

Sorcerer's Handbook

Chapter 141: What Professors Teach Beyond Knowledge

At Caimon Comprehensive University, lecture hall 107.

"The deconstruction of character is a significant research direction in the Heart Sect."

"Ordinary people or sorcerers who have not studied mental knowledge all unavoidably make 'pre-conceived characterizations' of unfamiliar people they just met, also known colloquially as labeling. Rich and gentle, poor and inferior, strong and domineering, weak and tender... We distill the most conspicuous characteristics of the other person and incorporate them into our thinking."

"Labeling is a very normal mental activity, which can help us quickly find the most reasonable way to interact: be humble in the face of a strong enemy, take a mile when given an inch in the face of the weak. It can even be said that labeling is a necessary survival skill."

"But for Spirit Art Masters, this 'pre-conceived characterization' often presents the best opportunity for us to cast our spells. We can influence strangers silently through character deconstruction, generally in two ways."

"The first method is the simplest, conforming deconstruction. Generally speaking, after close interaction, people gradually modify their understanding of others, from simple labeling to complex labeling. For example, 'rich and gentle' might become 'rich, stingy towards others, gentle, but only towards friends,' etc. People deconstruct a complex individual into easy-to-understand concepts through limited information."

"In conforming deconstruction, the Spirit Art Master, after giving an initial impression, constantly reveals 'expected' characteristics. For example, if I dress up as a rich and funny middle-aged man to chat up someone in a bar, they'll expect me to have a luxury car, and then I indeed pull out a luxury car key; they'll assume I live in the Upper District, and then I inadvertently reveal that I live in Phoenix Garden... Then, what do you think the result of my chat-up that night was?"

"Give the first impression that the other party likes, and continuously reveal details for the other party to automatically 'fill in' the characterization, and you can quickly gain their trust. Because 'you' didn't actually say anything, everything about 'you' was inferred by the other party, they will unconditionally believe in their own judgment."

“Many victims of romance scams are fooled by this technique, leading them to believe that love truly exists in this world. Personally, I do not recommend that you use this method, and if you do, don’t scam money; having a pleasant evening is enough.”

“There are many ways to use conforming deconstruction, which I won’t elaborate on here. Those interested can purchase my book, ‘108 Practical Character Templates,’ available for download on the Canopy.”

“The second method is the hardest, reverse deconstruction. You don’t need to worry about the impression you give to others, you only need to detail the impression others give to you. Simply put, it’s guiding others to ‘conform’ to your impression of them through techniques such as spirit, Miracle, rhetoric, etc.”

“If you think the other person is kind and generous, then in front of you, they become kind and generous. But you can’t simply label them, you have to think about ‘why they are kind’ and ‘why they are generous.’ Then reinforce this understanding through various details, leading the other person to unconsciously conform to your ‘impression’ even if they resist conforming to this impression.”

“This sounds complicated, but if you’ve read ‘The History of Social Change,’ you can definitely associate this with an ancient social unit yes, it’s the Family System that Fernand Snow mentioned last night.”

“In the Family System, male and female guardians often use this method of reverse deconstruction to shape their children into their impression of a ‘good child.’ It is said that in ancient times, the easiest way to become a Spirit Art Master was to raise a perfect child.”

“Here we aren’t discussing the correctness of Fernand Snow’s statements, but there’s no doubt that deconstruction in reverse will kill a child’s individuality, depriving them of their human rights and freedom. This is also one of the reasons why the Family System has been swept into the dustbin of history. But for us, the Spirit Art Masters, reverse deconstruction is our lifelong direction of research and learning.”

“Powerful Spirit Art Masters are no longer satisfied with deconstructing sentient beings in reverse. Instead, they are reversing the deconstruction of this world – ‘The world revolves around me.’ This is the highest realm for a Spirit Art Master!”

“That’s it for this lesson, class is over.”

As the bell rang signaling the end of class, students hurriedly left, and in a short while, more than half of the classroom was empty.

Adela, who sat next to Freya, slumped softly on the table and sighed, “At this rate, when will I be able to summon a spirit to gamble for me? This elective really teaches everything besides knowledge.”

Freya, wearing a cool camisole today, nodded in agreement.

Comprehensive universities do not have a Mind Series, or rather, none of the universities in the entire Blood Moon Realm do. At most, there are electives on mind knowledge, like the “Mind Analysis” course they chose.

The professor talks eloquently above them, but he has never taught how to summon spirits. He keeps repeating interpersonal relationship strategies and tempting everyone to buy his book – if Freya hadn’t misjudged, the professor even used a ‘suggestion’ kind of spirit just now, making the students think that his book “108 Practical Character Templates” contained the method to summon spirits.

Although the course is of low quality and the professor lacks integrity, the price is not cheap at all. Just for this course, Freya’s student loan has risen by a full 5%.

While it’s true that anyone can find all kinds of knowledge for free in the Canopy, the knowledge that makes money is not only not free, but also has a very high threshold and is strictly confidential.

For example, the field of biology, the 17th century was the century of biology, and biological implanters are currently the highest paid profession. But to learn relevant knowledge, one has only to become an apprentice to a biology professor, and essentially a 10-year employment contract is unavoidable.

The official profession of the Mind Series is only a psychotherapist, but everyone knows that a real Spirit Art Master is either a criminal or a politician (actually, they’re quite similar). They can be described as high-risk, high-reward, so it’s only natural that the knowledge of the Heart Sect is hard to come by.

If it weren’t for the fact that Freya is a Bewitcher, and has a high probability of being able to summon a spirit on her own, she would rather spend her tuition money at the Mud Cafe for a few happy days.

Adela said, “How about dinner at Saleh’s tonight?”

“No money,” Freya said lazily, “I just went to Frostfall last night.”

“I’ll treat you.”

“Did you win money?”

“Hehe,” Adela gave a cat-like smirk, “I placed a heavy bet on Fernand Snow in the Blood Moon Tribunal last night and made a lot.”

“How much did you make?”

“All I can tell you is, if I’d lost, I would have had to work in the Tea Cafe for the next few months.”

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Chapter 142: Cooking

“You really aren’t afraid of losing all your scholarship money, huh...”

Freya shook her head, “And don’t overestimate yourself. Even in Tea Café, you might not be able to enter the lowest-grade Green Tea. If you want to make money in Tea Café, you’d better take a loan and get a full-body medical beauty treatment first. Your body curve, appearance, hair, lips, smell, and various structures such as erotic acupoints all need adjustment...”

Adela looked terrified, “Is it that scary?”

“Let me give you a description.” Freya pointed at herself, “If I go to Tea Café, I’d only be a Green Tea level tea artist at most, and my performance would certainly be mediocre.”

“Has Tea Café become too competitive! Even a bewitcher can only scrape by!?”

“In my opinion, Mud Café is much more competitive than Tea Café. Next time you come with me to Mud Café, I can introduce you to a beastman who is more beautiful than a bewitcher.”

“It’s all the medic’s fault!” Adela clenched her teeth in anger, “In this day and age, even a natural beauty like me can’t make money with my body.”

“That’s why you need to study hard. Sorcerer is the least competitive profession.” Freya started packing up her books, “The Virtual Realm doesn’t care about your ranking, only about whether you are qualified or not.”

Adela got up too, “Let’s go, let’s eat at Salais.”

Salais is a music restaurant near the university. It's affordable, has a wide variety of dishes, and is very popular with students. It even divides areas into Moon Sugar and non-Moon Sugar zones, so students don't have to worry about neighboring diners suddenly eating too much sugar and going crazy.

"I'm not going with you."

"Ah, why? I'll treat you."

"I have something to do tonight."

Adela paused, "Going to Mud Café two nights in a row? You're so rich?"

"Not going to Mud Café." Freya propped her chin up, "It's something I shouldn't tell you."

Before leaving in the morning, Ashe had asked for Freya's schedule and told her to return home as soon as she finished her classes. Freya, feeling responsible for harboring a fugitive, decided to go home first to see how things were.

Adela looked doubtful, then suddenly grabbed Freya's shoulders, "You're not dating, are you? Don't be fooled by those Mud Workers from Mud Café!"

"No, how could it be." Freya laughed and waved her off, "Have you ever heard of a bewitcher being tricked by the opposite sex?"

Adela thought about it and indeed, since she knew Freya, Freya had frequented more than a dozen Mud Cafés near the university and never been infatuated with a particular Mud Worker—bewitchers are a notorious one-time race, they adore before mating, and despise after, with very few exceptions.

Dating is naturally insulated from bewitchers. They cannot tolerate long-term intimate relationships with the same person.

Adela clicked her tongue, "If you're not going, I'm too lazy to go to Salais. I'll go eat at the 'High Fortune' buffet then."

"High Fortune" is the most famous casino near the university. As long as you buy a certain amount of chips, you can enjoy the buffet inside for free. Freya warned, "Don't lose all your meal money, I don't have money to lend you."

"I'm lucky today, don't curse me!"

After leaving the classroom and parting ways with Adela, Freya silently prayed to the Blood Moon Supreme, hoping they would protect Adela from losing everything—otherwise, Adela would definitely follow her around for free food and drinks.

Adela is her college best friend, a human female with green hair and eyes. Her hobby is gambling. Although she has a serious gambling habit, it's not uncommon in college—gambling and sex are basically something every student has to experience, and it's even more likely for them to experience both. As for those 'wooden people' who don't touch either, they are ostracized by everyone.

On the other hand, the proportion of "sugar eaters" among college students is relatively low. Although there is no survey, everyone believes that eating sugar will reduce thinking ability, and sugar eaters basically do not have the academic ability to get into college.

However, Adela is not a gambler who loses her mind to the game. She is so brazen because she has confidence, for her grades are among the best. If she pushes a little harder, she can completely get into the Red Mist Research Institute for postgraduate studies upon graduation. The institute will naturally help her to waive her student loan by then.

In popular terms, she can 'settle down' very soon, so naturally she has little concern about the future.

For those like Freya who can't get into postgraduate studies, they have to pay back their student loans after graduation. If they can't find a good job to pay back the loan, the bank will introduce them to 'more profitable' jobs – such as a tea master at the Tea Café.

How many of her seniors have been transformed into mud workers in the Mud Cafe, specifically catered to the various preferences of the customers...

Lost in thought, Freya returned to her apartment.

In the staircase, she ran into Auntie Mulan from the second floor. As soon as she greeted, her arm was grabbed by the aunt. The fur area on the forearm is a weak point for Bewitchers, and Freya didn't dare to exert force. She just listened to Auntie Mulan's chatter: "Freya, don't trust men. No matter how good they appear, they're liars. Men fundamentally can't empathize with women. I was..."

After hearing the classic story of 'young and beautiful Mulan being deceived by a scumbag man' again, Freya took advantage of an opportunity to break free and said, "I got it, Auntie Mulan. I'm a Bewitcher, I won't be deceived by men!"

Auntie Mulan sighed and yelled from behind, "Men love to tie you up with little favors. If he's unwilling to spend a lot of money on you, he's a liar!"

Auntie Mulan was quite excited today. Did she encounter the man who cheated her money in the Mud Cafe?... Freya was lost in thought. As she pulled out her key to unlock the door, she suddenly remembered that there was a cult leader living inside.

Speaking of which, why did he ask me to come back early?

What would a cult leader do when no one is around?

Definitely some evil ritual, right? Search* The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Did he ask me back to be a sacrifice?

No, the contract last night clearly stated 'neither party can harm each other'.

Did he lack manpower for the ritual and wanted me to help?

But wouldn't that turn me from an accomplice into a perpetrator?!

And although the cult leader can't harm me, which cult leader doesn't have a few followers? There might be a lot of villains dressed in black robes and holding torches inside!

Even though she thought so, Freya still had to open the door and take a look. If there was danger, she'd run away immediately. This is a city area; an escaped criminal wouldn't openly chase a female college student on the street, right?

Freya opened the door, her nose twitched slightly, and she smelled the fragrance of food. She walked into the entrance with suspicion and saw Ashe, who was wearing an apron in the small kitchen, busy with the kitchen utensils she had never taken out since she moved in.

Xiao Xian was circling around his feet, meowing from time to time, seemingly wanting to taste his cooking.

Seeing her, Ashe smiled and said, "Sit for a while. I'll finish the last dish soon, and we can have dinner."

"Welcome home."

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Chapter 143: I'll Try My Best Not To Kill You

There was no dining table in Freya's home, so the dishes were placed on the desk.

Freya sat on a chair that was originally used for dirty clothes—the laundry had been taken by Ashe for washing and was now drying on the balcony. She pointed at the fiery Lala Fat Rice in front of her, the Sorcerer's lettuce salad and the foggy spinach egg pancake, and asked blankly, "You called me back just to have dinner together?"

Xiao Xian's cat food today was covered with a layer of Lala Fat Sauce and was quite delicious.

"Yes." Ashe took off his apron. "Although I can wear a mask to avoid surveillance from the cameras, I would have to reveal my face when eating. I can't eat out... So I can only buy ingredients to cook at home. Like at noon, I just bought a pie to eat."

"Then why not eat a pie for dinner as well, why cook?"

"To be honest, the food standards in the prison were quite good. I can deal with it at lunch, but if I can't have a good meal for dinner, that's a bit..."

"So why did you call me back?"

"Because it's impossible to cook just one portion. I can't eat all three dishes by myself, so I called you back to eat together."

It sounded reasonable, but Freya still found it strange—You are Ashe Heath, the leader of the Four Pillars God Cult. When you're hungry, shouldn't you just randomly find a passerby, crack open their skull and have a taste of fresh brain?

In fact, Ashe didn't know how to cook before. This was a skill he gained from reading the Sorcerer Handbook, titled "Mastery of Common Recipes", and it came in handy sooner than he expected.

"Having just come out of prison, where did you get the money to buy ingredients?" Freya suddenly remembered this.

She wasn't afraid of Ashe taking her money. In fact, her house didn't have any money. She wasn't a sorcerer yet, so she didn't need to carry Silver Coins. For purchases, the digital currency in her chip was directly deducted.

“You can earn money in prison too.” Ashe took a bundle of exquisite banknotes from his bag and exclaimed, “I used Silver Coins to buy ingredients, and I didn’t expect to get so much change.”

To be precise, the cost of the ingredients for this sumptuous dinner didn’t even reach one-twentieth of a Silver Coin. A Silver Coin could meet the food needs of an average person for about twenty days, and only eighteen coins were needed for a year. The exchange rate between Gold Coins and Silver Coins seemed to be 1:100...

After a day of shopping, Ashe felt that he needed to revise his impression of Medic 【222】 —She was not a rich lady who could casually give out a Gold Coin. She was a mega-rich woman!

While talking, Ashe opened a video in the Screen of Knowledge called “Why Sorcerers Are Great”. The Canopy had many such educational videos mainly aimed at ordinary people who didn’t have the opportunity to attend college.

But for a prospective sorcerer like Freya, the knowledge in these videos was a bit shallow. However, accompanied by humorous dialogue and hilarious scenes, they were quite interesting to watch.

Did he just randomly find this video? As a formal sorcerer, he doesn’t need to watch these educational videos, right?

It is worth mentioning that before the official broadcast of the video, there was a 30-second advertisement, which switched to the Heresy Court’s wanted notice in the last ten seconds.

“‘Corpse Lover’ Archibald Harvey, One-wing Sorcerer, Death/Alive Bounty: 10 Gold Coins, Information Reward: 1 Silver Coin.”

“‘Carrion Crow’ Ronat Wade, One-wing Sorcerer, Death/Alive Bounty: 8 Gold Coins, Information Reward: 8 Silver Coins.”

“‘Trickster’ Igor Bukin, Two-wing Sorcerer, Death/Alive Bounty: 15 Gold Coins, Information Reward: 2 Silver Coins.”

“‘Death Eater’ Langna Qios, Two-wing Sorcerer, Death/Alive Bounty: 20 Gold Coins, Information Reward: 2 Silver Coins.”

“‘Demonic Saint’ Ashe Heath, Power Unknown, Death/Alive Bounty: 50 Gold Coins, Information Reward: 5 Silver Coins.”

“You’re quite valuable,”

“Thank you for the compliment. Do you regret it?”

“Not really. After all, it’s hard to buy a Mind Series Art Spirit like a Compassion Art Spirit, and it’s not something you can get for 5 silver coins.”

At this point, Freya paused, looking at Ashe: “If you, Demonic Saint, wish to return to jail, please let me escort you back.”

“Don’t think about it. If I wanted to surrender, I’d take the bounty myself.”

“Stingy.”

As the two of them ate and watched videos, Ashe suddenly said, “Freya, I want to discuss something with you.”

“Hmm?”

“Can you wear clothes to sleep at night?” Ashe suggested gently, “After all, there’s me, a man, here now...”

Considering it was only the first night of staying at someone else’s place, Ashe had held back and didn’t say anything the previous night. Even though he was sleeping on the floor, the thought of a naked lamb lying on the bed kept him awake half the night.

Freya looked at him strangely, “Why should I wear clothes because you’re here?”

“Don’t you feel embarrassed to be seen naked by others?”

“Not at all. If it weren’t against public order, I’d even want to go to class without clothes. It’s been quite hot recently.”

Freya pulled her tank top and peered inside, then curiously asked, “Or do you find me unattractive, and it makes you uncomfortable?”

“No, you’re very attractive, it’s just...” Ashe struggled to phrase it delicately, “You... stir certain feelings in me...”

“Oh!” Freya seemed to understand, wiped her mouth with a tissue, and then pulled at her tank top, “Then let’s do it, once we do, your body will get used to it. Don’t worry, I’ll be gentle with you”

“Why do your thoughts go there!” Ashe pulled her tank top back down, “That’s too casual!”

“That’s a bit harsh, if it weren’t for the contract I signed with you, I would’ve filed a complaint with the Heresy Court.” Freya seemed a bit upset, “I’m not just anyone. Look, you’re the head of a cult, you’re going to give me an Art Spirit in the future, and you’re

not bad looking, so I thought there wouldn't be a problem doing it with you. This is also part of the Bewitcher's etiquette."

"Or are you scared to do it with me? Don't worry, I'll try to restrain myself and not kill you."

At this point, Ashe finally realized something was off, "What do you mean, 'restrain myself and not kill me'?"

"Don't you know? Our Bewitcher's body fluids have a peculiar effect, reducing the male refractory period to zero. Plus we get quite carried away with the pleasure of mating, sometimes we accidentally kill our partners." Freya said, "But I'll pay attention, as soon as you're satisfied once I'll stop immediately, because the contract doesn't allow me to harm you. Really, I'll be very, very careful."

Freya was serious, because she had to be the Mud Workers at the Mud Cafe had all undergone special modifications, and could decide when to finish, with unlimited stamina, but normal people who hadn't undergone these modifications basically didn't have this ability, not even the strongest races.

Even now, Freya would occasionally hear news about Ogres, Beastmen, and even Elves being killed by Bewitchers. There were also Sacred Bloodlines who were drained until their blood was depleted and they fainted, only the innocent Moonshadow could resist the allure of the Bewitchers.

In a sense, it was a good time for Bewitchers. Two hundred years ago, before the industrialization of biological modification technology, out of every ten Bewitchers, seven would be murderers, and the other three were just because they hadn't found the desiccated bodies yet.

But due to the intervention of the Human Rights Association and the Race Rights Association, as long as the Bewitchers did not hide their race beforehand, it was not considered intentional homicide, but rather suicide on the part of the other party. The punishment for the Bewitcher was a few dozen hours of community service.

If earlier Ashe rejected out of some inexplicable virginity moral code, now it was survival instinct that took over. He very determinedly held onto the hem of Freya's undershirt, preventing her from undressing.

Though dying in such a manner would be exhilarating, Ashe had no plans to die in ecstasy.

Freya pouted, "I don't want to put on clothes after bathing, and you don't want your body to get used to me, so what should we do?"

"I'll endure."

Freya shrugged, continuing to eat, “You really are a strange person.”

“In my eyes, you all are the strange ones.”

Ashe sighed, “I walked around near the university today, and saw three casinos, five or six candy stores, I even saw a group of female college students enter a place called ‘Honey Snow Tea Café’, and then put on extremely revealing clothes to solicit customers...”

Freya wore a puzzled expression, “What’s wrong with female college students working part-time? Did you patronize their business?”

“Freya, I’m a fugitive.”

“No need to worry about that. You can wear a mask throughout, and you can pay with Silver Coins. The Tea Café wouldn’t pry into your matters, they would just think you’re a customer with some unique fetishes.”

Freya said, “If you’re uncomfortable with holding back, go right after dinner. I can wash the dishes.”

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Chapter 144: Striving for a Better Life

Ashe momentarily froze, then changed the topic: “The Tea Café is tolerable, after all, I enjoy watching beautiful women. But the problem is, why are there so many scantily clad men posing provocatively in places named ‘Mud Café’? It’s a real assault on my eyes. If I weren’t a fugitive, I would report them to the Heresy Court for ruining the cityscape. There should be legislation specifically prohibiting this—”

“I advise you not to meddle,” Freya warned. “You may not enjoy it, but we do. So men can ogle beautiful women, but we women can’t appreciate handsome men?”

“That’s not the main issue, after all, it’s a traditional profession, albeit on a larger scale, so it’s not entirely beyond comprehension.” Ashe’s face darkened. “I wandered a bit further and saw some workers at a construction site.”

“What about the workers?”

“They... over half of their bodies had become mechanical. Their legs turned into wheels, their hands into multi-toolboxes, and even their eyes had become mechanical... If I hadn’t seen them drinking and heard them chatting, I would have thought they were robots.”

“They can’t possibly be robots,” Freya dismissed with a wave of her hand. “Fully automated robots are expensive and require regular maintenance, hiring these mechanical workers is much cheaper. I recall you haven’t been in prison for long, mechanical workers have been popular in Caimon City for over a decade, how come you seem like you’ve never seen them before?”

“...Are there many such mechanical workers in Caimon City?”

“Not necessarily on construction sites, their hands can change components, and with some simple training, they can take on jobs as assemblers, maintenance workers, and other technical professions.” Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Freya took a big bite of her spicy Lala Fatty, her lips smeared with yolk sauce.

“Generally speaking, most ordinary people who have no hope of becoming sorcerers would change their jobs to become mechanical workers, even clerks are no exception, the only difference is the degree of mechanization.”

Ashe was stunned. “Non-technical labor is also mechanized?”

“Of course, not to mention limbs and spine, replacing the organs with mechanical implants has many advantages.” Freya poked at her bun. “The heart can be replaced with a more powerful ‘Fire Seed’, the lungs with a ‘Combustion Engine’ with stronger circulation, and the stomach with a ‘Energy Pool’ with stronger digestion and absorption power...”

“Nowadays, mechanical modification is very cheap, a standard set of mechanical implants can be paid off in three or four years with diligent work, but the effect is excellent: it allows you to have a longer endurance and be more energy efficient.”

“In times of hardship, you can barely survive by just drinking water, while maintaining a high level of energy; in times of wealth, you can have more physical strength for enjoyment and experience more exciting sensory experiences.”

“If it weren’t for the fact that mechanical implants would reduce the efficiency of a sorcerer’s arcane energy absorption in the Virtual Realm, many sorcerers might choose mechanical implants instead of the more expensive biological ones.”

Freya shrugged. “But now for ordinary people, the ‘Universal’ mechanical hand and the ‘Energy Pool’ mechanical stomach are almost necessities, otherwise no company would be willing to hire them. Most practical tools are designed with the mechanical hand as an interface, without a mechanical hand, you can hardly use any tool. Like the head chef in my college cafeteria, his mechanical hand can be connected to a spatula, which can automatically heat up, cool down, and add seasonings. His steak is particularly delicious.”

“And a mechanical stomach can eat a whole day’s food in the morning and then digest it slowly, not only increasing work time but also saving on food costs—like our meal right now, it could be replaced with 30 servings of ‘feed’.”

“A mechanical worker only needs to eat one serving of feed to support a day’s work. In other words, we’ve eaten a month’s worth of a mechanical worker’s food.”

Ashe couldn’t comprehend. “What about the Human Rights Association? The Racial Rights Association? Don’t they care?”

Freya furrowed her brows, “What does it have to do with the Human Rights Association? No one is forcing them to undergo mechanical transformations. They’re doing it voluntarily. The Human Rights Association can’t limit their freedom to transform themselves mechanically, let alone stop them from pursuing a better life.”

Pursuing a better life.

Ashe was stunned by what he heard.

He remained silent for a while, waiting for Freya to finish her meal and wipe her mouth before he suddenly posed a question.

“If mechanical workers save so much money, where do they spend their wages?”

Freya counted on her fingers, “Mud Cafe, Tea Café, Casino, Candy Store, drama voting, clothes and jewelry, bio-modification, chip version updates, Screen of Knowledge updates, ‘Rise of the Sorcerer’, ‘Virtual Realm Fantasy 14’, ‘World of Miracle’...”

After a day of surfing, Ashe knew that the last three were the most popular multiplayer games in the Canopy. The Canopy is a world of information jointly constructed by all citizens, similar to the internet. It’s called the Canopy because it has a high degree of concealment. Apart from the Heresy Court that manages the chips, ordinary people

can't find others in the Canopy. Everyone in the information world is an 'invisible person behind the Canopy.'

Because of the anonymity, people's comments in the Canopy are utterly unrestrained. In just one day, Ashe learned various types of racial, gender, educational, and occupational slurs.

Even though there are no mothers in the Blood Moon Realm, their proficiency in swearing still astounded Ashe, making him wish for a pair of eyes that had never seen such obscenities.

There was even a moment when he thought that rules like 'speech restrictions' in Shattered Lake Prison actually made sense, and that these unrestrained slanderers should be caught and reformed.

As for drama voting, it's a special charging mode for TV dramas in the Blood Moon Realm. Simply put, after viewers watch the first half of a series, the producers will provide multiple ending choices. Viewers can vote (pay money) for their preferred ending, and then the producers will make it happen.

For example, in the comic Ashe read, "It's Weird That I Said I Like Married Women," after it was adapted into a TV show, there might be more than ten different endings like 'the male lead lives a happy life with the female lead,' 'the male lead lives a shameless life with both female leads,' 'the two female leads together,' 'the male lead and the second male lead,' etc. After the audience watches the first half of the series, the ending is in their hands!

As for clothes and jewelry, Ashe noticed today that even though Freya's house isn't big, she has three wardrobes filled with all sorts of beautiful clothes and accessories. He thought it was a female hobby, but when he walked on the street, everyone was dressed luxuriously. Even the male counter staff in the grocery store dressed like wealthy young masters.

And apart from the middle-aged and elderly, most young people are very beautiful, regardless of gender. Even the goblins are handsome, and some people even have starlight in their eyes — real starlight, the kind that twinkles in their pupils.

Obviously, everyone's appearance has been artistically processed by a medic. But Ashe couldn't say anything about that — his face was also sculpted by Medic 222.

The reason for purchasing the Screen of Knowledge is that updating the chip version also costs money. Most people are born with a Miracle 1 chip, which is slow, has limited storage space, and can only be considered 'usable.' Most adults update their chips to version 10 or higher. The newer the chip version, the stronger the functions, the better the experience, not to mention many applications require a certain version. Lower version chips cannot use higher version applications.

The Screen of Knowledge is the glass display screen they were looking at. Compared to the narrow light screen displayed by the chip, the Screen of Knowledge has higher resolution, bigger size, better colors, larger storage space, and stronger performance.

Even though they were both information entertainment terminals, the Chip was equivalent to an implanted smartphone, while the Screen of Knowledge was equivalent to a personal computer.

“So, are you saying that most people, once they earn money, invest it in sex, gambling, drugs, body modifications, clothing and jewelry, and virtual entertainment?”

“That’s right.”

Ashe opened his mouth as if to say something, but then closed it again.

Only when he had eaten the last piece of milk egg cake did he could not help but ask, “And what about you? Are you the same?”

“Yes, but I have no interest in gambling or drugs, and since I’m aiming to become a Sorcerer in the future, I can’t do any biological modifications at the moment.”

“Are you happy then?”

Freya gave him a strange look.

“Very happy.”

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Chapter 145: Half an Hour

Freya was quite conscientious, helping Ashe wash the dishes.

After finishing, Freya glanced at the Screen of Knowledge, “Are you going to use the Screen of Knowledge tonight?”

“Yeah, I want to look up some information.”

“Can’t you connect your Chip to the Canopy for that?”

“I got rid of the chip in the back of my neck when I escaped.”

Freya was a little surprised, “Where will you live then? Without a chip to register, you can’t even rent a house... Don’t tell me you plan to live with me forever!?”

“The contract clearly states that I can stay here for up to seven days.” Ashe replied, annoyed, “After seven days, I’ll find somewhere else to sleep, even if it’s under a bridge.”

“As long as you give me the Compassion Art Spirit according to the contract, I don’t mind letting you stay for a few more days... If you’re willing to cook every day, I can waive your rent.”

Freya paused, “I need to use the Screen of Knowledge after I take a shower, probably for about half an hour.”

“No problem, I also need to shower, so I can give you that time.”

Ashe continued to browse on the Canopy, while Freya began to write her social studies homework. Social studies is not a magic major, but all subjects for the City Public Examination are from social studies. Basically, if you want to become a government operator in the future, you need to have a silver degree in social sciences.

The speech by Fernand Snow at the Blood Moon Tribunal last night has already made the rounds. Even Freya, who didn’t watch it, was forced to watch it in class. Therefore, the professor’s assignment was “Discuss the Pros and Cons of Socialized Rearing and the Family System”. It was said that “Socialized Rearing” might become a compulsory subject in the City Public Examination in the coming years and is a key knowledge point that must be mastered.

The assignment was not difficult. As long as you follow the writing idea that “Socialized Rearing crushes the Family System”, you can pass. If you want to score high, you need to think more and write about the advantages currently shown by society that are not written in the book.

Considering the professor’s intention... Fernand Snow’s speech... Blood Moon Dual Race...

Freya quickly had an idea.

“...The Family System will cause more factional struggles within the Blood Moon Dual Race. Those who successfully transform into Blood Moon Descendants will use their

power to help their kin who are still of the original race to seize illegal benefits, robbing other original races of their rightful resources... It will lead to incompetent people who originally had no qualification to join the Blood Moon Dual Race becoming Blood Moon Kin through nepotism and other unwritten rules, reducing the average quality of the Blood Moon Kin..."

"If a family is all part of the Blood Moon Dual Race, they will form an unbreakable interest group, which is not conducive to the leadership of the research institute and the church... It will pollute the rule of the Government Affairs Hall..."

"Kinship bonds are a weakening poison and a precursor to internal strife for the Blood Moon Dual Race..."

"The Blood Moon Dual Race is the basis for the development and growth of the Blood Moon Realm. We cannot allow backward systems to tarnish the purity of the Blood Moon Kin..."

Since there were no other tables, Freya also sat next to Ashe to do her homework.

Fortunately, the desk was large enough. Freya did her homework on the left, and Ashe surfed the net on the right. Except for sitting a little close to each other, they could work without interfering with each other. The left side of the desk was originally filled with skincare products, lubrication, snacks, tissues, cotton swabs, and all sorts of clutter, but it was now all tidied up.

By the way, because Freya couldn't afford to hire a cleaner, her house was basically in a 'just enough to sleep' state. Underwear was only washed when there was no more to wear, trash was only thrown away when it piled up, and the corridor was filled with a maze of clutter that only allowed one person to pass. The landlord even said she was very normal.

Now, looking at it, Freya realized that her house was completely transformed. Clothes had been washed, trash had been thrown away, clutter had been sorted and placed in the corner, she even wondered, 'Is this really my house?'

"Did you clean up during the day?"

Ashe hesitated for a moment, but still nodded heavily: "Well, to be honest, the hygienic conditions here are worse than the toilets in prison. Since I'm idle, I might as well do some cleaning. Consider it as paying you rent."

Ashe said: "By the way, I took your clothes to wash. You don't mind, do you? After all, the weather has been kinda hot lately, and there's no air conditioning here. In such a remarkable experimental environment, those piled clothes have produced a very peculiar smell. It's bearable at night, but during the day, I really can't stand it..."

Freya's face turned red up to her ears, and she shyly said: "Really? I didn't notice any smell... I don't mind, thank you."

"That's good. I was afraid that you would call me a pervert when you got back, so I decided to cook for you to win you over."

"Why would I call you that? Rest assured, from now on, you can wash all my clothes!"

"Well, that's not necessary. But can you wash your clothes every day?"

"No, I'm used to piling up a bunch of dirty clothes and washing them all together. Just like you can't ask me to put on clothes right after taking a bath, you can't change my laundry habits either."

"Tsk, you're so pretty, how come your hygiene habits are so poor..."

"What does being pretty or not have to do with this? It's a waste of time to clean the room and do laundry every day."

After a satisfying meal, Xiao Xian jumped onto the table and curled up into a ball of fluff, seemingly falling asleep to their conversation.

With their intermittent chit-chat, Freya quickly finished her social studies homework. Seeing that it was about time, she naturally took off all her clothes and threw them on the chair, humming a tune as she walked into the bathroom.

Ashe glanced at the undergarments on the chair, the sound of water flowing in the bathroom filling his ears. His gaze couldn't move away from the lace underwear. It took all his effort to turn his gaze away, then he summoned the Substitute Spirit, directing the Substitute to put these clothes in the laundry basket on the balcony – a young man's body can't stand such stimulating sights!

Xiao Xian instantly perked up, chasing after the Substitute to play.

On the other side, Freya in the bathroom also felt something was off. As a Bewitcher, she was highly sensitive to emotional states, and she could clearly sense an odd emotion welling up inside her.

She didn't know how to describe this feeling, it was an experience she hadn't had in her eighteen years of life. Standing under the shower, letting the water wash over her pale skin, Freya quickly realized the source of this strange emotion – who else could it be but the Demonic Saint who had suddenly barged into her life?

Was she scared? A little.

Did she like him? It seemed so.

Did she hate him?

Feeling as if her stomach was being wrung like a towel, Freya found it hard to breathe from the pain – yes, she hated Ashe. She couldn't articulate why, but she suddenly found this man repulsive.

So, did she want to distance herself from him?

Freya stood silently under the water, leaning against the wall for a while, then suddenly laughed: "How can there be such contradictory feelings... It must be due to physical reasons, right? Yes, it must be physical reasons, after all, Ashe interrupted me last night."

She quickly let go of the matter, dried herself off, wrapped her hair in a towel, and as soon as she went out to blow-dry her hair, she saw Ashe dive into the bathroom and close the door in one smooth motion, so fast it was like he used a spirit. Freya didn't even get a clear look at him.

"You're in such a rush to take a shower? If you had said so earlier, I would have let you go first." Freya muttered to herself, then sat in front of the Screen of Knowledge, starting her nightly routine tasks.

After a while in the bathroom, Ashe gradually heard a soul-consuming moan.

At first, he thought the apartment's soundproofing must be poor, perhaps another couple in a different room were trying to earn some Fertility Fund. But when he turned off the faucet to lather up with shower gel, the absence of the water's noise made the low moan suddenly much clearer.

This was far more striking than any lingerie.

Ashe silently turned the faucet back on, cranking it to the maximum flow rate. Cold water!

However, the melodious voice, like feathers of a goose, tickled in Ashe's ear. Even the noise of the water couldn't help. On the contrary, it seemed to add a kind of filter effect, expanding his imagination.

A thought suddenly sprang up in his mind.

"Is it really going to take half an hour?"

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Chapter 146: Who Falls in Love Seriously?

Freya was awakened by the aroma of food.

Today was April 29th, her third day of harboring an escaped convict, and also a day she could sleep in due to a morning without classes.

The normal sleep duration for mature Bewitchers was 12 hours, but such a schedule was apparently not compatible with the fast-paced urban life. Therefore, on school days, Freya would sleep for six hours and then take a stimulant. If necessary, she could sleep for only four hours and take two stimulants.

However, stimulants could build up resistance, once the dosage was increased, it would be hard to reduce. Thus, Freya cautiously maintained a rhythm of one pill a day, preferring to yawn than to take a second one.

It wasn't that she feared addiction, but rather that the stimulants were expensive – the stuff was even pricier than Moon Sugar.

One could also argue the opposite, that Moon Sugar was too cheap.

That was how it was in the Blood Moon, entertainment was always cheap, anything that could be used for work and making money was definitely expensive.

Like how Ogres could use Moon Sugar to aid in painting, that belonged to the category of exploiting racial talents, something to be envious of.

After greeting the Demonic Saint, Freya, yawning, headed to the bathroom. She put on a non-slip hairband, took a shower, washed her face, brushed her teeth, groomed, and since she was a naturally beautiful Bewitcher, plus Freya didn't need to charm anyone currently, and she was the one paying, she only needed to carry out simple skincare, taking less than half an hour in total.

Before she went out, she thought about it and decided to give Ashe some face, she would get dressed before she left. After all, it was time for class and not sleep, she had no reason to be naked.

Ashe had prepared the meal and was watching a video while eating. Freya moved closer to take a look but lost interest soon after – it was “Analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses of Various Magical Factions (Part 1)”.

“I'd suggest you watch some comedy videos instead, although this video is also pretty funny.”

Ashe was somewhat surprised: “Why? I just wanted to get a basic understanding of the knowledge of other factions...”

“Understanding them like this will only lead you to form biased preconceptions.” Freya said, “Can you summarize yourself, who has existed for decades, in one sentence? Do you think a few minutes of introduction can summarize a magical faction that has existed for hundreds or even thousands of years?”

“Watching such videos will only make you think that Earth Art is all about moving dirt, lightning spells go ‘bilibili’, sword art requires close combat, illusion series has no lethality, prophecy series are all frail scholars, and Mind Series can be countered just by plugging your ears – you'd be better off knowing nothing, at least you would be more cautious.”

“If you want to understand a magical faction, you should at least read an introductory book, or listen to a lecture by a professional professor. Videos like this are not aimed at sorcerers, but at non-sorcerer audiences – these audiences just want to get a sense of superiority that ‘so magical factions aren't that mysterious or useful after all’.”

“You'd be better off watching the videos in the new folder, at least they're harmless, and they can even stimulate your appetite.”

Ashe was taken aback: “Really? Can they actually stimulate appetite?”

“You're actually doubting the taste of a Bewitcher, I'll pick one for you right now that will definitely increase your appetite—”

“No need, no need, I'll change the video.” Ashe hurriedly refused the Bewitcher's recommendation, quickly picking from the video canopy: “Hmm, let's watch this ‘Why is

it so Expensive?' food exploration video, it's perfect as we're eating... Damn, it's a Tea Cafe exploration video!?"

"Wait wait, let's just watch this."

"Do you eat so indiscriminately?"

"Technically, I shouldn't." Freya shrugged, "But it's also possible that I just haven't met a woman that can make my heart flutter... Tsk, you don't like Tea Cafe , how about a Mud Cafe exploration video?"

"Let's just watch this one." Ashe gave in.

And to tell the truth, the food seemed to taste even better.

Ashe looked around the single room and asked, "Have you been living alone ever since you left the Foster Home for college?"

Freya, who was enjoying her seafood Lala Fatty, looked at Ashe with a puzzled expression, "I'm not alone. What else could I be? A cat?"

She smiled at Xiao Xian, the Fold-ear Cat, scratching under its chin. Xiao Xian appeared to be in bliss, almost drooling.

"Have you ever considered sharing a flat with someone else?" Ashe asked. "Living with another person could be more economical. It could reduce living expenses and improve quality of life..."

"Not at all." Freya shook her head. "I get rental subsidies living alone, plus student subsidies, which cover about 80% of my rent. With rent so cheap, why would I want to share a flat?"

"But wouldn't sharing a flat with someone else be even cheaper?"

"I'm not struggling on my own, so why do I have to live with someone else?" Freya tilted her head. "I had a private room in the Foster Home too. Why should I crowd myself with others after moving out?"

"But if there's someone else, you can help each other in daily life. For instance, if you fall and injure yourself..."

"I can use a chip to notify the hospital to send an ambulance."

"You two can cook at home instead of eating out..."

“Actually, I spend less money eating in the school cafeteria than you do buying ingredients.” Freya grumbled. “If I cook, I have to wash dishes... and this apartment doesn’t come with a dishwasher...”

Ashe couldn’t help but say, “But if you have that kind of need, wouldn’t it be more convenient to live with a lover?”

Ashe had almost scrubbed himself raw last night waiting for the low moaning to stop. He had thought that enduring it for one night would be the end of it. However, he found out afterwards that Freya needed to satisfy her needs every night, usually three times, with the duration varying from 15 to 45 minutes depending on the material used, her mood, the amount of homework, and other factors.

Freya looked at Ashe with big puzzled eyes.

“Leaving aside the fact that I’m a Bewitcher, what does satisfying my needs have to do with being in love? Have you ever been in a relationship?”

Although Ashe wanted to be tough, he felt it was safer to be honest in front of Freya, who was an experienced and top-tier driver, while he himself only had a large vehicle license but no driving experience.

“No.”

Freya’s response shocked Ashe. “Neither have I. Who in their right mind would be in a relationship?”

Ashe asked in confusion, “Why? With your appearance, wouldn’t it be easy to attract the opposite sex? Or are they afraid of you because of your Bewitcher constitution?”

Freya shook her head. “No, I’m just curious as to why you think I should be in a relationship. Do you Four Pillars Religion followers still harbor such unrealistic dreams?”

“How is being in a relationship unrealistic?” Ashe felt perplexed. “You were enjoying the romantic comedy ‘Sorcerer 100%’ on the Screen of Knowledge last night, and you seemed to have a great time?”

Freya became annoyed. “Then tell me, what’s the nature of the love in ‘Sorcerer 100%’?”

“Well...truly loving each other, always thinking about each other, willing to protect the other at the risk of one’s own life, willing to accommodate the other in daily life...”

“Exactly!”

“What do you mean ‘exactly’?”

“How can such love exist in reality, outside of movies and TV shows?” Freya spread her hands. “Who would be willing to accommodate others, consider others, or even risk their lives for others nowadays? At least I wouldn’t.”

She paused, “I can feel emotions like love, liking, and infatuation. For instance, I think you’re quite good, and I’m willing to meet with you once or twice, or even on a regular basis. However, if you want to go further with me, such as living together, fully participating in my daily life or future plans, I can’t accept that.”

“When it comes to love, most college students understand that there’s no such pure relationship in reality. On the contrary, those with lower education believe in the plots from TV shows and movies, wishfully thinking that true love exists in this world—there are particularly many such fools in the Curtain Game. The end result is often being deceived of their money. The particularly foolish ones even end up in debt, but what’s on the other side of the curtain is not a beauty or a handsome guy, but an Orc Uncle and a Goblin Fat Woman.”

Ashe couldn’t understand, “But isn’t a romantic relationship very normal? In reality, you can always find someone you can trust, right? Can’t you start from being good friends and gradually develop into lovers?”

Freya chuckled, unable to resist reaching out to pat the Demonic Saint’s head. She said with a grin, “Silly boy, people change. He may be trustworthy now, but tomorrow he might become stupid due to Moon Sugar, and the day after he may have an adventure in the Virtual Realm and start to despise me.”

“Didn’t the Foster Home teach you not to trust strangers, not to have expectations of strangers?”

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Chapter 147: We're All the Same

Ashe brushed her hand aside, his expression somewhat uncomfortable.

"But if you're not in a relationship and don't have a family, doesn't that mean you'll always be alone?"

"We've always been... Oh, right!"

Freya suddenly remembered something, and started furiously writing in her notebook, "The benefits of Socialized Rearing also include this... cultivating independence from a young age... getting used to single combat... having an advantage in exploring the Virtual Realm... 'Every citizen of the Blood Moon Realm is a qualified reserve Sorcerer'... Well, I can't even say that the professor didn't give me a perfect score this time!"

As Freya wrote, Ashe asked, "Don't you want to have a perfect union with a lover, or share your joys and stresses with family, or have someone who cares about you?"

"Why are you asking so many strange questions... You're not thinking about becoming my lover and living with me, are you?!"

"I've told you, I'll be leaving after staying here for at most seven days."

Freya shrugged and replied, "I don't need a lover, I just need to spend some money at Mud Cafe to have a perfect union; if I want to share my joy, I can boast about my achievements in the Canopy to my classmates, and if I want to vent my stress, I should go see a therapist; as for care, isn't that another way of saying 'investment'? If someone cares about me, it means they want to gain greater benefits from me."

"If I have a lot of value, everyone will care about me; if I have no value, no one will care about me, even my lover would leave. This is a very simple human nature."

Ashe softly replied, "But human nature isn't just about weighing benefits, it also includes truth, kindness, and beauty."

"But why should I put my hopes in others, rather than invest all my resources in myself?" Freya laughed, "I can go to a restaurant when I'm hungry, go to Mud Cafe when I need it, hire a cleaner when my room is dirty, go to a therapist when I'm under pressure – becoming a therapist is actually one of my future career options – it's the 17th century, why gamble on human nature when you can satisfy your needs with money?"

“Even my gambling-loving friend Adela wouldn’t dare to participate in this kind of gamble where the other party holds all the cards. Entering into an intimate relationship is just too risky.”

“But don’t you feel lonely?”

Freya put the last period on her assignment, put it back in her bag, and turned to look at Ashe.

“We’re all the same,” she said.

Then she picked up Xiao Xian and affectionately rubbed her face against his. Xiao Xian, on the other hand, disdainfully pushed her away with his paw, “And I have Xiao Xian, how could I be lonely?”

Ashe suddenly realized, looking into the pure and happy eyes of the Bewitcher, that Fernand Snow, the Ogre mayor, had not actually touched the core of the Blood Moon Realm.

Because he too was an orphan, he had no family, he could not love.

Just as Freya didn’t realize the sour smell of her clothes, most people living in the Blood Moon Realm didn’t realize that they had lost the ability to love.

How could someone who had never seen the sun know the warmth of sunlight? How could someone who had never experienced family care believe in selfless feelings?

Perhaps they believe that there is selfless love in this world, they also long for this love, but they believe more firmly that such love will not befall them.

Just as Fernand Snow believed that the Blood Moon Realm did not deserve a savior, they also believed that they did not deserve to embrace love.

The Ogre thought that the Blood Moon sowed seeds of suspicion and erected walls of prejudice to isolate everyone. But in reality, the Blood Moon was draining the seeds of love from everyone’s hearts through education, causing everyone to resist entering into intimate relationships. Prejudice and suspicion were merely the foul stench resulting from the decay and erosion of this loveless soil.

Ashe suddenly remembered Langna – could this werewolf be considered a traitor to Moonshadow because his desire for love was too strong?

Seeing that Ashe had been silent for a long time, Freya couldn’t help but ask, “What’s wrong?”

Ashe came back to his senses and smiled, “Nothing, I was just thinking about where I could go to make some money.”

“If you are willing to show up, I suggest you work part-time at Mud Cafe. With your looks, while you may not be the top-tier Mud Worker, you’re still middle-to-lower tier, and there should be quite a few customers who would choose you. Why don’t I introduce you to a Mud Cafe? Even if you don’t want to do it for long, you can try it out. Many decent-looking men work as Mud Workers for a night to gauge their market positioning.”

“Thanks, but I’m not skilled enough to earn that money.”

“Being a beginner can also be a good selling point. Many wealthy women especially like virgins, and if you want to practice, I can accompany you...”

“Don’t you have a class at 2 PM? It’s already 1:50 now.”

Freya glanced at the time and hurriedly packed her bag, “Oh no, almost forgot the time. This bowl and plate...”

“I’ll wash them,” Ashe said, “Are you coming back for dinner tonight?”

Here it came again.

Freya felt that strange emotion welling up again.

It had nothing to do with lust, nothing to do with greed. It made Freya both dislike and like Ashe, made her want to stay away from and get close to him.

Could it be a curse from the Four Pillars Religion? Or was it the pollution aura unconsciously emitted by the Demonic Saint?

Despite the thoughts in her mind, she replied, “Hmm.”

“Any particular dish you’d like?”

“Red Flame Lala Fatty Fish Roe Rice Bowl, is that okay?”

“No problem.” Ashe waved his hand, “Be careful on the road.”

That strange feeling in her heart grew stronger, and Freya nodded hurriedly, put down Xiao Xian, and rushed out of the house.

Ashe turned off the shop scouting video and clicked on “Killing Virtual Realm Creatures with Hands: Slashing Fish Dragon Edition”. After watching the video, he got dressed, put on his mask, and summoned his Substitute.

“Wash the dishes, clean up, and if you have extra time, play with the cat. If anything unexpected happens, just dispel the Substitute, got it?”

The Substitute nodded.

Ashe opened a spreadsheet titled “4.29 Full School Timetable” on the Screen of Knowledge. This was a file that could only be downloaded from the Canopy within Caimon Comprehensive University, but coincidentally, Freya was also a student there.

He didn’t just randomly choose a place to stay, he had come prepared.

His gaze landed on a line in the timetable.

“16:00~18:00, ‘Ancient Ritual Faction’, Sylin Karl, Classroom 108.”

After confirming the target, Ashe was ready to go out, but saw Xiao Xian sitting on the floor like a lump, listless and spiritless.

An idea hit Ashe and he cast a Compassion Art Spirit towards Xiao Xian, immediately receiving a wave of pain feedback.

Despite the pain and discomfort, it didn’t seem unhappy, its mood was as calm as if it had grown accustomed to living with pain. It tilted its head at the Compassion Art Spirit in Ashe’s hand, appearing somewhat curious.

“Congenital chondrodysplasia, huh...” Ashe gently stroked Xiao Xian’s head, “Screened from birth, only those who meet aesthetic standards and have utilitarian value are lucky enough to survive, then they live in cages and undergo castration and sterilization. After leaving the cage, they are used as commodities, their value squeezed dry”

“Because we have accompanied pain since childhood, we don’t regard it as misfortune, but as an inevitable fate; because everyone experiences the same, we don’t perceive it as suffering, thus there are no worries.”

He reached out and scratched the chin of the Fold-ear Cat. Xiao Xian revealed a contented and naive smile.

“Being an Observer is really difficult.”

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- Chapter 148: Professor Sylin and the Shelf Life

Chapter 148: Professor Sylin and the Shelf Life

Caimon Comprehensive University, Tiered Classroom 108.

"If you could have ten times the arcane energy, but the price was to be pursued by an Immortal Snail forever, would you agree? Raise your hand if you would."

This strange question instantly turned the entire classroom into a sea of joy. An Elven Student in the front row could not help but laugh. Raising his hand, he said, "Professor, you should ask who wouldn't!"

Standing on the podium was an outstanding Elven Professor, with shoulder-length black hair, sapphire-like blue eyes, fair skin, crystal-clear thin lips, a thin face, and a tall figure. He wore a dark gray coat and white gloves on both hands.

In response to the student's answer, he showed a light smile at the corner of his mouth, "What if it's eight times the arcane energy, and the pursuer is a Red Wolf? Hmm, it seems you are not that afraid of the most common predator in the natural forest."

"What if it's five times the arcane energy, and the pursuer is a juvenile Slashing Fish Dragon?"

Now everyone was a bit hesitant the juvenile Slashing Fish Dragon could be considered a Silver Slayer. There was a joke: 'The first time a Sorcerer faces the Sea of Knowledge, he surrenders; the second time, even with experience, facing a fast, fierce, and passionate Slashing Fish Dragon, he still surrenders.'

Of course, since this joke was considered discriminatory against both men and women, you would hardly hear it in reality. Only in the Canopy could you see such a joke with hidden meaning.

But basically, everyone raised their hands, and the Elven Professor nodded, “What if it’s three times the arcane energy, and the pursuer is a standard Blood Mad Hunter?”

Half of the people who raised their hands put them down. Blood Mad Hunters were divided into apprentice hunters, official hunters, and hunter captains, corresponding to one-wing, two-wing, and three-wing respectively. Standard Blood Mad Hunters were almost all two-wing level combat Sorcerers. Moreover, two-wing Sorcerers who want to become Blood Mad Hunters need to undergo strict assessment and training. A regular two-wing Sorcerer would almost certainly not be a match for a Blood Mad Hunter.

“What if it’s only an increase of one times the arcane energy, but you are forever pursued by a Titan Executioner-level creature from the Virtual Realm?”

Everyone put down their hands, and a displeased student couldn’t help but say, “Professor, if I’m willing, can you give it to me?”

“I’m certainly not that generous.” The Elven Professor laughed, “But the Virtual Realm can.”

“The reward is an additional one times the arcane energy, and the price is to be forever pursued by an immortal and powerful creature from the Virtual Realm. This kind of ‘blessing’ is very common for the Virtual Realm. As long as you’re willing to pray to the Virtual Realm, it will genuinely fulfill your wish.”

“You’ve all signed the student loan contract, right? Both parties of the contract pray to the Virtual Realm as a notary, allowing the Virtual Realm to supervise the implementation of the contract. Whoever violates the contract will be sanctioned by the Virtual Realm... this is the most common kind of ‘blessing’!”

A student raised his hand and asked, “But almost everyone can sign a contract for any reason. Is the Virtual Realm really that easy to negotiate with?”

The Elven Professor laughed, “Of course it is, because the ones who need to abide by the contract are you, and the ones who pay the price for breach of contract are also you. In this process, you don’t get any extra benefits, but rather need to keep paying. The Virtual Realm is always generous with this kind of ‘blessing’ that harms others without benefiting itself of course, this is because of the long-term development of the insurance industry. It is said that a long time ago, signing a contract was a very troublesome thing.”

“But if you dare to ask the Virtual Realm for a ‘blessing’ that benefits yourself, the Virtual Realm will show a face more ferocious than a bank and teeth greedier than a loan

shark. For any Sorcerer who tries to take a shortcut, the Virtual Realm will give the strictest test.”

“But the ‘reward’ and ‘test’ are not fixed mechanisms. If a Sorcerer knows the correct use of the power of the Virtual Realm, he can greatly increase the reward amount and greatly reduce the difficulty of the test.”

“Praying for, and adjusting blessings, this is the power of the Ritual Faction.”

The elven professor surveyed the classroom, “To amplify the arcane energy from a reward by ten-fold, to reduce a pursuer from a Titan Executioner to a snail, these are not the ravings of a fool, but real existing Miracles.”

“Of course, praying for a blessing is not as simple as shouting in the Virtual Realm and immediately receiving a response. Even the Heresy Court’s operator system may not provide such a level of service. In fact, the ritual of praying for blessings is very complex. It not only requires various spirits as materials but also tests the sorcerer’s proficiency in various spell factions. Therefore, it’s a faction with a lot of prerequisites...”

Sitting in the back row, Adela was holding her face, her eyes glued to the elf on the podium. Search* The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“Professor Sylin is really handsome...”

“Huh?” Freya looked at Adela in surprise. “I thought you would exclaim something like ‘Is there a reward that can increase my luck, and the test is just loss of fertility’.”

“No way, I always listen carefully to Professor Sylin’s classes!” Adela said indignantly. “Of course, if there is such a blessing, I wouldn’t mind!”

At this time, the lecture hall was full of people, not only in the aisles, but even many people were leaning on the windows. Everyone came to listen to Professor Sylin’s class. Professor Sylin can be said to be one of the most popular professors at Caimon Comprehensive University. His academic achievements, appearance, and teaching skills are all top-notch. Unfortunately, due to his external duties as a councilman, he stopped being a resident professor a few years ago, and only occasionally comes to school to give one or two lectures.

Moreover, the most popular point about Professor Sylin is – his class is free! No tuition is required, anyone can audit, and only a fool would miss a free lecture by a two-wing sorcerer like this.

If it weren’t for Adela helping Freya to secure a spot, she would have to lean on the window to listen to the lecture.

“...However, sorcerers who can significantly leverage the power of the Virtual Realm are ultimately few. For example, even a legendary four-wing sorcerer would have to do their best to achieve the ten-fold amplification I just mentioned. Therefore, ordinary Ritual Faction sorcerers prefer to pair blessings through ‘conflict’.”

“Suppose I have two blessings now, the first one’s price is ‘I can never taste the flavor of food’, and the second one’s price is ‘I can taste the flavor of everything in my sight’, what do you think will happen?”

The students looked at each other, Adela stood up and answered, “The prices of the two blessings take effect at the same time, but the sorcerer can taste the food by looking at it when eating, which means the second price to some extent weakens or even suppresses the first price.”

“That’s right, this is the mystery of ‘conflict’, using different prices to conflict with each other to reduce the negative impact of the price.” Professor Sylin nodded approvingly, “Of course, not all blessings can achieve such clever cooperation, a more common pairing is to gather multiple prices that will act on the same place.”

“Suppose I have two blessings, the first price is to make me lose my vision, and the second price is to Turning the world in my vision into a quagmire of flesh and blood, then after I pray for these two blessings, although I will still lose my vision, I don’t have to bear the second price, it’s like taking advantage of the Virtual Realm.”

A student asked, “If I have ten blessings, and all the prices are related to the eyes, then do I only need to give up my eyes to gain the benefits of ten blessings?”

“That’s the idea,” Sylin laughed. “Through clever pairing, praying, adjusting, and conflict, Ritual Faction sorcerers can get the most out of the Virtual Realm at the least cost.”

Another student was puzzled, “If the Ritual Faction is so powerful, why is it gradually declining now?”

Professor Sylin said, “There are two reasons. The first one is as I mentioned, the entry barrier for the Ritual Faction is too high. One must master multiple silver factions to perform rituals, so the minimum threshold for a ritual sorcerer is Two-Winged Gold.”

“Such high-threshold factions of magic are often difficult to pass on and may vanish into history once an unexpected break occurs. Only when a sorcerer receives a legacy from the Virtual Realm and improves it can these treasures of the past shine again.”

“The second reason is that the Ritual Faction is too dangerous.”

A student laughed, “Is there a non-dangerous magic faction? The Water Art Faction, which excels in healing, can also kill people subtly.”

Professor Sylin shook his head, "As I just said, the Virtual Realm is stingy in granting benefits, but it is quite lenient towards 'harming others without benefiting oneself'. In some taboo rituals, a Two-Winged Gold sorcerer can offer himself as a sacrifice to summon a destructive storm comparable to the full strike of a Four-Winged sorcerer!"

"We sorcerers can be greedy, can take risks, and can be ruthless, but we must survive and cherish life no matter what. The Ritual Faction goes against this principle. Coupled with the fact that many gifts can cause physical and mental disabilities, making sorcerers radical, violent, and disdainful of life, it naturally won't spread."

"Even if you learn about the Ritual Faction in the Virtual Realm, there's no way around it, but in reality, any wise sorcerer would ban the spread of the Ritual Faction. This is not only for social stability, but also because the Ritual Faction tends to produce mad sorcerers. Apart from chaotic evil organizations, the Ritual Faction has no benefit to any stable organization."

"I am holding this lecture to clarify the harm of the Ritual Faction. If you encounter the legacy of the Ritual Faction in the Virtual Realm in the future, remember not to let greed cloud your judgment. Handle this dangerous knowledge cautiously."

At this point, a masked student raised his hand and said, "Would there be people in the Four Pillars God Cult who master the Ritual Faction? Could the natural disasters that happened before possibly be the evil deeds of the Four Pillars God Cult members?"

"...The Four Pillars God Cult has been completely sealed off by the Heresy Court, and all members, including the cult leader, have been apprehended. You should pay more attention to the news." Professor Sylin said coldly, "Your premise is invalid."

"Also, why are you wearing a mask in class? Can you take it off, please?"

Everyone turned to look, finding that the student who asked the question was wearing a crow mask, a medic model, as though role-playing. Freya also noticed this and suddenly recalled that the cult leader seemed to have a similar mask.

Could it be...

At this moment, the student took off the crow mask, revealing an apologetic face. "I'm sorry, Professor, I really like this mask, so..."

Professor Sylin stared at the student, then covered his eyes with his gloved right hand. After a moment, he put it down, "Don't wear masks in class. It distracts me."

In the midst of laughter, Freya keenly noticed that someone was leaving the room. He was wearing a backpack, a hoodie, and a mask as he walked through the classroom. No one seemed to notice him except for Freya. No one else was looking at him.

Although she couldn't see his face, based on his body shape and clothing, Freya was sure it was Ashe.

What was he doing here?

After class, when she returned to the apartment, Freya opened the door and was greeted by a delicious aroma.

"Welcome back, dinner is ready."

"...I'm back."

Once Ashe had set the table, Freya couldn't wait to ask, "Did you go to Professor Sylin's class this afternoon?"

"Yeah, did you see me?"

"Why did you suddenly come to class?"

"Yes, there are two reasons..."

Ashe picked up Xiao Xian, who was eating cat food: "The first reason is to go to the university clinic to get Xiao Xian treated."

Freya paused: "Is Xiao Xian sick?"

"Yes, it has congenital chondrodysplasia. I noticed it sitting listlessly on the ground this afternoon, so I figured it wasn't feeling well and took it to the Medic. The Medic said if we wanted to alleviate its pain, we essentially would have to get it treated every month."

Freya held the Fold-ear Cat in her arms with a distressed look: "I'm sorry, Xiao Xian, I didn't know... Thank you."

"That's good, I was afraid you might be upset with me."

"Why would I be upset with you?"

"If Xiao Xian hadn't received treatment, it wouldn't know that pain could be dispelled and that being healthy feels so good. It might have a hard time dealing with pain in the future, so you'll need to take it for treatment every month."

As Ashe was browsing videos to watch while eating, he said: "I was afraid you might think I'm causing you trouble."

"What trouble?"

“Isn’t it troublesome to take Xiao Xian to the vet every month?”

“No way!” Freya shook her head: “How could I find that troublesome? Xiao Xian shouldn’t have to suffer like this in the first place. You saved it from its illness, I can’t thank you enough.”

Ashe glanced at her: “That’s good... I was actually quite surprised. You don’t accept any intimate relationships, but you can devote yourself wholeheartedly and unselfishly to a cat.”

“It’s not the same,” Freya grumbled: “People aren’t as cute as cats, and Xiao Xian won’t leave me. It’s a friend with no expiration date.”

Ashe laughed: “Do you consider the ‘expiration date’ when making friends?”

“Of course!” Freya declared confidently: “If the ‘expiration date’ is only a few hours, like a Mud Worker, then you can be polite and act cute like a Bewitcher for a few hours. If the ‘expiration date’ is a week to a few months, then you can hang out during the holidays to bond, and chat about hobbies at other times. If the ‘expiration date’ is a few years, then you need to discuss political views as soon as possible to quickly judge whether they are the type for a deep friendship. If there’s a fundamental conflict in views, then you need to immediately draw a clear line and only interact for work purposes.”

“What conditions must be met for you to feel that someone’s ‘expiration date’ is a lifetime?”

Freya paused, lowered her head, thought for a while, and hesitantly lifted the Fold-ear Cat’s paw: “At least they should be as cute as Xiao Xian, right?”

Xiao Xian was gasping for breath in Freya’s embrace, and it pushed away the Bewitcher’s attack with its paw. Freya let it go and asked: “Taking Xiao Xian to the vet was the first reason, what’s the second?”

“I was passing by the school, so I just stopped by to see how you teach.” Ashe casually commented: “Huh? The first episode of ‘It’s Weird That I Said I Like Married Women’ is out? Let’s watch this.”

“I actually wanted to continue watching ‘Tea and Coffee Shop Exploration’...” Freya poked at the Red Flame Fatty Fish Roe Rice Bowl: “What’s so interesting about my class?”

“There’s nothing interesting.” Ashe twirled his noodles with a fork: “So I left after a glance.”

“What nonsense.” Freya muttered, watching the Screen of Knowledge and eating the Red Flame Fatty Fish Roe Rice Bowl.

But her mind wasn’t on the food, nor the video.

For some reason, the strange emotion in her heart was getting stronger, and she even felt... a bit happy.

Speaking of which, what’s the ‘expiration date’ of this Cult Leader...

She forced herself not to think about it.

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Chapter 149: Fear

“Why are you studying and doing homework again tonight?”

“Isn’t that what being a college student is about? I’ve paid so much in tuition and even took out student loans. If I don’t study diligently, how will I ever get my money’s worth?”

“Wow, that’s impressive. Keep it up.”

"Wait, I remember the warrant mentioned you went to college too! How about you help me with my homework?"

"Weren't you just now eager to study, insisting on sticking to the right path and studying diligently?"

"But some assignments are meaningless, and I only study them because I have to for the credits. Can you help me out, please?"

"Stop, don't lean in so close. It's hot, I'll start sweating. Let me see... (takes a quick glance) Ah, I see."

"So, are you willing to help?"

"I'm willing to provide any support other than helping."

"What does that mean?"

"It means I don't know how to do it either."

"But didn't you already graduate? You must have done these kinds of assignments too!"

"How can a person remember the taste of every piece of bread they've ever eaten? How should I remember how I completed these assignments back then?"

"Ugh, worthless grey college student."

"If you want to become a legendary golden college student, then do your homework. For your sake, I'm willing to endure this humiliation and serve as a negative example to spur you on."

"You're shameless."

"Ashe, we're out of shampoo, can you get a new bottle from the bottom shelf?"

"Strange, you actually know you can't just walk out and get it."

"I haven't finished my shower, and I'm too lazy to dry myself. If I walk out all wet, I'll get the floor wet. I have that much common sense."

"You're so considerate, I'm touched. I hope you can acquire more common sense... like how you shouldn't expose half your body when grabbing something from the bathroom!"

"You're so annoying."

“Ah, Ashe, have you finished your shower? You took even longer than me, water isn’t cheap...”

“Whose fault do you think that is.”

“Why are you acting as if I forced you to take so long... Oh, oh, I get it! My, I’m not even shy, why are you?”

“What?”

“If you want to take care of it yourself, you don’t have to hide in the bathroom. As long as you don’t make a mess, I don’t mind if you do it on my bed. And while I don’t have many videos suitable for men, I know which Canopy to download from. You can take your time finding spell materials. And I also have lubricant, it’s much better than water...”

“Stop, I was just taking a shower in the bathroom, nothing else!”

“So you handle it during the day, when you’re alone in the apartment? Hold on, let me check the browsing history...”

“I didn’t do anything like that in your house!”

“No way, you’ve been staying at my place for three days... You’re not a masochist, are you?”

“I don’t want to talk about it, move over, I need to use the Screen of Knowledge.”

“You’re quite strange.”

“Are you asleep?”

“No.”

“Isn’t it uncomfortable sleeping on the floor? Why don’t you come up and sleep in the bed? I can move over a bit.”

“No need, I’m afraid of you.”

“Hey, that’s kind of hurtful. Honestly, while there are many people who are afraid of my Bewitcher constitution, there are even more who are attracted to my looks. Besides the real thing, there are many games that could make you feel good... want to give it a try?”

“You know, I’ve been wondering. Freya, you’re so attractive, I bet you get hit on a lot at the Barista. But why do you prefer to spend money at the Mud Cafe?”

“Hey, Ashe, haven’t you ever been to a Barista? You really don’t have a clue, do you?”

“Whoa, I can’t believe I’m being lectured about common sense by someone who sleeps naked without a blanket.”

“Let me tell you, the most notable difference between a Barista, a Mud Cafe, and a Tea Café is, everyone in a Barista is equal.”

“Isn’t equality a good thing?”

“But equality means both sides have to serve each other—you make me comfortable, I have to make you comfortable too. You have to give as much as you want to gain. And I just happen to dislike serving others, so I’d rather pay a bit more to go to a Mud Cafe.”

“Hearing that, you sound quite self-serving...”

“Moreover, the Mud Cafe offers buffet, bath, sauna, spa, and other entertainment. ‘Mud Worker Service’ is just one of them. Every woman can temporarily shed her worries from reality and find entertainment suited for her at the Mud Cafe, so a visit there is a very relaxing experience. According to statistics, every adult woman visits a Mud Cafe once a month on average. Some high-ranking women even have long-term exclusive rooms in private Mud Cafes, living there directly and enjoying the top-notch service every night.”

“Oh, I see, you’re a queen, confident and shining!”

“If you pay, you can also make some requests that ordinary men can’t fulfill.”

“I see... Wait, what?”

“Ashe, come here (pats bed), I wouldn’t mind serving you.”

“After you serve me, will you make a request for compensation?”

“...”

“And the request is a ‘special service’ that ‘ordinary men can’t fulfill’?”

“But you’re not an ordinary man! Have some courage, Demonic Saint!”

“I find the floor quite comfortable. Goodnight.”

“Hm, you’re quite timid.”

“I’ve been wanting to ask, why are you always wearing arm and leg covers?”

“What arm and leg covers?”

“The fluffy white fur on your hands and feet isn’t something you wear?”

“How rude! That’s my natural charm fur. All Bewitchers have it. It’s the biggest difference between Bewitchers and humans.”

“I know a male Bewitcher who doesn’t have this fur.”

“There are no male Bewitchers in this world, only ‘males with a certain amount of Bewitcher blood’. Bewitcher is a term specifically for females. Moreover, if a Bewitcher gives birth, the daughter will definitely be a pure Bewitcher, while the son will mainly have the race bloodline of the male.”

“I learned some useless common sense again.”

“So, do you think my charm fur looks good? Although I like it myself, it seems that many people dislike charm fur, thinking it’s a characteristic of beasts. Some Bewitchers even undergo hair removal surgery, striving to look no different from humans...”

“It looks good! Can I touch it?”

“But don’t you think it looks too much like a beast?”

“Isn’t that even better?”

“Ah? Could it be you are into the Moonshadow type?”

“What I mean is, the charm fur only makes you better. It gives you a wild temperament, and you make the charm fur look even more cute and beautiful. Or to put it another way, it’s not the charm fur that’s beautiful, but you. You’d even look good bald.”

“Really!? I was actually thinking about changing my hairstyle...”

“——But I think your current hairstyle is already very good, no need to change.”

“Hehe, I think so too, you have quite a good eye.”

“What’s for dinner?”

“Fruit salad, and...”

“No Red Flame Fatty Fish Roe Rice Bowl?”

“That’s actually quite a hassle to make...”

“Oh, then I’ll go to class.”

“But I also want to eat it today, let’s replace the fried steak with the Red Flame Fatty Fish Roe Rice Bowl.”

“Hey, it’s you who wants to eat, not me begging you.”

“Have you had any good luck recently?”

During class, Adela suddenly asked this, which made Freya feel puzzled: “No.”

“Then why have you been so happy these days?”

“Am I very happy?”

“Your lips have been curling up, and they haven’t come down. It’s tiring even to look at!” Adela supported her chin and looked at Freya sideways: “I think even if I get admitted to the Red Mist Research Institute, I may not be as happy as you are.”

Freya subconsciously covered her mouth, but soon put it down: “That’s not true, I’m always a happy little Bewitcher.”

“C’mon, what good thing happened? Can’t you tell me?”

Freya looked at Adela quite strangely, “Adela, you seem a bit… impolite.”

Although they were friends, they were just friends.

They could share hobbies. Adela took Freya to the Casino, and Freya took Adela to the Mud Cafe, which was perfectly fine.

But once it came to privacy, it was the ‘taboo’ that both parties could not touch. Although it’s hard to describe what privacy is considered a ‘taboo’, it’s quite simple to judge whether the current topic is a ‘taboo’ or not – when the other party tries to avoid or refuses to answer, that’s the ‘taboo’ you can’t keep asking about.

People who can’t do this are ‘barbarians’ who can’t read the air, lack social skills, and easily hurt others with words.

Adela was naturally not a ‘barbarian’. In fact, she was well-liked and had several friends besides Freya. Plus, her ambition was to belong to the Heart Sect, so reading the air should be almost instinctive for her.

Seeming to perceive Freya’s astonishment, Adela asked back: “Are you planning to see a psychologist soon?”

“How do you know that?” Freya asked subconsciously.

Bingo.

Recently, Freya had been feeling that strange emotion in her heart growing stronger, to the point where it was affecting her rationality.

Although it was her first time experiencing this, she neither overthought it nor tried to solve it alone, but planned to see a psychologist for treatment.

For the citizens of the Blood Moon Realm, if there's a physical problem, they seek a Medic, and if there's a mental problem, they find a psychologist. These are survival skills that even an Ogre knows.

Moreover, the modern population is highly likely to have mental issues. Some people need to maintain a monthly appointment with a psychologist from childhood, so the demand for psychological treatment is growing, even surpassing ordinary treatment – after all, modern people may not get sick or injured for a year, but almost no modern person can go a year without having a psychological issue.

At the same time, being a psychologist is a very common profession. If Freya doesn't become a Sorcerer in the future, she will most likely become an ordinary psychologist.

The market is broad, and there are many practitioners. Coupled with college students' medical allowance, psychological treatment for Freya is cheaper than a meal, so she naturally wouldn't force herself to face it alone.

Adela whispered: “Because you're very scared right now.”

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Chapter 150: Because You Want to Protect Yourself

“Scared?”

Freya reflexively asked, “But didn’t you just say I’m very happy?”

“Joy and fear can coexist,” Adela replied, “I’ve seen many people like this in the Casino’s betting games. They get a great hand, so they’re excited and happy because they can win. But they also worry that the opponent may have a better hand, so their worry and fear don’t dissipate.”

“Joy comes from what you have, and fear comes from the possibility of the opponent taking it away at any moment. Freya, who are you betting with, and what exactly are you betting on?”

“Anyway, this class is so boring. Instead of talking to a therapist, why not talk to me? I won’t even charge you.”

Freya hesitated, “Generally speaking, if one seeks psychotherapy, they should find a therapist who has no relation to their personal life...”

“Yes.” Adela propped her chin, gazing at Freya’s beautiful face, “But you’re clearly so happy, yet your eyes send out ‘save me’ distress signals. I just can’t turn a blind eye to it.”

Freya gently touched her own face, lost in thought for a moment.

Adela didn’t rush her, waiting quietly by her side.

The sunshine was good today, and the teacher’s lecture was very hypnotic.

In such a peaceful daily routine, Freya seemed out of place.

Because she was exuding a sense of happiness that Adela had never seen before.

Even when Adela saw a gambler turn the tables in the Casino and repay his gambling debts, avoiding a life of digging as a mechanized miner, he wasn’t as happy as Freya.

Even the students who got into the Red Mist Research Institute as postgraduates weren’t as relaxed as Freya.

Even successful entrepreneurs, sorcerers, professors, and scholars weren't as content as Freya.

It was just... too dazzling.

It even made Adela feel a bit disgusted, to the point of wanting to throw up.

After a long silence, Freya finally spoke, "I know a Bewitcher..."

"Oh, hahaha, okay, keep going." Adela could barely hold back her laughter.

Freya glared at Adela and continued, "She recently met a man for some special reasons..."

Because of the contract, Freya couldn't expose Ashe's identity, appearance, or the fact that he lived in her apartment, but she could still share the information after disguising the details. For example, their nights spent together could be described as staying overnight at a motel; their dinners together could be described as Freya going to Ashe's house for dinner...

After recounting the fragments of their days together, Freya finally revealed her inexplicable feelings, "I now both like and dislike him, both want to approach him and stay away from him, I feel like I might be sick..."

"Isn't this easy to understand?" Adela laughed, "The Bewitcher is in love with him."

"No, absolutely not." Freya shook her head, "I've been in love before. Love is closeness, embrace, greed, demand. How can it involve disgust or distancing?"

Adela said, "There are many forms of love, or rather, love can have many purposes. The kind of love you are used to, Freya, is born from physical attraction, it's fiery just to satisfy desires. When you encounter a more attractive person, your love will shift accordingly. For you, this kind of love is replaceable."

"But what this man offers to the Bewitcher is not just fleeting desire, but the joy of mutual understanding, daily companionship, and soul connection. You may encounter many more attractive people in the future, but there may be only one such interesting soul."

"This is why Bewitcher despises this love and even tries to distance herself from it—he's irreplaceable. What's more terrifying is that he has gradually integrated into Bewitcher's life, like a poison seeping deep into the marrow, impossible to be removed by any means."

“What a wicked man. He brought Bewitcher into his life, so her life was also intruded by him; he wanted to understand Bewitcher, so Bewitcher also wanted to understand him; he was dependent on Bewitcher, so Bewitcher also came to depend on him.”

“Perhaps only a man who completely gives up his dignity, independence, and privacy would act like this. Even if he received the most basic moral education in the Foster Home, he wouldn’t stoop so low.” Adela shook her head: “It’s astonishing that such a shameless man still exists these days, and he successfully bewitched Bewitcher. Bewitcher is really unfortunate.” Search* The NôveFire.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Freya listened in confusion, subconsciously asking, “What should I do then?”

“Follow your instincts, detest him, stay away from him.” Adela said softly, “If this continues, you will only sink deeper into the increasingly intense affection, becoming someone you no longer recognize. What will bind you then is not just the man, but also all the past you’ve invested in him.”

“You’ve heard it many times in the Foster Home, haven’t you? ‘All relationships that make you worry will contaminate you’, ‘All relationships that make you feel wronged will harm you’, ‘All relationships that make you change will dominate you’. Everything that man does is contaminating you, harming you, dominating you.”

Adela grabbed Freya’s hand, “We’ve received so much education, not to lose ourselves. We were born for ourselves, and only for ourselves, with no room to accommodate others.”

“Do you still remember the main connotation of the Bloodline Prohibition Law?”

Freya murmured, “It’s... personal freedom...”

“That’s right, personal freedom. Because after the Bloodline Prohibition, families no longer exist, and kinship and love no longer have a foundation to stand on. Everyone has severed all societal shackles, hence the freedom of personality.”

“Perhaps you value him highly right now, but that’s just a ‘misunderstanding’. Next year, next month, tomorrow, or even the next second, you could have new thoughts, like new people, or want to live a new life.”

“This is not only for your own sake, but also for the other party, as humans are far more changeable than Bewitcher.”

“Think about it, what if the other party suddenly has new thoughts and chooses to leave you? How would you feel?”

Thinking about the short shelf life left, Freya suddenly felt breathless and struggled to say, "...I would feel terrible."

"Just knowing him for a short while has upset you. If you knew him for months, years, would you distort yourself and ingratiate him to keep him?"

"You've anticipated this possibility, you're worried about this future, that's why you're so uneasy, that's why you want to distance yourself from him."

"Because you want to protect yourself. Even if it's a marshmallow, you're still afraid of being hurt."

Looking at Freya's increasingly pitiful expression, Adela whispered in her ear, "We don't need irreplaceable love."

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Chapter 151: But I Want to Be With You

Freya stood outside the door for a long time, listening to the sizzling sound of hot oil inside. Her hand rested on the doorknob, but she hesitated to turn it.

Only when she heard the neighbor's door opening as if they were about to come out, did she muster the courage to push the door open.

"Welcome back, dinner is ready."

The usual greeting made Freya hesitate for a moment, "I'm back."

"Do you want to watch 'College Student's Moon' or 'Death Pursuit'?" Ashe put the food on the table, operating the Screen of Knowledge to prepare tonight's dinner show.

'College Student's Moon' is a light comedy about campus life. The protagonist is a goblin with poor academic performance, but after eating Moon Sugar, he enters an extremely intelligent 'moon mode.' In this state, he is nearly invincible in exams and even enters the top university in the Blood Moon Realm with the highest score in the national exam.

However, eating the sugar also brings him many side effects, causing his personality to fluctuate wildly. Sometimes he's quirky, sometimes reliable, sometimes ascetic, sometimes lecherous, sometimes gentle, sometimes violent.

In order to hide his poor academic performance, the goblin has to contend with the side effects while actively participating in college life, leading to a series of comical campus stories.

Frankly, this campus drama is well made. It's fast-paced, with one joke after another, filled with mockery of college life. Even to Ashe, it's a rare good show.

The prerequisite is that you can ignore its subtle promotion of the legalization of 'Moon Sugar.'

After Caimon City legalized Moon Sugar, other cities are also actively promoting similar bills. The popularity of 'College Student's Moon' could not be achieved without the backing of various interest groups. It could even be said to be a propaganda drama for Moon Sugar, aiming to change the public's negative perception and even make people view Moon Sugar as an everyday consumer product.

By the way, the only brand of Moon Sugar featured in the drama is 'Snow White,' well-known even to Ashe, indicating who the biggest sponsor of the drama is.

On the other hand, 'Death Pursuit' is a fantasy drama. The protagonist is killed by a friend, but at the moment of death, their souls switch. The friend's soul dies in the protagonist's body, and the protagonist survives in the friend's body. To figure out why he was killed, the protagonist impersonates different identities, investigates step by step, experiences death repeatedly, disrupts the villain's plans again and again, and unravels layers of mysteries. It's a tightly-paced mystery drama.

Ashe looked at some spoilers and found out that the villain is a cult organization.

No matter how he looked at it, this cult seemed like the Four Pillars, moved like the Four Pillars, and even sounded like the Four Pillars. This was clearly the Four Pillars Religion!

What was more, some people in the reviews were asking, “Is this based on the true story of Ashe Heath?” Ashe had to defend himself as an innocent bystander – this show started airing before I was even apprehended!

“‘College Student’s Moon’,” Freya said.

Ashe had no objections and enjoyed his dinner while watching the show, occasionally laughing so hard that his shoulders shook. From time to time, he reached out to rub Xiao Xian, who expressed dissatisfaction before continuing to munch on cat food.

But Freya’s attention was not on the drama or the food. Beneath her adorable and enchanting beauty, a complex mix of emotions was simmering.

Adela was right.

Ashe was a dangerous man, Freya had known that for a long time. What she hadn’t expected was that in addition to the apparent danger, he was also so ‘malicious’ inside – there was nothing more evil than binding a free spirit.

Even a prison only binds one’s body.

Freya couldn’t help but recall the materials she had looked up for her paper on Socialized Rearing a few days ago: “The blood relationship between the birth giver and the birth receiver is the farthest shackle from freedom. Severing all innate connections is the foundation of personal freedom... All dependencies between people are betrayals to freedom.”

Besides, the moral education she had received over the past decade also surfaced in her mind.

“Human nature is the hardest color to depict. He might be a good person today, but he could become a criminal who extinguishes humanity tomorrow. When you trust someone wholeheartedly, it means they can hurt you at will.”

“Don’t have any expectations of others. Other people are hell.”

“Trust only yourself, be responsible only for yourself, live only for yourself, die only for yourself.”

“The best equality is that I can’t take advantage of you, but you also can’t take advantage of me – complete and utterly unrelated equality. Only when people have no connection can they have space to breathe freely.”

“Never let someone plant a seed in your heart.”

Freya stole a glance at Ashe, finding him laughing so hard he was about to spit out his food, his mouth corner smeared with a streak of cream. Faced with this ogre-like table manners, Freya felt no discomfort in her heart. Instead, she had a strange impulse – she wanted to lick off that streak of cream with her tongue.

This is too terrifying, thought the Bewitcher.

Adela was right, while she still had her sanity, she needed to swiftly sever this relationship and banish Ashe from her life.

Otherwise, she wouldn't be able to maintain her 'complete self', but would degrade into a slave of emotion, bound by elusive relationships, completely lose her freedom in personality, become a vassal of social relations, and turn into an empty shell.

No wonder Ashe is the leader of a cult. If all the followers of the Four Pillars Religion are this 'shameless people' trying to pollute others, that indeed needs to be strictly cracked down on.

No wonder she felt repelled and wanted to stay away from Ashe. Thinking about how she might closely observe every move of Ashe's in the future, feel happy because Ashe is happy, feel sad because Ashe is sad, willing to give everything for Ashe, her heart would surge... surge...

...with a full of trepidation expectation?

No, Freya, you are a Bewitcher with an independent personality, you must not succumb to the despicable means of a cult leader!

You need to muster the courage to drive him out of this apartment!

Without him, you can become better!

Speak up after this meal!

Speak up after washing the dishes!

Wait until this homework is done and then

"I'll be leaving tonight."

Freya jerked her head up, "Where are you going?"

"Where a jailbreaker should go." Ashe put on his coat and mask, "I'm very grateful for your care these past few days. Well, though I feel like I've been taking care of you more."

“So, so soon?” Freya was a bit flustered, “It’s not the seventh day yet...”

“Although the deadline is seven days, I have already found the information I need in the past few days, so there’s no need to linger.” Ashe summoned his Compassion Art Spirit, “You’re not a Sorcerer yet, right? Do you have a container to store the spirit?”

“I, I do.” Freya went to open a cabinet, “I have a Glowing Sphere that can temporarily store a spirit...”

Ashe waited for a while, watching Freya still rummaging there, then went over and picked up a transparent spherical container, “Is this it?”

“Ah, yes, that’s it.” Freya scratched her head in embarrassment, “Oh, it was right here, how did I not see it?”

Ashe put the Compassion Art Spirit into the Glowing Sphere and cut off his own connection with the spirit. The sphere suddenly glowed, and then the Compassion Art Spirit stretched lazily as if it had fallen asleep.

“Here.” Ashe handed the Glowing Sphere to Freya, “Our contract is complete.”

“Okay.”

“Please keep my identity under wraps after I leave. After all, you are essentially sheltering an escapee. It might cause you trouble. Although I’ve done my best to avoid the neighbors, someone might have seen me around. If anyone asks, just say that you picked me up from the barista, and I just so happened to not die after you were done with me.”

“Okay.”

Ashe crouched down and looked at Xiao Xian, stroking its head. “Goodbye, don’t bear the pain on your own in the future. Shout out if it hurts, or nobody will know.”

He stood up, looking at Freya, and smiled, “Well, wish you peace and happiness, Freya.”

Freya didn’t respond.

She stared at Xiao Xian, as if the fold-ear cat had suddenly turned into a strange creature she didn’t recognize. She couldn’t take her eyes off it.

Ashe didn’t mind and walked past her towards the entrance.

“Will you come back?”

Ashe replied while putting on his shoes, “No, if things go as planned, I will be doing something big tonight. Coming back to find you will only bring you trouble.”

“Where will you live then?”

“I’ll be homeless, I might have to leave Caimon City. I’ll figure something out.”

“Sounds miserable.”

“It is quite miserable. The reason why tonight’s dinner was so lavish was because I foresaw that I’d be living quite miserably for the next month. Consider it my last joy.”

As Ashe’s right hand grasped the door handle, his left hand was also held by someone.

He turned his head and saw Freya clutching his wrist tightly.

Ashe felt something, “Do you want me to stay?”

“No.” Freya shook her head, “I don’t want you to continue to stay in this apartment.”

“But I want to go with you.”

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Chapter 152: Sympathy

Inside the apartment, the cult leader and Bewitcher locked eyes.

“Why?”

Upon hearing Ashe’s question, Freya was caught off guard. After a moment of thought, she replied, “I’m still a legal citizen. I can rent a place to shelter you, I can work to support you, whatever inconveniences you have can be left to me... I would do anything you ask.”

“Though I’m pleased you’re willing to work to support me,” Ashe said, unable to suppress a smile, “my question isn’t ‘why should I take you with me,’ it’s ‘why do you want to come with me?’”

Freya’s face blushed slightly and she looked down at Xiao Xian who was rubbing against her feet, “No reason... I just want to be with you.”

“Let me rephrase then. Why can’t you accept me leaving you?”

Freya opened her mouth but found herself speechless.

She bit her lip, feeling a pain in her heart she didn’t know how to articulate.

Years of indoctrination had taught her not to expose her vulnerability.

Suddenly, she remembered what Ashe had said to Xiao Xian: ‘From now on, if you feel pain, don’t keep it to yourself. Cry out, or no one will know.’

“Because it would hurt,” she whispered. “The thought of never seeing you again, never tasting the food you cook, not being able to converse with you... it makes my heart ache. It’s uncomfortable, almost to the point of tears.”

As she spoke, Freya began to feel aggrieved, “Even though everything will return to normal after you’re gone, why does it hurt so much? It’s not any different from before, but your presence has thrown my emotions into chaos. Why is this so...?”

“Because you feel lonely.”

“Lonely?” She seemed puzzled. “But we—we’re all lonely. It says so in the books, that loneliness is the wings of freedom, that freedom shines because of loneliness...”

Ashe took Freya by the hand and sat her down in the entranceway, gently saying, “But you’ve never truly embraced loneliness, you were only running away from it. However, because you were young and the world was novel to you, life was interesting, so you could always run. Loneliness could never catch up.”

“You’ve seen Fernand Snow’s speeches, haven’t you? Do you know why he sought out his descendants? Because loneliness caught up to him. He was too old, the world was no longer novel to him, and life was nothing more than a series of calculations. Faced with the pursuit of loneliness, he had nowhere to hide. So he urgently needed to find another container to bear his loneliness—there’s nothing better than seeing one’s own lineage continue to alleviate the pain of solitude.”

“What I did was establish a bond with you. When we’re together, the bond can dispel loneliness; when I leave, the other end of the bond will be connected to loneliness. That’s why you feel pain—you’ve been caught by loneliness, you can’t escape.”

Freya looked down at her beautifully manicured toes and murmured, “You’re so cruel...”

“In your eyes, I must seem like a villain,” Ashe laughed, “Actually, your point of view isn’t wrong, and the teachings of the Blood Moon are for your benefit. If you never engage in any intimate relationships, never establish any bonds, you won’t experience disappointment, loneliness, or pain. Since you never had it, you’re not afraid to lose it.”

“But... I reject this kind of ‘for your own good’.”

Ashe beckoned Xiao Xian over, lifted him high, and looked at where his testicles used to be, “The pet store neutered them before selling them to you, because for cats, being in heat is very uncomfortable, painful, and can lead to a lot of complications. Neutering them is for their own good.”

“In my view, what the Blood Moon has done to you is no different from neutering a cat. You dare not step into intimate relationships, being careful even when confronting marshmallows. This indeed lets you avoid many potential harms, but it also robs you of humanity’s greatest ability—the ability to love.”

“But humans are not pets, at least... they shouldn’t be.”

“I’m glad, Freya.” Ashe met Bewitcher’s gaze and said, “You’ve learned to love, and you know to resist instead of running from loneliness. This shows that it’s not me who’s crazy, but this realm.”

“Ashe, you’re really a thoroughgoing Cult Leader.” Freya’s smile was somewhat sorrowful. “So, what should I do?”

“Don’t resist entering intimate relationships; actively seek new bonds, be it friendships or romances. That way, you can resist the loneliness,” Ashe advised. “But the way you love needs some adjusting. You’re too extreme, even saying things like wanting to support me through part-time work. Switching from ‘complete independence’ to ‘total reliance’ like this, you could easily be deceived by scoundrels.”

“Stay true to yourself, learn to love. As long as you achieve these two points, you can live well in this mad realm, or rather, live happier than others.”

Freya stared at him intently, “Can I really not follow you?”

“It’s not that you can’t, I’d be very willing.” Ashe said, “But that would mean you have to give up your achievements of over a decade, risk becoming a wanted criminal, give up the degree within your grasp, abandon the resource-rich Swordflower College, forsake the mature Sorcerer training system of the Blood Moon Realm, and even give up the opportunity to become a Spirit Art Master... Are you willing?”

Bewitcher was taken aback.

“I’ve spent five days and four nights with you, compared to the over ten years you’ve spent in Caimon City, this is barely significant. To you, I’m not that important. You’re just a bit impulsive—of course, I’m glad for this impulsivity, as it means your love is sprouting.”

Ashe couldn’t help but laugh, “Speaking of which, I once invited someone to leave with me, she decisively rejected me due to realistic factors. Now that you’re actively following me, I’m actually rejecting you.”

Freya grumbled, “You yearn for the unattainable, and reject the ones who throw themselves at you.”

“I’ve been scolded by you so much that I’m starting to doubt my noble character.” Ashe grinned, “But my thoughts have always remained the same—I can give you this choice, but you need to think it through.”

“I can be your regret, but I can’t be your disaster.”

Freya hugged Xiao Xian and slumped on the ground, deep in thought for a long time. Eventually, she slowly said, “So you plan to toy with me until there’s no turning back, then just up and leave?”

With Ashe’s persuasion, she calmed down a bit. Becoming a Spirit Art Master was her dream. At this moment, her love seemed greater than anything, but that was because she hadn’t made a strict comparison, or rather, she didn’t want to. But when Ashe placed her dream and love on the two sides of the scale before her, she could no longer run away.

Visible things are always important, invisible things can always be easily discarded.

“You’re suddenly so harsh, making me out to be some scoundrel, but I really haven’t done anything.” Ashe was somewhat at a loss whether to laugh or cry, “And I’m not saying I won’t pay... Didn’t I give you a spirit?”

He paused then added, “If you haven’t found new bonds temporarily, just look at the spirit and miss me. Missing someone can alleviate loneliness, can brew anticipation.”

Looking at the Compassion Art Spirit in the Glowing Sphere, Freya suddenly felt a pang of sorrow.

“Are all the nice things you’ve done for me, all your actions these days, just out of sympathy?”

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Chapter 153: Heart-Bewitching Girl

Ashe was momentarily stunned, then he laughed and said, “Shouldn’t I be the one asking you that?”

“Huh?”

“You recognized me as Ashe Heath before we even signed the contract, didn’t you?”

Ashe continued, “But you still signed it.”

“Well, that’s because you’re a notorious jailbreaker.” Freya rubbed her eyes, avoiding Ashe’s gaze. “How dare I defy you? Not to mention the benefit of receiving a spirit.”

Ashe chuckled: “Don’t forget, at that time I held the Compassion Art Spirit, I could feel your curiosity towards me, and... pity.”

Freya remembered the night five days ago. She hesitated before signing, noticing the man beside her displaying various emotions—urgency, hesitation, fear. His eyes unconsciously darted towards the balcony, seemingly prepared to plunge into the deep night at any moment.

She suddenly recalled an unrelated scene—when she was casually browsing a pet shop and saw a Fold-ear Cat running amok. The cat, once caught by the staff, would look towards the window, then towards Freya.

So she purchased Xiao Xian.

So she signed the contract.

So...

“I’m kind to you not out of pity, but out of fondness,” Ashe said. “As the first person I met outside prison, although you have many habits I can’t understand, and your values differ from mine, your whole being is steeped in the bloody scent of the Blood Moon Realm...”

“But the kindness deep in your heart makes me feel that the world is still beautiful.”

“It’s because of you that I don’t want to be a mere bystander. Even if it’s just you, I hope you can... find enough happiness to heal a lifetime.”

Freya felt her face blushing, the formidable Bewitcher was even feeling shy: “You’re about to leave, why say such things...”

“It’s not like we can’t meet again,” Ashe said. “Though I’ll likely leave the Blood Moon Realm, I might return in the future. Even if I don’t, you’ll become a Sorcerer, and we might meet in the Virtual Realm—of course, it’s better if you don’t meet my Sorcerer’s projection there.”

“We’re Sorcerers, we can’t stop believing in miracles.”

“So...”

Ashe stood up, patting Freya and Xiao Xian’s heads: “Goodbye, Freya, I hope you’ll become a Spirit Art Master when we meet again. Goodbye, Xiao Xian, I hope your illness will completely heal.”

Freya bit her lip, watching him, “Goodbye, Ashe, I hope... I hope you turn out to be a good person.”

“You make it sound like I’m a bad person now...”

With the closing of the door, the figure of the cult leader vanished into the night. Freya rubbed her eyes, laid the Glowing Sphere and Xiao Xian down, returned to her desk, and picked up her pen to continue her homework.

As she wrote, large hot teardrops fell onto the paper, blurring her vision and smudging her writing.

She leaned on the desk, her shoulders shaking slightly, weeping silently.

“I’m surprised he didn’t take her with him.”

The Sword Princess sat in Ashe’s seat, watching the crying Freya with interest. “Despite all the changes in the jailbreak, Ashe still met the ‘Heart-Bewitching Girl’. Rather than coincidence, I’d call it fate—the ‘Heart-Bewitching Girl’ is always the ‘apocalypse observer’s’ follower.”

“No, it has nothing to do with fate or coincidence, it’s the result of a meticulous calculation.”

The Observer leaned against the balcony railing, watching Ashe disappear into the night. “This apartment is the closest to Caimon Comprehensive University, Freya’s room was the only one without a light on the third floor at the time, Ashe’s choice was inevitable.”

“Is it inevitable?” the Sword Princess tilted her face upward, “So the followings of ‘Heart-Bewitching Girl’ were accidental?”

The Observer nodded: “I wasn’t even a Sorcerer when I escaped from jail. Having Freya’s help could save me a lot of troubles. Using her was undoubtedly the most cost-effective choice. For Ashe, who has now become a Two-wing Sorcerer, Freya would only be a burden, there’s no need to take her along.”

“This is the first time I’ve felt injustice for Ashe.” The Sword Princess laughed in anger, “You actually used your dirty thinking to speculate and tarnish Ashe’s good intentions?”

“He might have good intentions, but he’s made many considerations deep down.” The Observer said lightly: “It’s all the same.”

“If ‘it’s all the same’, then why are we here?” The Sword Princess said coldly, “What we desire is the ‘unique’ miracle.”

“...Whatever you say.”

“Observer, is it my illusion, but I feel like you’re not in a good mood today. At other times, you would have mocked me with all sorts of shameless and boring jokes.”

The Sword Princess looked at Freya: “Is it because you’ve met an old subordinate whom you haven’t seen for a long time? How did the Heart-Bewitching Girl die? I only remember that I didn’t kill her—”

The Observer glanced at her: “Sword Princess.”

“I suddenly recalled a distant rumor.” The Sword Princess seemed oblivious, “The Heart-Bewitching Girl initially followed you because of her love for you, but you never satisfied her, and even until she died, she seemed unable to win your favor.”

“Just satisfy my curiosity, would you tell me your story with the Heart-Bewitching Girl?”

The Observer stared at her coldly, and the Sword Princess bravely stood up to him.

It wasn’t until Freya hiccuped from crying too hard that the Observer coldly said, “Are you feeling injustice for your former enemy?”

The Sword Princess said, “I am feeling injustice for women who have met jerks.”

After a long silence, the Observer said: “...Do you know why her Mind Series miracle has such a high priority, such a wide range, and such a deep influence?”

“Because she’s a Bewitcher?”

“Because she’s an Abstinent Enchantress.” The Observer said lightly, “An abstinent Bewitcher not only can greatly increase the learning speed of the Mind Series but also cause qualitative changes to the Mind Series miracle. This is not exactly a secret poison. It may be passed among the Bewitcher group, but few Bewitchers can achieve it they must have a person that they are infatuated with, then the Bewitcher can enter the abstinent state, and only after they become integrated with the object can they relieve it.”

“So, to get the Heart-Bewitching Girl’s combat power, you kept using her in that way?”

“I did it for her good.”

“The paradise created by the Blood Moon Supreme was also for the good of the pets living in it.” The Sword Princess said coldly, “You make me sick, Observer.”

“Ashe may not be Freya’s regret, but you were once the disaster of the Heart-Bewitching Girl.”

Xiao Xian walked to the Observer's feet and affectionately rubbed against the Observer's boots.

"I will tell the others about this when I go back. Now we finally have a reason to unite. How can things go well when you're with this kind of loudmouth..."

The Sword Princess was speaking, and when she turned her head, she found that the Observer had disappeared.

The Fold-ear Cat jumped onto the desk and snuggled into Freya's arms.

Freya raised her head in a daze, saw the Fold-ear Cat affectionately licking the tears on her face, and suddenly her nose was sour, and she held the Fold-ear Cat and cried loudly.

The Sword Princess calmly watched this scene, her mouth slightly raised, revealing a mocking smile.

"Trying to make up for it now...how pathetic."

But she immediately shook her head in self-mockery: "We are just as pathetic."

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Chapter 154: The Cheating Secret of the Blood Moon

In Caimon City, the cathedral area of the Upper District, at No. 22 of the Silent Forest Villa Area.

Knock, knock.

Three seconds after the respectful knock, a cold voice comes from inside: "Come in."

Beastman Gesas pushes the door open, stepping into the study that could be described as a small library along with his entourage. The room is 7.7 meters high and covers 79 square meters. All the walls are inlaid with bookshelves carved by Goblin craftsmen. Even the ceiling is covered with a glass canopy, behind which are ancient scrolls crafted with secret magics. The floor is covered with a soft, pinkish-purple carpet made from Bewitching Wool.

It's not Gesas's first time here, but each time he sees this lavish room, he can't help but bow even lower.

Not to mention the precious knowledge that would never be circulated in the Canopy, the pinkish-purple carpet alone is enough to prevent anyone from harboring any rebellious thoughts. You see, Bewitching Wool comes in many colors, and pinkish-purple is arguably the rarest and most beautiful.

How many Bewitchers would have to die to weave such a carpet?

Of course, Gesas doesn't think his master would use any unlawful means for a carpet. According to his master's character, he would never display something dirty so openly. Therefore, this carpet is a lawful and legitimate piece of art.

He guesses it might be something his master purchased from a research institute, or a gift from a scholar of the sacred bloodline. Almost all goods related to corpses are produced by the institute.

Only the institute with control over all corpse resources could 'lawfully and legitimately' create such a dazzling work of art.

Following the carpet through the book forest, what catches Gesas's eye is a desk that looks like a tree trunk. There are no lights on in the room. A faint red moonlight comes through the French windows, split in two by a chair, gently illuminating the area around the desk.

The person sitting on the chair is bathed in darkness. When he opens his green eyes, Gesas bows his head and dares not meet the Elf's gaze.

"You don't look like you're bringing me good news, Gesas."

“We have located Ronat. We dispatched two Golden Mouths and seven Silver Mouths, but due to the fierceness of the Death Eaters, they still managed to escape,” Gesas quickly stated. “All the black market healers are under surveillance by the Woodpeckers. As soon as they seek treatment, they will be caught by us.”

“Hmm, what else?”

“Although there are no eyewitness reports, based on shopping and garbage collection situations, we can confirm that Igor Bukin is hiding in the apartment of Blood Mad Hunter Emma Lekthas. But Emma Lekthas is a Moonshadow, so we can’t investigate further.”

“Even the Moonshadows are willing to shelter him?” The Elf seemed a little surprised. “They must have been deceived, most Moonshadows are simple-minded creatures... What else?”

“Several affiliated hospitals’ Corpse Recovery Departments have reported that when they went to recover bodies at the coordinates provided by the Heresy Court, they found no bodies. A Heresy sub-bureau in the Upper District arrived at the crime scene within ten minutes of receiving the ‘death signal’, but they also found no bodies and couldn’t even track down any traces.”

“There were several sensational murders in the Lower District. The heads of several gangs under the Eternal Wine Club suddenly went mad and slaughtered their subordinates. The bodies of the perpetrators have clear Necromancy Traces.”

“A former member of the Eternal Wine Club died in his sleep without any signs of resistance.”

“The clean and proficient way of handling bodies, as well as the style of a control master, all indicate that ‘Corpse Lover’ Archibald Harvey is seeking revenge.”

Gesas continued, “Based on his range of activity, we can basically determine that his base is inside the Pig District. Give me three more days, and I will definitely find him!”

“I don’t doubt your capabilities, but I’m certain you won’t be able to find him.”

The elf gently tapped the surface of the desk with his fingers, “This necromancer has violated the taboos of the sacred bloodline. These days, the Heresy Court is bound to be doing everything in its power to track him down... perhaps even as we speak, he’s been caught by the Blood Mad Hunter, bled like a pig, his memories being unraveled, and his body being broken down into various materials—when facing an enemy who can touch their interests, the sacred bloodline always shows respect.”

“Although they haven’t caught him, these four pieces of news can be considered as good news, right? So...”

“Is there more?”

Gesas was trembling all over, his knees buckled, and he knelt down directly, his forehead pressed against the carpet, his heart gripped by boundless fear, but his words were still fluent: “I’m sorry, Woodpecker simply couldn’t find any traces of Ashe Heath, not a bit of information.”

Light laughter came from behind the desk, “Under the glory of the Blood Moon, everyone is equal, and Gesas, you are a Two-wing Sorcerer who has bathed in the rain of gold, don’t kneel so easily.”

Faced with this seemingly comforting consolation, Gesas didn’t dare to move a muscle. This pride of the beastmen, still maintained the most humble posture, exposing his defenseless back to his master.

That’s right, he and his master were both Two-wing Golden Sorcerers. If it were anywhere else, Gesas wouldn’t say he was on par with his master, but at least he wouldn’t be this humble... however, this was the Blood Moon Realm.

The law is the will of the gods, the rules are the desire of the gods.

Unless one is willing to renounce society, civilization, willing to become a beast, willing to quit this garbage game, even legendary sorcerers must obey societal rules—and in a game with rules, resources are the biggest voice.

Power is a type of resource, an important one, but not the only one. The more stable a society, the less valuable power as a resource becomes, and in this civilization that has been passed down for more than a thousand years, power exists merely as a threshold, like a degree.

Non-sorcerers can only honestly become fuel for society, although sorcerers have the qualification to participate in this game, it’s just a qualification, because this is a PVP game that started a thousand years ago, with no newbie villages, no low-level zones. All new players who join face various guild leaders (businessmen), high-level players (legendary sorcerers), and even cheaters (Blood Moon Dual Race).

The most interesting part is, although it’s a PVP game, all areas in society are safe zones, theoretically not allowing attacks on each other.

Thus, new players only have two paths—they can become dogs for the old players, sharing the resources that trickle down from their fingers through flattery; or they can become fuel, being silently isolated and pushed out by the old players.

Gesas was a new player who only started this game thirty-six years ago, although his talents were indeed extraordinary, a mere beastman who reached the Two-wing level at

thirty, but his master, he was an old player who joined this game one hundred and eighty years ago.

Compared to arcane energy, connections, power, and resources are the elf's most terrifying strengths.

Titles like the chairman of the Elf Rights Association, city council member, school professor are needless to mention, merely being the “mastermind behind Woodpecker” is enough to easily ruin all of Gesas's years of hard work—Gesas was certainly the current leader of Woodpecker, but most of Woodpecker's core members could be directly controlled by the master.

It's funny, as an organization that does the dirty work, core members of Woodpecker actually don't have things like wages, even if their labor rights are violated, labor laws certainly wouldn't protect them, they might be better off seeking revenge from the Heresy Court.

The primary source of income for most members of the Woodpecker organization, including Woodpecker itself, is—loans.

All the rewards that everyone receives are ‘temporary loans’ from financial companies. Of course, as long as you work honestly, they won't ask you to repay the money, let alone charge interest. But once a financial company chooses to collect, anyone who can't repay the money will directly become a ‘defaulter.’

In the Blood Moon Realm, becoming a ‘defaulter’ is tantamount to sleeping in cardboard boxes under the overpass. You can't use any transportation, can't pass any checkpoints, can't make any high-consumption activities, can't rent a house, and even can't communicate. It's like being kicked out of civilized society with one foot.

Some may wonder, with such harsh conditions, why would anyone join Woodpecker? Can't they just work honestly and sign a service contract where their rights and interests are protected by law?

Because the members of Woodpecker can't stand the 9 to 5 work routine. And for a Sorcerer, unless they join a specific institution like a research institute, most jobs are a waste of time.

Learning as a Sorcerer requires full-time dedication and a lot of money.

Even if they want to borrow money to study full-time, no bank will approve this kind of loan. Comparatively, Woodpecker's offering of ‘no-term interest-free loans’ is very appealing. If they can become a Two-wing Sorcerer, Woodpecker will naturally waive the loan and even value their services. Even if they don't become a Two-wing, as long as they don't betray the organization, Woodpecker won't ruin their credit.

If they want to work and practice at the same time, it's not impossible. In fact, those who do this are often promoted as inspirational models. But since it's 'inspirational,' it shows how rough this road is. Every successful person needs to have talent, hard work, and luck to break out of the ordinary life.

Those with these qualities, if they come to Woodpecker and take the evil path earlier, might succeed faster.

Woodpecker's growth to this day is not by chance. Even without Woodpecker, these wicked Sorcerers would still pledge allegiance to other forces in exchange for learning resources (especially time resources), even if it means signing even stricter contracts and sparing no effort.

Moreover, most Sorcerers don't even have the chance to be a dog.

They can only be a dog's dog.

If we say the income of regular legal work is 1, the feed for a dog like Gesas is 15, then the income of a Woodpecker with a Silver Mouth is 5, and a Golden Mouth is 10.

So even if Gesas rises up now and could potentially kill the Elves, he would still humble himself.

Even if he kills his master, so what? He can't inherit any of the Elves' legacy. The debt-ridden Woodpecker won't recognize a criminal leader, all the Elves had will be divided among his peers, and Gesas, who broke the game rules, will only be sent to Shattered Lake Prison. As a 'dreadful criminal leader,' he will be stripped of his last dignity in the Blood Moon livestream.

The best outcome would be for other 'old players' to appreciate Gesas, save his life, and take him under their wing. In other words... Gesas would simply have a new master.

This is the racial equality of Blood Moon. In front of the immortal races, everyone is equally inferior.

This is the freedom of human rights in Blood Moon, the freedom to choose which old player to serve under.

From a long time ago, Gesas knew that the Blood Moon was a paradise for the immortals. In this game where there is no inheritance, no generational accumulation, and all new players need to 'start over,' lifespan is the most powerful cheat code.

The longer the lifespan, the more resources you can get; the longer the lifespan, the more you can become an 'old' player; the longer the lifespan, the more you can form an interest group centered on yourself.

This explains why the Blood Moon Dual Race is the ruling class and why Elves are praised as 'stewards of society'—for the Blood Moon Dual Race, Elves are the only race that has the right to stand on an equal footing with them.

As for those short-lived species that would die within a century, they are not worth attention at all. This is not about discrimination, nor even about interests, because in the eyes of the long-lived species, the short-lived ones are merely their resources.

Lifespan is the ultimate class barrier.

So even if he has to bow and scrape, even if he is as lowly as a maggot, Gesas has to earn enough money to afford the life-extension surgery.

Sometimes Gesas would wonder, if he had not been born in a foster home in the lower district, if he had determined to go to high school, college, and finally succeeded in being admitted to a research institute as a member of the sacred bloodline, would everything be different?

But there are not so many ifs in the world. If he was not born in the right place, if he did not do well in school, he would have to take the toughest road.

As time passed by the second, the study was so quiet it seemed to solidify. Not until Gesas was soaked in cold sweat did the Elf's voice sound slowly: "Keep an eye on Gerard."

After a moment of silence, Gesas said, "The captain of the Blood Mad Hunters, the 'White-Haired Butcher' Gerard Westminster?"

"Ashe Heath made him lose face, Gerard will definitely hunt him down personally. If Gerard kills him on the spot, then it ends there; if Gerard chooses to arrest him and spares his life..."

"Then the woodpecker will eat this pest."

Stealing a kill from Ashe Heath in front of a Tri-Wing Sanctuary Sorcerer?

Even thinking with his gut, he knew how difficult this task would be, but Gesas responded without hesitation: "Your command will be carried out, but since two days ago, Gerard has been elusive, even the Heresy Court does not know his whereabouts, I wonder..."

"He's probably at Observation Point 53." The Elf said, "Go, may the Blood Moon light your way."

Gesas exited the room with measured steps, closing the door gently behind him.

The Elf opened a file next to him. Inside was the resume of Ashe Heath. It detailed his birth records, upbringing in a foster home, high school awards, and college activities.

He tapped the desk lightly with his finger, his nails were quite slender, creating a tap, tap, tap sound on the wooden table...

“Why haven’t you left yet?”

The Elf looked up, gazing at the hooded figure in front of his desk.

The hooded figure walked from the shadows of the study into the blood-lit ground, wearing a mask, his eyes filled with surprise.

“Indeed, even among Two-wing Sorcerers, there is a hierarchy.” He chuckled, “Even a Two-wing Sorcerer could detect me, it seems I can’t bluff in front of Gerard...”

“You’re not Gesas’s follower?” The Elf furrowed his brow, “Who are you?”

He had noticed this person just now, but he thought it was Gesas’s follower, so he didn’t pay much attention.

But at this moment, he suddenly realized a problem—Gesas never brought anyone to see him, only the leader of the Woodpecker had the privilege to meet him...

“It’s really heartbreaking, after all the hardships I escaped from Shattered Lake, you, Professor, can’t even recognize your prized student.”

He pulled down his mask, revealing a refreshing smile.

“Nice to meet you, Sylin Dole, I’m Ashe Heath.”

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Chapter 155: You are not Ashe Heath at all

Looking at the visitor, Sylin stood up abruptly. The Blood Moon shone through his hair, illuminating his stunned face.

“Why are you...?”

“Perhaps it’s just to see the expression on your face now.”

Ashe laughed, “Ashe Heath, who had never learned swordsmanship, fought against a reckless elven swordsman in a battle, miraculously defeated him, sought revenge on the person who framed him after escaping from prison, and thus began a dramatic life—what do you think of this script?”

“By the way, don’t move around, or my finger will tremble.”

Sylin felt a chill on his neck, and a warm liquid flowed into his collar.

“Don’t look down, your head will fall off.” Ashe said seriously, his right hand forming a sword, pointing at the Elven Professor.

He pulled out a long sword from under his tongue, propped it on the ground, and the Sword Aegis Miracle was ready.

Sylin glanced downwards, “Heart Sword... Valcas’ Heart Sword spirit? I see, I was wondering, Valcas is not a careless elf, if he really wanted to kill someone, there’s no reason why he would make a ‘nearly dead’ mistake it’s more likely that he did it on purpose, he has always liked to show off.”

Ashe was slightly taken aback, “...He has always liked to show off?”

“Yes, like scoring one more point on each test than the previous one, standing on one finger in balance, or turning the tide in a sword competition after losing 10 points... he has always been fascinated by his own talent, always wanting to become a dazzling hero, always wanting to increase the difficulty to attract people’s attention.”

Sylin’s eyelids half-closed, “He has always been a naughty and proud child.”

Ashe’s pupils slightly enlarged, “What is your relationship with Valcas?”

Sylin tilted his head slightly, allowing his throat to be cut by the Heart Sword, “I know what you are thinking... I was once a teacher at the ‘Jade Dragon Nursery’, teaching for thirty-one years, well, it’s now called the ‘Jade Garden’. In my second year of teaching, the Beloved Church sent six elfen children one of whom was Valcas Uhl.”

“I named him, implying ‘free water lily’. In theory, the elves should choose a new name for themselves after leaving the nursery, just like my name, which I chose for myself, implying ‘gorgeous iron begonia’.”

“He didn’t change his name, which means he likes this name, and also means...”

Sylin gently pressed his left chest with his right hand, “He respects me, the guardian teacher who watched him grow up.”

Although Ashe had anticipated that Sylin and Valcas had an unusual relationship, given the deep hatred that Valcas showed in front of Ashe, indicating that the enmity between these two elves is deep, it is far from an ordinary interest relationship.

But Ashe never expected that the relationship between Sylin and Valcas would be this close!

“Why did you... send Valcas to the Blood Moon Tribunal?”

“What a strange question, Heath, very strange.” Sylin said, “He violated the law, was imprisoned, was sent to trial, everything was deserved, everything was as it should be. He took the wrong path, made a wrong step, killed himself, why do you say it as if I killed him?”

“Stop pretending, do you think I would still buy your nonsense after hearing Fernand Snow’s speech a few days ago?” Ashe sneered, “In a high position, using your power wisely, wrapping personal interests in public interests, hiding personal matters in public matters, you can achieve your goals within the legal scope, all these are just a ‘small caprice of power’.”

“What I want to ask is, given your deep connection with Valcas, how could you decide to eliminate him? Just because he was incompetent, unable to kill me in the death match? Simply to ensure my death in the Blood Moon Tribunal, you put him in the judgment sequence too, leading both of us to mutual destruction?”

“‘Simply’?” A rare anger surfaced on Sylin’s face. “I was seriously trying to kill you! I did everything I could, used every means at my disposal. You summarized all my efforts and determination over these days with just one ‘simply’!?”

The sudden outburst from the elf forced Ashe to retreat a bit—he had to, or his sword heart would cut through the elf’s throat! Sylin dared to ignore his own life, leaning his head forward to glare at Ashe, as if Ashe’s words had provoked his fury!

“Calm down, calm down, Professor Sylin,” Ashe didn’t even know what he was saying, “Let’s talk it out slowly, don’t move around. I didn’t want things to come to this either.”

In an instant, the positions switched: the assassin Ashe became humble, while the victim Sylin seemed to rise up in indignation. The reason was simple, Ashe found his ‘threat’ was not as effective as he had imagined.

He thought when he successfully put the sword heart to the elf’s throat, there would be only two outcomes—

The elf would rather die than submit, leaving Ashe with no choice but to grant him a swift death;

Or the elf would beg for mercy, allowing Ashe to complete a satisfying revenge.

But Sylin’s reaction was completely beyond Ashe’s expectation.

He was surprised, but not afraid; he was unafraid of death, and did not mind revealing information to Ashe.

Ashe thought Sylin was preparing some sort of miraculous counterattack, ready to behead him with a single stroke as soon as Sylin tried anything.

However, Sylin did not counterattack; instead, he deliberately bumped his throat against the blade of the sword heart.

This left Ashe in a dilemma—because he needed more than just information from Heath, he also needed information to escape from the Blood Moon Realm.

But the latter was not something ordinary like him, without an ID, could find out. This elf in front of him, however, was a high-level player who had achieved revered status in political reputation (as a congressman), racial reputation (Elf Rights Association), academic reputation (a university professor), and local reputation (Woodpecker). Sylin’s two hundred years of connections made him a massive source of information.

With Ashe’s current ability, Sylin was the best person to consult about leaving the Blood Moon—of course, aside from Sylin, there must be many others who knew how to leave, such as the Blood Mad Hunter Gerard, the Director of the Research Institute, the War Zone Commander, the Bishop of the Beloved Church... This was why Ashe was so torn, because aside from Sylin, everyone else could easily defeat him.

Ashe quickly weighed his gains and decided to go along with the elf for now. Once he had obtained the needed information, he would stab his sword through the throat of this mastermind, complete a splendid revenge, and become a legitimate fugitive.

That time when Valcas stabbed my throat in the Blood Moon Tribunal, now I'm stabbing yours—it's fair, right? I'm just making a slight profit. I took the sword heart, but essentially, it's Valcas betraying you.

As the saying goes, every debt has its debtor. When you get to the Virtual Realm, Professor Sylin, you can take your revenge on Valcas. Of course, you can also come at me. I'll let the Sword Princess blow up your head.

Having prepared himself to be the villain, Ashe managed to squeeze out a friendly smile: "Professor Sylin..."

"I gave him a chance."

"Huh?"

"I never hesitate to show kindness to my kind. For every Elf who has lost their way, I give them chance after chance to atone for their sins," Professor Sylin said calmly, "How I wish I could have a hearty drink and merry conversation with Valcas if given the chance... How I wish I could pass on this study to him... just like 70 years ago, when the previous president handed this study over to me."

"He was once my most admired successor. He detested politics, but he was skilled at it since a young age. He had a love for killing, but he was always clean and left no evidence. He loved to take risks, which is why he spent ten years as the leader of the Woodpecker — those were truly the most comfortable ten years. Compared to him, Gesas is like a wild boar that only knows how to search for treasures in the mud."

"Moreover, your initial guess might not be wrong."

"Hmm?"

Ashe took a moment to understand — his initial guess?

"Besides being Valcas' guardian teacher, I might also be Valcas 'provider' in a biological sense," Sylin stated.

Ashe's mouth opened wide, and after a moment of shock, he managed to utter a word, "Possibly?"

"I don't have the same interest as Fernand Snow, specifically tracing the flow of my own bloodline," Sylin said calmly. "However, we Elves are a very special race. Apart from our lower sexual desire, the combination of our genetic factors also has a very low probability, only rising from 0.8% to 13% in a certain month. This month is known as 'Elf Birth Month', which occurs only once every three years on average."

“Unlike other races that can reproduce freely, Elves only have ‘full mating rights’ during the Elf Birth Month. This is not just to increase the birth rate, but also to cut off bloodline bonds — the birth count of Elves is too low. If we spread out reproduction, bloodline providers can easily find their children based on the birth date.”

“A year before Valcas joined the Foster Home, I responded to the call of the church and fully mated. Theoretically, Valcas could indeed be my child. Our hair and eye colors are identical, and I can see my past self in him.”

Sylin’s voice did not fluctuate, only his pupils revealing the frozen vicissitudes of time.

Time cannot etch the bodies of the Elves, but their souls have long been occupied by the vast past. Simply flipping a page from their memory would reveal a journey of hardship.

“If he is both your student and your child, why...”

“Valcas disappointed me,” Sylin covered his eyes with his hand, “He is a stain on the Elves, a rebel of the immortal race. I gave him a chance, promising him the reward of reuniting with his biological child, but he still chose to defy my wishes... I can’t wait to see him suffer in Blood Moon Heaven.”

Perhaps it was because he had been living in this bizarre land for too long, Ashe found himself calmly observing these incomprehensible interpersonal relationships, losing the urge to comment.

Now that they had unraveled the mystery of Valcas, what was next...

“Professor Sylin, why exactly do you want to...”

Ashe suddenly found himself slowing down, even his thoughts seemed sluggish as if he was listening to a foreign language comprehension test. He watched with wide eyes as Sylin took a step back, out of the range of the sword heart, and began summoning a spirit to perform a Miracle.

At that moment, the thought ‘I need to use Sword Aegis to defend’ slowly surfaced in Ashe’s mind.

But he had no time to do anything. The wooden floor suddenly sprouted branches that pierced through the carpet, flowing along his body. In no time, a large tree formed in the study, and Ashe had already fused into the tree trunk, completely bound by it!

Time fell like rain, each moment landing with a clear ring. Ashe regained his senses, but it was already too late—this tree not only bound his body but also locked away his arcane energy. The floating sword heart, which depended on that energy, had vanished due to the interrupted connection!

The Honeyed Words, Dagger in Heart, which was essential for invoking sword spirits, had been seized by the tree branches. Now, all his sword spirits were rendered useless!

This was the weakness of professional spirits—if one could identify the common restrictions of the corresponding faction and seize the necessary casting medium, they could disable most of their opponent's powerful spirits!

“Indeed, you cannot resist the control of the ‘Stunning Eyes’.”

It was only then that Ashe noticed Sylin had removed the glove from his right hand.

He held his right hand over his eyes, yet Ashe could clearly see the elf's green iris. It was so deep, so bright, as if it wanted to suck in one's soul.

But what surged in Ashe's heart was profound shock.

Because there was a hole in the palm of Sylin's hand.

A hole that could allow an eye to peer through!

“You're not really Ashe Heath, are you? Who the hell are you?”

Sylin lowered his hand, sat back down in his chair, and looked at Ashe with a puzzled expression.

Although he didn't know how he'd been discovered, Ashe quickly seized the opportunity to play along: “Yeah, that's right. I'm not Ashe Heath. Just a regular guy who couldn't sleep and went out for a late-night walk. I hope the esteemed elf will let me go soon, or I'll accuse you of detaining me and violating my human rights—”

Sylin ignored him completely, muttering to himself.

But soon he abruptly stood up, his face filled with unmistakable terror and hysterical hostility!

“Could it be... the ritual was successful?”

He glared at Ashe as if he wanted to tear this handsome young man to pieces: “Are you the real ‘Touch’?”

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Chapter 156: Observer Ashe

“What is Touch?”

Ashe was perplexed. These sorcerers always managed to come up with new terms he had never heard before.

“He actually succeeded, Heath actually succeeded! How is this possible, how can this be possible!” Sylin roared quietly, suddenly turning into a desktop cleaning master, striking the desk hard and swiping the Screen of Knowledge onto the floor, shattering it into pieces.

Ashe swallowed: “Calm down, why don’t you explain to me what’s going on? Maybe I can offer all sorts of support apart from substantial assistance—eh!”

The tree trunk suddenly compressed inward. Ashe felt a heavy pressure coming from all directions, almost suffocating him. Even breathing became extremely difficult, as if he was about to turn into an Ashe pancake!

I can’t breathe!

“Aren’t you going to fight back?” Sylin said coldly, his left hand pointing at Ashe, making a ‘grip’ gesture: “Your body is still so fragile, I might accidentally crush you. I’ll count to three. Three, two, one—”

Is this the end for me?

If only I had killed him earlier... If only I hadn’t come to find Sylin... If only...

Facing death, Ashe surprisingly found that he was not as strong as he thought. His heart was filled with regret. He thought he didn't care much about life, but it seemed that was not the case.

Or perhaps, what he cared about was not life...

Ashe instinctively closed his eyes and clenched his teeth, waiting for the severe pain before death.

However, when the countdown ended, the tree trunk did not squeeze Ashe into a pulp, but instead loosened somewhat, allowing Ashe to enjoy the freedom of breathing again.

He opened his eyes and saw Sylin stumbling and falling against the desk. Sylin had tears running down his face, but he was laughing: "You are indeed not Heath, you really aren't... Hahaha! He succeeded? He actually succeeded? How could he succeed?"

Ashe silently watched Sylin crying and laughing, then after a long while, he finally asked, "What were you testing just now?"

Sylin, completely disregarding courtesy, sat on the carpet next to the desk. After a while, he replied, "The real Heath, he possesses the 'Key'. He doesn't need arcane energy or even language. As long as Heath activates the Key, he can control any follower—including me."

He showed a deep-seated fear on his face: "That is a contamination more terrifying than death, it's completely stripping away one's self-control! I tried to commit suicide before, but death is not an excuse for disobedience. The moment before I attempted suicide, I lost control of my body until I completed the work he assigned. I then regained the 'right' to 'use' my own body... From then on, I could not resist any of his orders and could only faithfully enforce his will."

"From the moment you placed the sword heart on my neck, I knew you were not Heath. But I dared not believe, dared not take risks—perhaps Heath was just pretending, perhaps you were a personality split from Heath, or perhaps..." Sylin's voice was trembling, "I simply didn't have the courage to believe that Heath would disappear."

"I was afraid you were just another one of his tricks."

Ashe looked at Sylin's right hand: "You mentioned Stunning Eyes just now..."

"You didn't inherit Heath's memories?" Sylin raised his right hand, the hole in the center of his palm was so round, like a missing puzzle piece, the moonlight passing through without hindrance.

"This is a hole drilled by Heath himself, the price of the ritual."

“Ritual... Ritual Faction?”

“Yes,” Sylin lowered his head to look at his hand, “To be fair, although the price is not small, the effect of ‘Stunning Eyes’ is extremely powerful. Anyone who is stared at through the hole in my palm will fall into a several-second mental lag, during which they can’t perform any actions, not even blinking.”

Mind Control!

Ashe deeply felt the horror of this sorcerer’s control skill. He couldn’t resist the experience of mental sluggishness he’d just had. He hadn’t even had time to think about ‘resisting’.

If an ordinary person’s mind is a waterfall, with countless thoughts splashing and surging every second, then Ashe’s mind just now was like a quagmire, with only a bubble born from decay after a long time.

“Of course, such a powerful effect is not without its limits,” Sylin said. “The Stunning Eyes can only take effect on each person once because only the first time is ‘shocking’, and after that, there’s only ‘stunning’.”

“I was just taken by the Stunning Eyes, so you’re sure I’m not Heath...”

“Heath has already seen my Stunning Eyes,” Sylin said calmly. “All the followers in the church who are given the Stunning Eyes, Heath has seen them all. He won’t let his followers have a way to counter him.”

Despite the lack of evidence, Ashe is now stuck in a tree, and Sylin could make him do anything. Sylin had no reason to lie to him.

However, Ashe still found it hard to believe. After all, Heath was a nobody who wasn’t even a sorcerer. Without Ashe, Heath wouldn’t even be able to pass the ‘Beautiful Beast’ Igor, a novice assassin. He would be directly robbed by Igor of his contributions and fall to the bottom of the prison.

If Heath really was a big bad guy with hidden cards, then... where are those cards?

I came all the way to substitute for him, and he didn’t even leave me a card!?

So, Ashe still felt that Sylin was fooling him. A two-hundred-year-old Two-Winged Elf was controlled by a twenty-something non-sorcerer human? If Ashe told the Sword Princess this, she would probably respond, ‘Don’t read so many underdog storybooks at such a young age’.

After a moment of silence, Ashe asked, “Why are you telling me all this?”

“Because I’m thinking,” Sylin looked at the ground, “about what to do with you.”

“After all, the last task Heath left me was to kill you.”

Ashe was taken aback, “Kill me... wait, but I am Ashe Heath, you mean...”

“That’s right,” Sylin stood up leaning on the desk, “The last task Heath gave me was to do my best to kill him. To thoroughly erase the Heath who would be left after the ceremony.”

Ashe’s mouth twitched, his pupils shrunk, “So, my capture by the Blood Mad Hunter... Varcas... the Blood Moon Tribunal... and Gerard’s visit, all were...”

“All were ‘your own’ will,” Sylin said. “I’m just doing my best to carry out ‘your’ orders.”

The one who wants to kill me is Heath?

Even though Ashe tried to judge if Sylin was lying, his heart still beat uncontrollably.

Infinite malice and resentment flooded his thoughts like a deep sea. A bone-chilling cold seeped into his body, and he seemed to hear the laughter of countless people.

From the beginning, he was a clearly arranged pawn.

He couldn’t even tell who the real mastermind was. He was like a child who saw his backpack being tossed around by bullies, not knowing who to hit, almost about to cry out of frustration.

But strangely, Ashe didn’t ignite the fire of anger to dispel the chill in his heart.

He calmly accepted the truth that he had been fooled. He could even dispassionately observe his own thoughts tumbling and boiling, as if looking at someone else’s Sorcerer Handbook, enjoying a dramatic plot of storms.

When you can observe pain, you are freed from pain.

When you can observe the self, you are freed from fate.

Anger, resentment, and regret can’t solve any problems. Only absolute calm, precise judgment, and mechanical execution can penetrate all secrets, understand the truths of the world, and implement your own will.

Don’t let the hormones secreted by your body affect your thinking. Don’t let boring worldly concepts restrict your imagination. Don’t let an unknown future destroy your calm.

Ashe, you need to watch yourself, you need to transcend reality, you need to think about the correct next step, execute the strategy that maximizes benefits, using all available resources.

Just treat others as tools.

And treat yourself as a tool as well.

Then you can become the unprejudiced Observer Ashe.

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Chapter 157: There Is Also the Sword Princess

In the study room on the second floor of the villa, Ashe was practically turning into a treant, like a tombstone of a forest. Each of his branches was as hard as steel, and every leaf was absorbing his arcane energy.

This was a very powerful miracle from the Sylvan sect. It's notable that the Sylvan sect has always been known for creation as its main development direction, yet this miracle was unusually ferocious. It's hard to imagine how many spirits were combined within it to incorporate binding, killing, and weakening effects all in one.

The over-two-hundred-year-old Sylin was a Two-wing Sorcerer, which wasn't surprising. The realm of sects was the most ruthless test, acting as a natural chasm that blocked all the 'mediocrities' without enough talent or opportunities. Efforts were meaningless to a

Sorcerer, as effort was the foundation of a Sorcerer. However, without talent, no matter how long you live, how diligent, or how desperate you are, you can't touch the higher scenery.

Although Sylin couldn't see the higher scenery, he had ample time. Therefore, he could appreciate the towering and ancient trees next to him, the poison stinger of the bee, the secrecy of the spider, and the hidden threat of the plants.

All resources could be transformed into the power of a Sorcerer, including time.

Ashe didn't look down on Sylin because he was also a Two-wing Sorcerer C neither now nor in the past. But time wasn't on his side. As time passed, it would be easier for the Heresy Court to find him. He found in the Canopy that the Heresy Court had begun a large-scale investigation into the lower areas and the Pig District.

Although Freya's home was a haven of peace, it was also his deathbed.

He had to get the needed intelligence as soon as possible, and Professor Sylin was his only choice. He knew before he arrived that he had to stake his life. After all, life was just a more important chip, and you had to bet when it was time to.

Moreover, to him, how important is the chip of life?

This wasn't the gambling game he was familiar with, and the gamblers he was facing weren't familiar either. If it weren't for the fear of being picked up by others, he might have wanted to throw this chip away a long time ago.

Ashe closed his eyelids slightly, as if he were falling asleep.

His voice became loud and steady, as if he were the ruler here: "Have you made a decision then, Professor Sylin?"

Sylin circled him, murmuring: "Since Heath is no longer here, I naturally don't need to continue to be loyal to him, nor do I need to carry out his orders. I am now a free Blood Moon Elf."

"But your existence is always a huge threat. No one can guarantee whether Heath will revive again, returning like a bolt of lightning with mountains of corpses and seas of blood."

"But you won't kill me." Ashe said calmly: "After you know that I am not Heath, not only do you not want to kill me, but you also have to protect my life."

After careful consideration, Ashe knew that he was in no danger at all.

If he were the real Heath, Sylin would have to obey the order to assassinate him, but Heath also had a way to control Sylin; he was not Heath, and Sylin had been freed, so naturally, there was no need to kill him.

Perhaps some people will wonder, wouldn't Sylin, who had been enslaved and controlled by Heath, want to destroy Ashe, who was a stand-in?

Of course not. If Sylin only had thoughts of revenge, he would have crushed him like a peach just now.

But Sylin was in fear.

"Yes." Sylin stopped behind Ashe, his voice trembling: "Since Heath wants you dead, then you have to live, even if you have to live in a pitiful way, even if life is worse than death, you have to live!"

Ashe asked: "Do you know why Heath wants to kill me?"

"I don't know, but considering how weak, ignorant, and insignificant you are, it can only mean one thing..."

Sylin walked in front of Ashe, his index finger pointing at Ashe's forehead: "The ritual isn't complete yet. You're not a complete 'Touch'. You're just a semi-finished product."

"Only by killing you can the ceremony be completed, and Heath's illusion descend upon this world."

Ashe looked at Sylin's fingers, "What is 'Touch'? What will happen after I die?"

"I don't know, I don't know!"

Sylin hysterically pulled at his hair, "That's a secret of the Four Pillars, a ceremony only Heath can fully comprehend! Heath told his followers that he is not yet the complete 'Touch'. After the ceremony, he will return from suffering, be freed from honor, fall from the sky, rise from the grave, and become the 'Touch' that surpasses all! Then...he will smear the world as he pleases!"

"It sounds like I will surpass the so-called four-winged sorcerers after the ceremony," Ashe's lips curled slightly, "So, if you kill me, will I become an existence...comparable to the Blood Moon Supreme?"

Sylin stared at Ashe with a harsh gaze, "You won't have the chance."

Ashe whispered softly, "So, you're going to hand me over to the Heresy Court?"

“No, definitely not. Gerard might kill you, and the Blood Moon Tribunal will take your life... I absolutely can't hand you over!” Sylin shook his head vehemently, as if trying to shake off a fly, “The arrogant sacred bloodline only wants to study you, the stubborn Moonshadow don't care about you at all!”

“Only I understand your seriousness, only I can handle this...only me...”

Sylin whispered demonic words, “Cut off your limbs, lock you in a puppet box, and place you in the deepest basement on the third underground floor, maintaining your basic life with an infusion tube...”

That's right, this was the plan.

Ashe's heart remained calm, he was satisfied with Sylin's decision. If Sylin really handed him over to the Heresy Court, Ashe would never be able to escape from prison again. Even the dumbest prison would know to be wary of his purifying miracle.

Ignoring everything else, just changing the frequency of sending Ashe's life signs from once every ten minutes to once every second would mean that as soon as Ashe removed the chip, Gerard would be right on his heels.

No matter how many obstacles Sylin added outside, they were not as straightforward as the chip ban. Ashe didn't care about physical disability, as long as he could enter the Virtual Realm, he would eventually have the power to break the game. Search the novelFire.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Moreover, Ashe was not completely devoid of resistance now.

Substitute, sword heart, Slash Me Miracle, these skills that Ashe completely mastered, he could activate without arcane energy.

But this tree completely restrained his mobility, and his resistance was futile for now.

The best time for him to escape would be when Sylin was preparing to transport him. He had followed Gesas here, observing the surrounding security situation. If Sylin wanted to kill him, he would kill the surrounding guards and draw the hunters over.

The hunters want to kill me, while Sylin wants to save my life. If handled properly, it could even spark a conflict between Sylin and the hunters. If it causes mass casualties, I could even exploit Fernand Snow's recent speech to ignite racial conflicts and class contradictions, and then... one thought after another spun to life and died in Ashe's mind, quickly forming a rudimentary conspiracy.

The worst-case scenario would be him being imprisoned in a basement, becoming an immobile, boxed, puppet whose world reduced to a heartbeat.

Ashe was indifferent to the tragic fate he was about to face, not nervous, not fearful, not excited.

He seemed to have removed himself from this body, quietly watching the fate of 'Ashe Heath'.

Pain, loneliness, torment, these could not shake his will, because in his world...

In his world...there was also the Swordswoman?

His thoughts broke off here, Ashe jerked up, his pupils regaining their luster.

It was hard to describe the feeling. It was as if Ashe was on the verge of taking flight, about to transcend this world when suddenly, an unseen string yanked him down, causing him to crash harshly onto the ground. Then, the sound of air flowing, the fragrance of earth, the pulsing of his heartbeat, all sensations flooded into his mind at once.

It was as if Ashe had just awoken from a deep sleep.

At that moment, there were strange noises coming from Sylin.

"Sylin Dor, you can't run away any longer," he whispered. "You are free now, you can't avoid it anymore."

An elf pulled a blackwood dagger from a drawer, walked over to Ashe, held the dagger upside down, and with a gentle push—

It pierced his own throat.

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Chapter 158: Ritual Miracle – Forbidden Rite of the Origin of the Virtual Palette

Sylin drove the dagger into his throat without piercing the windpipe. Instead, he drew the dagger downwards to his waist.

He cut through his dense shirt, drawing a straight line of blood that neatly divided his upper body into two halves.

Ashe's face changed, "You've changed your mind."

"Yes."

Sylin threw away the dagger, pulled his long hair back to his ears, regained his elf-like elegance, his expression calm, his voice gentle, "Imprisoning you is just my naive wishful thinking. You are the 'Touch' that Heath summoned with great effort. You even escaped from Shattered Lake Prison, how could I possibly imprison you?"

"There are too many accidents in this world. As long as the Four Pillars are still watching you, accidents are enough to penetrate all my arrangements."

"I can't imprison you, I can't kill you, I can't hand you over to the Heresy Court, and I can't even delay. The power of 'Touch' may allow you to escape at any time."

"So, I came to a conclusion."

The elf extended his middle finger and index finger from both hands like hooks, inserted them into his chest along the blood line he just cut.

"It must be now, it must be here, it must be me." Sylin stated calmly, "I want to purify you."

Ashe tilted his head slightly, "In my understanding, 'purification' is similar to 'healing'..."

"Purification means to drive out impurities, destroy invaders, and annihilate parasites!" Sylin's green eyes were getting brighter, as if emitting light, "And you, the incomplete 'Touch' that dwells in Heath, are the target to be purified!"

"I was originally going to use this miracle to destroy Heath ... but I could never dare to, I was always afraid, that's why I became Heath's puppet, that's why I made so many mistakes. Touch, I thank you, you gave me an opportunity to atone."

Ashe squinted his eyes, "But won't you kill me this way? Once I die, the ritual will be completed—"

"Therefore, I used this forbidden miracle."

Sylin was glowing.

His green eyes, his blood, his black hair, his skin, every color on him was glowing brilliantly, he was just like... he had turned into an oil painting.

"Not only 'you', but all the arrangements of the Four Pillars on you, all the marks engraved by Heath on your body, will be completely banished without a trace. Everything that does not belong to this body will be thoroughly purified."

Ashe took a deep breath, "Sylin, you are just a Two-winged Gold Sorcerer, do you have such a great ability?"

"Of course I don't, but... the Virtual Realm does."

Sylin suddenly showed a faint smile, "You attended my lecture on 'Ancient Ritual Factions' the day before yesterday, didn't you?"

Ashe's pupils shrank, "Forbidden ritual..."

"There was actually one thing I didn't say at that time." Sylin looked like he was giving a live lecture, "If you force a Two-wing Sorcerer to be a sacrifice by special means, you can pray for a full strike of a Four-wing Sorcerer at most."

"But if a Two-wing Sorcerer voluntarily performs the highest-level forbidden ritual, this sincerity will be recognized by the Virtual Realm, and even the power... beyond Four-wings can be prayed from the Virtual Realm!"

"Under the protection of the Blood Moon Supreme, the Four Pillars can give you a 'blessing' at the Four-wing level at most." Sylin showed a happy smile, "Fate still favors me. In Caimon City, only I can just right remove you, the 'Touch'."

Ashe's thoughts turned quickly and hurriedly tried to persuade, "We don't have to get to this point of life and death. Since I now know you are also forced, I won't bother you anymore in the future. Actually, I plan to leave the Blood Moon Realm, why don't you help me leave the Blood Moon? This way, when I leave, you don't have to sacrifice your life, it's a win-win for everyone, how about it?"

“Touch, what do you think I am?”

Sylin sneered, “President of the Elf Rights Association? Councillor? The hidden mastermind behind the bandits? A professor? A self-interested scrounger? A cowardly immortal?”

“I’m 203 years old this year. When I was born, the Blood Moon Tribunal hadn’t started yet; after I came of age, I participated in the foreign hunting festivals; I’ve traveled throughout the Blood Moon Realm, witnessed the destruction of old cities and the rise of new ones; all the suffering and entertainment in the world, I have seen and even experienced.”

“Do you actually think I would hesitate to give up this dying life?” There was mockery in Sylin’s eyes, “If it weren’t for death’s inability to resist Heath’s command, if it weren’t for the law prohibiting suicide, I would have long wanted to step into Blood Moon Heaven!”

Ashe was taken aback, “Immortality disease? Do you wish for the Lamp of Hope to extinguish inside of you?”

“Immortality disease? No, I don’t have a Lamp of Hope in my heart, because there is something warmer and more beautiful than it.”

Sylin revealed a smile, behind him was the majestic and beautiful Blood Moon. The light of the Blood Moon gently draped over him, as if a deity was blessing him.

“I have long wanted to perish together with Heath, but I can’t resist Heath. I have always been waiting for this opportunity, I don’t seek revenge, I just want to prove...”

“I still deeply love this Blood Moon.”

“Ritual Miracle Origin Prohibition of Virtual Color Painting.”

Sylin’s hands, penetrated in the middle by a blood line, violently pulled apart, his chest was torn open like a curtain!

What came into Ashe’s view was not the fresh red blood and purple guts, but colors!

Vibrant colors, gushing from Sylin’s chest, flooded Ashe like a river!

“The flower language of iron Begonia and lotus is loyalty,” he said softly.

At this time, what suddenly came to Ashe’s mind was Valcas since Sylin wasn’t voluntarily hunting Ashe, why would the failed assassin Valcas be despised and hated by Sylin?

Sylin didn’t despise him because Valcas failed the mission.

He despised him because Valcas 'wanted to' complete the mission!

Just now, Sylin had said that the reward for Valcas's mission was 'reunion with his biological child'.

By accepting the mission, Valcas indicated that he hadn't repented and still wanted to rebel against the laws of the Blood Moon Realm! For the Blood Moon believer Sylin, this was an unforgivable mistake laws are the will of the gods, rules are the desire of the gods, Valcas was tantamount to blaspheming Sylin's faith!

"In my death, when the skinning twins strip my skin, when the scarlet handmaidens draw my blood, when the priests of the night shadow sort my bones, when the blessed angels guide my soul..."

Sylin closed his eyes, softly reciting a prayer for himself.

He thought he would see the messenger who would guide him, but what came to his mind was a sealed page.

A young Sylin sat cross-legged on the wooden floor, watching a baby elf clumsily crawl towards him, making a gesture to be held. He smiled and held the baby in his arms, wiping the drool from the baby's mouth with a handkerchief.

"Read after me, Val-cas."

"Valcas?"

"No, I'm not Valcas, I'm Sylin."

"Sylin?"

"Yes, you are Valcas, I am Sylin."

"Sylin!!~"

"...And I will reunite in the promised land."

With the last splash of color, the elf scholar's robe lightly fell onto the carpet, devoid of its wearer.

The moonlight fell on the pure white fabric, reflecting the purest blood color.

In the vast study, only Ashe Heath was left.

Without the supply of arcane energy, the tree that trapped Ashe quickly wilted and decayed, turning into fragile debris at a touch.

Ashe looked down at his own hands, his eyes filled with confusion.

“It seems... I’m okay?”

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Chapter 159: New Job – Socially Unemployed Individual

“Apocalypse Observer”

“Human-Male-25 years old”

“Trust Level: ∞”

“Job: Socially Unemployed Individual”

“Job Trait: The appetite of spirits is reduced, feeding requirements are reduced by 50%.”

“Innate Talent-Sorcerer Handbook (Median): Log other operators into the handbook, the experience gained by other operators will be shared with this character according to the proportion of Trust Level. The current number of pages in the handbook is 1/2 (the talent limit can be unlocked after strength improvement).”

“Personal Skill-Exotic Wandering Soul: Effect unknown.”

“Silver Blessing: Observer’s Visage: Your appearance is deceptive, unless you make an unusual move, others will unconsciously ignore your existence. In the Virtual Realm, this blessing is strengthened, unless there is intimate trust, others can’t see your face clearly.”

“Held Items: Honeyed Words, Dagger in Heart, Virtual World Telescope, Alchemist’s Refining Bottle.”

“Controlling Spirits: Sword Heart, Substitute, Circulate, Earth Sword, Wind Barrier...”

“Sword Art Faction: Silver Level”

“Light Faction: Silver Level”

“Water Art Faction: Silver Level”

“Heart Sect: Silver Level”

“Virtual Realm Exploration: 1.022%”

“Curse of Knowledge: Whirlpool Venom, Eviction Venom, Golden Fish Secret Poison”

Ashe sat in Sylin’s place, staring at the words floating in mid-air, lost in thought.

After losing the chip, he naturally couldn’t call up the light screen, but the game “Aurora’s Sorcerer Handbook” is not bound to the light screen, but to Ashe.

He could still call up the Sorcerer Handbook interface, but the resolution dropped from 4K ultra-clear to 360P. Apart from the Sword Princess’s portrait becoming a bit more cartoonish from pure and desire, there was no significant impact.

Although Ashe felt that Sylin’s miracle had not affected him, when he opened his operator file, he noticed a change after a while – his job had changed from “Cult Leader/Ancient Historian” to “Socially Unemployed Individual”!

But the game did not pop up any prompts, and Ashe had not been paying constant attention to his status information. After all, the Sword Princess’s portrait had become so cartoonish, he had been too lazy to open the game interface these days, let alone open his own operator file.

Ashe couldn’t determine whether the change in his job was the effect of Sylin’s miracle, or the consequence of his jailbreak – after all, after his jailbreak, he did indeed change from a full-board employee of a state-owned unit to a socially unemployed individual, which makes perfect sense.

After pondering for a moment, Ashe decided to give up thinking about this issue.

However, compared to the useless “Cult Leader/Ancient Historian” luck check +10 and ancient relic identification ability +5, the new job trait is clearly much more practical – the feeding cost of spirits is halved!

It seems as if the spirits knew that Ashe had lost his iron rice bowl, so they happily welcomed the salary reduction – “I eat very little and am easy to raise.”

Closing the game panel, Ashe looked at his resume file.

This is the “Ashe-Heath Resume” compiled by Sylin, which includes the awards Heath received in the foster home, middle school, and university, the part-time jobs he had done, friends’ evaluations of Heath, Heath’s photos at different ages, and even Heath’s Canopy browsing records, which can be described as comprehensive and detailed.

The file was well organized, reading it didn’t feel dull at all, soon Ashe had a clear picture of Heath’s life trajectory in his mind: His talent was judged as ‘elite level’ at birth and sent to the city-level demonstrative foster home; He got into middle school with the 36th place in the entrance exam and entered the History Department under the Time Department of Caimon Comprehensive University with a mediocre performance in the college entrance exam; After graduation, he started a business and began to preach based on a pyramid scheme.

He didn’t eat candy, didn’t gamble, didn’t go to the Tea Café, nor had he ever worked part-time at Mud Cafe; his voting record in the Blood Moon Tribunal was zero. search the NôveFire.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Apart from his apartment and school, Heath’s favorite place to go was the convenience store downstairs. Apart from daily necessities, the most items Heath purchased were all sorts of books. Ashe noticed several familiar titles in there: “The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind”, “How to Induce a Virtual Realm Storm with Bare Hands”, “Criminal Law”. Many friends who knew Heath thought of him as ‘low-profile (unimpressive)’, ‘respectful and polite (boring in conversation)’, ‘strong individual capability (doesn’t socialize)’.

But there was one thing about Heath that terrified Ashe — in Heath’s browsing history on the Canopy, all he found were political, historical, military, sorcerer, religious, and racial information. There was absolutely no record of browsing any erotic videos, pictures, or novels!

Forget about human females, even if it were a beastman and an ogre, Ashe might not agree but he could understand. However, there were no such records!

The only thing that could remotely be associated with lust was the rumored female beastman army, the ‘Tyrant Flower Troop’. They were said to go on a mating hunt during their breeding season, turning captured male beastmen into fuel stations after chopping off their limbs. They were formidable with terrifying brutality.

But female beastmen... Heath couldn't possibly have a truck driver's license, could he?

In conclusion, a fine young man of 25 who didn't indulge in adult content and never exerted any effort to satisfy his sexual desires, was definitely not a normal person.

However, the documents also showed that Heath didn't have any abnormal experiences. It seemed like he had suddenly started a business out of nowhere. The records didn't mention how Heath had obtained the data on the Four Pillars Religion. Ashe originally thought that Professor Sylin was the puppet master behind the scenes and that he had given the information to Heath. But Sylin was only concerned with the Blood Moon, so it was clearly not the Elves causing trouble.

Ashe found a record highlighted in red by Sylin in the file. It was Heath's leave record. Eight years ago, when Heath was still a middle school student, he had taken a half-month study leave, during which there were no eyewitness accounts.

Eight years...eight years ago?

Igor once mentioned that Sylin had participated in archaeological excavations of ruins eight years ago and had unearthed some ritual texts of the Four Pillars Religion. However, in the same year, the ruins suffered a Virtual Realm storm, resulting in the loss of most of the findings.

But Heath was only 17 years old eight years ago...

Ashe had thought that he would be able to get revenge this time and solve the mystery of Heath. However, Heath turned out to be like a matryoshka doll, revealing another layer as soon as one was removed.

Ashe also had to consider another possibility: Sylin was telling the truth, but they were all lies to deal with the Heresy Court.

After all, in this world, 'memory modification' existed. Knowing that Heath might betray him at any moment, Sylin could modify his own memory, blame everything on Heath, and portray himself as a devout believer who only thought of the country and the two moons. This was also a possible scenario, and the likelihood was high.

Although the situation was still shrouded in mystery, Ashe decided to temporarily stop investigating Heath's background. As Heath's number one hater and secret fan, the information that Sylin had collected was probably the most detailed and comprehensive to date. This was all there was to Heath in 'reality'.

If Heath did have unknown adventures, they were either in dreams or... the Virtual Realm.

To be honest, Ashe was about to leave the Blood Moon Realm, and no matter how complicated Heath's background was, it was nothing more than someone else's story to him.

But Ashe had a strong premonition that even if he left the Blood Moon, Heath's past would still haunt him like a shadow. It was like seeing an author mention a gun in a detective story; the gun was bound to go off in the story. Heath had put in so much effort, surely it wasn't just to send Ashe to enjoy life in Shattered Lake Prison?

Four Pillars, Heath, Touch, ceremony... Ashe noted down these bits of information in his little notebook. If he didn't run into related characters, fine, but if he did in the Virtual Realm, they could not blame him for being ruthless together with the Swordswoman.

Next up was the time to collect the spoils. Ashe rummaged through everything, and in total, found 4 Gold Coins, 5 Silver Coins, a large number of luxurious items that looked like they could be sold for money, and 5 spirit cocoons.

This is where the credit currency system destroys the traditional "robbery" industry. Although physical currency is still in circulation, the vast majority of people are accustomed to making payments using Chips and only carry a small amount of emergency cash in their daily lives.

Sylin's total assets were probably calculated in tens of thousands of Gold Coins, but he only needed to carry a few Gold and Silver Coins to satisfy the feeding of spirits. There wouldn't be that much cash at home. Compared to these few Gold and Silver Coins, the luminescent watch that Sylin wore was probably worth more.

Among the 5 spirit cocoons, there were 3 Two-wing spirits, 1 single-wing spirit, and 1 three-wing spirit! This was an excellent harvest. However, Ashe couldn't bring himself to be happy.

Because these spirit cocoons had chastity locks.

Due to various trade and other needs, sorcerers invented many ways to seal spirits. The Glowing Sphere is the most common technique, which directly stuffs the spirit into the sphere. The spirit enters a dormant state and the feeding frequency decreases by 70%. It's a good choice to seal it in a Glowing Sphere to reduce feeding costs when a sorcerer acquires extra spirits but doesn't need them at the moment.

However, the downside of the Glowing Sphere is also severe. There are no defensive measures. Once the sphere is damaged, it will cause the spirit to escape. Furthermore, anyone who gets the sphere can directly control the ownerless spirit. The spirit in the sphere is like money taken out of the bank, with the possibility of being stolen or damaged.

The spirit cocoons in front of Ashe are a more advanced sealing method. Spirits sealed in the cocoon stop all activities, do not need feeding, and most importantly, there are three wheel locks on them. Only by inputting arcane energy under the correct password can the spirit cocoon be dissolved.

If the password is wrong, the spirit cocoon will automatically lock and can only be unlocked by finding the sorcerer who cast the spell. It's said to be a miracle equivalent to that of the Saint level, so a Two-wing Sorcerer has almost no chance to violently break it. Even if it can be broken by force, the spirit cocoon will most likely self-destruct along with the spirit inside.

Perhaps some people find it strange. Is it necessary to use a three-wing Saint's miracle to store spirits? But in a stable civilized society, spirits not only have use value, but they also have the potential to become luxury items.

The only single-wing spirit in the spirit cocoons is such a luxury item. It looks like a cicada, with a green exterior hiding a golden interior. This is a 'Reverse Moon' spirit.

The Reverse Moon is a consumption spirit that will disappear once used. Its effect is simple return the real state of a designated object to a month ago.

If used on an old sorcerer, the physical state of the sorcerer will return to a month ago, but the arcane energy, memories, and spirits wrapped in their soul will not change. That is, it can extend the subject's life by a month to a certain extent.

Aside from the 'Reverse Day' spirit, which is used as an emergency healing spirit, the 'Reverse Moon' and 'Reverse Year' spirits are considered side-effect-free life-extending spirits and are very popular in the market with extremely high prices. Ashe heard about this from the Sword Princess during casual conversations. In her words, it was "You can really make a fortune by picking up trash in the land of time spirits".

This 'Reverse Moon' spirit was clearly stored as a gift, and the other spirits should have a similar purpose. There's even a dual-winged sword spirit, which is quite rare. However, after some thought, Ashe made a decision that was contrary to the principles of the Sword Princess.

"Successful recharge! You've gained 8 points."

"Successful recharge! You've gained 20 points." ×3

"Successful recharge! You've gained 40 points."

Spirit cocoons can't be taken away. They're too big to fit in a pocket. Even if they could be moved, Ashe didn't have the means to dissolve them, so feeding them to the greedy Operator system was the best choice.

But getting only 40 points for a triple-winged spirit is such a rip-off...

After another round of searching without finding anything new, Ashe began to comb through the information Sylin had left behind. To kill 'Ashe Heath', Sylin must have racked his brains guessing Heath's escape route, trying to block all possible loopholes. Therefore—

Sylin might have 'helped' him plan the most successful escape route!

Ashe quickly found what he was looking for.

"Report of the 49th virtual gateway observation point (Top Secret)"

"April 21, 1668, 13:11, observed a water surge phenomenon, the other side of the gateway is an underground river, abandoned."

"Report of the 53rd virtual gateway observation point (Top Secret)"

"April 30, 1668, 17:36, 'Rabbit' returned, the other side of the gateway is a deserted wilderness, safe, can hold a hunting festival."

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Chapter 160: Igor and Emma

Cramped, dark, and chaotic.

To Igor's right was a large cardboard box filled with more than twenty boxes of tissues, probably purchased during a big sale. On top of the box was a box-type heater and various other household items not currently in use. To his left was a tightly shut door.

This was a storage room, and it had been his dwelling for the past five days.

The obvious feeling of hunger in his stomach indicated that it was around 6 in the evening, and Emma should be back soon to feed him.

Reflecting on his life over the past few days, Igor couldn't help but sigh. Although he had achieved his goal, managing to remain unharmed under the extensive search and pursuit of the Heresy Court, the way he accomplished this was somewhat special—he had been kept by Emma like a dog for these days.

Literally a dog, Igor tugged at the collar around his neck, feeling an inexplicable sense of irony.

He had finally managed to remove the chip collar from the back of his neck for the sake of freedom, but now, for the same reason, he willingly wore a real collar.

As for why Emma Lekthas, a hunter of the Heresy Court, was willing to shelter him, the story traced back to three years ago, when Igor was working part-time at the Mud Cafe.

Although males with the Charming Baby Bloodline often worked part-time at the Mud Cafe — much like Ogres who had regular jobs would paint oil paintings after work — Igor rarely did so. Mainly because working as a Mud Worker was too slow in terms of income; scamming was much more satisfying.

When Igor was willing to work part-time at the Mud Cafe, it could only mean one thing: the cafe could facilitate his fraudulent business.

The “Gambling Color Apocalypse” was exactly such a place. It was a Mud Cafe/Tea Café dual operation. One might think it was a casino from its name, and in fact, it was. Customers had to purchase initial chips with real money to participate in various gambling activities.

What set it apart from other casinos was what they gambled—domination time.

Customers could freely find a dealer they liked to gamble with, and both parties could use 60-minute chips. If a customer won all 60 minutes from a dealer, it meant they could command the dealer for 60 minutes, and the dealer had to comply with the customer's requests. Conversely, if the dealer won the customer's 60 minutes, the dealer could command the customer for that amount of time.

Yes, regardless of win or loss, dealers would have fun with the customers, because the customers' chips were bought with real money. They wouldn't let the customers go

home with a confused face, a shop that didn't respect the customers' demands would surely go out of business.

In simple terms, it was a Mud Cafe/Tea Café that capitalized on gambling, but its business was much better than other themed shops in the same industry—reality proved that gambling was always the mechanism that could best stimulate human impulses. Winning customers were elated, and losing customers, after being played by the dealer, would be fired up with a competitive spirit, ready to take on more challenges. The shop had many repeat customers.

The reason Igor worked part-time there was precisely because of the 'domination time'. He would specifically target rich women, actively approach them, seduce them into challenges, and then win their 60 minutes.

Once in the private rooms, under the guise of 'domination time', Igor could make the rich women swear oaths to him, like 'be good to me for a lifetime' or 'give me your most precious things'.

The women, thinking it was a special fetish of the dealer, would readily agree. Then they would be bound by Igor's contract spirit to keep their words. They had to keep their oaths, and couldn't even call the police, because that wouldn't be 'being good to Igor for a lifetime'.

These customers were not only conned out of all their wealth by Igor, but he also refused to mate with them, which was quite unprofessional.

Besides wealthy women, occasionally wealthy men would seek out Igor of their own accord. Igor would graciously accept them all, even making them swear oaths like 'not to have sexual desires for anyone other than me,' thereby helping them thoroughly cure their human weakness of being tricked by beauty.

In this way, Igor swindled money but not affection, greatly promoting the redistribution of social wealth with this part-time job. The efficiency even surpassed his full-time job for a time. However, the phrase 'smooth sailing' never appears in the life of a Trickster. One night, Igor encountered Emma.

To gain control, Igor, who had a high winning rate, quickly won the title of 'Gambling King' in the shop. Therefore, there were those who didn't covet Igor's body, but simply wanted to compete with him for gambling skills. Emma was one of them.

When Emma entered the shop, she did not hide her Moonshadow characteristics. Initially, Igor didn't want to provoke this privileged class, but Emma specifically requested him, and others did not want to compete with the Moonshadow. Thus, Igor had no choice but to serve.

Emma's gambling skills were good, but in addition to his own skills, Igor, as a Trickster, had a deep understanding of human nature. This was his secret to winning. When Igor unsurprisingly defeated Emma, he had already decided not to lay a finger on her, simply performing his job at the Mud Cafe as though he was bitten by a dog.

However, Emma was not willing to admit defeat. She insisted on continuing to gamble, even repurchasing chips. Multiple chip purchases were allowed. To encourage customer spending, if a customer bought N times the chips, the Dealer had to provide N times the service time, regardless of whether they won or lost.

Before the second round of gambling, Igor inexplicably asked Emma, "If I win, can I make a wish that lasts 120 minutes?"

"No problem."

The contract was established.

Unlike ordinary contracts, Igor proposed a quantity limit (one) and a time limit (120 minutes). The more restrictions a contract stipulates, the stronger its effect. After all, the other party was of the Moonshadow. Igor's typical 'overbearing contracts' that purely exploit others could potentially fail.

But when Emma lost 300 minutes, things started to take a subtle turn. She seemed to have received an urgent message and left the Gambling Color Apocalypse directly. Igor soon found out that Emma was a Blood Mad Hunter.

He immediately realized that he held a potentially valuable wish.

Thereafter, Emma often came to the shop to gamble with Igor, switching between various gambling tools and methods. Emma won occasionally, but generally, Igor dominated. The time limit of this wish, after being accumulated multiple times, amounted to 9000 minutes.

Just as Igor was considering how to maximize the benefits of this wish, the Heresy Court arrested him in the Gambling Color Apocalypse.

So that's why Emma kept gambling with him, and why she never suggested entering the 'gambling settlement phase.'

High-end Blood Mad Hunters often appear as prey in front of Tricksters.

Because it was a sudden arrest, Igor had no time to modify his memories. When the Memory Master searched, oh ho, so you've committed so many fraud cases, enjoy your time in the shattered lake.

Although he was arrested, his contract with Emma was still valid. The Virtual Realm is the longest witness.

So after breaking out of jail, Igor went straight to Emma's house and began his revenge on her, who was wearing pajamas: "I command you to help me escape from the Blood Moon Realm."

Although it was a single wish, it could be broken down into three parts:

Providing Igor with a safe place to live and food;

Not revealing any information about Igor;

Helping Igor gather information.

Emma fulfilled all of them.

Therefore, Igor remained in this cramped storage room, waiting every day for Emma to come home to feed him. He couldn't even say that Emma had broken the contract—the most it could be was that she fulfilled his requirements in the most humiliating way possible.

Click.

It was the sound of a key opening the door. Emma was home.

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