

# Sorcerer's Handbook

## Chapter 261: The Gift from the Swordswoman to Sonya

When Ashe flipped through the pages of the book, he felt as if he had transformed into the protagonist within, personally experiencing each memory recounted.

Interestingly, the book was not a tale of blacksmithing.

Or rather, it was not just about blacksmithing, which left Ashe, who had anticipated a blacksmithing story, somewhat disappointed.

The sorcerer who left these memories seemed to be a multi-faceted Creator Sorcerer, particularly skilled in the Mind Faction.

He managed to enslave a Knowledge Creature in the Virtual Realm, then infused it with multi-faction Miracles, including the "Hormonal Fury" from the biological faction and "Iron Scale Armor" from the Alchemy Faction, among others. Riding this Knowledge Creature, he wreaked havoc across the Time Continent.

Despite the book's sorcerer likely being a Genius among the Two Wings, Ashe vaguely remembered that the Blood Moon Kingdom had a population of several hundred million, and the Gospel Kingdom was not small either, not to mention other kingdoms. Among these billions of people, the emergence of thousands, if not tens of thousands, of Geniuses was almost inevitable. Therefore, a sorcerer who could traverse the Virtual Realm with such impunity was likely one of many.

This realization made Ashe discreetly curb his disdain. Because of items like the Sorcerer Handbook, the Map, and his sports car, he didn't see his peers in the Virtual Realm as threats, nor did he think they could catch up to him.

However, reality told him that even without cheats, sports cars, or maps, a Genius could still create a monster mount surpassing the current Version, push through the Virtual Realm, and plunder arcane energy!

"In the frost-laden sky of myriad creatures, freedom competes." This is the only Rule of the Virtual Realm.

I have cheats, you have Talent, he has luck, and we all have a bright future.

The book documented the sorcerer's process of enslaving and modifying the Knowledge Creature. It might have been highly beneficial for a sorcerer of the Mind Faction or Alchemy Faction to read, but Ashe's involvement with the Mind Faction was merely a side transfer from the Swordsman, superficial at best. Thus, while he understood each knowledge point presented, he couldn't grasp how they interconnected, making it as incomprehensible as attending an advanced mathematics class.

After leisurely finishing the book, Ashe immediately knew what reward he had gained.

All the Swordsmanship spirits on him burst forth, and a golden hammer emerged from the book, striking each Swordsmanship spirit heavily.

Clang! The Thrust Sword spirit transformed into Two Wings.

Clang! The Cleave Sword spirit transformed into Two Wings.

Clang! The Heart Sword spirit transformed into Two Wings.

In the blink of an eye, all of Ashe's Swordsmanship spirits were promoted to Two Wings!

This was the reward for reading the book, and it was also a Miracle once performed by the Genius sorcerer in the book—"Refining Sword into Wings"!

The Genius sorcerer liked to enslave close-combat Knowledge Creatures such as the Slaying Fish-Dragon, Rampage Dragon, and Umbrella Bird-Dragon, which often carried Swordsmanship spirits. Thus, the Genius came up with a way to make them even stronger—forcibly upgrading their spirits that had not yet evolved to Two Wings!

Forcing the promotion of a One Wing spirit to Two Wings might sound like cheating, but for a Genius, cheating is what counts as a Miracle. Hence, "Refining Sword into Wings" was born—merely by performing this Miracle, one could elevate all the target's Swordsmanship spirits to Two Wings!

However, this Miracle is not permanent and even requires the sorcerer to continually expend arcane energy to maintain it. Once the arcane energy is interrupted, the temporarily promoted Two Wings spirits will revert to One Wing.

This high-threshold Miracle is unlikely to be learned by anyone other than an Alchemist, but what ordinary Alchemist would need to practice the Swordsmanship Faction? Thus, "Refining Sword into Wings" is a very impractical Miracle, only meaningful in the hands of this Genius sorcerer.

But as a reward, this Miracle takes on a different significance.

Now, all of Ashe's Swordsmanship spirits have been elevated to Two Wings, but this Miracle was not performed by a sorcerer but activated by the Legendary Library.

Or rather, this Miracle has the backing of the Virtual Realm.

This also means that even though "Refining Sword into Wings" was originally just a temporary enhancement Miracle, once the Sorcerer is supported by the Virtual Realm, the temporary enhancement becomes permanent!

There may be many hidden issues, such as these spirits not being able to promote to Tri-wings, but Ashe clearly doesn't care about that. Setting aside whether he could even promote to Tri-wings, even if he could advance quickly to that level, he could just switch to other Tri-wings spirits and alter his tactical system. There's no need to cling to these few spirits as if they were heirlooms.

Many Sorcerers might stubbornly evolve their favorite spirits step by step, but as a Mudblood Sorcerer, Ashe has no attachment or perseverance toward 'Swordsmanship', 'belief', or 'spirits that have accompanied him for many years'.

If a more useful Slave spirit comes along, Ashe is even willing to replace his first acquired spirit, 'Substitute'!

To him, Operators are like limbs, but spirits are like clothes; such is Ashe's rule!

As for the promotion of 'Cleave Sword' and 'Thrust Sword', that was one thing, but Ashe did not expect 'Heart Sword' to also be promoted to Two Wings. The 'Heart Sword' is extremely valuable and practical, and the Swordswoman had always hoped Ashe would promote this agile attacking spirit to Two Wings. Ashe himself was reluctant to let go of this flexible spirit. However, his own Swordsmanship Faction was so weak that he could only rely on slowly feeding it Swordsmanship materials to grow.

Now that 'Heart Sword' has been promoted to Two Wings, Ashe no longer needs to compete with the Swordswoman for Swordsmanship materials, and his attack power can finally break through defenses!

Hmph, wait until the Swordswoman logs on tomorrow night, she's in for a big surprise!

Ashe was very satisfied with his gains and returned the book to the shelf. The next step was to leave a part of his memory here as well.

Which memory to leave seemed obvious—memories from his past life couldn't be left; those were treasures and secrets he refused to share with others. As for the memories of this life, only the escape from prison episode could slightly touch on the 'Legend'.

Ashe placed his finger on the shelf and quickly entered a state of recollection. In the gap where his finger pointed, a new book was slowly forming...

Meanwhile, on the first floor of the Legendary Library, a red-haired lady dressed in black gauze was pressing her finger against a bookshelf. Her body, like smoldering ashes, seemed ethereal, as though she could dissipate into a wisp of light smoke at any moment.

Like threads of memory being woven together, a new book gradually formed. The moment it fully materialized, countless screams of madness spread like ripples, all the bookshelves oozed dark red blood, and the floor seemed to turn into a soft, decaying mire, inch by inch swallowing those who entered the library.

However, when the red-haired lady pulled the book out, all the anomalies disappeared.

“Hmph, just as expected,” she chuckled. “Although the guide suggests reading the book first, then recording memories, in fact, these two steps do not have a sequential order.”

“That means one can record memories first, and then read the book, including... the memories just set down.”

“Sonya.” She flipped open the book. “Hope you like this gift.”

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

## **Chapter 262: No Longer the Silver Sorcerer**

“The situation looks grim...”

Watching Leoni retreat step by step on the stage, the faces of the Swordflower College competition team members darkened. Search the [novelFire.net](http://novelFire.net) website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

They hadn’t expected Leoni, who was supposed to handle the Chief Battle, to already show signs of defeat in the Vice Chief battle.

Although the order of vanguard, front guard, center, vice chief, and chief can be adjusted at will, typically the strongest are placed later, with the strongest as the chief.

If someone wanted to employ dirty tactics, such as using a “strong horse against a weak horse, weak horse against a strong horse” strategy to secure an overall victory in a Friendly Match, it would be within the rules and beyond reproach, but don’t expect other schools to engage with you next year — Friendly Matches are meant to scout talented

students among schools, and the outcome doesn't affect league scores. If you resort to tricks in such matches, don't be surprised if others refuse to play along next time.

Everyone can play tricks, but no one likes it when tricks are played all the time. Using cunning in Friendly Matches will cost you friendships.

This also meant — Orbit College's Vice Chief was on par with Leoni, even gaining the upper hand!

Before recommending Sonya, Leoni had been this year's top contender from Swordflower!

Orbit's second-best was about to defeat Swordflower's former number one!

Moreover, they had already lost the vanguard battle, and the front guard, a last-minute substitute, was also defeated, leaving only the center battle with a win. If they lose the Vice Chief battle, the score would turn 3:1, and even if they win the Chief Battle, they would still lose overall.

Not to mention, Sonya was responsible for the Chief Battle. Thinking of this, everyone grew even more pessimistic.

True, the Red-haired Swordswoman had rapidly risen to fame, known throughout the school, and even managed to draw with Leoni in a match, but the competition team members didn't trust her strength. Despite their reluctance, Leoni and Professor Trozan both endorsed Sonya for the Chief, and the other team members had no choice but to convince themselves with the rationale of "a weaker horse challenging a stronger one."

Their skepticism towards Sonya was not unfounded—her time as a Swordcerer had been too short, and she had experienced too few battles. Even though the Red-haired Swordswoman had managed a draw with the Orange Dancer, it was because they were both seasoned Swordcerers, familiar with each other's techniques, which gave them an informational advantage.

However, when competing externally, they would face Sorcerers from various factions, each with their own unique and unpredictable methods. At such times, combat experience becomes crucial. Leoni, having participated in the Intercollegiate League the previous year and spent the last six months intensively battling creatures in the Abyss, had amassed a wealth of combat experience and on-the-spot reaction skills.

In contrast, Sonya had only ever fought against Swordcerers within the school, had never participated in the league, nor ventured into the Abyss. Compared to the battle-hardened Leoni, she was like a naive girl who had never ventured beyond her own backyard.

Even if she encountered battles in the Virtual Realm, how much experience could she really accumulate?

Did she know how to confront a Spear Sorcerer?

Was she familiar with the four tactics against a Fire Sorcerer?

Did she know what to do if a Wind Sorcerer blew up her skirt?

Had she ever experienced the trash-talk storms typical of competition arenas?

Thus, the team was quite pessimistic about Sonya's prospects in the Chief Battle, feeling that she was merely there to soak in the atmosphere. As for winning or losing, participating was deemed good enough.

If they had won the previous four battles, having Sonya participate in one would have been harmless; but now, with the score likely turning 3:1, and potentially 4:1 after the Chief Battle, they would have to brace for a storm of criticism on the School Forum upon their return.

"Huff."

The third note of "Melody Rhythm" was abruptly interrupted as Leoni was knocked back three meters. However, she gracefully spun in the air, lightly touched the ground, and steadied herself completely.

"You've gotten quite strong, Skoll."

Standing in front of the Orange-haired Dancer was a dark-skinned man dual-wielding nunchucks.

He was dressed in a glittering Battle Garment that made his dark skin stand out even more, tall and lean, holding ebony nunchucks modeled like bird heads. He shuffled in place with quick, small steps, his movements both agile and sharp.

Skoll, the Vice-Chief of Orbit, majored in one of Orbit College's mainstream factions—the Nunchuck Faction. This faction evolved from the Fist and Claw Faction and integrated the essence of Sword and Spear Sorcerer factions. It is a Magical Faction that has developed in the last two hundred years, characterized by high speed, flexibility, and explosive power.

Leoni was indeed unlucky. Against a regular Spear Sorcerer, her 'Melody Rhythm' with its swift movements would normally allow her to take control of the Battle. Unfortunately, Skoll was also a high-agility fighter, able to keep up with Leoni's pace effortlessly.

“You too,” Skoll smiled and said, “I didn’t expect that in just a year, you would become the famed Orange Dancer. I regretted not facing you in the arena before, but now I finally have the chance.”

Both had participated in last year’s Intercollegiate League but were merely supporting roles back then, only briefly crossing paths. Now, it was their turn to be the shining main characters.

“However, I thought you would be this year’s Chief of Swordflower,” Skoll glanced at Sonya below, “could it be that your junior is stronger than you?”

“Heh, she is a genuine monster.”

“Then she’s my next target. I hope she won’t disappoint.”

“Don’t rush it.”

Leoni drew a short sword from her waist: “Looking at other pretty girls while on a date with a lady is a Taboo, you know.”

“You should keep focusing on me instead.”

Skoll’s expression became slightly more serious. “Dual swords? Could it be the Rhythm Sword Saint’s...”

“That’s right, exactly what you’re thinking!”

In an instant, Leoni disappeared from sight. Skoll swung his nunchucks across his chest defensively, but his shoulders drooped softly, and his legs slightly bent, appearing completely relaxed.

Miracle: One-Arm Domain!

In this state, any attack within the reach of Skoll’s arm would trigger an immediate, high-speed counterattack. His agility, strength, reaction speed, and insight were all enhanced, coupled with the Nunchuck Faction’s explosive power, effectively restraining Leoni’s movements!

Even at the Silver Rank, the ‘One-Arm Domain’ is a powerful Miracle of the upper-tier radiant silver. Of course, it also has a clear drawback—if facing a Sorcerer proficient in long-range attacks, this Miracle becomes useless. However, if Skoll were to confront a long-range Sorcerer, he naturally has other strategies and could still use his nunchucks to smash the Sorcerer’s head.



The defensive effectiveness of the One-Arm Domain is beyond question. For instance, Skoll's highest recorded reaction was instantly deflecting five Shot Bullets, proving that within ten steps, not even a Gun Technique practitioner could halt his advance!

If it's beyond ten steps, then those practitioners also can't stop Skoll from escaping.

However, at this moment, Skoll's expression was extremely grave, as if anticipating a significant challenge. Leoni had vanished from the stage, only occasionally flashing a hint of orange.

Her voice drifted across the stage: "Do you know what the most enchanting music in the world is?"

"It's silence."

Clang!

Suddenly, a piercing sound exploded through the Shining Trail Church, followed by a brief deafness—the screeching noise, like the most venomous and bloated bug, desperately burrowed deep into everyone's ears, cutting off all external vibrations!

Silence descended!

Just then, Skoll swiftly turned and swung his nunchuck, unleashing purple lightning like divine punishment aimed at Leoni behind him!

Miracle: Purple Lightning Naginata!

However, the nunchuck passed through, shattering only the image in his mind. The real Leoni appeared at his side.

Skoll hesitated for a split second, and his chest was already pierced by Leoni's long and short swords. The Orange Dancer, still unsatisfied, tripped Skoll and pinned him to the stage with her sword!

"The match... is decided!" The host, sickened by the piercing noise, struggled to fulfill his duties: "The winner, Leoni Vickt from Swordflower College!"

By this time, others had mostly recovered, and medical Sorcerers eagerly came forward to treat Skoll.

In both Friendly Matches and the Intercollegiate League, students must rely solely on their own abilities without any protective Miracles from their colleges.



For instance, when Sonya and Felix sparred, they were protected by a Star Robe, a privilege for outstanding students within the school, something that wouldn't appear in official competitions unless the student themselves mastered the Star Robe Miracle.

After all, if colleges could armor their students, the Intercollegiate League would merely become a contest of who has the most layers of armor.

Having no protective miracles means that casualties are inevitable. When injuries occur at the end of a Battle, it's time for the medical Sorcerers to step in. During the Intercollegiate League season each year, it's also a period when medical Sorcerers from various schools rapidly gain experience. They almost wish for the Battles to be fiercer, hoping everyone ends up so battered that they're sent straight to the Treatment room—such scenarios are like experience bonanzas for them.

“Wait...”

Skoll, with the help of medical Sorcerers, struggled to sit up and raised his hand to stop Leoni: “The ‘Silent Rhythm,’ the famous miracle of the ‘Rhythm Sword Saint,’ I remember it's an upper-tier radiant gold miracle!”

“Are you already a... Two Wings Sorcerer?”

The miracle that had just silenced the entire arena was indeed Nidhogg Professor's most daunting and nauseating move—Silent Rhythm.

The second shortsword wasn't for dual-wielding but served as a musical instrument. Leoni had been moving at high speed while scraping her longsword against the shortsword continuously, using the miracle to absorb all the resultant noise and then releasing it in one go, causing a widespread sonic blast that temporarily deafened everyone, friend and foe alike!

As Leoni's opponent, Skoll naturally received the brunt of the sonic impact, and his hearing was nearly destroyed instantly, leaving him only able to hear his own heartbeat.

Not only that, the intense vibration severely affected Skoll's vision. Although the One-Arm Domain allowed him to counterattack swiftly, he could only see afterimages left by Leoni; his dynamic vision failed to capture the Orange Dancer at his side!

If “Melody Rhythm” is Nidhogg's standard attack, then “Silent Rhythm” is his killer move. The wide-range sonic impact, deafness, and blindness make Nidhogg one of the rare Swordcerers who dares to face multiple attackers, allowing him to stand out among Two Wings Sorcerers and soar to new heights!

But the main spirits of “Silent Rhythm” are mostly at the Two Wings level, with no One Wing substitutes, so the minimum threshold to cast it is being a Two Wings Sorcerer!

The Audience was stunned, only the two supervising Professors showed no surprise.

Leoni glanced at Skoll and nodded, “A Silver Sorcerer, I haven’t been one for a few days now.”

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

## **Chapter 263: Enchantress, Take Your Path**

“Leoni Senior Sister is already a Two Wings Sorcerer?”

“She stepped onto the Time Continent before graduation?!”

“She truly is our Orange Dancer!”

In contrast to the jubilation at Swordflower College, the mood at Orbit College was sour. Skoll’s loss was one thing—it was just a Friendly Match, after all. But the real issue was Leoni’s recent promotion to Two Wings Sorcerer. This meant her power would grow rapidly in the upcoming days. By the time the Intercollegiate League started, the Orange Dancer might become an insurmountable barrier for Orbit College.

After the Spiral Cherry Saint and Hidden Hand Sword Saint finished their comments, the joy among the Swordflower team members faded somewhat, and they couldn’t help but look towards Sonya.

Now that Leoni had won, the score was 2:2, turning the Chief Battle into the deciding point. All the pressure was now on Sonya.

Indeed, the news of Leoni’s promotion to Two Wings Sorcerer was more significant than the friendly match itself. However, if Sonya were to lose next, all the jealousy, dissatisfaction, and malice harbored in the school towards her would erupt unabated.

The Red-haired Swordswoman was simply too much of a genius—Leoni had spent two years building her reputation, whereas Sonya had done so in just one month. Many were eager to see her fall hard. The last piece of news about Sonya’s death in the Virtual Realm was far from satisfying those with malicious intent, who hid behind the Curtain, hoping for a resounding defeat to prove that so-called geniuses were just as mediocre as they were.

Even among the competitors, many harbored such feelings.

Or should it be said, they were the ones most entitled to jealousy—why should a mere freshman, just arrived, become the chief competitor of the team?

Simply because she was a disciple of Professor Trozan, had tied with the Orange Dancer, and had deployed the Silver Full-Wing within a month?

But if I could become a disciple of Professor Trozan, perhaps I could accomplish these feats too!

What Red-haired Swordswoman, she's just a rustic girl lucky enough to be favored by the professor and given disproportionate resources!

"Sonya."

Leoni strolled over leisurely, dressed in a black leather vest that was cinched below her chest with a strap that accentuated her curves. Her arms were adorned with long rune gauntlets, and she paired it with tight shorts and black thigh-high stockings, giving her a look that was both light and wild. As a Battle Garment, her outfit wasn't particularly dazzling, but it unexpectedly matched her personality.

"Senior Sister, congratulations."

"It's your turn next." Leoni plopped down beside her and clapped her on the shoulder. "Go and disappoint those who look down on you."

Sonya clearly understood what her Senior Sister meant.

She had already sensed the veiled malice from her teammates, or rather, as she walked out of the dormitory in her Battle Garment to meet Professor Trozan at the school gate, the undisguised malice felt like a group of Carrion Crows, much more nauseating than manure from a farm. It was hard for the rustic girl not to notice.

So many people were waiting to see her fall flat on her face.

Sonya had grown accustomed to such gazes. Even back in her village, when she was studying and preparing for exams, the villagers' stares were just as piercing, their eyes as small as rats and their malice as red.

It seemed the rats in the city were not so different from those in the village.

"Sonya."

Professor Trozan called her casually.

Sonya glanced at her professor and suddenly asked, "What time is it now?"

“12:19,” Trozan looked up at the sky. “The Starlight is just right.”

“It’s a good day,” Sonya stood up. “I’ll be back soon.”

“When it comes to disappointing people, I never disappoint.”

“Next up is the highly anticipated Chief Battle between the schools!” the announcer declared in an excited voice. “Chief of Orbit, Tida Yarzhent, versus Swordflower’s Chief, Sonya Therave!”

Sonya lightly tapped her foot and leaped onto the stage, her hand resting on the hilt of her wooden sword.

Although the school had provided her with a real sword, she was still accustomed to using a wooden sword in reality—after all, the wooden sword given by the Observer was as sharp as any real sword.

Quietly, “Sharpening for a Decade” had already been activated.

At the same time, her opponent also took the stage. Unlike her, the Chief of Orbit walked up the stairs in a very ordinary manner, even stumbling slightly, nearly falling.

She was a petite girl, standing at about five feet, dressed in a Battle Garment reminiscent of a princess’s attire for children. She had to tilt her head back just to make eye contact with Sonya. With big eyes, pink curly hair, a bow tied on her head, and holding a teddy bear, she presented a strange mix of being too old to be a little girl and too young to be a teenager, existing in a peculiar state of overlap.

“Sonya, you look so pretty!” Tida chirped crisply.

“No, I should be younger than you, Tida,” Sonya smiled. “I’m just a freshman, but you seem to be... a junior?”

Tida paused, then flashed a smile: “Nope, Tida is forever fourteen, so everyone here is my big brother or big sister~”

“But you’re actually twenty-one this year, right?”

Tida’s smile slowly faded, and a swell of malice erupted like a volcano, the bizarre aura causing Sonya’s hair to flutter.

“Has anyone ever told you that discussing a girl’s age is very impolite?”

The teddy bear in her arms emitted a sizzling arc of Miracle, and with a surge of air, a five-meter-tall black bear stood erect on the ground, with Tida sitting on its shoulder.

“It’s not too late to apologize to your little sister now, Big Sister Sonya,” Tida laughed.

This was the newly appointed Chief of Orbit, Tida Yarzhent!

An Alchemist who rose to fame in last year’s Intercollegiate League, acclaimed as an ‘Alchemy Prodigy’. Her forte is the alchemically crafted giant bear, normally carried in the form of a teddy bear but capable of transforming into a terrifying monster with high resistance in battle!

It was said that Truth College had once invited her to join. Although there were many practitioners of the same strength as Tida, she was the only one in her age group with such capabilities within the Alchemy Faction!

“No need, Tida. I’m still in my rebellious phase.”

Sonya gripped the sword hilt and drew her weapon in a laido stance, showing no signs of stage fright but rather an elevated fighting spirit, her pale red eyes glowing with fervent arcs!

The atmosphere was electric, the tension palpable. Sensing the mood, the host wisely skipped the countdown and handed the stage over to the two Chiefs completely.

Just as the battle was about to erupt, Sonya suddenly heard the sound of pages turning.

Time seemed to freeze at that moment. When Sonya blinked, she found herself transported to a completely different world.

She was no longer on the stage of Flash Track Auditorium; instead, she stood on a bizarre plain. In the distance, the sky flowed with Magma, while the meadows close by bloomed with stunningly beautiful clusters of purple flowers. A faint mist filled the air, creating an ethereal atmosphere.

This environment seemed vaguely familiar to her—

“Why aren’t you moving? You’re not scared, are you?”

Sonya turned her head and saw a figure of captivating beauty.

She wore high heels, white stockings, and an off-the-shoulder dress that clung perfectly to her curves, creating an irresistible allure. Her makeup was so exquisitely applied that Sonya felt utterly inferior in comparison.

Despite her sweet and innocent appearance, every inch of her skin, every movement, and every glance seemed designed to seduce and tempt into wrongdoing.

However, the most peculiar aspect was the fluffy white fur that encircled her forearms, much like protective sleeves.

As Sonya observed this enchanting stranger, she found herself speaking—

Her voice was high-pitched and chilling, sending shivers down the spine.

“Enchantress, lead the way.”

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

## Chapter 264: Farewell

Enchantress?

Is her name Enchantress... Sonya thought to herself as she moved spontaneously, following the white-haired girl swiftly through the meadow.

Though suddenly pulled into this bizarre place, the rustic girl quickly regained her composure, knowing all too well that this must be the Observer’s doing.

She had told the Observer time and again to inform her before creating any trouble, yet the Observer, just like Sonya, never failed to disappoint when it came to letting people down.

Thus, the Red-haired Swordsman remained calm; after all, the Observer wouldn’t harm her, and this Adventure was sure to bring some benefits.

But the problem was that she was about to engage in the Chief Battle with Tida, and now being pulled here, would her real self become immobilized?

If she stopped moving, Professor Trozan would surely interrupt the match to protect her, but it’s very likely that he would simply declare her defeated—there was no way the match could just continue the music and dance, waiting for her to wake up. Professor Trozan simply wasn’t that shameless.

After all, a student’s malfunction was their own issue, a common occurrence for Sorcerers. For instance, dying in the Virtual Realm greatly affects one’s real condition.

Could a Sorcerer, who frivolously died in the Virtual Realm, use poor condition as an excuse to delay a match? Impossible, everyone would think, ‘Why did you die when others didn’t? There must be something wrong with you.’

Condition management is a crucial aspect for a Sorcerer. Venturing into the Exploration in Virtual Realm before a major event is like taking laxatives before a long bus ride—you bear the consequences.

But it was Sonya's first time representing her school in combat, and it was the Chief Battle no less. Just before the battle, to be fraught with such issues, she could already imagine the unpleasant comments that would flood the School Forum upon her return.

Oh Observer, why did you have to create trouble at this time? You must have known about the important match I was to attend tonight...

Just then, a pang of worry hit Sonya.

If she were to lose by default in the Chief Battle, the school would surely be disappointed in her, and it might even affect this year's performance in the Intercollegiate League. If she couldn't participate in the league, then her evenings would be free to continue the Exploration in Virtual Realm...

It only takes a little bit of soil for the seeds of suspicion to sprout uncontrollably.

Don't blame the rustic girl for having such dark thoughts. If her mind hadn't been filled with this foul rot, she would have been devoured by the city of Gales long ago—the label of a poor but beautiful college student might elicit kindness from the good-hearted, but it also invites malice from the wicked.

When faced with loss, the first reaction shouldn't be 'it wasn't intentional' but 'it was targeted at me'. Holding this mindset is why Sonya hasn't lost anything in her first year of college, securing every Scholarship and financial aid, edging out all competitors.

Because that's all she has left, and losing any more would mean selling herself.

Over the past month, Sonya was almost ready to abandon this rotten way of thinking—she hated her constantly scheming self.

After all, how can someone full of negativity be happy?

Who wants to see everyone around them as villains? Who doesn't want to be surrounded by Angels who like them?

The arrival of the Observer completely transformed Sonya's social life. She not only made better friends but also gained the means to interact with high-quality friends—this was most important. A big reason why Sonya can now relax around people like Lois and Leoni is that she isn't worried about being at a loss or being exploited by friends.

She can afford the cost of being betrayed by a friend.



Because she can afford to lose, she isn't afraid to have.

But she can't afford the cost of being betrayed by the Observer.

If, if it really was the Observer trying to control her life...

"Ah, we've encountered it so soon..." Enchantress suddenly said with a soft laugh.

Sonya saw a shallow pond suddenly appear in the meadow, and on it, an Orc wielding two axes. He had large ears and was clad in fine steel armor, sitting cross-legged on the pond, seemingly pondering something.

"Shall we attack?" Sonya heard 'herself' suggesting succinctly.

"There's no need for that. This is the Tokoyo-no-Kuni of the Shadow Evil Dragon, where all monsters are minions of the Shadow Evil Dragon. If we make a move, it would be like knocking on the door to tell the master of the house that Invaders have arrived." Search the [NôvelFire\(.\)net](#) website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Enchantress glanced at Sonya, "If you're eager to fight your way in, I don't mind, as long as you don't hinder me from completing the master's task."

"Otherwise, just follow my lead obediently." With a wave of her hand, both of their figures faded to transparency. Coupled with the light mist in the area, they became almost completely invisible. "I warn you, don't hold me back, Sword Demon."

"Hmph." Sonya heard 'herself' scoff disdainfully, seemingly uninterested in arguing with Enchantress.

At that moment, Sonya finally remembered where they were—Tokoyo-no-Kuni, the Tokoyo Abyss!

The Abyss is not a single type but consists of various derivative Areas, such as the Aqueduct Abyss appearing in river areas, the Cavern Abyss in urban undergrounds, and even dungeon abysses that mimic surface architecture styles. Moreover, each layer of the Abyss has a different environment; for instance, the first layer might be the Aqueduct Abyss, and the second could turn into a mud abyss, with corresponding changes in the monsters that appear.

The Tokoyo Abyss, known as 'the abyss closest to hell', only appears in the deeper layers of the Abyss. Sonya knew of this place because the Tokoyo Abyss often appears in film and television productions.

Being the closest to hell, Tokoyo is regarded as the necessary path for the dead to resurrect from hell, and it is primarily inhabited by undead monsters, fitting people's impressions of hell.

Currently, the knowledge of Tokoyo in the Stars Kingdom originates from the records of legendary Sorcerers, as only legendary Sorcerers have the capacity to delve into the deeper layers of the Abyss and step into Tokoyo-no-Kuni. As for more, Sonya wouldn't know; after all, she had no plans to explore the Abyss, and her entire understanding of Tokoyo came from Delarose starring in the Shadow Drama "Alice in Tokoyo-no-Kuni" and "I Don't Believe Every Heart Will Be Betrayed."

Since 'I' and Enchantress can explore Tokoyo-no-Kuni, it at least shows that we've already broken through several layers of the Abyss... Does this mean that 'I' and Enchantress are both legendary Sorcerers?

But, is 'my' name Sword Demon? Doesn't sound like a very nice person...

Sonya quickly gathered the current intelligence as she followed Enchantress through several monster defense zones. The monsters sat solitary on pools of water, standing like tombstones. They looked like Sorcerers from various races, except for their eyes, mouths, and ears, which were overgrown with blooming purple flowers, giving them a deceptively normal appearance.

Suddenly, their view shifted. One second they were in an expansive meadow, and the next they saw a magnificent palace in the distance. Enchantress's voice contained a hint of joy, "This is the place!"

Sonya immediately realized she must have been pulled into a memory—the transition clearly cut out the mundane part of their journey.

Only a memory could be 'edited' like this.

Why would the Observer want me to see this memory?... Sonya followed Enchantress into the palace, but the next second, she almost turned to flee.

"Lucky us," Enchantress whispered with a light laugh. "The Shadow Evil Dragon is asleep."

The vast palace seemed designed primarily to accommodate a huge black dragon. Its scales shimmered like onyx, and its wings were inlaid with purple orbs, curled up on a soft cushion, yet even in sleep, its appearance was fierce.

The palace was filled with purple flowers, some even growing on the dragon itself, which did not add a sense of natural harmony but rather made the scene even more sinister, as if the dragon and the flowers were consuming each other.

Logically, Sonya had slain dragons before—stacks of Slaying Fish-Dragon heads could form a small hill, so she shouldn't be afraid of seeing another dragon.

But the problem was, this dragon was simply too massive.

A rough estimate suggested that if the dragon stood up, it would be dozens of meters tall. Just its claws could completely cover Sonya, and the sound of its heart beating inside its chest echoed like thunder throughout the palace.

Sonya had never seen such a colossal creature before, severely triggering her fear of large objects. When the size difference reaches a certain extent, all Magic becomes trivial tricks. The dragon would only need to step over to crush Sonya, the insect.

A Swordsmanship-practicing insect, no different from any other insect.

Is this the Shadow Evil Dragon? Can it be classified as a Knowledge Creature? Does it belong to the Perfect Form or an ultimate form?

However, Sonya found herself gripping the hilt of her sword, seemingly eager to disturb the Shadow Evil Dragon's deep sleep. It was Enchantress who stopped her, saying, "I told you, we're not here to fight. You're just my backup plan if I fail... Watch me."

The sweet-looking girl hopped and skipped up to the Shadow Evil Dragon, even jumping onto its snout and walking up to its head. Sonya, watching from the side, felt her heart pounding—she now somewhat understood how a mouse feels when trying to bell a cat.

Yet, the Shadow Evil Dragon showed no reaction to Enchantress's actions, sleeping even more soundly. Sonya could now see that Enchantress seemed to be constantly performing a Miracle, keeping the dragon's guard at its lowest, completely oblivious to her actions.

But as Enchantress reached the top of the dragon's head, she suddenly plunged her hands into its forehead, prying apart—she revealed the vertical pupil of the Shadow Evil Dragon!

The evil, dark purple, large pupil was exposed to the air. Sonya was so nervous she was nearly numb, but the Shadow Evil Dragon still did not wake up. Its sleepy vertical pupil stared blankly into the void, completely unaware of Enchantress.

"The master was right; it has indeed matured..."

Humming a tune, Enchantress poured a strange solution into the vertical pupil. Sonya had a bad feeling, but unfortunately, this was just a memory, and she couldn't stop her—

“Hey!”

With a sharp cry, Enchantress dug out the vertical pupils of the Shadow Evil Dragon! The sound of the eyeballs and nerve fibers breaking was like the crisp pop of opening a bottle of red wine!

“Ow—”

The intense pain instantly woke the slumbering beast. The dragon’s roar alone created a shockwave of sound, and Sonya felt as if she had been hit by a Wind Magic Miracle. Not to mention the roar sounded like thunder shattering Tokoyo, filling her ears with Echoes!

Enchantress gracefully jumped down from the Shadow Evil Dragon, first placing the purple orbs into a transparent container to keep them alive, then storing them in her spatial equipment, “Okay, my task is done. Now it’s your turn.”

“What do you mean?”

“What I mean is—goodbye, loser.”

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

## **Chapter 265: The Honor of Battle, All Eyes on Her!**

Clang!

A swift sword strike—Sonya barely had time to react, but ‘she’ had already slashed at the Enchantress.

However, ‘she’ struck only an illusion; the Enchantress had already escaped to the outside of the palace, her form quickly fading to transparency.

She looked at Sonya, her pretty, cute face filled with spiteful mockery: “Why are you so upset? Isn’t this the Battle segment you’ve been longing for? Come on, the opponent I’ve specially prepared for you is right behind you. If a raging Shadow Evil Dragon can’t satisfy your appetite, you wretched woman, then perhaps the spirits from the Tokoyo Abyss, gathered by its fury, will.”

“Is this your idea, or your master’s?”

“You can ask me that question once you climb out of the Tokoyo Abyss.”

As she spoke, the Enchantress completely dissolved into the air and vanished. But now, ‘she’ had no time to pursue this malicious woman, as the pupil-less Shadow Evil Dragon was already eager to unleash its fury.

“Hmph.”

Sonya looked at the Shadow Evil Dragon, which seemed like the incarnation of doomsday, and heard ‘herself’ laugh bitterly in extreme anger: “So, some efforts just can’t be spared after all.”

“Isn’t it just slaying through the Tokoyo Abyss? What’s so difficult about that?”

“Enchantress, I will remember this grudge!”

The Shadow Evil Dragon roared, its claws emitting dark Thunder, as boundless chaotic darkness surged forward!

“Reptile.” Sonya tightened her grip on her sword hilt: “I’ve just created a new Miracle, and it needs testing.”

“By your death, I shall prove my skill.”

“You should feel honored.”

The next second, the Shadow Evil Dragon was sliced into countless pieces.

“Sonya, if you win, drinks are on me!”

Suddenly, Sonya snapped back to reality and found herself back at the Flash Track Auditorium.

Leoni was loudly cheering her on, and Tida still sat on the shoulder of the alchemical giant bear, as if the recent adventure had been merely an illusion.

But the Red-haired Swordsman knew, it was not an illusion, but an incredibly precious experience.

Sonya breathed a sigh of relief—it turned out that the flashback had only lasted a moment and would not affect the reality of the Chief Battle, meaning the Observer had no intention of harming her.

Even though she had wronged the Observer, the rustic girl felt no guilt, as it was his fault for not clarifying the situation beforehand.

“Were you distracted just now?” Tida raised an eyebrow. “Were you planning to surrender?”

“That’s my line,” Sonya retorted. “If you surrender now, you won’t lose too badly later.”

“You’re really stubborn, big sister,” Tida scoffed, and suddenly bit her own small hand fiercely, allowing the giant bear to lick her blood. Tasting the Bloody Scent, the bear roared, its eyes turning blood-red and its body swelling even larger as it lunged at Sonya!

Miracle Bloodthirsty Berserk!

Sonya watched the alchemical giant bear, which seemed capable of swallowing her whole, but her mind was still on the scene just moments before.

Facing the Shadow Evil Dragon, whose size dwarfed her own by hundreds, if not thousands of times, the Sword Demon had slain it with a single move.

Sonya couldn’t forget that magnificent sword strike; she even wanted to replicate it.

She had experienced the entire process of that Miracle while inside the Sword Demon, and coincidentally, she almost had all the necessary down-tier spirits for that Miracle—perhaps it was no coincidence, considering the Observer had arranged those memories.

But only almost; she was missing a key spirit, and without a down-tier substitute, she couldn’t activate the Miracle.

Yet, for some reason, Sonya had a strong premonition that she could summon that key spirit directly!

Although she had never studied or practiced related techniques before, and her understanding of that spirit was limited to its name, she felt confident she could do it! This sudden confidence was like a student who knew the exam answers in advance!

Looking up at the alchemical giant bear charging towards her, Sonya chose to trust the Observer’s judgment.

And to trust her own abilities!

Clang!

The Red-haired Swordswoman’s eyes sparked with fierce combat spirit as she silently drew her sword!

Vibration Sword!

Moon Silk!

Rapids!

And...

Professor Trozan from Orbit College was momentarily stunned as she watched a spirit rapidly take shape on Sonya's shoulder. Her own arcane energy was unexpectedly pulled along, causing it to surge and boil! The other students also sensed something amiss. Although they were not as sensitive to arcane energy as Professor Trozan, they too could feel Sonya's influence on them!

This formation pattern, this broad knowledge resonance... it was the summoning of a spirit!

Was she actually summoning a spirit in the middle of a Battle!?

But soon, Professor Trozan felt apologetic for her own imagination—Sonya was not just summoning a new spirit, she was also immediately integrating this new spirit into a Miracle!

As the Two Wings fully unfolded, the new spirit 'Sword Shadow' was completely born from Sonya's knowledge!

'Sword Shadow' appeared as a stern, aloof woman in black, quietly standing by Sonya, turning even shadows into Sonya's lethal swords!

In the next second, countless threads sliced through the body of the alchemical giant bear, each thread as sharp as a blade, instantly cutting the bear into nineteen pieces!

The charging bear exploded into countless Blood Flowers, turning into fragments scattered on the ground!

Miracle... Blood Flower Water Moon!

Tida was shocked by the sudden Slash, and as the bear fell apart, she was thrown off the stage, tumbling twice before hurriedly getting back up. She glanced at her blood-stained clothes and, facing Sonya's chilling gaze, instinctively took a step back.

However, this step back filled Tida with a mix of shame and rage; her face turned beet red, and Sonya thought she was about to leap up and attack her. Instead, Tida turned and walked off the stage, leaving behind only one sentence:

"See you at the league!"



Tida's main reliance had been the alchemical giant bear, and now that it was destroyed beyond repair, staying on stage would only bring her further humiliation.

But as a Genius Alchemist of Orbit College, she vowed that the next time they met on the league stage, she would show Sonya, that old hag, what a war machine truly is!

"What just happened?"

"Did Sonya defeat the Chief of Orbit in one move?"

"No, you're all missing the point, didn't you see Sonya summoning the Two Wings spirit during the Battle? That's a Two Wings spirit, the Two Wings!"

"Can someone remind me when Miss Therave became a Sorcerer?"

"Less than a month ago, to be exact, it was April 12th. You're welcome," Leoni said with a smile.

"Raising her Swordsmanship Faction to Gold Tier in one month? From an Apprentice Sorcerer to a Two Wings Sorcerer in one month?"

"Professor Trozan, do you still accept students? What do you think of me?"

"I'm not taking any more students," Professor Trozan said. "Sonya will be my last student—because I've thought about nipping her in the bud already."

It was only then that Sonya had time to observe her new spirit.

Seeing the Two Wings of 'Sword Shadow', she was stunned for a moment, then her face turned red as if she was about to burst into laughter at any second.

She had summoned a Two Wings spirit on her own!

This meant that her Swordsmanship Faction had been elevated to Gold Tier, officially making her a Two Wings Sorcerer in societal terms!

She could finally flaunt her status as a Two Wings Sorcerer openly!

Ha, those jealous folks on the Curtain are probably going to spend the night biting their handkerchiefs, unable to sleep!

And she is just a freshman now. Swordflower College would have to push her forward, throwing money, fame, and status her way. The promotional strategies would have to focus on her!

Even if Sonya wanted to star in a popular Shadow Drama, Swordflower College would likely clear the path and do their best to meet her demands! Let alone releasing a music album!

Defeating the Chief of Orbit in one move, stepping onto the Time Continent within a month!

When the Radiant Star rises tomorrow, the entire Gales will whisper my name!

Bathed in glory, the center of attention!

“The results are clear!” the host announced loudly. “The winner, the Chief of Swordflower, Sonya Therave!”

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

## **Chapter 266: Duped by the Library**

In the Gospel Kingdom, Annan’s home.

“Ah, ah, ah, ah—”

Early in the morning, Deya was rolling on the bed, taking out her frustration on Lise’s newly purchased bunny plush toy by punching it. She accidentally used a bit of the real kung fu from the Fist and Claw Faction, and her punches burst the bunny’s head open.

“Why... Why am I so stupid...”

“Lise, wait, let me vent a bit more, or I’m going to explode!”

“I’m such an idiot, waaa!”

Deya was now so full of regret that she wished someone would spank her, for she had missed an Adventure in the Virtual Realm—she had been tricked by the Legendary Library!

After separating from the Observer, she made her way to the third floor of the library. The sights on the third floor were even more spectacular and bizarre than those on the second; there were no bookshelves anymore, each book had its own display stand. The space on this level was much, much bigger than the second, making Deya feel as

though she had entered a tomb of gods, where countless Rules were born and extinguished.

The ancient book in front of her emitted fierce flames, as if it could burn the space around it, turning the surroundings into a charred wasteland; that scroll emitted a chilling cold, freezing time itself, turning its nearby area into a frosty Static Domain.

Beyond that, there were necromantic wastelands, sword spirit tombs, stormy seas, an alchemy Sanctuary of all things, and even what seemed to be Prophecy bubbles that could peer into the future, capturing threads of one's own Destiny...

But the problem was, this was the Legendary Library on the Time Continent!

The Sorcerers who could make it here were only of the Two Wings rank, so the memories they left behind were merely adventure stories of Two Wings Sorcerers. How could the power contained within surpass the legendary?

It was all fake, a trick to make me read!

Although the books were fake, the storms of Rules displayed were not, so Deya carefully navigated through the domains of various books, struggling towards the stairs leading to the fourth floor.

Along the way, Deya's gaze was captured by a book. It was a fairy tale picture book; on the cover, a brave knight was protecting a beautiful Princess. The floor around the picture book was covered in fresh grass, scattered with flowers, butterflies, and bathed in sunlight.

In the chaotic third floor of the dance of gods and demons, the picture book area was as tranquil as a promised land. Deya really wanted to just go there, lie on the grass, open a picture book, and enjoy the quiet reading time.

But a strong sense of greed turned her head.

Yes, everything here was very good.

But there must be better on the fourth floor!

With even greater anticipation, Deya resisted all temptations and walked nearly a kilometer on the third floor, finally arriving at the stairs leading to the fourth floor!

Unlike the first three floors, the entrance to the fourth floor was filled with radiance, clearly indicating that more powerful books were hidden inside!

With great effort, the Witch climbed the stairs, joyfully stepping onto the fourth floor, and then—

She arrived at the rooftop.

Deya stared blankly at the sky formed by the Reverse Golden Rain, still not coming to her senses.

Where was the fourth floor?

How did I just come out here?

With the last bit of hope, she looked around, but reality shattered her illusions: there was nothing on the rooftop, no books, no scrolls, no crystal balls, no data storage devices.

At this moment, the Witch realized something and turned around to try to return to the stairs leading to the third floor. However, after running down more than a dozen steps, she felt that the distance to the third floor had not shortened at all; the stairs seemed endless.

She looked down and realized she was still on the rooftop, not having descended the stairs at all.

The tips from the \*Guide to the Legendary Library\* buzzed around in Deya's mind like annoying flies:

“②The path you walk must not be retraced. There are no do-overs in life.”

“③The library has four floors, each higher level contains books of better quality than the one below. Always aim higher.”

“④Books may deceive you. It's better to be skeptical than to believe everything.”

At this moment, not just the White Queen and the Black Butler, but Deya herself understood.

The key was the fourth tip!

Books indeed could deceive them. Deya initially thought it meant that books would present a facade of thunderous might to lure them into reading, but in fact, this statement had been effective from the beginning—the \*Guide to the Legendary Library\* itself was deceiving them!

Search the [website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“There are four floors in the library, and the books on each upper floor are better than those below” – this rule was false!

There was no fourth floor, and the books of the fourth floor were not better than those on the third!

If a sorcerer rushes straight for the topmost fourth floor, they end up missing out on the adventures that the first three floors offer. Moreover, because of the rule “The path you’ve taken is not to be retraced,” the sorcerer has no chance to regret their decision; they must simply endure the bitter consequences.

It would have been slightly less embarrassing for Deya if she had discovered the Legendary Library alone. But she wasn’t alone—she had come with the Observer!

When they met at the entrance and the Observer cheerfully asked her what she had found upstairs, Deya almost overflowed with regret. She was so embarrassed she could have curled her toes into a three-bedroom apartment!

Understandably, the atmosphere turned even heavier after Deya revealed the deceptive strategy of the library. Although the Observer was very considerate of Deya’s feelings and avoided mentioning the issue, he suddenly laughed during the subsequent Exploration in Virtual Realm, which completely broke Deya’s composure.

Cursed Legendary Library!

Cursed Observer!

Why is everyone picking on me!

No, I have to vent by beating Ashe in a game, or I won’t calm down!

Deya brushed her teeth furiously, washed her face furiously, peed furiously, changed clothes furiously, and then went out to find Ashe, saying fiercely, “Ashe, I’m in a bad mood today—”

“Then stay away from me,” Ashe pushed Deya away. “I’m in a good mood today, don’t bring me down.”

“I want to challenge you to a duel in Sorcerer Karting!”

“Wait, you mean you’re in a bad mood and you want to relieve stress by playing Sorcerer Karting?”

“Exactly!”

“Alright then, I’ll try to fulfill your wish.”

When Igor and Miss Annan stepped out of the Hovercar, they saw Banjeet repairing a controller.

Aside from the Frost Faction, the sixty-year-old Butler Youth was also skilled in the Alchemy Faction. He could repair most common items using a slime-like universal material.

“Good morning, Miss Annan, Mr. Bukin.”

“What happened to it?” Annan asked curiously.

The Butler Youth didn’t respond, glancing instead at Lise who was eating spaghetti. Lise raised her hand: “I accidentally broke the controller while playing a game.”

Annan gave a sigh and glanced at the cracked Holographic Screen next to him, “So this is...”

“I was playing a game and accidentally threw the controller at the Holographic Screen,” Lise explained with a shrug and a sigh.

She felt helpless, but it was Deya who had caused the trouble. Reluctant as she might be, as the younger sister, she had no choice but to clean up after her.

Igor nodded thoughtfully, picked up a dinner knife from the table, handed it to Lise, and then turned her around to face Ashe, who was eating a custard Lala Fatty.

“Lise, it’s not that I don’t trust you, but everyone is curious about how you were so careless. Please demonstrate with Ashe as your target...”

“Lise, tilt your head back.”

Before Igor could react, Lise’s head forcefully bumped into his chin. Ashe reached out to take the dinner knife from Lise’s hand and snorted, “Don’t let children play with knives, Igor. This is the punishment you get for not taking care of children!”

“But why am I being punished too!” Lise rubbed her head and pouted, “Aunt Bukin’s chin is so hard...”

“There, there, it won’t hurt if you blow on it,” Ashe told her, gently blowing on Lise’s head. “Lise, this is the price paid for your protection, but depending on the situation, you might also become the price itself...”

While Lise was being taught dark life philosophies by her father, Igor, dragging a suitcase, crossed the living room to return to his dormitory. The suitcase was the same size as the one Harvey had brought back yesterday. Ashe’s gaze followed the suitcase, then shifted to Harvey.

The Necromancer twitched his nose and shook his head, “That’s not a gift for me; it lacks the pleasant scent.”

“Maybe it’s not dead yet?”

“Impossible, the stench of a living person is more distinct, I would definitely notice.”

“Now I’m starting to wonder what kind of hellish Map this world looks like through your sense of smell...”

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

## Chapter 267: Deception

When Igor finally joined for breakfast, he winked at Ashe, who understood telepathically. After breakfast was over, Ashe made his way to Igor’s room, where the Con Artist was already waiting for him.

Ashe made himself comfortable, sitting on the bed without any hesitation: “What mission were you and Annan on last night?”

“It’s a long story,” Igor said, settling into an armchair. He picked up a bottle and poured a bit of sky-blue liquor into his glass.

Ashe then noticed the presence of a liquor cabinet in Igor’s room. In these external pleasures, Annan was very generous to them. Typically, all it took was a word to Banjeet, and the Butler would order takeout to bring whatever they wanted.

There was also another possibility—Gospel was a highly developed kingdom, where food ingredients like meat, eggs, milk, and alcohol were almost basic social welfare commodities. No amount of consumption by Ashe and his companions was considered wasteful; in fact, it even promoted the internal circulation of the Gospel Kingdom.

The most fundamental manifestation of any developed society is food. In Blood Moon Kingdom, even the lowest ogres could eat their fill of meat every day; Gospel Kingdom had no reason not to achieve this. If the commoners here used red wine as mouthwash, steak as a staple, and milk for baths, with the entire population’s BMI well over 30, Ashe wouldn’t be surprised at all.

“Where’s mine?” Ashe asked.

After a moment’s thought, Igor fetched another glass and poured water for Ashe from a pitcher.



“Better than nothing.”

Ashe rolled his eyes at him, took the glass, and drank it in one gulp. Then Igor said, “The person last night drank the poison I prepared just like that.”

Pfft!

Ashe spat out the water in surprise, but Igor, prepared for this, waved his hand lightly and a breeze instantly blew in the room, sending the water Ashe had spat out right back at him.

“Last night, Annan took me to an aerial estate in the Double-tiered City,” Igor said, gazing out at the Inverted City. “You might think Annan’s home is already quite nice, but if you saw that estate, you’d think this place is for the poor.”

“The ceiling is made of heat-resistant glass, allowing for brilliant sunlight during the day and a view of the stars at night. The courtyard boasts a garden that blooms all year round, and the estate owner seems to have a keen interest in alchemical creatures, even setting up a small zoo filled with chimera alchemical beasts.”

“Every exposed surface in the estate, like the walls and floors, uses the most expensive Miracle materials, powered by solar energy for everyday use, constantly maintaining a ‘clean’ Miracle. There is no dust inside, and all areas are sterile. The only two servants are nearly lifelike alchemical maids—one with long, straight black hair, tall and sultry, and the other a petite, pink-haired loli. If it weren’t for the Mind Spirit’s ineffectiveness on them, I would never have realized they were alchemical creations.”

“But in that grand, luxurious estate lives just one person—his name is Count Russell. Although the noble system in the Gospel Kingdom has declined, there are still remnants of the old era, or rather, the new era’s Wealthy who wish to be remnants of the old.”

“He looks very young, with tender white skin and dressed in a silk robe. But his weary tone and the undisguised loathsome look he gave Annan when speaking are enough to prove he should have been buried long ago, only his power has preserved his quality of life.”

“Interestingly, he seemed even more interested in me,” Igor shrugged. “Perhaps that’s why Miss Annan brought me along—let’s skip the details. All you need to know is that we put the estate owner to sleep.”

“Asleep?”

“Yes, asleep,” Igor twirled his ring. “Given his physical condition and the life-support setup we arranged, he’ll probably sleep for about five months—then he’ll turn into Harvey’s favorite breeding ground for maggots. As an important figure, his corpse will

definitely attract the Red Cap after five months. But since even Annan doesn't care, I naturally don't either, especially since our Contract will be over by then."

"As a reward for assisting with the sleep, Annan and I cut off his hands and gouged out his eyes. This allowed us to bypass the estate's fingerprint and iris verification and access the inner sanctum. Naturally, there was a spree of zero-cost acquisitions, though most of the items, including Contract documents and bank credentials, were taken by Annan since I couldn't easily liquidate them."

"The only thing I managed to obtain was this."

Igor walked over to his returned luggage and pulled out a black velvet box, handing it to Ashe.

Ashe opened the box to find a light red gradient mask that felt almost as smooth as silk yet was very durable. It fit comfortably on his head, breathable as if he wasn't wearing anything at all, and the mask seemed to have an automatic adjustment feature. Within three seconds of putting it on, it perfectly conformed to the shape of Ashe's nose and mouth.

He turned to look in the mirror. Combined with the Dark Red Trench Coat Lise had given him, Ashe now possessed a mysterious and ascetic allure, the kind you'd see in a film or TV drama, portraying a villain capable of challenging conventional morals.

Ashe was quite pleased with his appearance—his own assessment was 'so handsome it makes one wish they didn't have to defecate.'

"This is said to be the last creation of a Sanctuary Alchemist. Though it appears devoid of arcane energy, wearing it can block most mind probes and significantly enhance one's charm. It's known as the 'Mind Mask,'" Igor said casually as he sipped some blue wine. "If you like it, it's yours."

"Really?"

"As a Mind Sorcerer, I have no need for an Item to cover my face; my expressions are my weapon." Igor seemed genuinely indifferent. "Actually, there wasn't much else in that secret room that caught my eye. I only took this because I remembered you needed a mask."

Ashe blinked and removed the mask, saying, "So this is a special gift you picked out for me?"

"If you want to think of it that way, I don't mind," Igor said, swirling his glass of blue wine nonchalantly.

A gift just for me?

A unique gift just for me?

Watching Ashe's expressions shift from confusion to touched, then slightly embarrassed, and back to confusion, Igor observed with a mix of amusement and indifference.

The Cult Leader paused thoughtfully, then suddenly turned to look at the suitcase in the corner of the room.

Igor raised an eyebrow and stood up, saying, "Alright, it's time for you to leave. I have other matters to attend to—"

Ashe rushed over and opened the suitcase, finding it filled with black velvet boxes, identical to the one Igor had just given him.

He turned to Igor, pointed at the suitcase, and asked:

"What are these?"

"...What if I told you they were just to stuff under the bed? Would you believe that?"

"So, was the manor fake? Was Count Russell also fake?" Ashe held the Mind Mask and continued, "You just bought this mask randomly to give to me, but to increase its value, you made me believe it was a special gift meant only for me, crafting such a long story?"

Igor shook his head, his face displaying a 'pearls before swine' type of disappointment: "Gifts, gifts, the item is secondary; the gesture is what matters. Would you have been so happy just now if I hadn't imbued this gift with so much meaning?"

"If a gift has no story behind it, it's just a cold piece of handicraft. A true Mind Sorcerer is someone who imbues every ordinary object with thrilling significance."

"Have you ever watched a magic show? Your behavior just now, like a child on stage smartly revealing the secret of the trick loudly, not only dampens the spirit of the performer but also robs yourself of the enjoyment of the show."

Igor earnestly advised, "Fortunately, I don't mind, but don't do it again, Ashe. Others might think you're insensitive to the mood."

"Why does it sound like it's my fault, when I was almost deceived by you?" Ashe retorted irritably, "So how many times were you planning to repeat that story?"

"Do I look that lazy?" Igor remarked. "Of course, I tailor a specific story for each client. For someone like you, Ashe, with your chaotic good nature, you'd definitely enjoy a story about the dirty deeds of high society being double-crossed. As for Harvey, that

chaotic neutral Necromancer, I'm planning to weave a tale about him discovering a blood-stained torture device while eliminating a gang. And naturally, the story for Lise will be different..."

"Igor, you really play your cards right with Green Tea," Ashe teased.

"Don't betray me," Igor warned. "I'm just trying to curry favor with them through gifts. Don't say after you leave that the mask was from me. 'I only give gifts to you, nobody else' is a crucial point for gaining favor."

"I really couldn't care less about getting involved in your schemes," Ashe responded irritably. "And to think... You had it all so detailed, with names and everything, I almost believed you."

"Honestly, the fact that you saw through this charade makes me think I need to reflect," Igor contemplated. "If even you can't be fooled, I definitely need to fine-tune the pacing of my stories... Go on, I have to wait for the next client."

Ashe huffed, picked up the mask, and headed for the door. But just before leaving, he paused and said, "That being said, I really like this mask, thanks."

"Please! When you get back! Immediately record this in your journal!" Igor called out. "Remember to be forever grateful and repay Mr. Bukin for his great kindness."

Watching Ashe leave the room, Igor went over to tidy up and stash the suitcase under the bed. He then prepared a bath in the bathroom—not just out of habit. After a busy night, he felt sticky all over, and the warm bath was heavenly relief.

After bathing and brushing his teeth, Igor inadvertently resonated with 'Revelation', and saw foam on the mirror forming the words—

"Don't let anyone know you're pleased."

Igor caught his reflection in the mirror, his lips curving into a smile, and he chuckled softly to himself.

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

## **Chapter 268: The Scarecrow and the Fire**

Stars Kingdom, Swordflower College, evening.

Engulite, with her sword bag slung over her shoulder, returned to the dormitory, holding up a gold-edged invitation. “I just got back from Swordsmanship Practice, and someone asked me to deliver this invitation to Sonya.”

Adelle came over to take a look, smirked, and casually tossed it into the trash bin. “A mere viscount’s son daring to send invitations is like a toad lusting after a swan’s flesh... Engulite, let me teach you something. For invitations like this, with less than three stars, just say ‘I’m not very close with Sonya’ to decline. If it has a Moon Star, then you should bring it back because it means the sender is at least an earl or a direct heir.”

“What if it has a Radiant Star?” Engulite, though of noble birth herself, had never learned heraldry and was completely unfamiliar with such etiquette.

“That would represent an olive branch from the royal family,” Adelle explained. “You would need to kneel on one knee and accept the invitation with white gloves on as a sign of respect to the royalty... Haha, just kidding. Normally, just accepting it is fine, but doing that might actually earn you some favor with the royal family!”

It was just a joke from Adelle, but seeing Engulite pondering seriously, she was somewhat surprised. “Are you actually considering it?”

“Why shouldn’t I consider it? Opportunities to connect with the royal family aren’t common, are they?” Engulite countered.

Scratching her face, Adelle said, “But... you know, Engulite, you’ve always seemed to us someone who wouldn’t bow down to power, nor compromise yourself for personal gain. After all, even when Sonya offered to introduce you to Professor Trozan, you weren’t keen...”

“I am someone who doesn’t bow to power, nor compromise for personal gain,” Engulite nodded. “In these past few days as a Sorcerer, many nobles have tried to curry favor with me through various means, and I’ve ignored them all.”

“So why would you consider bowing down to the royal family?”

“Bowing to other nobles is selling oneself to the powerful, but serving the royal family is a contribution to society—how could they be the same?” Engulite gave Adelle a look and set down her sword bag. “I’m not a fool. After becoming a Swordcerer, my goal was to join the Stars Kingdom’s Sorcerer system. If I have the chance to start at a higher level, why would I refuse?”

Adelle understood—Engulite had always been principled because she had long decided that her only sovereign could be the country itself, and as the royal family rules the

Stars Kingdom, she would offer her loyalty exclusively to them, never accepting the overtures of other nobles.

“But why didn’t they directly approach Sonya?” Engulite wondered. “Sonya goes to the training grounds every day, isn’t she easy to find?”

“They don’t dare.”

Lois rubbed her eyes and yawned as she climbed out of bed, saying, “Nobles are the most concerned about face. If people knew that Sonya had turned down their invitation to a banquet, it would be them who lose face, not Sonya. But if they send the invitation through us, even if it’s rejected, no one would know... Oh no, my head hurts so bad, Adelle—”

“I’m on it.” Quickly, Adelle prepared a cup of honey water and handed it to Lois, who gulped it down. Curious, Engulite asked, “Lois, do you get hangovers?”

“Normal people get hangovers after drinking and sleeping,” Lois muttered.

When Sonya triumphantly returned from Orbit College in the wee hours, the entire girls’ dormitory was abuzz, staying up all night to celebrate.

Initially, the dorm supervisor had objections, but when Professor Trozan directly paid to have several cases of wine delivered overnight from the Secret Garden, the supervisor had no choice but to reluctantly participate.

The excitement in the girls’ dormitory was inevitable. Although Sonya had been focusing on Swordsmanship Training this past month, not participating in any girls’ activities, remember that last semester, Sonya diligently expanded her network. Even though she wasn’t close with everyone, she was at least acquainted.

Therefore, as Sonya rose to prominence, the female students also quietly paid attention to this impoverished and beautiful college student. Among them, there were those who blessed her, those who were jealous, and even those who disliked her. However, regardless of their feelings, they all kept an eye on Sonya. As she continued her relentless Swordsmanship Training and achieved one dazzling victory after another, many of them gradually changed their attitudes, secretly rooting for Sonya, becoming her first batch of fans.

Most students at Swordflower College come from the middle class, lower Noble families, and merchant families of Gales. Although most of them were born into luxury, their spiritual world is often very empty. The bustling Gales only filled their minds with vanity and entertainment, not instilling in them the ideals of responsibility they should have.

Some, like Lois, knew to study hard, preparing to take over family business affairs in the future; others, like Adelle, spent four years at Swordflower College with the plan to graduate, get married, have a few children, and then continue to drift through life, with their futures secured by others.

They were like luxuriously dressed scarecrows, existing merely to fill a quota.

Initially, Adelle and Lois, both locals, ostracized Sonya and Engulite essentially due to the conflict between scarecrows and fire—whether it was Engulite or Sonya, they both had clear aspirations and ideals, and their souls constantly radiated a flame named ‘struggle’, naturally causing the scarecrows to keep their distance.

But now, the situation had changed.

Because Sonya was no longer merely a fire; she had risen and become a rising Radiant Star.

Scarecrows might fear the pain of flames, but they do not fear the sunlight of a Radiant Star. On the contrary, they yearn for the sunlight to enrich their souls. As long as the Radiant Star shines brighter, they feel as if their empty souls are also becoming fuller and more brilliant.

In fact, Lois was the first to be affected. In order to keep up with Sonya’s pace, she had quietly declined all invitations, stopped attending tea parties, left the Club, and even started paying attention in class, fully dedicating herself to studying the Water Faction. Her academic achievements in this month alone were equivalent to the past half-year—time previously wasted on meaningless social activities had occupied too much of her attention.

So when they saw Sonya slay the alchemical giant bear with a single stroke on the Curtain live broadcast, they were almost ready to jump up for joy in the dormitory. The honor of Swordflower students and Sonya’s achievement—these two joys overlapped, bringing them even more happiness.

Last night’s celebration party didn’t end until dawn, and traces of yesterday’s carnival were still evident in the dormitory. The trash cans were filled with bottles and cans, and there were even scraps of fireworks tubes on the floor—it’s amazing they managed to find fireworks to celebrate late at night.

Lois, not yet a Sorcerer, was already exhausted from staying up late to watch the Curtain live broadcast, and the early morning celebration party only added to her fatigue. As soon as it was daylight, she passed out drunk in bed, skipping classes for the entire day.

On the other hand, Adelle, who had also drunk quite a bit, was unaffected and remained energetic all night without needing sleep, which she claims is a skill developed from



staying up late watching shows. Now suffering from a terrible hangover, Lois saw Adelle playing cheerfully on the Curtain and couldn't help but kick her with her foot.

"Sorry!" Lois preemptively shouted out loud.

Adelle was immediately taken aback by her action, muttering, "Always taking it out on me..."

"Where's Sonya?" Engulite asked. She had been engaged in Exploration in Virtual Realm the previous night and missed the morning party. "Is she still outside?"

"She came back at noon," Adelle nodded, "She's been lying in bed this whole time."

Engulite looked over and noticed that Sonya was deeply engrossed in the Curtain, seriously tapping away, her expressions changing rapidly—smiling joyfully one moment, gritting her teeth the next, then looking serious and deep, and occasionally raising her eyebrows in triumph, her expressions shifting several times within a minute.

The Swordsmanship girl blinked, "Why has she suddenly become so obsessed with the Curtain? She's almost like someone else..."

"Engulite, you've changed," Adelle said solemnly. "You didn't use to beat around the bush and insult people like this."

"I didn't say it was you!"

"Still denying it? As if I don't know who's the biggest Curtain addict in this building!"

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

## **Chapter 269: The Observer is Dead by My Hand**

At this moment, Sonya noticed Engulite had returned and called out, "Quick, go to the School Forum and find the post titled 'Is Miss Therave a Disgrace to Our School Regardless of Her Skills?' and help me obliterate the author."

"Adelle, you should come help too. There are a bunch of idiots in there spouting nonsense and rolling around; it's infuriating. Come and blast them with me!"

Engulite pointed at Sonya, her face a picture of confusion, and looked towards Adelle.

Adelle shrugged. “She’s been like this all afternoon, intensely searching for herself. She echoes posts that praise her and curses at the ones that insult her... she just can’t stop.”

Previously, Sonya was merely recognized as a genius within the Swordsmanship Department, and not much attention was paid by other departments. However, after last night’s Mixer Party where she summoned the Two Wings spirit and slew the alchemical giant bear during the Chief Battle, the Red-haired Swordsman’s fame skyrocketed across Gales. The School Forum was flooded with the name “Sonya Therave” all day.

But Sonya was not a Gold Coin—while some admired her, others despised her. Quickly, the forum divided into two factions. One believed Sonya would emerge as a new Swordflower of the Sanctuary, potentially a Legend, while the other viewed her as merely a lucky rustic girl who would soon fade into obscurity, a disgrace to the Swordflower title.

Engulite opened the post, and her expression shifted slightly.

The post mainly argued three points: Sonya was not only non-Noble but not even an ordinary citizen, just a marginal impoverished villager, “A mud-legged commoner likely just using a Sorcerer status to sell herself at a high price.”

Sonya had lost her father early on, and her mother was a farmer. Where would she get the resources to study and learn, “She might have been exploiting her beauty even as a child.”

The reason Sonya became a Two Wings Sorcerer in just a month, a speed beyond normal, even legendary Sorcerers hadn’t achieved such absurdity, so she must have received support from others. But why would she receive such support, “Perhaps she found herself a new father?”

Every point was a slanderous attack, bereft of any logic. Engulite, furious at the read, exclaimed, “Can’t we just track down the author and beat them up?”

“It’s a new account, can’t dig anything up,” stated Adelle. “Today the School Forum saw a surge of zero-post accounts, all specifically trashing Sonya. They know they have no reasonable ground, so they don’t dare use their main accounts to confront us directly.”

Engulite, puzzled, asked, “Can’t these accounts that are indiscriminately insulting people be banned?”

Adelle sighed, “Take a closer look. The original poster didn’t use a single swear word; all the phrases just skirt the edge of insult, using suggestive tone to lead thoughts in a

negative direction. Even if reported, the school can't officially recognize it as direct verbal abuse."

"I thought the students at Swordflower College would have better morals..." Engulite continued scrolling through other comments, growing increasingly agitated, "People in our town wouldn't even speak like this!"

"Hah, don't mention Swordflower College; even the School Forum at Truth College is filled with this kind of toxic posting. Colleges can only screen intelligence, perseverance, and background, but not character," Adelle shook her head. "That's how it is with us Nobles, polite face to face, but spewing nonsense behind the Curtain."

Engulite looked towards Sonya, concerned, "Sonya, are you okay?"

"Huh? I'm fine, look, another person got so scared by our replies they didn't dare to respond."

The rustic girl flipped over, lying back on the bed, "So cowardly, must be one of those jerks from the Wind Department, hiding behind the Curtain and still wavering."

Engulite blinked, Sonya's reaction was completely different from what she expected.

At that moment, Lois finally recovered from her hangover and waved her hand, "Don't worry about her; she's the type who gets more excited the more people insult her."

"Why do you make me sound like a pervert!" Sonya flipped back, continuing to lie on the bed.

"Tell me how you're not a pervert. Can a normal person raise their Magical Factions to Gold Tier in just a month from scratch!?"

"Hmph, jealousy sounds so sweet."

"See, I wasn't wrong, you are a pervert, pervert, pervert!"

"Lois, your way of being affectionate is really weird."

"Sonya the mega pervert!"

Facing derogatory and slanderous comments, people generally react in one of three ways: The first is to be heartbroken, losing sleep over such comments as if they were a physical blow, necessitating avoidance;

The second is to maintain composure, getting angry but not distressed, and not dwelling on these minor issues as if nothing happened;

The third type is like Sonya, with a heart of steel.

You insult me? I'll insult you back, and not just that, I'll call others to join me in the comeback!

Anger is my fuel, words are my ammunition, and if I don't make you surrender with them, then I consider it a loss!

While ordinary people might cry over such slander and vilification, Sonya is different. The village she comes from is no simple place; from a young age, she honed her verbal skills through insulting others. When she sees these covert smears by Nobles on the School Forum, she's utterly unfazed, even finding it somewhat amusing.

Is that all?

City rats don't even squeak as sharply as country rats.

Engulite carefully read through the post replies and asked, "Is 'Did the Swordswoman eat today?' from Sonya?"

"No, that was me," Adelle said. "Sonya's alternate account is right beneath that one in the thread."

Engulite looked perplexed, "The 'President of the Stretching Claws Club'? What does that mean?"

Sonya glanced at her, then lay on the bed, sticking her bottom up in the air and stretching her arms forward as far as she could to stretch her back, much like a cat, comfortably squinting her eyes, "This is what it means to stretch claws."

Adelle quickly snapped a photo with the speed of lightning, "Don't worry, I won't share it, just keeping it for myself."

"Of course you can't share," Sonya said. "Even if you were to post a lifestyle photo, it would have to wait until I'm dressed in my Battle Garment and have my makeup done, and besides, the dorm lighting isn't good, we'd need to get a ring light..."

Watching Sonya's antics, Engulite couldn't help but remark, "I used to think that Geniuses were always aloof and detached, like Professor Trozan is the epitome of a Genius in my mind..."

Engulite never imagined that a real Genius not only isn't aloof but also intensely engages in searching their own discussion threads, uses alternate accounts to argue on forums, and even pays attention to lighting when taking photos...

“Your impression isn’t wrong,” Lois said. “What is wrong is the Stars, who blindly favored Sonya. No wonder there are so many novels about ‘poor boys favored by princesses’ out there; there’s some truth to them after all.”

“You’re talking behind my back again,” Sonya sat up. “But today I’m in a good mood. Not only am I not going to hold your jealousy against you, but I’m also planning to treat you to a meal!”

“Really?” Adelle jumped up excitedly. “What are we eating?”

“At the school restaurant!”

“You’re treating us to the school restaurant after winning the Chief Battle?”

“That’s true,” Sonya mused, chin in hand. “After all, since I won the Chief Battle, it should be you treating me, shouldn’t it? Why should I be the one paying?”

“That’s odd,” Adelle remarked. “Sonya, you didn’t use to take advantage of others, but recently you’ve gotten shameless. I wonder who you learned that from... And for the record, it wasn’t me!”

“You know me,” Engulite said calmly. “It wasn’t me either.”

“I’m usually the one Sonya takes advantage of,” Lois added, curious. “Besides us, the only other people Sonya is in frequent contact with are Felix and Professor Trozan, but they don’t seem like that type either... Could it be you’ve secretly started dating someone behind our backs?”

“Let’s go eat,” Sonya jumped down to change her clothes, sounding annoyed. “I’m rarely giving you the chance to treat me to a meal, so I advise you not to miss it.”

“Changing the subject!”

“Putting on airs!”

“Girl, you’ve caught my attention. Hand over your man, and I’ll spare your life!”

The dormitory was buzzing as everyone headed out to eat.

At 11 PM, as usual, Sonya arrived at the Meditation Tower, ready to enter the Virtual Realm.

She had a lot to discuss tonight: she had learned a new Miracle in her dreams, and her Swordsmanship Faction had advanced to the Gold Tier, successfully summoning a new Two Wings spirit;

She had won the Chief Battle and would be participating in the Intercollegiate League as a Swordflower seed player;

It seemed Demilo might be connected to Vlozrada, and Star Hall was likely under the Stars Sovereign's Faction...

Thinking of this, Sonya couldn't wait to step into the Time Continent to show off her achievements to the Observer.

She summoned her newly acquired Two Wings spirit, Sword Shadow, and tapped into the Gate of Truth within the spirit to descend into the second layer of the Virtual Realm on the Time Continent.

As her consciousness sank into the Virtual Realm, the rustic girl slowly opened her eyes. Finding herself in the front seat of a sports car, she turned around and said to those in the back, "Observer Witch, you'll never guess what happened last night..."

Mid-sentence, Sonya faltered.

She looked at the Witch, and the Witch looked back at her. They glanced around and saw no one else.

"Where is the Observer?" Sonya asked, puzzled.

"It's not my fault," Deya quickly disclaimed any responsibility.

Soon, they noticed a note stuck on the car's windshield:

"Got held up tonight, you two go for a drive. Just don't wreck the car."

"And Swordsman, our adventure went smoothly last night, and we didn't speak ill of you, ask the Witch if you don't believe me."

Sonya turned to Deya, "What bad things did you say about me last night?"

Deya looked utterly perplexed, hesitating to speak, then stopping, her expression twisted as if she were in stomach pain.

After discussing with her sisters for a moment, they decided to follow the advice of the Black Butler: "Actually, the Observer lied."

"Where did he lie?"

"Our exploration last night did not go smoothly. The Observer was run over by my car as soon as he arrived in the Virtual Realm, so we didn't have a chance to speak ill of you."

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

## Chapter 270: Life Difficulty Easy Mode

“They should have seen my message by now...”

Seated in the back of Miss’s luxury car, Ashe scrolled through the dial, summoning his Gospel. He flipped to the Sorcerer Handbook interface, where the current Team Composition was displayed under “Exploration in Virtual Realm”:

“Team Composition: Death Maniac Swordswoman, Black-and-White Witch”

“Location: Time Continent”

“Status: Exploring”

Before leaving home, Ashe had arranged for the two of them to embark on the Exploration in Virtual Realm.

Of course, even without his arrangement, the two would have ventured into the exploration on their own. However, having received Ashe’s approval, the swordswoman duo were allowed to use his sports car.

However, the Map seemed to be bound to Ashe’s gaming system and could not be lent to them.

And similar to the Swordswoman’s Leave Request, although Ashe was not part of the team, a share of the team’s spoils still had to be allocated to him. Thirty percent of the arcane energy experience earned by the swordswoman and the witch would be shared with Ashe, and they might trigger special mechanisms that would benefit him.

S

The only difference from an Operator was that Ashe’s leave had no Restrictions!

If he wished, he could avoid entering the Virtual Realm altogether, relying solely on the gains from the swordswoman and witch to grow stronger!

But as Ashe decided not to join the exploration that evening, the game issued a reminder: “Interacting with Operators is crucial for maintaining Bond Levels. If Operators

perceive that you are avoiding meetings, it could gradually decrease their favorability towards you, leading to a reduction in Bond Level.”

Only then did Ashe realize that the game’s favorability was fluctuating, not fixed once it increased. This meant that taking a leave or two might be fine, but constantly avoiding work and distancing himself from the group could lead to dissatisfaction among the frontline workers.

No, working was for earning, but Ashe entered the Virtual Realm primarily to enhance his Bonds with the Operators.

Rather than calling it work, it felt more like... team building?

Realizing this, Ashe suddenly developed a reluctance to enter the Virtual Realm.

Ying—

With a slight vibration, the hovercar switched lanes, yet Ashe remained as steady as Mount Tai. He looked at Annan in the driver’s seat and swiftly brought his thoughts back to reality.

Although Harvey and Igor had not breathed a word about it, the nature of the tasks associated with people like them could only be related to gang vendettas, trickery, robbery, and theft, given their narrow range of operations which a single criminal code could encompass.

Despite Ashe’s usual calm demeanor, he had secretly investigated Azura’s underworld forces primarily through online games. Many helpful folks from Azura had educated him that there were ten major underworld forces in the region, known as “One Palace, Two Firms, Three Families, Four Major Companies.”

The ‘One Palace’ referred to the Mermaid Palace. The sea demon race, dubbed the ‘Sewer Royalty’ of the Gospel Kingdom, had chain stores in major cities. Nearly all murders, smuggling, drug trafficking, and race trading had to pass through the sea demons’ approval, making them the undisputed leaders of the underworld.

‘Two Firms’ meant the top two firms in the Azura Sub-Ranking, both squeezing into the top ten of the General Ranking. Firms like the one Annan represented, which were pushed out of the top ten of the sub-ranking, ended up taking the leftover cases that others passed on.

‘Three Families’ were ancient families deeply rooted in the Azura region. Ashe didn’t remember their specific surnames or emblems, but he did remember that they intermarried among themselves and their connections were deeply entrenched in departments like Bluebeard, Red Cap, and the Government Affairs Hall, even the mayor hailed from one of these families.



The 'Four Major Companies' were four enterprises that accounted for over 75% of Azura's GDP and had also made it into the national corporate rankings, considered too big to fail. Although closely related to the Three Families, with almost all having received investments from them, the relationship between the two remained complicated due to the inherent contradictions between capital and feudal systems. After all, capital naturally resists such feudalistic structures, and it would be naive to think that early investments could control a successful company.

Thus, as Ashe sat in Annan's car, he wondered which of the ten major underworld forces they were going to confront. When they reached their destination, even the well-prepared Ashe was stunned by the sight of this underworld stronghold.

Azura No.4 High School

"This is..."

"No.4 High School, you can just call it No.4 High."

Annan stepped out of the car, pressed the car key, and the hovercar went to find a parking spot on its own.

Although it's called a high school, No.4 High School looks more like a business center. Each floor radiates a warm, bright light, and the glass revolving doors are wide open, with no security measures in place nor guards to check visitors.

Ashe followed Annan inside, and his impression changed once again. There were no classrooms as one might expect, nor any sounds of teaching. Through the windows, Ashe saw rooms filled with coffin-like pods, fully enclosed, each with a three-dimensional projection displaying the name and information of the person inside.

Rather than a classroom, it seemed more like a laboratory engaged in human experiments.

However, these fully enclosed pods looked familiar to Ashe. "They resemble the virtual game pods you often play in, don't they?" Annan said. "Or rather, the game pods resemble these."

Ashe paused for a moment, then realized, "Right, if consciousness immersion technology has already been applied to private virtual gaming, then it must have been adopted in more crucial fields like education, medicine, and experimentation!"

"Before I was born, 'Education Pods' had already become the mainstay of basic education," Annan explained. "Except for Sorcerer colleges, which still employ teachers, elementary and secondary education no longer require them. Most people start their customized education plans in Education Pods from the age of five. It's said to be a wonderful experience—you'll have a teacher who perfectly suits you in every aspect.

They understand all your thoughts and feelings, use the most ingenious methods, and create the most comfortable scenarios to make you fall in love with learning.”

“By the time you reach secondary education, you begin to discover your own Talents, from jump rope to marksman, from hair styling to fashion design, from biological research to civil engineering... Whether you’ve encountered these fields before or not, the Education Pods strive to unearth your hidden Talents, allowing you to explore the limits of your abilities within just a few years.”

“Wait, are you saying that Education Pods can tailor education to each individual?” Ashe asked, puzzled. “That sounds like...”

“Just as you thought,” Annan said, “the Education Pod utilizes the big data analysis from the Gospel. Don’t be surprised. Most high-tech enterprises make use of the Gospel’s big data — the seamless flow of high-speed traffic we saw on the way here and the orderly drones in the sky are all powered by this data analysis, which is why the city’s lifeblood flows like art.”

“Banjeet mentioned that you and Mr. Harvey seem to have some reservations about our education system, believing that families without Points will be far behind those with Points reserves.”

Annan glanced around the room filled with hundreds of Education Pods: “But in reality, until your Talent is recognized by the Virtual Realm, the Gospel won’t charge you a penny in tuition.”

Ashe, however, caught on to a word she had used earlier: “Supposedly?”

“Yes,” Annan flicked her Amethyst Earring, “I never went to school.”

“The majority of wealthy people do not partake in the basic education provided by the Gospel Kingdom.”

“Why not?”

“Because basic education isn’t free. If you want to receive basic education, you have to Sign a Contract and pay a price.”

“What price?”

“Lifelong education.”

Ashe was puzzled, “Lifelong education is a price?”

Annan nodded, pointing to a mature woman who had just emerged from an Education Pod in the next room: “Depending on age, each person has a certain educational time

quota per year. It's most intensive during youth, practically requiring daily classes. After reaching adulthood and starting work, the educational time is significantly reduced, but you still have to attend at least 60 hours of courses per month."

"The adult courses offer a lot of freedom; you can learn anything you want, whether it's stacking blocks, playing the harmonica, makeup techniques, or appreciating Shadow Drama... as long as your brain absorbs new knowledge, it offsets the educational time."

Ashe blinked, "Isn't that... a good thing?"

"I never said it wasn't a good thing," Annan replied, nodding slightly to the mature woman as she passed by, then ascending the stairs, "The Gospel Kingdom has sustained a technology boom for Thirty Years, and the lifelong education system has contributed a lot to this."

"Why do wealthy people not participate in basic education?"

"Why don't you want to be employed by me for life, insisting on reducing the time to 101 days?" Annan retorted.

"That's a false analogy," Ashe immediately countered. "How can serving you as a beast of burden be compared to lifelong education? One is like eating dirt, the other like having a meal!"

"It doesn't seem like you're serving me as a beast of burden right now," Annan raised an eyebrow. "Are you saying I'm the dirt?"

"No, no, no, I am the dirt, you're the one dining."

Annan was momentarily amused by his response, forgetting where she had left off. After a moment she continued, "Just like you're unwilling to accept a lifetime Contract, if we had the choice, we wouldn't accept the lifelong shackles either. My Family would rather have Banjeet tutor me than sign a Contract for basic education."

"By the way, the Gospel Kingdom also offers another lifelong Contract, or rather a benefit—lifelong labor. If you sign a contract with the Labor Security Bureau, you'll receive the average social salary even when unemployed, but in return, the Bureau will assign you suitable employment."

"Of course, the job must meet the three basic principles: good pay, light duties, and close to home, and it absolutely must align with your interests, because job assignments also rely on data analysis from the Gospel. If there are no suitable jobs, the Gospel would rather you stay home and collect unemployment benefits."

"However, long-term unemployment is rare because all enterprises must comply with the planning of the Labor Security Bureau. The enterprises themselves only staff 10% of

their workforce; the remaining 90% must be provided by the Labor Security Bureau. This policy still operates healthily to this day, proving that the quality of the 90% of employees likely surpasses that of the 10% recruited by the companies themselves.”

Lifelong education, lifelong labor, then...

Ashe looked a bit puzzled: “There wouldn’t also be a lifelong love Contract, would there?”

Annan shook her head with a smile: “How could that be... right, the Gospel can indeed help you find a perfect match—if you saved the world in your past life.”

“Yet, most of the time, the Gospel can uncover Treasures buried deep underground, determine the weight of the sun, and calculate the rhythms of the moon, but it just can’t provide us with a perfect love,” Annan explained.

“But...” Annan’s lips curled into a subtle smile, “if you’re just choosing the most suitable partner from those you know, the Gospel can still help you.”

“Love is a luxury, but marriage is not, and lifelong marriages are common here. While not mandatory, most people marry the most suitable person within their social network after completing their secondary education at age 17. Then, following the Gospel’s guidance, they mate at the optimal times to have the healthiest babies... It has been proven that those who follow this path achieve happiness.”

“Appropriate education, suitable job, right partner. If life had a difficulty setting, then by signing three lifelong Contracts, you’d switch to easy mode—just listen quietly to the Gospel and the world opens its most accommodating side to you.”

“Uncovering hidden Talents, finding a job that may not be grand but fulfills one’s life value, having a partner who may not be perfect but with whom you share deep affection... Ashe found himself envying this, needing to read several inspirational posts shared by his manager just to cope.”

And all these blessings are just the basic social security for most people in the Gospel.

“If a normal life under the Gospel is like playing on ‘easy mode,’ then Ashe’s previous life was at least on ‘hard mode,’ designed for those who the creators suggest should not pick this difficulty on their first attempt at life.”

“This lifetime is even more daunting, like starting with a ‘harder start’ mod where all enemies are enhanced.”

Looking back now, Ashe realized that his beginning was like being attacked by Gerard, a Sorcerer of the Tri-wings Sanctuary—a high-level player striking from another

dimension. If any game dared to start like that, it would be guaranteed to receive a refund request within two hours.

However...

Ashe, puzzled, asked, "All this sounds quite good, doesn't it? What are you dissatisfied with?"

"I'm not dissatisfied," Annan said with a smile. "On the contrary, I'm grateful for this system. It's precisely because the melody of the Gospel is so harmonious that a discordant note like me stands out so starkly."

"We're here."

They arrived on the third floor and stopped outside a room. Miss pointed to Education Pod 15 inside: "That's my target, an Orc Sorcerer, but a Production Sorcerer with no combat ability whatsoever. Now it's your turn, Ashe."

Ashe looked around: "You want me to kill someone in a school?"

"Of course not, our Firm is a law-abiding good citizen," Annan replied. "Just pull him out and give him a beating to make him leave. This is a task specifically prepared for you."

"Ah? Why is my task this?"

"Because your other two companions don't seem like the kind to stop easily. They are more suited for services that lead to death or serious injury."

Ashe didn't immediately argue with Annan. After pondering for a moment, he suddenly remembered the 'Bullhide' spirit he had acquired in the Virtual Realm. Clearly a spirit from the Physical Faction, it could temporarily enhance his defense, so Ashe had kept it without integrating it into the system yet.

He activated the 'Bullhide' spirit to boost his defense, and his skin, pale with a hint of pink, took on a faint bronze tint. Then, putting on the mask given by Igor, his appearance resembled that of a well-fed street thug with nothing better to do.

"Is he a bad guy?" Ashe suddenly asked.

"Not really," Annan glanced at him. "He just cares a lot about his reputation."

Ashe said no more and entered the room. Next to the Education Pod, he found an emergency call button. After pressing it, Pod 15 quickly opened to both sides.

A medium-sized Orc emerged, looking bewilderedly at Ashe: "Who are you?"

Ashe: ” “

The Orc, both shocked and delighted: “Really? My father died a few years ago, and my mother hasn’t found a new partner. She would definitely like you.”

Ashe: ” “

The Orc scratched his head: “Haha, I’m not very bright. Even coming here to learn, I’m more about the technical side; I can’t understand the theory.”

Ashe fell into contemplation, eventually tiptoeing to pat the Orc on the head.

“Why aren’t you wearing a hat?”

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

## Chapter 271: A Guide to Knee Pillows

“Do you know? It is said that just before death, a Sorcerer’s Soul enters a state known as ‘Elysian Dreamscape.’”

Lying on the ground, Ashe opened one eye and saw Annan squatting beside him. Her purple stockings elongated her legs, pressing a plush white rabbit outward, and her short skirt did little to fend off intruders, instead stirring a desire to conquer and explore.

Annan spoke leisurely, “In the ‘Elysian Dreamscape,’ time is infinite. There, Sorcerers erase all memories and relive an entire lifetime.”

“However, unlike reality, everything in the ‘Elysian Dreamscape’ unfolds as the Sorcerer desires. People they like return their affection, desired things are obtained easily, and disliked individuals meet an immediate demise... Sorcerers can dominate the Destiny of everyone in the Dreamscape, doing as they please, in boundless bliss.”

“Is there really such a thing?” Ashe couldn’t help but laugh, which made him tremble in pain: “I’ve neared death a few times myself, why haven’t I experienced it even once?”

“How do you know this isn’t your ‘Elysian Dreamscape’ right now?”

Annan blinked like Ashe and chuckled, “The ‘Elysian Dreamscape’ only appears at the moment before death, and once the dream ends, it means the Sorcerer is certain to die. Ashe, do you know where a Sorcerer’s Soul goes after death?”

“Hell?” Ashe asked tentatively. “But I’ve heard that the Divine Master’s heaven might also accept Soul migrations...”

“That’s right, either hell or heaven,” Annan confirmed. “And what determines whether you go to hell or heaven is your behavior in the ‘Elysian Dreamscape.’”

“If you remain devout in the dream, living according to the Divine Master’s will, then you can ascend to heaven; but if you indulge recklessly and enjoy carnal pleasures, you will fall into hell.”

“Ashe, would you prefer a moment of pleasure or eternal happiness?”

“Can I choose not to die?”

“Do you know why I’m telling you this story, Ashe?” Annan propped her chin with her hands as she gazed at Ashe lying on the ground. “Although I can’t delve into your past, from what Mr. Bukin and Mr. Harvey have said, I gather that you were cellmates and recently escaped from prison, eventually crossing through the Virtual Realm Passage to reach Gospel.”

“Because of this, I had already braced myself for the moral lows you might exhibit. That’s why Mr. Harvey and Mr. Bukin actually surprised me—if we were to measure them by the standards of the Firm, they’ve surpassed the average moral level.”

That must mean your line of work is really lacking in standards...

“If the two of them were a surprise, then you, Ashe, have been a shock.”

Annan glanced at the bruises on Ashe’s face. “I really didn’t expect you to complete the task by faking a fight.”

“What fake fight? I genuinely couldn’t beat him!” Ashe spoke a bit too forcefully, pulling at the bruises on his face and wincing in pain. “That was an Orc! Not only was he heavier, but he seemed to have learned some combat skills. Luckily, my skills in the Fist and Claw Faction are decent enough; otherwise, I couldn’t have escaped him. I’ve completed the task you assigned, winning cleanly and decisively.”

“You call this battered state of yours a win?” Annan was somewhat speechless. “The victory was probably more like seventy-thirty.”

“How is it only seventy percent?”

“Seventy percent for the Orc, thirty for you!”

Annan helped Ashe up, and he naturally placed his hand on her shoulder, shifting his weight towards her. Purple Moth spoke irritably, “I need to take a photo of this moment



later. It will definitely prove that I'm sincerely collaborating with you. Even Mr. Bukin can't accuse me of treating you like slaves—what kind of slave owner helps up a slave?"

Ashe chuckled, "You're underestimating Igor. He only uses reason when it's to his advantage. If reason is detrimental to him, then he'll resort to 'double standards,' 'logical fallacies,' 'shifting the topic,' and other miracles to find ways to blame you. For a Con Artist, reason is such an inconvenient thing, isn't it?"

"I can understand that," Annan snorted. "People can't betray their own interests. Reason is just a consensus that benefits most, and if it's harmful to oneself, there's no need to acknowledge it."

"But because selfishness is a common human trait, I can't understand you—why didn't you use a sorcerer's power to beat the Orc?"

"I did," Ashe replied. "I enhanced my skin's defense, but I didn't expect the Orc's basic attack power to be so high..."

"What about your Sword Technique Miracle? Your Defensive Miracle?" Annan said. "Even without using miracles, if you had just drawn the sword hidden on you, the mere presence of a Swordcerer's spirit could have scared him into kneeling."

"Being a Production Sorcerer, he understands the terror of a Battle Sorcerer more than ordinary people."

"How do you know I have a sword hidden on me?" Ashe was somewhat surprised, as he had never exposed his Honeyed Blade in the Gospel Kingdom.

"As a Swordcerer, the fact that you never carry a sword with you already says a lot," Annan glanced at him, the Amethyst Earring shimmering with a dazzling halo. "Any sorcerer with equipment would carry their weapons at all times, like the Red Cap units that are auxiliary trained in Gun Technique; they even take their Firearms to the bath."

"And when they go to the bathroom..."

"Why?" Annan cut off his attempt to continue the trivial topic. "Why don't you show your true strength and instead fight like an ordinary person?"

"I completed the task, didn't I?"

"Do I need to order you to get a serious answer from you?"

"I almost forgot you can now demand anything from me," Ashe muttered. "Well, I just didn't want to bully anyone. It already felt weird intentionally causing trouble for him, and using a sorcerer's power to suppress him would just make me a plain villain."



"I used to be assigned stupid and offending tasks by my terrible boss when I worked. But to make a living, I had to grit my teeth and do them."

"Because I knew that if I didn't do it, someone else would. And if it was me doing it, I could at least minimize the harm."

The Cult Leader paused, "Though I didn't reduce the harm much, since I did kick the Orc hard enough to send him flying—"

"Alright, alright." Annan said. "So are you accusing the person who assigned the task—me, your terrible boss?"

"Terrible boss is just a metaphor," Ashe shrugged. "In life, you will inevitably have conflicts with others; there will always be something forcing you to hurt others, like living conditions, desires, beliefs, family... and yes, including you."

"I can't resist you now, and besides me, you have other executors," Ashe spoke calmly. "Since that's the case, I'll complete the task in my own way."

"That Orc will probably think about how to punch better when he goes to bed tonight, and by tomorrow morning, he'll have forgotten this fight. If I had bullied him unnecessarily with a Sorcerer's power, he might never forget the humiliation I caused him until the day he dies."

By then, they had left the school, and Annan pressed his car key, signaling the Hovercar to come over.

"He's not even the same race as you, you don't find his appearance appealing, and you have no relationship with him, why would you choose the most troublesome way to help him?"

"He never offended me before, so why should I hurt him in the cruelest way possible?"

Both remained silent, waiting until the Hovercar arrived. Annan got into the back seat and gestured for Ashe to sit next to him.

"Ashe, do you remember the story of the Elysian Dreamscape?" Annan said. "I've always found the Elysian Dreamscape to be unfair because most of the people I know can't pass the dream's tests to enter heaven, but they aren't bad enough to fall into hell either... I'm the same."

"The Elysian Dreamscape purposely creates an environment where evil can be vented, drawing out people's desires, thereby proving they should fall into hell... It's just arrogance, like a Sorcerer oppressing mortals with power, or a Divine Master manipulating lives with dreams."

"But you're different, Ashe," Annan said. "You're not someone who would be in-between. I have a strong feeling that in your Elysian Dreamscape, it would either be a paradise where everyone is happy, or an unimaginable hell. You would either stand above the heavens or become an enemy of the gods."

"I appreciate the compliment, Miss, but I'm just a zero-star genius who hasn't made any Ranking List," Ashe responded calmly, not tempted by Annan's grand visions. "I don't wish to go to either heaven or hell."

"Hmm," Annan hummed softly and patted her thigh. "Lie down."

"What?"

Annan summoned a hydrotherapy spirit. "Don't you need healing? Or you can go back and have Banjeet treat you."

"Don't think you can harass me just because you're my boss..." Ashe said as he lay down on her lap.

The faint scent of violets, the elasticity of her thighs, the smooth texture of her stockings... Well, it's not bad.

Unknowingly, Ashe had also amassed a wealth of experience in lap pillows.

The Swordswoman's lap pillow, Freya's lap pillow, and now Annan's lap pillow could be said to rival each other in quality. The Swordswoman would sing during her lap pillows, Freya would clean his ears, and although the Miss didn't have any special skills to add, she was currently Ashe's boss, and that alone was enough to earn a nod of respect.

While Ashe was mentally rating them, Annan, while treating his bruises, asked, "So, are we heading back now? Or do you want to buy something?"

"Huh?" Ashe was taken aback. "Is the mission over?"

"It's over," Annan smiled. "Did you think I would assign you something very difficult? You just wanted to spend money in the game; I certainly wouldn't make you kill someone... at least not to do it personally."

"Then why did you have me drive that Orc away?"

"Curious?"

Ashe suddenly sat up, turning to look at Annan. "If Harvey and Igor are curious, then I am too."

"After all, that was your real purpose for taking me out tonight, wasn't it?"

Annan pulled him back down to lie down and continued to leisurely treat his injuries, but she didn't answer his question.

Although Ashe didn't know Annan's attitude, he first took a good look, his eyes wide open.

That Amethyst Earring, really big and flashy!

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

## **Chapter 272: My Inability to Impregnate Elves Makes Me Disabled**

Several minutes had passed, and Ashe's treatment was nearly complete. The hovercar had also come to a stop.

However, Annan didn't open the car door. Instead, he pulled out a remote control and pressed it, causing a drone to rise from the rear compartment of the vehicle. This appeared to be a special model, capable of silently ascending to the height of about ten stories.

"That Orc sorcerer lives right here," Annan explained. "His plan for tonight is to study from 8 PM until 4 AM, then enter the Virtual Realm inside an Education Pod, where he will spend three hours before leaving for work at 7 AM."

Ashe commented, "That sounds like a full life."

"His wife thinks so too," Annan said as he pressed the remote again, projecting a Holographic Screen into the air. "This is the image transmitted by the drone... I don't mind, but you can't see the screen with you lying on my lap."

"Ah, is the treatment over already?" Ashe realized, sitting up suddenly. "I thought..."

Before Ashe could finish his thought, he was captivated by the scene displayed on the screen.

The drone's footage showed a heart-stopping battle — an Orc was brutally beating a naked blond man, while a female Elf in pajamas, her hands bound, cowered fearfully to one side.

No further explanation was needed; Ashe immediately understood that the combatants were a pure-hearted Orc warrior and a blond Minotaur.

“Can Orcs and Elves reproduce? Aren’t different races unable to breed?” Ashe asked, noticing this detail first — he remembered that in the Blood Moon Kingdom, reproductive segregation among races was extremely strict, causing races like Humans, Ogres, Goblins, and Orcs, which have strong reproductive capabilities, to proliferate widely, while Elves and Bewitchers, who have weaker reproductive abilities, were quite rare.

“Reproductive segregation was solved hundreds of years ago,” Annan replied. “Long ago, people believed that babies born with the bloodlines of all races would possess the talents of each race. For the rewards of the Weaving Festival, sorcerers of the past continuously researched miracles to break the barriers of reproduction.”

“But the results were not as ideal — the newborn would be dominantly influenced by the bloodline of one race, while the bloodlines of other races remained recessive and silent.”

“Now all newborns are vaccinated and receive genetic adjustments. After over a decade of genetic modifications, they will overcome reproductive segregation upon reaching adulthood. Some families might stick to traditions and avoid these adjustments, but in the broader social consensus, maintaining reproductive segregation is nearly akin to having a disability.”

As he spoke, Annan glanced at Ashe.

Ashe blinked—Am I considered disabled because I can’t impregnate Elves?

“Moreover, the priority of racial bloodlines is highly random. Like this Orc and Elf couple, their child could be an Orc or an Elf. So, over the years, races that were once minorities, like Elves and Sea demons, are nearly catching up in population size with Humans and Orcs. This couple, for instance, has an Elf daughter, but she’s staying with her grandparents tonight and isn’t here.”

Annan watched the Holographic Screen: “Interracial marriages like between an Orc and an Elf are not uncommon, or rather, marriages within the same race have been decreasing in recent years.”

At this moment, Ashe truly realized the profound differences between the Gospel and Blood Moon Kingdoms—not only in terms of technological levels but also in their fundamentally incompatible cultural systems.

Biological adjustments are not merely about breaking reproductive barriers, just as the Bloodline Prohibition Act creates a society full of orphans, biological adjustments also lay the foundation for a massive racial Fusion.

The Bloodline Prohibition Act of Blood Moon and the biological adjustments of Gospel represent nearly opposite societal transformations.

The former not only preserves racial divisions but even escalates these distinctions to individual levels, where each person is an isolated entity, unable to establish any stable relationships; the latter completely breaks down racial barriers, amalgamating all cultures, eradicating any race-based hierarchy—could someone whose mother is a Sea demon still claim ‘Humans are nobler than Sea demons’?

At this moment, the blond man in the screen seemed to say something, causing the Orc Sorcerer to hesitate. However, he did not let go but instead tied the blond man up with a rope.

“What did he say?”

“He claimed to be someone from the Kelmor Family, which means he comes from a significant background,” Annan explained. “He can compensate with Points and money.”

“How do you know that?” Ashe dug at his ear. “There’s no sound in the video.”

“I can read lips.”

“Wait, isn’t the blond man facing away from us? How could you see his lips?”

“Just add a little imagination.”

“So you’re just making it up...”

At that moment, whatever the blond man said next enraged the Orc Sorcerer. He kicked out, sending the blond crashing against the wall, coughing up a great deal of blood, and then rushed up to deliver a barrage of blows.

Ashe was initially amused, but his smile gradually faded, and he suddenly asked, “Did you know from the start that it would turn out like this?”

“Yes,” Annan replied. “I had you send away the Orc Sorcerer because I needed him to come home and see the video of his Elf wife’s infidelity.”

“But didn’t you just say that nowadays, married couples are the most suitable matches for each other? Why would there still be betrayal?”

“It depends on how you define ‘most suitable.’”

Annan gently touched his earring. “For instance, if there’s a female Elf who naturally loves fun and is attracted to men, how would you choose a suitable partner for her?”

“A man who also enjoys fun?” guessed Ashe. “So they can both do their own thing?”

“Wrong,” Annan said. “That pairing violates the fundamental principle of marriage: mutual benefit. Two equally fun-loving people together might not harm each other, but they also don’t provide any benefits, which is just like not being married at all. Moreover, betraying a partner is part of the fun, and if your partner doesn’t care about your infidelity, then cheating is pointless.”

Ashe looked at the image on the Holographic Screen, his face devoid of any smile: “So, the best match for a fun-loving female Elf is a dedicated, capable male Orc?”

“Yes,” Annan nodded. “With an Elf wife, the Orc Sorcerer feels happy and motivated at work; and with an Orc husband, the Elf enjoys the love and protection of a partner, and can seek thrills on the side when needed. Both parties achieve happiness, making it a mutually beneficial marriage.”

“But what if it’s discovered?” Ashe pointed at the Holographic Screen. “Is it still a suitable marriage then?”

“What do you think would happen if we hadn’t intervened?”

Seeming to have been sitting for too long, Annan changed his posture by crossing his legs and straightening his back to relax, calmly saying, “The Orc Sorcerer goes to work at seven in the morning and returns home at five in the afternoon to find a virtuous Elf cooking dinner. By six, their daughter comes home from middle school, and the family enjoys a peaceful dinner together.”

“Guided by the Gospel, they would happily enter their graves without any incidents that could destroy this family.”

The Gospel.

A thought gradually formed in Ashe’s mind: “Does the Elf ask the Gospel how to keep her husband in the dark?”

“I’m glad you’re catching up,” Annan smiled. “But that’s not quite it. If I’m not mistaken, the Elf learned techniques like ‘Anti-Reconnaissance’ in her secondary education, and she uses the Gospel to check for any slip-ups, ensuring the Orc Sorcerer remains oblivious his entire life.”

“Does the Orc never suspect? Just a little doubt, and if he consults the Gospel...”

“Do you suspect your pillow will suddenly grow teeth and bite you?” Annan said. “Human thinking can’t break free from its own perceptions, and Orcs are not naturally suspicious. As long as the web of lies is woven tightly enough, he’ll never escape it.”

“But doesn’t that turn the Gospel into a tool for betrayal?” Ashe barely finished speaking before shaking his head: “No, matching the Orc with the Elf from the start was already harming them!”

“Harming whom? Doesn’t the Orc have a virtuous wife? Doesn’t the Elf have a husband who loves her?” Annan countered. “Betrayal is just a minor issue.”

“What then is a major issue?”

“Getting caught is the major issue.”

“That’s not fair!” Ashe spread his hands. “The Orc hasn’t done anything wrong, why should he have to suffer—”

“Orcs aren’t purely good, either,” Annan said. “He cares a lot about his image, so he sabotages and defames his outstanding subordinates at work. He consults the Gospel on how to maintain his position and how to set traps for his subordinates... The harm he causes others might even be greater than the harm caused by his Elf wife’s infidelity.”

Ashe frowned, faintly sensing that Annan was about to perform a Miracle on him—a Miracle even more compelling than a Contract.

Annan continued, “Everyone has their own desires, everyone has their own stance, and everyone wants to encroach on others’ benefits. If everyone acted solely based on their selfish motives and clashed with each other, most of society’s resources would be consumed in internal strife.”

“Is there a system that can regulate everyone’s desires and make everyone happy?”

A book appeared in Annan’s hand.

The corners of Annan’s mouth tilted upward in a mix of disdain and resignation.

“Under the guidance of the Gospel, a perfect social network is woven from three threads: lifelong education, lifelong labor, and lifelong marriage. In this network, everyone hurts others to satisfy their own desires, but at the same time, everyone is secretly being hurt by others.”

“But it doesn’t matter, the Gospel helps them weave perfect lies, so they don’t know they’re being hurt. The Orc Sorcerer’s subordinates don’t know they’re being sabotaged by their boss, and the Orc Sorcerer doesn’t know his wife seeks pleasures elsewhere while he’s at work.”

“It’s like the seamless flow of traffic on the ground and the orderly drone routes in the sky—this vast network operates carefully yet flawlessly, with lies lubricating and concealing any Loopholes.”

Ashe was stunned for a moment, and after a long pause, he managed to say, "So, by disrupting their daily routine, are we actually doing something bad?"

"Listening to the Gospel leads to happiness," Annan said. "Correspondingly, hearing our noise leads to unhappiness."

At that moment, the Orc Sorcerer threw a heavy punch, knocking several teeth out of the blond man.

Ashe suddenly exclaimed, "No, we have to go and save him!"

"Weren't you just enjoying the show? Why would you want to save—"

"I just want to save this Orc Sorcerer!" Ashe said. "If this continues, someone will get killed, and he shouldn't be taken away by the Red Caps for that!"

"Don't worry," Annan reassured him. "I've looked into it. This Orc Sorcerer, although hot-tempered, has never killed even an animal from childhood. He works as a Production Sorcerer in the company and generally holds back, even when angry."

Ashe relaxed a bit, but then something didn't feel right. "Generally?"

"If someone really embarrasses him," Annan said slowly, "then don't blame him for losing his temper."

Buzz!

Suddenly, the sound of flying machines filled the air. Ashe looked up through the transparent roof and saw several Sorcerers wearing Red Caps zooming overhead. Their Boots emitted blazing blue flames for propulsion, assisting their flight!

The warning from the Red Caps echoed through the sky: "The criminal in room 3506 on the 35th floor of the Holy Spirit Building, cease your criminal activities immediately. Place your hands high against the wall; otherwise, the Red Caps will take coercive action. This is your first warning! Holy Spirit Building..."

Trouble.

Ashe saw in the Drone footage that the eyes of the Orc Sorcerer were almost red. The arrival of the Red Caps was undoubtedly going to exacerbate the conflict. While there was a chance that the Orc Sorcerer and the blond man could have settled their issues privately, the Red Caps' broadcast made the entire building aware of the incident in room 3506!

"He really cares about his reputation," Annan commented.



Thud!

There was no sound in the Drone footage, but Ashe felt as if he could hear the sound of lives shattering.

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

## Chapter 273: Blood Moon and the Gospel

As the sun rises on the horizon and light falls on the center of Azura, the entire city blooms shyly, as if graced by a Miracle.

The roads become congested with traffic, and the sky fills with swarms of Drones, as all Races start another day of calm and happiness.

Annan's car remains parked not far from the Holy Spirit Building. By now, all traces have been cleaned up by the Red Cap. The suspects have been arrested, the Corpses removed, and the victims transported to the hospital for psychological treatment.

Perhaps the tale of the Orc Sorcerer will be the talk among neighbors for a few days, but they will soon forget this discordant noise amidst their fast-paced and fulfilling lives.

Ashe and Annan watch silently as the Red Cap enforces the law, until the first rays of sunlight enter the car, like a slap across Ashe's face.

The Cult Leader slowly speaks, "Is this the 'reality' you showed Harvey and Igor?"

"Pretty much," Annan replies. "I selected a few tasks specifically, feeling they would appropriately touch upon your experiences."

"Was the blond man your real target?"

"Yes. A common assassination task, something I wouldn't have taken in the past even if my methods were completely legal. However, the Gospel would have lowered my Firm's rating. But now it doesn't matter, since to get a few of you, the Firm has already dirtied itself completely, might as well consider it trashed."

"What was your design philosophy?"

Annan makes a gesture with three fingers: "Identify the target, find a proxy, and let the proxy deal with the target."

"But how do you motivate the proxy?"

"Everyone has their own desires," Annan says. "The Gospel doesn't ask you to suppress your desires, it only helps you cover up your actions with lies. When you indulge your desires, you inevitably encroach on the rights of others, but under the veil of lies, neither are you aware of the harm you cause, nor the harm inflicted upon you."

"The network of relationships built by the Gospel is so ingeniously fragile."

"I just need to lift the veil of lies, and what follows will naturally be a Conflict of desires."

Ashe asked, "So, you're saying you could ruin anyone's life?"

"It depends on the situation. Different people have different levels of vulnerability. Besides, didn't I mention that performing such tasks would lower the Firm's rating? Anyone with a bit of ambition wouldn't undertake these tasks," Annan explained. "Not everyone has vulnerabilities. For instance, those on the 'Unrelated Ranking List' don't have social connections that can be exploited."

"Newcomers to the Gospel like you, who have only been here a few days, are like little insects that haven't yet been caught in this web."

"But the longer you live under the Gospel, the more you interact with others and express your desires, the deeper you'll become entangled in this network of relationships."

"You will harm others quietly using the Gospel, and others will harm you in the same silent manner."

"In fact, if you know nothing, you would be quite happy. Your life is on easy mode. The Gospel is constantly weaving a veil of lies for you, shielding you from the dirt of reality and letting you embrace the happiness of dreams. You can enjoy peace and occasionally vent your darker thoughts, leading a rather flavorful life."

Purple Moth looked at the rushing traffic beside her and softly said, "With such a sophisticated social system, the Gospel reduces meaningless internal consumption in society. Plus, with the Ranking List as motivation, productivity has greatly advanced, and indicators of happiness like public security, resident satisfaction, and living standards have not decreased."

"Sounds pretty good, doesn't it?"

Annan flicked his Amethyst Earring, glancing sideways at Ashe, "Do you like our Gospel?"

Ashe asked, "What did Harvey and Igor think?"

"They didn't respond directly, but Mr. Harvey seemed quite angry, while Mr. Bukin was overjoyed."

"It's normal. Harvey doesn't like his life being controlled by others, while Igor always feels he can manipulate anyone through rules..."

Annan then asked, "What about you, Ashe? Do you detest this system or do you want to utilize it?"

"I'm not naive enough to judge this social system that has maintained the stability of the Gospel Kingdom for centuries based solely on your word," Ashe said. "But you have certainly achieved your goal."

"Oh?"

"I will do everything in my power to get the Divine Master's Wish," Ashe said, looking up at the Inverted City. "It's not about changing anything; I just hope to have the means to prevent change."

If Ashe remained blissfully unaware of everything, he could continue living obliviously in the Gospel Kingdom. But having seen the intricate web woven by the Gospel, he could not passively accept his Destiny.

Think about it, although the social systems of the Blood Moon Kingdom and the Gospel Kingdom have many differences, they are both designed to address one issue: when productivity is greatly developed, how to reduce the internal consumption among the societal gears.

When everyone can sustain themselves with simple labor, the original Family System naturally disintegrates. Humans are selfish by nature, and cooperation goes against their instincts. In the past, due to the lack of resources for survival, people were forced to band together to get through tough times. Moreover, since productive labor occupied most of their time, there was little opportunity for the expression of desires.

As productivity reaches a certain level, two problems arise: people have more leisure time and seek a better life; people can sustain themselves with minimal effort and do not need to rely on others.

If these issues are not addressed, social development will stagnate, birth rates will gradually decline, and contradictions among Race, class, and regions will become increasingly sharp, wasting societal energy on meaningless internal consumption.

The Blood Moon Kingdom and the Gospel Kingdom offer two completely different solutions.

The Blood Moon Kingdom chooses to hit the accelerator to the floor, not waiting for the Family System to disintegrate naturally, but abolishing it preemptively. All citizens start life as orphans, then promote consumerism, strictly prohibit all forms of discrimination, and utilize mechanisms like the Blood Moon Tribunal, Moon Sugar, and establishments like Mud Café and Tea Cafe to channel public anger. As for reproduction, they simply purchase children with money.

The societal progress in the Blood Moon Kingdom does not rely on the common folk; exceptional commoners can ascend through normal channels to become part of the elite Blood Saint or Moonshadow groups, then contribute their light and warmth to the Research Institute and the Church, while the rest of the populace serves as fuel, sustaining a small number of immortals.

In contrast, the Gospel Kingdom opts to mask its contradictions. If society were a completely random game of chaos, the Gospel would be its only solution. It regulates everyone's desires and covers all contradictions with sophisticated lies, allowing everyone to live in a perceived paradise.

The Gospel Ranking List further motivates progress, giving everyone something to look forward to. People accustomed to life's easy mode, facing issues related to childbirth, employment, and education, will heed the guidance of the Gospel, thus maintaining a virtuous cycle in society.

It was through comparing Blood Moon and Gospel that Ashe truly understood the terrifying miracles—or rather, divine acts—that the Divine Master had imposed on the Kingdoms...

The Blood Moon Sovereign created the "Blood Moon Promotion System," a sustainable exploitation that does not resolve any societal contradictions but instead uses them to mask the exploitation by the Blood Saint and Moonshadow groups, relying only on a few elites to drive societal progress;

The Omniscient Weaver, utilizing the absolute authority of the Gospel, forcibly suppresses and covers all societal contradictions, making the well-educated populace docile like sheep, with work, reproduction, and consumption all accounted for in the Gospel's calculations!

Compared to the earth-shattering destructive powers, these miracles that change the Destiny of every individual from the top down make one feel incredibly insignificant.

"I'm glad you've finally decided to join my side," Annan said with a smile. "Indeed, compared to vague temptations, a real and direct threat is what truly motivates you to willingly join my plan."

Ashe glanced at her, “But Annan, by stirring up our greed, are you really doing yourself any favors? I won’t speak for myself, but people like Igor have never known the meaning of ‘moderation’; they only understand ‘monopoly.’ Or do you have that much faith in the Contract?”

“The only purpose of a contract is to be broken, but what replaces it isn’t necessarily hostility; it could also be an alliance.”

Annan extended her hand towards Ashe: “Let’s cooperate with each other, each harboring our own agendas.”

Ashe looked at her seriously and took her hand.

“Right, we agreed that once I complete the task, you would help me add funds to the game...”

“10,000 copper coins.”

“That won’t do. 10,000 copper coins might only buy a pass and a monthly card. I also need the big monthly card, the newcomer’s discount package, the limited-time package, and I have to buy the pass level package too, otherwise I can’t level up to 1000...”

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

## Chapter 274: Direct Your Concerns Towards the Substitute

May 10th, in the Gospel Kingdom, at the bathhouse of the Funeral Firm.

It was 7 AM, and dawn had already broken. Ashe arrived in his swim trunks, hearing voices from the bathhouse. Upon entering, he found that someone was already occupying the place.

Splash!

Ashe jumped in, creating a splash of water. Igor, with a look of disdain, used his spirit to blow the droplets back, “(\*¯^¯) Ashe, how old are you this year? Did you graduate from the senior class of the Nursery?”

On the other side, Harvey was lying on a massage lounger in the bath, smoking a Catnip Cigarette, with the water bubbling beneath him. The Necromancer had turned on

the ceiling's sun lamps; warm, intense light bathed him, epitomizing the ultimate in comfort, as if to say, 'any place can be a seaside retreat if you desire it.'

In comparison to Ashe and Igor, Harvey seemed quite normal. His skin was dark, making him look like a laborer, and his speech was straightforward. Though morally flexible, his desires were not high, fitting the type who goes with the flow.

If Harvey had come to the Gospel Kingdom alone, he might have been picked up by some wealthy woman, doing housework by day and tomb raiding by night, leading a flavorful life.

Even considering his necrophilia and Sugar Addiction, neither harmed others, only affecting Corpses and himself, which upon reflection, might not be unacceptable...

Ashe abruptly splashed water on his face and sank deeper into the bath.

This is bad, Ashe thought.

Having been around this group for too long, even Harvey, who seemed less offensive compared to Igor and Annan, started to appear decent.

"What were you guys talking about just now?" Ashe relaxed in the bath, his stiff muscles aching in response to his attempts at appeasement. "Igor, were you recommending another Shadow Drama?"

"I did, but you guys don't watch them anyway. Why should I bother?" Igor replied coldly. "The last one I recommended, 'The Redemption of the Wife,' is a classic from the Gospel Kingdom not to be missed in these past Ten Years."

"It's not that I don't want to watch, but when do I have the time—"

"Why don't you just watch it at 32x speed?"

"If I had a gun in my hand right now, I'd shoot you dead and then ask why you didn't dodge."

"We were just discussing artistic creation," Harvey said, exhaling a wisp of pale green Catnip Smoke. "How to properly sculpt a character."

Although Ashe found their topic a bit odd, he didn't think too much about it and casually said, "Then you've come to the right person. Crafting characters is my forte. Listen carefully, for every word I say is a gem."

"Oh? Were you a novelist before? Written any masterpieces? I read in my spare time, I might have come across your work," Igor sneered.

"I'm not a writer, but my occupation requires even more character crafting than writing does," Ashe spoke confidently. "Our business is all about creating characters to trick money out of kids."

Igor instinctively wanted to retort, but after a moment of thought, he nodded thoughtfully, "Right, you were a Cult Leader before; you really are a professional."

Ashe thought Igor surely misunderstood the scope of a Cult Leader's work, but he was too lazy to explain and continued, "Creating a compelling character involves many dimensions: appearance, personality, abilities, background, and aspirations... But it all boils down to two things: Sexual Function and Functionality."

Igor and Harvey blinked, evidently shocked by Ashe's blunt truth.

"Strong beauties, mad beauties, haughty coldness, wealthy beauties... These character images are deeply popular and resonate so well because they fulfill the two major needs of Sexual Function and Functionality. When you sculpt a character, you need to consider, does this character arouse your desires? Can this character alleviate your suffering? If the answer to both is yes, then you have a successful character."

"Whether this character becomes a timeless classic depends on a spark of inspiration and the course of history. You can't force it."

As an operations planner for a mobile gaming company, Ashe had not directly engaged in character creation but had attended internal training sessions and was well-versed in how character planning systematically extracted money from middle and high school students. While individual creation might occasionally strike gold with a brilliant piece, the creation process at a mobile gaming company resembled an industrial assembly line. It involved arranging and combining popular elements to cater to 'Sexual Function' and 'Functionality', thereby compelling people to impulsively reach for their wallets.

Harvey seemed greatly inspired by the conversation. He pinched off his Catnip Cigarette and climbed out of the bath, casually grabbing a towel from the side to wrap around himself: "As expected from a former Cult Leader, you're indeed the right person for this kind of job. I can't contain my inspiration anymore; I'm heading back to my room to create."

Watching Harvey rush off, Ashe scratched his head: "Strange, Harvey doesn't seem like the type who enjoys writing novels..."

Igor also exited the bath, shaking his long hair dripping with water, and casually draped a towel around himself. He slicked back his wet bangs with his hand and glanced at Ashe.

"Who told you he writes novels?"



Ashe stiffened, suddenly realizing a possibility. He stared intently at Igor: “He’s asking about character crafting techniques to use them on virtual characters, isn’t he?”

Igor remained silent, looking at him briefly before walking out of the bathhouse.

Ashe grew anxious: “It’s for virtual characters, right!?”

Now alone in the bathhouse, the sun slowly rose, ushering in a new day in Azura, with its warm rays reflecting into the water.

Ashe let the buoyancy lift his body, floating on the water’s surface like a corpse.

Three days earlier, when Ashe and Annan had returned early in the morning, they had just seen Igor and Harvey coming off work from the Virtual Realm, sitting in the living room as if waiting for his return.

Feeling a bit guilty for not buying any gifts during his outing, Ashe invited them to join him in the bathhouse, hoping to divert attention by discussing the social system of the Gospel.

However, this seemed to set a precedent. For the next three days, after clocking out from their Exploration in the Virtual Realm, they would soak in the bathhouse and casually chat. This allowed Ashe to quickly realize that their exploration skills in the Virtual Realm were not inferior to his—they usually arrived after dawn, indicating that each of them was capable of exploring the Time Continent for a full six hours.

Although they had neither maps nor sports cars, their unique methods of exploration seemed to match Ashe’s in duration.

Ashe even suspected that they had their own means of transportation; otherwise, at least half of their Soul Energy would be consumed in traveling, making it impossible to endure for six hours—a mere three hours would have drained them.

Harvey’s transportation was easy to guess: he was either riding a skeletal horse or a skeleton man, or perhaps even improvising by riding a Slaying Fish-Dragon made of bones on the spot. Igor was harder to predict. Could it be that his Mind Faction was powerful enough to hypnotize Intelligent Creatures to serve as his mounts?

That wasn’t right. Ashe recalled a conversation from the previous day in the bath, where he had asked Igor if he had ever used Mind Miracles for any indecent acts. Igor had responded, “First off, the things you’re imagining—I can indeed do them. But even without miracles, I’ve been capable of that for a long time and am quite bored of it; moreover, Ashe, you shook the water in your head and asked, ‘Since you can hypnotize others, why not hypnotize yourself?’”



“Hypnotizing oneself is much simpler and more effective. You can set the plot, the characters, the content—anything you like. In reality, you might be limited by physical functions, but in illusions, you can be as bold as you want... In fact, Mind Sorcerers rarely directly hypnotize others; instead, they use language and gestures as subtle cues to guide others to the conclusions they desire.”

“Only a mediocre Mind Sorcerer would use miracles to achieve their goals. Most of the time, the subject of a Mind Sorcerer’s hypnosis is themselves.”

“Mind Faction is not about warping others, but about sculpting oneself.”

So, it’s highly likely that Igor is not hypnotizing Knowledge Creatures, but rather hypnotizing himself to believe that “walking is not tiring at all!”

In fact, this is the normal encounter for sorcerers Exploring the Virtual Realm: Sorcerers from different factions use different methods to mitigate the adverse factors in the Virtual Realm.

Indeed, there’s no way around the Sea of Knowledge; everyone starts off inexperienced and must struggle through it. However, once reaching the Time Continent, with a bit of factional foundation, they can begin to mitigate the environmental disadvantages.

This is actually a form of selection—sorcerers who cannot conquer their environment are considered failures within the sorcerer evolutionary system.

In a sense, Ashe and his group, driving through the Reverse Golden Rain, have been spoiled, completely slipping through the cracks of the sorcerer evolutionary system. Without properly cultivating the ability to adapt to unfamiliar environments, they will eventually pay the price elsewhere.

Ashe and the others are aware of this, but they have no intention of remedying it—for now, they think they might as well dream big, perhaps they’ll never have to pay a price?

With this thought, Ashe twisted his finger ring to summon the Gospel, flipping to the page of the Sorcerer Handbook, which immediately popped up information.

“Growth Report for Death Maniac Swordswoman from May 3rd to May 9th”

“Swordsmanship Faction: Silver → Gold”

“Radiance Magic Faction: Silver → Silver”

“Water Faction: Silver → Silver”

“Mind Faction: Silver → Silver”

“Arcane Energy: Gold Virtual Wing → Gold One Feather”

“Cultivation Evaluation: Grade A!”

“As a result of receiving a Grade A evaluation, the Death Maniac Swordswoman has received an Occupational Enhancement from the Sorcerer Handbook: Frenzy Dancer → Genocide Gold Sorcerer!”

“Genocide Gold Sorcerer Occupational Traits: Increases damage to group Knowledge Creatures by 10%.”

“Assessment Mission ‘Frenzy Dance’ (10,000 Slashes) completed! Frenzy Dancer Occupational Traits permanently solidified!”

“Frenzy Dancer (Permanent Occupation): Attacking the same target increases attack speed by 2%, accumulating up to 5 times, with the effect immediately nullified upon switching targets.”

The main content of their Exploration in the Virtual Realm these past two days has been helping the Swordswoman complete her Assessment Mission. Fortunately, the Swordswoman acquired a new Miracle, ‘Blood Flower Water Moon’, which not only offers high instantaneous output but also allows stacking dozens of effective Slashes with each activation. If group creatures are gathered together, it can instantly execute hundreds of effective Slashes.

Even so, in the past two days, Ashe and his group raided the homes of several White Velocidragons, Fierce Wolf Dragons, and Migratory Bird Dragons. The Swordswoman’s new occupation, ‘Genocide Gold Sorcerer’, is clearly related to this.

The essence materials obtained solely from raiding and annihilating these creatures were enough to feed the Swordswoman’s ‘Vibration Sword’ and ‘Moon Silk’ spirit, as well as the Black-and-White Witch’s ‘Water Thread’ and ‘Claw’ spirit to Two Wings.

Ashe glanced at the Swordswoman’s interface and indeed, her occupation had changed to “Genocide Gold Sorcerer/Frenzy Dancer.” Her Swordsmanship faction had advanced from Silver to Gold, but the Cultivation Evaluation was only Grade A. It seemed that only during the promotion of arcane energy could one receive a Grade S evaluation.

This made sense; if Grade S were easy to achieve and triggered occupational assessment missions frequently, wouldn’t every Operator have a myriad of occupations later on?

Ashe even imagined an introduction: “Standing before you is the Storm’s Frenzy Dancer, the White Flame atop the grave, the lord of swords wielding the scepter of death, the Slaying Fish-Dragon Genocide... the Death Maniac Swordswoman with twenty-three occupations!”

While there were no surprises, the Swordswoman's growth didn't disappoint Ashe. However, when Ashe opened the Black-and-White Witch's Growth Report, his good mood for the day ended.

"Growth Report for the Black-and-White Witch from May 3rd to May 9th"

"Mind Faction: Silver → Silver"

"Fist and Claw Faction: Gold → Gold"

"Time Faction: Silver → Silver"

"Water Faction: Silver → Silver"

"Arcane Energy: Gold One Feather → Gold Two Feathers"

"Cultivation Evaluation: Grade B!"

"Due to receiving a Grade B evaluation, the Black-and-White Witch has received an Occupational Enhancement from the Sorcerer Handbook: Genocide Follower!"

"Genocide Follower: Increases damage to group Knowledge Creatures by 5%."

A Grade B evaluation?

This was the first time Ashe had received such an evaluation—it felt like a slap in his face, not just the Black-and-White Witch's!

However, Ashe quickly cooled down, immersed in water. Previously, the Swordswoman had started from scratch, a blank slate, so her rapid advancement naturally led to higher evaluations. But the Witch had started with Two Wings, her main faction already at Gold Tier, and several sub-factions established. It was impossible to expect significant short-term advancements, not to mention she was under the "Curse of the Bronze Dragon," unable to undergo regular training, limited only to entertainment each day.

If the Swordswoman hadn't advanced her Swordsmanship faction to Gold Tier this week, she likely would have also received a Grade B.

This meant that starting next week, if the Operators didn't achieve significant 'arcane energy promotion' or 'faction advancement to Gold Tier,' they would probably only receive a Grade B or even C evaluation.

Should I do a card draw? Ashe sighed as he looked over his savings.

These days, the income from spirits for Ashe and his team wasn't much. They mostly gathered materials to feed the spirits. Additionally, after Ashe's promotion to Two

Wings, the recycling price for a One Wing spirit became 5 points, and for a Two Wing spirit, it was 10 points. After a week of accumulation, he had only 211 points, still a distance from the next first-time double bonus of 328.

As for this week's cultivation strategy, it was business as usual: the Witch would continue with her entertainment, and the Swordswoman would continue with training... Ashe paused, remembering he had promised the Swordswoman some entertainment activities.

The Swordswoman had three Action Points, with two points required for each entertainment session. And since she had already played, Ashe wouldn't be so heartless as to push her back into training.

Mainly because the effectiveness of training after entertainment wouldn't be great, similar to playing games on your phone while in the restroom and then going back to work, your mind still lingering on how you could have played better.

So, it would be entertainment plus rest, letting the Swordswoman enjoy a bit of the rose-colored campus life.

So, which day should the Swordswoman take off?

Ashe thought about it and decided to schedule Rose Day for tomorrow, the 11th.

He initially wanted to set it for today, but today was a bit special. To avoid any accidents, it was better to let the Swordswoman continue her regular school and training schedule.

After setting the cultivation strategy, Ashe went back to his room to change clothes. When he came out, he found everyone gathered in the living room, and it didn't look like they were just having breakfast.

"Ashe, you're just in time," Igor said, "Here's a Single Choice Question for you."

"Do you prefer this?" Igor handed over a potion bottle filled with a dreamlike pink liquid.

"Or do you prefer this?" Lise held up a blood-stained mace.

"Or maybe this?" Annan twirled a pair of silver handcuffs.

Handcuffs + mace + potion = ?

Ashe's mind raced, quickly activating his spirit to summon a Substitute. The Substitute took a battle stance, ready to face any danger for Ashe—

"Direct any grievances at the Substitute, not me!"

Substitute: ...

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

## Chapter 275: Time Off

The misunderstanding was quickly resolved. Igor and his group didn't mean any harm. Nonetheless, Ashe had administered some sedatives to the Substitute, conducting experiments while listening to their explanations.

"Seven Days of Knowing One's Destiny?"

The Butler Youth nodded: "You might not have this custom in the Blood Moon Kingdom, where a baby, seven days after birth, is allowed to pick their favorite item from a collection. This chosen item is called 'Life Choice.' It signifies that the child's destiny will follow this selection."

"So, based on the different Life Choices picked, one could predict the future direction of the baby's life?" Ashe commented, "That sounds superstitious, not at all like something a Sorcerer would do..."

"It's indeed just a beautiful blessing bestowed upon children hundreds of years ago. Over time, it has continued as a custom, not as a Procedure or Ritual Track," Annan explained. "After all, with the existence of the Ranking List, parents hope their children make it onto the list, eager for their talents to be revealed early."

"But—"

"While it's not a Procedure or Ritual Track, it doesn't mean the custom lacks significance," Annan continued. "The future of society is a vast chaotic system. Compared to 'certain' miracles, the 'uncertain' meanings can have a deeper impact. According to years of research by the Dolan Family, intangible factors like 'wishes,' 'meanings,' and 'acknowledgment' play significant roles during the Weaving Festival."

"These wishes, which can't take immediate effect, are heard by the Gospel. Life isn't comprised of miracles every second, but every second is meaningful."

"Plus," Annan shrugged, "if everyone else has a Life Choice, why shouldn't you?"

Hmm, it's like including in your resume that "My strengths are being helpful, team-oriented, and having strong social skills; my weakness is being overly meticulous, which

might impact my work.” Although it’s likely no one believes these clichés, if you write them and others don’t, you might just get hired because of that.

Ashe understood, but was still puzzled: “But isn’t this custom meant for infants just seven days old? You can count Lise out, but do I really look that young?”

“We have indeed just been born for seven days,” the Necromancer said, examining a Silver scalpel. “Or rather, we’ve just arrived in this world seven days ago.”

“Is that even possible?”

Ashe was stunned. They had changed the Map, and even the age cooldown was refreshed?

“The Gospel has existed for over a thousand years, perhaps even longer,” Annan explained. “In the time scale of the Gospel, whether you’re 25 years and seven days old or just 1 year and 7 days old doesn’t make much of a difference.”

“Right,” Igor added. “And there are people in the world who are 25 years old but mentally just like newborns. The Gospel certainly won’t discriminate against you, Ashe.”

Ashe punched the already dizzy Substitute, glanced at the various torture instruments on the table, and asked, “So after we choose, is there a chance we might make it onto today’s first future Ranking?”

“How could that be possible.” Annan shook his head. “No one can know what the first Ranking List will be in advance, not even me. I have to use the first List to guess the subsequent ones. Holding the ‘Seven Days of Knowing One’s Destiny’ is just a gamble, who knows, maybe it will coincide perfectly with the desires of the Gospel?”

“It sounds like we’re matchmaking with the Gospel...” Ashe picked up a transparent glass needle. “But why are there so many... um, torture instruments?”

“As a Firm, isn’t it normal to have so many instruments?” Annan shrugged. “If you don’t want to pick an instrument, then don’t. Just choose something you like. Besides, don’t be too utilitarian; after all, no one knows what the first Ranking List will be. Only by choosing something you truly like will your voice be loud enough for the Gospel to hear.”

“Also, when you choose your Life Choice item, it’s best to imbue the item with some good wishes. Normally, this step is done by parents, like ‘this child chose a dagger that will never be discovered after killing someone’—it’s a further reinforcement of a wish and a very meaningful step.”

“Moreover, according to intelligence collected by the Dolan Family, some rewards during the Weaving Festival are custom-tailored based on your Life Choice. If you make a wish for your Life Choice, it might just influence the Ranking List’s rewards for you.”

Ashe suddenly realized an issue: “Wait, why did you make me choose from handcuffs, spiked clubs, and love potions earlier?”

“Because we thought they’d suit you well,” the three said in unison.

“Isn’t that a personal attack?” Ashe turned to the Necromancer. “At least you, Harvey, have the sense not to mess around with them...”

Then he saw Harvey holding a whip.

“Harvey, I didn’t expect you to be interested in that—”

“How could I? Whips are useful for living people, and I’m not interested in the living. I just think a whip suits you because—”

“Stop, I’m not interested in your stereotyped impressions of me.” Ashe looked at the workers: “So what Life Choice did you guys make?”

Lise held up a small mirror: “The Little Magic Mirror that always reflects the most beautiful state of its holder!”

“Really!?” Ashe took it playfully and looked at it: “Nope, I still look the same, just a regular mirror.”

Igor commented, “Just a guess, but maybe it’s not the mirror that’s ordinary, but you?”

“Stupid dad, give it back to me!” Lise was very angry, kicking Ashe’s knee and snatching the mirror back while Ashe was bent over.

“I chose this,” Igor said, shaking a pen in his hand. “A pen that grips the reader’s attention no matter what it writes.”

“Eh?” Ashe blinked.

“Why do you look so surprised?”

“I thought you’d want a pen that ‘makes whatever you write come true’ or ‘makes whatever you write believable’...”

Igor wagged his finger: “For someone like me, a social engineering Scholar, it’s not about distorting reality or gaining others’ trust, but about attention—once I can capture your attention, I can control your Destiny.”

Ashe looked at Harvey, the Necromancer, who pulled out a box similar to a sewing kit with needles and thread—Heaven knows why the Gospel Kingdom would have such a

thing. Given the Gospel's productivity, shouldn't ordinary people here be wearing a new set of clothes every day, with no need to wash or mend them?

"I chose—"

"Stop, I didn't ask you," Ashe said with his arms crossed, indicating his refusal. "I don't want to hear about the special uses of sewing needles."

"It's not a sewing needle—"

"Then I want to hear it even less."

Annan and Banjeet, without a doubt, didn't need to choose; they had made their choices at birth.

Ashe glanced over the items on the table and shook his head.

"Can I choose something else?"

"What else?"

Ashe went back to his bedroom and then came out wearing a Dark Red Trench Coat and a mask: "I don't like anything on the table; I want to choose these two as my Life Choices."

He pointed at the Dark Red Trench Coat: "This is a coat that can ward off all harm..."

Annan reminded him, "Don't be so utilitarian. Do you think this is a game? Would your parents wish for something like this?"

Ashe recalled his parents' way of thinking and said earnestly, "This is a terrifying trench coat that will make everyone afraid to bully me."

Annan was about to say something else but was patted on the shoulder by Igor.

The Con Artist pointed at himself, Harvey, and Ashe, and Annan immediately understood his point—right, they were all orphans from the Blood Moon Kingdom; how would they know what parental love is?

When you want to blame others, think about how they might not have parents.

With this thought, Annan's gaze towards Ashe was filled with tolerance.

Ashe pointed at the mask and said, "This is a... um... mask that will make everyone like me?"



“The function doesn’t quite match, does it?” Harvey commented. “Although you do look better with your face covered, the mask has nothing to do with charm.”

Harvey’s words often left Ashe puzzled, such as this phrase “you look better with your face covered.” If Igor, Lise, or even Annan had said it, it would definitely be a personal attack, but coming from Harvey, Ashe couldn’t quite tell if it was meant as a compliment or an insult.

But he did have a point, and after thinking it over, Ashe said, “Then this is a mask that will give me an air of mystery.”

“Why does dad get to have two Life Choices!?” Lise protested. “I want two as well!”

“But if you choose two, the power of the wish might be diluted,” Annan said. “And the Gospel might pick and choose, only rewarding one true Life Choice.”

Lise thought about it: “Then never mind, I still want the Magic Mirror.”

“We’ve all made our choices, so when is the first Ranking List coming out?” Ashe asked. “It’s almost breakfast time. Could the Gospel be on leave?”

“No,” Annan shrugged, “but it won’t be on time either. If it were truly punctual, the first future Ranking should have been released at midnight last night.”

“Then why—”

“Because today isn’t over yet.”

Butler Youth Banjeet raised his hand, signaling everyone to look at him: “How should I put this... If the Weaving Festival were a job, then the Gospel would be the creator who submits their work at the very last second.”

“These are all our guesses,” Annan added. “When it comes to Weaving the Future, the closer we get to the future, the more precise the weaving becomes. Therefore, although the Weaving Festival announces the first Ranking List on the 10th, a list woven at 00:00:00 is inevitably less accurate than one woven at 23:59:59.”

“In the history of the Weaving Festival, the vast majority of Ranking Lists are published at the very last second of the day. Only 25% are released right at midnight, and another 10% are released at random times during the day, without any discernible pattern.”

“That’s why I didn’t keep you all up until midnight last night, because for the past several editions of the Weaving Festival, the first Ranking List has always been released at the last second,” Annan flicked his earring. “But tonight, you all have to wait until midnight to see the first future Ranking before you can go back to your rooms.”

Ashe asked, "Can't we just look at it tomorrow morning? Do we have to chase the update?"

"No," Annan shook his head. "Although it's unlikely, if you're either very lucky or very unlucky... something might happen. However, the likelihood of something happening with the first Ranking List is slim; our concern is more about the second Ranking List in ten days."

Waiting until midnight...

Ashe's scheduled time to start Exploring the Virtual Realm with his team was at 11 PM, so asking for a leave at midnight seemed a waste, but he couldn't just skip it either.

After finishing breakfast, Ashe hurried back to his bedroom, summoned the Gospel, opened the game page, and checked if there was any way to delay the team assembly time.

"Exploration in Virtual Realm" – "Team Composition," Ashe carefully reviewed and discovered a detail—every time he selected "Start Action," secondary options like "Depart Immediately" and "Discuss Further" would pop up.

Previously, Ashe thought "Discuss Further" meant cancel, but this time, clicking it brought up "Adjust Action Time" and "Change Team Composition."

Choosing "Adjust Action Time," Ashe found he could shift the action time from 11 PM to 12:30 AM, but this required the agreement of the Operators.

"Observer proposal: Postpone tonight's Exploration in Virtual Realm by 90 minutes."

Meanwhile, Lise also returned to her room, speaking to the newly acquired Little Magic Mirror, "Calling Observer! Calling Observer! Can we delay tonight's exploration by an hour? Please convey this to the Swordswoman."

"No, wait!" Lise shook her head, switching to negotiating with Deya: "Can we delay it by 90 minutes? Tonight, we need to watch the Gospel Ranking List, which might take a good fifteen minutes."

After a brief silence, both Ashe and Deya received the answers they were hoping for—

"Swordswoman agrees, Witch agrees."

"Since you beg so humbly, I will mercifully approve."

In another Kingdom, Sonya, who had just gotten up and was doing her skincare routine, looked at the letter on her desk with a subtle expression.

“Dear Swordswoman,”

“The great Observer has kept his promise. Tomorrow you will have a full day of Entertainment and Rest with no Training.”

“But in return, your training tonight will be extended by 90 minutes, and the time for your Exploration in Virtual Realm will also be delayed by 90 minutes.”

“...I usually only train for two hours anyway...”

The president of the Stretching Claws Club really wanted to be happy, but her intelligence wouldn't allow it: “What is this? Comp time? How is this any different from not having a day off at all!”

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

## Chapter 276: Anonymous

At 11:46 PM on May 11th, time was running out for the Gospel to finish its homework.

All members of the Funeral Firm gathered in the living room, quietly waiting for the Gospel to turn in its first set of answers.

“Dad, what is that outside?”

Ashe squinted his eyes towards the giant Holographic Screen erected in the city center. Mysteriously, as he focused, his vision suddenly sharpened, allowing him to clearly see the screen even from several kilometers away.

“That’s the city announcement Holographic Screen.”

Annan nestled in a red leather armchair, dressed in pink and purple pajamas and wearing a sleep cap, slowly sipping hot chocolate milk like a kitten. “It’s been enhanced with the ‘Focus’ Miracle so that no matter the distance, as long as you look at it, you can clearly see its contents. It’s only used for major holidays.”

“Given that it’s the Weaving Festival, which only happens every Fifty Years, there’s no doubt it’s a major holiday.”

The impeccably dressed Butler, Banjeet, commented, “This is actually a remnant of an older era. Fifty years ago, not everyone could afford their own Gospel, and there were even ‘Shared Gospels’ and ‘Gospel Kiosks’... That’s why these city-wide Holographic

Screens came into existence, and over decades, they became a tradition. But in reality, given the current proliferation of Gospel devices, there's no longer any need for these city screens."

"I quite like these outdated and redundant things; they're filled with historical sediment," said Igor, sitting by the dining table, swirling the ice in his glass. "The most endearing and meaningful aspect of history is precisely that it is outdated and redundant."

Harvey sat in the farthest corner, quietly smoking a Catnip Cigarette, seemingly ostracized. However, he was next to a coffin, so it seemed it was he and the coffin that were excluding everyone else in the room.

Ashe moved to another red leather armchair. Lise also wanted to sit, but couldn't squeeze past him, so she reluctantly settled beside the dining table instead.

Ashe looked around and asked, "Why are both of you dressed in formal wear?"

Ashe, Lise, and Annan were all in pajamas, while Banjeet was dressed in his butler's uniform. In fact, Ashe and the others had never seen Banjeet without his butler's uniform. However, Harvey and Igor were fully dressed, even wearing their boots—noteworthy since they had been wearing slippers the previous days, and Igor had even stopped wearing slippers after noticing the floors were clean.

"The Revelation spirit issued a warning to me," Igor said. "It's better to be safe than sorry."

"Same here," Harvey added. "When I was lost in a haze from smoking at noon, losing track of time, I saw Sanjiel, Linda, Ackley, and Sushibe urging me to run away..."

"Question!" Ashe raised his hand. "Are you having a split personality?"

"No, those were my dear friends and brothers—"

"Got it, they're dead." Ashe said. "So, does that mean something might happen tonight? Should we—"

"Don't rush," Annan was the calmest. "This phenomenon is also recorded by the Dolan Family. Every time the Weaving Festival Ranking List is released, both the Prophecy Faction and the Destiny Faction are affected, and the answers they get are either very good or very bad. Today, I made three prophecies; two celebrated good fortunes coming my way, and one warned me to leave immediately or disaster would strike."

Given that the locals said so, Ashe naturally believed it. However, Harvey and Igor showed no intention of changing their clothes—perhaps out of laziness, or maybe they trusted their own judgment more.

Suddenly, Ashe summoned his Gospel and asked, “Speaking of which, does checking the future Ranking still cost Points?”

“During these 100 days, no, it doesn’t,” Annan replied. “After the Weaving Festival, if you want to check past future Rankings, you will need to use Points. When the first Ranking List is woven, our Gospels will display a bookmark, reminding you to observe who will be the prominent figures over the next fifty years.”

“Speaking of which, is there a way to appear on the Ranking anonymously?”

Ashe suddenly recalled a classic scenario from online gaming novels: “If we appear on the Ranking, it will attract attention. Wouldn’t it work to be anonymous?”

“Sorry, that’s not possible,” Banjeet shook his head. “Although we still don’t know why the Omniscient Weaver holds the Weaving Festival—perhaps to control the future, perhaps to inspire the people—whatever the reason, the Weaving Festival is definitely not meant to serve the Echoers.”

“Echoers would certainly prefer to be anonymous on the Ranking List, but Echoers are just tools for display at the Weaving Festival. The Gospel would never consider the wishes of Echoers.”

“However,” Annan suddenly said, “there is indeed a Ranking where anonymity is possible.”

Banjeet was briefly startled, then realized what she was talking about: “That’s an exception among exceptions, meaningless...”

Igor, keenly sensing a secret, asked, “What are you talking about?”

“Among the thousands of Gospel Ranking Lists, there’s only one where everyone is listed anonymously,” Annan explained. “But being on that list isn’t a good thing; there aren’t even any Points rewards.”

“Is it the criminals’ list?” Ashe inquired.

“The Slaughter Ranking is one of the few Ranking Lists that criminals can enter. It’s highly competitive, and the rewards are richer than ordinary lists, but the cost is that it’s easier to get caught by the Red Caps,” Annan shook his head. “But I’m talking about the ‘Unrelated Ranking,’ which offers only losses, with no rewards at all.”

“Unrelated...” Lise murmured, sounding sympathetic.

Banjeet added, “The ‘Unrelated Ranking’ is the strangest of all the Gospel’s lists. There’s only one criterion to be on it: being unrelated.”

“People who are forgotten by society, people who are needed by no one, people who are cared about by no one, and even those who don’t care about themselves, end up on this list. Moreover, the information about those who are listed is not known to others, only the listed individuals themselves know.”

“Typically, those who are listed are minors under 17 years old, with no adults included.”

“Why is that?” Igor asked. “Because they become needed by someone once they are adults?”

“Because they don’t live to become adults.”

The living room fell into a brief silence before Harvey exhaled a ring of smoke. “Why? What happened to them?”

“No one knows,” Banjeet replied. “All we can see from the Ranking List is that names on the Unrelated Ranking suddenly disappear one day.”

Ashe suggested, “Maybe they became needed by someone—”

“Even though the Gospel obscures their specific information, it doesn’t stop us from finding out why Unrelated individuals are removed from the list,” Annan said. “Only a very few are removed because they ‘no longer meet the listing criteria.’ Most are removed because they ‘are no longer in the Kingdom of the Gospel.’”

No longer in the Kingdom of the Gospel—where did they go?

Certainly, they couldn’t have left the Kingdom of the Gospel on their own—Ashe and others who have experienced leaving the country understand how perilous it is to shuttle between two kingdoms.

Leaving one’s native land to start anew in a completely different society and culture is akin to transmigration, not to mention that many kingdoms obliterate outsiders to prevent invasions, as is the case during the Blood Moon and also in the Gospel.

Thus, the most likely reason for Unrelated individuals being removed from the list is that the Gospel has deemed them societal waste and granted them a Life Restart package.

“Perhaps the Omniscient Weaver has taken all the Unrelated to heaven to enjoy blessings,” Annan said calmly.

“Or maybe they’ve fallen into hell,” Igor added coldly. “It’s cruel. What kind of feelings must brew inside the tender hearts of the Unrelated when they hear the Gospel proclaiming them as the most unloved children in the world?”

“I thought you, Mr. Bukin, were a proponent of social Darwinism,” Annan said, somewhat surprised. “Supporting the natural elimination of those who cannot survive.”

“I do support the natural elimination of the weak, but I don’t support a god sitting high above passing judgment on the weak,” Igor stated. “Even if what lies ahead is hell, one should walk there on their own, not be thrown down by a god.”

Annan remarked, “But don’t you think the Unrelated might lack the courage to end their own lives? If they are listed, it means they have already taken 99 steps, and the Gospel merely pushes them to take the last one.”

“Indeed,” Ashe agreed. “Given the criteria for being listed as Unrelated, they probably don’t want to live anymore. It’s like they’re writing a horribly disorganized essay, and the Gospel is just putting a poor ending to it, which might actually be a relief for them.”

“However, the fact that they haven’t chosen to end their lives suggests that deep down, they still hope to write a beautiful chapter ahead. With such great power, the Gospel, acting as their editor, doesn’t need to rush them into finishing their story prematurely.”

“The power of a miracle isn’t meant to destroy the weak but to forge the strong,” Harvey added calmly. “Similarly, the Necromancy Faction isn’t about accumulating death but about elevating life.”

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

## **Chapter 277: The Eternal Journey**

Lise watched them, her beautiful, large eyes sparkling and glowing.

Ashe also found it strange that these two death row inmates could possess such a high moral awareness, but upon reflection, it made sense—even though they were indeed guilty of heinous crimes including murder and arson, they had received a complete Blood Moon education during their childhood at the Nursery.

The most important aspects of Blood Moon education are ‘supremacy of human rights’ and ‘racial equality’. It’s precisely because of this focus on human rights that the Blood Moon Tribunal has become so popular—for the audience, ‘death’ is merely a byproduct of the tribunal. Their greatest pleasure comes from ‘trampling on the prisoners’ human rights’.



Even if Igor and Harvey scorn it, deep down, they acknowledge the concept of ‘human rights’; they just believe that the Blood Moon Kingdom has not yet reached a stage where it can respect everyone’s rights.

Had they arrived in a darker, more brutal realm, they would never have questioned the ‘elimination of the Unrelated’ system. It’s like arriving at a foul-smelling cesspit and not being surprised to find flies and cockroaches.

But arriving in the Gospel Kingdom, where the cultural level is even higher than in the Blood Moon Kingdom, they find an elimination system even more primitive than that of the Blood Moon, hence their repeated shaking of their heads.

Even the death row inmates of the Blood Moon find it unacceptable.

“...Although there are disagreements, I’m glad your moral baseline is a bit higher than I imagined.”

Though it was a compliment, it was clear that Annan was not impressed by their rhetoric, much like someone observing ancient people clinging to outdated feudal remnants: “Now, it’s about time.”

It was 58 minutes past the hour, with at most one minute left before the release of the first Ranking List. Everyone couldn’t help but feel nervous, including Banjeet and Annan—for Annan, this was her first experience of the Weaving Festival.

Although it was Banjeet’s second time, his last experience was fifty years ago, and this was likely the last Weaving Festival he would ever witness in his life.

As the time reached 23:59:59, everyone’s Gospels sprouted a glowing bookmark.

At the same time, the city center’s Holographic Screen burst into dazzling rainbow lights!

The Weaving Festival, had begun!

Blood Moon Kingdom, Affiliated Hospital of Kaimon College.

“If you could possess greater power, so mighty that the weak cannot ignore you...”

“If you could possess deeper wisdom, so profound that stupidity cannot deceive you...”

“If you could possess stronger health, so robust that aging cannot harm you...”

“If you could possess more lasting happiness, so enduring that sorrow cannot catch up to you...”



The doll girl whispered softly in Bewitcher's ear, "Would you then be able to achieve eternal peace of mind?"

Freya looked confused, her eyes vacant as she murmured softly, "If I had power, wisdom, health, and happiness, I could achieve eternal peace of mind..."

"Yes, peace of mind, you would have no worries, no sorrows; the sun would rotate for you, the world would revolve around you, the pillars would become your support, constructing a world exclusively for you..."

"Pillars..."

"So..." Selina's eyes grew brighter, but her voice became softer, "Please embrace me, and I will take you to meet the pillars..."

"But I already have pillars."

"Ah?" Selina was taken aback.

"And I don't need peace of mind." Freya's expression remained blank, but her eyes slowly brightened, "It's this unease, this nervousness, that makes me so look forward to the future reunion... Huh? What's happening to me?"

"Freya, you must be very tired lately," Selina said sweetly, "You were nodding off just now. Do you want to sleep here for a while?"

"No need, no need." Freya rubbed her temples, "I can't believe I was so tired that I fell asleep? I'll recover quickly once I go back to the Virtual Realm... So, I'll head back first?"

"Mhm, goodbye, sister!"

Watching Bewitcher leave the hospital room, Selina's expression gradually darkened.

This was her third attempt at Preaching to Freya and failing. As Eternal Calamity, this was truly the first time she had experienced such humiliation.

If it had been earlier, Selina would have already had other believers kill Freya and simply switched to another for Preaching. But here, the doll girl could no longer find any other puppets.

Of course, there's no need to mention the nominal Guardian Gerard, a Tri-wings Sanctuary Sorcerer. Even Selina at her peak would have had a hard time Preaching to him. Then there's the lead Medic, Sivirin, but the problem is that this female doctor is also of the sacred bloodline.

After brief interactions, Selina realized that these members of the sacred bloodline essentially lacked Souls, or rather, their Souls were dispersed throughout their blood. While this Soul defect impacts their ability to absorb arcane energy in the Virtual Realm, it also has a positive effect—aside from having longer Soul lifespans, those without normal Souls from the sacred bloodline have high resistance to any mental enchantment.

Imagine a regular person's body as a water tank and the Soul as the water. Mind Miracle would be like pouring paint to contaminate the water. In contrast, the body of someone from the sacred bloodline is like mud, with the Soul's water already seeped into the soil. Even if paint is thrown over it, it would only contaminate the surface water without affecting the overall.

Forget the Four Pillars; the sacred bloodline likely has no faith even in the Blood Moon Sovereign. They only revere the Divine Master but never blindly follow. This isn't because they are all rebellious by nature, but rather it is determined by the essence of their Souls. A defective Soul cannot foster radiant belief.

Normally, nurses also take care of patients, but Sivirin seems to take this case very seriously, sending nurses who are also from the sacred bloodline, which made Selina quite frustrated.

Help, I'm surrounded by the sacred bloodline!

Therefore, Selina's only Breakthrough point was the college student Freya, who occasionally visited her. However, Freya was like a fortress, specializing in the Mind Faction, which also happened to grant her resistance to mental enchantment.

More importantly, her mental state was incredibly healthy!

This was truly strange.

Among all the people Selina had interacted with, only Freya and Sivirin had healthy mental states. Others, including passing patients, nurses, Freya's friends, and the Sanctuary Sorcerer Gerard, all had severe psychological issues.

In this group of almost madmen, only Bewitcher and the Medic remained unblemished by the muck, perfectly normal.

Selina's failure to breach Freya's mental barriers three times in a row clearly indicated that Freya had fully embraced her life. She neither resented others nor aimed unrealistically high, having detailed plans and firm aspirations for the future.

Such a person does not need the Four Pillars; she is capable of supporting her own world.

Each time Selina thought of this, the doll girl felt somewhat deflated.

After investigating the Blood Moon Kingdom, Selina thought that Preaching here would be simple since the social system was incredibly bizarre. It seemed like a breeding ground for psychological patients, those with depression, and anti-social misfits. She almost suspected that the Blood Moon Sovereign was an incarnation of the Sovereign of Wind, Rain, and Snow.

Moreover, this place revered personal freedoms and lacked widespread prophetic tools like the Gospel. The streets were full of fools ready to give and take, like chives growing from the ground, just waiting for Selina to turn them into Followers of the Four Pillars.

If the Blood Moon Kingdom was like a buffet, then the Gospel Kingdom was like crashing a banquet. Selina had to dodge the Red Caps while quickly gathering Followers.

Thus, Selina's view of the apocalypse observer worsened—she had learned these past few days that the Four Pillars Cult had recently been destroyed and the Cult Leader, Ashe, had escaped from prison and was on the run, the very man who could compete with her for the favor of the Four Pillars.

She couldn't understand how the apocalypse observer lost in such an advantageous social environment. If she were Preaching here, the Blood Moon Sovereign would have been promoted as a Substitute of the Four Pillars, completely subverting the Blood Moon Kingdom.

Selina still couldn't grasp why the Four Pillars favored such a loser; surely they didn't keep him around just for amusement?

However, she soon wouldn't need to ponder the troubles brought by the apocalypse observer anymore.

Selina slightly tilted her head, and a Holographic Screen appeared before her.

A few days earlier, she had been implanted with a Miracle Chip, a special product of the Blood Moon Kingdom.

But Selina wasn't concerned about the shackle installed at the back of her neck; she had endured far worse.

She was destined for Eternal Entanglement, but Ultimate Everlasting.

"It's 10 o'clock..." Selina squinted her eyes, "Two hours time difference... the Weaving Festival there has already started."

"That means, Ashe Heath..."

“Your journey of Eternal Entanglement begins now.”

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

## Chapter 278: Art Ranking

Gospel time, May 10th at 23:59:59!

The first future Ranking List is announced!

The six people in the living room all flipped to their bookmarked pages, only to see the pages swiftly transform into images and text—no, into a video player!

“Video?”

“The last edition was still in the form of images.” Butler Youth commented, “But with each Weaving Festival, the method of announcement evolves with the era, and recently, video has indeed become the main medium.”

As they spoke, the scenes within the Gospel rapidly changed, featuring young men, Elves, Orcs, and Goblins. Some appeared handsome and dashing, others ancient and stodgy, some fierce and robust, and some elegantly aloof. Without exception, all were painting.

With a stroke of vivid ink, the title of the first Ranking List was grandly announced—

Art Ranking

“No me this time.” Harvey yawned.

“It would be nice if I were included,” Banjeet laughed. “I quite enjoy painting... Maybe Miss Annan is on it.”

“I’m not even as good as you at painting, Banjeet,” Annan smiled.

Igor pondered, “I do like painting quite a bit, but I’m not interested in pursuing it further...”

Con Artist looked at Ashe, who cleared his throat, ready to say something, but Igor’s gaze skipped over him to a young girl with white hair: “Lise, do you like painting?”

“Um—” Lise checked her Little Magic Mirror before answering: “I love it!”

Ashe: “Why not ask me?”

Igor said, “Look, they’re about to release the painting ranked tenth.”

“Don’t dodge my question, hey!”

The scene in the book began to shift, showing a meticulously dressed male Elf bent over his desk. He seemed to be in a basement, his clothing somewhat dirty, and on the Holographic Screen in front of him, a comic was rapidly taking shape with each stroke of his pen.

Art Ranking, 10th Place: “From the Old Era”

“A comic that portrays the transition from the old Gospel era to the new Wasteland era, the creator integrates his own experiences to depict the personal, social, and Destiny changes under historical shifts. This comic visualizes the transformations of history...”

“Lanbeisi Dongbei”

“Dongbei Family!” Annan immediately exclaimed, “He’s a member of the Elves’ Dongbei Family!”

More than the creator’s identity, everyone was captivated by the description of the artwork—Old Gospel era? New Wasteland era? What do these terms mean?

Moreover, as a descendant of the Elves Family, why would Lanbeisi live in a dirty basement, wearing tattered clothes stuffed with cotton, creating in such harsh conditions?

Even the poorest commoners could afford a Mechanical Spider, so why would he live a life that seems akin to dwelling in a Sewer?

Beyond the artwork and the creator himself, the historical context of his creations is even more intriguing.

“Lanbeisi Dongbei receives the reward ‘Pen of Dialogue’.”

“Pen of Dialogue: Any character created with this pen can converse with the creator, and only the creator can hear their Inner Voice. Treat your fictional characters well, or they might curse you out!”

“‘From the Old Era’ receives the reward ‘Must-See’.”

“Must-See: The moment this work is completed, every Family will receive a set of this work, and at the same time, the creator will receive an equivalent amount in royalties. The royalty funds will be drawn from the top ten offenders on the Slaughter Ranking.”

What a scheme!

Everyone present couldn't help but internally criticize. S

While the Pen of Dialogue indeed seems magical and could certainly become a useful tool for a cartoonist, for this group who never planned to contribute to cultural pursuits, the Pen of Dialogue holds little allure.

Ashe could not think of any other use for the Pen of Dialogue—drawing a Paper person and then falling in love with it?

Moreover, there are many simpler alternatives for chatting with virtual characters: consulting Igor for hypnosis, seeking Harvey for sweets, or asking Ashe for video games—there are plenty of virtual characters in online games.

But the latter reward is truly insane.

It's one thing to have rewards for the artworks, but to have them instantly distributed nationwide, requiring every Family to own a copy; and not just nationwide distribution, but having the royalties drawn from the top ten murderers on the Slaughter Ranking!

When the people of the Gospel unexpectedly receive a deluxe set of the comic book, should they say ‘thanks to the number one on the Slaughter Ranking’?

“Not right,” Annan suddenly said. “While it makes sense to draw from the Slaughter Ranking, typically such cash rewards are deducted from the national treasury. There has never been a precedent for demanding money from the Slaughter Ranking, unless...”

“Unless there is no treasury left,” Igor finished for Annan, voicing what Annan had only hinted at. “It's even possible that the Gospel Kingdom no longer exists.”

The three migrant workers were naturally indifferent to this. Whether it's the destruction of the Gospel Kingdom or even the Blood Moon Kingdom, they would simply comment, ‘Isn't that fortunate.’

However, Banjeet and Annan's expressions turned quite grim. After all, this was their homeland, and unlike the orphans of the Blood Moon, they still held deep feelings for their nation.

But unnoticed by all, Lise, hiding in the corner, had a slight smile playing at her lips.

At that moment, the video from the Gospel continued. The scene showed the Elves painter Lanbeisi suddenly picking up a photo frame from his desk. The frame contained an image of a diminutive Goblin Sorcerer painting beneath an Obelisk. The scene then transitioned from the basement to the Obelisk Square.

The Goblin Sorcerer painted swiftly and fiercely—each stroke was incredibly bold and forceful. Just watching his painting process, one could feel as if they were witnessing life burning brightly.

As the Goblin Sorcerer made the final brushstroke, the tip of the Spire emitted a brilliant glow. A visible energy shield quickly unfolded, enveloping the entire city. At the city's edge, one could faintly see rolling waves of darkness...

However, upon completing his work, the body of the Goblin Sorcerer disintegrated into ash—this turned out to be a Ritual Miracle that demanded life as its price!

Art Ranking, 9th Place: "Monument of Guardianship"

"A Sorcerer has inscribed their wisdom, soul, and arcane energy into the Obelisk through painting, leveraging the power of the Virtual Realm to protect the city from calamities."

"Mantos Cheno"

"That Spire is a landmark of Hemera..." Annan murmured. "Hemera is a plains city, also known as 'Land Blessed by the Gods.' It's the second major urban area in the Gospel Kingdom, and it has never faced any disasters for thousands of years..."

There's no need for further discussion—If once could be a coincidence, twice confirms that in the future depicted by the Gospel, this Kingdom will face catastrophic changes.

Art is merely a shadow of this heavy history.

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

## Chapter 279: Ashe and Heath

"Mantos Cheno received the reward 'Hemera's Badge of Honor'."

"Hemera's Badge of Honor: In the Hemera region, the holder's arcane energy recovery rate, Soul Energy recovery rate, and stamina recovery rate increase by 100%, and it grants the holder three chances to resurrect from death."

“The Spire received the reward ‘Watcher’.”

“Watcher: This building cannot be worn down. Any creature that gazes upon this building receives a temporary stamina restoration blessing, lasting for five minutes, which can only be triggered once per day.”

Undoubtedly, ‘Hemera’s Badge of Honor’ is an extremely powerful Item, especially with the three chances to resurrect, allowing the holder to virtually dominate in Hemera. The ‘Watcher’ reward is also quite intriguing; rather than saying it rewards the Spire, it might be more accurate to say it rewards the citizens of Hemera.

However, no one in the living room felt like discussing these rewards. The city outside had also fallen into silence, as if everyone was waiting for the verdict from the Gospel.

“Art Ranking, 8th place: ‘The Demigod’s Body of the Thousand-Color Oath’”

“A Sorcerer uses up all their sanity, all arcane energy, all spirits, their unique name, and life traces to create colored ink, which they apply stroke by stroke to their own body, thus leveraging the power of the Virtual Realm to temporarily gain power beyond Legend.”

“Alifiya Kaliya”

Art Ranking, 7th place: ‘The Five Thousand Blood Array’

“5623 Sorcerers use their own blood as ink, and in a single night, they draw ritual runes across the entire city, using themselves as conduits to leverage the power of the Virtual Realm to reinforce the city’s structures.” Search\* The novelFire.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“Paris Sastin and 5623 others.”

As Ashe and others looked through, it was one thing, but Annan and Banjeet were nearly out of breath, their expressions extremely oppressed.

The Art Ranking barely described the world fifty years later directly, but each ranked piece indirectly depicted the brutal disasters that the Gospel Kingdom had endured.

It was a cruelty that led to the death of Sorcerers, the collapse of nations, the destruction of cities, the extinction of Families, marking nearly the end of the year 1668 in the history of Gospel—a great terror!

“What exactly happened...” Miss Annan bit her finger, “If the future is destined to be like this, is there still a need for us to vie for the Divine Master’s Wish... Yes, the Divine Master’s Wish!”



Banjeet responded, “Exactly, as long as we obtain the Divine Master’s Wish, we can request the Omniscient Weaver to intervene!”

“Oh? I guess you don’t mean using the wish to save the world, do you?”

Igor tilted his head, “Mr. Banjeet probably won’t have the chance to see the world fifty years from now, and Miss Annan, after using the wish to elevate your power beyond Legend, even if you can’t resist, you could definitely escape from the Gospel to another safe Kingdom to live, like our homeland which is quite nice... There’s absolutely no need to use the wish on something grand like saving the world, right?”

Annan surveyed them, “What if I suddenly decide I want to save the world?”

“Then I’d be very happy that my employer is a good person,” Igor shrugged, “After all, I don’t have such a high Realm of thought.”

They had revealed themselves, Ashe thought.

From the beginning to the end, Annan had never disclosed why she was willing to pay such a great price just for a chance to seize the Divine Master’s Wish.

Of course, everyone wants a wish, but what to wish for after obtaining it could be worlds apart.

If Annan wished for eternal life, everlasting youth, or even to become a deity, everyone could understand and cooperate normally. However, if Annan was pursuing this plan for some lofty ideal, it would be difficult for everyone to collaborate sincerely.

Igor and Harvey are both selfish, so they know that dealing with the selfish is the most comfortable—selfish people are afraid of death.

People with weaknesses are the easiest to control.

But idealists are different; apart from death, idealists have no other weaknesses. They only have two outcomes: win or die.

Cooperation means that everyone bears a cost too great to breach, so they must adhere to the rules of winning and losing. But if one party is not afraid of breaching, then such cooperation is merely a joke; they could overturn the table and deny everything at any time.

Annan and Banjeet seemed to sense that the rift between them and their tools was widening, so they remained silent and continued to look at the Art Ranking.

Soon, the Art Ranking reached its number one spot.

Unlike the gloomy scenes before, the scene of the first-place artwork was very comforting. In the studio with white walls, soft sunlight filtered through the windows, spreading across the wooden floor. Indoor plants gently swayed, inducing a drowsy laziness at first glance.

As the camera zoomed in, the scene revealed a beautiful woman in purple attire painting. Opposite her, there seemed to be a soft chair that should have been occupied by a model, but it was empty. However, the woman continued to paint as if someone was indeed there.

As the camera slightly shifted, the face of the woman in purple slowly came into view, and then, almost everyone in the living room stood up in shock!

Although she appeared more mature and more dazzling, this painter was unmistakably the head of the Funeral Firm, Miss Annan, known as the 'Purple Moth'!

Miss Annan seemed melancholic in the video, her hand heavy as if leaden, painting with slow, burdensome strokes. Despite the light paper, each brushstroke felt immensely heavy, making it uncomfortable to watch.

When she made the final stroke, she stood up as if finally freed, violently snapping her paintbrush and shouting loudly, "It's over!"

Crack!

With that crisp sound, the clean studio and the soft sunlight shattered like glass.

She wasn't in a clean, bright studio but standing amidst burning ruins. The ground around her was cracked, the sky a murky yellow-grey, indistinguishable between day and night, as if the world was being devoured by the apocalypse!

At that moment, the perspective shifted behind Miss Annan, and everyone noticed that the soft chair, which should have been empty, now had someone sitting in it!

However, because the easel blocked the view, they could only see the legs and not the face directly!

But that didn't matter.

Because whatever was obscured by the easel, Miss Annan had already captured it on her canvas.

This is the first-ranked artwork on the Art Ranking.

In the ruins of a burning city, a man dressed in a dark red trench coat is seated on a luxurious red leather soft chair. He crosses his legs, rests his left hand on his cheek,

and wears a mask. His unkempt bangs fall casually, and he gazes indifferently at the burning world, his eyes slightly squinting as if he is smiling.

A chilling shiver runs up Ashe's spine.

Art Ranking Number 1: "Ashe Heath"

"Portrait of Ashe Heath, painted by Annan Dolan"

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

## **- Chapter 280: The Reward of Weaving**

### **Chapter 280: The Reward of Weaving**

Everyone looked towards Ashe, who was perched on a red leather armchair.

At the moment, Ashe was sporting his Dark Red Trench Coat with his legs crossed. He hadn't gone so far as to wear a mask indoors, and beneath the trench coat, he wore pajamas with slippers hooked on his feet. Compared to everyone else, he stood out like a mudslide at the Funeral Firm.

Yet, the familiarity in his eyes and face, the corresponding outfit, and most importantly, the Gospel having named him explicitly, forced everyone to acknowledge that this man before them, Ashe Heath, was indeed the mysterious and commanding figure from the number one portrait in the Art Ranking!

"Fifty years and you're still clinging to that trench coat and mask!?" Igor and Lise exclaimed in unison.

"Cough, cough!" Harvey, caught off-guard while smoking, looked bewildered at the pair—your points of focus are so odd that even a Necromancer would find it strange.

Ashe himself seemed puzzled, but his confusion quickly turned to delight, "Wait, does this mean both Miss and I can receive exclusive rewards from the Ranking List?"

"Rewards? Now is not the time to care about rewards!"

Annan chuckled bitterly, "Banjeet!"

The Butler Youth, understanding with Telepathy, immediately left. Lise, puzzled, asked, "Isn't it a good thing that Annan and Ashe are listed?"

Annan sighed, about to say something, but the Gospels of both her and Ashe suddenly emitted two beams of light, one landing on the Purple Moth, etching Pattern Lines on her left eye and tongue; the other fell upon the Cult Leader, causing his Dark Red Trench Coat to ripple and surge as if alive.

"Annan Dolan receives the rewards 'Calamity Insight' and 'Tongue of Release'."

"Calamity Insight: The bearer can now identify calamities, never bringing them home again."

"Tongue of Release: The bearer can verbally end any Contract when both parties are willing."

"Ashe Heath receives the rewards 'Demonic Trench Coat' and 'Twisted Mask'."

"Demonic Trench Coat: All intelligent beings who see the wearer for the first time undergo a mind check. The higher the Mind Faction level of the wearer, the more difficult the check becomes for those with a lower Mind Faction level, and vice versa. If the check fails, the observer will be subjected to a mental suggestion, rendering them incapable of harboring any malice towards the wearer."

"Twisted Mask: Distorts all detection attempts directed at the wearer. All intelligent beings will notice the wearer's presence at first sight. This effect remains active regardless of whether the mask is worn."

Starting from the third place, the rewards from the Art Ranking typically come in pairs, and even when they are singular, they are extremely powerful.

However, no one expected the method of awarding to be so direct, with the rewards literally shooting out of the Gospel and onto the ranked individuals—essentially a direct sale from the manufacturer.

In the eyes of the onlookers, they could faintly see Ashe appearing to wear a mask, fitting so well that it seemed as if the mask was the real entity and Ashe was merely an ornament to the mask. Yet, when they shifted their gaze away, the mask disappeared;

Annan's pupils were now covered with complex purple Pattern Lines, and at a quick glance, they appeared to be purple pupils. But upon closer inspection, the pupils were filled with densely packed, intricate lines that could drive those with a fear of tightly-packed patterns insane!

"Is this... the reward of the Weaving Festival?" Annan murmured softly.

She covered her right eye and looked around with her left, noticing that each person had a different colored aura around them. Since this eye was named Calamity Insight, she temporarily referred to this vision as Calamity Vision.

Harvey's aura was an unpleasant dark green, but not highly dangerous; Igor's aura was a clear dark red, pretty and enticing at first, yet with a murky darkness at its center that was chilling to behold; Lise's aura was multicolored, shifting from black to deep red, to pure white, to sky blue, making it hard to understand.

But at this moment, what Annan cared about most was her future portrait model, Ashe Heath!

Among everyone, Ashe's aura was the thickest, almost overshadowing the auras of others. However, his aura was also the most unique, flowing like surging rainbow waves. Annan could not determine his level of danger based on the color of his aura!

"Distorts all detection attempts directed at the wearer"... The effect of the 'Twisted Mask' actually supersedes that of 'Calamity Insight'!?

Miss Annan's expression darkened as she opened her right eye, and the world returned to normal, with the halos around everyone disappearing.

Normal vision returned with both eyes open, while using only her left eye activated Calamity Vision. The Gospel seemed quite considerate in this regard—if Calamity Vision were always active, it would greatly impact normal life.

At this moment, she noticed everyone was looking at her, and Igor asked, "What did you see with Calamity Insight?"

"Now is not the time to discuss that," Miss Annan shook her head. "Everyone, pack your bags. I'm giving you 15 minutes. We leave in 15 minutes."

"Why?" Ashe asked, surprised. "It can't be because of me, can it? The Gospel didn't say anything about me, and they surely don't think I'm the source of the calamity..."

"Actually, the Gospel did mention it," Lise raised her hand and said. "There's a whole bunch of text in the artwork's description praising dad's great achievements. It's just that dad's power has overshadowed it, and the text has been smeared away. Dad, you're so powerful!"

"And it's not just the painting itself," Igor added. "Look at Miss Annan's exclusive reward, 'Calamity Insight' means to mock the lady for bringing this disaster home, and 'Tongue of Release' is urging the lady to hurry up and terminate the Contract with you and kick you out. Goodbye Ashe, I'll visit your cardboard box under the Skybridge later."

Harvey also spoke up, “I recommend living in the cemetery. In a developed Kingdom like the Gospel Kingdom, the cemeteries are sure to be clean and hygienic. I hear there’s even a tradition of offerings, so you won’t even need to worry about finding food.”

Ashe looked at them both, surprised. He could tell that, although the Con Artist and the Necromancer were mocking him in their remarks, they were actually inciting Miss Annan—now that she had gained the ability to dissolve Contracts, if she really disliked Ashe or had other plans, she might indeed terminate their Contract on the spot.

Freedom!

If Ashe could escape from Annan’s control during this opportunity, it would be an unexpected boon for him.

Despite Ashe’s laissez-faire attitude—often quipping “It’s great to be kept by a rich lady,” “No need to work for a living,” and “A life without work is incomplete”—if he had the chance to regain his freedom, he would seize it without hesitation, even if it meant facing numerous risks.

Recall that when Ashe escaped from Shattered Lake, he had to face pursuit by Sanctuary Sorcerers and societal rejection. There was nowhere in the world for him save for the Bewitcher’s home.

But now, he didn’t even have a single warrant out for his arrest, not to mention his rewards: the Twisted Mask shielded him from prophetic inquiries, and the Demonic Trench Coat deterred strangers. The social atmosphere in the Gospel Kingdom was so harmonious and united, incomparable to the troublesome citizens of the Blood Moon Kingdom.

With such adverse conditions during his escape from Shattered Lake, Ashe had resolutely broken his iron rice bowl; now, with such favorable conditions for starting a business, he was not afraid of being dismissed by Annan. At worst, he could become a freelancer and start anew in a strange city, something he was already accustomed to.

However, Annan did not seem to intend to let go of her outstanding employee: “It’s not about the painting. Don’t say this artwork implies that Ashe is the calamity destroying the Gospel world. Even if it praised Ashe for saving the Gospel Kingdom, marrying the Princess, and leading the people into a heavenly society, we would still need to escape!”

“Our danger is related only to Ashe’s prominence!”

Igor abruptly stood up: “Because Ashe is a foreigner?”

“Exactly!” Annan nodded emphatically. “Once others realize Ashe has no past, they will know he is a foreigner, and I, being the head of the Firm, am associated with him... The idea of exploiting a foreigner to find a loophole during the Weaving Festival has been around for a while, but few have succeeded. Only our Dolan family has the experience.”

“When they associate me with Ashe, they won’t think that he will truly bring disaster to the Gospel Kingdom. They will think it’s a miracle I created, that I successfully disguised Ashe as a sweet and splendid cake, hence the Gospel gives a five-star rating!”

“Our plan has been exposed.” Annan’s expression was extremely grim: “Our enemies are not the Gospel, but—”

“Annan!” the Butler Youth screamed, rushing out with a suitcase in hand. “The Hovercar has lost connection!”

Annan was startled. She saw Ashe suddenly pull a longsword from his mouth and slash down at her heavily—

Miracle Sword Barrier!

Boom!

The balcony’s French windows shattered explosively as dozens of Drones burst into the room, not delivering parcels this time, but armed with light machine guns!

“Remote defense!” At Annan’s command, Banjeet, Harvey, and Igor automatically reacted—

Ice Miracle Ricochet Ice Screen!

Necromancy Miracle Life Link!

Mind Miracle Cold Blood Mode!

These days weren’t all about leisure for them, as Annan held a commanding Contract over them, allowing her to orchestrate everyone’s actions in battle as if playing chess!

The Ricochet Ice Screen could effectively defend against a storm of Shot Bullets, Life Link could lock the health of the severely wounded, and Cold Blood Mode could make the recipients forget fear and pain. Combined with Ashe’s Sword Barrier, these four miracles ensured that the Funeral Firm had the means to protect itself from long-range attacks!

Dada dada dada dada—

The terrifying sound of Shot Bullets echoed inside, causing one's scalp to tingle and brain to boil. Ashe, holding Annan with one hand and Lise with the other, quickly retreated behind the group.

Before he could catch his breath, suddenly, a spider-like object leaped out and clamped onto his face—

“Watch out!”

These usually inconspicuous Mechanical Spiders, responsible only for housework, suddenly attacked like mad, exploding upon getting close!

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

The Mechanical Spiders approaching Igor and the others were preemptively blown up, the only one that slipped through was the one that jumped at Ashe's face!

Bang!

With a muffled explosion close at hand, the Mechanical Spider clinging to Ashe's face fell off.

A shaken Ashe saw Annan next to him, dressed in pajamas, single-handedly holding a submachine gun, the barrel still trailing smoke. Clearly, Annan had just saved her employee's life.

However, Ashe keenly noticed that dangling from the barrel of the submachine gun was a sparkling Amethyst Earring, while the Amethyst Earring Annan was always fidgeting with was missing.

He suddenly remembered what Annan had said: “As a Swordcerer, the fact that you are never seen carrying a sword at any time is telling. Any practitioner of the craft always carries their weapon.”

Annan noticed his gaze, patted the stock of the gun and said, “This is Miss Donna. Her mother works for the Absolute Blade Mechanics Corporation. She's usually shy, excels at firing 9mm Shot Bullets. Won't you thank her?”

“Thank you, Miss Donna!”

At that moment, the Drone's barrage ended, and the ice screen was shattered. Miss Annan, looking towards the two figures descending from the Hovercar at the edge of the



balcony, slowly exhaled, “Azura is skilled at controlling Drones and spiders, these smart devices. It must be you guys.”

“Pleasure to meet you, Purple Moth of the Funeral Firm,” the young man smiled. “I am Menard Keenest, the Combat Officer of the Moonlit Harmony Home Firm.”

“Logistics Officer, Leman Searle,” the long-haired lady said coolly.

“Forgive our intrusion. It seems you were planning a trip, but we hope you can stay for a while. Our firm’s leader is on her way here.”

“She is very keen to discuss a deep collaboration with the Funeral Firm.”

“What kind of collaboration?” Annan asked coldly.

“Well, that would be...”

Menard summoned his Gospel, turned it towards Annan, and there were four photos inside—it was Ashe, Igor, Harvey, and Lise!

“To jointly develop scarce resources.”

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