

Sorcerer's Handbook

Chapter 101: Summoning “Sincerity”

Cailleach, Swordflower College.

“.....I knew it must be a whirlpool, damn it! Why don't I have luck like you? My Silver Wings were painstakingly condensed bit by bit every day and night!”

“Oh, no. The more I think about it the angrier I get. The more I look at you the more jealous I become. All my life I've hated people like you the most, those with both great luck and talent. Go away, go away!”

“Go back and diligently train your swordsmanship. If I find out you become arrogant and lazy just because of this little achievement, I'll burn you to ashes with my jealous flames...”

Sonya was kicked right out of the professor's research lab, spat her tongue out and headed back happily – despite Professor Trotzam's harsh words, he hadn't stinted on the rewards at all. He directly gave her two sword spirits from his own treasures, and even shared two Sword Miracles with her!

The two single-wing spirits were ‘Sheath’ and ‘Sharpen’, the former Sonya had seen before with senior sister Sylvia. It can be triggered when the blade is kept in the sheath for more than 15 seconds, which strengthens the power of the next attack;

The latter is a specialized spirit for empowering blades. When sharpening a sword it will trigger, making the edge keener, more resilient and less prone to chips and breaks.

The two Sword Miracles were “Sheath's Gathered Light” and “Sharpen for Ten Years”, both derived from the main spirits of Sheath and Sharpen. Sonya would need to purchase additional support spirits to activate these Miracles.

For example, “Sharpen for Ten Years” requires the time series spirits ‘Second’, ‘Minute’, ‘Hour’, ‘Day’, ‘Month’, ‘Year’.

Although they are time spirits, they aren't expensive and can even be considered cheap, readily available at any time on the spirit trading platforms.

In the second layer of the virtual world, the Time Continent, this series of time spirits are practically everywhere. Two-wing casters can harvest quite a few every time they enter the virtual world.

Although only Two-wing casters have the qualifications to gather them, with such large quantities the prices are naturally pressed down. Otherwise Professor Trotzam wouldn't have taught Sonya this Miracle – the Sword Saint still understands the circumstances of his genius student.

However, because she sold quite a few spirits from the virtual world, Sonya is actually wealthy now. She has been pondering what spirits to purchase recently to improve her tactical system, and Professor Trotzam has helped resolve her dilemma early.

From these two Miracles it's also clear that Professor Trotzam has established Sonya's current goals: raise her level, become familiar with spirits, and master Miracles.

This is only natural. Condensing Silver Wings in just eight days starting from nothing, Sonya's swordsmanship level completely cannot keep up with the speed of her arcane energy growth.

The chasm before Sonya now is her spell level. Until the day she raises her swordsmanship to the Gold level, she cannot summon two-wing spirits for a single day, naturally unable to enter the second layer of the virtual world, unable to step foot on the Time Continent, unable to condense Golden Wings.

A caster's advancement does not permit weak points. Arcane power and level must reach the criteria together for the virtual world to open up higher level worlds.

Therefore, even if Sonya fully unfolds her Silver Wings, if she wants to advance to Two-wing, she would need at least a year to precipitate her swordsmanship level.

In a certain sense, Sonya condensing arcane energy so quickly actually has huge risks, because from now on she will arrive at the core areas of the sea of knowledge, and if unlucky could even encounter mature knowledge lifeforms – absolutely not something a One-wing caster can contend against.

This is also why Professor Trotzam is so strict with her, because if Sonya becomes lax and lazy, it is very possible she would die repeatedly in the virtual world. Not only would her soul be damaged, she could also lose important spirits, and possibly even cause her spell level to stagnate.

'Fair winds' are a great taboo for casters. Countless casters, after obtaining a fortuitous encounter, believed themselves blessed by heaven, confidence inflated, but were soon harshly taught a lesson by the virtual world, ultimately fading away into the masses, their achievements even less than diligent casters who steadily climbed step-by-step.

The virtual world is no charitable place. The more benefits you obtain from it, the greater pressure it will impose on you. All the fortunes bestowed by the virtual world that are given away are marked behind the misfortunes that need to be paid for.

Unless Sonya could meet a Golden Fish like the whirlpool through a burst of luck, directly smuggling her to the Time Continent, then she could ignore the level divide and directly advance to Two-wing.

But not to mention Professor Trotzam, even Sonya hadn't considered this possibility – because even the Observers couldn't find Golden Fish.

Thinking of the Observers, Sonya's excited expression gradually faded away.

She quietly sighed, preparing to return to the dorms – today was still under martial law, the entire school suspended with all students prohibited from approaching the White Tower.

Yet just exiting the research building, she saw a familiar luxury sedan parked on the driveway. She turned to circle around it but the window slowly down, revealing Felix's handsome face.

"Get in, I'll take you back."

A statement without need for response. Felix slowly followed Sonya in the car, asking "You met a whirlpool?"

"Yes."

By now nearly everyone in school knew that the country bumpkin Sonya had encountered a whirlpool just days after entering the sea of knowledge – if Sonya had displayed some rare spirit, there might still be gossip about her being a mistress to get them or something. But the growth of Silver arcane energy had only this one avenue, even the most gossipy people had nothing to say.

No one could possibly think someone used a whirlpool to take Sonya as their mistress!

As for nonsense like "she's just lucky", once it appeared in the Swordflower Exchange, it would only invoke ridicule and bans from the students – the rise of every legendary caster involved fortune's favor, unfortunate casters had long been bullied by the virtual world into whimpering.

Attacking a caster's luck is the most shameful behavior, no different than "if he couldn't breathe then I could definitely beat him", rogue and boring.

So Sonya had no need to deny it, moreover right now she couldn't deny it anyway.

Felix was silent for a long time, and only when Sonia was about to enter the dormitory area did he suddenly ask, "After you crossed the whirlpool, didn't you meet a severely injured fish and get the Murderous Sword from it?"

Sonya was slightly stunned, whatever she was thinking at the moment, but the ritual had already decided what she was going to say, “Yes.”

Felix was a little surprised, he hadn’t actually expected such an answer. If Sonia had actually encountered it, she would have inevitably grasped the subtext of Felix’s statement.

According to Sonya’s character and ability, she would definitely be able to recognize the drop and not let Felix see the slightest trace.

Felix gently tapped his fingers on the steering wheel and asked, “What price would I have to pay to buy back Murderous Sword from you?”

Although Sonya wanted to act tough and say ‘not for sale’, her mouth obediently said “Give me a noble title.”

Felix was slightly surprised “Didn’t I mention to you before, as long as you marry me-”
“I don’t like you.”

What did liking or not have to do with a marriage of mutual benefit... Felix almost blurted out this sentence, but seeing Sonya’s earnest expression, he swallowed the words back down with a sigh “If you’re unwilling to take that path, then I have no other conditions to move you... wait a moment.”

Sonya decisively hurried back to the dorm area, thinking Felix wouldn’t openly rob a civilian girl’s spirit in broad daylight right?

She saw Felix take out a paper to write on, then directly flew it over to Sonya “Read it then burn it yourself, can this be worth a favor to you?”

Sonya took it and looked – it was surprisingly a Miracle formula called Murderous Activation, with Murderous Sword as the main spirit.

Unlike simply enhancing might like Wicked Light Slash, Murderous Activation was a very comprehensive composite Miracle. Its effect was for the caster to convert murderous intent into self enhancement, comprehensively increasing strength, explosive power, reflexes, health recovery and more, with the boost strengthening as murderous intent rose.

This was a very practical Miracle in both the virtual world and reality, because murderous intent included not just the enemy’s but the caster’s own as well.

At the Silver level, Murderous Activation could grant the caster up to 150% increase. Sonya couldn’t afford such a useful Miracle even if she emptied her little money stash.

Clearly this was a matching Miracle Felix obtained together with Murderous Sword.

“Can this formula make you owe me a favor?”

“It can, but only a favor approximately equal to one silver coin. If your request exceeds one silver coin, I would guiltily and anxiously refuse it.”

“You’ve calculated it very clearly.” Felix smiled “I will use this silver coin favor at the most suitable place.”

“But you’re just giving this to me?” Sonya said in surprise “No confidentiality agreement? No other conditions?”

“No need, just use Murderous Sword well, don’t waste it.”

Having said that, Felix drove away. Sonya was a bit confused, thinking so this is how rich people are, casually giving away a Miracle?

But it was understandable too. As one of the ‘21 Secret Swords’, for Felix obtaining Murderous Sword again would be too difficult, so the matching Miracle Murderous Activation was nearly meaningless to him, better to give it to Sonya as a favor.

Moreover, Felix seemed to want to switch to training in toxins, water and wind, swordsmanship had become his cover, Professor Trotzam was just a temporary shelter he found, now he and Sonya had no competitive relation.

Although that was the case, Sonya still couldn’t help sighing at the boldness of the silly rich young master. If it were her, no way could she bear to freely give away a Miracle, at least need the other party to fork out some money to appease her miserly heart.

But Murderous Activation still needed two supporting spirits, the high price, and the possibility of not being able to buy it, added to Sonya’s already poor situation.

As if she finally became lucky after such bitter, in just a single day Sonya obtained two spirits and three Miracles. Just grasping these new ‘equipment’ would consume quite a bit of her time.

If it was the Sonya from half a month ago, she definitely couldn’t have imagined a day where she would be troubled by having too many spirits and Miracles.

Yet what troubled Sonya most right now was not the spirits and Miracles.

She had originally wanted to relax in the dorms, watch some of Dahlia’s new show or something. But after hesitating for a bit, she still chose to go to the training hall for spirit training.

11 pm at night, Sonya arrived at the Meditation building on time.

Although the school was still under martial law, the areas outside the White Tower had basically resumed operations, like the cafeteria, training halls and such. Only classes were cancelled, having students self-study the entire day – many students hoped these days would continue indefinitely.

When looking for the Door of Truth, Sonya suddenly felt some anxiety, but quickly calmed down.

‘Was still forced to train swordsmanship for two hours tonight... clearly the Observer’s power is still in effect...

‘And for a revived powerhouse with lost memories, even if he died he could definitely revive again...

‘If something really happened to him wouldn’t that be great? Then I could gain freedom. I’ve already condensed the Silver Wings, temporarily no longer needing him to explore the virtual world, he’s useless now...’

‘But he most likely successfully escaped last night, just accidentally overslept which is why he didn’t come to the virtual world. No way something happened that easily. Come to think of it, if I show off the new spirits and Miracles I obtained, wouldn’t he be very surprised?’

Amidst her random thoughts, Sonya found the Door of Truth and sank into consciousness, entering the virtual world.

Her soul passed through layers of dark mist, her consciousness coalescing into form in the virtual world. Sonya slowly opened her eyes, the scene entering her eyes the familiar boat, and the familiar strange man.

His voice was still just as frivolous and unreliable: “Good evening, Swordswoman.”

Sonya suddenly forgot the words she had prepared to complain and rebuke with.

Like a heavy weight lifted from her heart, she breathed out in relief, lightly pressing a hand to her chest, revealing an expression of having a weight taken off as she smiled lightly “It’s good that you’re alright.”

This sudden concern made Ashe pause in surprise, but before he could say anything, a flash of gold light burst out from Sonya’s chest, transforming into a radiant single-wing spirit.

Its exterior looked nearly transparent like a butterfly, with only one wing, but when fluttering about it refracted rainbow light, gorgeous as dreamy bubbles.

Even without contacting it, just seeing it in that instant, Ashe and Sonya already knew this spirit's name.

“Sincerity”.

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

Chapter 102: You Really Don't Care About Your Own Life and Death?

“Sincerity”

“Single-Wing Spirit”

“Restriction: Must possess a heart”

“Basic Effect: Transforms the heart into a ‘Sincere Heart’. During the duration, greatly enhances the sorcerer’s mental resistance in various aspects, and weakens negative effects that act upon the soul, consciousness and mind, such as dizziness, confusion, lethargy, etc.”

“Passive Effect: The sorcerer will become more fond of telling the truth, prefer sincere communication, and more easily discern the authenticity of others’ words.”

“There are only two tragedies in life: one is not telling the truth, the other is not telling the truth truth.”

Sonya stroked this transparent butterfly-like single-wing spirit, feeling an incredible sensation. This was not her first time summoning a spirit, but it was the first time doing so without any precautions, making it so surprisingly delightful.

She knew the “Sincerity” spirit was summoned due to the Observer’s compulsory ritual, yet she grasped “Sincerity” with almost no obstacles, fully comprehending its knowledge structure.

Sonya had a strong premonition: even if she were to lose “Sincerity” in the future, she could summon it again. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Clearly she had never studied any knowledge about “Sincerity”, and her own nature was also far different from “Sincerity”. However, as she stroked this transparent butterfly, the

resonance of knowledge connected her with the spirit, giving Sonya a feeling as if they were blood-bound. It was as if “Sincerity” was also her spirit when her birth.

She suddenly recalled what was taught in class about the origin of sorcerers.

The first sorcerers did not know how to summon spirits. They simply lived normal lives, then all kinds of “little cuties” would emerge to help them.

In that distant era, time was abundant, worth waiting for. Every second and minute could bring spirits to their side.

Ashe opened the “Operator Management” interface and took a look.

“Death Maniac Swordswoman”

“Human Female Age 18”

“Trust Level: 2 (40% EXP Sharing)”

“Resonance of Trust – Greed Falls Short: Chance to acquire better spoils when acting together.”

“Profession: Silver Sorcerer of Annihilation”

“Professional Trait: Recover 0.5% max arcane energy with each effective attack.”

“Possessions: Wooden Training Sword”

“Controlled Spirits: Vibration Sword, Moon Silk, Virtual World Telescope, Murderous Sword, Split Sword, Sheath, Sharpen”

“Sword Style: Silver Rank”

“Light Style: Silver Rank”

“Water Style: Silver Rank”

“Mind Style: Silver Rank”

“Virtual World Exploration: 0.098%”

“Curse of Knowledge: Whirlpool Venom”

As expected, her Mind Style directly rose to Silver rank, but how did she obtain several spirits I haven’t seen before?

Sonya told Ashe about her experiences and gains these past two days, equally surprising and delighting him. He thought this was likely the social and story modules that were missing from Aurora's Sorcerer Handbook. Even without a player's help, a mature swordswoman could progress through the story alone and obtain rewards.

Although Ashe could not help the swordswoman clear "game levels", he was determined not to drag her down, and would try his best to accommodate her needs when dividing spoils in the future.

"I can teach you 'Murderous Activation', but I cannot tell you about 'Sheath's Gathered Light' and 'Sharpen for Ten Years'," Sonya explained. "The latter two miracles were taught by Professor Trotzam. We signed a non-disclosure agreement that only grants me usage rights, not sharing rights. Before tearing up the contract, I cannot reveal any information about those two miracles."

Ashe expressed understanding. Those two miracles were the swordswoman's character-exclusive story rewards. Naturally it was impossible to share them with other characters. The source of Murderous Activation was the Murderous Sword, which was a reward they obtained together in the virtual world. Gaining additional storylines from it was like bonus rewards, so everyone could benefit.

However, he was not interested in these miracles. After all, he did not have the key spirits, and he himself was a sorcerer without any skills. Even if he learned the miracles, he would not be able to research much out of them.

Sonya glanced at him and pursed her lips to ask, "What about you? Did you break out of prison?"

Ashe shook his head and recounted the bizarre experiences of the past two days.

Upon hearing that the prison break plan was cancelled, the Three-Winged Saint Hunter had arrived, and he was even nearly murdered by the captain in his dorm room, Sonya's emotions also fluctuated up and down.

"So what are you going to do? Wait until ten days later to break out the prison again?"

"Hopefully," Ashe shrugged. "But there's another Blood Moon Tribunal in a few days. I highly suspect I'll be selected into the lucky eight again. With Sylin even inviting Saint sorcerers, I don't believe he'll miss this chance to openly and legally end my life."

"Last time I had Valcas standing in front of me. This time I can only rely on my own abilities to get through."

"You want to contend against the Blood Moon Tribunal?"

"I want to act pitiful on the livestream, so the audience votes for other criminals instead."

“So in other words, you plan on waiting helplessly for your death.” Sonya’s brows furrowed as she showed an unsatisfied expression.

In the past, Sonya would have brushed it off with a joke or two even if she mocked him. After all, the Observer’s reality was unrelated to her. The Observer’s complaints and worries about his circumstances were at most chatting material during their breaks.

She had never truly cared about – or rather, worried about – the Observer’s circumstances.

But this time, Sonya could not help but ask, “Don’t you have any backup plans or hidden cards? If you really encounter an inescapable predicament, do you have any surefire way to get out of it?”

“No no, if I did I would have broken out already to breathe the sweet outside air.”

“How could you not have any, you can force me to train, you can see through the secrets of the virtual world, you can casually read the Sorcerer Handbook, you even made me summon spirits I’d never imagined before. How could you not even be able to save yourself?”

“But I really can’t do it,” Ashe spread his hands helplessly. “I guess I’m just unlucky. Sorry.”

Sonya stared at him intently, and suddenly said, “Is it my misperception, or do you really not care about your own life and death?”

Ashe was slightly startled. He turned his head and looked at the misty ocean, saying awkwardly, “Hearing you care so much about me, I’m a little embarrassed.”

“I’m not...”

Sonya suddenly froze mid-sentence. “Wait, did my ritual stop?”

Ashe nodded. “Of course, the ritual already ended when you summoned the ‘Sincerity’ spirit. By the way, your Mind rank also rose to Silver. Remember to find some books to read when you get back – or perhaps I can arrange Mind training for you.”

“No need, I’ll go learn Mind myself!” Sonya firmly rejected. She looked at Ashe suspiciously for a moment, and suddenly blurted out, “Observer, you are a humble, friendly and kind good person.”

Ashe wondered why he had just received a deluxe good person card. He saw Sonya breathe a long sigh of relief, “Ah, lying feels so nice.”

Ashe was speechless. He scoffed, "I don't want to discuss this with you. It's time to explore the virtual world. Since we've both formed the Silver Wings, we'll play it safe for now and explore low-risk areas as much as possible—"

"You haven't answered my question yet."

Sonya grabbed Ashe's right wrist as he was about to tap the light screen. Her pale red eyes stared straight at Ashe's blurry visage. "I've never seen anyone care so little about their own life and death. Is it that you have some mysterious hidden card I don't know about, or do you really not care at all about your own life and death?"

"Hey, it's not that I don't care. It's just that I don't see the need to outwardly display my nervousness. Do you really want to see me panicking and shivering in fear? Swordsman, you have such twisted tastes~" Ashe spoke lightly. His words also sounded reasonable.

Yet Sonya shook her head.

"When I was young, my mother would occasionally bring home snacks and treats. Whenever I asked her to eat some too, she would always shake her head and say she already ate. That's the feeling you're giving me now – do you think I'm a little girl? Even a little girl could see through such a flimsy lie."

Ashe thought for a moment, then relaxed and laid down in the boat. He smiled lightly.

"I didn't lie, I told the truth. If I wasn't afraid of death, how could I care so much about breaking out? How could I rack my brains to form an escape team? I also fear death, I also desire life – that's a biological instinct. It's just..."

"Just what?"

"The most I can think of is just living. No past, no future, no family, no friends. The only drive pushing me to move forward now is simple biological inertia. I don't have a goal worth striving for. Living is just for the sake of living."

"Sounds like nonsense and drama, right? I was afraid you'd laugh at me." He shrugged. "I don't know how to describe this feeling... It's like my whole being is light as a balloon, yet only a slender thread ties me to the ground."

"It sounds like the early symptoms of 'Eternal Life Syndrome'," said Sonya. "Some high-age legendary sorcerers have a chance of contracting this special illness. Because their virtual world explorations have stalled and their management of reality is severely lacking, coupled with their old age meaning they have not updated their social circles in time, or even unable to keep up with the changing times, they eventually fall into confusion and loneliness."

“‘Eternal Life Syndrome’ was considered a terminal illness long ago. Sorcerers who had it would quickly have their souls wither away and die.”

Ashe was shocked. “That serious?”

“But with the development of medical sorcerers, this illness was soon cracked. No sorcerer has died from ‘Eternal Life Syndrome’ in the past few centuries.”

Sonya held up two fingers. “There are two treatment methods. The first is directly using the miracle ‘Lamp of Hope’ to reignite the spark within the sorcerer and help them rediscover their life’s goal. ‘Lamp of Hope’ is also a very common medical miracle that can effectively treat illnesses stemming from the mind and consciousness.”

Although Ashe had tried his best to keep an open mind about this world, he still found himself constantly surprised by the sorcerers – even sentimental diseases could be cured. Sorcerers really were wondrous.

“The second method is counseling, which is getting you back on track through conversation. Do you need me to provide treatment?”

“Sure, how does the counseling work?”

“First, you have to call me Master.”

Ashe was silent for a moment. “Swordswoman, I feel you also show some symptoms of ‘Eternal Life Syndrome’. How about I provide treatment for you first... Even little boy would not believe a lie that obvious!”

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

Chapter 103: Guarding My Dream

Sonya clicked her tongue. She saw the Observer suddenly become so dejected, and thought she could take advantage of this opportunity to completely change the dynamics between them, turning the Observer under her control.

But if she thought about it from his perspective, Sonya could understand the Observer’s feelings.

He had awakened in an unfamiliar body, losing all memories of being a Sorcerer, yet not inheriting any memories of the new body either. He was like a newborn baby abandoned on the streets, so how could he not feel lost?

The only difference between the Observer and a baby was that he wouldn't cry and he wasn't as cute as a baby.

Just when he had come up with an ingenious prison break plan and was about to take action, all kinds of accidents had disrupted it. Plus there was an unresolvable crisis looming over them, so it was normal for the Observer to feel discouraged.

When Sonya didn't finish her homework on time, she would also completely give up and listen to fate.

But when she gave up, the worst consequence was being scolded by a professor.

Whereas if the Observer gave up, he could really die.

She couldn't let that happen.

"Do you want power? As long as you become a Saint Sorcerer and gain the legendary Four Wings, you can overlook all living beings and wield power enough to overturn the world."

"I want it, but only a little bit. Power is indeed a marvelous thing, and it's good to have it, but I won't be greedy without it either. The Silver Wings have already made me very satisfied."

"Do you want to explore the secrets of the virtual world? The sea of knowledge is only the first layer of the virtual world. The time spirits are the second layer, the boundless distant void is the third, and the Ruby Mountains are the fourth... Many Sorcerers are immersed in the virtual world, not only because the virtual world can give them power, but also because traveling the virtual world itself is the most touching adventure."

"I want to, but not that much. To be honest, I'm the kind of person who needs to cool down for a few months after one trip. If it wasn't for continuing to increase my strength, I would have discussed with you about whether we should pause exploring the virtual world for now, since we've already condensed the Silver Wings—"

"Of course not! How could a Sorcerer pause exploring the virtual world! Even the laziest donkey on the production team wouldn't dare say that!" Sonya shook her head repeatedly, as if hearing some outrageous words: "You're so strange. Isn't power and the virtual world usually the ultimate desire for Sorcerers? Or does your taste run more vulgar, desiring authority or women instead?"

"Would it sound better if I said career and love instead?" Ashe said, "Actually, if I could settle down after breaking out of prison, and meet a pure, cute, nice-figured beauty, then live a sweet, peaceful life together, I would be very satisfied with that."

“...The original owner of this body must have been framed,” Sonya said very seriously. “This kind of thinking definitely didn’t come from you. You must have been influenced by the body. A body that can produce such thoughts, how could it possibly belong to a cult leader!”

Although Ashe didn’t agree with the swordswoman vetoing his vulgar tastes, he concurred with her latter point—Ashe Heath couldn’t possibly be a cult leader, he must be a scapegoat pushed out by Professor Sylin!

“Tsk, you’re so troublesome, but I don’t know ‘Lamp of Hope’ either.” Sonya muttered, “I heard that beating someone up also has therapeutic effects...”

Ashe retreated to the corner of the boat: “Hey hey hey, let’s talk nicely! Actually this is just a trivial minor issue. Alright, let’s ignore this unimportant part and happily explore the virtual world!”

“No! We have to resolve your problem first!”

“Why?”

Ashe was truly a bit puzzled: “Didn’t you always hate me controlling your actions? Didn’t you say you could live well even without me? And I’m not trying to commit suicide either, just feeling a bit tired and unmotivated, it won’t affect exploring the virtual world. Why are you so concerned about my psychological issues?”

“Because I need you!”

Ashe was slightly startled.

“Yes, I need you.” Sonya seemed to have realized something as she crouched in front of Ashe and said, “You’re very important to me.”

“I want to become a legendary Four Wings Sorcerer, grasp earth-shattering miracles, make the world heed my commands, and make even fate submit before me.”

“I want to explore the mysteries of the virtual world. I want to see the ‘rain of time’ in the time spirits, see the endless distant void, see the Ruby Mountains made of rubies... I want to witness more miracles, tame more spirits, climb to even higher levels in the systems of Sorcerer techniques, and even uncover the truth of the virtual world!”

“I want to become a big shot in Cailleach, to receive the empress’ conferment and become a new noble.”

“I also want to become a songstress, a movie star, create classic and timeless films and dramas that people never tire of watching, and leave behind albums of heavenly songs

that are passed down for generations. I want to become the vision in the eyes of others!”

“I want even more, more.” Sonya gripped Ashe’s hand tightly: “But relying only on myself, I simply can’t achieve my dreams.”

“So I need you, Observer. You are my shortcut to realizing my dreams.”

“Although I really hate all the accidents you’ve brought into my life, I also acknowledge the many benefits you’ve given me. If it wasn’t for your appearance, I might not even be a Sorcerer yet, let alone have condensed the Silver Wings. Both in reality and in the virtual world, I need you.”

“Observer, although you don’t have any dreams of your own,” Sonya enunciated word for word, “you can guard my dreams.”

“You’re called the Observer aren’t you? Then observe me properly, and live well until I achieve my dreams.”

Ashe blinked, unable to hold back a snort of laughter, tears nearly coming out from laughing.

As he wiped the tears of laughter from the corners of his eyes, he ridiculed, “All I hear in your words just—using!”

Sonya clicked her tongue, “Isn’t this very good? Our relationship has always been totally self-interest. Clarifying our respective needs early on can only help our future cooperation, right?”

“But I was actually hoping for a more affectionate conversation...”

“That’s possible too. Don’t move.”

Sonya reached her arms around Ashe’s waist and gently hugged him, resting her chin on his shoulder. Ashe could feel her movements were somewhat stiff, unclear if it was because she had never embraced someone of the opposite gender before, or because she rarely hugged people since she was little.

“You’ve already become someone very important in my life. I don’t want to lose you.”

Ashe was stunned for quite a while, feeling like eating a strawberry ice cream on a hot summer day. Just as he was about to hug her back, the swordswoman swiftly pulled away, a faint smile on her face.

“How was it, did you feel your heart flip?”

Ashe's face darkened: "Oh right, you're not restricted by the ritual anymore, so you don't have to tell the truth!"

"What else could I do? Do you really think that after knowing each other for just a few days, I'm that casual a person?" Sonya stuck out her tongue, "I already said we have an interest-based relationship. You actually believed what I said... So did your feel?"

Ashe directly changed the topic: "You said you wanted to become a songstress earlier. Anyway we're free, why don't you sing a song to liven up the mood?"

"If you tell me to sing, then I'd sing. Wouldn't I lose face then?"

Saying this, Sonya's face reddened to her ears—she had spoken too quickly just now without thinking, accidentally revealing her dream of becoming a movie star and songstress.

She had kept this desire hidden in her heart since she was little. Even after starting college, she didn't dare expose it. Firstly because she hadn't chosen the Sound techniques, so theoretically she didn't meet the threshold to be a songstress. Secondly, she would encounter situations like this, where if others heard she wanted to be a songstress they would surely ask her to sing a bit, which was very annoying!

As usual, they quarreled for a little while, they suddenly stopped at the same time. Sonya sat down and asked, "How are you feeling now?"

"I'm feeling awful, even want to die deliberately to angrily you."

"You—"

"Kidding." Ashe shrugged. "But seeing how annoying you are, I suddenly recalled there's a nemesis outside the prison living free and easy, yet still trying every means to put me to death, making my retirement days in prison so frightening, and he's even the main culprit who framed me into prison... The more I endure, the more angry I get thinking about it. The more I compromise, the more I regret it. Even if I'm too lazy to live, I still have to break out first to settle accounts with that guy!"

"Good, fired up now! Before taking revenge, I definitely can't die!"

Seeking revenge as a short term goal didn't seem bad.

Sonya nodded: "Right, taking revenge is big thing. You should return whatever offense others have given you tenfold!"

"Also," Ashe looked at Sonya, "Swordswoman, just now didn't I say that I felt light as a balloon, with just one string tying me to the ground?"

“You’re that string.”

Sonya blinked.

“Even if it’s for you, to guard your dreams, to observe your future, I will live on properly.”

Sonya didn’t know how to react for a moment, reflexively averting her gaze. “I—”

But then Ashe suddenly tactically recoiled, giggling and asking, “How about it, did you feel it?”

Sonya’s mouth twitched, anger making her shoulders tremble.

She coldly snorted, “You spoke without any feeling at all, even a little girl wouldn’t believe you! Do you want me to teach you how to say lies you don’t even believe in yourself with full emotion? I’m a professional at that.”

“I want you to teach me to sing. Liven up the atmosphere by singing a couple lines first.”

“Tsk, end of idle chatter. Let’s start exploring the virtual world, otherwise it’ll be daylight on my side.”

“You’re right.”

Ashe nodded and opened up the virtual map: “We really have been here for too...long...”

Noticing the tremor in the Observer’s voice, Sonya asked in puzzlement, “What’s wrong?”

“On the first day we entered the virtual world, didn’t you tell me about the taboos that must be remembered when exploring the virtual world?”

“Yeah, which is not staying in the same place for too long—”

Sonya’s voice cut off abruptly as she tilted her head slightly, seeing a pair of pale yellow vertical pupils emerge from the thick white fog.

They were the eyes of a fox dragon.

Without them noticing, they had been surrounded by a group of knowledge spirits—slicing fish dragon, fox shining dragon, rainstorm dragon, mud fish dragon, umbrella bird dragon...

“Swordswoman, were you speaking too loudly just now—”

“Shut up.”

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

Chapter 104: Another Hopeful Day

Swordflower College, meditation room.

As soon as her consciousness returned to her body, Sonya couldn't help but collapse on the ground in exhaustion. She barely managed to prop herself up against the wall and breathe heavily. The fatigue of her soul was reflected in her body, and before long beads of sweat were flowing down her cheeks and dripping down her collarbone like pearls sliding into the depths of her dress.

She was completely worn out.

It was still dark outside, the first time she had exited the virtual world this early, and Sonya felt like she had come out too slowly.

Just now, a full eight knowledge creatures had chased her and the Observer for over an hour in the sea of knowledge. No matter how far or fast they fled, the knowledge creatures tenaciously pursued them, even when the Observer deliberately crashed into other knowledge creatures' territories. The pursuers didn't hesitate at all!

Moreover, after the Observer did that, the number of pursuers increased from eight to nine.

In principle, they shouldn't be so afraid. After all, they were only silver sorcerers. At worst they could just give up their virtual lifeblood, since sorcerers were bound to die in the virtual world anyway, just with varying frequency.

Being able to last until condensing the Silver Wings and then dying, compared to all the sorcerers throughout history, they would be among the most outstanding few. If there was a “Latest Sorcerers to Experience Their First Death Ranking List” in the sorcerer world, while they might not make the top ten, Sonya felt they could at least make the top hundred.

But the moment they discovered they were surrounded by knowledge creatures, Sonya suddenly came across a hidden piece of knowledge. As they fled, the Observer introduced her to the “poison” brought by this hidden knowledge.

“Eviction Venom”

“Venom Details: When a sorcerer stays in the same place in the virtual world for too long, their scent will be noticed by the surrounding knowledge creatures, provoking hostility from the knowledge creatures who see it as an affront to the natives. The virtual world is the home of the knowledge creatures. They do not allow invaders to settle here, and are determined to drive away and kill any invaders with ‘settling tendencies’. They will devour any invading souls completely.”

“Number Infected with Venom: 31”

“Venom Strengthening Degree: 31%”

“Current Venom Effects: Easier to notice surrounding knowledge creatures (when strength reaches 51% this turns into a negative effect, drops to 10% for great increase in benefits).”

Sonya understood why the professors always said that “you cannot stay in the same place in the virtual world for a long time” was a taboo, but no one could say why, even though sorcerers loved to dig deep for answers. It turned out it was because it was a venom.

Unlike the Whirlpool Venom which had extremely high use value, so informed people were willing to share the secret with their loved ones, even at the risk of being poisoned.

But the Eviction Venom was meaningless. Now that Sonya knew the truth about it, she would always remember “never stay in one place for a long time” in the future – but the school had already taught them this lesson!

Therefore, people who knew about the Eviction Venom would not actively spread this venom. The number infected was naturally pitifully small, most likely from accidentally staying too long, thus unfortunately getting infected.

Moreover, based on Sonya and the Observer’s harrowing experience last night, most people who knew about this venom had probably been devoured immediately by the knowledge creatures.

They had a small boat to sail quickly over the waves, plus the two of them teaming up to barely shake off the pursuers and exit the virtual world in the nick of time.

Sonya couldn’t even imagine how desperate a solo sorcerer who could only swim to move would be when discovering they were surrounded by several knowledge creatures.

The most terrifying thing was the knowledge creatures’ “quantitative change” leading to a “qualitative change” in the sorcerers’ deaths.

As mentioned before, there were serious consequences when a sorcerer died in the virtual world, because when the sorcerer's consciousness returned, remnants of the soul still lingered in the virtual world. The knowledge creatures would take the opportunity to take a big bite, damaging the sorcerer's soul.

But after being bitten by the knowledge creatures, the sorcerer's soul also became lighter and returned faster, so the loss would not be too severe.

This was why Sonya and the Observer had fled so desperately – they weren't being chased by one knowledge creature, but by nine!

Each monster taking a bite would be enough to completely devour their two souls, maybe even not enough to share for other monsters.

This was the real reason "staying too long in the virtual world leads to death": the sorcerer is torn apart and eaten by the knowledge creatures, the soul simply cannot return to the body. The body waits for too long and mistakenly thinks the soul has abandoned it, directly dropping dead on the spot.

Because of this sudden incident, they didn't get to explore at all tonight. They shook off their pursuers at top speed and directly exited the virtual world. Apart from slightly increasing their faction boundary, it was basically a wasted night, even a negative return – just having one "Whirlpool Venom" was already annoying enough, and now there was another "Eviction Venom" too, making Sonya feel her mind becoming less and less pure.

Although with the low number infected, the "Eviction Venom's" effects were currently beneficial, sooner or later if this venom spread it would definitely turn into negative effects.

But in any case, being able to survive was a good thing. Just now Sonya had almost thought she and the Observer were going to die in the virtual world.

Sonya heaved a long sigh of relief as she left the meditation building.

The night sky was filled with twinkling stars, as bright as daylight. The largest was the "Waning Moon Star", its crescent shape casting deep blue light that illuminated the school's paths.

According to the moon phase calendar, the meteorologists were going to replace the Moon Star with a "the Lower Moon Star" tomorrow...Sonya suddenly wondered what the blood moon looked like on Observer's side. Was it also managed and replaced by the Meteorological Bureau like the stars in the Starchild Nation?

Suddenly, a rainbow halo burst in the night sky, startling Sonya. Looking closely, she realized it came from the white tower.

Being listed as a warning area, and converging sorcerers from all of Cailleach, Sonya vaguely sensed the “virtual chaotic flow” that dropped people from the white tower was very important. But her status was still too low to access such high-level intelligence, so she could only watch from afar, guessing whether a group of professors was having a wild party inside.

Returning to her dorm, Sonya moved lightly without waking her roommates. With no hot water late at night, she took a cold shower and went out to the balcony to stand and let the wind blow dry her hair.

She tapped her Miracle Bracelet, bringing up the light screen, wanting to watch the new drama starring Dahlia.

There was also a full length mirror on the balcony. Sonya’s eyes glanced at her reflection, and she suddenly adjusted her posture, tidying her hair, scrutinizing her appearance from all angles.

“What are you doing so late at night?”

Adele, who had been hiding in her blankets watching shows, poked her head out curiously to ask Sonya.

Sonya looked at Adele and pondered for a moment before asking, “Do I count as a cute and innocent beauty with a nice figure?”

Adele blinked. “You do, but you’re still a little lacking compared to me.”

She held out a hand, making a gesture indicating the gap wasn’t very big at all.

Shattered Lake Prison.

Ashe jerked up from the bed and rolled onto the cold floor. The icy ground seemed to reach his panicked soul, slightly soothing the turmoil after the escape.

After getting up off the floor, he realized his whole body was drenched in sweat, so he went to take a hot shower. Although the regular dorms didn’t have bathtubs, hot water was available 24/7 – not providing hot water could be seen as abuse by human rights organizations.

Leaning against the white tiles, letting the water sprays on his body, Ashe opened up the light screen to organize tonight’s gains.

Yes, tonight was fruitful. Although to others, the “Eviction Venom” might be purely a burden, but for “Aurora’s Sorcerer Manual” it had generated new changes.

“You are infected with ‘Eviction Venom.’” Search* The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“The ‘Eviction Venom’ has enhanced the apocalypse observer’s perception of knowledge creatures in the virtual world. The virtual world map has undergone changes.”

“Note: The virtual world map has been updated. You can now discover knowledge creatures within observational range on the map, and obtain simple information about them.”

Earlier in the virtual world, when Ashe opened the map, he noticed some changes in the 24 surrounding grids. Most were still “Waste of effort” and “Not worth mentioning”, but several grids had popped up with more info:

“Mist Fish Dragon, Worth a visit”

“Blast Fish Dragon, Bit of trouble”

“Umbrella Bird Dragon, Bit of trouble”

Although it just showed the knowledge creatures’ names, for virtual world exploration this was a huge breakthrough!

Before this, Ashe could only make a rough judgment on whether a region contained legacy islands or knowledge creature habitats based on the map prompts. Generally, “Worth a visit” was mostly legacy islands, while “Bit of trouble” was basically knowledge creatures, although occasionally it would misjudge. But it was still better than blindly barging around.

Now the areas where knowledge creatures lived were marked out, so the other unlabeled areas where battles still occurred must be legacy islands!

Not only that, although Ashe didn’t know much about knowledge creatures, the Swordswoman had read “Knowledge Creature Compendium” so she could judge the corresponding monsters’ favored factions, approximate strength, and even specific weaknesses just from their names. They could specifically target knowledge creatures they had advantage over!

They could even hunt knowledge creatures that dropped swordsmanship gems, like ‘Cleave Fish Dragon’ and ‘Umbrella Bird Dragon’, to raise the Swordswoman’s swordsmanship boundary to gold rank, helping her advance to Two-Winged Gold!

Once the Swordswoman reached the time spirits, Ashe could naturally use the same trick to hitchhike to the time spirits through her.

Just like becoming a silver sorcerer in the sea of knowledge, Ashe could also advance to a gold sorcerer in the time spirals, even if he didn't have a single faction at gold rank, or had never cultivated a day in his life, relying entirely on clinging to the Swordswoman's thighs to ascend – saying that out loud would probably make other sorcerers explode with anger.

With Ashe's exploration abilities and the Swordswoman's knowledge, as long as they didn't deliberately trigger taboos and court death like earlier, exploring the sea of knowledge from now on would be smooth sailing without danger!

But the premise for all this was that Ashe had to survive, had to escape from this prison, had to regain his freedom.

Turning off the shower head above, he grabbed a towel to wrap around himself and walked to the sink. Ashe looked at his sopping wet self in the mirror, water dripping from his bangs onto his bony shoulders, sliding along his collarbones.

"Crap, I'm starting to like this world a little."

The corners of his mouth turned up in a slight smile. "Today is another hopeful day too."

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

Chapter 105: You Give Me No Choice

"Increase the fault tolerance of the plan and come up with an escape route after hijacking the ship?"

On the roof of the Sea View Tower, Igor listened to Ashe's request and found it odd. "Shouldn't your top priority be figuring out how to get through the Blood Moon Tribunal in a few days? Don't tell me you don't think you'll be selected for the lucky eight, or that you believe only one person will die in this extra Blood Moon Tribunal."

Not just Igor, even the ordinary death row inmates sensed that the next few Blood Moon Tribunals would result in heavy casualties—because the prison was nearly full.

As the number of inmates increased, the prison couldn't expand or reduce the per capita living space, lower the living conditions, or convert other facilities into dormitories.

The environment at Shattered Lake Prison was already extremely close to the limits outlined in the "Guidelines on Prisoners' Living Conditions." If the prison dared to

increase the inmate capacity by lowering living standards, human rights organizations would definitely come. They would accuse the prison of abusing prisoners.

Therefore, the prison's only and best method was naturally to let the death row inmates suffer "reasonable attrition," while also increasing the revenue from the Blood Moon Tribunals—because the prison couldn't force the executioners to attack non-target death row inmates. To maximize casualties, the prison had to design game segments that resulted in "total annihilation" and "no escape." That way, the livestream effect would naturally be explosive.

The Blood Moon Tribunal on the 15th was a prime example. The tribunal rounds were complex and exciting, and the death row inmates could even kill each other. And when Valcas was being executed, if he had the thought like "if I can't make it, neither can you guys," he could bring down all the other death row inmates with him.

Come to think of it, it was quite interesting. Human rights organizations would never allow the prison to increase death row inmate capacity by lowering living standards; but they thought it was acceptable for the prison to design Blood Moon Tribunals with high fatality rates to reduce the number of death row inmates.

Though there was no evidence, Igor felt that a portion of the advertising fees from the Blood Moon Tribunals must have become political donations to human rights organizations.

"Then what do you think I should do to safely get through the Blood Moon Tribunal?"

"Hmm...pray to the Four Pillars behind you? Or repent and beg for mercy from the Blood Moon Sovereign?"

"If Shattered Lake Prison is a cage, then the tribunal list is like the butcher outside choosing who to slaughter." Ashe responded. "We beasts in the cage can't impact what happens outside, unless there's a butcher out there who knows me well. But sadly there isn't one, though there are probably quite a few who want to eat me."

"So instead of worrying about surviving the Blood Moon Tribunal, I should operate on the premise that I'll be lucky enough to live, and formulate a more detailed prison break plan. After all, there are nine days until the next transport ship arrives, can't waste them like this."

Ashe leaned on the railing around the roof, arms crossed.

"Sounds like a waste of time." Igor wrinkled his nose.

But Ronat beside them was excited. "No, Ashe is right! Even reducing the danger by 1% and increasing the success rate by 1% is worth spending time on. Friends, our time is

precious. We could enjoy life after we return to the free world, but for now, please wholeheartedly prepare for the prison break—that's good, right?"

"That's right, we'd just be wasting time in prison anyway." Langna said. "And I believe Brother Ashe won't die so easily in Shattered Lake."

The vote was 3:1. Igor naturally had to go along with the majority's opinion. Though he wasn't actually against perfecting the plan, he simply wanted to argue with Ashe.

Perhaps because he knew someone like Ashe could never become his scam victim, Igor didn't want to waste his charm on Ashe either.

One had to know, when facing customers, Igor was a lovely person. With his spirit's abilities, he could easily pry open a customer's heart. He could chat with a customer all day long without boring them. Quite a few people would rather be scammed by him and want to chat with him.

"The chip's restrictions make my plan easy to fail. The most likely point of failure is the period after we take the medic's clothes and before we board the transport ship."

"If the unconscious medic is discovered early, or if our actions take over ten minutes, or various accidents happen along the way, the guards will realize we've disabled our chips. Once they send a warning to the transport ship, we'll have no chance of boarding, let alone hijacking it."

"The risks are too great here, with too many unpredictable factors. If the plan fails, it will most likely be at this stage." Igor looked around at everyone. "Any ideas?"

Ashe racked his brains, Langna stayed silent, but Ronat raised his hand. "Why not go for something more direct—kill all the guards first?"

"Unless we can take out all the guards at the same time, if even one escapes, he can sound the alarm." Igor was a little exasperated. "Plus, the guards work in shifts. Some are always in the guard living quarters we can't access. We won't get a chance to wipe them out all at once."

Ronat said seriously, "Then think of a way to gather them together!"

"What way? Pray to the Four Pillars like Ashe? Or just directly, pray for all the guards to suddenly drop dead—"

"What if we find someone, purify their chip, then have them go kill other death row inmates and guards? Wouldn't the guards gather to hunt him down?"

Igor was about to reject this idea, but swallowed his words. He paced back and forth reflexively, sticking his thumb in his mouth and nibbling his thumbnail, deep in thought.

Ashe blinked. "That sounds...more reliable than purely relying on luck!"

"Ronny is so smart!" Langna patted Ronat's shoulder and laughed.

"It's definitely feasible, though the details need perfecting!" Igor's eyes grew brighter. "Use bait to draw the guards' attention away, whether it's ambushing and killing them or taking the chance to hijack the ship, it's much better than my original plan. We can also prepare more fallback options, like having Ashe disable more people's chips and incite a huge riot at Shattered Lake!"

"Right under the prison's nose, right in front of the guards, throw Shattered Lake into utter chaos!"

Thinking about directing this spectacular, magnificent drama made Igor's blood pump faster, and his long-lost passion for work reignited within him!

Ashe said excitedly, "No time to delay, let's go pick a lucky death row inmate as bait!"

Igor had no objections. The four headed to the Deathmatch Society.

Their requirements for the bait were: aggressive, hates the prison, obedient, gullible, and most who fit this profile gathered at the Deathmatch Society.

On the way, Ashe surreptitiously moved closer to Igor and whispered, "Ronat is really weird today."

Today's Ronat was all smiles, speaking actively, his expression sunny and passionate. It formed a stark contrast against the withered, dried up Ronat of the past few days, giving Ashe the creeps.

Igor also whispered back, "It means the ritual has entered the late stages. I won't be surprised if Ronat's cell is emptied out tomorrow."

Ronat turned to look at them, shaking his head. "I should've mentioned I enhanced my hearing with a spirit, right? Unless you mask it with a spirit, I can hear whispers at this level!"

Ashe and Igor stopped in tandem, both with innocent "nothing happened" expressions. When it came to shamelessness, they were oddly in sync.

"Don't worry about me, I'll definitely make it to next month." Ronat thumped his chest. "My business with Langna won't impact the plan. We'll resolve it after the breakout, trust me!"

Ashe couldn't help asking, "Then why the huge change these days?"

Ronat held up one finger to his lips. “Secret.” Then he angled his elbow out, letting Langna hook their arms. To onlookers, the intimate pair seemed impossible to be mortal enemies.

But Igor was lost in thought. Was this Langna deliberately making Ronat like this to cooperate with the prison break? Now this sunny, cheerful, proactive Ronat would naturally be more helpful to the plan, he even contributed useful suggestions right off the bat.

If Langna did this on purpose, it meant he had great confidence in the prison break. So much that he was willing to alter his ritual’s progress to accommodate the plan.

But even Igor, the plan’s proposer, didn’t have much confidence in the prison break. By his calculations, their chance of success was less than 10%, and even after perfecting it, less than 30%.

Where was Langna getting his confidence from?

Igor knew it definitely wasn’t in him.

At this thought, Igor instinctively turned to look at the cult leader beside him. Ashe was confused by his stare, hesitating briefly before angling his elbow out in offering, an exasperated “you give me no choice” expression on his face. “Didn’t expect you to actually envy this. I’ll force myself to oblige...”

Ah, how he wanted to hit him, to curse at him!

Igor was so furious he nearly snapped.

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

Chapter 106: Necromancer

“Stop hitting, you can’t beat someone to death like this!”

“Can you guys hurry up? There are dozens of us waiting here, every minute you waste is wasting dozens of minutes for all of us!”

“That’s about enough.”

As Ashe and his companions entered the Deathmatch Society, what reached their ears were not adrenaline-fueled screams, beastly roars, or malicious jeering. Rather, it was disgruntled complaining.

If not for the chips restricting the foul language of these death row inmates, Ashe was certain he would quickly learn the classic profanities of Blood Moon Kingdom's various races.

They squeezed to the front, and the death row inmates who got bumped into behind them looked impatient. But when they saw it was 'Demon', 'Beauty Beast', 'Gourmand' and other infamous prison thugs, they quickly made way, some even showing deferential smiles.

Although there was no hierarchy among the death row inmates, and even the mightiest inmate could not harm the weakest, not even pluck a single hair or scratch their fresh manicure. As long as one did not voluntarily step into the deathmatch ring, there would be no bullying from others.

But reverence for the strong was ingrained in living beings, and this trait was in full display among these inmates with morals lower than an old man's diaper. Even if Ashe and the others could not harm them one bit, they did not dare offend these vicious criminals.

Ashe secretly kicked the deferential ones out of his list of candidates – I'm the kindest and most innocent person in this prison, if even I scare them, how can they be used as bait! None of them qualified!

Getting to the front, Ashe saw two people fighting in the lowest-level deathmatch ring. One was a reptilian Snakelizard race with green scales all over, the other was a prison buddy whose name Ashe forgot but remembered his last name was Harvey.

After watching for a bit, Ashe understood why everyone was complaining – Harvey and the other guy were putting on a show fight.

The Snakelizard simply did not fight back, allowing Harvey to keep punching his face. Even as the leather-like scales on his skin cracked and small teeth got knocked out, he knelt motionless on the ground, calmly watching Harvey.

Only when Harvey's fists were covered in viscous blood did the Snakelizard slowly say, "Feeling better, Archibald?"

"Not yet!"

Harvey suddenly knelt down, tore open his clothes to reveal a skeletal and scarred body, face contorted hideously. "Come on, Hableen!"

The Snakelizard shook his head, but still went to pick up a barbed whip placed at the side of the ring. One look and Ashe felt his hair stand on end – the whip was covered densely with small barbs, he could imagine how excruciating yet exhilarating it would feel to be licked by it. Add some salt water and the soul might ascend straight to heaven.

With the muffled cracking sounds, the complaining voices lessened significantly. Though some still mocked Harvey for being an idiot, more expressed their respect in silence – to earn the esteem of death row inmates, there were two methods. Be cruel to others, or be cruel to oneself.

Ashe suddenly asked, “What do you think?”

“Not bad,” Igor replied. “I’ll investigate his ‘story’ later, might find something we can use.”

“Archibald Harvey has a deathmatch record of 7 wins and 1 loss,” Langna said. “Due to his thin build, he is sometimes seen as easy prey, but opponents who fight him often mysteriously lose consciousness. He is not weak.”

“This is the kind of hot-blooded man we need, he gets my blood pumping just watching him!” Ronat exclaimed excitedly, clenching his fist. “Let’s go find him after the match!”

Igor shook his head, “No rush, we still have time, let’s see if there are other options. Even if we pick him, I should grasp his weaknesses first, it’ll make things easier.”

“Ew, you such a jerk!”

“What, do you have a problem with that?”

“Yes, you see the Snakelizard seems close with Harvey. If we can’t find a weakness for Harvey, maybe we can use the Snakelizard instead – after all he just got to prison recently, so he hasn’t forgotten the smell of freedom yet.”

Igor nodded approvingly, “Rarely do you make a decent suggestion, Ashe.”

“It’s nothing, I learned it all from you, Igor.”

Seeing the two exchange wicked grins like bosom buddies, Langna’s face remained impassive, but he was extremely surprised inside. He had observed Igor Bukin before, and knew this scammer was a cold-hearted, selfish, and hedonistic person. He always wore a polite smile, but deep down looked down on everyone, seeing people as tools to be used.

Of course Langna wasn’t saying Igor saw Ashe as a friend. If he dared say that, Igor and Ashe would probably think he was crazy.

But from Langna's observations, Igor's attitude towards Ashe was completely different from how he treated other inmates. It wasn't the calculating fawning he did with others, nor the disgust he showed enemies. It was closer to...sincerity.

Yes, sincerity. Although it sounded too naive to describe the scammer this way, this was Langna's conclusion from his observations.

Perhaps even Igor himself didn't realize, he had unknowingly lowered his guard around Ashe, no longer hiding behind the mask he wore for self-protection. He didn't conceal his disgust or approval, but treated Ashe as an equal, interacting and arguing normally – Igor's emotional fluctuations in the past year and a half were not as much as the past few days.

Was this because of Ashe's personal charm?

No, Langna didn't think so.

It wasn't that Ashe lacked charm, but that Igor could not be so easily influenced – any Sorcerer specializing in the Mind sphere would have firmer beliefs and willpower than other casters, let alone Igor who was skilled at manipulating hearts. How could he possibly have such a sudden change of heart, as if 'love at first sight'?

In the world of Sorcerers, there were no coincidences.

Only 'Miracles'.

Although Ronaldo was a factor, ever since knowing Ashe initiated the prison break, Langna strongly sensed this escape plan would surely succeed.

Unlike Igor and Ronaldo, Langna used to be a member of the Church, a servant of the gods. He had bathed in the glory of the divine, and deeply understood the vastness of the gods' authority.

The will of the gods would come to pass.

To the Blood Moon Sovereign, the flawless and heavily guarded Shattered Lake Prison was but a fragile bubble that could be popped effortlessly, almost transparent.

It was the same for the Four Pillars.

Suddenly, the lights in the Deathmatch Hall turned fully bright. The barriers around the stage lowered, the stage doors opened, and crowd doctors came to carry the Snakelizard away. But when they tried to take Harvey, he refused – he didn't want treatment.

As the injured and blood-stained Harvey came out, the death row inmates automatically gave way. Since they still needed Igor to find Harvey's weaknesses before recruiting him, Ashe's group did not immediately approach Harvey either.

But Harvey took the initiative to come to them.

"I was just looking for you, Ashe," Harvey said. "I want to discuss something with you."

"I'm broke."

"There's too many people here, let's go—" Harvey reached to pull Ashe away.

Igor grabbed Harvey's wrist, smiling, "It sounds quite interesting, may I listen in?"

Harvey glanced over Igor, Langna, and Ronaldo, then slowly nodded, "Of course."

The five big villains quickly left the Deathmatch Hall, and went to the men's restroom — they had no choice, it was the nearest private place. Besides, the restrooms were cleaned regularly and smelled nice, the running water could mask their voices, it was truly the ideal breeding ground for conspiracies and schemes.

"I heard you guys are planning a prison break recently?" Harvey used a wet towel to wipe the blood off himself, looking at Ashe's reflection in the mirror.

"That's right," Igor did not intend to hide it. He had visited all the big names in prison over the past few days, the news could not be kept secret.

But because he did not reveal Ashe's Miracle Touch, and Igor had previously seduced newbies by posing as the president of the Prison Break Research Society, people either thought Igor was joking around or plotting something shady again. Plus the death row inmates were already mostly domesticated by the prison, so no one was willing to join. This forced Ashe to find ways to drag Ronaldo and Langna down with him.

"I want to join you guys." Harvey stuck his head under the faucet, wetting his curly hair. He lifted his dripping head, and Ashe was surprised to see him look rather delicate without the curls, not as vulgar and twisted.

"I want to break out."

Ashe was overjoyed, but before he could speak, Igor took the lead, "If you want to join, you'll have to contribute something to show us your value. We aren't lacking people right now, if you can't play a useful role, we have no need to include you."

"But even without contribution—"

"Shut up!" Igor glared fiercely at Ashe, who shrank away aggrievedly.

It should have been Igor's side begging Harvey to join, but now that Harvey took the initiative to join, how could Igor let this chance slip by? He took the opportunity to make demands of Harvey. Having conducted so many negotiations and deals, Igor understood people's cheap trait of 'the harder to obtain, the more precious'. If he directly let Harvey join, it would only make Harvey doubt their professionalism, perhaps even giving Harvey a 'I'm important' misunderstanding. That would make Harvey harder to manage.

It was best to raise the barrier high now, fully exploit Harvey for his resources before 'reluctantly allowing' him to join. This would not only make Harvey grateful, but also let Harvey know his place, so that even if they ordered him to be bait in the future, he would not resist much.

"A very reasonable request," Harvey nodded at his reflection in the mirror. "I'm confident my abilities will satisfy you – I can operate the prison processors."

"Hmm, sounds pretty goo— What?"

Igor was startled, "Processors? You can operate the prison chips? How is that possible!"

"Why wouldn't it be possible?" Harvey turned to look at the other four, wet hair hanging over his face but unable to cover the sharp glint in his eyes. "Among the death row inmates, if anyone could operate the processors, it would definitely only be me."

"Because I am a Necromancer."

"And the chip processors is just a corpse."

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

Chapter 107: The Mouse Tries to Chain the Cat

A processor chip is a corpse?

At this moment, Harvey suddenly took off his prison uniform. The blood from his whipped back had stuck to his clothes, and when he took it off you could hear a crisp 'swish' sound. The countless barely healed wounds were ripped open again, and blood flowed from the finger-width gashes, trickling down his dark back, making it look suddenly like countless eyes were crying.

“Actually, I’m quite surprised you guys know about the processor,” Harvey said as he used a towel to wipe his body. “This isn’t the kind of knowledge taught in foster homes. Most people in prison don’t even know what’s controlling their chips, just like ants can’t see the people above them.”

“What imprisons us isn’t the prison, but the chips. Shattered Lake is just a room in the Blood Moon Kingdom.”

Igor leaned against the wall with his arms crossed: “I consider myself quite well-informed, often mingling among high society. I even made contingency plans in case I was ever locked up in Shattered Lake, which is why I deliberately tried to uncover the operating mechanisms of Shattered Lake Prison, and was lucky enough to learn of the processors’ existence... You’re just a janitor, how do you know such hidden information?”

With just the right mix of arrogance and suspicion, Igor tried to subtly trigger Harvey’s emotions with his ‘resonance’ spirit technique. If Harvey really knew some secret, he would surely eagerly boast about the information and its source.

However, Harvey just glanced at Igor in the mirror and calmly asked: “You’ve all been to the hospital before, right? Did you notice that there are no private hospitals in the Blood Moon Kingdom, only research institute affiliated hospitals and maternity hospitals?”

“Isn’t that pretty normal?” Igor felt confused: “Even if there were private hospitals, I wouldn’t go. The affiliated hospitals have low fees, good reputations, guarantees, and many doctors. Private hospitals have no room to survive.”

“Generally speaking, doctors can be any race – human, reptilian, elven, beastmen, even cannibals...” Harvey said. “But there is one department in the hospital that only has members of one race – no other races are allowed to join that department.”

Langna glanced at the bloody lashes on Harvey’s back: “Since it’s related to the research institute, then the race you’re talking about must be the Sacred Bloodline... But which department are you referring to?”

“The morgue.”

Harvey vigorously scrubbed his wounds with the towel, though his face was twisted in pain, he still spoke calmly: “If I told you the research institute exists solely to keep the morgue firmly in their hands, so they set up affiliated hospitals and banned the issuance of private medical licenses, would you believe me?”

Of course Ashe listened in complete confusion – they opened a whole hospital just for one department? Bought a whole crab just to dip it in vinegar?

But Igor seemed to have passed an insight check, and asked: "I remember your most serious crime was 'illegal handling of corpses'. And the Sacred Bloodline Research Institute wants to tightly control the source of corpses... Could corpses be a very precious resource for the Sacred Bloodline?"

"Corpses are not only a resource for them, but also a taboo." Harvey smiled slightly. "Just now you were shocked that the chip processor is a corpse, but what if I told you all the Sacred Bloodline are corpses too?"

Ashe thought back to that arrogant white-haired hunter Gerard, and couldn't associate him with a corpse at all. Although he was terrible at poker, he was clearly a smart guy whose mind worked quickly, just a tiny bit less so than Ashe.

"Corpses...yes, that makes sense!"

Igor had a sudden realization: "I also wondered why the Sacred Bloodline has such long lifespans and don't age, even long-lived races like elves grow old. I used to think it was some miracle effect, but if they're corpses, then of course their appearance would be frozen at the moment of their death!"

"Come to think of it, I've seen the Sacred Bloodline before, and indeed didn't hear a heartbeat from them," Ronat said, stroking his chin. "Langna, you're a Moonshadow, you should know more, right?"

He turned his head, but saw that Langna's expression was very strange, or rather expressionless. He didn't speak or move his eyes, just stared straight ahead like a motionless wax figure.

"If he is a Moonshadow, he cannot respond in any way to this topic," Harvey said. "The Blood and Moon made a pact when transforming their races to keep each other's secrets."

Ashe asked: "So you're saying the processor controlling all the death row inmates' chips is a member of the Sacred Bloodline!?"

"Don't jump ahead, I haven't gotten to that part yet," Harvey said. "The Sacred Bloodline has always been hiding the secret that they are corpses, while also controlling all sources of corpses, in order to prevent anyone from researching corpses and learning necromancy – the necromancy school is currently the only school of magic that can control corpses!"

"In other words, necromancers are the natural enemies of the Sacred Bloodline. Although I can't easily manipulate the Sacred Bloodline like I can control corpses, if I were to face off against a Sacred Bloodline sorcerer of equal level, unless they were also highly skilled in necromancy, I am confident I could make it so they can't even

summon their spirit, leaving them stunned and confused until their soul is extinguished and their body turned into a real corpse!”

Igor raised his eyebrows, skeptical of Harvey’s claims.

Every school of magic practitioners will boast that their school is the most powerful. Just like Igor firmly believed mentalism to be the strongest school, Harvey hyping up necromancy so much definitely contained some exaggeration.

This kind of “because our school is so powerful we were suppressed” claim could be heard from almost every obscure school of magic.

Langna had a similar attitude. As an exiled Moonshadow, he definitely knew more but was bound by his oath not to reveal anything.

Ronat and Ashe both had “Wow you’re so powerful, I want to follow you” looks on their faces. Ashe excitedly clenched his fist and said: “Great, then when we break out, if Hunter Captain Gerard catches up to us, we’ll leave him to you Harvey!”

Harvey’s expression stiffened. “Although we’re natural enemies, it’s not to the point where I can fight three wings by myself...”

Nicely done... Igor glanced at Ashe, thinking no wonder he could fraud a fraudster, he had knocked Harvey’s position down with several words. Under the guise of admiration, his words were full of sly verbal traps – was this the leader of a cult’s skill?

Harvey changed the subject: “However, while I can’t contend with a true three wings Saint from the Sacred Bloodline, if my opponent is in a special dormant state, that would be a different story. For example... the remains of a Sacred Bloodline sorcerer being used as a chip processor!”

What Harvey described next reminded Ashe of a term: biotechnology!

Because of the nature of magic, the technology of this world’s mages was very advanced. Things like the chips on the backs of people’s necks were derived from mage technology. At most, the chips were people’s mobile devices, sending and receiving information, watching videos, listening to music, functioning as a locator – there were no problems using them that way. But wanting to control people’s behavior through the chip would surely exceed the chip’s capabilities.

Those “capability limits” that were insufficient to meet demands were naturally filled by “miracles”. But those who could cast miracles could only be mages, and only needed to be mages.

Even if the mage was dead, as long as certain conditions were met, they could still be made to cast miracles.

The so-called chip processors were actually corpses of Sacred Bloodline mages whose souls had departed for the virtual world. The Sacred Bloodline mages used necromancy, alchemy, electromagnetism and other miracles to reuse these corpses, eventually turning them into terminal processors that could automatically receive and transmit chip signals!

Not only was this environmentally friendly and energy saving, it was also imaginative, forcibly breaking through theoretical limits to let death row inmates prematurely experience technology that might not be invented for another hundred years.

But Ashe was puzzled by one thing: "If only mage corpses are needed, there's no need for them to specifically be Sacred Bloodline, right?"

"This is my conjecture," Harvey said. "Although the current Sacred Bloodline are corpses, their souls have not departed for the virtual world, and their bodies have endured. This leads easily to one conclusion – their souls remain inside their bodies, and most likely within their blood."

"Even if most of the soul has dissipated from the corpse, there are probably still tiny fragments remaining in the blood and flesh."

Igor understood as soon as he heard: "Resurrection?"

Harvey nodded. "For the Sacred Bloodline, a corpse does not represent complete dead. Becoming a 'processor' is probably an important step in some resurrection ritual, and not all Sacred Bloodline mages become 'processors' – this might even be a privilege reserved for high-ranking mages."

"By the way, I specifically tested that when I open the chip's light screen and do complex operations like watching videos or playing veil games, my soul energy shows obvious depletion, but quickly recovers, even mages can barely detect it. As for why it consumes that bit of soul energy, it can be explained as the chip's power source, but can also be explained as... the corpse's nutrition."

Listening to this made Ashe feel uncomfortable all over, and he subconsciously scratched the back of his neck. It was like everyone had a tube there, connected at the other end to a withered, decaying corpse that absorbed nutrients from the living every second.

"Ugh, gross!" Ronat shuddered and suddenly rushed to the bathroom stall to vomit into the toilet – he was actually nauseated enough to throw up!

Harvey put down the towel and turned to lean against the sink, facing them: "So, are you willing to accept me joining you?"

At this point, even Igor couldn't find fault. "Archibald, welcome to the team."

“Hold on, let me verify something first,” Harvey said. “You have a way to remove the chips, right? Without removing the chips, this so-called prison break is just a bad joke.”

Igor nodded. “We do.”

“Good, then the plan at least has a chance of success. But before I join you, you must first sign a contract and promise me one thing -”

“Necromancer,” Igor’s voice turned cold. “I admit you’ve provided some interesting information, but that’s all it is, interesting. So far, I don’t see how you can contribute anything to the prison break.”

While lightly patting Ronat’s back to make him vomit more comfortably, Langna said: “You said you can control the corpses used as chip processors. Does that mean you can directly change our chip permissions?”

Harvey shook his head: “No, inmate permissions can only be changed using the Criminal Registry. Unless we can erase our records from the Criminal Registry, there’s no way to reduce the chip restrictions.”

“What use are you then?” Igor’s expression grew more and more unhappy.

“While I can’t reduce our restrictions, I can increase others’ restrictions. Opening shackles is hard, but adding shackles to others is easy.”

Harvey made a light slicing motion across his neck: “The guards’ chips are also under the processors’ jurisdiction.”

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

Chapter 108: Time to Switch Places Behind Bars

“Enforcing restraints on the jailers?”

Ronat, having spat out the last of his bile, wiped the corner of his mouth in disbelief. “But they are not the prisoners!”

“Why do you think that only the prisoners’ chips would have restraints added to them?” Search the novelFire.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Harvey sneered: “Or perhaps, why do you assume that a regular person’s chip can’t have restraints?”

“The Register of Sinners—”

“You were already under multiple restraints while you were detained in the Heresy Court, long before you ever signed your name in the ‘Register of Sinners’. There’s no essential difference between you and an ordinary person. The Register merely ensures that our restraints are permanent.”

Ronat muttered, “I thought it was a hunter using a Miracle on me...”

A chill rose in Ashe’s heart.

This meant that everyone in the Blood Moon Dominion, whether ordinary citizens or sorcerers, wore a figurative noose around their neck—a shackle that could strangle them at any moment. If the processor received the command, it could control anyone within the area to do anything, even if it meant piercing their own throats!

It was almost laughable; Ashe had never truly laid eyes on the Blood Moon Dominion, nor had he met an ordinary citizen from there, but he had uncovered many secrets beyond the reach of common folk.

It was as if he were observing the world through a crack, collecting fragmented keywords: multi-races, Human Rights Association, foster homes, Heresy Court, the Church, memory artisans, Blood Moon Tribunal, Woodpecker Gang... These keywords pieced together a bizarre world that was democratic yet dictatorial, affluent yet impoverished, respectful of human rights yet invasive of privacy, indulging in entertainment to death yet harmoniously stable.

It resembled a blood lotus blooming out of the mud—radiantly tempting but exuding a rancid, sordid stench.

Perhaps this had a lot to do with Ashe’s sources of information. After all, what beauty, truth, or goodness could he witness in a death row prison? Yet no perfect nation exists on earth; perhaps once Ashe steps out, he might find it alluring—lying on a sofa, watching the Blood Moon Tribunal broadcast punctually every month.

“This is certainly not information that a mere cleaner should have access to.” Igor suddenly said: “Who exactly are you? How did you manage to deceive the Heresy Court?”

“I am just a cleaner,” Harvey stated calmly. “My duty is to deal with bodies, making sure they do not call for help, do not resist, and do not attempt to escape.”

“A Controller!”

Something clicked for Ronat: “There were some legendary murders in the industry in the past few years. Victims were murdered at home without any signs of struggle in the room, the bodies vanished without a trace, and among those victims were sorcerers... This killer was dubbed the ‘Controller,’ believed to wield a powerful controlling Miracle, even capable of completely stripping Two-wing casters of their ability to resist!”

“You flatter me, I simply exploit existing vulnerabilities.” Harvey shook his head. “As for how I evaded the Heresy Court, it’s simple—erase the memory first, then find a way to retrieve it later.”

Ashe was perplexed: “If you can erase memories, then why not just delete all illegal memories outright? Wouldn’t that result in an immediate release without charges?”

“He can’t,” Igor explained. “He specializes in the necromancy school, and most of his memories are tied to necromancy. If he deletes the memories related to necromancy, it’s as good as making himself amnesiac; and if he deletes the memories of dealing with bodies without touching the necromancy part, the Heresy Court would definitely know he’s erased his memory—necromancy can’t be learned without dealing with corpses.”

“This is the best outcome he has calculated.”

Ashe voiced an understanding, “Wait, if you’ve handled your memories in advance, does that mean you got arrested on purpose? Do you have a reason you had to be in Shattered Lake Prison? Like... for Narbel?”

A cold draft suddenly swept through the sealed chamber.

When Harvey lifted his chin, his malevolent gaze scanning the room, Langna immediately pulled Ronat behind himself, and Igor stepped forward to stand in front of Ashe.

The chill made Ashe’s skin crawl, and even his breathing became constricted; his mind went blank.

Was it the work of a spirit, or a Miracle?

The wind was as swift in its departure as it had been in its arrival. Harvey lowered his eyelids, “I can add restrictions to the guards, making it impossible for them to take any action, not even to send out an alarm. Can this ability secure a promise from you?”

“Let’s hear your demand first,” Igor proposed.

“After the prison break, you’ll help me kill someone.”

“Who?”

“Arandor Fernand Snow,” Harvey released a name well-known to many: “The current mayor of Caimon City.”

The virtual realm, the sea of knowledge.

“So, you’ve signed an unbreakable contract, not yet escaped, but already the powerful mayor is on your hit list?”

“Yes, it just so happens we have a contract sorcerer in the team, there’s no way we could ‘agree now and betray later’.”

“Wow, you even thought about reneging.”

“Yeah...”

“After the escape, you could immediately band together with others to take down the necromancer, thus avoiding fulfilling the contract! The contract doesn’t state that you can’t harm each other, does it?”

“That’s impressed, perhaps it should be you sitting in prison.”

In the midst of their casual conversation, the tattered umbrella bird dragon that had been beaten to a pulp suddenly folded its wings and charged towards the white fog like a spinning umbrella, throwing a spirit in the opposite direction as it did so!

“Swordswoman!”

“I’m on it!”

Ashe rushed over and grabbed the spirit, while Sonya ran right in front of the umbrella bird dragon. Facing the umbrella bird dragon’s fierce charge head-on, Sonya was utterly fearless. Taking up a sword receiving stance, strands of water flowed around her, glowing in the moonlight!

The moment the umbrella bird dragon touched the Moon Silk, Sonya’s entire body tensed like a coiled spring. Her wooden sword traced out a perfect arc, unleashing a surging crimson sword aura!

Miracle – Murderous Moon Reflection! A new miracle fusing the Murderous Sword into Moon Reflection to increase its power!

The umbrella bird dragon’s body was slashed apart. With a resentful cry, it dispersed into wisps of smoke, dropping two spirits.

Seeing this, Ashe sighed, “Still no experience orbs. At this rate, who knows how long it’ll take for you to advance to a two-wing caster...”

Sonya consoled, “There’s no need to rush these things. Many casters say the Virtual World listens to our desires – the more we want something, the more it withholds it. But when we stop caring, it’ll send it our way.”

“Sounds like the Virtual World is bitchy.” .”

“If you say two more words, I’m afraid you won’t be able to see the experience orbs again for the rest of your life.”

With the help of Virtual World Telescope and Eviction Venom, Ashe could now steadily look for knowledge creatures to hunt. In order to promote the Swordwoman to the Second Wing as early as possible, thus allowing himself also could be helped, Ashe had then specialized in searching for Knowledge Creatures that might burst out with experience orbs.

However, after hunting the Chopper Dragon and Umbrella Bird Dragon consecutively tonight, apart from bursting out a few Art Spirits, he couldn’t see any sign of the Experience orb at all. Not only did this make Ashe a bit discouraged, at this rate, it was simply unrealistic to want to feed the swordwoman into a two-winged in ten days.

Sonya lay down in the canoe, directly resting both her feet on the edge of the boat, and said lazily, “Masters basically rely on learning and sailing in the virtual realm to raise their faction’s realm, and once in a while, when they come across an experience pearl, they rejoice with joy, and if they can come across the experience orbs of their major faction, it’s even more of a bounty that can be bragged about for the rest of one’s life. Using experience pearls to pile up the major faction realm? Ideas like this would be laughed at by little children when you say it out loud.”

Ashe glanced at the pair of slender legs swinging lazily, and the sliver of white between stockings and skirt. “Or is it just me, I feel like you’ve been more relaxed around me lately.”

“Wh-what are you talking about, I’m just taking a short rest because I’m a little tired.”

“But I remember you used to always sit properly even when resting, perfect posture and all.”

“Sitting is nothing compared to lying down for comfort. Hey, can you make the boat bigger, with maybe a leg rest? I wanna stretch out and put my feet in the boat, really relax with a good stretch.”

“Don’t get too carried away now, Swordswoman!”

“What, it’s okay for you to act like a spoiled child but I can’t stretch?”

“Wh-wh-what acting!” Ashe stammered in agitation, “When have I ever did that! Don’t go making stuff up!”

Sonya cleared her throat: “My whole body feels light as a balloon, yet only a slender thread ties me to the ground. Swordsman, to me, you are that thread...”

“Hmph, you think you’ve got dirt on me? You think I’m the sort who gets embarrassed over things like this?”

“Then-”

“But having your feet out like that, it’s easy to get your socks wet. Wouldn’t want you slipping during battle. Actually, I know some foot massages – why don’t you put your feet in my lap?”

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

Chapter 109: “The Swordsman and the Observer Break Up”

“But you still haven’t solved your most imminent crisis.”

Sonya rested her chin on her hand, “Listening to you, the Blood Moon Tribunal on the 27th will definitely result in many deaths. What if you get put on the list for the Blood Moon Tribunal? It feels like some kind of omen – the more perfect your plan is, the less likely you’ll survive to carry it out.”

Of course she didn’t stretch her long legs over, it wasn’t actually comfortable lying on the boat since it wasn’t a bed. She was just feeling playful and wanted to provoke the Observer a little, to test his tolerance limits towards her.

The result was naturally very ideal.

Soon, soon, the day she could free the Observer from his shackles and make him her own chariot was approaching!

Ashe naturally didn’t know about Sonya’s wicked thoughts. His eyes were fixed on the virtual world map in the light screen as he said, “Then let’s just initiate the plan directly, cause a massive prison riot.”

“But we don’t have a ship—”

“Even without a ship, there are other methods to get through the shark swarms in Shattered Lake. It will just require some bloodshed. The biggest inconvenience without a ship is not being able to get ashore safely. When we arrive, there will definitely be hunter squads surrounding the escaped death row convicts. Although it’s basically impossible to escape, it’s still better than waiting to die in the Blood Moon Tribunal.”

Sonya nodded. This was indeed the best option in the worst case scenario. However, in her mind she refreshed her perspective of the Observer a little. Because of last night’s “coquetry”, she thought the Observer was someone indecisive with delicate thoughts. She didn’t expect that when it came time to be ruthless, he would be just as decisive.

Even though Sonya said easily in front the Observer, but in truth, if she was locked up in Shattered Lake Prison, facing the heavily guarded isolated institution controlled by chips, she might not have the resolve to attempt a prison break, let alone plan a riot.

Because a prison break was more than just breaking out of prison, it was resisting national institutions and challenging the ruling class. Even if she succeeded in escaping, what awaited her would be endless pursuit and manhunts. Every time she opened her eyes she would have to face ubiquitous malice. Even in the sprawling city there would be no safe place for her.

Compared to death, such suffocating pressure was perhaps even more terrifying.

However, while the Observer sometimes revealed his weaker side, he was unambiguous about the prison break. He knew the might of Blood Moon Kingdom well, he was even captured by the Blood Mad Hunters himself. He knew even better about Blood Moon Kingdom’s strong control over society, and he knew the precarious life of constantly looking over his shoulder that awaited him after the escape.

Yet in his words, he never revealed a shred of fear towards Blood Moon Kingdom.

Sonya could only attribute it to the self-confidence brought about by his “revival of the strong”, or perhaps...

He was fearless by nature.

“There’s an adolescent Slash Fish Dragon up ahead, wanna take it down?”

“Let’s do it! I just thought of an amazing opening move, maybe we can knock out the Slash Fish Dragon in one hit.”

As the small boat cut through the white fog, Sonya soon started getting scattered senses: the sound of fish scales scraping the sandy ground, the Slash Fish Dragon’s bubbling, the smell of the sea... Although not as perceptive from a distance as the

Observer when it came to cognitive creatures, Sonya's "Expel the Arcane Venom" allowed her to collect biological information about cognitive creatures through the fog, letting her prepare for battle early. Her right hand lightly grasped the hilt of her sword.

"Huh?"

The small boat suddenly took a sharp turn, instantly dissipating all the momentum Sonya had gathered. She complained, "What are you doing?"

There was some excitement in Ashe's voice. "I discovered a very strange place behind the Slash Fish Dragon, it might be a Miracle Isle."

In the "Virtual World Map", he saw silvery radiance spreading out behind and to the right of the Slash Fish Dragon, forming a sparkling prompt:

"Come quickly!"

"We've finally encountered another Miracle Isle?" Sonya straightened her back, "This time we must round up all the spirits! Not a single one can escape!"

But as they drew closer to the target area, Ashe and Sonya both felt something was wrong – the fog here was as dense as milk white, visibility lowered until Ashe and Sonya in the small boat couldn't even see each other!

More and more knowledge flowed into their consciousness. Ashe was fine, but Sonya's mind flashed continuously as she felt she had broken through one barrier after another in her swordsmanship, quickly resolving all her current difficulties. All that was left was to practice it in reality to confirm her thoughts and ideas!

Sailing through the virtual world absorbing the fog itself increased faction experience. Although Ashe and Sonya had both awakened their Silver Wings, unable to continue aggregating arcane power, their swordsmanship factions that hadn't broken through to gold level could still gain experience from absorbing the fog.

However, these fog experiences were very subtle, often only taking effect when the sorcerer researched or did battle. Fog as rich as this that allowed sorcerers to continuously break through obstacles was almost comparable to Experience Orbs!

Thump.

The moment the small boat stopped, the fog in front of them roared open, revealing the small island hidden within.

The next second, Ashe and Sonya's expressions changed dramatically!

If there were cognitive creatures, sorcerer projections, or other sorcerers on the island, they wouldn't be so shocked.

However, what entered their vision were two chairs!

Two!

They exchanged a glance. Ashe instinctively lowered his voice to ask, "Do you know what this place is?"

"No memory of it. Should we leave?" Sonya was also a little cowardly.

Their fear was natural. If it was just one chair, they definitely wouldn't think much of it, but two chairs meant this island knew two people would come!

Yet besides the two of them, all the sorcerers in the virtual world travelled alone!

It was like when travelling in an unfamiliar city, suddenly finding a hundred dollar bill, only to discover upon closer look it said: 'Hello Ashe, take this and spend it.'

That chill and fear of being watched by an unknown existence, anyone would be afraid.

Ashe took another look at the "Virtual World Map" to confirm it really did say "Come quickly." Determined, he steeled himself to go ashore: "Don't be scared. At worst we just give up a life in the virtual world. We've both awakened our Silver Wings anyway so there's no real loss if we die."

"But what if it's another certain death situation like 'Expel the Arcane Venom'?"

"Trust me!"

Seeing Sonya was still reluctant, Ashe directly pulled her onto the island – he was afraid too, he needed someone to accompany.

The chairs were very ordinary chairs. They exchanged another glance before taking a deep breath and sitting down together.

Nothing special happened. The chairs didn't grow tentacles to tie them up either.

A while later, they sensed something and lowered their heads, only to find a piece of paper on their laps that hadn't been there before.

The instant they picked up the paper, they knew the game rules: Answer the questions that appear, answering incorrectly immediately ends the game, answering correctly allows you to continue answering. If the number of correct answers is greater than or equal to 1, the answerer gains the right to ask questions.

When Sonya looked at the paper, rows of words emerged:

“Question – Multiple Choice: What is the fundamental reason the Swordswoman and the Observer broke up?”

1. The Swordswoman hates the Observer’s coldness
2. The Observer believes the Swordswoman is beyond control
3. Unequal division of spoils
4. All of the above

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

Chapter 110: Let’s Break Up Now

“I remember now,” Sonya murmured. “This is the Destiny Questionnaire.”

“Destiny Questionnaire?”

She nodded slightly. “This is a very rare virtual world mechanism that comes in many forms. What we’ve encountered is the simplest ‘paper questionnaire’ version. If we answer correctly, we can ask the virtual world any question and it must provide an answer.”

“We can ask anything?” Ashe said in surprise. “So if I ask how to attain immortality and invincibility in this world, it would also answer?”

“Yes!” Sonya nodded affirmatively. “But the quality of the virtual world’s answers depends on the number of your correct responses. The more you answer correctly, the more detailed its answers will be.”

“In fact, compared to the reward of ‘asking the virtual world questions,’ most sorcerers actually value the Destiny Questionnaire itself more — because the questions asked in the Destiny Questionnaire are about the sorcerer’s future.”

“Questions about the future?”

“Right. The questions here are about things the sorcerer has not yet experienced, so there’s no way for them to know the correct answers. They can only infer based on the past to guess the future.” Sonya looked at the paper and said softly, “It’s said that whatever future is mentioned in the Destiny Questionnaire will inevitably become reality.”

Ashe uttered an “oh” and said, “What’s your question then?”

Sonya’s pupils suddenly constricted. She spoke as if nothing had happened, “I don’t want to tell you.”

“Why not? Wouldn’t discussing it together make it easier to find the right answer?”

“Oh please, don’t pry into a girl’s privacy, how disgusting,” Sonya said in feigned disgust.

“Sorcerers still care about privacy...”

Ashe grumbled, seeing Sonya intentionally covering the paper. He thought she was really shy, but suddenly felt something was off.

When it came to power and her future, the swordswoman had never been ambiguous. Although she occasionally had a bad temper, there was no denying that she was a good teammate, never dragging the team down in virtual world explorations. Whenever she needed to contribute, she did so without hesitation.

The Destiny Questionnaire was undoubtedly an extremely rare opportunity. In this situation, would the swordswoman really refuse to cooperate due to “shyness” and prefer to answer incorrectly rather than discuss it with Ashe?

Maybe for others, but the swordswoman was someone who could shout “You have no dreams but can protect my dreams” in front of him. Her greed was even recognized by the game, with “Bond Resonance – Greed” being the best proof of her ambition.

Moreover, Ashe and her were from two different worlds, no matter how many of her secrets Ashe knew, it wouldn’t affect her reality one bit. Putting on an act of purity in front of Ashe was useless anyway.

It was as if a laser beam pierced his head and Ashe had a flash of insight. “Is your question related to me?”

Sonya’s body froze.

She knew now was the best time to deny it. She should contradict it with humor, disdain, and astonishment, then disgustedly throw out a “Stop prying into a girl’s privacy!” to dispel all his doubts.

Just lie, just conceal, only consider her own interests, and nip anything unfavorable to her in the bud.

But for some reason, she, who was usually slick with words and cunning, hesitated for a moment this time. It was this brief pause that robbed her of the possibility to conceal it.

Perhaps she was influenced by the “Sincerity” spirit...

Sighing inwardly, Sonya nodded, “Yes.”

“I knew it.” Ashe muttered and pondered, “It’s related to me and you, and you’re unwilling to tell me, could it be written above that—”

Sonya immediately tensed up.

“You’ve fallen in love with me?”

“Are you so sleep deprived that you’re dreaming with your eyes open?” Sonya said impatiently. “How is that possible!”

“You denied it so adamantly, it really makes one suspect... Hey hey, we’re answering destiny’s questions here, what sword are you wielding, put it down, you’re disrupting my test taking!” Ashe righteously admonished Sonya, then lowered his head to look at his question. “If you’re not willing to say, then don’t say it, as if I’m very curious.”

“Aren’t you curious?”

“Of course I’m curious, I’d love to trick you into turning around and snatch your question to read it.” Ashe said languidly. “But you’re unwilling, I can’t offend you now just for the so-called ‘destiny’.”

“When it’s very likely the ‘destiny’ written above will come true, don’t you want to know what will happen between our future?”

“You shouldn’t ask me this question, you should ask yourself. Are you willing to share your future with me?” Ashe said.

Sonya was slightly taken aback, holding up the paper to cover her mouth, she shook her head, “Not very willing yet.”

“Alright then.” Ashe shrugged and lowered his head to look at his question.

After a moment, he asked again, “Really not willing? If you’re unwilling, I’ll ask again later.”

Sonya barely held back a laugh, giving Ashe an irritated look. The corners of her lips curled up slightly, her long eyelashes trembling cutely, her eyes forming crescent moons. Her brows were full of charm, making Ashe think she had used some kind of beauty spell.

"You're so annoying," she grumbled. "Alright alright, since I can't guess the answer anyway, let's discuss it."

"Didn't you actually want to chat with me all along—"

"Listen to the question! Multiple choice, what is the fundamental reason for the swordswoman and observer's split? 1) The swordswoman hates the observer's aloofness, 2) The observer believes he cannot control the swordswoman, 3) Unequal distribution of spoils, 4) All of the above."

"I'll split up with you in the future?" Ashe was also intrigued. "Split up, this is the first time I've heard this term in real life. It sounds like something that would only appear in a stage drama."

The most severe declaration of cutting ties Ashe had heard was "I won't play with you anymore." Words like "split up" were generally used between two major powers, ordinary people didn't have the qualifications to "split up", "divorce" was more fitting.

"Tell me, are you thinking of controlling me, and will resent me when you find out you can't control me?"

"How is that possible, you might as well consider whether your impression of me is biased. I don't look like some hot-blooded youth at all. As a mature member of society, isn't being aloof an excellent traditional virtue? How could you resent my aloofness?"

"So I don't think it's option 1 either, I'm more inclined to think it's 3, unequal distribution of spoils."

"Are you insinuating there's a problem with the current spoils distribution system?"

"No problem now, but after you break out of prison, your appetite may grow. Who knows what will happen then..."

"Pfft, I see you're the greedy one making unreasonable demands. For the greater good I have to tolerate you, but eventually can't stand it anymore and have to part ways with a freeloader like you!"

"Speak conscience, from the beginning until now, which battle was I not the one contributing the most, outputting the most damage? Tsk tsk, observer, you've revealed your foxy tail. You must be planning to reduce my share of the spoils in the future!"

“Even if I adjust the shares, it will certainly be for good reason. I’ve always been fair and impartial, never doing underhanded things...”

“Who was it saying just now that if selected for the Blood Moon Tribunal, they would incite a massive prison riot? Who was it~?”

Although they were discussing very serious future matters, the two spoke lightly and jokingly, causing Sonya’s mood to gradually relax.

She had been worried that bringing up this destiny question might cause the observer to become suspicious and resentful, but his attitude dispelled all her concerns.

Many things were like this – when you don’t see it as a problem, it ceases to be a problem.

“1 is wrong, 2 is wrong, 3 is wrong.” Sonya said impatiently, “Then which option do you think is correct?”

“I actually don’t think any of them are correct answers. If I split up with you, there must be another reason.”

“What reason?”

“For example, you’re not strong enough.”

Sonya was startled. “What do you mean?”

“That is, you might not be able to keep up with my pace of improvement in the future,” Ashe said. “Then I meet an operator stronger than you, naturally you’ll become useless.”

This was the most sensible reason in Ashe’s opinion – although there was only the swordswoman operator for now, that didn’t mean she’d be the only one in the future. Wasn’t it very normal for initial characters to not keep up later in gameplay for a mobile game? There would surely be stronger operators to draw in the future, then Ashe would naturally stop putting the swordswoman in his team.

Sonya was so angry her hands and feet turned cold, her shoulders trembling. “So you want to abandon me because I’m not strong enough?”

“Not abandon per se, just that you might not be suited to me then, could even drag down my progress. For both our sakes, we’d have to temporarily part ways, it’d be better for you and me—”

“No need to wait for the future, let’s split up now!”

“Huh?” Ashe was taken aback.

Was this Destiny Questionnaire so effective it became real right away!?

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

Chapter 111: Because of Love

“Are you sure you want to pick option 4?”

“Why not? I feel like the first three options are all possible, but not completely possible. In this kind of situation, choosing ‘All of the above’ has a high chance of being correct. Trust me.”

Sonya didn’t have any objections either. She was also unsure which was the right answer, although she felt option 3 was more likely. But the future was full of uncertainties, so using the past to infer the future was actually very unreliable. Since the Observer was now strongly advocating for option 4, then she would go with 4 – she could blame him if it was wrong.

With a thought, Sonya ticked option 4. The paper immediately glowed with a rainbow shimmer as the words began to change –

“Congratulations, you answered correctly. Would you like to continue answering questions?”

“It was actually right!” Even Sonya was surprised.

“See, I told you to trust me. I’m confident when it comes to blindly guessing multiple choice questions,” said Ashe, once a legendary anti-overstudying king in college.

“What’s the next question?”

As Sonya chose to continue, the words on the paper transformed to reveal the second question:

“Question: Multiple Choice – What was the reason the Swordswoman and the Observer reconciled after their falling out?”

“1. For a greater good.”

“2. To counter a common threat.”

“3. Because of love.”

“4. All of the above.”

“This time it must be 4 again—”

“Impossible!” Sonya vehemently shook her head. “Option 3 is definitely wrong, so it can’t be 4.”

Ashe spread his hands, the corners of his lips curving like a crescent moon. “Oh my, this is something that could happen in the future, not something that will definitely happen. Why are you being so shy about it? Just answer the question of fate with an open mind—”

Sonya was on the verge of snarling. “Then you should sort out your own emotions first! I can clearly hear the smugness in your tone that you’re unsuccessfully trying to hide!”

After bickering for a while, Sonya looked back at the question and pondered for a bit before speaking, “It should be option 1 – if it’s for a greater good, we could temporarily set aside any past grievances, no matter how serious they were.”

Ashe didn’t try to mess with her and nodded seriously. “You’re right, option 1 is the most likely. And the chances of having the same answer for two consecutive questions is low.”

It wasn’t just because of the principles of guesswork, but also logical reasoning – Ashe felt option 1 was the most sensible. Firstly, the Observer and the Swordswoman had already fallen out, so how could two estranged people possibly have romantic love? Other than common interests, what could bring them together?

After spending so many days together, Ashe already knew the Swordswoman was someone who prioritized interests above all. As for himself, an old social animal doesn’t talk about interests, does he talk about feelings?

After briefly conferring, Sonya decided to choose option 1. But when she willed it, the words on the paper glowed with a murky, turbid light – clearly an ominous sign:

“You answered incorrectly. The fate questioning ends here. You may now begin asking your question.”

They got it wrong!?

Both Ashe and Sonya were stunned. Considering there were only three other options left, and two of them contained “because of love”, that meant there was a two-thirds probability that they would reconcile in the future because of love!?

“On second thoughts, perhaps option 2 is also likely – two estranged people setting aside their differences to counter a common threat...”

“Yes, I think so too.”

Their awkward attempt to forcibly change the topic made the atmosphere turn stilted, even veering into ambiguous territory. Sonya quickly switched topics again: “So what’s your question?”

“I’ll keep it simple.” Ashe looked down at the paper.

“Question: Short Answer – Who did Sylin Dole see before he died?”

“Speaking of which, why was your question multiple choice while mine is short answer?”

“Probably because of the time frame,” Sonya guessed. “If it’s a question set too far into the future, with my current limited knowledge, it would be impossible for me to deduce the right answer. So fate questioning gives me options to choose from, at least giving me a chance to guess correctly. Your question is probably set closer to the present, so you should be able to guess it yourself without options.”

She paused for a moment: “This Sylin, is he the hidden killer you mentioned before?”

“Yes,” Ashe said. “So the answer is obvious.”

Ashe focused his mind and wrote: “Sylin Dole died after seeing Ashe Heath.”

The words on the paper morphed into a rainbow glow: “Congratulations, you answered correctly. Would you like to continue answering questions?”

After Ashe’s input, the paper displayed a second question:

“Question: Short Answer – How did the Observer escape Blood Moon Domain after breaking out of prison?”

Ashe relayed the question to Sonya. She was somewhat confused: “No multiple choices? That means you should be able to deduce the right answer based on what you currently know. Did you guys plan an escape route for after the prison break?”

“Does surviving in the wilderness count?”

To be honest, Ashe and the others hadn’t really thought about how to escape after the breakout – anyway, they would all just go their separate ways and mind their own business after getting out, no need to discuss plans with others.

For amnesiacs like Ashe who was in the dark about everything, he had no other choice but to disappear into the remote wilderness and live like a savage. But Igor, Langna, Ronat and even Harvey were all local snakes, they probably had private safehouses and wouldn't want to share escape plans with their prison mates.

"Do you know of any ways to leave Blood Moon Domain then?"

"Nope, I don't even know where the borders of Blood Moon Domain are right now." Ashe looked completely lost.

Unable to come up with anything concrete through discussion, Sonya pondered: "Since we can't think of anything, let's just pick one of the most common options – either impersonating a legal identity and leaving by normal transportation, or finding smugglers to leave the domain illegally, with smuggling by sea being the most common illegal method..."

"Impersonation won't work, there must be chip scanning to use any transportation in Blood Moon Domain. After getting my chip removed, I won't implant a new one." Ashe said. "So it has to be illegal channels. Compared to land transport which can be easily intercepted, escaping by sea does seem more likely... Alright, let's go with that!"

"The Observer escaped Blood Moon Domain by boat after the prison break!"

The paper made a scoffing sound, spewing out wisps of gray mist, as if mocking Ashe's stupidity:

"You answered incorrectly. Fate questioning ends here. You may now begin asking your question."

Ashe and Sonya had expected this outcome and weren't too disappointed. After all, with zero clues, just blindly guessing based on logic meant the chances of getting the right answer were extremely low.

But Sonya was still puzzled: "That can't be right. If fate questioning asks a question the Sorcerer can't answer, isn't that just petty bullying? You must know how to escape Blood Moon Domain, you just can't recall it at the moment."

"Maybe the virtual world heard me cursing it just now and is deliberately targeting me."

"Well you definitely deserved it... But the fact that even the virtual world thinks you can succeed in breaking out and leaving Blood Moon Domain means you don't have to worry about the Blood Moon Tribunal."

Ashe realized she was right – not only this question, but the previous ones about how Sylin Kahl died and the falling out between the Observer and Swordswoman also

proved that Ashe wouldn't just end up as tomato sauce at the Tribunal. Otherwise, how could he even have a future?

This was the greatest benefit of fate questioning – you could indirectly learn about your own future circumstances through the questions, which provided tremendous value in assessing your current situation.

With the questioning over, it was now time to ask their own questions.

Looking at the paper in their hands, Sonya said: "Our questions can't be too outrageous, it's best to keep them within the scope of the White Silver wing. Although there's little information about fate questioning, there is one universal rule in the virtual world – you reap what you sow. Since we only got one question right, the reward from the virtual world definitely won't exceed that."

Ashe nodded: "It's best if the answer directly increases our combat power, since the second Blood Moon Tribunal is approaching. Every bit of extra strength increases my chances of survival."

Speaking of which, both of them were struck by inspiration at the same moment and excitedly said to each other:

"The golden fish!"

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

Chapter 112: Myself from a Different Time is Not Myself

Based on Ashe and Sonya's situation, asking the Golden Fish was undoubtedly the most cost-effective choice.

Spirits – they lacked them, but Fate's answers could not simply hand over a spirit directly. This was a Q&A, not a wish granter.

Miracles – they were not lacking much in this aspect, and with their number of correct answers, the Virtual Realm would most likely not provide a detailed miracle formula at most, only pointing them toward a specific direction of miracle research.

As for quickly improving the proficiency level of their spellcasting disciplines, the fastest method would undoubtedly be taking Experience Orbs. And the origin of Experience Orbs were creatures of knowledge. The Virtual Realm could at most point them toward suitable creatures of knowledge, not directly taking an orb out from such a creature's body and giving it to them.

After thinking it through, the three factors of spirits, miracles, and proficiency provided only decorative improvements. What truly determined a sorcerer's combat power were undoubtedly the number of virtual wings and the level of arcane energy!

As long as they advanced to two wings, they could adventure in the Time continent and obtain two-winged spirits!

As long as they advanced to two wings, their arcane energy could continue growing!

As long as they advanced to two wings, Ashe could use his golden arcane energy to fully activate the two-winged spirit Sword, greatly increasing the defensive power of the Miracle Sword Barrier. This would provide greater assurance when breaking out of prison!

The reason Ashe was so eager to improve the swordswoman's sword mastery to golden grade was that he hoped after she advanced to two wings, she could bring him to smuggle into the Time continent. And now there was an even better smuggling opportunity!

Of course, if they directly asked the Golden Fish, the Virtual Realm would definitely not provide a very detailed answer.

However, there was an obvious loophole in the Fate Q&A – no matter how many correct answers a sorcerer had, if the question was a matter of right or wrong judgement, the Virtual Realm would definitely provide the right answer!

For example, if a sorcerer was stuck in their research on a certain miracle, and had tried all possibilities leaving only two directions A and B, then asking the Virtual Realm whether direction A was right, the Virtual Realm could only answer "yes" or "no", naturally also knowing whether direction B was right or wrong.

If it was a master logician, they could even construct a complex right-wrong judgement question to have the Virtual Realm eliminate multiple doubts for them.

For example, if Ashe asked “Will I see the swordswoman sleeping beside me when I wake up one day 10 years later?”, with the key points being “one day 10 years later”, “wake up”, and “swordswoman sleeping beside”.

“Wake up” was a necessary element, Ashe could not stay in the Virtual Realm every night, sleeping in lazily was a luxurious and wonderful enjoyment that Ashe definitely wanted to experience occasionally.

And “swordswoman sleeping beside” was a controllable element, Ashe could completely remember this and have her act it out and sleep beside him in the future.

The only uncontrollable element was “one day 10 years later”.

If the Virtual Realm answered “yes”, then naturally there was nothing more to say, Ashe could directly confidently call the swordswoman his wife.

If the answer was “no”, there were two possibilities – either Ashe and the swordswoman had broken up by then, so the swordswoman refused to even act it out; or the Virtual Realm believed Ashe would not live past 10 more years.

Therefore, when the Virtual Realm was stingy with its answer quality, asking right-wrong judgement questions was the most cost-effective choice, at least it would not provide useless information.

After briefly discussing, they decided to ask the Virtual Realm different questions in succession:

“Does the Golden Fish need to be seen through a specific ritual?”

Questions like “Where is the Golden Fish” or “How can I find the Golden Fish” would definitely not get a detailed answer. The Virtual Realm would mostly answer with correct nonsense like “In the Sea of Knowledge” or “Use your eyes to look for it”.

These two questions actually originated from Ashe and Sonya's guess – Sonya had asked Professor Trotzam before, the Time continent was also an extremely vast place, not much smaller than the Sea of Knowledge. Logically, the Time continent was so big, then the Golden Fish should also be very huge, but why could sorcerers not see the Golden Fish in the Sea of Knowledge?

With the precedent of “Whirlpool Venom” and “Expulsion Venom”, they naturally associated and guessed that the Golden Fish was likely “non-existent” in the Sea of Knowledge. Only when a sorcerer activated the Virtual Realm's mechanisms through a specific ritual would the Golden Fish appear before the sorcerer.

Yet the answer greatly shocked them: “No.”

The Golden Fish did not need a specific ritual to be seen? That meant the Golden Fish also existed in the Sea of Knowledge right now?

After briefly discussing, they asked the second question:

“When does the Golden Fish float up from the seabed?”

In any case, Ashe and Sonya were certain that encountering the Golden Fish through normal sailing was impossible. After all, even Ashe who held the “Virtual Realm Map” had never seen any trace of the Golden Fish, let alone other sorcerers.

Since it was not on the sea surface, then naturally it was sunk at the seabed. And adding on that the Golden Fish did not need a specific ritual to be seen, they guessed the Golden Fish may periodically float up from the deep sea to the surface. So they directly asked the Virtual Realm when the Golden Fish would float up, and they could try their luck finding it then.

Because it was not a right or wrong question, they were very nervous about whether the Virtual Realm would randomly spew nonsense.

The result still greatly shocked them: “The Golden Fish has always been floating on the sea surface.”

The Golden Fish has always been floating on the sea surface, and can be seen without any specific ritual?

Although this conclusion completely contradicted Ashe and Sonya’s experiences exploring the Virtual Realm, they had no choice but to believe it. If the Fate Answers mentioned the ‘future’ which may not happen, but their question about the Golden Fish was information the Virtual Realm definitely possessed. The Virtual Realm was the authority in this!

“Could it really be just our bad luck that we have never encountered the Golden Fish?”

Although incredulous, Ashe could only accept this conclusion. At this time the paper disintegrated into light smoke and disappeared, while their chairs also suddenly vanished, almost causing them to fall on their butts.

Back on the small boat, watching the Fate Q&A island sink, Sonya murmured: “Feels like we totally got ripped off, didn’t get any useful intel at all.”

“At least I know I can escape Bloodmoon alive.” Ashe was quite relaxed. To him the Fate Answers were just a windfall opportunity. Gains were of course good, but no gains just opened his horizons: “And in the future we will also break up for various reasons, then get back together for some other reasons—”

“Since we experienced the Fate Answers, the future may not necessarily happen that way!” Sonya glared at him. “There’s also always been a saying that many prophecies in Fate Answers were never fulfilled, but those who knew died before the prophecies happened, so no one knew of these invalid prophecies, thus there were no records.”

“If you die, then I’ll report this precious case regarding Fate Answers to the school. Maybe I can earn some credits...”

Survivorship bias, not bad... Ashe spread his hands: “So do you hope the prophecies come true, or hope they don’t come true?”

Sonya snorted lightly: “I only believe prophecies beneficial to me, unfavorable ones are all lies.”

“It’s you.”

“What about you then?”

“Me? Hmm, how do I put this... I don’t care about the prophecies themselves, but I look forward to confronting them.”

“Confronting? What do you mean?”

“Let me think how to explain this to you... Swordswoman, do you think the you now and the you 30 years later would be the same in personality, values, ideals, habits etc?”

Sonya thought for a bit then shook her head: “Should be different right? I’m not even 20 yet, 30 years is longer than my entire life until now. Many changes would definitely happen.”

Ashe nodded: “Then if the soul of you 30 years later suddenly took over your current body, can it be considered the 30 years later you killing the current you?”

Sonya’s brows knitted slightly, looking a bit unsettled: “Can think of it that way, I guess?”

“If you extend the ‘taking over’ process to 30 years, where through the prophecy you know 30 years later there is a Swordswoman completely different from you in all aspects, yet you still inevitably become the Swordswoman of the prophecy. Can that be considered the prophesied Swordswoman slowly killing you over the 30 years?”

“...Most people wouldn’t think that way.”

“But don’t you think it’s very interesting?” Ashe spread his arms: “If you didn’t know the prophecy then forget it, but since you know the prophecy, it’s like a ‘future you’ has appeared. Only one of you can survive, either she kills you, or you kill her, no second possibility.”

“The only difference between ‘prophecy’ and ‘taking over’ is the time span. ‘Taking over’ happens instantly, so you feel it’s the ‘future Swordswoman’ killing the ‘current you’, but for ‘prophecy’ it’s long days and nights where the ‘future you’ uses time to sculpt the ‘current you’ into your likeness.”

Sonya’s lips moved slightly, seemingly wanting to retort but didn’t say anything, probably thinking how to refute him. Ashe continued asking:

“Have you heard of a game where children write a letter to their future grown up selves?”

“Heard of it, I’ve written one too.”

“What do you think, when the grown up adult reads that letter, would they feel it’s like a final will?”

“Why would they think so?”

“Because they are completely different people, vastly different in thoughts, habits, values, ideals, yet they once lived in the same body. Isn’t that like the latter killing the former?”

Sonya shook her head repeatedly: “But they are the continuous same person, this change is called growing up, not taking over!”

Ashe smiled: “When the child wrote the letter, it’s like freezing the him at that instant in time on the letter. The soul on the letter broke away from the continuum of time, becoming an independent unchanging individual.”

“Isn’t this very similar to a prophecy? The prophecy pulls out a future you from a certain point in time to show you. Isn’t that like the future you writing a letter to the current you?”

“Myself from a different time is not myself.”

“So I don’t care about prophecies, but I look forward to confronting them. Of course, things that are clearly about to happen soon like me going after Sylin after breaking out don’t really count as prophecies. But if in the future we really break up for those random reasons, then it means the prophesied Observer killed me, the prophesied Swordswoman killed you.”

Ashe suddenly pondered: “Speaking of which, why does the reason for getting back together contain romance, but the reason for breaking up doesn’t include broken relationships? Could romance have only sprouted after breaking up, both sides realizing how indispensable the other is—”

Sonya snapped back to reality and said with a red face and gritted teeth: “That would mean we got back together not because of romance, but to unite against common threats!”

“Alright alright, no need to get worked up.”

“I’m not worked up!”

“Okay okay okay, you’re right, we should go kill a Slash Dragon to liven up the mood.”

After hunting two more creatures of knowledge, not only were there no Experience Orbs, Sonya also failed to intercept an escaping creature of knowledge. But such mistakes were common, Ashe didn’t mind. They bid farewell and exited the Virtual Realm together.

Upon her consciousness returning to her body in the meditation room, Sonya took a long time to recover her bearings, the Observer’s words still echoing in her mind.

Actually, after growing closer, Sonya couldn’t help but harbor doubts – was the Observer really the reincarnation of a mighty one like she had imagined?

Mainly because the Observer did not resemble a legendary figure at all – he did not pursue power, did not love learning, even his desires were shallow. If placed in Swordflower College, this kind of person with no potential, a mediocre and inferior passerby, Sonya would not even glance at.

But the Observer’s speech just now made Sonya realize he was absolutely no ordinary person, even if he was now, he would not remain so in the future.

That madness wrapped in logic, that wickedness vastly different from common sense, Sonya had witnessed many times in “Psychoanalysis of Malicious Sorcerers”. Malicious sorcerers were not all evil people, many were even content with mediocrity and having families. But once their lives were shattered by accidents, they would shed their ‘old selves’ like cocoons into butterflies, daring to trample all earthly laws and morals, and chase the light in their hearts like moths to flames.

She recalled the opening words of that book—

“They did not change, only awakened.”

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Chapter 113: The Heartbroken Seeking Advice on Love Issues from a Single Dog

Swordflower College, Mori Library.

Although it couldn't compare to the four Libraries of Truth at Trinity College, the Mori and Hana libraries at Swordflower College were also considered one of the top scenic spots in Cailleach – in terms of book collection, Mori and Hana libraries couldn't even make the top ten in Cailleach, but in terms of the comfortable and pleasant environment, Mori and Hana libraries were the undisputed top two existence in Swordflower College, enjoying the reputation of “Number One Dating Spot”.

Unlike the vibrant and dazzling Hana Library, Mori Library's theme was “Tranquil Forest”. From the outside, it looked like a lush forest, with small bridges over streams, mating rabbits, squirrels nibbling on pine cones, comfortable breezes blowing through the trees, and everywhere were cozy swings, benches, treehouses and even bears – yes, there were very friendly bears inside that you could lean on their bellies and read.

To Sonya, the most magical thing about Mori Library was that there were no mosquitoes.

This was truly shocking to the country girl who grew up in an agricultural town and often went into the woods to pick mushrooms for extra meals when she was little.

But of course, to provide a comfortable reading experience, many functionalities of the library had to be sacrificed. The books were all stored in the tree trunks. Mori Library had four floors in total, connected by winding trunks. People coming here for the first time could easily get lost even with a map.

Sonya wasn't new to Mori Library and she knew how to access the navigation index through her Miracle bracelet, but it still took her quite some effort to find the books she needed.

When she wanted to find a bench to sit down and read, she unexpectedly ran into her “archenemy”.

“Hello, senior sister.”

Seeing Sylvia walking towards her, Sonya felt the third-year senior looked slightly more haggard compared to their first meeting, but it didn't detract from her beauty. On the contrary, it added a touch of endearment to her that made people want to comfort her when seeing her. The male students nearby were the best proof, looking at this direction with one eye while reading with the other.

Sylvia was also a bit surprised. She nodded lightly and stopped when passing by Sonya. "Last time... I caused you trouble."

"Yeah, how are you going to compensate me?"

Sonya realized she had already ended the Sincerity ritual and didn't need to tell the truth anymore – but whether it was the lingering influence of the Sincerity spirit or the past few days, she still blurted out the truth when she was supposed to equivocate and lie.

Sylvia was taken aback for a moment, then smiled with a hand over her mouth. "Then let me buy you a tree juice?"

There was a water cafe in Mori Library, and the drinks there all had forest themes, like "Tree Juice", "Flower Nectar", "Morning Dew", etc. Although the names didn't sound appealing, they were actually sorcerer drinks made by watermage students as part-timers, with sweetness and texture far superior to ordinary drinks, and cheaper than outside too, very popular among students.

Since Sylvia wanted to ease the tension between them, and Sonya had no direct conflict of interest with her, she readily agreed to go to the water cafe with her and ordered a "Dew Dropping on Grass Blades".

"I'm sorry." Sylvia said after sitting down. "I was too impulsive last time and didn't think through anything. If there's anything I can do to compensate you, please let me know and I'll try my best."

Seeing that Sylvia was sincerely apologetic, Sonya also softened her tone: "Although you were 99% at fault, I'm not without 1% fault either. Perhaps my actions misled you... By the way senior sister, I saw you played the third female lead in 'My Child Bears My Surname', you were so amazing!"

Sylvia naturally understood her intent and was a bit surprised: "My uncle was the director and screenwriter of that film, so he let me make a cameo... Sonya, are you interested in becoming an actress?"

"Yeah!" Sonya's eyes lit up: "I actually read some performing arts books in private too."

Although very shocked that Sonya didn't aim to become a sword saint, Sylvia didn't say anything more. Catering to her interest, she promised to ask her uncle to arrange a good role for Sonya if possible.

"For others, my uncle may not be willing, but you're now the disciple of Hidden Hands Swordsaint, the fastest sorcerer to unfold the Silver Wings at Swordflower College. Just this background alone can give you a lot of attention, it's extra promotional resources. But if you don't leave the audience with an impression in the film, you'll quickly fade into obscurity." Sylvia said seriously: "The most I can do is provide you with an opportunity, whether you can seize it depends on your own efforts and luck. But my uncle doesn't have any filming plans recently, so you may have to wait a long time."

"No problem, I still have three years before graduation!"

The two hit it off and the atmosphere became much more harmonious. After chatting about campus life for a while, Sylvia shyly asked, "I heard he... is still single now?"

What else could it be, could he have turned into a dog?

Sonya naturally knew who Sylvia was talking about and nodded: "I haven't seen any other girls around him anyway."

"Then you—"

"Absolutely not."

Sylvia breathed a sigh of relief. At this moment, their drinks arrived. Sonya took a sip of the "Dew Dropping on Grass Blades" and found it surprisingly milkily fragrant, like milk tea, but the texture was fresh instead of cloying. She thought it would be great if she could become a watermage.

Though if her roommate became a watermage, she could also mooch some drinks from her, but Iris and the others didn't seem very interested in becoming sorcerers...

Sylvia hesitated and said, "This is different from his past self... In the past, he would always start a new relationship after ending one..." Search* The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Mm-hmm."

"Do you think... he might still be thinking of me?"

Sonya almost spat out her drink. She barely managed to keep a straight face and felt a bit of pity seeing Sylvia's longing yet apprehensive look.

Through the Sincerity summoning ritual and her experiences as a sorcerer these days, Sonya vaguely sensed that Felix's behavior of "attracting admirers" was probably some kind of ritual, or a necessary condition to resonate with spirit.

Once Felix became a sorcerer, he immediately broke up with all his girlfriends and never went to those entertainment venues again, spending every day either studying or training hard instead. Sonya didn't think the virtual world had the ability to correct his worldview, so this could only mean Felix was just pretending before. Naturally he no longer needed to pretend after becoming a sorcerer.

But there was no need to tell Sylvia all this. Firstly it was just Sonya's speculation, and secondly, Sylvia still had a chance.

Sylvia really had excellent qualities – long black hair, delicate features, tall and slender figure, and even her bust size was just right, just a bit smaller than Sonya. Most importantly, she genuinely liked him. Who could resist the pursuit of such a pretty, pitiful senior with long black hair?

"It's possible!"

"You think so too!"

Sylvia said happily, "Then what do you think I should do to get back together with Felix?"

"Hmm, let's see..." Sonya suddenly recalled the questions she encountered in Destiny Quiz: "For greater good? To resist a common threat?"

Seeing Sylvia's slightly confused expression, Sonya remembered they were still students. There was no need for complicated reasons to get back together: "Actually, you just need to actively walk into his life, and he won't reject you either. Of course, don't directly aim for getting back together. You can say you want to resolve misunderstandings and be friends first. If needed, I can create coincidental encounter opportunities for you."

"Yeah!"

"As long as you become close again, many tactics can be used." Sonya smiled. "For example, the woodpecker tactic."

"Woodpecker tactic?"

"That is, during your interactions, you can suddenly sigh for no reason. When he asks what's wrong, you say it's nothing. Or you can suddenly fall silent while chatting, occasionally act dispirited, to make him worry about you, but you don't explain the reason. Then you also need to rely on him and act coquettish from time to time, to make

him feel like you can't live without him. Through such frequent emotional prodding, in the long run you can achieve shallow emotional control. By then, your every sigh and move can make his emotions fluctuate, with all his attention focused on you. This is what I call the woodpecker tactic."

Speaking passionately, Sonya went on to teach: "If you successfully get back together, you can move on to the second step, negative emotion transfer and positive emotion control. Simply put, whenever you feel unhappy, you must share it with him and make him feel unhappy too. But if he encounters something happy and wants to share with you, and it's not something you like, then you should deny him and repress him. In short, don't let him feel happy when you are not, and even when he's happy it can only be within the scope you allow."

"The third step is time distortion. When he treats you well, you must remain calm and make him promise to keep treating you this way for the rest of his life, prolonging his effort to a lifetime, making his devotion seem natural.

"Then combined with the fourth step, historical projection, when he becomes cold towards you, you can invoke projections of his past to prove he has changed his heart. Of course, as long as he is willing to apologize, you should also give him some sweetness."

"As long as you grasp these four steps, Felix will definitely become your lapdog, the perfect partner!"

Sylvia blinked as she listened. After Sonya finished, she smiled and asked, "Sonya, have you been in a relationship before?"

Sonya's face turned red. "No. I'm sorry, I was too arrogant, blabbing all these useless personal shallow insights in front of senior sister..."

Sylvia gently shook her head. "No, these 'tactics' are very practical. If it was in the past, I would have been very happy to learn and use these 'tactics'."

"But love is a kind of 'miracle'." She said softly. "I don't want to hurt him, or see him unhappy. I just hope... I can stand by his side."

Sonya was taken aback. She now noticed the books Sylvia was holding – Sword Wind Abyss, Support Handbook for Windmages, Recommended Battle Wind Spirits for Windmages. They were basically all about how windmages could assist swordsages in combat.

Sylvia smiled and said, "Still, thank you for your advice. I may have to trouble you again in the future, can we add each other on Curtain Call?"

"Of course, no problem."

The two exchanged their personal Curtain Calls and could now directly communicate through the Miracle bracelets.

Sylvia looked at the books Sonya had: “Speaking of which, Sonya, are you planning to self-study the Mind sphere? But these two seem...”

Dream Interpretation and Psychological Language Interpretation were must-read books for the Mind sphere, but the other two puzzled Sylvia a bit: Days with a Sinmage and How to Relieve Others’ Psychological Stress.

The former was similar to adventure fiction, while the latter, though related to the Mind sphere, leaned more towards a practical guidebook and didn’t help much with studying the Mind sphere.

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Chapter 114: The Arrival of Starchild

Sonya’s lips moved slightly, and she soon smiled and shrugged: “I was just passing by and thought the titles of these two books looked interesting, so I picked them up to take a look. There’s no particular purpose. I’ll put them back if they turn out to be not good.”

Sylvia nodded thoughtfully: “You don’t have to explain it to me in such detail...”

Seemingly aware that Sonya was feeling flustered, Sylvia changed the topic: “Actually I was quite surprised to run into you here in Mori Library. I thought you had joined the annihilation operation too.”

“Annihilation operation?”

“Yeah, didn’t Professor Trotsam mention it to you? Oh right, your growth has probably been so rapid that the professor would rather have you miss this opportunity than take the risk.”

“What is the annihilation operation?” The term completely stumped the country bumpkin.

Sylvia thought for a moment: “I don’t really know the details either, since it’s a covert mission for gifted students that the school privately commissions. Those without adequate skills won’t even get an invitation, and students who sign the contract are forbidden from divulging any information about the operation.”

“The only reason I know is because Lorein signed up for it too... I heard from him that Leone is participating as well, so I assumed you wouldn’t be absent either.”

She added after a pause: “I heard it’s a special event involving young sorcerers across Cailleach, with even the genius sorcerers from Trinity College taking part!”

Not only senior Leone, but even the top elites from Trinity College were willing to participate in this event!?

Sonya instantly felt she had missed out on a tremendous opportunity, but she understood it was only normal — the name alone indicated this was a dangerous ‘operation’ that would involve combat.

Even though she was now a sorcerer with the full Silver Wings, she had also only been a ‘novice sorcerer’ in the virtual world for less than a month. Whether to protect her or to prevent her from dragging the team down, Professor Trotzam would never have allowed her to participate prematurely in such perilous actions.

‘I still have to get the professor to recognize my abilities as soon as possible, or I won’t get a shot at many opportunities.’ Sonya thought to herself.

Bloodmoon Kingdom, outskirts of Caimon City, halfway up a hill.

“Shift change, everything normal.”

It was 10 a.m. The two adventurers responsible for observing the virtual gateway lightly tapped the back of their necks and reported softly. Soon, two other adventurers emerged from a tent halfway up the hillside camp, and the two teams switched shifts.

The younger adventurer had barely stood there for a while before he started grumbling: “Pops, how much longer do we have to stay here? The weather’s getting hotter, and it’s bad enough there’s no cold air, but the mosquitoes are crazy too. Even the heavy-duty repellent doesn’t work!”

“12 more hours. If the ‘bunny’ doesn’t come back in 72 hours, we can be sure it’s dead.”

The adventurer beside him wearing a cloak replied in a robotic, emotionless mechanical voice. On closer look, his arms, thighs, and even one eye were not organic but mechanical prosthetics.

"If not for the generous credit from this commission, I'd rather be in the war zone killing some sea ghosts." The young adventurer muttered: "If you ask me, whoever caused this virtual fissure ought to just die already. It's adding to our workload and poses a threat of foreign invasion..."

"Only sorcerers can trigger chaotic virtual flows. There are currently 86 unknown virtual gateways around Caimon City," the older man said, "which means 86 sorcerers triggered the chaotic flows. One of them could be you. It's reasonable coming from others, but you're a sorcerer yourself."

The young man's voice shrank: "I was just saying... Can't you complain a little too, Pops?"

"Just as I've accepted that I don't have the aptitude to become a sorcerer, I accept these natural disasters caused by them," the older adventurer shook his head slightly. "I grew tired of complaining by the time I was forty."

The young man changed the subject: "Pops, what are you spending your credits on this time? I've saved up enough to exchange for the 'Blade' spirit. Now I can try taking on cognitive beings too."

"Looks like you haven't spent much and your gear is still an outdated old version. Are you saving up to exchange for the latest accessories? If I weren't reluctant to modify my body, I'd like to get a 'Silver Wolf Arm' too."

The older man glanced at him, the cold gaze of his mechanical eye giving the youth the creeps. But he quickly shifted his eyes to focus on the virtual fissure thirty meters below like a depression in space.

"I'm using the credits to purchase some intel."

"What intel?"

"Intel on my child."

"What child—isn't that illegal?!"

"I know, that's why I've been saving credits for so many years. Otherwise they wouldn't take the risk."

"You're insane!" The youth was shocked. "Why go through all that fruitless trouble? If anyone finds out, you'll both end up exploring the sewer abyss in a pig cage!"

The older man shook his head. "Of course not. The child should have been born 31 years ago. I don't even remember what the woman looked like. I just want to see him once."

The youth could not comprehend it. “What’s the point of seeing him once? With that many credits, you could improve your combat strength by two levels if you spent them on yourself. You could trip on moon sugar for a year, gamble it away, spend it on fun – why use it just to see a stranger once?”

“He’s not a stranger, he’s my child.”

“How’s that any different from a stranger? You have to pay just to find out what he looks like and what his name is.”

“But he’s my child. He exists because of me.”

“I don’t get it. You might as well give the credits to me.”

“You’re a sorcerer, and still young. You don’t understand. I was like you when I was younger, spending money on moon sugar and gambling it away at First Blood casino, going transform for mods. But as I grew older, those entertainments lost their thrill for me, and I lost interest in tomorrow.”

“Then one day I remembered – when I was young I had a child with a woman to earn the birthing subsidy. It was like the sky suddenly lit up. I found my purpose in life – to see that child once.”

“You’re a sorcerer. You can explore the virtual world, research spells. But I can’t. If not for 70% full cybernetic mods, I wouldn’t qualify to be an adventurer in the war zone. I can’t even cross the threshold of ‘magic’ for something as easy as gunmanship.”

“They say sorcerers pursue miracles. That child is my miracle.”

The older man pointed at his left eye. “I didn’t replace this eye so I can see my child with my real eye.”

The youth muttered softly: “Still don’t get it...”

The older man laughed mechanically: “Don’t try to understand. What I’m doing is illegal.”

Bang!

The young man was sent flying violently and swore in confusion: “What the hell, Pops—”

The words stuck in his throat the next second.

Because he saw an orange-haired girl in dark blue armor standing where he was a moment ago.

The girl stood on the older man's body, her longsword dripping red and blue fluids. The older man's head had been severed, his mechanical spine snapped open, spurting red blood and blue machine oil!

The youth's pupils contracted as alerts popped up in his vision: "Threat detected—"

Snap!

By the time Lorein lopped off the young man's head, the other two resting adventurers in the camp had also been dispatched by the other annihilation team members.

Soon, one hundred and sixty-three annihilation team members gathered at the campsite. They all wore dark blue armor, and their weapons were without exception specially forged alchemical items. Even the martial artists wore spiked gauntlets! But in the few seconds since their arrival, blood-red shackles of light had appeared around their necks, making them look like walking light pollution.

"There are four rules to the game."

"First, kills must be landed with Starchild weapons to gain points."

"Second, try to survive 48 hours without getting killed."

"Third, try to kill as many targets as possible. Humanoid monsters take priority, rest are secondary. Sorcerer monsters take priority, rest are secondary."

"Fourth, everyone must activate the armor's Miracle Transfer when time's up to return here. The Starchild will destroy this Level 2 virtual fissure 48 hours from now."

"The sacred stars connect us all, the starlight will guide our path. Let the game begin!"

Their pupils all glowed with a faint purple-blue rim. At the command, everyone saluted in unison, then scattered simultaneously!

From above, one could see only a handful of blue dots moving north and south toward villages, while most of the blue dots advanced westward toward Caimon City!

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Chapter 115: The Mayor Falls

“When hurt enough, use a hand to cut open freely, the curse of yesterday...”

As the energetic prison bell rang, Ashe got up, washed up, and brushed his teeth while pondering Swordswoman’s strange behavior the past two days.

Instead of idle chatter, Swordswoman suddenly asked Ashe many targeted questions in the virtual world, such as his favorite color palette, how to make friends, whether he prefers mystery thrillers or horror thrillers, and even asked if Ashe preferred big breasts or small breasts, leaving Ashe very confused – isn’t the answer obvious? Who doesn’t like big breasts!?

Moreover, Swordswoman’s attitude towards Ashe changed four times in one night – sometimes gentle and considerate, sometimes cold and aloof, sometimes sexy and flirtatious, and sometimes innocent and cute.

Ashe’s thoughts were – it would be even better if she could change her clothes along with her personality switches.

When Ashe asked Swordswoman what was going on, she said nothing was wrong, leaving Ashe nervous.

He racked his brains and figured Swordswoman couldn’t possibly be psychologically testing him. Other than that, he could only think of one possibility – that Swordswoman was having her monthly menstrual cycle.

Carefully thinking it through, moody, talkative, curious – it did seem to match a woman’s characteristics during menstruation. Other than marveling that ‘a paper doll also gets her period’, Ashe didn’t think too much of it.

Opening the light screen, Aurora’s Sorcerer Handbook immediately popped up a message:

“Death Maniac Swordswoman’s training has ended. Please check the growth report and set this week’s training strategy as soon as possible.”

“Death Maniac Swordswoman’s Growth Report 4/19 – 4/25”

“Swordsmanship School: Silver → Silver”

“Light School: Silver → Silver”

“Water School: Silver → Silver”

“Mind School: 0 → Silver”

“Arcane Energy: Half Silver Wings → Full Silver Wings”

“Training Evaluation: A!”

“Due to obtaining an A evaluation, Death Maniac Swordswoman gains the Sorcerer Handbook’s career enhancement: Silver Sorcerer of Annihilation → Silver Sorcerer of Soul Shattering.”

“Silver Sorcerer of Soul Shattering – Career Trait: Each effective attack deals an additional 1% soul damage.”

This new career trait made Ashe’s eyes light up. The enemies in the virtual world were undoubtedly spiritual bodies, which meant Swordswoman could deal additional true damage to them. Along with Swordswoman’s high attack speed, the cumulative extra damage would be considerable.

The arcane schools didn’t grow much. Over the past two days, they had only obtained a water arcane gem, which was fed to Swordswoman, so her water school naturally remained at the silver level.

If not for the mind school advancing from 0 to silver, and the arcane energy breaking through from half wings to full wings, the training evaluation wouldn’t have reached A. But Ashe still felt resentful – why wasn’t there a growth report for his ‘Apocalypse Observer’? He also wanted to get career enhancements from the handbook and change to a new career!

Until now, his job was still the useless cult leader! The Four Pillars’ blessings had never taken effect!

Ashe checked his points. Although they had hunted many knowledge creatures these days and obtained many arcane spirits, because Swordswoman said she needed money on her side to purchase arcane spirits, the spoils were split 60% to Ashe, 40% to Swordswoman.

After exchanging all the unused arcane spirits for points, Ashe now had 124 points, still unable to purchase the ‘Bag of Source Crystals’ worth 198 points.

Without the summoning ritual, Ashe directly arranged Swordswoman’s training strategy for next week. Originally he wanted to max out her swordsmanship training as usual, but thinking that Swordswoman needed rest during this special time, he pondered for a bit before deciding... to let Swordswoman rest for an hour, today only.

Ah, it pained his heart. Was this what it felt like to be a boss, as if he had lost a lot of money just by letting his employee rest?

Ashe quickly executed the training strategy before he regretted it, then went to the cafeteria for breakfast as usual. But he discovered the central hall was crowded with people – another recruitment for volunteers (cannon fodder)?

But no, the inmates were just gathered together watching the news on the hall's light screen, even Igor was staring intently at the screen.

Ashe went over and asked Igor, "What's the news say? Did the citizens finally gain a conscience and decide to boycott the inhumane Blood Moon Tribunal?"

"Even more shocking than the citizens gaining a conscience." Igor kept his eyes fixed on the screen, murmuring, "Fernand Snow is going down."

"Who?"

"The Mayor of Caimon City, he's going down!"

Ashe was slightly startled, and also turned to watch the news.

"...The current estimated death toll has already exceeded 10,000. Countless were killed and injured in New Yichen City. Fires broke out in multiple places in the downtown area, with corpses and bloodstains covering the streets. They may have been office workers, shopping couples, future legendary sorcerers, or ordinary hardworking people, but at this moment, because of an invasion that should not have happened, they have become pale corpses."

On the screen, a beautiful female host with refined features stood atop a tall building. She looked somewhat similar to Igor, with charm in her brows and eyes, seeming to have some succubus blood. She had a circle of cute pink-purple fur around her sleeves.

But right now she looked extremely indignant, with anger suppressed in her voice: "Everyone, look. Behind me is Caimon City's most prosperous downtown area, but what can we see now? Ruins, flames, corpses, bloodstains, exposed steel beams, broken dolls-"

"Caimon News is a mouthpiece for the Church and the Research Institute." Igor said softly. "When the host shows obvious political leanings, it means the Blood Moon races want to offer up a scapegoat to quell the people's anger."

"It's been forty hours since the first attack. We can't help but ask, why hasn't the Heresy Court captured the attackers yet? Why are there still attacks happening today? Why is downtown still a high-risk area, to the point that even medical teams don't dare go in to treat the injured?"

“Where did our tax money go, who squandered it? As the area rated to have the best public security nationwide, why did we suffer such a disaster? We ordinary people living and working happily in Caimon City, why do we have to encounter such misfortune?”

“Why were there organized, large-scale attackers from other nations able to infiltrate Caimon City? What is the Administrative Bureau hiding from us?”

“We need answers, the dead need answers! Someone must take responsibility for this disaster-”

Splat!

Seeing the screen splattered with blood, the death row inmates in the central hall gasped. They were used to seeing deaths in the Blood Moon Tribunal, but seeing the host get hacked up live was a first.

The live feed went dark, but quickly switched to a new scene.

This time, the backdrop was a clean, tidy, stylish office. Sitting behind the desk was an ogre in a dark formal suit – yes, an ogre. He had no fangs, neatly trimmed nails, and his looks contained no ferocity at all, in fact he looked rather amiable. But he was undoubtedly a blue-skinned ogre, as evidenced by the huge chair, big enough to seat two Ashes, that he sat on.

When he spoke, even Ashe was stunned.

“I am Caimon City Mayor, Alandel Fernand Snow.” The ogre spoke heavily. “It is with grieving heart that I inform everyone, the number of innocent lives lost to the terrorist attacks has reached 13,000. The Heresy Court is operating at full capacity, and the Administrative Bureau has also mobilized nearby Lake Scenery War Zone adventurers to assist in capturing the attackers, in hopes of apprehending them soon.”

“These attackers came from other nations through the virtual gateways to the Blood Moon. I have to admit, I must bear some responsibility for this. Joint research on investigating the virtual gateways was a decision made by the Administrative Bureau, Parliament, Heresy Court, and Lake Scenery War Zone together. If the Administrative Bureau could have made more comprehensive plans and prudent judgements originally, perhaps...”

“He’s still not giving up.” Igor sneered. “He’s threatening the other conspirators, that if he goes down the rest won’t end up any better. He can lose, but doesn’t want to leave.”

“...Therefore, I am willing to accept the Heresy Court’s investigation, temporarily step down from the position of Mayor, with the deputy mayor Guro taking over mayoral duties.”

Finally, Fernand Snow stood up and bowed deeply. “I sincerely apologize for the failures in my work.”

“Oh!”

“Hahaha, Fernand Snow you’ve got yours today!”

Successive cheers sounded in the central hall. Although the Noise Ordinance prevented loud laughter, so many people celebrating at once still filled the hall with a joyous atmosphere. As expected, only seeing others suffer misfortune could bring genuine happiness to these scumbags.

But Ashe saw that even the normally calm Igor had red ears and could barely restrain his smiling, and couldn’t help asking curiously: “Igor, do you have a grudge against Fernand Snow? Even if you’re gloating, you’re not so happy, are you?”

Igor grabbed Ashe’s shoulders. “You don’t understand? The mayor has fallen! He’s being charged by the Heresy Court!”

Ashe felt confused. “I heard that, so what?”

It was clear Igor wanted to personally attack Ashe’s intelligence, but the chip prevented his rude behavior.

After holding it in for a while, he finally said in an excited, suppressed voice: “While in office, if the mayor faces serious charges and has to immediately step down, to ensure his personal safety and prevent suicide, the mayor would be detained in the nearest Blood Moon prison for isolated investigation.”

Ashe recalled that he had also heard this rule when discussing the right way to escape with the doctor.

Ashe vaguely realized something. “You mean...”

Igor stared straight at Ashe, eyes shining as if wanting to suck Ashe in.

“Without waiting for next month’s transport ship, when Fernand Snow is escorted to Shattered Lake Prison, that will be our chance to escape!”

“So when will Fernand Snow be detained at Shattered Lake?”

“Generally it’s as soon as possible, but he’ll definitely have to spend a night at the Heresy Court first, to modify the authority restrictions in his chip beforehand. In other words—”

Ashe and Igor looked at each other. “Tomorrow, the 27th’s Blood Moon Tribunal!”

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- Chapter 116: I Almost Really Became a Swordswoman

Chapter 116: I Almost Really Became a Swordswoman

Swordflower College, Training Hall

When Sonya stopped, time seemed to freeze in the entire training hall.

The apprentices looked at this genius swordswoman in astonishment, glancing down at the time on their bracelets to confirm it was only 9pm.

She had only been training for an hour, so why did she stop?

Although she had only been training in the hall for two weeks so far, Queen Therave had undoubtedly become the most dazzling sight in the eyes of the sword apprentices – the unshakable two hours of evening training, with no breaks, full concentration, perfect form. Just watching her train dripping with sweat was a visual treat.

Not to mention Queen Therave's profound swordsmanship skills. Many apprentices would sneak peeks during their free time, suddenly gaining insights and deepening their understanding of swordsmanship, increasing their slashing ring count. It was eye candy and knowledge rolled into one.

Strangely, Swordflower College had no shortage of sword geniuses, from Leone and Lorein before, to Felix now, but their training did not attract the apprentices' gazes.

Firstly, their training times were irregular. Secondly, they took breaks during training. And thirdly...though there was no way to articulate it, everyone just felt Sonya's swordsmanship was a cut above the rest.

So the training hall had been packed every night recently. When Sonya entered, the apprentices barely dared to breathe, greeting the queen's arrival with admiring eyes.

Yet tonight the queen had changed her training routine for the first time?

What could make someone so obsessed with swordsmanship alter her unchanging daily training?

Indeed, it wasn't just the students – in everyone's eyes, even the professors', Sonya Therave was a swordsmanship genius born for the blade, gifted with exceptional talent and a passion for swordsmanship. Even after achieving great success (defeating Felix, turning the tables on Leone, unleashing the Silver Wings), she did not forget her original intention, persisting in intense nightly training. If that wasn't called 'love'?

These youths in the prime of their lives naturally jumped to the same thought: Could the queen be in love!?

As the apprentices focused their indignant gazes on Felix, almost igniting him, Felix himself also felt quite helpless – he was equally curious why Sonya had stopped.

In fact, Sonya herself was the most confused.

She had long grown accustomed to the two-hour training, obediently starting on her own when time was up, without needing the Observer to force her.

That familiar glass bottle filled with unknown medicine had appeared on her desk this morning. After drinking it, she'd been bursting with energy all day, not feeling tired even during intense swordsmanship training.

Moreover, the training was quite enjoyable. Every swing of the blade, every slash, gave Sonya a hint of indescribable pleasure.

As this pleasure accumulated bit by bit, it turned into an inexplicable, aberrant craving. Only by slaying cognitive beings in the virtual world, feeding their bodies to the sword's edge, could she slightly appease this hunger.

Sonya didn't think too much of it. She figured it was a side effect of the medicine the Observer made her drink. After all, this craving did have some enhancement effect during hunts, improving her damage output. So the Observer was clearly the prime suspect.

Surely she herself couldn't be a bloodthirsty maniac craving battle!

Although Sonya no longer resisted training, she couldn't complete it by willpower alone. Probably after half an hour, she couldn't maintain focus. The rest relied on the Observer's mysterious power to make her train automatically.

Thus, when she suddenly stopped after an hour, Sonya immediately realized what had happened – the Observer's power forcing her to train had vanished.

What was going on?

Could the Observer suddenly have grown a conscience?

No, unlikely. Then did the Observer die?

Although speculating wildly, Sonya wasn't too worried.

The recent Fate Q&A, several questions showed the virtual world held the Observer in high regard, so at least he couldn't have suddenly dropped dead in prison.

Speaking of which...what should I do next? Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Sonya blankly looked at the wooden sword in her hand, trying to recall her previous nightly activities.

Though it was just half a month ago of peaceful life, it felt to her like the distant past.

'Nothing else planned anyway, why not keep training swordsmanship? Practicing is quite fun...'

Sonya was frightened by the thought that popped into her head – Heavens! Given the chance to rest, yet she still wanted to practice swordsmanship?

No, can't train, can't do what the Observer wants! If he knows I'm so obedient, he'll only increase the training intensity. Even just to oppose the Observer, I can't train!

It's too scary, I almost really became the "swordswoman" the Observer spoke of.

I want to be a songstress, a shadow mistress, but I absolutely don't want to be some swordswoman!

First, get out of the training hall. Even just going back to lie in bed watching Dahlia's latest shadow play is better...

Just then, cries of surprise sounded from the training hall entrance. Sonya looked over and saw a flash of brilliant orange hair – it was the "Orange Dancer" Leone!

"Sonya, training's over? Got time to grab a drink with me?"

Although they'd fought before, Sonya had both saved face and gained benefits, and Leone had apologized afterwards.

She'd heard Professor Trotzam had taken on two new disciples, plus she was close with Lorein, and caught wind Lorein wanted to make trouble for Felix, so she took the chance to test the caliber of the new first-years.

Ultimately it was just a petty dispute between students. The other side had actively apologized and given gifts, so Sonya wouldn't insist on feuding with a promising, future sword saint over this. Plus Leone was a very straightforward, traditional female swordmaster – simply put, easy to take advantage of.

Such high-quality, renewable social connections, Sonya naturally wouldn't pass up. A few exchanges rapidly warmed up their relationship. Still, seeing Leone take the initiative to find her, she was quite surprised: "Senior Sister, you came looking for me specially?"

"Yup, just got back not long ago, still excited and wanting to grab a drink. Happened to pass the training hall, so dropped by to see if you were here." Leone grinned, then turned to Ingritt beside her: "Ingritt, want to join? My treat!"

As Sonya's roommate who trained with her unfailingly every night, Leone had also seen Ingritt a couple times and thought quite highly of this diligent female apprentice.

Ingritt shook her head: "I don't drink, and tonight's training isn't over yet."

"Thought so."

Leone looked towards Felix watching them and smiled: "Girls' night out, no boys allowed, Felix."

"I don't like drinking either." Felix said lightly: "Rather, a swordmaster actually liking alcohol is what's hard to understand."

"That's because you're still students. Once you step into the Abyss, experience battles, you'll understand even the sharpest blade needs alcohol to maintain it well. Let's go, Sonya!"

Seeing Leone and Sonya leave, the sword apprentices universally breathed sighs of relief – great, turned out she was just going drinking with the Orange Dancer. Our Queen Therave remains a pure, untainted maiden.

"Your dorm?"

"I'd love to, but my roommate probably wouldn't like it." Leone shrugged. "Let's go to the Secret Garden."

The Secret Garden was Swordflower College's only bar. Sonya had gone before, but the drinks were expensive. As someone who had to count every penny, after going

once she'd generously told others for future invites, "I'm very poor, so I won't go." Even if treated, she wouldn't attend. After a few times, they changed the gathering spot to a more affordable tea house.

The "poor female student" label, when useful, had to be utilized.

But now things were different, she had money. Even if treated by Senior Sister this time, Sonya could find a chance to return the favor. She had no hesitation accepting the invitation.

The biggest difference between wealth and poverty was that wealth allowed openly accepting others' goodwill.

The Secret Garden had a faint lavender fragrance. There wasn't a single lamp inside, the ceiling completely open to bring in starlight through mirrored designs, illuminating every corner brightly yet mystically dim.

Soothing, melodious music drifted gently through the bar. A three-person band played on stage, likely music students working part-time for pocket change during their free time. Students and couples sat in circles chatting and sipping, the atmosphere quite nice, putting Sonya at ease as well.

"One screwdriver, one summer day." Leone ordered very smoothly, bringing Sonya to a small booth and dropping the curtains to block outside sights.

"Senior Sister comes often?"

"Every time I return from the Abyss, to numb myself with alcohol, how could I bear that kind of stress?"

"Oh~ I thought Senior Sister was the extremely, extremely tough type."

"Even the toughest need to find suitable ways to decompress. Drinking like me is already quite normal. I have a teammate who likes streaking in the streets after every mission, you must have heard that urban legend right?"

"Ah, so that city rumor was true, how scary~"

"Let me tell you, don't spread this, but actually..."

Listening to Leone recount all kinds of amusing Abyss adventures, Sonya also couldn't help getting excited.

She also shared her recent virtual world experiences, and even omitting the Observer's hacks, just the cognitive beings she had hunted and sorcerer legacies she had witnessed kept Leone engrossed. Leone would occasionally chime in with her own

experiences battling cognitive beings, the combat insights of a fellow swordmaster very valuable. Sonya learned a lot.

[Sonya gained some swordmanship experience]

Chatting gossip, chatting the Abyss, chatting the virtual world, their cups emptied unknowingly. Sonya's face was flushed as she tipsily asked, "Senior Sister, did you participate in some special activity a couple days ago?"

The words were barely out when she regained her senses and hurriedly apologized, "Sorry, that was tactless of me."

Casually discussing the virtual world was fine, but events requiring confidentiality contracts, how could she ask about it casually? To put it severely, Sonya was testing the Orange Dancer, tempting Leone into making a mistake.

Leone smiled and shook her head to indicate it was nothing, but she thought for a bit and said, "Although I can't give details...that event was actually a game organized by the Church."

"A game?"

"Mmhm, have you played the roleplaying games on the bracelet before? Similar to those."

The Miracle bracelet had many functions. Ordinary people could not only connect to the Curtain to communicate with those thousands of miles away, sorcerers could also leverage the bracelet's computing power to create all kinds of Curtain games, allowing ordinary people to enjoy entertainment provided by sorcerers too.

As a result, Illusion sorcerers able to develop bracelet functions also rose with the tide. Sonya had also considered choosing Illusion, but being unfamiliar with Curtain games, she ultimately picked Water in the end.

Sonya rarely dabbled in Curtain games, and it wasn't that she disliked them – she just didn't have the money.

A poor country bumpkin like her only deserved to grind away at textbooks, not enjoy high-end entertainment. Her spiritual life was fully satisfied by watching shows.

Hearing Sonya shyly admit she hadn't played any, Leone was a bit surprised. She explained with a smile, "I was placed in a completely virtual illusion, full of monsters for us to kill. The more monsters killed, the higher the score, and the richer the rewards from the Church...the entire game lasted a full two days two nights, it was exhausting."

"Sounds quite interesting." Sonya's interest was piqued. "Were the enemies strong?"

“No, not strong, some very weak, even unable to flee. Only occasionally were there sorcerer-level monsters chasing me...they would even cry and beg for mercy...”

Leone's voice grew softer, her expression more and more blank. Sonya casually responded, “Sounds pretty relaxing, slaughtering some weak enemies...Senior Sister? What's wrong?”

Leone snapped out of it: “Nothing, maybe just a little tipsy.”

“You were talking about the game monsters just now right?”

“Of course, what else would I be talking about? Waiter, another Claire cocktail here!”

Parting with Senior Sister, Sonya ambled lazily towards the Meditation Tower.

Ah, it had been so long since she'd had such an enjoyable night.

First was pleasant sword training, then drinking and chatting with a friend. Next, as long as she could test out the new miracles she'd researched in the virtual world, nicely slaughter a few cognitive beings, tear them into shreds with her blade, make their blood bloom like flowers, it would be a perfect day...

“Huh?”

Sonya lifted her head. Without realizing it, the white spire had vanished, the swirling virtual chaotic flow suspended in midair also gone. The radiance of the stars poured down on the college campus like rain.

The white spire's disappearance meant campus lockdown was lifted. Classes resumed tomorrow...

Sonya sat in the meditation room, tipsily summoning her spirit, finding the Door of Truth, sinking into the virtual world through her consciousness connection.

Opening her eyes to look at the Observer, Sonya foolishly smiled, “Let me tell you, tonight I...”

“This is my last night accompanying you to explore the virtual world.”

Sonya instantly sobered up.

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

Chapter 117: You're Really a Nasty Observer

The virtual world, the sea of knowledge.

"Now everything is ready, tomorrow is the day we enact the plan."

Ashe checked the virtual world map while steering the small boat, and said, "If the prison break fails and I get caught back by the hunters, then naturally everything is over and things will remain the same. But if I succeed in escaping, then I must be vigilant at all times. Until I can confirm my safety, I can't enter the virtual world."

Sonya nodded, completely understanding the observer's thoughts. Search* The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Exploring the virtual world takes at minimum 4-5 hours and up to 8-9 hours. The observer who follows a regular schedule in prison can naturally log into the virtual world on time, but escaping means not only does he have to find a way to make a living, he also has to avoid the hunters' pursuit as much as possible. How can he possibly have 4 hours or more of safe time to enter the virtual world?

She breathed a sigh of relief, "You scared me, I thought..."

Ashe raised his eyebrows, "Thought what? That I was going to abandon you?"

Sonya's small eyebrows furrowed, looking pitiful and charming as she pretended, "Yes, I've discovered I can't leave you anymore. Just thinking that I won't see you for the next few days, I feel empty, lonely, cold, and so sad I could almost cry... Oh right, since you'll be busy, does that mean we have to stop my training too?"

"Of course not, the training continues as usual. Although I won't be here, I'll still supervise your training. Speaking of which, you should have rested for an hour tonight right? That's a one-time reward only for tonight, back to normal tomorrow."

"Well aren't you so very kind."

"You're welcome."

Sonya harrumphed and stared at the observer, legs crossed. "So when will you be back?"

“After I can confirm my safety.” Ashe said, “Didn’t you see in the fate answers that I may leave the Bloodmoon Kingdom? If I succeed in breaking out, I plan to look for a way to leave the Bloodmoon Kingdom.”

“So there’s no specific timeline…”

“Mm.”

Sonya tilted her head to one side, watching the wisps of white mist drifting by. She asked softly, “Is there anything I can help with?”

“Didn’t you say before you wanted to become a songstress? How about singing a song for me to hear?”

“You—”

“Haha just kidding.” Ashe laughed, “Let’s not hunt knowledge creatures tonight, and specifically look for sorcerer projections instead.”

Sonya understood instantly: “You want to read other sorcerers’ manuals through their projections, to find more clues about the golden fish?”

Ashe nodded slowly, “Based on our progress, even if we get experience orbs from hunting knowledge creatures, it’s still not enough for your sword skills to break through to gold rank.

“Even if we get a rare spirit, it can’t be immediately integrated into my combat system and does little to improve my combat strength.”

“We only have one night left, the golden fish is the only choice if we want a breakthrough.”

Although the two of them had hunted many knowledge creatures these days, most of the spirits were either used by Ashe to allocate points, or sold by Sonya to earn a bit of cash on the side. Very few were kept for their own use. The most important reason of course was—unsuitability.

Despite grasping four disciplines of swordplay, water magic, light magic, and telepathy, for the bizarre spirit world of the virtual world, what they had encountered was barely the tip of the iceberg, at most a drop in the ocean. It was common for the spoils of war to not contain spirits of disciplines they specialized in.

Even if they got spirits of the same disciplines, most likely it would be unsuitable. For example, swordplay spirits like ‘Vibrating Sword’, ‘Continuous Sword’, ‘Poison Sword’ represented three different directions – relying on high frequency vibrations to increase

destructive power, increasing attack speed for continuous slashes, or imbuing the blade with special properties.

Apart from the swordplay discipline, 'Vibrating Sword' needs the sound magic discipline as support, 'Continuous Sword' means having to train in the weak constitution discipline to improve physical fitness, while 'Poison Sword' signifies the need to study the poison magic discipline as well.

The time a sorcerer would need to invest to delve deep into any small direction is difficult to estimate, possibly even requiring involvement in other unfamiliar disciplines. If the spirit is used superficially without thorough understanding, the effect would certainly be inferior compared to a combat system that the sorcerer had carefully researched and developed, such as the destructive power of Sonya's 'Rupture Slash' which could easily overwhelm the aforementioned three swordplay spirits.

Therefore, although they had obtained many spirits, those spirits were not indispensable. Rather than deciphering those new spirits, it was better to utilize their existing, tried-and-true spirits – old is gold, new is not necessarily better.

But their situation could be considered as lucky, what average silver-rank sorcerer could harvest 2-3 spirits every night? Just surviving was a blessing from the virtual world, any gains could be celebrated like a festival.

It's not like they didn't update their equipment at all. For example, Ashe was the first to complete the three fundamental swordplay spirits of 'Slash Sword', 'Thrust Sword', and 'Cleave Sword'. In principle, a swordsman would need to personally summon these three spirits in order to establish a solid foundation in the swordplay discipline. Sonya, being an actual swordsman, did not ask for these three spirits, while Ashe, as a stowaway outsider without any skills, naturally did not care about foundations.

After selling off her spoils of war, Sonya quickly gathered the necessary spirits for the two miracles 'Sheath's Gathered Light' and 'Sharpen for Ten Years', further increasing her combat strength.

Although not exactly invincible in the world, this male-female duo could be said to have the capital to act unrestrainedly in the sea of knowledge.

But from another perspective, this also meant the sea of knowledge was starting to have diminishing returns for them. They had gained too much in the virtual world and needed to spend ample time slowly absorbing it.

Unless they could reach a higher level of the virtual world.

"If I can coalesce golden arcane energy, I can fully activate my sword body barrier, increasing my defense by at least five times compared to now." Ashe explained the necessity of golden energy for him. Unlike the swordswoman, he had the two-wing spirit

'Earth Sword' granted by Valcas, so advancing would instantly boost his combat strength.

Sonya waved her hand dismissively, "That's assuming we can even find the golden fish. You're talking as if you've already won the lottery before the numbers are drawn."

"What would you do if you won the jackpot?"

"First I'd buy a mansion in Cailleach, then pretend to be gravely ill and urge my mother to borrow money from other relatives and villagers."

"Why?"

"Those arrogant villagers who always bullied my widowed mother definitely wouldn't want to lend money. Then I'd rent a fleet of luxury cars to go pick up my mother, let the villagers jealous. If anyone dares ask my mother for money, I'll remind her of it and chop off the hands of those arrogant villagers."

"Ew, you really are..."

"Got a problem with that?"

"I think you could find a well-connected person and have her borrow money for your mother. When you return home gloriously, you can generously reward that person. Contrast makes the harm more apparent – this way you only need to spend a little, but can make others regret it so much they'll bash their heads on walls."

"Wow, you observer are really nasty and oozing."

"I'll be shy from your praises."

During their banter, Ashe noticed a light red area appear on the virtual world map, marked as "Extremely Challenging" – this was the most dangerous area they could access, and also the area Ashe was looking for.

Ashe's smile faded as he solemnly said, "Although not necessarily linear, the stronger the sorcerer's projection, the more likely they'll know information about the golden fish. So from here on, it'll be tough battles."

"Anyway you won't be coming to the virtual world after tonight."

Sonya's palms emanated a steel-white glow as she lightly stroked the wooden sword in her hand, "Let's go crazy just once, worst case I'll give you first blood."

Miracle – Sharpen for a Day, activate.

Strictly speaking, although 'Sharpen for Ten Years' was a two-wing miracle, there was a large adjustable range. Because in time-based spirits, 'year' was the rarest, followed by 'month', with 'day' being the most common. 'Ten days' was a two-wing spirit, 'hundred days' a three-wing spirit, 'thousand days' a four-wing spirit, and so on for 'year' and 'month'.

Therefore, Sharpen for Ten Years could be changed to Sharpen for One Day, Ten Days, Hundred Days, Thousand Days, One Month, Ten Months, and so on. As the spirit rank was adjusted, the might of this miracle would correspondingly increase or decrease. It was called Sharpen for Ten Years simply because 'ten years' had the best cost-performance ratio.

Yes, activating this miracle directly consumed the time spirits, which had to be rebought. So Sonya only dared to use the cheapest 'day' spirit. It was said the more advanced and complex powerful miracles often required massive spirit consumption. Thus when legendary sorcerers made a move, it was like pouring out gold and silver, which could still crush many people even if converted to gold and silver coins.

But in proportion to the cost, these miracles had excellent effects. Sonya's wooden sword emanated a bright grey glow – this was the 'sharpness' generated from sharpening. All her attacks in the following duration would gain the sharpness buff, increasing their penetrative power. Even against masochist mages she could break through their defense.

Ashe took out a longsword from his tongue – the 'Honey Stomach Sword' he had drawn previously. He then summoned a clone and had it circle around the sea to reach the inheritance islet from the other side.

Preparations complete, the two broke through the wisps of white fog and arrived at the inheritance islet. At the same time, the clone crawled onto the islet from the other side, drawing the sorcerer projection's attention.

Now!

Ashe pointed his sword tip, and a cute single-wing spirit appeared on the blade. A flash of sword light shot towards the sorcerer projection's neck like lightning!

Spirit – Sword Heart!

Sonya kicked off from the small boat, leaping up with sword drawn. The corners of her mouth hinted at an expectant smile, like an elegant dancer bounding onto the island and spinning. The swirling sinister light surged forth like a meat grinder towards the sorcerer projection!

Miracle – Rupture Sinister Wave Slash!

The clone attracted attention and sacrificed itself, Ashe attacked from afar, Sonya erupted in close combat – this was their foolproof encirclement tactic!

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Chapter 118: The Belly of the Golden Fish

Sorcerer Handbook: Culinary Arts Archive: “Mastery of Common Recipes”

Sorcerer Handbook: Cat Care Diary: “Mastery of Cat Care”, “Mastery of Scooping Litter”

Sorcerer Handbook: Fishing Secrets: “Mastery of Identifying Unknown Objects”

“Wow, this fishing sorcerer has practiced identifying unknown objects to mastery just from fishing up all kinds of weird things from the river... But judging by his frequent empty catches, he clearly doesn’t have the Fishing Mastery skill.”

“But he’s very skilled at fishing for people.” Sonya unceremoniously plopped down on the sandy ground, her face flushed as she panted lightly, the corners of her lips curving up slightly, seeming to complain and get excited at the same time, “He almost killed me just now.”

The fishing sorcerer used a very strange “fishing rod” weapon, combining the abilities of a long spear and bola, adept at both long range and close combat. He was a very rare one-wing sorcerer skilled at group combat, able to hold his own against Ashe and Sonya at the same time.

He even pulled a trick, feinting an attack at Ashe to draw out his defensive reaction, then immediately turning to assassinate Sonya’s unprotected back. At that time Sonya was still dealing with his frontal fishing rod assault, and though she noticed the backstab, she had no way to evade it.

If Ashe had not quickly cast Sword Aegis over Sonya, they might have already been forced out of the virtual world. Even after avoiding that lethal trap, they still spent tremendous effort before finally killing the fishing sorcerer. Ashe sustained countless minor injuries, while Sonya had half her hand pierced through. Fortunately they could

quickly recover soul energy in the virtual world, otherwise the fishing sorcerer would have easily killed them in reality.

Other than the inability to actually fish, the fishing sorcerer was flawless as a one-wing sorcerer.

Ashe watched as the sorcerer handbook dissipated into wisps of smoke and the legacy isle rumbled as it sank. Looking at Sonya still resting on the ground, he noticed her body was nearly half transparent, indicating massive soul energy expenditure. He reached out a hand and said, "Let's call it a night."

Sonya glanced at him and took his hand to stand up. "I should still have one more fight in me."

"But I'm tired and don't want to keep battling."

Ashe laughed and shook his head, sitting down on the boat and stretching lazily. "No need to force yourself. Dying in the virtual world would actually impede our prison break tomorrow. Let's sail a while longer before logging off." Search the * website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"After all, trying to find the golden fish in one night was an extremely unrealistic wish to begin with. Not achieving it is normal – if we did succeed, I'd have to suspect the Four Pillars were really blessing me." Ashe complained jokingly, "It's all because you mentioned the golden fish, now my hopes are too high and the disappointment is greater. Swordsman, you have to take full responsibility this time!"

Hearing the observer make such an absurd accusation, Sonya wasn't angry at all.

She sat on the small boat, legs crossed, the plump and straight thighs squeezed together in an alluring line. Her elbow on her knee and petite hand supporting her chin, she gazed steadily at the observer.

Tonight she wore a black vest and deep red ultra mini skirt, little boots with thigh highs, even some black garter-like decorations on her legs, fashionable and sexy yet retaining a youthful flair, adding a touch of dazzling color to the grey virtual world.

Seeing the swordswoman silent, Ashe grew a little afraid. "Sorry, I got too arrogant. Oh, let me tell you a joke, once there was a little white bunny who met a bear that was having diarrhea..."

"Shush, I'm thinking."

"Thinking about what?"

“Thinking about intel on the golden fish.” Sonya said calmly, “Organizing the information we have to see if we can uncover the truth about the golden fish.”

Ashe waved his hand dismissively, “Don’t waste your efforts. So many sorcerers have searched for so many years and found nothing. Are they less talented than us, trained less hard than us? But even they have to follow proper progression, first raise their faction’s domains before accessing higher virtual planes. For us to expect a miracle like the golden fish is simply unrealistic...”

“But seeking miracles is exactly why sorcerers exist!”

Sonya tilted her head and smiled, “Anyway we’ve got nothing better to do, so just keep me company and think with me about how to find the golden fish.”

Ashe pursed his lips, then tapped the “Virtual World Map” to set the boat sailing towards a safe zone. Leaning against the hull with folded arms, he said, “Seeing how beautifully you’re dressed tonight, I’ll follow you.”

“Thanks!” Sonya responded crisply, “Let’s organize the new intel first.”

Ashe nodded, “Of the three sorcerer projections we defeated earlier, two of their handbooks mentioned the golden fish: the culinary sorcerer wanted to take a bite of the golden fish’s meat, while the fishing sorcerer believed the golden fish could be caught.”

It’s hard to say whether the former was overly bold, daring to covet such a great existence in the virtual world, or if the latter was deranged, still obsessed with fishing even after entering the virtual plane.

Although the culinary sorcerer pursued it for years until death without tasting so much as the golden fish’s crap, let alone its meat, he did gain something – he once reached the Fortune Telling Isle.

This shows how Ashe’s ability to ‘barrier-free read sorcerer handbooks’ will become more and more important in the future.

Earlier they could only access some low-level sorcerer handbooks, naturally yielding little benefit since insignificant sorcerers led meaningless lives.

But when they reach the core regions of the Sea of Knowledge and encounter powerful sorcerer projections, the handbook insights will increase exponentially.

Because it’s not just that they have serendipities in the virtual world, other sorcerers also have fortunate moments blessed by the virtual plane.

What’s more miraculous is that the virtual world’s serendipities are not necessarily non-reproducible.

Reading the handbooks is like obtaining other sorcerers' exploration notes and even intelligence gains in the virtual world. The 'Whirlpool Venom' is the best example – if not for Ashe happening to read that handbook and learning the rapid leveling up tricks, they might still be Silver Half-Wings now.

"Like us, he also asked the virtual world about the golden fish: 'Can I eat the golden fish's meat in the Sea of Knowledge?' The answer was 'No'."

"We can conclude: the golden fish does not exist in the Sea of Knowledge in physical form."

"The fishing sorcerer believed the golden fish was hiding in the sea, so he persisted in fishing the virtual world for over a decade. But other than the occasional knowledge creatures like Mud Dragons and Slash Dragons, he found no traces of the golden fish. He also dove into the Sea of Knowledge, but it was pitch black down there and he quickly died."

"Here we can also conclude: we can't dive into the Sea of Knowledge to search for the golden fish."

Sonya pondered, "And our previous intel was that the golden fish can be seen without triggering any rituals, that it floats on the sea's surface."

Ashe counted on his fingers, "The golden fish is on the sea's surface, not a physical entity, and can be directly seen... Ah, I know what the golden fish is!"

"Huh?"

"See how this white fog fits all the characteristics – on the sea's surface, inedible, directly visible. The only problem is it doesn't look capable of carrying a whole continent." Ashe gazed at the dense white fog enshrouding their boat.

"Be serious!"

"I am serious!" Ashe leaned lazily against the boat, looking at Sonya and suddenly smiling, "Don't worry, even without the golden arcane energy I won't just die during the prison break...probably."

Sonya's blinkered, "Who cares about you, I just want to see the landscapes of the Isle of Time as soon as possible. Stuck in the Sea of Knowledge, my arcane energy can't grow at all."

"Alright alright, I think too much." Ashe was in a good mood. "Oh right, what did you do during your one hour break tonight?"

"Went drinking with Senior Leone."

“That Leone senior who beat you badly last time?”

“What beat me badly, I clearly won! And that whole affair was your fault to begin with, you insisted I fight her! You dare to say-”

“Oh, you’re old enough to drink now?”

“Well, you’re really... Of course I’m legal age. She told me lots of adventure stories about exploring the Abyss, very interesting.”

“Do tell.”

“Like there’s a very rare ‘shadow ghoul’ that’s insubstantial, uses soul attacks, extremely tricky to deal with, but its weakness is obvious – shine any light to reveal its shadow then attack the shadow, and its main body will also be heavily injured.”

“There’s also the super creepy ‘Eyeball Hunter’ whose body is extremely sturdy. When someone looks at it, it will stand utterly still, but the moment you look away, it will swiftly approach and pierce the sorcerer’s eyes. Leone’s team saw one once, fortunately they were far enough to flee in time.”

“The most dangerous monster in the shallow Abyss is the ‘Devourer’, it’s colossal in size and disguises its stomach as an ordinary cave. The moment a sorcerer steps in, it seals the cave which is its stomach and releases potent gastric acid. Idle Silver-rank sorcerers would have great difficulty piercing its stomach sac, only able to watch helplessly as they dissolve away...”

Sonya seemed excited and bright-eyed recounting these scary Abyss stories. Ashe was originally listening benevolently to the little cutie narrating her school adventures, but his expression gradually changed, even bolting upright in shock.

“You just said there’s a monster that disguises its stomach as a cave?”

“Yeah, the ‘Devourer’, why, have you seen it before?”

“I think I may have seen something similar.”

Sonya blinked. “Similar?”

Ashe looked up at the sky obscured by white fog.

“What if we’re inside the belly of the golden fish?”

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Chapter 119: Silver Wings!

“Why can’t sorcerers find any trace of the theoretically massive golden fish?”

“Why does the virtual world say the golden fish is in the ocean and can be seen without any rituals?”

“There’s only one answer.”

Ashe murmured, “We’re inside the golden fish, and the time spirits are above the white fog.”

Sonya instinctively wanted to nitpick, but when she matched the information she knew with this conclusion, she found that everything fit perfectly, explaining the truth about the golden fish!

“And,” she suddenly recalled, “The only Sorcerer Handbook I’ve read mentioned that after explorers found the golden fish, they climbed over 800 layers but still couldn’t get to the top of the golden fish, right?”

“Carefully thinking about it, if the golden fish really had over 800 layers, even with the white fog obscuring it, sorcerers wouldn’t be completely unable to find any trace... And in the sea of knowledge, the only place that explorers can climb hundreds of layers without reaching is...”

“The sky.”

The two stared blankly at the white foggy sky.

After a good while, Sonya asked in a daze, “But how do we climb up there?”

Yeah, how could they climb up into the sky?

Even knowing the time spirits were right above them and climbing up would make them two-wing casters, but...where was the path?

There is no ladder hanging down from the sky, there is no tower on the ground, and there is no natural landscape more than one meter above sea of knowledge.

They weren't adept in the earth element like the explorers, unable to build tall structures from flat ground. Their only way to gain height was having the doppelganger stand on top, the swordswoman on the doppelganger's shoulders, and Ashe on the swordswoman's shoulders.

Could Ashe summon thousands of doppelgangers to stack himself up? No, because he only had the 'doppelganger' spirit, not the 'multiple doppelgangers' miracle, so he could only summon one doppelganger.

If he summoned a second doppelganger, the first would disappear. To summon two doppelgangers, the best method was finding a second doppelganger spirit and activating them together, combining into the 'double doppelganger' miracle.

So spirit use was a skill – very versatile in some ways yet conservative in others.

"Are there any flight miracles?" Ashe asked.

"Very few at the one-wing level," Sonya shook her head. "One-wing movement miracles are basically swift ground movement. Even if they can briefly go airborne, it's just to cross obstacles, not actual flight."

"This doesn't improve at two-wings either. At most, the movement is faster, costs less, and changes direction more flexibly. True flight miracles are common only at the three-wing saint level."

"Why?"

"Because reaching three-wing saint requires fully unfolding the silver and golden wings." Sonya flapped her arms like wings. "You don't think a caster's virtual wings are just for show, do you?"

"Huh? Aren't virtual wings for intimidating opponents? Everyone compares virtual wings before fighting – more and more complete wings means stronger."

"That's just the sociological use. Actual virtual wings represent a caster's knowledge accumulation and each grants tremendous aid..."

"Tremendous aid?" Ashe was startled and unfolded his silver wings. "Other than not needing a light to pee at night, what other help do they give?"

"The silver blessing." Sonya shrugged. "Didn't I tell you before? Fully unfolding the silver wings only proves our silver arcane energy has peaked. When we successfully advance

to two-wings and leave the sea of knowledge, reaching the time spirits, the silver wings will shine – that's when they're in perfect form."

"Shining silver wings bestow eternal blessings based on the caster's specialty. Even a newly advanced two-wing caster's silver blessing grants over 20% more power, sometimes up to 100% with luck."

Ashe realized, "No wonder you insisted on finding the golden fish tonight despite the exhaustion..."

A 20-100% power increase would be decisive for his prison break plan tomorrow. It was worth going all out for the silver blessing.

Sonya felt drunk again, her cheeks slightly flushed. "I told you, I just want to see the scenery of the time spirits as soon as possible... And you did promise to help me achieve my dream – finding the golden fish is part of that dream, so of course I'd drag you along."

"That's true. So when will you sing for me, I could according to your skill to judge if I've accepted a dirty job against my conscience?"

"You just can't let that go huh. Then I'll start – 'I'm light as a feather, floating without any weight...'"

"I'm sorry, that was arrogant of me. Let's talk flight miracles, flight miracles."

At this time, Ashe also resolved a doubt in his mind. He had felt his silver wings looked a bit inferior to Valcas' back then – not as bright or majestic. He thought it was a lighting issue before, not expecting it to be a developmental problem.

Without opening the new world's gate even once, his silver wings were not mature virtual wings.

Sonya paused. "After obtaining perfect dual wings, casters not only get the silver and golden blessings, but because the dual wings bring qualitative change, they can directly soar through reality with their wings. For this reason, most flight miracles require three-wing saint minimum, at least two-wing completion."

In short, flight miracles were like luxury cars and yachts, only accessible by rich guys who have three-wing, and who had no intention of developing budget versions for the poor.

She looked up at the grey sky. "Even if we find a flight miracle one-wings can use, the explorers built an 800 layer tower and still couldn't reach the top. Even if we exhaust our arcane energy, we probably can't fly that high."

“The easiest flight for casters is definitely virtual wing flight, no doubt about it. Knowledge is our lightest wings.”

Ashe stood and flapped his silver wings, only rocking the boat slightly without any lift.

Sonya said helplessly, “Even without wind element training, you should know you need actual wings to fly right?”

She also looked puzzled. “Flight miracles can’t go that high, earth magic can’t build a stairway to heaven... How did those legendary casters who found the golden fish and crossed over do it? Did we think wrong, or is there a ladder in the sea of knowledge, or some way to prematurely get wings?”

“If we just need a pair of wings...” Ashe said softly. “We have them too.”

“We?”

Sonya was startled. Ashe pointed at his silver wings, then at hers.

“That’s too crazy...”

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Chapter 120: Some Things Cannot Be Locked Away

“I can’t believe this is actually happening!”

Seeing her feet leave the small boat and soar into the white mist, Sonya was so excited that goosebumps covered her entire body. It was like the first time she saw Dahlia’s show on the light screen – she was blown away by the miraculous sight.

“Don’t get too excited. We need to work together, or else any mistake could make us fall,” Ashe warned.

At this point, Sonya was actually very confident: “Didn’t you say there’s a bond between us? If a bond really exists, cooperation like this should be nothing.”

She glanced at Ashe, gripping his right hand tightly with her left, as if doing so would connect their hearts. Their silver wings flapped at the same frequency, like two birds flying side by side, supporting each other.

“We finally found so many clues about the golden fish, finally deduced the truth about them, finally discovered the right way to fly...”

Ashe coughed solemnly: “I was the one who deduced the truth and discovered the flying method. Of course, Swordswoman, you also made huge contributions...”

“Yes, yes, you’re so amazing, Observer,” Sonya smiled radiantly. “I declare that your standing in my heart tonight can be compared to Dahlia!”

“Just for tonight? Also, who is Dahlia?”

“She’s my most admired idol! You should be content with just one night! Compared to your previous standing in my heart, at least this time I’m comparing you to another person.”

“I’m very curious what exactly I was compared to before...”

The two laughed foolishly for a while before Ashe stopped smiling and looked up at the gray sky seriously. “Are you ready?”

“Yes,” Sonya nodded heavily.

“Observer, let’s fly,” Ashe said.

With a flap of their silver wings, they shot into the white mist, circling upwards. The Sea of Knowledge grew farther and farther, and Ashe’s “Virtual World Map” also began to turn chaotic. The higher layers of mist grew thinner and thinner, until they could even faintly see the end – a stretch of golden light!

“How did the sorcerers in the past find companions to fly with?” Sonya suddenly asked. “Could other sorcerers form teams to explore the virtual world too?”

“Maybe, but I guess there’s an even more unbelievable possibility,” Ashe replied.

“What possibility?”

“That they encountered their friends from the real world here in the virtual realm.”

“Stumbling upon other sorcerers who just happen to be friends they know, and just happening to both manifest silver wings, and just happening to know the truth about the golden fish? That’s so many lucky coincidences...”

“It’s precisely because it requires so many coincidences that it can be called a miracle.”

As they drew closer and closer to the sky, the mist grew thinner and thinner, and they flew higher and higher. At this point, they felt their “bodies” grow heavier and heavier, as if the Sea of Knowledge’s gravity over them was increasing. Their hands, feet, and even bodies felt like they were filled with lead.

The Sea of Knowledge was stopping the stowaways.

If they really relied on a miracle to fly, they would most likely stop here. Like explorers, their soaring dreams would be dragged down by the heavy gravity and come crashing into the deep sea, shattering like crystals.

But the flapping of their virtual wings seemed to require no effort at all, easily cutting through the mist and resisting gravity. Even as the Sea of Knowledge bound their souls, the virtual wings still allowed them to traverse the earth and sky.

As the golden light drew nearer and nearer, as they were about to sneak from the Sea of Knowledge into the Time Spirits, Sonya grew more and more afraid, and her breathing grew heavier and heavier.

She suddenly could not suppress the question that had lingered deep in her heart: “Why me?”

She didn’t even understand her own feelings. She could’ve asked this question later, tomorrow, in the future, but she insisted on an answer right now, even if it wasn’t the one she hoped for.

Even though this might jeopardize her interests, at that moment, Sonya felt that some things were more important than her own promotion to two wings.

Ashe glanced at her in surprise. Although the question was out of the blue, he understood what the Swordswoman was asking.

Originally planning to joke around, the words became the truth as they left his mouth: “Just a coincidence.”

Sonya concealed her emotional fluctuations very well, revealing a professional smile: “I knew it. Looks like I’m pretty lucky—”

“I’m the lucky one,” Ashe said softly. “It’s precisely because of you, this coincidence, that the series of miracles afterward could happen.”

“Some things cannot be locked away. Even if you tie up their hands and feet, they will still grow wings and take flight,” he suddenly recalled this phrase. “Swordswoman, I can fly not because of the Silver Wings, but because of you.”

“When my hands and feet were bound, when I was trapped in prison, you became my window to explore the virtual world, you helped me obtain the power of a sorcerer.”

Ashe looked at Sonya and smiled. “Swordswoman, you are my wings.”

Sonya stared blankly at him. In the increasingly blinding golden light, the black fog concealing the Observer’s appearance dissipated swiftly, revealing a finely chiseled smiling face and a pair of bright eyes.

After knowing him for many days, Sonya finally saw his face.

In that moment, the lingering dissatisfaction, resentment, worry, and more in her heart all dispersed like smoke. She had never felt this way before in her life – happier than the first time wearing new clothes, more excited than the first time seeing Cailleach, sweeter than the first taste of ice cream...It was as if...the emptiness in her heart that she’d never noticed was being silently filled.

Finally, she grasped Ashe’s hand tightly and softly hmm’d, saying softly:

“You’re also my golden fish.”

Ashe chuckled. “What a weird metaphor, it makes me feel like I’m your stepping stone.”

Sonya argued weakly, “That’s not what I meant...”

“Just kidding, I understand what you mean. So next...let’s go witness the real golden fish!”

When they flew past the outermost layer of mist, what appeared before their eyes was a golden ocean occupying the entire sky, as clear as a mirror and as vast as the sea.

With the flapping of their silver wings, the golden sea seemed stimulated, stirring up surges of waves. The churning golden waters reflected the individual feathers of the silver wings, suddenly appearing as layered, distinct scales!

In the blink of an eye, the endless golden sea transformed into the belly of a golden fish!

“So this is...the truth of the golden fish!” Sonya murmured softly.

Ashe was also deeply shocked by this spectacle, but he didn’t linger. With a satisfied smile, he led the Swordswoman flying into the golden ocean!

The next second, the world inverted!

Discord: [.gg/pCWPSD3bWA](https://discord.gg/pCWPSD3bWA)

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