

SORCERER'S HANDBOOK

Chapter 2: Am I Really the Villain?

“Name?”

“Ashe... Ashe Heath.”

“Age?”

“I don't know, I've lost my memory.”

“Gender?”

“Let me check... male.”

“Race?”

“Probably not a dog?”

“Past experiences?”

“I really don't know, I've lost my memory.”

...

Emma, the Blood Mad Hunter watched through the one-way mirror at the interrogation room, hearing how the Cult Leader responded so casually and with such disregard during the Interrogation, it enraged her to the point where her eyes turned into vertical slits and her fingernails elongated.

“Captain, does this scoundrel think everyone in the Sin Hunter's Hall is a fool? This kind of interrogation won't work, let me do it. I learned interrogation techniques from a Priest during my school days and even got my Level 1

Inquisitor License. I swear on the Priest's name, I'll make this bastard spill everything, even the bed-wetting incidents from his childhood!"

"Just burn your Inquisitor License." Gerard said calmly: "The Amendments to the Human Rights Act abolished the inquisitor system twelve years ago, completely prohibiting the Sin Hunter's Hall from the right to interrogate suspects. Violators could have their Hunter License revoked or even face a prison term of a hundred years or more. The Council is keeping a close watch on us, and if Ashe Heath so much as has a bad night's sleep, we'll be in trouble. If you want to get bitten by the Council, I won't stop you."

"Hmph." Emma, angry yet intimidated, pouted and changed the subject: "Where's the Memory Master? It's been so long since we captured this villain, why hasn't a Memory Master come to extract his memories?"

"The Memory Master won't be coming."

"Why not? For a major case like this, shouldn't a Memory Master come to extract memory evidence? I remember the Criminal Code saying that all criminal offenses must have memories as direct evidence."

"But he is different."

"How is he different?"

Gerard glanced at her: "He has seen the Four Pillars."

Emma was taken aback for a moment, then she understood.

"It's not just him, no memories can be extracted from any Cultist."

Gerard explained: "Memory Corruption is a specialty of the Four Pillars. One hundred and thirty-four years ago, when I was involved in the investigation of a Four Pillars Cult case, a Memory Master extracted the memories of a Cultist and, without realizing it, became a Follower of the Four Pillars. That's why the Cult of the Four Pillars keeps resurging endlessly from the ashes."

“What do we do then?” Emma was dumbfounded: “We can’t extract evidence through questioning, we can’t interrogate, and we can’t extract memories... Are we supposed to let him go free without any charges? Or should there be an exception made for this special case?”

“No need for exceptions.” Gerard stated: “There’s a death sentence that’s perfect for heinous criminals like him who also stir public outrage... The interrogation here is just for show, the real trial will happen on the 15th at 8 p.m., carried out by the citizens of the entire city.”

Emma immediately understood, but turning to see the Cult Leader still in the interrogation room, claiming ignorance and memory loss, she still couldn’t quell her anger. She stuck out her tongue in disdain, her grey tail drooping as she turned and walked away.

Gerard still watched the fruitless interrogation, where because it had exceeded 15 minutes, a mandatory rest was required for the suspect. This was one of the basic human rights outlined in the Human Rights Act.

The Cult Leader was drinking water, occasionally touching his chest which had been recently pierced, his eyes showing surprise, but soon shifting to worry.

For some reason, Gerard felt he wasn’t lying.

His reactions—panic, curiosity, fear, confusion... they all seemed genuinely like those of a person with amnesia.

According to the Human Rights Act, symptoms such as personality splits, amnesia, and mental illness can be considered as an inability to take care of oneself, exempting the person from criminal punishment.

If a Memory Master were used and found that Ashe truly had amnesia, then he could even be released without charge.

But that didn't concern him because due to the Four Pillars, there would not and could not be a Memory Master to extract his memories, so...

"The trial is a matter for the public; our only job is to present you to their eyes," Gerard said as he turned to leave, continuing his pursuit of the next suspect.

...

...

"I guess it's really better to die sooner than later..."

Lying on a clean, soft bed, Ashe put down the documents in his hand, looking around the bright and spacious cell with an en suite bathroom, his heart filled with gloom.

Although, after witnessing the grotesque demise of those 'angels,' Ashe had a hunch, he hadn't expected the reality to be even graver than he imagined—the Hunters' accusations against him were entirely accurate; he truly was an unflinching Cult Leader.

The gods that had bestowed Ashe with power were the infamous Four Pillars of this world, known by many aliases and distinguished by the tendency to appear together, wreaking endless chaos in the world.

The Lord of a Billion Brilliances, also known as the Tyrant, seeks endless war and a sea of corpses drowning the world; his Followers would slaughter everything in sight, including themselves;

The Sovereign of Wind, Rain, and Snow, also known as the Conspirator, is famous for manipulating mortals with his schemes, fulfilling Followers' wishes while driving them into madness;

The Heart of Eternal Blaze, also known as the Compassionate Father, is the source of all plagues and diseases, the final resting place for all things rotten;

his Followers become breeding grounds for disease, living in pain, terror, and despair, but unable to die;

The Soul of Dreamy Freedom, also known as the Debauched Prince, represents the endless desires of creatures, and he is the most written about in the documents—Intelligent Races are most susceptible to his seduction into corruption; once an Intelligent Creature becomes a Follower corrupted by desire, it turns into an instinctual animal that can never be satisfied, with reason completely consumed by instinct.

Actually, Ashe had also wondered if the other side was fabricating documents to deceive him, but firstly, he had already been captured, and they could present him in any light they wanted without going through such trouble; and secondly, the documents were rich with images, including Heath's own criminal photos and a detailed process of his crimes. The cruelty of the methods was so severe that Ashe felt like vomiting out the mushroom chicken noodle soup he had just eaten.

Since Heath was a villain, then the Four Pillars were naturally Dark Gods.

So conversely, the Blood Mad Hunter pursuing me is a force of justice... at least, a power that maintains social order.

In just half a day, Ashe experienced great joy and sorrow—he initially thought he was about to leave the newbie village as a Hero, only to find out he was actually a Cult Leader gearing up for the first Angel Round to start a business.

Then he got farmed by a group of Heroes like a rare elite mob.

To transmigrate as a Cult Leader was one thing, but why did it have to be right when the Hunters were closing in on the Cult? Was I sent here just to boost the Hunters' performance?

Ashe tossed and turned in bed, cursing his unjust fate while pondering whether he had died suddenly from overwork, but all thoughts converged on one: How are they going to execute me?

Although the interrogation was very polite, and they even provided free food and a luxury single room—aside from having to wear elegant bracelets and anklets—Ashe even felt as if he was on vacation.

But he knew full well, even without using his fallen hair to think, that they would never let him go.

However, Ashe had a vague sense that the civilization of this world seemed quite advanced; maybe they had abolished the death penalty, and there might still be a glimmer of hope for him...

Suddenly, a crisp notification bell sounded in his mind.

“Ding Dong!”

Ashe felt a warmth at the back of his neck, and then a Holographic Screen unfolded before his eyes.

His heart skipped a beat, filled with countless hopes as he discerned the unfamiliar text on the screen—

“Dear Mr. Ashe Heath, Prisoner Number 4001623. Kaimon City Hall formally invites you to be the Special Guest on the ‘Blood Moon Tribunal’ show on Kaimon’s first channel on the evening of the 15th at 8 PM. Please pay attention to your appearance, as we will send someone to escort you to the Live Broadcast Site. If you wish to opt-out of the program, please reply with ‘TC’.”

Although he had no idea what this ‘Blood Moon Tribunal’ was, the name didn’t sound like anything pleasant, and naturally, Ashe hastened to type ‘TC’ in the dialog box.

However, as his thoughts moved to send the message, the Holographic Screen popped up with a prompt:

“Your current status is under arrest and awaiting trial; the Message Sending Function has been disabled.”

Damn, so was that last part of the notification just to tease me?!

Ashe guessed that the ‘Blood Moon Tribunal’ was likely his Death Sentence Announcement, but his attention was now on the Holographic Screen before him.

He touched the back of his neck, unable to feel any distinct bumps, but he could clearly sense that the back of his neck was closely related to the Holographic Screen, as if the settings of the screen were implanted there.

Since such information as a ‘Death Sentence Announcement’ was notified to him in this way, Ashe felt that this might be the communication tool of this world, not just unique to him.

Sure enough, when he focused his thoughts on the ‘?’ icon in the upper left corner of the Holographic Screen, a string of information immediately popped up:

“Name: ‘Heath’s’ ‘Consciousness Holographic Screen’”

“Version: 14.4.1”

“Chip Model: Miracle 13”

“Current Status: Message Sending Function disabled, Online Function disabled, Channel Access Function disabled, Photographing Function disabled, Output Kinetic Energy restricted, Virtual Realm access prohibited, arcane energy output prohibited...”

“Main Number: 459105198”

“Service Operator: Kaimon Telecommunications”

Ashe casually changed the name to “Ashe’s ‘Consciousness Holographic Screen’,” thinking to himself that the technological system of this world was truly advanced, possessing both extraordinary abilities that enhance individual combat power and such widely available technological peripherals to everyone.

It was ironic that Ashe had initially thought this was a transmigration cheat unique to him, only to discover it was a common item everyone had. It was as if an ancient person had transmigrated to the modern world, found a cell phone, and mistook it for a divine artifact.

Just thinking about his earlier, overly dramatic thoughts made Ashe’s face feel hot with embarrassment.

Although Ashe was eager to explore this new toy, most of its functions were unfortunately disabled, leaving him with access only to the calendar, messages, notepad, calculator, and one other thing...

“Aurora’s Sorcerer Handbook”?

Ashe was puzzled.