades, and as for the possibility of purifying recessive bloodlines and sublimating them, such things were unheard of!

Irene closed her eyes in thought for a long while, slowly stood up and looked toward the two men nearby, saying:

“Byrne, I have received some mysterious knowledge about bloodline power that might allow your son to master the Knight Bequest.”

Byrne was taken aback for a moment, shook his head, and said, “Although the Hoffman family has the power of bloodline, my son did not inherit that part of the power, as you know.”

Irene was well aware of this, but the situation was now completely different.

The potential of bloodline powers is not something that every noble descendant can possess; often, only a part of them have potential worth developing, while for another group the level of potential can be considered non-existent, which is what they call “recessive.”

The Hoffman family possesses bloodline powers of the “Blazing Fire Lizard Spirit” and the “Crystal Jellyfish,” with about half the family members inheriting the bloodline powers—a quite favorable proportion.

Most of them inherit the former, possessing the ability to control fire, and so far, only two or three people in the family history are recorded as having inherited the latter.

However, the bloodline power of the undersea magic beast, the Crystal Jellyfish, belongs to a higher tier, a level above that of the Blazing Fire Lizard Spirit, and is only second to those of the ancient magic beasts in terms of strength.

Apart from their intrinsic tier, another important facet is the quality of the aptitude. The higher the aptitude level, the easier it is to ascend to higher echelons.

On the Ouden Continent, the rule in most noble families is that the person with the highest combined level of bloodline and aptitude has the right to become the next family head.

What Darren possessed was a recessive bloodline, and the well-prepared Hoffman family had sent someone to test this a few days after the child was born, paying great attention to any manifest bloodline.

Unfortunately, Darren was just an ordinary person, with insufficient purity of bloodline. Everyone except his parents showed a look of disappointment at that time.

Irene smiled and said, "The power of Darren's bloodline will reveal itself because the great Lord of the Lost has already given him a chance to change his fate."

Byrne was stunned for a while, then his body could not help but get excited.

He never doubted Irene's words. If so, Darren might very well become the first person in the entire Fischer family to master both the Power of Consecution and the power of Bloodline!

His own son could have greater achievements than anyone else in the family!

Byrne, of course, felt incredibly happy and fortunate about this and couldn't help wanting to tell his wife the good news. But then he remembered Margaret was not yet a member of Dawn, so he forcibly held back.

He quickly asked, "What do we need to do to activate Darren's bloodline power?"

Irene spoke calmly, "It's impossible to do that in the material world; we must take him to the Spirit Realm to perform a ceremony."

"The Spirit Realm?"

Byrne immediately fell into deep thought; the Spirit Realm was a very dangerous place.

In fact, the Fischer family had mastered the method of traveling to the Spirit Realm through dreams from the very beginning, and Irene received the related mysterious knowledge the first time she was granted mystical insights.

However, with its multitude of mysterious entities and unpredictable supernatural phenomena, the cautious members of the Fischer family dared not set foot there lightly.

Byrne had occasionally heard the word "Spirit Realm" from some people, who had started to interact with the Spirit Realm in their own ways years ago.

Some lesser noble individuals had been too curious in their dreams, unable to stop the heart of pursuit and were lured to the Spirit Realm through the woodlands via their astral forms.

As a result, they encountered dangers and died there, remaining in a coma in the real world for over a month before awakening, gradually succumbing to fear and madness, unable to extricate themselves completely after repeated incidents.

The Spirit Realm was filled with opportunities but also peril, with the most severe scenario being the loss of the soul, leaving the physical body in the real world a complete empty shell.

Byrne was willing to risk going to the Spirit Realm for his child but had no desire to bring Darren, still an infant, to such a frightfully unpredictable place.

He shook his head, repressed the desire within his heart to make his family stronger, and continued, "The Fischer family principle is to acquire power prudently; let's wait until he grows a bit older, until we also become stronger."

Chapter 46: Chapter 45 Consecution "Hunter"

Four years have passed in the blink of an eye.

There are twelve more years until the peace treaty between Cyart and Rhea expires.

Cyart has entered a relatively stable period, and commodity prices near the East Coast have gradually stabilized, except for the prices of Extraordinary materials, which have never decreased.

Once the prices went up, they stayed up, showing no tendency to fall back to previous levels.

Fortunately, the Fischer family's income has also greatly increased over these four years, not because the new potions they developed later were more effective, but solely due to that one energy potion they had developed earlier.

Its effect was not particularly good, just passable, with its biggest advantage being the low cost.

However, Mr. Gold was a business genius, and he put forward a suggestion that made the sales of the energy potion gradually skyrocket.

That was to market it not as a medicine, but as a food additive to various food vendors, and since the product truly had no apparent side effects, and Viscount Bast was Mr. Gold's brother-in-law, the city hall passed their proposal.

Soon, those merchants selling food found that their food became more popular, while those who did not add the energy potion were squeezed out of certain business opportunities.

As a result, every food merchant in Fein City rushed to purchase the energy potions from the Fischer family, who then had to find more people to subcontract production.

Mr. Gold began to persuade Byrne to consider a joint investment in a food processing plant to produce foods with the added energy potion themselves.

However, factories were a novel concept in Cyart over the recent years, and everyone was not very familiar with them; there had never been a so-called food processing plant in the East Coast region.

Even Mr. Gold had only heard descriptions of how it was done in the empire, and Byrne always found it unreliable and hesitated.

Now, the Fischer family would receive up to thirty-five Gold Coins in profits every month, and even after subtracting various expenses over four years, they had still accumulated a substantial fund of five hundred and thirty-five Gold Coins.

Two years ago, Irene also established a Daybreak Orphanage in Fein City, and the first group of orphans they took in numbered over fifty.

Meanwhile, with the Fischer family gradually increasing their investment, the conditions at both orphanages improved, and the children were mostly grateful to Irene.

With the rapid influx of outsiders, Fein City's population far surpassed that of Nasir Town, and still, many orphans were homeless and destitute.

Over the years, Irene grew ever fonder of the children and even felt an urge to open a third orphanage to take in more kids, but reason held her back.

According to surveys, there were hundreds of orphans throughout Fein City, and the Fischers couldn't possibly take them all in with their current financial capacity.

At most, she could offer a free window for distributing food to the orphans and treat those with serious illnesses whenever she went to Fein City.

Over the years, the orphans of Fein City had come to call Irene the "walking saint," their greatest dream being to live in the Daybreak Orphanage.

At present, the Fischer family was almost considered the wealthiest in the small locality of Nasir, matched only by the wealth of the new town chief.

Town Chief Francis was not an ordinary town chief; he was the younger brother of Baron Hovern, but as a member of the Hovern family who was not an Extraordinary Exponent, he was at best qualified to hold the position of town chief.

Compared to the former town chief, Town Chief Francis was still not excellent, showing little interest in managing Nasir Town.

His greatest passion was to gallop through the town, laughing loudly, and on several occasions, he nearly ran into people. Byrne guessed the man was probably depressed, thinking that a small place like Nasir wasn't worthy of him.

Tonight, in the basement of the Fischer family's mansion, Irene, Byrne, and Chris were gathered together.

Chris had grown to be ten years old, looking increasingly delicate, resembling a finely carved doll, with silver-white, slightly curly long hair, even though he was not a silver descendant, and easily mistaken for a girl.

Byrne had a gentle appearance as a child as well, but compared to Chris, the difference was vast. He occasionally even wondered if Chris had some hidden elf ancestry, which might explain his hair color and features.

Chris had also grown taller, yet his reticent nature had not changed at all.

The entire basement was now fully furnished, with all the ritual implements needed for the worship, including incense, candles, fresh flowers, fruits, offerings, and other items, all neatly arranged.

“

Aside from these, there were also statues and banners belonging to the great Lord of the Lost.

Irene personally crafted a black cross stone sculpture as the statue of Lord of the Lost, but did not worship it, because for daily prayers she could directly venerate the sacred bottle-shaped object.

Furthermore, she also paired it with a matching banner, upon which the insignia was also a black cross radiance, of course, all these items could not leave the basement.

At this moment, the scent of incense had already enveloped the basement, Irene knelt on the ground silently praying, her face full of pious devotion.

Byrne glanced at Irene, then turned to Chris, who had been waiting leisurely for quite a long time, and solemnly said,

“Chris, today we shall grant you extraordinary power, the Power of Consecution, from this day forward you will become even more unlike the common man.”

He paused for a moment, as Chris was already quite a unique individual.

Chris nodded silently, showing no intention of replying to Byrne, then when the time came, they knelt down together before the transparent bottle, praying to the great Lord of the Lost for new blessings.

They offered up a Class 1 Extraordinary Material, the “Secular Thoughts Demon Flower,” which appeared to be grey petals with black pupils on them.

Karl channeled the Spirituality from within the Secular Thoughts Demon Flower, arriving once again in the unpredictable and elusive Spirit Realm, seeking new Extraordinary Laws there.

He found yet another “constellation.”

Meanwhile, Karl could sense some mysterious entities observing his actions around the Spirit Realm.

However, they all dared not make a rash move, not having the slightest intention of touching him.

Frankly, Karl was rather curious about those existences in the Spirit Realm, as for the level of danger, it was irrelevant; after all, should danger arise he could retreat to the real world at a moment’s notice.

He established a brand-new God Pantheon stairway, the Path of Tranquility.

Power of Consecution, “Hunter.”

The 1st Rank of the Path of Tranquility, “Hunter” was a vision in the constellations, a middle-aged man lying in the snowy ground, silently lurking in a deep blue color.

Karl returned to the real world, presenting the dark blue Spiritual Radiance that was calm and silent, quietly alighting on the still very young Chris.

He closed his eyes, peacefully feeling the extraordinary power he had received.

First was the enhancement of his physical fitness, a little less than that of “Gladiator,” and then the increase in Spirituality, a bit more than that of “Gladiator.”

The Power of Consecution of the “Hunter” could not be considered as balanced point allocation, but it was also not an extreme stage.

The Hunter had two extraordinary traits, namely “Tracking Senses” and “Trap Making.”

“Tracking Senses” brought about the all-round strengthening of the five senses, and even allowed for ultra-long-distance tracking based on clues left long ago, an actively

triggered special state that could clearly see the trail left by the target and various “scents” in the air.

“Trap Making” was the ability to turn anything into traps, allowing anyone possessing it to become a leading Trap Master, highly suitable for chaotic real combat.

Chris, who reopened his eyes, nodded, tilted his head slightly, and finally uttered a brief sentence.

“Lord of the Lost, thank you.”

Irene and Byrne were both incredulous, they did not expect Chris would know to thank the deity.

They had originally thought that with his eccentric personality he would surely just nod and then turn to leave.

A gentle and relieved smile appeared on Irene’s face.

Deep in her heart, she knew something, that was Chris seldom spoke but never lied, the thanks he just expressed must have been sincere.

“

Chapter 47: Chapter 46 Alchemy Council

Chris left the basement and with great agility jumped down from the manor’s window, not through the front door, but sprung on to the wall like a cat.

In the night, with his hands behind his back, he silently walked on the wall, then silently flipped down, and soon the boy disappeared behind a few trees.

The children in the orphanage were almost all asleep, even those who weren’t asleep didn’t notice Chris sneaking in.

The silver-haired boy quietly came to the yard and found Vanessa under a tree watching the stars; the girl didn’t realize he was there at all until she suddenly got tapped on the head.

“Ah! Chris, you scared me!”

Vanessa had no idea someone was approaching and her face turned pale with fright. When she saw the boy behind her, she immediately became annoyed and embarrassed.

In four years, she had grown quite a bit.

Even because girls mature earlier, Vanessa was now a little taller than Chris, although her right leg was still severely deformed, looking terrifying and nauseating.

Vanessa pointed seriously at Chris's belly with her cane and frowned, "Apologize, Chris, you always like to scare people."

Chris remained silent and, under the moonlight, looked very beautiful, like an angel without gender, which even stunned Vanessa for a second.

She sighed and said, "Chris, come sit, let's watch the stars together."

Chris calmly sat down next to the girl, knowing that Vanessa must have something on her mind, and quickly listened to her mumbling about her inner frustrations.

"Chris, I heard another story from Hospital Director Irene recently, it made me feel really conflicted."

"In the story, a man with strong sense of justice let his enemy's child go, which later led to all his own family members being killed by that child... Hospital Director Irene asked me if I would make the same choice as that man."

Vanessa bowed her head, unable to figure it out, as she was too young.

"I don't know what to do, but children are innocent either way, yet causing one's own family members to die seems... quite foolish, doesn't it?"

Chris didn't utter a word, knowing that his sister was trying to gradually change Vanessa's notions, and it was indeed becoming more effective.

But her heart seemed to be in pain, as moral dilemmas are often very fatal for those with strong morals.

For some reason, Chris suddenly remembered the girl who once claimed she would teach him a lesson. He didn't really want Vanessa to change at all deep inside, but whatever he said, wasn't he also actively influencing her like his sister?

"Follow, your heart."

Under the night sky and the stars, his voice was calm and reassuring.

Vanessa turned to look at the silver-haired boy, was silent for a long time, and couldn't help saying:

"I didn't quite understand what you're saying. Can't you give me a more precise answer? Forget it, you're terrible with words, and a bit strange, I can't expect anything from you."

Chris, now in a bad mood, stood up with a cold face, and the next moment, he was gone without a trace.

Byrne, Margaret, and their child lived in the best room of the Fischer family mansion, although it was still not comparable to Margaret's previous living environment in Fein City.

He often stayed out all night. Many nights, he was either in the renovated workshop studying new drugs or secretly discussing hidden matters with Irene.

To protect his family in the war that was more than a decade away, for the greater good of the Fischer family, for the unfulfilled wishes of Lucius, Byrne had too many reasons not to rest easy at night.

Over the years, Margaret seemed to vaguely sense that he was hiding something, often questioning him indirectly, but Byrne managed to evade every time. The strong-willed Margaret was initially very unhappy but later stopped caring.

"Should I invest, or do something else?"

Byrne pondered what to do with the wealth the Fischer family now possessed.

Money, when continuously hoarded in hand without being put to use, always seems regrettable, but if invested unwisely or misused, one inevitable regrets it.

As he pondered over what to do, he calmly added a type of Class 0 Extraordinary Material to a vial containing his own blood, just as he had done before.

At that moment, a voice belonging to Byrne himself abruptly surfaced in his mind.

"Spirit Realm, Gate of Shadow"

He was slightly stunned, research on the Fischer family's bloodline had been ongoing for years, but perhaps due to poor luck, he had only heard hints through the "Self-Extracted Formula's" Extraordinary Trait twice before.

They were the Class 1 Extraordinary Material "Non-living Flower" and the enigmatic "Time of Ashes."

According to Irene's uncertain opinion, the so-called "Time of Ashes" might refer to the time represented by the Lord of Ashes among the otherworldly gods.

That is midnight.

As for the concept of the Lord of Ashes and otherworldly gods, Irene had suggested it was best not to speak too freely of them, as those fearsome entities do not belong to this world, and mentioning them too frequently might attract their attention.

Now, the third hint about Fischer blood surfaced in his mind, and it even mentioned the location of the “Spirit Realm!”

Byrne took a deep breath, able to smell the fresh scent of the Non-living Flower on the table.

“What, then, is this ‘Gate of Shadow’ mentioned after the Spirit Realm? It seems to exist within the Spirit Realm as some sort of ‘structure’ or perhaps refers to some other thing or concept and is not an actual physical gate?”

Byrne decided he would ask Irene the next day, as her knowledge of the mysteries of the Spirit Realm was vast, possibly the most extensive on the entire continent.

The next day, as dawn broke and the first ray of light hit the ground,

Byrne, who had found Irene, saw her sitting on the couch holding an envelope, her gaze flickering occasionally as if the contents of the letter had plunged the girl into deep contemplation.

“Irene, I would like to inquire about the ‘Gate of Shadow.’

Irene looked slightly startled, her eyes questioning as she asked Byrne, “Where did you hear about it? The Gate of Shadow is a concept of the Spirit Realm, existing on the periphery of the Spirit Realm.”

Byrne nodded and explained the hints that had appeared in his mind.

After listening to all the reasons and consequences, Irene thought for a moment and then continued, “I see, I understand now.”

She paused before going on, “The Gate of Shadow exists as a Spiritual Gateway on the edge of the Spirit Realm, but after we arrive in the Spirit Realm, we have no idea on which ‘island’ it is actually situated, so we must search repeatedly to find it, and the difficulty for you to get there is considerable.”

Byrne shook his head, unwilling to give up, and continued,

“But we must try. I’ve been researching the blood that flows in our veins for years now, and we’re finally on the brink of some results—we can’t give up halfway!”

His eyes grew steely with resolve. Sooner or later, the Fischer family had to set foot in the Spirit Realm, and it was better to start exploring it from his own generation than to leave the risk to his descendants.

Irene, after a long reflection, said indifferently, "We indeed cannot give up halfway. But if we are truly determined to go to the Spirit Realm, we must be well-prepared."

After she finished speaking, she handed the envelope to Byrne. The text on it was like living golden tadpoles, wriggling before Byrne's eyes.

He was startled but soon made out the contents of the letter before him, which turned out to be a very polite invitation.

The organization extending the invitation claimed to be the "Alchemy Council," and Byrne furrowed his brow slightly as he faintly remembered having heard of it before.

It was said that the Alchemy Council was a secret organization formed by spellcasters adept in alchemy, specializing in the sale and auction of various items, including but not limited to alchemical tools and Mysterious rare artifacts, and even illegal contraband.

His heart skipped a beat; after all, many items were difficult to obtain through normal means, like Treasure class Mysterious rare artifacts that were hard to come by through transactions.

Irene calmly rose from the couch and took back the envelope, saying, "Both you and I are invited, so I suppose only we can see these golden letters."

"Perhaps we could convert some of the family's wealth into resources to prepare for the potential journey to the Spirit Realm."

Chapter 48: Chapter 47 Contact with a Secret Organization

The Alchemy Council's gathering will take place in Fein City in thirteen days, and since Irene has no intention of leaving Nasir, Byrne will be the only one to take the carriage there.

In the past few years, he's been back and forth to Fein City dozens of times, and he's already accustomed to the experience of traveling for work.

"The Alchemy Council, huh? It's my first time dealing with such secretive, undisclosed organizations."

After stepping foot in Fein City, Byrne looked around at the increasingly chaotic architecture, frowning slightly.

He quickly went to the designated bank and received a gift box that had been stored there from the hands of the bank employee.

Back at the inn, Byrne opened the gift box and took out a dark gold mask.

He lifted the dark gold mask and examined it very carefully.

Made from high-quality metal material, it was sturdy and elegant, with complex patterns intricately carved on its edges, covered with a luminescent coating that shimmered more brilliantly under the light.

“A fine piece of art, the creator must be a powerful figure well-versed in alchemical spells.”

Byrne quickly realized that it was an alchemical item created through spells, and the maker was probably a strong spellcaster specializing in alchemy.

Its existence served as a proclamation of the strength behind the Alchemy Council to all invitees.

He carried banknotes equivalent to a total of four hundred gold coins with him, as many people in this era used banknotes that could be exchanged for gold at a bank any time.

As night fell deeper, Byrne arrived at the desolate alley indicated on the address, which was dark, old, and filthy, nothing like what one would expect.

“What should I do?”

He gently touched the walls, but nothing happened.

“...”

He was silent for a moment before he realized, put on the dark gold mask, and once again reached out to touch the cold walls.

The next moment, Byrne felt the environment before his eyes change completely.

In a daze, he arrived at a porch adorned with golden brass decorations, surrounded by a bright and warm light, with servers wearing silver masks that bore smiles, quietly watching the new guest.

“Please follow me,” said the server.

The server led him across the porch into a grand hall.

Glamorous crystal chandeliers hung from the high ceiling, shining brightly and illuminating the entire space, where rows of chairs were occupied by guests wearing all sorts of bizarre masks.

It was like a high-class noble club; Byrne was no longer that bumpkin from years ago, as he had occasionally visited similarly decorated places with Mr. Gold.

And thanks to the powerful memory from the Extraordinary trait “Profound Memory,” he quickly counted that there were a total of twenty silver-faced servers present, with thirty-two guests having arrived here.

Byrne noticed something interesting: he clearly remembered the physical characteristics of the nobility and rich people in the city, yet none matched any of the thirty-something people present.

“I see, it seems to be an Extraordinary effect of the alchemical mask.”

He quickly realized that the “concealment” effect was due to the Extraordinary power contained within the mask, which impeded his ability to recognize the true identities of the guests through normal means.

“It seems that the Alchemy Council’s auction adheres to a principle of secrecy.”

With this in mind, Byrne immediately felt much more at ease, and even some of the less honorable desires deep inside him were somewhat relieved.

He suddenly realized something: another meaning of the mask was probably because they were afraid people would hesitate to auction forbidden items if they could recognize each other.

Since no one could identify anyone, the sense of morality would naturally decrease after the auction started, leading to more uninhibited behavior.

A silver-faced server handed Byrne an auction list written on golden paper, detailing all the items for sale at this auction.

At first glance, Byrne didn’t think much of the list, but he was soon shocked!

The list actually included an option for the trafficking of people from foreign races; he fell into silent contemplation.

The public abolition of slavery was only a few decades old, and in reality, there are still slaves in many smaller places, so it’s not surprising that such a place would sell slaves.

Soon the auction began.

The host, wearing a silver mask, took the stage; tall and thin, he resembled a slender ghost, and every move he made on stage was filled with an immense sense of eeriness.

“The auction begins.”

The auctioneer’s voice was devoid of emotion, making Byrne feel slightly uneasy. He sensed that something was off about him.

Initially, the alchemy council auctioned off items of little importance like artwork, and Byrne just watched without the slightest intent to buy, despite his interest.

It was not until the alchemy council started auctioning off books and the Extraordinary Bequest that Byrne finally decided to make a move.

He bid on some books about the secret history, most of which were forbidden texts that the church did not allow to be privately owned, costing a total of fifteen gold coins.

Having recognized Vanessa’s talent, he also purchased a set of spellcasting heritage for a Summoning-type spellcaster, at the cost of thirty-seven gold coins and ten silver coins.

Its creator was a Monarch-Level spellcaster from five hundred years ago, and it included three common summoning spells “Summoning Fireflies,” “Summoning Birds,” “Summoning Vines,” and a general spellcasting technique “Spell AoE Expansion.”

“Spell AoE Expansion” is one of the five common specialized proficiencies universal to spellcasters, allowing for the expansion of spell’s range and increase in the number of effects produced at the cost of several times more mental power, enabling a master spellcaster to unleash terrifying spell effects instantaneously.

However, only those spellcasters who have successfully reached the Transmutation Level can learn and master “spellcasting technique.”

Vanessa is currently just a talented ordinary person, not even the weakest of spellcasters, and there’s no guarantee she will become a spellcaster of Transmutation Level in the future.

By purchasing this spellcasting heritage for her, Byrne could be said to be investing in the future.

Second-Level spellcasters are considered pillars within the military systems of various nations, undeniably possessing status and strength as powerful Extraordinary Beings.

“Let’s hope she does not disappoint our expectations.”

The alchemy council auctioned off some alchemical tools, and after some thought, Byrne decided to purchase again.

He bought twenty-five blood potions, intending to use them as ingredients, three specially made alchemical flintlocks, and fifty bullets to go with them. He also acquired a considerable amount of alchemical explosives and three potent alchemical burning potions.

Next, Byrne purchased two portions of the ghastly green alchemical poisonous mist spray, which looked repulsive but was, in reality, very effective.

Upon contact with air, they would rapidly evaporate, covering an area of dozens of meters, within which they would corrode the skin of any ordinary creature, causing it to fester.

Although it wouldn't immediately kill, most beings would suffer immensely, nearly losing all ability to move and the will to fight.

Lastly, he acquired five important sobering potions, which could gradually clear the minds of those with abnormal mental states. Irene mentioned that these were necessities when roaming the Spirit Realm.

The total cost for these alchemical tools amounted to seventy-four gold coins and thirteen silver coins.

The auction was coming to an end, and the highlight of the night finally appeared, presented on a tray by a silver-masked attendant.

The alchemy council only held auctions every few months, and the final auction item was always something immensely covetable.

On the outside, it appeared to be a blood-red ring containing an exceptionally powerful force.

The tall and thin auctioneer, his voice sounding from beneath his mask with no hint of fluctuation, joy, or sorrow, introduced, "Tonight's last item for auction is the Treasure-class Mysterious rare artifact, the 'Soul Detachment Ring.'

"Its effect allows the wearer's consciousness to leave the body temporarily in the real world, after which the consciousness can pass through walls, dirt, and other obstacles in an invisible state. The duration depends on the user's spiritual power. The starting bid is two hundred."

At the mention of a Treasure-class Mysterious rare artifact, many in the room immediately became interested. The starting bid was two hundred gold coins. Byrne bid

twice—once at two hundred thirty and then two hundred seventy—but he wasn't able to secure it, merely contributing to the spectacle.

Treasure-class Mysterious rare artifacts are valuable items worth thousands of gold coins. He watched as the bidding prices soared higher and eventually, a female guest in the front row secured it for the price of one thousand five hundred thirty-five gold coins.

Byrne couldn't help but suspect something.

The alchemy council's backers were likely the "Pillar Families" of the Eastern Four Kingdoms!

The majority of the lands, wealth, and resources of the four eastern states—Cyart, Rhea, Vallere, Carnia—were completely controlled by the ten "Pillar Families" and the five major churches.

And all the other smaller families and organizations had no choice but to bow down to their might.

The East Coast Governor, Earl Hovern, backed by the Hovern family—also known as the "Shattered Giant" family—were among them.

The power behind Duke Romann of the Romann family was colossal; they too were one of the Ten Great Pillars, with their family bearing the moniker "Dark Night Angel."

Compared to them, the Fischer family was extremely insignificant, not even worth mentioning.

Yet in his heart, Byrne believed that with the help of the great Lord of the Lost, the Fischer family would stand shoulder to shoulder with the great Pillars one day, even reaching beyond them in the future!

Chapter 49: Chapter 48 The Gun Muzzle on the Forehead

After leaving the Alchemy Council, Byrne felt an insatiable yearning within, almost addicted to the thrill of spending a fortune.

He then recalled those auctioned individuals of foreign races with a hint of sympathy but knew he couldn't play the role of the "Savior".

Suddenly, the image of that exceptionally beautiful elf under the moonlight emerged in his mind.

Byrne shook his head, muttering to himself, "That should have been our last meeting. I hope she doesn't end up in those people's hands."

Once, in his younger years, he had harbored impractical hopes—even romantic thoughts—of reuniting with the elf.

But after marriage, only Margaret had a place in the depths of Byrne's heart.

"That auction at the Alchemy Council... I wonder who is behind it all. I'm afraid I might have to come here again."

Just as he was about to leave for good, he suddenly stared at the dark gold mask for a long moment, then abruptly stopped and quickly turned back into the deserted alley.

He put on the mask and re-entered the porch, facing the puzzled silver-faced attendants.

Byrne spoke in an exceedingly calm tone, "I'd like to purchase a few more alchemical masks with 'concealment' effects."

The auction had already ended, so normally one would expect guests not to come back and to leave hurriedly, as if fleeing a dangerous den.

However, Byrne was one of the few guests who kept returning.

Upon his request to buy more alchemical masks, the silver-faced attendants quickly recovered.

A very tall, leading silver-faced attendant stepped forward, bowed slightly, and replied most politely.

"I apologize, but our masks are limited to one per invited guest and are not sold in surplus."

"I see, I understand now."

Actually, Byrne was not surprised by the answer; his sudden idea had been just an attempt.

After all, the 'concealment' effect of the alchemical masks was far too practical.

The leading attendant spoke with a soft voice, a hint of amusement continuing,

"Esteemed guest, there is something important I must inform you: the 'concealment' effect of the alchemical mask only works here. It's best not to use it to handle matters outside."

Byrne fell into thought, feeling a deep sense of disappointment toward the alchemical mask.

He quickly understood the reasoning behind it.

Otherwise, whenever people wanted to do something covert, they would don the mask of the Alchemy Council, and the so-called secret organization would become almost universally known.

Leaving the dark alley, Byrne got onto the prepared carriage, removing the dark gold mask and placing it in its special box.

The coachman, in charge of driving the carriage, was Theo, the captain of the guard who had worked for the Fischer family for many years and had been Byrne's swordsmanship teacher before.

Theo had been a boatswain, working for sea merchant John for over a decade until he almost lost his life in a shipwreck and refused to set sail again.

Several years ago, as his savings dwindled, he sought new employment with the Fischer family through John's introduction due to his skilled hand and rich experience, ultimately appointed by Lucius to be the family's Guards Captain.

After returning to the inn, Byrne didn't go to sleep immediately but pondered visiting Mr. Gold the next day to discuss the food processing factory matter.

The money had been spent; he needed to outright refuse the invitation to invest in the food processing factory.

The night had grown deep, and after Byrne finished thinking, he went to sleep, waking up after 8 in the morning.

However, Mr. Gold was a creature of the night, without a morning or noon to his days, rising in the afternoon, so now was not the time to visit him.

He contemplated his next steps:

"Having traveled from Nasir to Fein City, it's been such a long journey. The guards and servants are all tired. Let's rest another day and visit my parents-in-law and Baron Hoffman of the Hoffman family the day after tomorrow."

Travel by carriage was indeed troublesome, and Byrne couldn't help but think how much faster travel would be with the luxury of spells.

The expenditures of the Fischer family at the auction were significant; the goods would be delivered to Nasir within half a month.

It wasn't until after 3 in the afternoon that Byrne, along with his guard and servants, set out by carriage to Mr. Gold's villa in the city center.

"I am Byrne Fischer. I wish to have an audience with Mr. Gold, as there are some matters I would like to discuss in detail."

Byrne announced his name and soon was welcomed by the steward and waited in the drawing room.

The polite steward approached and said with a smile to Byrne, who he already knew well,

"Mr. Byrne, we meet again. Mr. Gold mentioned that he could see you in the study in about ten minutes. Around five o'clock, Mr. Gold has other guests to receive, so he won't keep you for dinner."

Half an hour would likely be enough for the conversation, Byrne reasoned.

Due to the profitable collaboration with the Fischer family, both parties naturally found each other more and more agreeable to the eye.

Over the course of four years, his relationship with Mr. Gold grew stronger.

Byrne was well aware that much of the money Mr. Gold had made for the Fischer family had actually gone to Viscount Bast.

Viscount Bast Leone was the head of the "Lion clan," Mr. Gold's brother-in-law, and also the lord of Fein City, who had just turned fifty-three this year and was still in a very vigorous stage.

He had long since reached Level 2, and was even a powerful Knight of the Transmutation elite, although it was virtually impossible for him to advance to Monarch in his lifetime.

The Leone family's stable inheritance of two Extraordinary bloodlines, "Bronze Lion" and "Graystone Giant Ape," both stemmed from the power of high-level magic beast Bloodlines.

Also, the Leone family had a seventeen percent chance of inheriting a "protect" type spellcasting talent.

The entire Lion clan had been operating in Fein City for over a hundred years, and the core family members had branched out to nearly a hundred.

In comparison, the foundation and influence of the Eagle clan were much weaker. It could basically be said that on paper, their strength was no match for the Leone family.

Their biggest trump card was the backing of Earl Hovern, the East Coast Governor.

Although at banquets, Earl Hovern always seemed chummy with Viscount Bast, and on the surface, even longtime intimate friends for many years.

However, in the upper circles of the East Coast, it was clear to everyone that the sparks of tension between Earl Hovern and Viscount Bast had long since exploded everywhere, and nowadays the various industries owned by the Lion clan were being eroded step by step.

So far, Viscount Bast and the family behind him had not been seriously hurt, as Mr. Gold's ability to do business and amass wealth was extremely strong, always handling the main business deals of the Lion clan.

Ten minutes later, Byrne looked up at the naval clock on the wall; it was just past four o'clock.

He made his way familiarly to the villa's second floor and gently knocked on the study door, but he did not hear Mr. Gold's voice calling "come in" with its usual low timbre.

Byrne paused, "Profound Memory" showed that Mr. Gold always called "come in," today was different.

Then he heard a "crack" as something shattered, sensing something was wrong, he pushed the door and entered.

"Mr. Gold..."

Byrne was about to speak but stopped short, his gaze gradually turning somber as his eyebrows slightly knitted together.

Something was wrong.

The massive body, weighing hundreds of pounds, lay supine on the floor, the bald man's eyes staring fixatedly at the ceiling, his gaze filled with intense anger and lingering immense fear, as if he had seen the most terrifying thing in the world.

There was a clear bullet hole at his temple, and plasma was oozing out.

An incredibly exquisite alchemical flintlock lay fallen beside Mr. Gold's hand, with the residual smell of smoke still hanging in the air.

Dead!

"Damn it!"

Byrne took a deep breath, not wanting to touch anything, he cautiously moved back, suspecting the murderer might still be nearby.

“Mr. Byrne, what are you doing here?”

The sudden appearance of a voice nearby made Byrne flinch, and he immediately turned to see two people.

One was Mr. Gold’s butler, and the other was the local sheriff of Fein City, an Extraordinary Exponent Knight of the Transmutation class from the Lion clan, Viscount Bast’s third brother, Renzo.

Sheriff Renzo, clad in a black leather jacket and sporting a two-pronged mustache, looked quite stern.

Wondering why they had suddenly come here, Byrne said after a moment of silence, “Mr. Gold is dead, the murderer might still be nearby.”

Both the butler and Sheriff Renzo were completely stunned.

“Mr. Gold is dead? What on earth are you talking about!” Sheriff Renzo roared.

The two of them hurried into the study and were shocked at the sight before them.

Mr. Gold’s hefty corpse was right in front of them; everything was too shocking!

The butler began to cry, shaking his head continuously, “Oh Lord of Salvation, why has this happened! Impossible!”

Byrne paused a moment, then reminded again, “The murderer might still be nearby, we must be careful, they may attack again.”

“Nothing will happen, Mr. Byrne, with me here the murderer won’t succeed,” Sheriff Renzo quickly regained his composure, and then his voice confidently reassured him.

Just as Byrne was about to nod, he saw Sheriff Renzo decisively and swiftly pulling out the alchemical flintlock from his waistband and, without hesitation, pressed it against his head, the icy-hard sensation chilling to the bone.

“Don’t move!”

Chapter 50: Chapter 49 Mr. Humor

Byrne had actually reacted the moment the other party drew the gun.

He forcibly endured his instinct not to dodge.

Fein City's Sheriff Renzo, as a mainstay of the Lion clan and a mid-level Transmutation Knight Extraordinary Exponent, had absolutely no chance of defeating him at close quarters.

Byrne instantly judged that any frivolous attempt to dodge might prompt the other's next attack, and that not resisting was the correct choice.

Sheriff Renzo hesitated slightly, the young man before him was calmer and more composed than he had expected, without the panic and screaming he had anticipated.

"I am not the murderer."

Sheriff Renzo was also unsure whether Byrne of the Fischer family was the actual murderer.

He was just trying to intimidate the other party, figuring that once Byrne was caught off guard, he could easily extract a lot of information.

But now, looking into the young man's calm eyes, Sheriff Renzo felt uncertain again.

"First, tell me why you are here."

Byrne looked around and, feeling that the murderer was not nearby, explained very calmly:

"The butler can testify for me, just one minute ago I had come upstairs, and you arrived shortly after. Moreover, I had an appointment with Mr. Gold in advance, and did not barge in."

He paused, shook his head, and said:

"If I really wanted to kill him, leaving so many traces would be simply ludicrous; anyone would be able to trace it back to me immediately."

"Moreover, Mr. Gold and I are close business partners. Our business has always been well, and there are no conflicts. I have absolutely no motive."

Having said that, Byrne gazed into the other's eyes and slowly revealed a smile:

"Put the gun down, Sheriff Renzo."

Sheriff Renzo calmly lowered the gun; even if the murderer really was Byrne, he was fully confident in his ability to deal with him, with or without firearms.

"Thank you."

Byrne concealed his dissatisfaction and, as calmly as possible, walked forward, slowly turning to survey everything in the room quickly.

“Profound Memory” was at work.

While gazing at the blood next to the bullet hole, he still felt dizzy due to his innate fear of blood, but he was no longer so easily knocked down.

He was well aware that he was no longer the boy who could rely on his father, and that as an adult, he did not have the right to just “fall down”.

His combat ability was weak, his life experience shallow, and he had psychological defects, aspects in which he could not compare to his father Lucius.

He was aware of these things.

So, whenever he was alone, lying in bed with no one around, Byrne often recalled the blood in his Profound Memory, remembering the repulsive odor that signified death and despair.

Enduring the pain time after time, Byrne gradually tried to overcome the most fatal flaw deep inside him.

And now, it seemed to be effective; he took a deep breath, expelled the dizziness from his mind, and fully memorized everything he observed.

The shattered mirror on the floor was likely the source of the “crack” sound, the muzzle of the alchemical flintlock still had gunpowder residue, clearly it had been used not long before, followed by the wine bottle on the desk and the two glasses of red wine, except it was unknown to whom the second glass was poured.

Byrne felt that the wine was not poured for him, as Mr. Gold knew that he hardly drank, and such a worldly man would not forget that.

Sheriff Renzo was squatting next to Mr. Gold’s corpulent corpse, his expression serious without carelessly touching it, and without turning his head, he said to Butler Poltz and Byrne:

“Mr. Byrne, you must stay here. Butler Poltz, go find my brother and summon Viscount Bast. Don’t spread the word for now and don’t let anyone from the villa come to this side of the study, understood?”

“Yes! Gentlemen, of course, I understand. I will go to Lord Viscount right away!”

The butler nodded repeatedly, began stepping away, and then suddenly, the sheriff turned back and coldly stared at him.

“For whatever reason, if you leak what has happened here beforehand, I will consider you an accomplice to the murderer.”

The butler, pale with fright, scurried away in a panic.

Byrne could tell, this third son of the Lion clan, Sheriff Renzo Leone, was very adept at “intimidation”.

Only Byrne and Sheriff Renzo were left in the room, and because of the recent awkwardness, they did not speak for a long while.

Byrne was not one to hold a grudge, and took the initiative to say to Sheriff Renzo:

“I think the person who wanted to kill Mr. Gold must be an acquaintance, as there were two glasses of red wine on the desk and I do not drink, so the second glass couldn’t have been poured for me.”

Renzo glanced at the young man and nodded calmly: “Makes some sense.”

The atmosphere relaxed slightly, and they did not say much more, waiting until dusk gradually fell and they finally heard footsteps coming upstairs.

The study door was opened from the outside, and three people quickly entered.

They were Mr. Gold’s butler, Viscount Bast, and a middle-aged woman whom Byrne did not recognize at all.

Viscount Bast was slightly short, of medium build, with meticulously combed greying hair, wearing a black tailcoat and a black hat.

His perpetually squinted eyes betrayed a cunning sparkle like that of a fox hunting. Known as “the fox leading the pride of lions,” Viscount Bast’s image of craft and cunning left a profound impression on people.

“Renzo, Byrne, I’m here, alas.”