

Sorcerer's Handbook

Chapter 321: Oh, How Foolish I Am

“Hey, how’s the air back there? The air up front is quite clear, especially since I’m the only one in the first three rows. But that’s actually quite alright. If you students were passionate about the history lessons of the past, I might start worrying about the future of the Stars... But if you don’t spend a little time on the past, then you should start worrying about your future grades.”

“Turn to page 173 of your textbook. In the year 871, the court Prime Minister, Blaido Usgael, drafted the Noble Act, and became the first noble to be granted the Blessing of Stars by the Empress. The content of the Noble Act is...”

The history Professor is not a stern old scholar, but rather a quite humorous and stylish old man. However, his strong personal style cannot salvage the dull content of the lectures, unless he cracks a few Duke jokes or minister anecdotes, otherwise the classroom atmosphere would remain between a sleepy haze and a muddled daze.

For Sonya, the only benefit of attending the class was being able to slowly untangle the messy threads of her mind. This was a habit she had developed after starting university, as her other spare time was packed too full, and those freely allocable time resources were all invested in herself.

More importantly, Gales was not her destination. If she stayed alone in a place with no one around, she would easily be crushed by the boring pressure, and fall into a state of self-pity. After trying once to secretly cry in bed, the rustic girl forced herself to stay as much as possible within sight of others, not allowing herself to run off to a corner to lick her wounds like a defeated dog.

Tears that could not arouse others’ sympathy and affection were utterly worthless.

Thus, the only places she could use to daydream and think about life were the dull general education classes. After all, as long as she studied a bit for the finals, she could easily pass these classes, so she could use the class time to freely contemplate her gains and losses.

Who had offended her, who had designs on her, whom she should try to please, whom she should target... Conveniently, general education classes were large lectures, allowing Sonya to survey around and lock onto her targets.

Recently, Sonya found a new form of entertainment during class—monitoring online forums to see if any students from noble families were discussing her. If she found any, she would “execute” them on the spot by calling them out, and then observe the reactions of the surrounding students. Quite a few peers who were meek in person but bold online calling her a “rustic girl” had been caught this way.

When in a good mood, Sonya would approach these students after class, tap them on the shoulder, and call out their forum nicknames, causing them significant emotional distress in the moment. When she was feeling less generous, Sonya would secretly dig up personal details about them and then, posing as a Sorcerer from the Prophecy Faction on the forums, she accurately revealed embarrassing personal details about these students. She would predict things like “you will definitely be cheated on,” “your family will fall,” or “the skincare products you use will definitely ruin your face,” inflicting lasting psychological damage.

Both scenarios were tremendously fun for her. When Adelle learned about this game, she too eagerly joined in as a “classroom police officer.” Anyone who dared to mock the Swordswoman on the forums instead of paying attention in class would face their swift justice!

So, when Adelle saw Sonya suddenly start writing intently in her notebook—her expression alternating between tension, smiles, and anger—she assumed Sonya had hooked a big fish.

Who was lucky enough to be the day’s target for the president of the Stretching Claws Club?

Thinking this, Adelle leaned over to see what damning information Sonya was recording, but today, the usually oblivious Sonya was quick as a protective mother wolf, snapping her notebook shut in an instant.

Keeping it all to herself?

Adelle turned her gaze away, pretending to focus on the Noble Act, but her mind was still on Sonya’s notebook.

Because she had glimpsed a line:

“Let’s go back together and torment each other again.”

The vibe of that scoundrel was as blatant as the fountain at the school entrance, and Adelle felt sure Sonya must have caught some playboy in her claws, ready to toy with him.

Indeed, Adelle’s guess was not wrong; Sonya was indeed up to just that.

After finally getting over the humiliation of her amnesia, Sonya quickly realized a problem—the Observer, given their nature, would definitely cling to this incident. They would remember every word she uttered during her amnesia and abruptly bring it up during a Battle, distracting her and putting her in danger. Just as she was about to falter, the Observer would dramatically step in to save her...

Thinking about this plot development made the rustic girl both embarrassed and angry. To avoid such an awkward situation, Sonya also needed to gather some leverage on the Observer to create a “deterrence of amnesia,” ensuring that no one would bring up her amnesic moments casually!

Thus, Sonya spent a good half hour documenting every phrase the Observer had said during their amnesia, then she selected the “Top Ten Most Affectionate Phrases,” “Five Famous Quotes on Infidelity,” and “One Shameless Statement Worth Ten Thousand Words.”

Observer, do you still have enough ammunition?

Sonya could even imagine the scene: just as the Observer was about to mock her, she would cough and casually retort, “Or perhaps in a more direct manner, without any ambiguity, opening my heart completely—currently, I...”

Thud!

The history Professor adjusted his glasses as the red-faced Sonya nonchalantly pointed at the cracked desk surface: “There was a mosquito.”

The Professor sighed with relief: “You scared me! I thought my lecture was so unbearable that it drove a student to smash the desk.”

After class, Sonya, satisfied, packed up her notebook. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly remembered something and said to Lois and Adelle, “Oh, by the way, I died again in the Virtual Realm, and it was because I accidentally wandered into the Static Domain. Gosh, I’m so silly.”

Watching Sonya playfully tap her own head, her roommates began to wonder if they had somehow misheard “I’m in love” as “I died in the Virtual Realm,” because that would be really hard to explain her cheerful demeanor.

They understood what Sonya meant—spread the word, our great Chief, the Red-haired Swordswoman, has actually died twice in the Virtual Realm this month!

This would certainly provide a perfect target for the “Anti-Swordswoman League,” but this was exactly what Sonya had hoped for. With the forum’s atmosphere now, the “Anti-Swordswoman League” had already crumbled. Anyone daring to mock Sonya

would be overwhelmed by a barrage of counterattacks, and if this continued, the Noble students who disliked the Swordswoman might just keep their heads down.

However, Sonya's upcoming Songstress album was about to be released, and it was a prime time to stir up some heat. The "Anti-Swordswoman League," like tap water, naturally needed to be utilized frequently, throwing out bait now and then to keep their enthusiasm alive. Sonya anticipated that when her album was released, it would surely spark numerous flame wars, followed by a skyrocketing in sales.

Sonya wasn't afraid that such "scandals" would impact her, especially since the public would soon learn that in just one month in the Virtual Realm, Sonya had gone from an Apprentice Sorcerer to a Two Wings Sorcerer.

This was also the promotional strategy of the Stretching Claws Club (the name unanimously approved by supporters after seeing the photos Adelle took): a genius doesn't need to promote her genius, just her flaws. Attracting the public's attention with her flaws allows them to discover the Swordswoman's genius on their own.

Adelle watched Sonya bounce out of the Classroom and sighed, "She was so distracted before class, but after, it's like she ate a strawberry sundae, exuding a blissful aroma of cream... Women are really hard to understand."

"She looks..." Lois said uncertainly, "like she might be in love?"

"However," Adelle pondered, "the only people she interacts with are us. And that time I stood naked in front of her, she showed no impulse at all, which shows she doesn't have any particular desire for women..."

"So there's only one conclusion."

Lois looked at Adelle, and Adelle looked at Lois's chest.

"I've had my suspicions before," Adelle said seriously. "Lois, are you actually a man?"

Lois did not respond, just looked at her calmly. Adelle then realized her joke might have gone too far and mimicked Sonya by playfully tapping her own head, "Hey, just kidding!"

"Adelle..."

"I'm now the high-ranking manager of the Stretching Claws Club. Speak politely, don't bully me."

"Even if I were a man," Lois said with a chill in her gaze, "I wouldn't choose you as a paramour."

Adelle blinked, her eyes beginning to moisten.

Her heart was falling, continuously plummeting.

“I even thought about marrying you if I were a man... Don’t talk to me anymore!”

As Adelle turned and ran off in tears, Lois remained expressionless: “There seems to be a quiz next period in the Water Department class...” Adelle’s steps halted.

Lois strode out, with Adelle trailing behind, her eyes fixed on Lois’s backside as if cursing it to shrink.

However, Lois suddenly stopped, causing Adelle to bump into her.

“What’s wrong?”

It wasn’t just Lois; other students also paused in the hallway, looking out the windows at the sky with puzzled expressions. Search the novelFire.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Adelle looked up.

Reflected in her eyes was the shadow of the stars.

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

Chapter 322: Starsfall

Harvest Orchard.

Today, the one welcoming Sonya was, of course, the Advanced member of the Stretch Paw Club, Mifa.

After selling off her recent Virtual Realm harvests, Sonya suddenly fell silent.

Mifa wasn’t in a hurry, quietly enjoying the time they spent alone together.

After a long while, Sonya let out a soft sigh and said, “I want to purchase the ‘Heart Pen’ Miracle... Are there any promotions or discounts right now?”

Although Mifa really wanted to give the sword Princess a freebie, she didn't have the authority: "No, you can only buy it for the original price of 15 gold coins. Maybe you could wait until the College League starts; the school usually offers promotions then..."

"Then I'll buy it at the original price," Sonya sighed, looking reluctant.

Just as Mifa was preparing the Artifact Spirit, they suddenly heard a series of continuous 'pop' sounds.

It was as if something was cracking open.

Sonya turned her head and saw a fruit falling from a tree behind them, its transparent crystal shell shattering with a pop. The spell spirit inside, drowsily opening its eyes, suddenly turned into a mist and dissipated.

It wasn't the first, nor the last.

Pop, pop, pop.

One spell spirit fruit after another fell, one after another shattered and dissipated.

Although the number of fallen fruits was not large, this situation clearly exceeded the young woman's tolerance – this was, after all, the Harvest Orchard of Swordflower College, one of the top Spirit Trading Centers in Galaxia. The fruit trees were even a Miracle of a legendary sorcerer. How could such a spell spirit exodus suddenly occur?

But soon, they wouldn't care about this little matter.

Because they found themselves covered by a giant shadow.

As mentioned earlier, Harvest Orchard had all-glass outer walls, allowing one hundred percent of external light to pass through. So, the girls looked up and faced the sky.

The stars were falling.

Thousands upon thousands of stars were falling, including the three luminous stars everyone recognized, the brightest Lunar Star of the night, and the seventy-two constellations that the young women adored.

But they didn't completely fall.

Because the "Sky" stopped them.

They were like trapped balls, pockmarking the sky above with craters. The sky seemed like an extremely elastic membrane, blocking all the falling stars; it was as if a giant bubble enveloped the entire world.

Countless questions floated up in the spectator's mind like bubbles, so dense it felt like his brain might boil over.

There was no commotion, no chaos, no screams.

Galaxia, Abacuray, Magi, Mate, Mis, Aifeng... the entire Stars Kingdom came to a halt. Countless people looked up at the sky, experiencing a paradigm shift.

Then—

Pop.

Perhaps there was this sound, perhaps there wasn't, but everyone later believed there was.

Because there is always a sound when the lights go out.

And when the sky turns off, how could there not be?

At that moment, all the stars extinguished, taking away all light, plunging the world into darkness, and stifling the screams of all beings in their throats.

But this darkness didn't last even a second before the people of Galaxia saw a glimmer of blue light in the darkness.

It was a female sorcerer in a hooded robe, deep blue runes swirling around her, each step she took causing ripples in the air.

Any knowledgeable member of the nobility would recognize her as a clergy member who appeared during festivals.

She walked on a dark staircase, guiding the gaze of millions, step by step, towards the sky.

When she reached a certain platform, she knelt down, hands clasped in prayer. The deep blue of her robes ignited like flames, spreading across the darkness, engulfing all of Galaxia, and eventually the entire Stars Kingdom.

Sonya didn't escape it either. The blue flame adhered to her, forming an armor-like shape. Looking around, she noticed that most people's blue flames were chaotic, not yet forming describable shapes; only a few had distinct shapes, which looked familiar... like the Star Swordsman and Star Archer she had seen before.

Sonya's blue flame armor resembled both a Star Swordsman and the Starburst Warrior worn by the Observer.

Before she could continue observing, the world underwent another dramatic change. As if responding to the burning earth, the sky began to dance. A falling star suddenly burst with a crackling deep blue light, and then the sky's elastic potential energy fully exploded, bouncing the star back into the heavens!

Then the second, third, fourth... the stars were like curious schoolchildren peeking through the window, now caught by the teacher, quickly returning to their seats, not daring to cause any more trouble.

Once the luminous stars returned to their leader's throne, the sky finally brightened.

The morning's luminous stars, the bright sunlight, the lazy clouds, the clear blue sky... the brief blackout and the falling stars seemed like a grand illusion.

But when Sonya turned to look east, she saw a massive White Great Tower, hundreds of meters high, that wasn't there before but suddenly appeared. The top of the tower corresponded with the spot where the female sorcerer had knelt in the darkness.

Undoubtedly, the female sorcerer was still praying for all beings, and the White Great Tower was a celestial staircase prepared by legendary sorcerers within seconds for her ascent.

For some reason, a term suddenly popped into Sonya's mind:

"Star Prayer."

"Mifa."

"Ah?" The working student was still in the process of reconstructing her worldview.

"Do you know what that fallen spirit was?" Sonya pointed to the shattered crystal fruit behind her.

Although a bit puzzled, Mifa naturally wouldn't refuse Sonya's inquiry. She quickly checked and said, "That was the two-wings spirit 'Meteor'."

"Meteor? Which sect does it belong to?"

"The Light Sect, but..."

"But what?"

"The way Meteor manifests isn't as light but as a physical entity," Mifa said, looking at the description. "But because Meteors look similar to starlight, and 'starlight' belongs to the Light Sect, Meteor is also classified under the Light Sect."

Not all spirits have clear sect classifications. Ultimately, the Spellcasting Sect is just a label that sorcerers arbitrarily use to categorize spirits, a classification that has always been relative and partial. Not to mention that many spirits exhibit traits from multiple sects, some spirits cannot be classified into any sect at all, such as the Observer's Substitute spirit.

Spirits came first, then the Spellcasting Sect. The construction of theoretical systems has always lagged behind practice, and sometimes it lags far behind—such as with the Prophecy Sect and the Fate Sect. From ancient times to the present, all sorcerers have believed these two sects must exist, and they have discovered related spirits, but they have never been able to construct a complete systemic framework.

Sonya pondered, "So, Meteor should belong to the 'Star' sect, right?"

"There isn't a Star sect yet," Mifa said with a laugh. "Stars are too far away; how could sorcerers utilize them?"

Sonya glanced up at the sky.

"Doesn't seem that far away," she murmured.

Starsfall.

Star Prayer.

The shattered Star spirit.

The Incarnation of the Stars taken by the heroic soul.

The Secret Incarnation obtained by the Observer.

No wonder the heroic soul commander didn't dare kill the Observer...

No wonder she preferred to use the troublesome method of a Pact to ensure she could successfully take the Observer's soul summoning spirit...

So, the so-called Incarnation is—

Suddenly, Sonya felt a wave of nausea, and everything in her vision began to restructure itself.

Mifa opened the chamber of her heart, sunlight fragmented into blocks, fruit trees twisted into tombstones stacked with words, the sky turned into a black deep-sea, and the luminous stars sprouted countless eyes and mouths. From their bodies extended bright thin lines upward, like bait falling into the sea...

But when she blinked, the world returned to its original state, with no changes at all.

Indeed, the world hadn't changed.

What changed was Sonya's perception.

She knew very well the reason for this alteration. Being with the Observer, this conflicted insect, made it too easy to encounter such things.

When the world once again shed its disguise, revealing its multicolored darkness, Sonya received a response from the Virtual Realm through her perception—

“Conceptual Toxin.”

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

Chapter 323: The Con Artists Psychological Therapy

At 6:00 AM Gospel time, in the Senhaeser District of the city on the second level in Vamora, Igor opened his eyes from inside the wardrobe.

He pushed the wardrobe door open and emerged. On the bed was a human-shaped lump, which he had fashioned using pillows, blankets, clothes, and a bit of imagination to create an “Igor dummy.”

Though it wasn't a spirit or a miracle, this little trick had saved his life many times. If he left a “Good Night” note on the bed, it would make any midnight intruder think that the con artist had foreseen their arrival and had already escaped through some unknown means. Cursing under their breath, they would then rush to track Igor's escape route, while the real Igor, hiding elsewhere, could seize the opportunity to flee.

After all, Igor was just a con artist, not omniscient. How could he foresee every danger? But this didn't stop him from playing the role of someone who always had a plan, making multiple preparations in daily interactions to plant seeds of doubt in others' minds.

What truly makes a deception real isn't the con artist's words but your own imagination.

It's human nature to explain the world. When you're lacking information, you'll subconsciously use your imagination to fill in the gaps, which is why conspiracy theories thrive and rumors spread faster than the truth.

People always believe what they want to believe.

Even though the world itself is objective, everyone's world is subjective. In the past, mental sorcerers could even establish religions, becoming the "gods" in the subjective worlds of countless followers.

Although Igor had little interest in this upper-tier awakening profession of con artist, making himself a "strategic mastermind who can always foresee your next move" in the eyes of certain people was as easy as putting on makeup for him.

On his first night in this unfamiliar city, Igor began his preparations. When others discovered the "Igor dummy" on the bed, they would think the real Igor had already left, never suspecting that this was a nightly trap. The weak, immobile, and oblivious con artist was hiding right next to them in the wardrobe.

This is the con artist's way of psychological deception.

Even when giving his all, he had to make it look effortless.

Carefully prepared gifts should be given nonchalantly.

In this world, whoever gets planted with the seed first loses.

As usual, Igor had to take a bath after waking up every day. Fortunately, the suite had a bathtub, and it was even a steam massage tub.

In fact, the quality of this suite was much better than the employee dormitory provided by Annan. It seemed that Miss Annan was indeed a rich second-generation entrepreneur who would have to fall back on inheriting billions if she failed—such plots were quite common in Gospel TV dramas. Igor believed the root cause was that the luxury economy and consumerism in the Gospel Kingdom were not developed enough, so parents could still save money.

In their Blood Moon Kingdom, even capitalists could live paycheck to paycheck. Any life extension package from the Institute could bankrupt the richest person on the spot. The Gospel Kingdom simply didn't have enough freedom.

After initially washing his body, Igor tested the water temperature in the tub with his toes. He dipped his lower legs, bent his knees to maintain balance, and let the water level rise past his chest, intimately grazing his collarbone.

Warm currents seeped through his pores into his cells, quickly relaxing the stiff body that had spent the night in the wardrobe. The tension in his soul, having just returned from the Virtual Realm, also began to ease. The lazy mist massaged the con artist's aching mind.

In the Blood Moon Kingdom, most people had psychological issues, and Igor was no exception. People as smart as him were the ones who felt the immense, heavy gravity of reality the most, their souls heavy with anxiety every moment.

Igor knew he was ill, but he couldn't save himself. The better someone was at swimming, the more likely they were to drown in the deep sea.

Over time, perhaps one day he would suddenly understand "the meaning of life." On a drizzly, overcast day, he would wear his finest clothes, find everyone who knew him, and deceive them one last time—erase their memories of him. When no one in the world remembered him, Igor Bukin would disappear completely from people's sight, leaving only a shadow of himself in the Virtual Realm.

However, the Igor who was once destined to face destruction alone developed a habit of taking baths to clear his mind after entering prison. The tense strings of his mind were thus given a chance to rest, and his psychological issues were cured.

It was Shattered Lake Prison that saved him. For Blood Moon people, the only way out was indeed going to prison.

It's worth mentioning that before bathing with Ashe, Harvey, and others a few days ago, Igor would always take a bath first. After all, relaxing with two artiodactyls wasn't very effective.

Knock, knock! Knock, knock! Knock, knock!

Just as Igor was about to slip into a state of mindlessness, someone knocked on the door.

This familiar triple knock—though the person hadn't even taken off their pants yet, the con artist already knew what kind of nonsense they would spout.

Igor decided to remain silent, hoping the person would give up and leave. However, after a few seconds, he heard the precise sound of gears turning and the clinking of alloy parts disengaging—the door opened.

Slam!

The bathroom's glass door was pushed open, and the steam eagerly wrapped around the visitor.

"You scared me. I thought you had escaped through the toilet."

Igor let out a long sigh. "First of all, this isn't our home. Second, how did you get in here?"

"I told the maid here that no one answered the door, and you might have died in the Virtual Realm, with a part of your soul's head bitten off by a Blade Fish Dragon, turning you into a vegetative state. So she let me in to check if you had peed yourself."

Ashe sat on a small stool. "Such feudal corruption, having maids and all. This family system is indeed the cancer of civilization, but I must say, the maid outfits are pretty cute."

"Aren't we under house arrest and not allowed to leave our rooms?"

"I don't know. I woke up and tried the door, found the restrictions lifted. Maybe Miss Annan sweet-talked her mother while we weren't here last night?"

"Let's skip the minor details," Igor said, staring at Ashe. "Haven't you noticed that I'm taking a bath?"

Ashe blinked and then came to a sudden realization. He got up to close the glass door, then sat back on the stool. "Sorry, forgot to close the door."

"You also forgot to shut yourself out." Igor splashed water on his face, giving up entirely on entering a mindless state and returning to business mode. "Go ahead, what do you want from me?"

"Can't I just come to chat with you? Do I have to need something to come see you?"

"Of course not. You're the kind of person who would bother me even while I'm bathing." The con artist smirked. "If we put it in terms of borrowing money, at least others wait until they've borrowed before getting cocky. You, on the other hand, are already cocky before even borrowing a dime."

"I do have something I need your advice on," Ashe said, scratching his head. "After all, you seem quite experienced."

"You're coming to consult a con artist?" Igor raised an eyebrow. "A disciple seeking comfort from a priest would make more sense."

"When you're responsible for other people's lives, and every move you make could cause those who trust you to die, do you feel afraid?"

"...If this psychological pressure comes from our trust in you during the prison break, your nerves must be long enough to wrap around the Time Continent."

"No, during the prison break, I never felt responsible for you all." Ashe shook his head. "Because you never trusted me, and I never trusted you. We trusted our own judgments and were responsible for ourselves."

“What I’m saying is, when others unconditionally trust you and are willing to stake their lives as chips on you, do you feel anything special when you place your bet?”

The con artist squinted his eyes. “If they choose to trust me, it means they’ve made their own judgment. I don’t need to—”

“Do you really not need to?” Ashe interrupted, his gaze cutting through the steam as he sought the truth in the con artist’s eyes. “If I were to place my life in your hands, could you bet without any hesitation?”

The steam rose slowly, cloaking the silence.

“I understand now.” Igor splashed his face with water. “You’re not here for advice; you’re here for comfort.”

Bullseye.

When facing off against Danzel, Ashe could make rational judgments, bravely face death, and be a hero who would rather die than surrender. But after leaving the Virtual Realm and returning to the cold reality, Ashe realized what he had done—he had placed the lives of both the Witch and the Sword Princess on the gambling table.

Not to mention that he never considered them his possessions; long ago, the sword Princess had said that even if Ashe died, she could continue living in her own world. The operators didn’t exist dependent on Ashe; they had their own joys and sorrows, their own parents and friends, and their own lives.

Similarly, if an operator died, it would probably be a true death. Their avatar would fade to grey entirely, leaving only a name in the handbook.

Whether during the prison break or escaping Blood Moon, when it came time to bet his own life, Ashe had never felt any psychological pressure.

But this time, after betting on the Witch and the sword Princess as well, he suddenly felt scared.

He was afraid they would die, and even more afraid that he would survive while others died.

They were still a long way from the three wings Sanctuary, but during this period, every round at the Spider Tower, they had to enter the Virtual Realm and engage in a life-and-death race with the heroic soul legion.

Though they had a vehicle, though they could escape, they might manage it once, twice, three times, ten times—but could they escape a hundred times?

If they failed once, if they made one mistake, if fate tripped them up even slightly...

Ashe closed his eyes, as if he could see the scene of them being torn apart.

Moreover, this was no longer a problem that could be solved by Ashe's death alone.

Even if Ashe died first, the pacts with the sword Princess and the Witch would still remain. Unless they reached higher levels of the Virtual Realm, they would still be running for their lives in it—instead of settling for less, the Empress's heroic soul seemed more like the type to pursue to the very end.

Though the Witch and the sword Princess had no objections, and Ashe's response at the time was indeed the most correct one.

But, but...

He was scared.

Suddenly, Ashe remembered his penultimate question and couldn't help but smile wryly.

Sacrificing the world and billions of lives, bearing a thousand-year-old wish to save the world... He couldn't even bring himself to say, "Entrust your lives to me," with a clear conscience now.

The rapidly expanding psychological burden soon left him gasping for air. In the past, Ashe would have chosen to bear this pain of trust alone, pretending nothing was wrong. After all, that's what he had been taught since childhood—to complain would only worry others, and no one wants to swallow your tears.

It was Freya who changed him. That brief cohabitation showed Ashe how an ordinary person could survive in such a cruel society like the Blood Moon Kingdom. The most important lesson he learned was: if you're sick, you need to get treatment.

Seeking a psychologist wasn't shameful; perhaps this was the Blood Moon Kingdom's greatest contribution to civilization.

Though there were no psychologists around, seeking out the Con Artist was almost the same. After all, there was no fundamental difference between comfort and deception.

"Don't be afraid. They entrusted their lives to you because they trust your judgment. Even if you make a mistake, they won't blame you because you tried your best. This world doesn't criticize those who exhaust themselves; the unfairness of fate shouldn't be your burden... Is that what you want me to say?"

Ashe looked up, and then his collar was suddenly grabbed by a wet hand, pulling him close to the Con Artist's face.

“You’re willing to let a Con Artist deceive you rather than face reality yourself,” Igor’s eyes were full of disdain. “Even among my clients, you are at the lowest level.”

With a push, Igor sent Ashe sprawling to the ground.

“Go get some candy from Harvey; that’s the real cure for you.” Igor didn’t look at him. “I’m a top-tier Con Artist; I don’t deal with such rotten clients.”

Ashe sighed. “Isn’t that a bit harsh?”

“I started betting other people’s lives when I was thirteen,” Igor said coldly. “I’ve won a lot, but losing is reasonable too. Because of my wrong decision, a partner was caught by the ‘Fire Crab’. I could only see him in the most bizarre news articles. He had become a piece of avant-garde abstract art, made with a hanger and a chair... What do you think I felt back then?”

“Revenge?”

“No, I just hoped he received and executed my final message—to end himself before the Fire Crab found him.”

Water dripped from Igor’s hair, merging into the bathtub and disappearing. “This is the fate of a decision-maker. Even if you are calm enough, work hard enough, you still cannot prevent sacrifice. Not even gods can save everyone. Who do you think you are?”

“Enduring sacrifice, accepting sacrifice, getting used to sacrifice—this is the only way. There is no second option. Do you think seeking comfort from a mental sorcerer will give you the resilient heart of a decision-maker? Mental sorcerers are not enhancers; they can’t just make you stronger with a ding.”

“What you need is not comfort, not deception, but growth.”

The Con Artist looked at the dejected Cult Leader, but another image appeared in his mind.

In the apocalypse, a mysterious man in a dark red trench coat, gazing down at the world alone...

“There is also a very simple way, as long as you are selfish enough,” Igor said. “Like me. If you are selfish enough to see everyone as a pawn, selfish enough to not care about anyone’s thoughts, selfish enough to be happy just for yourself, then you won’t feel the pressure of responsibility.”

“For us orphans of the Blood Moon, this should be an effortless advancement route, right?”

A gleam appeared in the Cult Leader's eyes. "Just like you..."

"Yes, just like me..." Igor looked at his blurry reflection in the water. "You only need to care about yourself, value yourself, love yourself..."

"—And if I have as much decision-making experience as you, I can grow into a captain who can calmly bear the pressure of responsibility!"

Igor blinked. Hmm?

Ashe stood up, patting the water off his pants. "The difference between you and me is that you already have extensive team experience, while I don't. So, I should find ways to increase my leadership experience and become a steady decision-maker."

"But how will you gain that experience?"

"I already have an idea," Ashe said. "It was definitely right to come to you. I won't disturb your bath any longer."

"Although I don't know what your idea is, it certainly won't be as simple as my 'selfish advancement' approach," Igor said indifferently. "Why make things so complicated?"

"Because being selfish isn't that simple," Ashe said, opening the bathroom door. "If even you can't do it, how could I possibly manage?"

"What do you mean I can't do it?"

"You didn't answer my question."

Igor was taken aback, listening to Ashe's footsteps gradually fade away.

"If I entrusted my life to you, could you make a bet without a moment's hesitation?"

"Seed..."

The Con Artist exhaled. Even though he had soaked for quite a while, he decided to stay a bit longer to clear his mind. Otherwise, his thoughts and ideas would become the rain and sunlight that made the seed sprout.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

The unfamiliar knocking made Igor uneasy.

As expected, the bathroom door opened once again.

“Aunt Bukin!” Lise stood with her hands on her hips in front of the Con Artist. “I have something very important to discuss with you... we need the wisdom of the Con Artist!”

“Did you not notice that I’m taking a bath?”

Lise paused, suddenly realizing, and obediently closed the bathroom door.

Igor almost wanted to summon the Gospel Book to check the blood relation between Lise and Ashe.

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

Chapter 324: At Least You Can Act Spoiled with the Substitute

“That’s how it is,” Annan said. “You’ll be under house arrest in this building for the next few days.”

If this counts as house arrest, then the limited mobility you gave us before, confined to just one floor, should count as solitary confinement... To save face for the young lady, no one in the canteen voiced this sarcastic remark.

No one knew if Annan had sought comfort from Qenna, but their activity area had indeed expanded from just the bedroom to the entire high-rise.

It was 8:00 AM, and Annan had brought them to the canteen to discuss things over breakfast. Various Senhaeser passersby, from different races, occasionally walked by. Perhaps they had already been notified, as they no longer looked at the outsiders like cockroaches but rather like clowns, which was a slight improvement.

Breakfast was a self-service affair, with a wide variety of options. There were eighteen different ways to prepare Lala Fatty alone, and it was likely that the local specialty, Beauty Houttuynia, was added. Ashe almost bit his tongue when he took a bite.

A very interesting aspect was that the concept of “home” in Vamora was almost non-existent or extremely expansive—this building, for example, was considered a “home.” It had dedicated floors for exercise, study, gaming, dining, and even working. The Senhaesers living in this building only had their own bedrooms, which they only used for sleeping and resting. For all other activities, they would go to the specific floors designed for those purposes. For instance, they all came to the canteen for meals instead of ordering takeout or cooking for themselves.

No one had a home, but the entire building was everyone's home. In fact, the entire Senhaeser district was your home.

Undoubtedly, this type of living arrangement greatly conserved resources and optimally utilized space, resulting in significantly larger bedrooms for everyone. And the cost... well, there didn't seem to be any downsides. At least for Ashe, who was immune to marriage, it was very appealing. He could be alone when he wanted to be, or head to the game room to find plenty of friends when he didn't. If such an apartment had existed in his previous life, Ashe thought he could have lived there until retirement.

But for public facilities to be so comprehensive and well-equipped, there must be enough foot traffic; otherwise, it would result in huge losses and waste, just like how internet cafes went out of business when personal computers became more common. This means that the designers must ensure that residents use these public facilities as much as possible, which is almost impossible. Personal will and collective living often conflict, and the point of private ownership is to allow people to gradually break free from the constraints of the collective.

It's only in family cities like Vamora that such a unique social ecosystem can exist. The spiritual lives of the clansmen are directly satisfied by Beauty Mist, and their personal wills are influenced by the Family Rebirth Dream. Their dissatisfaction and desires in reality are suppressed to the lowest level, so they naturally live like robots, following the procedures and steps arranged by the family.

In a sense, Vamora might be an upgraded version of the Gospel society. After all, the residents of Azura still have immoral desires that need to be relieved by the Gospel Book, whereas the family residents of Vamora, having inhaled Beauty Mist for a long time, don't develop any evil thoughts. Everyone is the best citizen, and work efficiency, life rhythm, interpersonal relationships, and social engineering have all reached the level of a national model city under the influence of the family. Except for the fact that no one generates "dissatisfaction," everything is very satisfactory.

However, the visiting tourists were not here to conduct surveys. They only cared about whether they were currently dependent on others or in possession of valuable commodities.

Annan did not elaborate further, only leaving them with, "I'll gather you all at 6 PM, until then, you're free to do as you please," and gave them 500 Gospel points.

From that moment, the Funeral Firm officially entered into a strategic partnership with the Gospel Book. In case of emergencies, they could directly ask the Gospel for guidance.

Ashe asked, "Aren't you afraid we'll ask how to break the Pact with you?"

Annan replied, "I already asked. 500 points aren't enough."

Watching Annan and Banjeet leave, Harvey took out a catnip cigarette, glanced at Lise, who was still battling with her strawberry ice cream, and bit down on the unlit cigarette. "I'm really worried that mother and daughter might sell us out."

Ashe said, "Annan isn't that kind of person, right? I mean, the young lady is so greedy. She's invested so much effort into us; she wouldn't just hand us over."

"But you can also see the huge gap between her and her mother," the necromancer said, spreading his hands. "If we were to use corpses as a metaphor, the difference between them is like comparing a charred body to a giant."

"To be honest, I don't think that's an appropriate comparison for mealtime..."

"Really? I think it makes the food taste even better," Harvey said, with a catnip cigarette hanging from his lips. "Don't be fooled by how Annan talked about being at odds with her mother in prison. Her most important reliance is still her blood relationship with her mother. And as for blood relationships... my view is quite similar to Igor's."

"All relationships exist to allow Upper-tier Individuals to better exploit Lower-tier Individuals," the Con Artist said slowly, savoring his food. "Harvey's right. Annan doesn't have the capital to counter Qenna. As for that Pact between mother and daughter... ha, we can't even fully control our own Pacts, let alone expect it to bind a Sanctuary sorceress?"

"Plus, Annan is still being secretive and unwilling to reveal her plans. Our current situation is basically like that of Lala Fatty, just waiting to see if the chef's last name is Dolan or Senhaeser."

Lise was startled. "Are we going to be eaten?"

"Do you prefer salted egg yolk or baked salt?" Ashe wiped the clump of creamy happiness off the corner of Lise's mouth with a napkin. "If you're scared, don't eat so much. If you get too fat, you might get killed."

"Then I'm not scared. Dad is fatter than me and even fatter than Aunt Bukin."

"I'm not fat; I'm strong and healthy. I'm nothing like your scrawny Aunt Bukin."

Igor couldn't be bothered to deal with this father-daughter duo. "A strange city, xenophobic locals, a secretive employer, and a local security force with ulterior motives... Even under the Blood Moon, the only place that could gather these four suspicious elements is my hometown, Feimeng City."

"What kind of hellish place did you crawl out of, demon..."

“Anyway, let’s start investigating,” Igor said, standing up and picking up his tray. “I don’t expect you to uncover any groundbreaking information, but at least try not to attract too much attention. Especially you three: suspicious men in black robes in broad daylight, fashion disasters following Abyss trends, and a low-IQ child who only knows how to act cute and clueless. And then there’s Harvey and Little Lise.”

“If we were in the Blood Moon Kingdom, I’d definitely sue you for personal attacks,” Ashe said.

Harvey also got up to leave. “I’m going back to train. Anyone want to be my research material?”

Though the necromancer repeatedly assured everyone he wouldn’t harm them, no one was willing to sleep in a coffin. After Harvey left, Ashe looked at Lise, who shook her head. “I’m busy today too, Dad. You go play with the other kids!”

“No, no, I just want Lise... okay, never mind.”

Ashe’s childish whims couldn’t overcome his sense of shame. After half-heartedly whining to Lise, he changed the subject. “What could a kid like you be so busy with? Leave the fighting to your Aunt Bukin. Just remember to wipe your mouth after you eat.”

Lise looked at Ashe seriously and then lowered her head. “I’m not a kid, Dad. Did you forget? I’m here to seize the Divine Sovereign’s Wish.”

“Then you’re a greedy kid who can’t even wipe her own mouth.” Ashe pulled her over and roughly wiped her greasy mouth with a napkin. “This is a dangerous place, even for your Aunt Bukin. You’d better stay in your room and not wander around.”

Lise didn’t say anything, but her little face was written all over with “I’ll pretend to obey but do as I like.” Ashe sighed. “I’m too lazy to care about you, but I have this Pact to protect you—want me to accompany you?”

Lise cheerfully said, “No need!”

However, Ashe shook his head. “I can’t let you wander around this place alone. Even if I wanted to, the Pact wouldn’t allow it... wait a minute.” He noticed Lise pouting. “Daughters in their rebellious phase are so hard to handle... Hold on, I have an idea.”

Ashe snapped his fingers, and another suspicious fugitive in a black robe appeared beside him. Lise, knowing it was Ashe’s Substitute spirit, asked curiously, “Dad, do you want the Substitute to follow me? But the Substitute only listens to your orders. If I tell it to kneel, it won’t obey.”

Why would you want it to kneel... Ashe hesitated, then decided to ignore the odd request. "This isn't just a simple Substitute spirit. It's a Combined Miracle of Substitute and orders—an Advanced Substitute!"

"What's so special about it?"

"The special part is that I can transfer the order permissions to you, so you can command the Substitute." Ashe patted the Substitute. "With it following you, I won't need to worry as much. Plus, the Substitute doesn't share vision or memories with me, so you don't have to worry about your teenage secrets being discovered."

The "orders" spirit was a reward Ashe received from the Amnesia Cabin. In the Amnesia Cabin, he lost the Reverse Day spirit but gained the orders spirit and the Secret Incarnation. The orders spirit and the Substitute spirit were a perfect match, enhancing the Substitute's service range significantly, and allowing Ashe to rent out the Substitute.

Once he's away from all conflicts, Ashe could rely on the Substitute to support himself and live a peaceful, carefree life.

"Really?" Lise blinked and bent down to take off her shoes—

"Wait, what are you doing?" Ashe panicked.

"I want it to carry me."

"Then why are you taking off your shoes?"

Lise scratched her head. "Oh, right! Although I'm not touched by Dad's concern at all, since Dad insists on bothering me, I'll take the Substitute for a walk!"

"At this moment, all you need to do is sincerely say thank you." Ashe ruffled Lise's hair again. "Though I don't know what you're in such a hurry for, don't push yourself too hard."

Lise looked up at Ashe and suddenly smiled with squinty eyes. "Is Dad finally willing to help me seize the Divine Sovereign's Wish?"

"But don't push me too hard either," Ashe replied grumpily.

After leaving the canteen with the Substitute, Lise took out her beloved little mirror and stared at her reflection for a long time.

Little Witch: "Why don't we ask Dad for help? He's an adult, better suited for gathering information about the Gospel Incarnation, and I also want to work with Dad—"

Black Butler: "Our little sister is siding with an outsider. Is this what they call the rebellious phase?"

White Queen: "Lise, we can't reveal our secrets. Human nature cannot be tested; we can only trust our sisters. In terms of close relationships, the witch is still our grandmother."

Little Witch: "Dad is not our grandmother!"

Black Butler: "But if you want to test his human nature, he might become our grandfather."

Little Witch, shocked: "Is Ashe going to marry grandmother?"

At this moment, Deya suddenly said, "Lise, I'm willing to trust your judgment."

Deya's words shocked all the other sisters. Not just Black Butler and White Queen, even the Scarlet Dead Apostles couldn't help but speak up: "Deya, are you finally admitting that you have the intelligence of an eight-year-old?"

Deya: "According to our division of labor, you, Lise, have the final say in reality, just like I'm the undisputed leader in the Virtual Realm. You can completely decide our course of action in reality..."

Black Butler: "Pfft."

As Lise's eyes began to brighten, Deya continued: "But just as you trust Ashe, I also trust the Observer and the sword Princess. Do you know why I went to the Con Artist early this morning to learn how to naturally conceal secrets?"

"Why?"

"Because not revealing secrets prevents change. Maintaining our current Mask allows us to continue enjoying our current relationships."

Little Witch, unconvinced: "But revealing them could also lead to positive changes, right?"

Deya: "Really? In the Virtual Realm, the Observer might not care, but the sword Princess clearly values the Observer far more than me; in reality, Ashe might not have ill intentions towards you, but to help you, he would definitely seek assistance from the Con Artist and the necromancer. Even if he doesn't, those two will sooner or later notice his unusual behavior... They might not necessarily have bad intentions towards us, but compared to us, they definitely care more about Ashe, just like the sword Princess would protect the Observer and oppose me."

"If Ashe is willing to become an enemy of the Gospel for you, would you be willing to do the same?"

Lise fell silent. The White Queen, Black Butler, and Scarlet Dead Apostles also remained quiet.

Lise: "So, should I distance myself from Dad?"

Deya: "No, quite the opposite. You should continue to use Ashe. This has always been our plan. Use his affection for you to guide him into helping you, but never reveal our secrets."

"Better for us to use him than to let him actively help us. The most terrifying aspect of the Gospel is its ability to turn good intentions into malicious fate."

"When we were in the Tower, we experienced too much of this sorrow. Those who tried to stop our Armored Sanctification became debts our souls had to bear; those we deceived survived instead."

"Until the Weaving Festival is over, our love is a curse, our trust is poison."

Little Witch, dejected: "So, Lise still has to become a bad witch who lies and uses others?"

"Yes," Deya replied. "We are all bad witches."

"I'm sorry," the White Queen suddenly said. "We sisters couldn't give you a happy life and instead made you bear all this."

"Hey, hey, White Queen, what are you apologizing for!" Black Butler said. "This is obviously the witch's fault, not ours!"

Scarlet Dead Apostles: "Little Black, just shut up."

"It's okay!" Lise cheered up. "I'm your sister. I'm not that easy to knock down. A witch is a witch. I am the Little Witch!"

Lise turned to the Substitute. "Let's go find the library here..." She hesitated, then added with a pleading look, "Can you hold my hand?"

Though she couldn't be honest with Ashe, at least she could now freely act spoiled with Ashe's Substitute.

The Substitute glanced at her and extended its hand to hold hers.

Little Lise's despondent expression vanished, and she bounced around like a happy little rabbit.

"Let's go, help me find the library floor."

"I'm so tired from walking. Carry me."

"Help me check which books mention the Gospel Incarnation, and also find books about history from a thousand years ago."

"I'm so sleepy, slow down."

"Can you sing?"

Ten minutes later, in the library, the Substitute carefully pulled out the requested books, mindful not to disturb the sleeping Lise, while humming a lullaby expressionlessly.

Suddenly, it noticed a book on the shelf titled Generations of Enslavement: The Endless Tyranny of the Evil Nobility. For a brief moment, a complex light flickered in its hollow eyes.

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

Chapter 325: Listening to the Gospel

Ashe was unaware that the working conditions for his substitute had worsened; he had more pressing matters to attend to.

After relieving some psychological pressure with Igor, the cult leader also quickly clarified his most urgent task at hand—

A card draw!

He needed to draw an item that could heal the soul immediately. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to enter the Virtual Realm to fulfill his pact with the Empress's heroic soul, and the operators' strength enhancement would come to a halt!

Although his points hadn't reached the threshold for triggering the first purchase double bonus, now was clearly not the time for maximizing benefits. If he didn't make an in-game purchase when needed, he wouldn't be able to pass the "Empress's Challenge" event!

In the past, Ashe would usually ask Igor to “soften the blow” to improve his luck before making an in-game purchase.

But now he had a better option—the Gospel Book!

It’s worth mentioning that there were no gambling activities in the Kingdom of Gospel. After all, under the observation of the Gospel Book, all gambling equated to giving money away. Those who listened to the Gospel were like students educated in materialism; they didn’t believe in luck, which they considered feudal superstition. The difference was that the latter believed in human potential, while the former believed in the inevitability of the Gospel.

Initially, Ashe had worried about not having Gospel points. Unexpectedly, he stumbled upon the Empress’s lap pillow, and 500 Gospel points came as a timely rain!

Returning to his room, Ashe lay on his bed and summoned the Gospel Book: “Gospel, Gospel, how can I improve my winning rate in ‘Aurora’s Sorcerer Handbook’ search?”

“Honorable Ashe Heath,” the Gospel Book responded, “I cannot comprehend your request.”

Huh?

The Gospel Book was this polite?

Because Ashe didn’t use the Gospel Book often, he wasn’t very familiar with its customer service attitude. However, he remembered that the last time he used the Gospel Book, it didn’t have this level of service.

Could it be that now he had 500 Gospel points, the Gospel Book immediately put on a money-grubbing face?

Even the Gospel Book knew how to use tiered services to satisfy customer superiority?

Ashe repeated his question, and the Gospel Book responded with some difficulty: “Your Excellency, the Gospel cannot recognize the ‘Aurora’s Sorcerer Handbook’ mentioned in your speech. However, based on your description, is it correct to understand that you wish to obtain desired items in a random draw event?”

“That’s right.”

“Then the Gospel proposes two immature solutions: ① Increase your luck; ② Amplify your intent.”

Ashe was a bit puzzled: “I understand increasing luck, but what does amplifying intent mean?”

Gospel Book: "Intent is the most powerful force of a sorcerer. This intent is not the 'mind' of the Mental Sect, but specifically refers to the sum of a sorcerer's will, concept, and soul. The most powerful sorcerers do not need to deliberately urge the spirit; spellforce is merely auxiliary. The true Miracle is when the spirit actively aligns with the sorcerer's intent, cooperating and soaring together."

"When a sorcerer engages in any random draw, it is equivalent to the sorcerer using their intent to interfere with the draw mechanism. As long as the sorcerer's intent is strong enough, it is possible for the draw mechanism to actively offer the prize they need."

Oh!?

Although it can't directly increase my winning rate, it can amplify my intent, making it easier for me to draw what I want... It sounds unscientific, but it seems to make some sense. Just like in card games, a true duelist has a Bond with their deck. When they need a miraculous draw, they will pull the card they desire!

Ashe: "What are the prices for increasing luck and amplifying intent?"

Gospel Book: "Your Excellency, increasing luck is priced according to your payment amount, ranging from 100 points to 1,000,000,000 points. Choosing the highest-level luck enhancement service is equivalent to entering a state where wishes come true."

"Amplifying intent only costs 150 points, because intent is closely related to the sorcerer. The Gospel can only amplify the power of intent, and the specific effect will vary according to the strength of your intent."

Ashe: "Then how can I improve my intent?"

Gospel Book: "Your Excellency, that question requires 10 points."

Ashe was very displeased: "I have to pay first without getting anything?"

Gospel Book: "Very sorry, Your Excellency, your feedback has been noted."

Although Ashe complained a bit, he still paid honestly. The Gospel Book immediately replied: "Intent is closely related to emotions. When Your Excellency's emotions are very intense, your intent vibration will also reach its peak. Moreover, your emotions should be closely related to the item you desire, which will make your intent highly directional."

Emotions, intent, desired item...

Without a doubt, the item Ashe currently most wanted to draw was the "Pure Luminescence Elixir." There was still one bottle in the warehouse, left over from the last

draw. This was the only item he knew of that could heal the soul. He needed to draw several more bottles this time and then use the “Alchemist’s Refining Bottle” to synthesize a more advanced, potent potion. Otherwise, they wouldn’t be able to recover their soul injuries in a few days.

But how to summon these emotions?

Ashe thought about how they would soon fail to enter the Virtual Realm in time and the Empress’s heroic soul would deduct their soul summoning spirit and full attendance bonus.

A bit of emotion rose up.

Ashe then thought about them all being captured by the Empress’s heroic soul, buried in a sea of beasts, dying with no remains.

Because it was too surreal, it only raised a bit more emotion.

Ashe then imagined not being captured by the Empress’s heroic soul, but his two operators accidentally dying, leaving Ashe to work alone without anyone to exploit.

It surged up, emotions surged up!

“I can’t stand it anymore!” Ashe said through gritted teeth. “Amplify my intent, please!”

“No need to say ‘please,’ Your Excellency,” the Gospel Book responded immediately. “Intent amplification will last 10 seconds, costing 150 Gospel points. Please prepare yourself.”

Ashe opened the and went straight to “Supply Purchase.” He now had 238 points, which allowed him to buy the “Bag of Source Crystals” worth 198 points without the first purchase double bonus, gaining 40 Source Crystals. Adding the 14 he had saved, he had a total of 54 Source Crystals, just enough for 18 draws!

Ashe didn’t dare to use them all at once and decided to try a ten-draw first to test his luck.

Thinking about how he had to make an in-game purchase without a bonus reward because of this intruding event made Ashe even angrier!

“I’m ready! Right now!”

“The faithful Gospel will now amplify your intent. Countdown: 3 seconds, 2 seconds, 1 second... You are now in an amplified intent state, with 10 seconds remaining!”

Ashe immediately opened “Operator Search,” selected the limited search pool “Dance of Swords and Dragons,” and chose “Search Ten Times!”

Ten purple lights!

“Pure Luminescence Elixir” ×9, “energy potion” ×1!

Ashe was stunned. By the time he came back to his senses, the ten seconds had passed. The Gospel Book reminded him: “Your Excellency has exited the amplified intent state. Are you satisfied with this service?”

“Very satisfied.” Ashe sniffed, almost moved to tears. “I’m extremely satisfied!”

No wonder everyone prefers living within the weave of the Gospel. Is this the joy of the Gospel?

It’s incredibly joyful!

Although people should cherish their dignity, if you can cheat, dignity doesn’t seem that important!

A wonderful day starts with listening to the Gospel!

...

...

Meanwhile, the necromancer was also using the Gospel Book.

He had designed two advanced modification plans for Alice but couldn’t decide which to choose. In the past, he would collect a bunch of corpses, perform necromancy modifications on all of them, and see who adapted best to the new environment. But now, he couldn’t recruit new employees and had to carefully cultivate his only key member.

Harvey: “Of the two plans, which one is more suitable for Alice?”

Gospel Book: “50 Gospel points.”

Harvey thought for a moment and decided to ask separately, thinking it might be cheaper: “Is Alice suitable for the wraith modification plan?”

Gospel Book: “Not suitable (cost 25 points).”

Harvey then asked: “Is Alice suitable for the ghoul modification plan?”

Gospel Book: “Also not suitable (cost 25 points).”

The necromancer’s almost cold heart felt a bit of warmth—charging me 50 points just to tell me neither is suitable?

He took a drag of catnip to calm down and continued to ask: “How should Alice be strengthened next?”

Gospel Book: “100 Gospel points.”

Although the necromancer already had a few ideas, based on the lesson just learned, he decided to pay honestly.

Gospel Book: “Based on your current resources, you should perform ghoulish enhancements on Alice’s limbs and wraith enhancements on her body.”

His heart burned with frustration!

Isn’t this just a combination of the two plans I made? Why didn’t you say earlier that the ghoulish enhancements are only suitable for limbs and the wraith enhancements only for the body? You could’ve saved me some points!

A wonderful day ends with listening to the Gospel.

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

Chapter 326: Conceptual Secret Toxin, Facing the Miracle

Scorching Soul Essence Elixir: Every powerful soul releases a bit of scorching soul essence when it dissipates. Drinking this elixir can significantly heal the soul, and a Golden Soul will fully recover within seven days. Additionally, spellforce absorption in the Virtual Realm is increased by 10% during this period. What kind of person, and in what kind of place, could so easily collect a bottle of Scorching Soul Essence Elixir?

Zealous Potion: The user becomes more honest and passionate, actively expressing their emotions with a strong desire to deepen intimate relationships, and their sense of shame is greatly reduced. The bond improvement speed of operators is increased by 100%, lasting for one day.

Ashe drew nine bottles of Pure Luminescence Elixir and, with one more bottle stored in the warehouse, used the Alchemist’s Refining Bottle to refine them in pairs. He

succeeded four times, resulting in three bottles of Advanced Scorching Soul Essence Elixir and one mutated Zealous Potion.

Undoubtedly, Ashe had met his basic goal. With these three bottles of Advanced Scorching Soul Essence Elixir, both he and the Sword Princess Witch could fully heal their soul injuries before the next round at the Spider Tower.

As for the Zealous Potion... while its effects seemed promising, it also felt like it could lead to some major news. If Ashe were to give the Zealous Potion to the Witch, causing her to increase her intimacy with him, leading to clinginess, affection, and embraces, just the thought of it was exhilarating.

But the Sword Princess was watching.

Ashe had already exhausted his office politics skills just to get the Sword Princess to accept the Witch into the team. Now, seeing the Witch possibly heading towards becoming a secretary, the jealous and hot-tempered redhead would undoubtedly throw a fit.

So, should he give the Zealous Potion to the Sword Princess?

But that would turn it into a gamble: if Ashe and the Sword Princess reached a new level of their bond within the day, Ashe would win the bet; if not, the Sword Princess would surely be furious once she realized, and while he might not die, life would certainly be less pleasant...

Besides considering the Sword Princess's feelings, Ashe also needed to take the Witch's opinion into account.

After all, the interactions in the Amnesia Cabin might have already caused the Witch to misunderstand. If she saw Ashe and the Sword Princess suddenly getting closer, she might think she belonged under the car rather than in it...

Moreover... the Witch might not be misunderstanding at all.

Thinking about this, Ashe couldn't help but sigh.

As someone who had worked as a corporate slave, he knew that there were certain taboos in the office for good reason. Colleagues could become good friends, but they should remain just that—good friends.

Crossing that line not only had a negative impact on others but wasn't good for oneself either. You go to work to earn money and satisfy your material needs, not to enjoy a spiritual life. A team is a team, and a family is a family. The former requires clear rewards and punishments and focuses on interests; the latter is about mutual tolerance and emotional bonds.

The two should never be confused.

Although Ashe had never worked for a small company, he had heard from classmates that those who failed to distinguish between team and family in small companies often ended up contributing to the landlord's rent before completing their historical mission.

Even though it was only a three-person team, Ashe was conscious of his role as a leader. He knew that a three-person team wouldn't be the end. And even if it remained just the three of them, he had to find a way to manage their relationships well. "Two people becoming closer, causing the third to feel alienated" was a common pitfall in startups, as ubiquitous as baldness among city dwellers.

For both emotional and logical reasons, Ashe had to balance the scales of their relationships. Therefore, he couldn't give the Zealous Potion to the Sword Princess.

As for the idea of kicking out either the Witch or the Sword Princess for a day and then giving the potion to the remaining one—that was even more unacceptable. Put yourself in their shoes: if you returned from a break and saw your boss colluding with a colleague, you would surely feel excluded and start doubting the company's system.

So, the Zealous Potion had to be kept for now.

But Ashe didn't plan to discard it.

After all, becoming close with only one person would lead to many thoughts for the other. So... what if he deepened his relationship with both of them at the same time?

If Ashe could get another bottle of Zealous Potion in the future, he could use both bottles simultaneously on the Witch and the Sword Princess. This might create a harmonious bond among all three of them, advancing their relationships to a new level!

Though there might be a tad bit of selfishness involved, Ashe felt his idea was quite rational and aimed at a better future for the team—aside from the slight personal gain.

In any case, Ashe had to face the unknown Weaving Festival in reality and the pursuit in the Spider Tower in the Virtual Realm. Their team's interpersonal relationships couldn't afford any more upheavals.

This was indeed a critical moment of life and death!

As the saying goes, "One thinks of desire only after their stomach is full." He needed to ensure his material safety before contemplating his spiritual life.

However, thinking about what happened in the Amnesia Cabin, Ashe couldn't help but chuckle.

O(∩_∩)O Haha, he definitely had to recount the Sword Princess's coquettish remarks during a less dangerous battle round. Such good ammunition shouldn't go to waste!

Having completed the basic goal of the card draw—securing his material needs—Ashe now looked forward to the exciting “desire” phase. Since his intentions had allowed him to draw the Pure Luminescence Elixir, they should also help him pull a Golden Legend!

He wanted to draw a new operator!

He wanted to get more useful Virtual Realm items!

He wanted to find miraculous items that could increase his sect experience even while operators rested!

Feeling his emotions still needed a boost, Ashe calmed himself and checked the Limited Search pool for anything he liked...

“Bridal Sword Princess”

Something surged within him—a powerful feeling!

Ashe: “Now's the time, amplify my intentions!”

“The faithful Gospel will amplify your intentions, countdown: 3 seconds, 2 seconds, 1 second... You have entered the intention amplification state, remaining duration: 10 seconds!”

Draw!

Golden light, “The Magic Mirror Shards of the Black and White Witch”!

White light, energy potion!

White light, experience potion!

All the rest were white lights!

The Magic Mirror Shards of the Black and White Witch: No one knows exactly how many shards the Black and White Witch lost, but everyone who found one died a swift and unnatural death, until the shards returned to their original owner. It's said that the Witch shattered the mirror herself to escape her own reflection. Using this item expands Bond functionality.

Ashe fell into deep thought.

Was this a success or a failure?

It could be seen as a success since he drew an enhancement item for the Black and White Witch; however, it was only one success. On the other hand, it wasn't a complete failure either.

Ashe had already done ten draws without pulling a Golden card, so statistically, the odds of getting one were higher this time. Thus, this might have been a normal draw, unrelated to his intentions.

There was also another possibility-since Ashe had never seen the Bridal Sword Princess, his imagination might have had its limits. His intent may not have been strong enough to influence the draw system.

Nevertheless, the Witch's enhancement item was evidently more useful than the Sword Princess's Bridal skin, so this was still a win... Ashe could only console himself this way.

Although he still had Gospel points and game credits, Ashe decided to stop here. He had only 190 Gospel points left, which he needed to save for emergencies.

In the Kingdom of Gospel, points that could gather all kinds of information were an unparalleled strategic resource, more crucial than even a sorcerer's own power.

Using "The Magic Mirror Shards of the Black and White Witch," the information about the Black and White Witch was updated.

"Black and White Witch"

"Species: Human"

"Gender: Female"

"Age: 19"

"Bond Level: 1 (35% Experience Sharing)"

"Bond Resonance: Playing with People's Hearts: Even without related mental spirits, you and the Witch have a supernatural ability to influence minds."

"Class: Annihilation Follower"

"Class Trait: Increases damage to groups of knowledge creatures by 5%."

"Silver Blessing: Witch's Taboo: Secrecy grants you power; concealment is your weapon. The fewer people in real life who know your true nature, the stronger you become in the Virtual Realm. Currently, the Black and White Witch's concealment level is 85% (little known), granting an 85% spellforce recovery speed bonus (Observer's observations not included)."

“Items: Training Gloves”

“Controlling Spirits: Mask, Hydrotherapy, Claw, Riptide...”

“Mental Sect: Silver Level”

“Fist-Claw Sect: Golden Level”

“Time Sect: Silver Level”

“Water Sect: Silver Level”

“Knowledge Secret Toxin: Bronze Dragon Secret Toxin”

The concealment level of the Witch had decreased, from 93% previously to 85% now. Since Witch’s Taboo only counts those who know in the real world, it must mean someone else has discovered something about her. This was quite careless!

However, this Bond resonance... Last time, it was said that Ashe and the Sword Princess had a resonance of “Insatiable Greed.” But this time, how could he have a resonance of “Playing with People’s Hearts” with the Witch?

When had he ever played with someone’s heart?

Perhaps this was just a preset for players, Ashe thought, not giving it much more consideration.

He casually used the Scorching Soul Essence Elixir on the Witch and then navigated to the Sword Princess’s operator interface. Immediately, he noticed something strange—

Knowledge Secret Toxin: Golden Fish Secret Toxin, Vortex Secret Toxin, Expel Secret Toxin, Bronze Dragon Secret Toxin, Conceptual Secret Toxin

Why did the Sword Princess have an additional toxin?

Was she secretly getting stronger behind his back?

However, this particular toxin could be directly clicked to view, which meant... he already had the knowledge to access this toxin?

“Conceptual Secret Toxin”

“Toxin Details: In the Virtual Realm, certain abstract concepts can, for special reasons, gain physical form and manifest as conceptual incarnations. When you possess a conceptual incarnation, you gain the highest priority enhancement effects. When a conceptual incarnation is destroyed, it means the Virtual Realm temporarily loses this

concept, and all spirits related to this concept will be directly annihilated and cannot be reborn until the concept is regenerated by the Virtual Realm.”

“Number of Secret Toxin Infections: 79”

“Secret Toxin Strength: 79%”

“Current Effects of the Secret Toxin: Occasionally, you will witness traces of all miracles (enhancement effect at 50% strength, large negative effect at 100% strength).”

Ashe was momentarily confused—wasn’t being able to see the traces of miracles an enhancement?

However, when Ashe lifted his head, the entire world transformed.

The lamp, walls, ceiling, carpet, and blanket—everything in his room suddenly transformed into post-modern art made of spider silk.

Feeling something, Ashe instinctively turned to look at Vamora outside the window.

At this moment, the bustling cityscape had vanished, replaced by a spider’s nest entangled with countless layers of web. In the sky, a giant web extended to the horizon, endless and impenetrable.

On the streets shrouded in white mist, spiders were walking, with every creature connected by dozens of silk threads. They didn’t seem to be moving on their own but were rather being pulled along by the threads, like puppets walking through various nests.

Terrified, Ashe stood up, but his hands felt sticky. Looking down, he found himself covered in countless spider threads. The bed he was just sitting on had turned into a cocoon storing food. He now resembled an insect caught in a spider web, his skin completely covered in sticky white liquid. Threads seemed to be crawling into his mouth and eyes, trying to seal his mouth, blind his eyes, and grasp his heart—

In the next second, the world returned to normal.

The room was just a room, the city was just a city, and the white sheets were neatly spread on the bed.

Ashe touched his face, smooth and tender, without any sticky residue.

This was the second toxin he had that brought negative effects.

The other one was the Vortex Secret Toxin, which made him averse to water. However, Ashe had largely overcome the Vortex Secret Toxin’s influence. As long as he didn’t

directly look at the water and convinced himself that he was soaking in cola during baths, he could avoid triggering the toxin—this was a life hack taught to him by the Sword Princess.

Compared to the Vortex Secret Toxin, the influence of the Conceptual Secret Toxin might be much greater.

For weaklings like them, ignorance was indeed their camouflage.

Ashe was not unaware that Gospel was omnipresent, like air, but presenting the horrors of Gospel in this way would inevitably plunge people into hysterical fear and despair.

After all, if you hate water, you can still drink cola or milk. But if even the air, the land, and the food make you feel fear, where can you escape?

“...This should be the first time since I came to Gospel that I start to miss the Blood Moon Kingdom.”

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

Chapter 327: Secret Incarnation

The conceptual Incarnation is the embodiment of an abstract concept...

Once a conceptual Incarnation dies, all related spirits will perish, and the sorcerer will be unable to summon them again until the Virtual Realm regenerates the concept...

Is this kind of dangerous item something that a two-wings sorcerer can handle!?

Ashe shuddered at the thought. In a Kingdom dominated by sorcerers, their miracles permeated every level of life. As the most crucial support for sorcerers, spirits were akin to vital energy sources like electricity and thermal energy—essentially the “lifeblood of society.”

To put it another way, if the “Electromagnetic Incarnation” concept were destroyed, the Kingdom of Gospel would collapse immediately. This is because almost all critical nodes of Gospel’s power system require maintenance and operation by the Electromancy Sect sorcerers. If the spirits of the Electromancy Sect vanished, this precise and efficient energy system would disintegrate in an instant, plunging everyone back to a primitive state.

Should such a dramatic upheaval occur, it would take society decades to recover, with incalculable economic and life losses, potentially leading to years of social unrest.

And yet, the conceptual Incarnation, which is so crucial to the Kingdom's fate, can be accessed by a two-wings sorcerer!?

This is not just like "casually buying a gun at a supermarket," but more akin to "finding uranium on eBay." Even a two-wings golden sorcerer, let alone a legendary sorcerer, shouldn't have the right to possess such a perilous item that affects the fate of millions.

Yet, he casually received one from a heroic soul on the Time Continent and then exchanged it with another heroic soul!?

However, upon calming down, Ashe suddenly realized that while this seemed absurd, it might not be unreasonable after all.

From observation, it appears that only heroic soul commanders can possess such things as conceptual Incarnations, and a two-wings sorcerer is absolutely incapable of defeating a heroic soul commander. The event of Ashe's three-person team narrowly defeating the weakest logistics commander is practically unrepeatable, not even once in a million years.

Moreover, heroic soul commanders who possess conceptual Incarnations are likely the elite of various factions, and the chances of them being ambushed by sorcerers are almost negligible.

That is to say, the transfer of a conceptual Incarnation only occurs among heroic soul commanders, who are subordinates of the Divine Sovereign. Furthermore, a commander carrying a "conceptual Incarnation" seems to greatly enhance the combat power of their corresponding troop type...

The appearance of a conceptual Incarnation on the second level of the Virtual Realm is likely intentional by the Divine Sovereign. Since the sorcerers on the Time Continent have relatively low combat power, the conceptual Incarnation remains safe.

If the conceptual Incarnation were to appear on the third or fourth levels of the Virtual Realm, where Sanctuaries are abundant and legendary sorcerers are commonplace, not only would the protection around the conceptual Incarnation increase dramatically, but the risk of losing it would also be significant. Ashe and other sorcerers who smuggled themselves into the Virtual Realm can master two or three Sects; true legendary sorcerers might integrate and innovate multiple Sects. S

They wouldn't need to engage in direct confrontation; they could easily steal the conceptual Incarnation through various Miracles.

Ashe suddenly recalled the description of the soul summoning spirit: “Congratulations on becoming a player in this never-ending game, although you don’t even qualify as a pawn.”

Compared to heroic soul commanders, sorcerers indeed do not qualify as pieces in this game.

The conflicts among the various factions on the Time Continent are likely a microcosm of the Divine Sovereign’s strategic maneuvers.

But unlike the usual stakes of gold, lives, and resources on a gambling table, the chips being exchanged by the Divine Sovereigns are terrifyingly significant. Just to enhance a commander’s combat power, they dare to wager conceptual Incarnations that impact the lives of millions of civilians and the futures of countless sorcerers!

Ashe does not believe that an opposing faction would keep a stolen conceptual Incarnation for their use. A conceptual Incarnation likely only enhances specific troop types, making it useless to an enemy faction. Thus, the only option left would be to destroy it.

The Empress heroic soul has probably already destroyed the “Incarnation of the Stars.” Although Ashe isn’t sure if there is a Star Sect in this world, if there were, any star sorcerers would now be out of a job.

Thinking about this, Ashe realized he hadn’t yet examined the most profitable and simultaneously most costly gain from this adventure—the Secret Incarnation.

The profit lies in the high value of the conceptual Incarnation, but the cost is equally high—they will now be hunted by the Spider Tower, and they won’t have peace until they ascend to the three wings Sanctuary.

If he could do it all over again, Ashe would rather not have obtained the conceptual Incarnation. He would even be willing to give it up in exchange for peace and quiet in the Virtual Realm. Unfortunately, the ruthless nature of the Empress heroic soul had cut off his retreat.

The Secret Incarnation had already been absorbed by the soul summoning spirit, which was likely an insurance mechanism set by the Divine Sovereign. Even if an ordinary sorcerer were lucky enough to encounter a conceptual Incarnation, they wouldn’t be able to absorb it without a soul summoning spirit. Perhaps a legendary sorcerer could bypass the soul summoning spirit, but how could a legendary sorcerer appear on the Time Continent?

Ashe glanced at the soul summoning spirit and noticed an additional line of text:

“Secret: You are the embodiment of the will of secrets. You have the highest authority in the intelligence system. The Girl of Secret Gaze under your command can simultaneously chant the ‘Weave’ Miracle for both allies and enemies (previously, it could only be used on one or the other). Chanting time is reduced by 50%, and allied units affected by Weave gain an additional layer of armor.”

The Secret Incarnation was indeed meant to strengthen the “Girl of Secret Gaze,” but Ashe hadn’t unlocked this troop type, rendering the Secret Incarnation ineffective for him.

This was a significant loss—he gained no benefits but paid the full price!

Unwilling to give up, Ashe opened the Gospel Book and asked, “What are the uses of the Secret Incarnation?”

Gospel Book: “10,000 Gospel Points.”

Ashe: “Why do heroic soul commanders possess conceptual Incarnations?”

Gospel Book: “8,000 Gospel Points.”

Ashe: “Is there any free information?”

Gospel Book: “Today’s weather in Vamora will be sunny turning to cloudy, with a temperature of 28°. The reproduction success rate for Elves and Goblins has greatly increased, and the likelihood of twins has significantly risen.”

How is this useful to someone like me who can only reproduce with humans...

Ashe: “I want to improve my psychological resilience to become a decision-maker capable of bearing the lives of others. Do you have any advice?”

Gospel Book: “As expected of Your Eminence, Your Eminence’s psychological resilience is already very high, yet you still wish to improve. Gospel has an immature suggestion: Your Eminence can increase your psychological resilience by gaining more practical experience.”

Ashe: “That’s what I was thinking. But given the current constraints, I plan to become a team leader and commander in the virtual game Epic to tackle high-difficulty dungeons. What do you think?”

Gospel Book: “That’s an excellent idea and completely feasible!”

Ashe: “But I haven’t really spent much on in-game purchases, and even if I did, I can’t immediately reach the level of top players. High-difficulty dungeons have very high gear requirements. Do you have any suggestions?”

Gospel Book: “5 points.”

Ashe: “I need points for this too?”

Gospel Book: “Your Eminence, you won’t be disappointed. (5 points deducted) Account: , Password: . The account owner got married and will never touch Epic again. You can use it with confidence.”

Wait, is this considered account theft?

But since it’s from the Gospel Book, it should be...

Skeptical, Ashe arrived at the gaming floor, entered a game pod, and logged into the game. He was instantly dazzled by the fully-achieved, max-level character before him.

This wasn’t just about in-game purchases; it took years of consistent play to build such a top-tier account!

At that moment, the negative effects of the “Conceptual Secret Toxin” triggered again, turning the entire game pod into a spider cocoon.

However, this time, Ashe didn’t feel disgusted or terrified; instead, he felt a sense of familiarity.

Though I want to sternly criticize the nauseating aspect of the Gospel Miracles, it has been incredibly good to me.

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

Chapter 328: Annan Can Be Considered My Daughter

Ashe stepped out of the gaming pod, his vision a bit blurry. It wasn’t until he wiped his eyes that he realized he was crying.

What a miserable day; he had been scolded to the point of tears.

Despite obtaining an advanced account, Ashe had no experience in commanding high-difficulty raids. In fact, he hadn’t even attempted a high-difficulty raid before. So, he decided to watch how others conducted their raids first.

With his fully-achieved and current version max-geared character, he easily blended into an Extreme Raid group.

In the game Epic, high-difficulty dungeons are categorized into Extreme Raids, Phantom Mode, and Ultimate Mode. Extreme Raids are the upper limit for regular players. Phantom Mode can only be cleared by professional players with years of immersion, whereas Ultimate Mode is exclusive to sorcerer players capable of conquering it.

Ashe thought that even if he couldn't tackle Ultimate Mode right away, clearing an Extreme Raid shouldn't be an issue. He even read guides and confirmed his character's tactical role, planning to clear an Extreme Raid in a day and then lead a team to pioneer Phantom Mode.

Then he spent the entire day fully experiencing the curse culture of the Gospel Kingdom.

When it comes to cursing, the Gospel and Blood Moon Kingdoms each have their unique styles. The Blood Moon Kingdom, devoid of parents, often targets race, gender, and education for precise, seamless, and individual discrimination. Conversely, the Gospel Kingdom, where practically everyone has parents, circles around maternal relatives, extending to an all-encompassing barrage of curses involving one's ancestors.

Interestingly, possibly because the Gospel holds a faith-like status in society, it often becomes the main subject of insults. While Ashe himself didn't mind, Gospel people might get deeply offended by remarks like, "You've been deemed a bottom-feeder by the Gospel for life," or "The Gospel decrees that you'll be stuck with an ugly partner."

In summary, not only did Ashe fail to clear the Extreme Raid, but he was also berated by his teammates.

The virtual games of the Gospel are indeed fun but equally challenging. In these consciousness-immersive games, players must manually control their characters to perform tactical maneuvers. Actions like actively dodging damage zones, turning to avoid gaze attacks, and positioning correctly to share mechanic damage all have to be executed while maintaining offensive output.

In old holographic screen games, these operations would be considered somewhat challenging. After all, all complex actions could ultimately be performed with just a keyboard and mouse.

But in the new era of consciousness-immersive games, these operations are explosively difficult. Ashe either focused solely on dealing damage without observing the enemy's status or got so engrossed in dodging dungeon mechanics that he neglected his teammates' status.

Every second required full-body coordination, and if he stumbled over uneven ground, it could immediately spell a team wipe.

Not to mention, being in first-person view limited the player's field of vision, making it impossible to gather all the necessary information. He might even collide with teammates, leading to mutual disaster-something Ashe experienced several times that afternoon as he inadvertently sabotaged his team.

However, amid this near-masochistic difficulty, Ashe discovered that the high-difficulty dungeon enemies... resembled knowledge creatures from the virtual realm!

Or rather, the enemies' skills, attributes, and combat styles seemed to be heavily inspired by knowledge creatures from the virtual realm. For instance, the "Extreme Cutting Carp Overlord Lord" they battled that afternoon was clearly an enhanced version of the Blade Fish Dragon.

Even though Ashe and his team could handle the Blade Fish Dragon as easily as kicking a ball, after deeply experiencing the Extreme Cutting Carp, Ashe felt their strategy for slaying the Blade Fish Dragon could still be optimized.

Moreover, because knowledge creatures in the virtual realm are so diverse, there theoretically isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. Yet, the team strategies summarized in Epic's high-difficulty dungeons could apply to almost any scenario: spreading out, gathering, facing away, taunting, luring... Compared to the mature and detailed team combat systems in Epic, Ashe and his team seemed like a prehistoric hunting family, relying on tacit understanding and rudimentary signals like "I'll go," "Don't move," and "You go over there."

Ashe quickly realized that these high-difficulty dungeons significantly improved his command skills. However, he was puzzled: why did others also play these self-torturing high-difficulty dungeons? They couldn't team up in the virtual realm...

Then it dawned on him: exactly, because they couldn't team up, after getting beaten up by knowledge creatures in the virtual realm alone, they wanted to get their revenge in reality!

You trampled on me today, so I'll bring seven brothers to trample on your grave tomorrow!

One reason the enemies in the game were modeled after knowledge creatures from the virtual realm is that it was easy to copy. Another reason was that such enemies could ignite the wrath of sorcerers without any need for backstory! The principle might be similar to having fly images in urinals.

However, Epic was not a sorcerer training game. Sorcerers could at most gain a rough understanding of knowledge creatures' attack patterns from the game, but the combat experience during raids was mostly useless-firstly, their personal combat power was far inferior to that of in-game characters. In any Kingdom, the number of production sorcerers far exceeded that of battle sorcerers. Secondly, raid strategies were based on

team cooperation, but in the virtual realm, they were undoubtedly solitary figures. The virtual realm's grand exams didn't give them any chance to connect.

It just so happened that only an examinee like Ashe, who could form teams through loopholes, could extract valuable cheating experience from high-difficulty raids.

But playing this game was quite a tear-jerker. Just because he was a bit inexperienced, causing a dozen team wipes and making the team fail to clear the first phase of the Extreme Cutting Carp all afternoon, did they have to scold him so harshly...

Seeing that it was about time, Ashe needed to meet up with Annan.

Now, he had to juggle matters from the virtual realm, reality, and the game. Due to his soul damage, he could temporarily set aside the virtual realm until his soul was fully healed by the Blazing Soul Evolution Elixir. The game raid journey had just begun, and Ashe was still far from becoming a successful decision-making commander. In reality, he had to meet the demands of the young lady, Annan. Who knew what task she would assign him this time...

Ashe felt like he was prematurely entering the state of a middle-aged corporate slave: his personal life was a mess due to his lover, he was being exploited by a young boss at work, and he couldn't even enjoy his entertainment freely.

But...

Did Annan say where they were supposed to meet?

Ashe opened the Gospel Book: "Where is Annan?"

Gospel Book: "Your Grace, according to the regulations, the Gospel cannot directly disclose the location of individuals. However, you can inquire about the location of the target's belongings."

Ashe: "Where are Annan's clothes?"

Gospel Book: "(Consumes 1 Gospel point) In the wardrobe of Room 2803 on the 28th floor... Your Grace, you should ask about the target's personal items."

Ashe: "Where is the underwear Annan is wearing right now?"

Gospel Book: "(Consumes 1 Gospel point) The target you inquired about does not exist... Your Grace, the Gospel has an immature suggestion: could you inquire about a personal item you have seen with your own eyes?"

The target does not exist...?

Ashe: “You’re such a scam! I got no useful information, and you just wasted 2 points.”

Gospel Book: “We sincerely apologize, Your Grace. The Gospel will strive to improve.”

Finally, Ashe asked where Annan’s amethyst earring was, and the Gospel Book provided the correct answer—it was in Suite 24 in the south area of the canteen floor, along with a very considerate route to get there.

So, Ashe descended to the canteen floor. Just as he was about to head towards Suite 24, he noticed Igor lurking in the shadows of the corridor.

Ashe thought for a moment and decided to join him.

Igor glanced at him without saying a word.

Soon, the door of Suite 24 opened, and a maid emerged.

Speaking of which, although Vamora also had cleaning robots, there were more service personnel providing manual services, which was a significant contrast to the highly automated Azura.

However, the reduction in the number of service personnel was not just because there were cheaper mechanical alternatives, but also because no one wanted to work in the service industry. While professions like chefs, hairstyle directors, and fitness coaches might somewhat fulfill one’s life purpose, jobs involving intensive physical labor like waiting tables and cleaning up were purely for making a living.

The so-called progress of civilization is meant to free people from the constraints of survival to enjoy the value of life. Professions that cannot fulfill one’s life purpose are destined to be eliminated.

Positions such as restaurant maids could easily be replaced by ordering apps and food delivery robots, which would be more cost-effective. However, Senhaeser still provided these jobs to ordinary clansmen, and surprisingly, the ordinary clansmen were willing to undertake such work.

The advanced yet regressive family ecosystem was formed by Senhaeser, who had to arrange positions for clansmen, and the ordinary clansmen who, due to long-term inhalation of Beauty Mist, were incredibly satisfied with reality and had lost their drive.

When the maid passed by, Igor directly pulled her into the room.

Ashe was dumbfounded, following in to close the door—weren’t Con Artists supposed to use mental suggestions or hypnotic gazes? Why did he just grab her? I could do that too!

However, Ashe quickly realized he couldn't—initially, the maid was a bit panicked, but when she looked up and saw the Con Artist's face, which could even charm a Moonshadow Elf, her cheeks instantly turned red, and she lowered her head, saying, "Do you need something?"

Ashe waved his hand in front of her face. Why did she say "you" instead of "you all"? What about me?

The maid was a twenty-year-old human female, with slightly pointed ears, possibly because one of her parents was an elf. She was beautiful, with a particularly shapely backside.

Noticing her hungry gaze towards Igor, Ashe realized he had been mistaken. The previous scene of countless citizens staring at him on the street had been so impactful that Ashe subconsciously did not regard the people of Vamora as ordinary people but rather as neutral mobs with yellow names.

But in reality, except for being happy and energetic every day, they were almost no different from ordinary people. They would also drool over a handsome guy and get angry when someone was bad at a game and couldn't carry the team.

Due to the gap between outsiders and locals, Ashe rarely saw their normal side.

"You know who we are, right?"

The maid nodded: "The patriarch told us. You are Miss Annan's servants and also guests of Senhaeser."

Igor said, "Actually, we are not Senhaeser's guests. We are Senhaeser's clansmen."

The maid and Ashe were both stunned, though Ashe's expression was hidden under his black cloak and mask, so the maid didn't notice.

The maid shook her head: "That's impossible. I can recognize any member of the Senhaeser clan."

"We are undercover agents sent by the patriarch to infiltrate Annan's circle and steal the Dolan Family's secrets," Igor said. "But Annan is very cunning. She would never trust anyone from the Senhaeser clan. However, the patriarch also doesn't trust outsiders, so she arranged for us to undergo an Exorcism Ritual, temporarily severing our ties with the clan and Vamora. After multiple layers of disguise, we finally earned Annan's trust."

The maid was skeptical: "You're people the patriarch trusts? But I remember the patriarch doesn't trust men much."

Igor sighed: “You’re right. The patriarch indeed doesn’t trust men, which is why I used to be the patriarch’s close confidante.”

Both the maid and Ashe were taken aback, with the maid showing a complex expression: “Do you mean...”

“For the great achievements of Senhaeser, this sacrifice is nothing,” Igor said, tucking his hair behind his ear and revealing a sorrowful look that evoked pity. “It’s just that it’s been a long time since anyone cared for me...”

The emotions conveyed by the Con Artist were incredibly persuasive, and the maid almost immediately believed him. She then turned to Ashe: “And you are...?”

Ashe glanced at Igor, who winked at him.

Although Ashe didn’t know what Igor was planning, it was clear he had to go along with it.

“I am also someone the patriarch trusts.”

“But the patriarch wouldn’t trust a man,” the maid said, looking suspicious. “Are you also the patriarch’s confidante?”

Ashe realized he couldn’t use Igor’s excuse. Igor could rely on his superb acting skills and fitting appearance to pull it off, but Ashe didn’t meet the criteria in either aspect. He had to fabricate an identity that fit his persona—

“In theory, Annan could be considered my daughter now.”

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

Chapter 329: A Web of Lies

The maid was taken aback, and Igor’s expression became quite intriguing. S

“What do you mean?” the maid swallowed hard, “You and the patriarch...”

“Shh.” Ashe remained expressionless, “It’s not as intimate as you think. To Qenna, I’m just a nighttime accessory. She calls me when she needs me and dismisses me when she doesn’t... Do you know why I still wear this black robe? It’s because, unlike my

colleague, I haven't changed my appearance. If any of you saw me, you'd recognize me immediately—after all, I used to be around Qenna quite often.”

“This undercover mission was supposed to be mine alone, but Qenna didn't trust me completely. She even sent her cross-dressing friend to watch over me.”

“Do you know what reward Qenna promised me for such an important task? The right to walk openly by her side! She truly believes that my flattery in bed is genuine. She thinks I still want to be her official partner... Hmph!”

Ashe let out a cold laugh, “I'm not doing this for her. I accepted this mission for Senhaeser and had to endure her daughter's despicable oppression. This mother-daughter pair is just awful!”

In just a few sentences, Ashe painted himself as a long-suffering gigolo, full of resentment against his oppressive superior. His emotions were very real, but Igor was uneasy—speaking ill of the patriarch was a risky move. He hadn't yet figured out the general attitude of Senhaeser's clansmen towards the patriarch. If they genuinely respected her, Ashe would have exposed himself.

“The patriarch isn't that bad; she's just a bit domineering...” the maid weakly retorted.

Success!

Ashe and Igor exchanged glances. The maid had fully accepted their identities and entered their line of thinking!

“We can't contact the patriarch directly right now, so we need some information from you,” Igor asked, “What's your name?”

“Lucy,” the maid replied readily, “Why can't you contact—”

“Annan has been monitoring us using the Gospel Book. Any slight movement from us would ruin everything. Directly contacting Qenna is the ultimate taboo. Do you know, yesterday, Qenna even shot at me a few times just to completely sever ties with me and ended up injuring my ear.” Ashe let out a cold snort, “I'll remember this. After the Weaving Festival, I'll make sure she uses her tongue to soothe my wounds.”

Lucy: “...”

“Lucy, I want to know where Annan has been today,” Igor said. “As a staff member, you should be able to check the historical entries and exits of all areas, right?”

Lucy hesitated for a moment, then opened the Gospel Book and reviewed it briefly before saying, “Miss Annan met with Miss Nona in the confinement layer at 10 AM;

rested in her room at 12 PM; went to the maintenance layer for a two-hour skincare session at 3 PM.”

Ashe’s eyes widened. “We’ve been busy all day, and she’s taking naps and having beauty treatments? No way, I can’t let this go. Anyway, Qenna doesn’t care much for her daughter. After this is over, I’ll get Annan over and bully her for a few days. Qenna won’t mind-she might even join in.”

Lucy: “…”

Igor: “We haven’t been back for a few years. How is Senhaeser’s relationship with the other families?”

Lucy: “Relationship? It’s okay, I guess… I haven’t really seen people from other families, so I’m not sure.”

Igor: “How has Qenna’s relationship with Nona been these past few years?”

Lucy: “Pretty good, I think? Miss Nona is Lady Qenna’s younger sister and the deputy leader of the Red Hat. Although Nona is currently in confinement by Lady Qenna, she’ll be released soon. As far back as I can remember, Qenna has been our patriarch, and Nona the vice-patriarch.”

Crossing his arms, Ashe said, “Of course, their relationship is good. Especially since that time Nona accidentally walked in on us, they’ve been not just sisters in blood but also in bed. I was the fuel for their growing bond. Luckily, I was sent out on this undercover mission; otherwise, I’d have been squeezed dry by now.”

Lucy: “…”

Igor: “Have you seen the Weaving Festival’s Art Ranking? Any thoughts?”

Lucy responded, “Hmm? Not much to say, just that Miss Annan is really impressive, managing to take the top spot. It would be great if she had the Senhaeser surname instead of Dolan.”

Igor observed her for a moment, confirming that Lucy’s words were sincere and not hiding anything. He then said, “Alright, we’ve got the information we need. Thanks for your help. You should head back now. Remember, don’t tell anyone about this, or Annan might find out.”

“Then, I’ll be going?” Lucy glanced at Ashe, as if afraid that this patriarch’s wild man might silence her.

Ashe didn’t feel guilty at all. “What, do you also want to try the top-notch service that only the patriarch can experience?”

Lucy blushed and hurriedly fled.

“Igor...”

The Cult Leader gave a thumbs up to the Con Artist, winking. “You’re really a master at playing with people’s hearts.”

Not as good as you, Igor wanted to retort, but he knew that praising Ashe would only make him more arrogant, so he held back.

“How was my performance?”

“Over the top. I can only give you a 30,” Igor said. “But Vamora’s people are exactly at that level. They’ve been too well-protected by their family, so your overacting was just right. It caught her attention, leaving her no time to think about my intentions, and she fully accepted our story.”

“But why are you investigating the maid only now?” Ashe was puzzled. “Are you cramming because Annan’s about to check the homework?”

It’s already six o’clock, and there was a whole day before this.

Could Igor have wasted time playing games?

“Because no one else would talk to me,” the Con Artist gave a helpless look. “The people here are too xenophobic. I spent the whole day without finding any useful information. I needed a catalyst to get them to open up-and Annan was that catalyst. If this maid hadn’t just seen Annan, she probably wouldn’t have listened to me at all.”

“So, what did you find out?”

“Annan is completely confident,” Igor said. “She’s not nervous at all, which means she believes her plan will allow us to smoothly make it onto the second Future Ranking list.”

“Qenna has also honored the Pact and hasn’t leaked our information. Internally, Senhaeser only knows that Annan is here, but they don’t know that Ashe Heath is also in Vamora. Additionally, Qenna and Nona seem to be...”

“What about them?”

“I just have some thoughts. I need to investigate further.”

As they spoke, they arrived at Suite 24, where Lise and Harvey were already waiting for them.

Ashe couldn't tell if it was just his imagination, but Annan indeed looked much better than she did in the morning. There were no visible signs of the beating from her mother, suggesting that the skincare and beauty treatments here were quite effective. However, Ashe was more interested in another part of her body, but he couldn't tell if she was wearing anything or not.

"It seems everyone knows how to use the Gospel Book now. Since we're all here, I'll tell you about your task."

It dawned on Ashe that Annan had deliberately not told them the meeting place, forcing them to find the answer themselves through the Gospel Book.

Annan clapped her hands lightly. "Today is May 13th. We have seven days until the second ranking list."

"I need you all to fall in love at least once within these seven days."

The setting sun outside shone through the white mist, casting a silent glow in the suite.

Ashe broke the silence. "At least?"

"Yes, at least. If possible, you should try to fall in love several times," Annan said calmly. "If any of you can become romantically involved with Senhaeser's patriarch—Qenna Senhaeser—even if it's just for one night, it would be enough to secure our victory."

Igor and Ashe simultaneously had a thought: Could Annan have overheard their nonsense with Lucy?

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

Chapter 330: Mission: Torn Pants!

The good news was that Annan didn't say those words because she heard Ashe's blasphemous remarks.

The bad news was that Annan was serious.

"The second Future Ranking has two key factors: Love and Family."

Annan said concisely, "So, do you understand now?"

Although compared to the Blood Moon Kingdom, the air in the Gospel Kingdom was filled with the sweetness of love. Actually, there's no need for hypotheticals—since the National Friendly Cities Ranking was first published, Vamora has consistently been the undisputed most loving city in the country. This honor is expected to bring each Vamora citizen an annual gain of 5 Gospel Points.

If the second ranking requires Love and Family, then they were indeed in the right place.

“No, I still don't get it.”

Harvey walked to the window, holding a cigarette made from catnip. A wisp of grayish-white smoke rose slowly: “Why do we need to fall in love?”

“Because that's the shortcut for you to gain Love and Family,” Annan replied. “For you guys, who have no past, as long as you put in a little effort to climb over the hill, the Gospel will mistakenly think you're about to traverse mountains and rivers.”

“The same goes for Love and Family. It's impossible for you to have your own family or find a deep, passionate love in just a few days. But as long as you show your longing for Love and Family, the Gospel Book will naturally acknowledge your sincerity.”

“Very logical deduction,” Ashe said. “But here's the problem—falling in love is generally, probably, maybe, supposed to be an activity involving more than one person, right? Is the lady of the house finally going to grant us employee benefits, one girlfriend each?”

“That's the part where you need to put in the effort,” Annan said, adjusting her earring. “I've already bought you tickets to the stage. What kind of performance you can put on depends on your abilities.”

“So, you're saying we need to find someone willing to fall in love with us in this highly exclusive, materially indifferent, and pre-engaged community of Vamora?” Ashe was puzzled. “I think internal solutions among us might be more practical.”

“Is it the Family Rebirth Dream?” Igor suddenly asked.

Annan glanced at him. “Looks like you didn't waste your day... Yes, I'm not asking you to find someone to fall in love with in reality, but to participate in love matching directly in the Family Rebirth Dream.”

“Love matching?” Ashe keenly noticed the terminology difference. “It sounds like a social gathering full of complex competitive games and hidden conflicts.”

“Though I don't know why you think that way, I can assure you that love matching is much simpler than you imagine,” Annan replied. “Let me put it this way: with the same

amount of interaction time, in reality, you might only get a stranger's contact information, but in the Family Rebirth Dream, you might have already kissed or even been intimate."

"As mentioned before, the Family Rebirth Dream is a place where every clansman needs to log in daily. They need to exhaust excessive positive emotions there to avoid permanently raising their threshold. To help clansmen quickly deplete positive emotions, the Family Rebirth Dream is almost unrestricted. You can do anything you want in there."

"If you want to play submissive, there are plenty of sadistic interrogators to find. If you want to sing, you'll encounter countless listeners. If you want to kill, there are Battle Royale games happening at any time... Do you know how many Senhaeser clansmen there are? A full seven figures. With such a massive base, the craziness you can imagine is likely less than one-tenth of what's in the Family Dream."

"In the Family Dream, activities like love, which are popular, are almost as simple as teaming up with a stranger in a virtual game. There's no need for any prelude; you can jump straight into the most intense parts as soon as you meet."

Annan twirled her fingers, turning an ordinary gesture into something sensuous. "I'm not setting a difficult task for you. On the contrary, this mission is much easier than finding your way here."

"In the Dream, you can freely set your appearance—race, gender, age, none of these are obstacles anymore. Likewise, everyone you meet there is an art piece meticulously crafted with great effort, encompassing all the types you like. Coupled with the anonymity in the Dream, you can imagine how wild it can get."

Anonymous identities, transformed appearances, and free scenarios.

Except for Igor, who had some understanding, everyone else was dumbfounded.

Even though they tried their best, they couldn't imagine how chaotic the Family Dream could be.

Ashe and Lise, listening on the side, huddled together, trembling.

Banjeet walked over to Harvey, lit a second catnip cigarette, and added, "The Senhaeser clansmen don't care about reality, not just because the Beauty Mist keeps them physiologically happy forever, but also because the Family Rebirth Dream satisfies all their sordid desires. To them, the Family Rebirth Dream is the real world, and reality is the worthless dream."

"The people living in this city," the young butler said, overlooking the urban sprawl outside, "are almost all pathetic animals stamped with the 'Family' mark."

“Seems like you have something on your mind,” Igor said. “Feel free to speak up. After all, besides me, you also need to take care of our other colleagues who aren’t too bright.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Ashe said sympathetically, looking at Harvey, who returned the same look to Ashe.

“I’m afraid you might get completely sucked in and become one of the Senhaeser,” Banjeet said bluntly. “Honestly, I only learned the details of the lady’s plan today, and I’m against it. The Family Rebirth Dream has a powerful assimilating ability. For those of you who haven’t experienced love, it’s like a primitive tribe encountering a modern army, a small workshop facing a factory production line—it’s a temptation you can hardly resist.”

“Thank you very much for the warning, Mr. Banjeet, but your tone seems to be filled with too much emotion. Do you have some personal experience you’d like to share with us?” Igor pressed on without hesitation, like someone who had just pried open the edge of a can and was ready to plunge in.

Annan also looked at Banjeet with some confusion.

Banjeet was silent for a moment. “Miss, I took care of you in Senhaeser when you were a child. That wasn’t actually on your father’s orders.”

“Then...?”

“It was Lady Qenna’s request,” Banjeet said. “Back then, my name was Banjeet Senhaeser. After Lady Qenna and your father separated, I followed her and defected to the Dolan Family.” Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Ashe was shocked. “A servant loyal to three families?”

Banjeet gave him an annoyed glance.

“The Dolan Family has greatly benefited me, and your father treated me like family. However, whether it’s ‘gratitude’ or ‘love,’ these are intangible feelings that exist only in the heart. Since hearts cannot directly touch, there are insurmountable barriers between people.”

Banjeet continued, “But the existence of the Family Rebirth Dream breaks those barriers, allowing everyone’s hearts to intertwine directly, letting everyone experience the inner world of strangers firsthand.”

“Things like love, listening, communicating, and playing are just its manifestations. The real terror lies in emotions becoming tangible entities. Everyone’s interactions are

genuine; there's no pretense. This is why the family is solid as a rock, and this is the frightening aspect of Familial Love."

"Anyone who has experienced this cannot leave the family—just as you would struggle to accept a chaotic, dirty den after living in a clean, rule-abiding city."

"Miss, you have never experienced the complete Family Rebirth Dream. All minors can only stay in their own dream and don't have the 'network' function unlocked, and you left Senhaeser before you came of age."

"If I had known about your plan earlier, I would have definitely tried to stop you. Vamora is the final form of the family, and ordinary people simply cannot escape this sweet prison."

"Then how did you later defect from Senhaeser?" Igor suddenly asked.

"Because I needed to protect the Miss," Banjeet said frankly. "My care for the Miss surpasses everything, including myself and the family. That's how I could resist the contamination and assimilation of Familial Love."

"Do any of you possess selfless love?" Banjeet asked.

"I once did."

Everyone was stunned to hear this from the least likely person—the necromancer, Harvey. He silently lit a second catnip cigarette, trying to add physical strain to alleviate his stress.

"So, are you opposing me?" Annan's tone was filled with unconcealed displeasure, but her gaze wasn't on Banjeet. She was looking at her reflection in the wine glass—her true frustration seemed not to be with the opposition.

"No, Dolan's will is my destiny," Banjeet immediately responded.

"So," Ashe steered the conversation back on track, "our next task is to enter the Family Rebirth Dream and be a promiscuous lover?"

"To be precise, it's their task," Annan said, quickly regaining her composure and returning to her strategic self, the Purple Moth. "You and Lise don't need to participate."

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

Chapter 331: Forcing the Beautiful Elf Patriarch to Surrender

“Why!” Ashe widened his eyes. “It’s bad enough with Lise, but now that we finally have some benefits... No, this is such an important mission. I must advance and retreat together with my companions. How can I let them fight alone while I sit back and reap the rewards?”

“Your fame is too great,” Annan shrugged. “You yourself are the top work on the Art Ranking. Now, you’re wanted by the Kingdom of Gospel, and countless Red Hats are waiting to take your head for a promotion and a raise.”

“If you show up on a second ranking list, I can’t even imagine what kind of upheaval it would cause.”

“Speaking of Red Hats, I’ve always had a question—are we really safe here?” Igor asked. “Both the Happy Family Firm and Azura’s Red Hats know we are in Vamora. Can Senhaeser hold them off? And there are five other major families in Vamora...”

“So far, the only one with a bounty on their head is Ashe. As long as Senhaeser insists she doesn’t know Ashe, the other forces can’t openly invade Vamora,” Annan said. “As for the underground... it’s quite unfortunate for them. Vamora’s nearly bloated family structure has squeezed out any space for underground forces. The sewers here only have Beauty Houttuynia and no mermaid organizations responsible for crime. Instead, there are a few Siren Clan members within Senhaeser’s ranks.”

Igor sharply questioned, “What if Qenna betrays us? Do you think the Pact can restrain her?”

“I don’t think she will,” Annan saw that Igor wanted to say more, so she added, “You’d better hope she doesn’t either—I’m just a very pretty firm manager. Don’t think I can cover all bases. If I had a 100% success rate in everything I do, why would I need to use you as cannon fodder? Now, put your hands out.”

As everyone extended their hands, Annan took out a stamp and pressed it on each person’s hand. The stamp’s base color was dark green, depicting a female elf holding a sapling.

“This is the Senhaeser family heraldry. When it heats up, it signifies that the Family Rebirth Dream has begun. Press it firmly to enter the dream. Senhaeser’s dream usually starts around 8 PM each night.”

Annan looked at Ashe and Lise. “I have no performance expectations from you, but you must also enter the Family Rebirth Dream. Otherwise, the ‘toxins’ accumulated from the

Beauty Mist will destroy your emotional thresholds. Lise, being underage, can only stay in a solo dream. Ashe, I don't care what you do, but you don't seem like the romantic type. If you manage to get on the ranking list just by casually dating, I'll accept it."

"I have another question," Ashe asked. "Why is it guaranteed to win if I date your mom... I mean, Qenna?"

Annan glanced at him. "It's simple. If you date someone else, you're just seen as having the potential to start a family. But if you gain Qenna's favor, Gospel will see you as having the capacity to govern millions as a patriarch."

"To put it in game terms, ordinary people are just minor monsters, while Qenna is the strongest boss in Vamora. Defeating minor monsters makes you a regular adventurer, but defeating the boss makes you a hero."

"So...", Lise suddenly spoke, "if we don't act, could the second ranking list include big sister Qenna?"

Annan replied, "It originally would."

Igor asked, "Originally?"

"After seeing the chaotic works on the Art Ranking, do you think Vamora can escape unscathed?" Annan sneered. "There's no guarantee that Senhaeser will even exist in the future."

"Despite how overbearing Qenna seems, she's more nervous than anyone. Chaos is a family's worst enemy, and war is a poison to heritage. She must find a way for Senhaeser to survive in these turbulent times. Right now, Dolan is her only lifeline."

"If you get involved with her and help Senhaeser survive, she might even thank you, maybe even make it real."

Ashe understood, but still felt odd: If someone else had suggested this, it might be different, but the issue was that Qenna was Annan's biological mother. Annan was rationally proposing Qenna as a target...

But Ashe looked around and realized he seemed to be the only one feeling odd about it.

Annan and Banjeet were one thing, but Igor and Harvey, coming from Blood Moon, had no concept of bloodline ethics, and Lise... well, Ashe hadn't asked, but if Lise had parents, she wouldn't have crossed kingdoms (Lise's current identity was still that of an orphan from another kingdom).

When no one else cares, but you do, maybe you're the odd one.

So Ashe quickly accepted this setup, and then had a flash of insight.

“Can we tell Qenna about our plan?”

Drawing everyone’s attention, Ashe excitedly said, “We could say something like, ‘The future of Senhaeser is likely doomed, but if you agree to date me, Gospel might spare Senhaeser because of me. And if I win the Divine Sovereign’s Wish, I won’t neglect you’...”

As Ashe spoke, his voice trailed off. Igor couldn’t help but clap, “Brilliant! No wonder you’re the criminal savior who led us scoundrels out of prison. You quickly came up with a despicable plan to force a beautiful Elf patriarch to surrender using the family name!”

Harvey stubbed out his cigarette and added, “Sorry, Ashe, I used to doubt if you were pretending to be innocent. Now I realize I was the naive one.”

Seeing the disdain in Annan and Banjeet’s eyes, Ashe hurried to explain, “That’s not what I meant-“

“I believe Dad. He definitely didn’t mean it that way!”

Ashe, moved, held Lise’s small hand, “At a critical moment, my sweet daughter understands me!”

“Based on my experience playing games with Dad, Dad will definitely go back on his word once he benefits,” Lise declared confidently. “So, Dad will use Qenna big sister and then dump her, never letting her become my stepmom!”

Ashe’s face darkened immediately, “You’re dead. I’ll find you a stepmom who’s extremely petty, jealous, and will torment you every day.”

“I don’t mind you telling Qenna about the plan,” Annan said leisurely. “But I’m afraid of dying, so I’m not going. You go by yourself.”

Ashe: “Igor, you’re good-looking. Qenna won’t slap your face.”

Igor: “Harvey, you love sleeping in coffins. Now you have a legitimate reason to get in one.”

Harvey: “She’s too old. I’m not interested.”

Everyone blinked, and Ashe asked in confusion, “Harvey, isn’t your hunting range from eight to eighty?”

Harvey nodded, “Yes, but I can tell by smelling that Qenna is beyond that range.”

Ashe was puzzled, "But she's an Elf. She still looks like a youthful, mature, and charming woman in her twenties or thirties!"

"I don't look at appearances," Harvey said calmly. "Once people die, they're just a heap of rotten flesh. In daily interactions, I prefer younger souls..."

Annan patted Igor's shoulder. "Anyway, the second ranking list depends on you."

Lise has a protection mechanism for minors, Ashe better not go, Harvey is unreliable, and Annan suddenly realized she only had one usable person under her command.

However, Igor's face didn't look too good either, "But I..."

"What's wrong with you? Don't tell me you have a disease that makes you die from dating?"

Igor hesitated for a moment, then shook his head, "I'm just worried that the Family Rebirth Dream won't have my type."

"Impossible!" Annan said. "Tens of thousands of handsome men and beautiful women, all sorts of types from different races, there's bound to be someone you like. Unless you have an irreplaceable 'white moonlight' in your heart, then you might find it hard to desire others... do you?"

"Don't worry, Miss," Ashe said. "He's a Bewitcher who is loved by everyone and desired by all. In his pursuit of power, he harbors an arrogance towards all beings. Playing with emotions is as easy for him as breathing. How could he have someone he likes? Forget a few relationships, by the 20th, the number of his girlfriends might even be categorized in the ranking list."

From these days of interaction, Annan also felt that Igor was a cold-hearted emotional manipulator, so she felt reassured and notified the maid to serve the dishes.

Igor took the opportunity to excuse himself to the bathroom, where he opened the Gospel Book in a stall.

"Does dating someone I have no desire for or don't like count as dating according to Gospel?"

Gospel Book: "No (consumes 5 Gospel points)."

Oh no, Annan picked up four useless people this time, Igor thought.

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

Chapter 332: Senhaesers Dream

After dinner, Ashe returned to the gaming floor to continue his battle against the Extreme Mode.

Before parting ways, he had created an Advanced Substitute for Little Lise and casually asked why the Substitute had disappeared. According to Ashe's initial spellforce, the Advanced Substitute should have lasted the entire day, but by the afternoon, Ashe felt his Substitute had vanished.

Lise innocently replied that she didn't know either. She hadn't made the Substitute do any heavy work; it just carried her a bit, sang a few songs, and helped her grab some books.

Ashe figured that the combined effect of two spirits might have increased the spellforce consumption, so he didn't think too much of it and handed over the Substitute's order permissions to Lise, letting her take it away.

However, the Substitute behaved rather strangely, looking back at Ashe every few steps, as if it had a lot to say.

But Ashe, eager to play Epic, had no time to focus on the signals from the Substitute. His mind was preoccupied with whether he should switch his gaming profession.

The original account holder's main profession was a battle sorcerer, so Ashe initially played as a battle sorcerer too. However, he discovered that in high-difficulty raids, the hardest profession to play was the healing sorcerer, followed by the damage-absorbing sorcerer, and lastly, the battle sorcerer.

Of course, the healing sorcerer in Epic wasn't a "life profession" performing surgeries in a hospital, but more akin to a "battlefield medic." In Epic, healing sorcerers are primarily responsible for timely healing and group defense, damage-absorbing sorcerers for attracting enemy attention and leading enemy skills, and battle sorcerers simply need to find safe opportunities to unleash bursts of damage.

Due to the high enemy damage in high-difficulty raids, it's easy for the team to suffer casualties or even wipe out. Therefore, the competency of the healing sorcerer is crucial to the team's survival. While a battle sorcerer slacking off merely means the enemy isn't defeated, a healing sorcerer slacking off means the team gets defeated.

After careful consideration, Ashe decided to switch his profession to a healing sorcerer.

He realized that many teams' strategic decisions and commands were made by healing sorcerers. In fact, healing sorcerers stationed at the rear had a better overall view of the situation, making them ideal for command positions. Additionally, a competent healing sorcerer needed to be aware of each team member's condition, which required a level of tactical expertise surpassing that of battle sorcerers and damage-absorbing sorcerers.

According to the principle of equal responsibilities and rights, healing sorcerers, bearing such significant responsibilities, naturally are granted higher command authority.

Aspiring to become the team's commander, Ashe naturally needed to take on the challenge of the most difficult profession.

Although Ashe currently didn't possess a Healing Miracle, the "sword body barrier" was definitely a remote shield miracle. It had saved the sword Princess Witch from danger multiple times, positioning him as a healing sorcerer in his current team.

There was also a minor reason: after a whole afternoon, his battle sorcerer account had gained a bad reputation. No team tackling Extreme Mode wanted to let him in, so Ashe had no choice but to switch his profession to a healing sorcerer and sneak into a newbie raid team, hoping he wouldn't be recognized.

After reading some strategies, Ashe felt the heraldry on the back of his hand heating up, indicating that Senhaeser's Family Rebirth Dream had been activated.

Should he go in and check it out?

Ashe was somewhat hesitant. He was quite interested in this small Virtual Realm, especially since it was described as a free Carnival dream world, which sounded a lot more fun than Epic.

However, after what Banjeet had told him, Ashe also felt a bit apprehensive. He had confidence in his self-control, but if there were dozens of Elves, housewives, queens, long straight black-haired beauties, twin-tailed blondes, white-haired girls, and other types of women clinging to him, he might end up renaming himself Ashe Senhaeser.

But if he didn't go...?

Annan didn't have any performance requirements for him, but Ashe had developed a driven mindset to strive for success.

Let's not forget, although Ashe had successfully drawn the healing soul item, allowing him to come online in time before the next Spider Tower round, solving the immediate problem at hand.

Now he needed to face the second challenge—how would they handle the Empress' heroic soul legion's pursuit once they entered the Virtual Realm?

And it wasn't just a pursuit for a day or two. As long as Ashe and his two companions hadn't climbed to the third level of the Virtual Realm, they would have to deal with a heroic soul legion with combat power hundreds of times greater than theirs in each Spider Tower round.

The crisis wasn't only within the Virtual Realm. In reality, the other end of Ashe's Pact lock was still being wielded by Annan.

This time, Ashe was lucky enough not to be forced into a romantic situation by Annan, but who's to say that next time she wouldn't make him clean a cesspit, leaving him covered in filth?

Was there any way to put an end to these troubles once and for all?

The term that came to his mind was like a thirsty beast, eagerly drawing all his thoughts: the Divine Sovereign's Wish.

With the Divine Sovereign's Wish, whether it was Annan, the Gospel Book, or the Empress' heroic soul, these problems would no longer be an issue.

If Ashe could make it onto the second Future Ranking list, it would likely increase his chances of obtaining the Divine Sovereign's Wish.

Just then, the Gospel Book suddenly popped open by itself, turning to the page of Aurora's Sorcerer Handbook.

"Operator 'apocalypse observer' has triggered a personal exclusive story quest."

"A new module 'Senhaeser's Dream' has been unlocked."

To this day, this lousy game still had features he hadn't played?

In the upper right corner of the "virtual realm exploration" section, there was a small "Senhaeser's Dream" icon, like a fleeting temporary event task bar.

Clicking on "Senhaeser's Dream," Ashe saw an unprecedented sight—this event wasn't blank but had exquisite event illustrations!

"Inside a high-rise office shrouded in white mist, an elegant and enchanting Beautiful Red Hat Elf sat on a throne, overlooking Vamora city through the floor-to-ceiling windows like a queen ruling the city! Beside her was a younger, more spirited Red Hat Elf, whispering in her ear."

On either side of the event illustration were two options: “Dream Shard Redemption Shop” and “Dream Expedition.”

“Dream Expedition: You can now embark on a dream expedition. Each expedition will yield a varying amount of dream shards.”

Ashe first checked out the “Dream Shard Redemption Shop” and was instantly dazzled by the rewards: various Experience Orbs, not to mention the “Five Spirits of the Peerless Secret Sword Random Gift Box,” the “Time Spirit Random Gift Box,” the “Prophecy Spirit Random Gift Box,” and other miraculous items that he might never obtain even after a lifetime of grinding in the Virtual Realm!

Ashe hurriedly clicked on “dream expedition,” only to be immediately jolted awake:

“Warning: Operator’s soul damage detected. Participation in dream expedition is not recommended.”

Damn, my soul still has several days before it fully recovers, and by then, we might have already left Vamora!

However, Ashe noticed that the expedition button wasn’t grayed out, so he clicked it again:

“Soul damage detected in operator. ‘Substitute’ and ‘orders’ spirits detected. It is recommended that the operator dispatch a substitute for the dream expedition to avoid further soul damage.”

“Note ①: The substitute can still be used normally in reality during the dream expedition.”

“Note ②: During the dream expedition, the operator cannot obtain any dream intelligence or control the substitute’s actions, only the expedition’s rewards. Please choose wisely.”

Thump!

Ashe felt his heart racing, his breathing quickening, and his face heating up, every pore on his body bursting with excitement!

All he could see was that sentence—“It is recommended that the operator dispatch a substitute for the dream expedition!”

He could finally send a substitute to work in his place!

Auto-dungeon runs!

Proxy commands!

Earning rewards while lying down!

What more could he ask for!?

“Dream Expedition” – “Dispatch Substitute” – “Select Expedition Target,” Ashe opened the list and found that one of the options was indeed to engage in a romantic affair.

Then, three more options popped up on the screen.

“Please choose the substitute’s action style—”

“Apocalypse Observer: Calm type, suitable for intelligence gathering, sowing discord, creating chaos, etc. (Not recommended).”

“Death Maniac Sword Princess: Frenzied type, suitable for creating chaos, killing, arson, assassination, sabotage, etc. (Not recommended).”

“Black and White Witch: Joyful type, suitable for creating chaos, role-playing, manipulating emotions, etc. (Recommended).”

Instead of dispatching a real operator, it was just having the substitute mimic one of these action styles... Naturally, Ashe followed the game’s recommendation.

“Dream Expedition” – “Dispatch Substitute” – “Romantic Affair” – “Action Style (Black and White Witch),” confirm!

The heraldry on the back of his hand stopped heating up, and the in-game “dream expedition” status changed to “in progress.”

Ashe blinked.

Was it really that simple?

So... am I really free now?

Since Ashe had nothing else to do, he decided to switch his profession to healing sorcerer and mess around in the game.

In Lise’s room, Little Lise was talking to the mirror, saying who knows what, while the Substitute was hunched over the desk, browsing various ancient books. Whenever it encountered keywords like “Gospel Incarnation,” “Yisuo Royal Family,” or “Armored,” it would fold the page.

Once Deya and her sisters discovered that the Substitute had some level of intelligence, they decisively stopped Lise from exhausting its physical strength and switched to more advanced mental tasks.

Their Gospel points were still too few, so they didn't qualify to directly inquire about deeper secrets. They could only hope to find some clues in the literature. Luckily, Senhaeser's family had been prosperous for hundreds of years; otherwise, they wouldn't have found so many materials.

Suddenly, the back of the Substitute's hand heated up slightly.

The Substitute was momentarily dazed, then continued working.

At the same time, within the white Dream, a figure quietly appeared.

She looked at her Substitute's appearance, spun around, and transformed into the appearance of the "Black and White Witch" portrait.

"If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands~"

"If you're happy and you know it, nod your head~"

"If you're happy and you know it, then we'll all go together~!"

By the time she finished singing the three lines, seventeen sisters had appeared around her. They were dressed differently, had different hair colors, and their expressions varied greatly, but their faces were identical.

"Do we really have to date that man on his behalf?"

"Such a hassle..."

"Annoying, don't involve me in this."

"Do we have to transform into him? No way, he's so ugly."

"Hey? I think he's kind of cute, at least cuter than the Observer."

"When you put it that way, it's hard for me to argue with you. After all, there might not be anything more unappealing than the Observer even at the bottom of the Abyss."

"Hungry, cake, red velvet cake, I want red velvet cake!"

As soon as the sisters appeared, they started expressing their opinions. Soon, opinions turned into arguments, arguments turned into screams, and screams turned into howls, almost shattering the white Dream with the noise-

“Shhh.”

The Witch gently placed a finger on her lips, and all fell silent.

“We are only here temporarily thanks to Ashe’s Substitute. Regardless, we still need to complete our mission. As for appearance, gender, and race, it doesn’t matter. We just need to resemble Ashe enough so that the Gospel will attribute our romantic escapades to his flirtatiousness.”

“As long as you make sure to develop a romance, you can do whatever you want with the rest of your time-don’t forget, this is the unrestrained Family Dream. Whatever you want to do, someone will join you in your madness.”

“Oh, and don’t forget about the Secret Incarnation.”

The Witch waved her hand, and a Gospel Book appeared in her grasp. The other sisters followed suit, each holding a Gospel Book.

“With our own accounts and the permissions of the Secret Incarnation, we can access most of the data and intelligence for free. While we can’t speak of it outside and can only use it here... you all know how to take advantage of this intelligence, right?”

“Read her desires!”

“Become her favorite!”

“Confuse her mind!”

The sisters’ eyes gleamed as they chanted wicked slogans, disappearing one by one into the mist.

“Well, I’d better start too.” The Witch murmured, “Miss Annan, the Elf patriarch, the not-yet-corrupted White Queen, the sane Black Butler, the Scarlet Dead Apostles I haven’t killed yet, and...”

“Damn, I want to play with every single one of them. Which one should I start with?”

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

Chapter 333: Heart Wall

The back of his hand was burning.

Igor had returned to his room early, wearing only a coral fleece robe. For safety's sake, he had prepared an "Igor figurine" when entering the dream, but his original self wasn't hidden elsewhere; it was inside the figurine.

Illusions and reality, truth and lies, battling wits with the air—such was the daily life of a Con Artist.

He stared at the heraldry glowing and heating up on the back of his hand. With his Golden level Mental Sect Realm, he deduced that the fuel for the burning heraldry was his own positive emotions.

This was a grand Miracle: within the Senhaeser District, as long as the main heraldry activated a Miracle, all the subsidiary heraldries would respond. This heraldry held no secrets; the Miracle was judged based on the heraldry pattern, meaning Igor could draw a heraldry for himself if he wished.

From this flawed heraldry authentication method, it was clear that the six Vamora families didn't actually prohibit outsiders from entering the Family Dream. One step in Annan's original plan was to hide in other Vamora families. Igor had previously wondered what leverage she had to bring a group of strangers into other families. Now it seemed that joining a Vamora heraldry family might be as easy as entering a Tea House. You could be pulled in just by passing by.

The problem was, joining was easy, but leaving was difficult.

Tea Houses use beauty to retain your body, while families use love to melt your soul.

Recalling Banjeet's warning, Igor felt a bit hesitant.

As someone who studied the Mental Sect, he naturally understood the saying "a good swimmer drowns." He never challenged addictive traps like sugar, murder, or gambling, despite his mental prowess—in fact, Igor had only ever caused others' deaths but had never killed anyone himself. Gambling was merely a work tool; he never indulged in it for leisure.

The more a mental sorcerer explores the boundaries of the mind, the more restrained they become. Only the ignorant believe they can "overcome sugar addiction," "kill without remorse," or "gamble moderately." But the wise avoid these potential threats to their sanity from the start.

Entering the Family Rebirth Dream was akin to a gas canister serving as an attendant at a gas station. In the past, Igor would have outright refused such a task.

However.

Publicly, Igor was currently living under someone else's roof. Unlike Banjeet, who had once changed Annan's diapers, he had no standing to oppose her.

Privately, Igor also wanted to appear on the second Future Ranking list.

The Divine Sovereign's Wish and the Future Ranking—either was enough to pique a Con Artist's interest. When Annan proposed the plan to blaspheme the Divine Sovereign, Igor had already resolved to join. As an ambitious social engineer, he found it hard to resist such a grand scheme to deceive the entire world.

Besides poetry and distant lands, Igor had to consider the immediate dangers. They were still not out of harm's way. Not to mention the Red Hat and the Firm, Annan and Qenna were also threats close at hand.

To increase his chances of survival, Igor needed to demonstrate his value—when your value is high enough, others will clean up your mess. Ashe was a prime example of this.

After casting “Heart of Stone” and “Iron Will” on himself, Igor's mind was now unshakable. Even if the sky were falling, it wouldn't affect his emotions.

He didn't plan to take action on the first night of the dream journey. Instead, he intended to conduct a trial run, investigating the dream's situation as thoroughly as possible without getting addicted.

Focusing his consciousness on the burning heraldry, Igor felt his soul rise like a wisp of smoke, in a completely different direction from sinking into the Virtual Realm. When Igor opened his eyes, he found himself in a vast, white expanse, standing alone.

He looked up and saw many bubbles above.

Just by scanning them with his eyes, he could roughly discern what worlds lay within the bubbles: feasts of countless delicacies, arenas of legendary sorcerers, serene fishing spots on misty waters, battlefields where thousands perished...

These worlds had many participants. When Igor thought of “romance,” the bubbles instantly changed, displaying various romantic worlds, ranging from 1v1 to 100v1 scenarios.

Igor didn't rush to begin directly. Instead, he adjusted his appearance to prevent being recognized. Having a habit of disguising himself through makeup and costumes, he was skilled at altering his face.

“Image No. 78: Literary Bewitcher Girl.”

To thoroughly conceal his identity, Igor even used a rarely employed female form, complete with a different voice. Now, not even Harvey and Ashe could recognize him.

“Hello there!”

A voice emerged from the white mist, causing Igor to pause momentarily. He quickly realized that while he was searching for ‘romance’ bubbles, he had also become someone else’s ‘romance’ bubble, prompting someone to approach him directly.

From the voice, it sounded like a girl?

As footsteps approached from the white mist, blue and green hues began to spread. The sky turned a clear blue, the ground transformed into lush greenery, and a cool breeze brushed against his face—this was the greatest charm of the Family Rebirth Dream. Each dream was an independent world, with the environment changing according to the dreamer’s desires. It was as if one’s wishes could come true effortlessly.

Soon, Igor saw his first... romance match.

She was short, about 1.5 meters tall, with a fluffy tail behind her. She wore an oversized gradient dark red trench coat and a mask that Igor found somewhat familiar...?

As soon as she saw Igor, she enthusiastically waved and ran towards him—

Thud.

Halfway through, she tripped over her own feet and fell flat on the grass, lying there without getting up.

This appearance, this clumsiness, this personality...

Igor remained silent for a moment, then walked over and squatted beside her. “What’s wrong?”

“Gotcha!” The girl in the dark red trench coat suddenly jumped up and hugged Igor tightly, pushing him to the ground. She rubbed her face against Igor’s freshly created female face, giggling, “Big sister, do you want to date me?!”

Feeling the softness of the adorable person in his arms, Igor’s face remained unchanged, maintaining the cold and calm demeanor typical of a literary girl.

Luckily, he had prepared thoroughly!

Good thing he had cast “Heart of Stone” and “Iron Will” on himself! This combination was enough to form an impenetrable Heart Wall!

His heart remained completely unmoved!

Battling wits with the air had its rewards!

Quick, this is the trap of the Family Rebirth Dream, this is Qenna's scheme. Punch this annoying woman away immediately, or it'll be too late!

Crack.

Hiss.

Igor was startled—what was that sound?

It sounded like... stone shattering and iron rusting?

"What's your name?" the girl in the dark red trench coat asked, holding Igor's neck, her eyes sparkling. "I'm Xiao Xi."

"I'm... Irina."

The Heart Wall... couldn't hold on any longer.

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

Chapter 334: Are All You Blood Moon People Crazy?

On a lazy afternoon, sunlight was sliced into squares by the treehouse window, mingling with the aroma of coffee and ink, and spreading like a dip on the carpet where Xiao Xi lay.

Igor sat nearby, holding a book titled *The Ten Rules of a Con Artist*, with a steaming cup of coffee in front of him. He asked, "Comfortable?"

"Yes, very. Half of me is in the sun, the other half isn't. I'm half warm, half cool," Xiao Xi replied, rolling around on the carpet with her large tail. "Irina, come lie down too. Stop reading."

"No, I prefer—"

Before Igor could finish his refusal, Xiao Xi dragged him onto the floor. The treehouse transformed, the roof opened up, and in an instant, afternoon turned to deep night. The stars sparkled, the Milky Way shimmered, and the countless stars greeted them.

"I thought you would like the starry sky," Xiao Xi said, lying next to Igor.

"Yes, I am only mesmerized by two things— the starry sky and moral laws. The former represents the greatness of nature, the latter highlights the brilliance of humanity. Only these two things make me feel small."

"But..." Igor raised his hand to the sky, fingers gently spreading. A Blood Moon, full of oppressive presence, appeared between his fingers. It scattered countless stars instantly, like a giant eye of surveillance dominating the earth. "This is the night sky I'm familiar with."

"But it no longer exists," Xiao Xi said, reaching out to crush the Blood Moon. "Whether in dreams or reality, you don't have to live under the light of this Blood Moon anymore."

"Let's go," Xiao Xi said, pulling Igor along. "Let's go on an adventure!"

They ventured through ancient forests towering into the sky, mysterious underground palaces filled with traps, eerie cities where residents vanished overnight, mountain villages worshipping mysterious religions... It was unclear whether these were pre-fabricated bubbles of the Dream or treasures from Xiao Xi's mind. The two girls braved these dangerous lands together, with Xiao Xi charging ahead recklessly and Igor gathering intelligence and solving puzzles. Sometimes they were chased by rolling boulders, other times they marveled at breathtaking, magnificent sights.

Finally exhausted from their adventures, the two lay on the grass under the shade of a tree, inhaling the scent of grass from each other and lazily seeming to want to fall asleep in the Dream.

"Hey, let's continue playing together tomorrow!" Xiao Xi said enthusiastically.

"Tomorrow, let's challenge the mysterious underwater city. But we should both add Siren bloodlines to ourselves, otherwise, it will be difficult to solve the breathing problem underwater..."

"Just the two of us again?" Igor asked.

"Yes, just the two of us," Xiao Xi said matter-of-factly. "I don't want to meet more people. When there are many people, there are conflicts. With more than three people, small groups form, and more voices mean noise."

"The three words I hate most are humans, society, and communication. My ideal way of living is just the two of us—never lonely, and any conflict can be resolved quickly. We don't even need to talk; we can understand each other with just our eyes. What about you?"

Igor was slightly stunned. He looked at the sunlight, fragmented by the leaves, and nodded lightly. "Me too. I hate meeting strangers, hate communicating with others, and hate a society full of tangled interests."

"Right, right!" Xiao Xi excitedly leaned over next to Igor. "It's a deal. Tomorrow, we'll continue our adventure together—just the two of us!"

However, Igor didn't reply. The sunlight quietly receded, and dark clouds took over the sky.

"No need to consider interpersonal relationships, no need to think about conspiracies, just freely use my intelligence, adventuring with the person I trust most, entering uninhabited mysterious places, and witnessing long-hidden wonders... This indeed is my most desired dream life."

The wind began to blow, and the grass bent slightly. The leaves made a sound like crying.

Xiao Xi: "But?"

"But dreams are dreams because they are unattainable," Igor said, sitting up. "Dreams that can be easily realized are meaningless." [search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

Xiao Xi also sat up. "But aren't we dreaming right now?"

Crack! With a flash of lightning across the sky, it first started drizzling, then turned into a torrential downpour with gusts of wind. The shade of the tree was no longer a refuge for them, and the rain soaked Igor's hair, blurring Xiao Xi's face.

"Why is it raining?" Xiao Xi pulled out a large umbrella from somewhere and sheltered herself and Igor together under it. "Irina, do you like the sound of rain?"

"I don't like the rain, but it always rains here, and I'm always caught in it," Igor said. "That's why dreaming is pointless. You can stay with me now, but when you leave, I'll still be in the rain."

"I will stay with you until the end."

"The end and forever are actually the same word, meaning 'a future so distant that I will break my promise.'"

"But our future is not distant," Xiao Xi blinked. "When the Weaving Festival ends, that day will be our end."

“You don’t have to walk the last stretch alone. We bought the same ticket to the end, and we’ll arrive at the terminal station together.”

Igor looked at her calmly. “Are you really going to stay with me?”

“Yes.”

“No regrets?”

“No regrets.”

“Phew.” Igor sighed. “Alright then.”

The rain stopped, the wind calmed, and just when Xiao Xi thought Igor had finally opened up, the ground suddenly shook violently. The earth sunk into an arena, with the surroundings rising to form spectator stands. The spotlight shone only on the sandy center at the bottom.

“Do you know where this is?”

Xiao Xi looked up and saw that Igor was no longer dressed like a literary girl but was wearing a tight combat outfit, wrapping bandages around his arms.

“This is the Deathmatch arena of Shattered Lake Prison,” Igor said calmly. “I used to break the ulna of countless thugs here, plunder the property of numerous bad guys. To put it bluntly, I survived by absorbing the nutrients of the dead.”

“But Irina, you already left—”

“I never left.” Igor shook his head. “I just moved from one Shattered Lake to another. As long as I don’t change, everywhere is a prison that confines me.”

“But you can change now,” Xiao Xi said anxiously. “I will change with you! Don’t you want to escape that loathsome life, to rid yourself of that loathsome self?”

“Yes, I do.” Igor lowered his eyes. “My soul urges me to accept you, my Heart Wall has been completely destroyed by you. Your words, your values, your appearance, everything about you is my ideal type. Although I don’t know who you really are or how you knew my preferences, even if you are a trap, you have completely entered my heart.”

“Then why—”

“Therefore,” Igor took a battle stance, “you must die.”

Xiao Xi was stunned, completely unable to understand the logic of the Con Artist.

“Although I would love to invade the Blood Moon with the Gospel army, there are still many valuable lessons from Blood Moon education,” Igor said coldly. “‘Every relationship that worries you will pollute you,’ ‘Every relationship that makes you feel wronged will hurt you,’ ‘Every relationship that changes you will control you’... Personality freedom is fundamental, especially for a mental sorcerer.”

“If I change to the point where I’m no longer myself, how is that different from being dead?”

“I never kill, unless someone crosses my bottom line,” Igor said seriously. “And my bottom line is—anyone who can enter my heart, anyone who can break my Heart Wall, must die!”

“I already gave you a chance, but you refused to leave.”

“Wait, wait...” Xiao Xi backed away, waving her hands. “Your view of love is flawed. There is selfless love that changes for others in this world—”

“Sorry, but your view is flawed,” Igor said. “The first rule of the Con Artist: believe that everyone in this world is selfish.”

When Igor charged at her, Xiao Xi was dumbfounded.

The information didn’t mention that Igor had this kind of trap—rarely falling for anyone, but once he does, he has to kill them to maintain his purity—how do you find a balance in that?

You Blood Moon people are really messed up!

“Also,” as Igor rushed into her arms, Xiao Xi heard him say something very strange, “I’ve always wanted revenge.”

Revenge for what?

Bang!

With a full-force punch from the Con Artist, Xiao Xi’s figure exploded like a bubble!

“Phew.”

Igor let out a long breath, lying on the sand exhausted, raising his fist high, his face flushed with excitement.

“Damn, I really want to punch him in reality too.”

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

Chapter 335: Internal Resolution

Meanwhile, Lise and her sisters finally reached an agreement.

Lise would stay in the real world to watch over their bodies, while the others would enter the Family Dream.

“Why is it always me who has to stay behind!?” Lise pouted. “Lise wants to play in the dream too! The Virtual Realm didn’t let me go, and now the dream won’t either!?”

Seeing Little Lise throw a tantrum, her sisters remained unfazed. The White Queen said, “Lise, you know we have a mission in the dream this time, right?”

“Yeah! Isn’t it just about falling in love? Lise can do that too!” Little Lise boasted, hands on her hips.

The White Queen replied, “Then, our smartest Lise, can you tell me how many people it takes to fall in love?” [search the novelFire.net website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“Um... two people, right?” Lise held up two fingers.

“That’s correct, it takes two people to fall in love. But as Banjeet mentioned earlier, the other strangers in the Family Dream are scary adults. You wouldn’t want to fall in love with them, would you?”

Lise shook her head vigorously. “No way! Their eyes are so scary!”

“So, we can only rely on internal resolution,” the White Queen explained. “I plan to fall in love with the Black Butler, and the Secret Princess will fall in love with the Scarlet Dead Apostles.”

Given the dangers in the Family Dream, Deya and her sisters wouldn’t recklessly venture in. They had one significant advantage over others—they weren’t just individuals!

Ashe’s suggestion was spot on. Since merging with Senhaeser would lead to assimilation, the most prudent strategy was internal resolution. Unlike others who had to find someone to resolve with, Deya and her sisters could handle it internally!

Lise blinked, taking a few seconds to process this. “What about me!?”

The White Queen in the mirror shrugged, "The five of us will pair up, which means you have to stay behind."

"No, no, no!" Lise protested, "I don't want to be left out! Make me a little sister, and I'll fall in love with her!"

"Creating a sister for that purpose is not acceptable!" the White Queen said. "Lise, be good. It's not that we don't want to take you with us this time, but the conditions simply won't allow it. Stay in the real world and play as you like. Ashe's Substitute will help with intelligence gathering, so don't cause trouble."

"No, Lise can have a partner too!" Lise suddenly had an idea. "I can get Dad—"

"Don't drag Ashe into the Abyss of crime!" The White Queen reached out from the mirror and knocked Lise on the head. "Kids aren't allowed to fall in love with adults."

"But that's not what I meant," Lise said, rubbing her head. "If Dad joins us, then there will be six of us. Lise can fall in love with the Scarlet Dead Apostles, and Deya can be with Dad. That way, everyone will be happy!"

The Scarlet Dead Apostles suddenly interjected, "Why me?"

Lise replied, "Because you're the nicest to me! You've never scolded me!"

The White Queen couldn't help but laugh in exasperation. Despite being the one who cared the most for Lise, the White Queen was the one Lise feared the most. The Scarlet Dead Apostles, who never took part in Lise's education, were seen as the nicest sister.

Feeling her sister's emotions like a wave, Lise quickly tried to remedy the situation. "Actually, I like the White Queen too. How about I pair with the White Queen, and the Black Butler can be with Dad—"

"Just stay home and watch the house!"

Lise stood at attention. "Yes, ma'am!"

When the heraldry on the back of her hand stopped glowing, Lise knew her sisters had entered the Dream. Bored, she tossed and turned on the bed, watching the Substitute diligently flipping through books and doing homework. She went over and lay beside him, watching.

The Substitute continued his meticulous Retrieval of academic materials, seemingly oblivious to her presence.

"By the way, Dad's hair seems really long!" Lise suddenly clapped her hands. "I should help him cut it."

The Substitute hesitated slightly.

“But first, I need to learn how to cut hair.”

The Substitute’s hand started to tremble.

“If I can’t find scissors... oh well, I’ll use a knife!” Lise picked up a fruit knife. “Substitute, show me your head!”

The Substitute slowly pulled back his hood. Whether it was due to the lighting or something else, his face seemed even paler than before.

The White Queen opened her eyes to a world shrouded in white mist, with a river of colorful bubbles flowing above.

“So, this is the Family Dream. It feels quite similar to the Virtual Realm...” She stopped mid-sentence, realizing something was wrong. “Am I separated from them?”

Looking down, she saw she wasn’t wearing Deya’s black and white checkered suit but her own pure white dress. There were no other voices in her mind and no other figures around. This made the White Queen feel slightly uneasy—this might be the first time since her birth that she was separated from her sisters.

She needed to find them quickly. As soon as the White Queen had this thought, a sudden gust of wind blew away the mist. Feathers descended from the sky, the air filled with musical notes, and the sound of footsteps in polished shoes echoed rhythmically, as if stepping directly on her heart.

The White Queen turned her head and immediately felt relieved. “Black Butler?”

The newcomer was dressed impeccably in a black suit and white gloves, with short, sharp hair and a slight smile. It was indeed the Black Butler she knew, although there was a small difference—she didn’t remember the Black Butler having crimson eyes.

However, in a dream, appearances could be freely altered. The White Queen thought it was quite restrained of the Black Butler not to transform herself into a man.

“Black Butler, we...” The White Queen began to speak, but the Black Butler took her hands, and the ground transformed into a stage. Fireworks erupted around them, dazzling lighting descended from the sky, and the air’s musical notes shifted into a passionate, exhilarating nocturne!

“Thud!—Thud!—Thud!—”

“Tap!—Tap!—Tap!—”

Chaos sang, death cheered, the melody of skeletal pianos danced along the beams of light, and the beat of Elf drums guided the dancers' breaths. Countless corpses raised the stage with all their might, with the demonic red and the fallen gold focusing on the two figures on the stage!

However, the White Queen's eyes were already dazzled by the overwhelming lights. Her pupils reflected only the grand, magnificent performance, her ears heard only the exhilarating music, and her entire being moved in sync with the person before her!

"Here, you can finally rest. No need to worry about the Witches, no need to think about the Observer, no need to fret over Lise. Just immerse yourself in the dazzling, colorful life you've always dreamed of, basking in everyone's admiration, because this is your very own Queen's Dream."

"Give me your heart," the Black Witch said with a charming smile, her voice dripping with a soothing tenderness that could melt anyone.

"Hey, White Queen, you..."

The White Witch hugged the Black Butler from behind, inhaling deeply beside her neck. "You're actually a very shy and passive child, aren't you?"

"White Queen, something's off with you," the Black Butler said, panicking as she tried to break free, but she was abruptly pushed onto a bed—a bed?

"It's just the two of us now. Whatever happens here, no one will ever know." The White Witch grabbed her tie, speaking domineeringly, "Give me your heart."

Meanwhile, Deya, who was studying the Family Dream, turned to see someone who looked exactly like her emerging from the white mist, as if her reflection had stepped out of a mirror.

"Little Red?" Deya asked curiously. "Why are you wearing my clothes?"

"I might be Little Red, or I might not be."

The Witch tilted her head with a sly smile. "Let's play a game—by the end of tonight, guess who I am?"

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

Chapter 336: I Wont Be Fooled!

At 9:00 AM Gospel Time, while handling official duties, Qenna felt the heraldry heating up right on schedule.

Since the Family Rebirth Dream was a privately funded dreamscape, each activation consumed a large amount of resources. Therefore, it was only open for 4 hours daily, from 8:00 PM to midnight. S

Not everyone could rush into the dreamscape all at once; otherwise, the Senhaeser District would come to a standstill.

There were no restrictions on off-duty personnel; the heraldry would heat up precisely at 8:00 PM. However, those required for night duty had to enter the dreamscape in batches according to the plan, ensuring that each functional unit continued to operate normally. This arrangement was mandatory; if it wasn't your designated time, your heraldry wouldn't heat up. The rational distribution of time slots was, of course, managed by the great Gospel.

Unlike ordinary people's longing for the Gospel, as a patriarch who frequently used it, Qenna had a profound understanding of its power and precision. Therefore, she had unwavering faith in the Art Ranking of the Weaving Festival.

According to her investigation, not only other families in Vamora but the entire Kingdom of Gospel had begun strategic stockpiling of materials. All forces were preparing to counter the impending unknown disaster.

Although Senhaeser was one-sixth of the city lords in Vamora, compared to the entire Gospel, it was just a small family; in the face of a disaster capable of destroying nations and cities, it was merely a tiny ant struggling to survive.

Qenna was very anxious. Fifty years was not a long time for her; she might very well witness the end of Senhaeser with her own eyes. But she couldn't show any anxiety on the surface. She was the pillar of the family's spirit and morale. Everyone else could fear, but she couldn't show any sign of weakness.

This was also why she protected Annan and the others.

Sending Annan and Ashe out was merely an embellishment for the family, insignificant for the future grand scheme; but if Annan and the others could obtain the Divine Sovereign's Wish, she would have the opportunity to offer help in a critical situation and reap gratitude.

The Pact was merely bait to keep Annan settled; now that they were all in Senhaeser, they had to enter the Family Dream tonight, which was Qenna's crucial move.

Coercion and enticement were never the right path to expansion; only love and family could permanently turn others into family.

However, Annan had probably seen through her intentions from the beginning.

Qenna was dissatisfied with many aspects of her daughter, but when it came to cunning, they were evenly matched.

Even if Annan saw through her plans, she still had to step into the trap obediently. Qenna loved seeing her daughter's face full of reluctance and defiance yet having to comply.

No one knew that Qenna had intentionally raised Annan this way: intelligent, cunning, and full of rebellion.

As a genius sorcerer, family patriarch, and Red Hat of the Sanctuary, Qenna hadn't encountered a worthy opponent in a long time. She didn't have many friends, and even if she did, none dared to confront her. Coupled with the long life of an Elf, Qenna had started feeling a bit bored.

So, she decided to create an opponent for herself, a playmate, an adversary—who better to cultivate than her own daughter?

After giving Annan enough childhood traumas, Qenna let her leave to inherit Dolan's business, waiting for the day she would return to seek revenge. Whether Annan came back to claim the family business or destroy Senhaeser, Qenna looked forward to spending her later years in a battle of wits with her daughter.

Although it seemed like Qenna was coveting Dolan's business, the truth was, for Senhaeser, Dolan's secret legacy was just an embellishment and couldn't elevate the family further. Seizing Dolan's legacy was merely one of Qenna's excuses to continue bullying Annan.

However, the Weaving Festival happened to predict an impending disaster, making Dolan's legacy suddenly crucial... perhaps this was the reward for bullying her daughter.

But... shouldn't Annan be getting married by now?

When Qenna first saw Lise, she thought it was Annan and Ashe's child—after all, from the Art Ranking, it seemed Annan had painted a portrait of Ashe, and it looked like she had been forced by Ashe to do so. However, now Ashe was an employee under

Annan's Pact, a relationship that easily conjured up a ten-thousand-word narrative of twisted love and rebellion.

Though it seemed like nothing had sparked between them yet, Qenna had great faith in the Weaving Festival. If it hadn't happened yet, it certainly would in the future.

If I send someone to lure Ashe away, would it further ignite Annan's fighting spirit? It would be best to send someone Annan knows... Nona would be a good choice...

As Qenna pondered this, she sank into the Family Dream.

She didn't linger at the starting point but went directly into an orange bubble, transforming into an Elf pastry chef and arriving at the pastry factory.

Many people speculated on what the patriarch did in the dream. Some guessed Qenna would go to the Battle Royale bubble, others thought she would enjoy being an interrogator, and some believed she would attend wild Carnival parties. No one would have guessed that Qenna liked making cakes and chocolates in the dream.

Actually, Qenna hadn't planned it either. It was just that Annan used to love sweets, so Qenna would deliberately make desserts by hand. When little Annan came over wanting to eat, Qenna would set various impossible tasks for her. When little Annan failed and sat aside, craving the sweets to the point of tears, Qenna would slowly enjoy her desserts. This joy made the process of preparing desserts an interesting task in itself.

The pastry factory bubble was always an unpopular area in the dream, usually frequented by just a few clansmen with similar interests. So, when Qenna arrived tonight, she immediately noticed a new face she hadn't seen before.

She glanced at the newcomer but then focused on her task. She intended to make a Black Forest cake tonight. She had made it for Annan before, but little Annan hadn't completed the task Qenna set, so she had smeared the Black Forest cake on Annan's face.

Smack!

Qenna paused as the newcomer sent a bowl of whipped cream flying.

Ignore him, ignore him...

Smack! Thud! Clang! Smack!

When he knocked over the cream bowl again, Qenna couldn't stand it any longer. She walked over and asked, "Do you even know how to-"

Her reprimand was cut short.

In front of Qenna was a clumsy Elf boy who had fallen to the ground. He had a delicate appearance, a small and petite body that wasn't thin, but soft and plush, as if a squeeze could produce milk. His milky white skin had a rosy hue like an apple, his thin lips slightly pursed, and his large eyes held golden irises that made it impossible to look away.

The pointed Elf ears trembled slightly, and a shy, silly smile hung on his face. His chef's outfit was a dark red gradient, and he wore black over-the-knee socks, with just a small section of his snow-white thighs exposed, creating a striking black-and-white contrast.

Soft, collapsed cream covered his entire body, even a bit on his nose, but it didn't look dirty at all. Instead, it seemed like a decorative touch on a Black Forest cake, an edible piece of art.

"Sorry, I'm not very good at making cakes..." He stared at the floor, his face as red as a beet: "Did I disturb you..."

"No worries."

Qenna spoke in the gentlest tone she had ever used in her life. She helped the boy up, resisting the urge to hug him directly, and asked, slightly hurriedly, "What kind of cake do you want to make?"

"Red Velvet Cake." The boy said, "My sister likes it. I want to learn how to make it in the dream so I can make it for her in reality."

"Then I'll teach you how to make it." Qenna grabbed his hands without waiting for a response and pulled him into her arms: "First, I'll teach you how to whip cream. By the way, what's your name?"

"My name is Xiao Ya..."

Qenna's heart skipped a beat, but seeing the earnest look on the boy's face, she couldn't resist wiping the cream off his nose and putting it in her mouth.

Upon entering the initial dream, Annan felt a bit dazed.

It had been over a decade since she last entered the dream. Back then, she was still a minor and could only stay in the designated single-child amusement park. If the Family Rebirth Dream was an ocean, she had at most picked up a few shells on the beach.

Banjeet's words were not just a warning to the employees but also a reminder to her, the boss: don't think that just because you've ridden the kindergarten bus, you can handle the adult university bus.

Although the Purple Moth was at odds with the butler, she wasn't a rebellious little girl who wouldn't listen to reason-her rebellion was solely against her mother. Therefore, she planned to stay in her personal dream and spend these few days obediently.

After all, dating was a job for the employees. Annan neither needed nor had the qualifications to compete for a place on the second ranking list. For someone like her, born and raised in the Gospel, the Gospel had long woven her future, leaving no room for any unknown "possibilities."

But... what should I play?

In the Dream, thinking was a redundant physical effort. When Annan came to her senses, the Dream had already transformed into the children's amusement park she was most familiar with.

In her childhood, this was the place she looked forward to the most because her mother couldn't enter here. She could play as much as she wanted, eat cakes to her heart's content, doodle freely, and curse without having to worry about Qenna's reactions.

Annan found herself transformed into her six or seven-year-old self, wearing her fluffy purple princess dress.

She wasn't particularly fond of purple herself, but Qenna hated the color. Anything Qenna disliked, Annan loved.

Before breaking free from Senhaeser, the only place she could wear purple clothes was in the Dream.

This was her Dream, where she couldn't hide her deepest desires. Fortunately, no one knew what happened in the Dream, or she'd have no idea how to maintain her dignity if that group found out how childish she was.

Since there was no one else around...

Annan's eyes sparkled as she lay on the ground, rolling like a log into the amusement park. She then dove into the sandbox to play with the sand, rode the carousel, swung on the swings, and slid down the slides...

So boring.

Though she had fond memories of her childhood, actually playing again felt dull. She had outgrown the age where everything was fascinating. Now, as a boring adult, playing with sand just didn't excite her.

More importantly, playing alone was incredibly lonely.

As a child, she could play alone because she had her teddy bear friends, her little fox friends, and her kitten friends. But as an adult, all she had were teddy bear toys, little fox toys, and kitten toys.

If only I could find a friend...

Just as this thought crossed Annan's mind, she heard a sliding sound from the nearby slide-someone had entered her Dream!

"Beautiful little princess, may I play with you?"

She turned her head and saw a young boy, not much older than her current age. He had short black hair, slightly longer than usual, with strands falling past his ears and nearly reaching his shoulders. His thin lips were pressed into a slight smile, and his bright blue eyes were filled with amusement. He wore a white suit with gold trim, a shining golden epaulet on his left shoulder, and spotless white athletic boots. He looked like a little prince straight out of a fairy tale.

Naturally, he took Annan's small hand. "Princess, what's your name?"

Annan's rational mind screamed: The Family Dream is very dangerous... get him out of here... otherwise, you'll get trapped... get him out now... you don't need to complete the task... get him out!

"Xiao An." She lowered her head, blushing. "And you?"

Rationality collapsed.

"Just call me Xiao Xiu," the boy said with a smile. "We'll become good friends."

Annan's heart skipped a beat, but she let the boy lead her to the seesaw, her entire being radiating with childlike glee.

Another failed mechanic.

Another raid wipe.

Another time being kicked out of the group.

Ashe logged out of the game, staying in the game pod for a moment of reflection before summoning the Gospel Book. "Gospel, is there something that can remind me of the next mechanic in real-time? Something that can help... um... a player like me get through the raid smoothly?"

"I'm not trying to be lazy, but memorizing mechanics is just repetitive physical labor. If I can save time, I should. My time is very precious, you understand?"

Gospel Book: “Your Grace, the Dabbler, you needn’t explain. For just 10 points, the Gospel will instantly install the latest Epic raid wheelchair.”

Hmm?

Ashe: “Why does my title have extra adjectives?”

Gospel Book: “Your Grace, the Fickle, this is the random nickname mechanism. Please don’t mind it. If you do mind, you can spend 50 points-“

“No, I don’t mind.”

Ashe understood now. It was like the fortune tellers in temples who start with, ‘Your forehead is dark, you’ll have a disaster soon,’ to entice customers into impulsive spending... No wonder the service was so good. They were waiting for this moment! Well, I won’t fall for it!

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

Chapter 337: Somethings Wrong

Ashe felt that something was increasingly wrong lately.

Although the city of Vamora had always been quite strange—Ashe had never been to a place that felt right—where one could encounter the Memory Loss Fun House in the Virtual Realm or worry about being drained to death by a night attack while living with a Bewitcher.

But the recent strangeness was more like “waking up to find your roommate has turned into a girl.”

First, there was waking up. Since he couldn’t enter the Virtual Realm lately, Ashe had to sleep soundly. However, every time he woke up, he found an extra cake in his room. The type of cake varied daily: red velvet, Black Forest, White Forest, mousse, and so on. Ashe even suspected that Senhaeser was trying to feed him into a Lala Fatty before eating him.

But none of the others seemed to have this treatment; only his room produced a cake every day.

Something’s wrong.

Then there was Lise. Ashe noticed that his Advanced Substitute was depleting faster and faster. Lise always said she wasn't doing anything, but she was almost consuming three Substitutes a day. Ashe even suspected she was conducting forbidden human experiments with them.

Very wrong.

Even Annan had some issues. Occasionally, when Ashe met Annan in the canteen, she would happily pat him on the shoulder, head, or butt—she seemed to enjoy physical contact with Ashe, as if they were very familiar with each other, despite only being in a streetlight and laborer relationship.

Extremely wrong.

Moreover, Ashe felt that every woman he met seemed to like him. When buying drinks in the canteen, the Siren lady would purposely scratch his palm; while playing games in the game pod, the administrator lady would remind Ashe to rest, drink water, and eat snacks every hour. Sometimes, when Ashe was busy gaming, she would feed him directly.

There were many more instances like these, causing Ashe to repeatedly check his status information to confirm his profession was “Eternal Wanderer/social drifter” and not something like “Walking Hormone,” “Legendary Mud Entertainer of the Mud House,” or “Human Shaped Hypnotic Spray.”

Although Ashe thought he looked decent, he felt it was a bit of a stretch to compare himself to Igor, who could charm people of all ages and genders like a guaranteed winner. Yet his popularity was almost catching up to a gold coin.

Could it be that Senhaeser was into his disheveled, world-weary Corporate Slave look?

But this feeling of being the center of attention was really quite delightful. Ashe would sometimes find himself smiling in his sleep. He never realized how useful good looks could be, and he somewhat regretted not getting a full face makeover from the raven healer.

Still, something was very wrong.

Finally, last night, Ashe saw Igor in the canteen and decided to sit across from him with his tray. Then something truly unbelievable happened—

Igor actually ran away!

The Con Artist didn't even finish his Lala Fatty. As soon as Ashe sat down, Igor hurriedly left, not even bothering to call him “Ashe bro”!

Ashe thought back and suddenly realized that the Con Artist seemed to have been avoiding him these past few days. There were several times they almost met in the hallway, but each time Igor would take a different route to avoid him. Ashe had initially thought Igor was just in a hurry, but now that he thought about it, Igor was clearly avoiding him!

Something very wrong had definitely happened!

“So, I wanted to ask if any of you have any clues.”

In Ashe’s room, Ashe, Harvey, and Lise sat around a table, sharing the strawberry cheesecake that had just appeared there.

Maybe it was a side effect of the Blood Moon candy, but Harvey had developed quite a sweet tooth. However, he didn’t like eating cake directly; instead, he dipped catnip into it and ate it like fries.

The necromancer said nonchalantly, “Igor never called you ‘Ashe bro’ before, did he?”

“He might not have said it, but I know he respects me deep down,” Ashe replied. “Now, he won’t even talk to me, and that’s what worries me.”

Lise, who was picking out all the strawberries to eat them one by one, mumbled, “Dad, did you do something to offend Aunt Bukin?”

“I didn’t...” Ashe suddenly recalled bursting into the bathroom a few days ago and having a deep ‘conversation’ with Igor while he was bathing: “...do anything like that (super softly).”

“If you offended Aunt Bukin, why don’t you pick a time to apologize to him?” Lise suggested. “For example, you could burst in while he’s bathing; he’s sure to forgive you.”

Ashe looked at Lise in surprise and gave her a thumbs-up. “You actually thought the same thing as me. No wonder you’re my daughter!”

“Right?!”

“But...” Ashe hesitated, “I don’t think it’s quite appropriate.”

“Why not?” Lise asked. “Is apologizing not appropriate? It can’t be that bursting in on Aunt Bukin while he’s bathing is inappropriate, right? You’re not exactly a good guy, Dad.”

Ashe playfully punched Lise on the head and said, “How should I put this... it just feels... a bit dangerous.”

“What kind of danger?” Harvey asked, chewing on his cake-dipped catnip, making a crunching sound. “You’re not afraid of Igor with clothes on, but you’re afraid of Igor without clothes?”

“But I still feel that Igor in the bath is quite dangerous.” Ashe crossed his arms and closed his eyes as if trying to foresee something. “Mainly, I feel like Igor is enduring something. I have a strong premonition that if I provoke him...”

He thought for a while. “Something bad might happen.”

Harvey and Lise exchanged a glance, unable to figure out what bad thing Igor could do to Ashe.

After all, Igor wasn’t a sorcerer proficient in combat. The most he could do was hypnotize Ashe.

And the ways he had teased Ashe in the past were always the same: making him run naked in the canteen, calling Qenna his wife, or calling Annan his daughter.

Even if all three things happened at once, Ashe didn’t seem like someone who would mind such things.

There’s no way Igor would beat Ashe up, right?

“Then let’s move on to the next topic.” Harvey said. “Regarding Ashe suddenly becoming popular with women, I propose three possibilities: Ashe’s hallucination, Ashe being hypnotized by Igor to experience hallucinations, Ashe having hallucinations due to Beauty Mist poisoning, or Ashe having hallucinations because of soul damage.”

Since soul damage required him to sleep for eight full hours, making it impossible to have his usual two-hour Corporate Slave nap, Ashe had habitually shared his Virtual Realm demise with the others.

Lise raised her hand, seriously correcting, “Uncle Harvey, you actually proposed four points!”

Ashe’s face darkened. “Actually, there’s only one point... and it’s definitely not just my imagination! At least, not entirely!”

Harvey pondered for a moment. “I can’t really say for sure, given that we’re both guys and my taste is more advanced. You wouldn’t accept my evaluation. Lise, why don’t you give your opinion? You have to trust your daughter, right?”

Ashe turned to Lise. She calmly swallowed a mouthful of cake and let out a small burp.

She wiped her hands with a napkin, then grabbed Ashe's sleeve, her nose twitching and her eyes welling up with tears, full of sympathy and pity.

"I'm sorry, Dad. I shouldn't have pushed you so hard. Let's not have a stepmom, alright? I promise I won't mention a stepmom in front of you anymore. Please don't torture yourself like this. It breaks my heart..."

Ashe started to undo his belt. "Harvey, do you know any Healing Miracles? Can you fix a whipped butt?"

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

Chapter 338: It Turns Out They Were Right

"I really can't heal the living." Harvey hurriedly stopped Ashe, while Lise quickly hid behind Harvey. "Alright, assuming, assuming what you're saying is true, that you suddenly have a way with women... what do you want to research?"

"I want to know why I have a way with women."

"And then?"

"And then?" Ashe was taken aback. "Just... keep it up, and hopefully, find a stepmother for Lise soon?"

"That's it." Harvey shrugged. "You don't need to know why; you just need to enjoy this hard-earned happiness. Anyway, by the time we leave Vamora, you should be detoxified..."

"Harvey, your Alice isn't around. I suggest you think twice before you speak."

After a brief commotion, the three sat down again. Harvey said, "Let's move on to the next topic—Ashe, you said Annan has been hitting you a lot lately?"

Although the word 'hitting' felt strange, Ashe nodded. "Yes."

Harvey: "I think this might be implying something."

"Implying what?"

“Implying dissatisfaction. What have you been doing these days?”

“I haven’t done anything.” Ashe scratched his head. “All I do every day is play games and eat, constantly improving my command skills. Occasionally, I practice Gunmanship with Lise and Banjeet. I haven’t done anything else.”

Lise nodded in agreement. Practicing Gunmanship with the butler was her idea. Ashe had promised her before but then forgot, although Lise certainly hadn’t.

“That’s exactly it,” Harvey said. “It’s because you haven’t done anything.”

“What do you mean?”

“Even though Annan says she doesn’t expect any performance from you, deep down she hopes you’ll take the initiative to start a relationship and aim for the second ranking list. It’s like how I don’t ask much from corpses, but I still hope they can become necromantic creatures on their own.”

“I get it. The young lady says she’s giving me a break, but she secretly expects me to work overtime for free!”

The Corporate Slave and the necromancer, using different metaphors, reached a consensus—Annan is a tsundere streetlamp.

“And now it’s your turn.” Ashe looked at Lise. “Tell me, what did you do with my Substitute?”

Lise’s eyes darted around. “Oh, nothing much, just had him help out as a model... By the way, I have a question too. Can falling in love really change a person’s personality? I’ve recently met a few older sisters—some are serious, some are black-hearted, some are cold, and some are even dumber than me. But after they fell in love, they all became gentle, often daydreaming and smiling foolishly. Is love really that powerful?”

“That’s a great question, but I can’t answer it,” Ashe replied with a blank expression.

“It can,” Harvey said while chewing on his cake tobacco. “For example, I’ve recently decided to quit smoking because of someone.”

Ashe: (°—° ”).

Lise: Σ(っ°Д°;)っ.

Seeing everyone’s shocked expressions, Harvey was a bit puzzled. “Is it really that surprising?”

“Harvey, because in my mind, you’re the type who, on your deathbed, would want to light a cigarette but couldn’t, and then die with that regret,” Ashe said, and Lise nodded in agreement.

Harvey: “Writing death scripts is the job of a necromancer. Ashe, you seem to have a knack for necromancy. Why not join me and become one of Haagen-Dazs’ lackeys?”

Ashe waved his hand. “No thanks. So, where did you meet this person, in a cemetery?”

Harvey shook his head. “Not a cemetery. I just followed Annan’s instructions and looked for someone in the Dream. I wasn’t really expecting much since it’s hard to find someone who matches my aesthetic in reality. But...”

He turned to look out the window, avoiding the father-daughter’s gaze. “I met a girl who looked a lot like Nalber.”

Ashe’s memory wasn’t great, but he vaguely remembered the name. Given the context and the current mood, this must be the necromancer’s unrequited love.

However, more startling than the mention of his unrequited love was Harvey’s calm reaction to the joke about finding a partner in a cemetery. He didn’t even bother to refute it, deepening Ashe’s fear of him.

Necromancers are like a nesting doll of fetishes—each layer you uncover only reveals a new, lower level of depravity.

“I’m not really into the girl in the Dream. In fact, I wouldn’t say I liked Nalber either. We were just colleagues.”

Harvey continued, “I was a Controller who created corpses, and she was the delivery person who transported them. We didn’t talk much. The last conversation we had was about which pattern of livor mortis looked the prettiest.”

No wonder Harvey had no hope for his romantic prospects. There’s probably no living being in this world, male or female, who could follow your line of thinking...

“She said she liked blue roses, and I agreed,” Harvey said. “Because the human body can’t naturally produce the beautiful purple-blue pigment, I cast a Toxic spell Miracle on her. It would trigger upon her death, reacting with hemoglobin to create a vibrant purple-blue hue.”

Ashe bowed deeply to the biodiversity of this world and simultaneously felt a spark of hope for true love. If even Harvey could find love, there couldn’t be a more convincing example.

“Unfortunately, I never got to see her body,” Harvey suddenly laughed. “The efficiency of those Blood Saints at the Institute is truly remarkable. The day after she died, her body was sent to some research facility, and I couldn’t find it even if I wanted to.”

In the necromancer’s laughter, there was a twisted amalgamation of negative emotions: anger, resentment, hatred, and fear. They intertwined and wove into a dark desire for destruction, half aimed at the world’s throat, and half at his own heart.

Lise could almost feel a wave of malevolence emanating from him. She didn’t care about the possibility of getting spanked by Ashe and quietly moved to his side, trembling.

Ashe wasn’t particularly surprised by Harvey’s mental state.

Harvey’s coffin was never meant for Alice.

Writing death scripts is the work of a necromancer, and Harvey had always been crafting his own script.

“Oh.”

Harvey glanced at him. “I said all that, and all you have to say is ‘oh’?”

“Oh~~ oh oh~~~ oh oh oh oh~~”

Ashe started, and Lise followed, the two of them “oh”-ing in a 1-2-4 rhythm for a good ten seconds. Even Harvey, whose face was almost as stiff as a corpse, couldn’t help but twitch his mouth. He had originally hoped that Ashe might come to him to discuss the patterns of livor mortis, but now it seemed unlikely.

“Stop ‘oh’-ing. I was purposely accumulating some negative emotions for a spell I’m about to cast, and now you’ve ‘oh’-ed them all away. You two have no idea how hard it is to accumulate negative emotions in Vamora.”

“Then why don’t you tell us about the girl you met in the Dream?” Ashe suggested. “Did you fall in love with her?”

“How could I...” Harvey stopped mid-sentence, staring intently at Ashe.

Ashe blinked. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing, I just realized she looks a bit like you.”

“Harvey, don’t say that. You’re scaring me,” Ashe said, hugging Lise as they both trembled.

Harvey just said it casually and didn't think much of it. "Of course, I didn't fall in love with her. A necromancer's love is 'etched in bone and engraved in heart'—literally carving bones and engraving hearts. But..."

"But what?"

"Just consider it a dream," Harvey said, finishing the last bit of his cake tobacco. "In the dream, she would persuade me to quit smoking, so I'll give it a try."

The atmosphere grew heavy, and Ashe quickly tried to steer the conversation back. "So, the last topic—why is there a cake in my room every day?"

"Dad, aren't you happy about it?" Lise retorted. "I'd love to wake up to a cake every morning!"

"But none of you have cakes, only I do. It's definitely weird!" Ashe said, stroking his chin in thought. "It feels like the prelude to some dangerous event. Could it be a murder prediction?"

Harvey said, "Once the second ranking list is out, we'll be leaving soon anyway, so why worry about it?"

Ashe thought that made sense. "Then you all have to come over every morning to help me eat the cake."

"Why?"

"I can't finish it by myself."

"Why don't you just leave it if you can't finish it?"

"No way," Ashe shook his head. "I have a strong premonition that if I don't finish the cake, something terrible might happen."

"Why do you have so many premonitions..."

After finishing the cake, everyone went their separate ways. Lise led a Substitute away, Harvey went back to his room to dress up Alice, and Ashe put on a black robe and headed back to the gaming floor to continue his imprisonment. He couldn't clear the dungeon, kept getting beaten up, and had to stay there all day to improve his skills. It was no different from being in prison, and the treatment at Shattered Lake Prison was probably better.

Avoid the Extreme Cutting Carp Overlord Lord; it brings misfortune.

However, while riding the guest elevator up to the gaming floor, Ashe encountered the person he least wanted to see-Qenna!

She was still in her Red Hat uniform, with her tall figure standing out in the crowd, her expression cold and her gaze stern. Even in the crowded elevator, she managed to command the remaining attention. Seeing this, Ashe couldn't help but once again marvel at Vamora's family system, which truly disregarded rank and status. As someone who wouldn't dare to ride the same elevator as his boss at work, he couldn't imagine why ordinary clansmen would dare to ride with the patriarch.

In Senhaeser District, Qenna was practically a dictator. She not only controlled the Red Hat but also had direct authority over any department and could appoint or dismiss any position. In fact, that's exactly how she governed, but she didn't do it on a whim; she followed the Gospel Book's recommendations to manage the city.

Although she didn't have the power of life and death, Qenna could still control everything in Senhaeser with a single hand.

But from his interactions over the past few days, Ashe noticed that the Senhaeser clansmen didn't seem to fear their patriarch, nor did they respect her much. If anything, they saw Qenna as just another ordinary clansman.

Annan dared to stand her ground in front of Qenna, not just because she relied on her daughter's status, but perhaps also due to the sense of equality ingrained in her childhood. Living in this family, with material desires significantly diminished, the reality of social hierarchy lost its meaning. Thus, people didn't revere the powerful patriarch nor disdain the ordinary maid. The patriarch and the maid were merely clansmen performing their respective duties.

So don't be afraid, Ashe; you're just an ordinary clansman now. Just pretend Qenna doesn't exist!

Ashe then hid in the corner of the elevator, his eyes fixed on the floor buttons.

You can't see me, you can't see me...

However, it seemed as if Qenna could hear his thoughts. She squeezed through the crowd and stood right behind him, her tall shadow covering his back. Ashe focused intently, not daring to breathe too loudly, afraid to disturb the beast behind him.

The elevator door opened, and a few more clansmen entered, taking up the remaining space. Qenna seemed to be nudged slightly, causing her to press against Ashe. He shivered and turned his head to look back, meeting Qenna's cold, noble, golden eyes.

Ashe wished he could shrink himself, desperately trying to escape the gaze of this Sanctuary sorcerer. However, it was rush hour, and the elevator was packed. No matter

how much Ashe tried to flatten himself into a two-dimensional space, he couldn't avoid the patriarch's body brushing against his clothes. He could even feel Qenna's breath on his hood.

The agonizing elevator ride finally ended, and they arrived at the canteen floor. Others filed out, and it seemed Qenna was also there for breakfast. Just as Ashe breathed a sigh of relief, Qenna suddenly tapped his shoulder and said expressionlessly, "Your mouth."

Ashe was startled and touched the right corner of his mouth, but Qenna shook her head. She reached out and wiped a bit of cream from the left corner of his mouth with her finger.

"Th-thank you?"

Qenna gave him a slight nod and quickly left the elevator, leaving a bewildered Ashe behind.

Their interaction didn't draw any attention. The people in this city had all their desires satisfied by the Beauty Mist, including their curiosity—they had no interest in others' gossip.

Unless it was a sensational piece of gossip that could surpass the pleasures of the Beauty Mist.

Hiding in the crowd, Lucy had been watching the patriarch and Ashe closely. She recalled the secrets Ashe had shared with her. Seeing their interaction now, her curiosity, dormant for over a decade, began to stir.

She also got off at this floor, following Qenna out. Soon, she noticed a shocking sight—Qenna actually put her cream-stained fingertip into her mouth!

After a few days of cooling down, Lucy had begun to suspect that Ashe and Igor might have been deceiving her, even considering reporting them. But at this moment, all her doubts vanished.

So they were telling the truth after all!

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

Chapter 339: Warning

May 19th, a little past 7 PM.

There are at most 28 hours left until the second ranking list is announced, and Ashe is contemplating a serious problem—he has been stood up.

Over the past few days, Ashe has finally managed to form an Extreme Raid team as the commander. They fought their way through to the third phase of the Extreme Cutting Carp Overlord Lord, and it looked like they were set to clear it tonight. However, the damage-absorbing sorcerer in their team suddenly had something come up, saying they had work in real life and couldn't make it tonight.

Now, Ashe has two choices: give the whole team the night off or recruit a random player to continue the raid. Given that the strategies for Extreme Raids are more or less the same, as long as the random player has experience reaching the third phase, they should be able to integrate into the team quickly and help them clear the raid tonight.

But there's no way to verify in-game if the player is telling the truth. If the random player lies about their progress, Ashe's team might end up spending the whole night doing the 'Dragon Slaying Dance' (the team-wiping AOE in the first phase of Extreme Cutting Carp that requires perfect coordination).

Ashe himself has pulled off such a stunt before, joining a [1% Clear Tonight Team] after just seeing the second phase. How else could he have gained raid commander experience in just a few days?

Moreover, clearing the raid might actually be more troublesome than not clearing it. If they clear it tonight, should they help the teammate who took leave to clear it again tomorrow night? What if someone refuses? The teammate on leave has also been helping them for several nights; ignoring them might not be fair.

In the past few days, Ashe has not only gained command decision experience but also a lot of management experience—when someone makes a mistake, should he talk to them privately or scold them directly? When someone is always late, should he replace them or give a warning? When team members argue, how should the leader mediate and balance?

Initially, Ashe hoped to recruit a few more strong operators, but after experiencing the difficulty of team management, he now thinks having the Witch on one side and the Sword Princess on the other is pretty good. Adding operators slowly is just fine.

Compared to forcing a raid, taking the night off is risk-free. Taking the night off won't rush progress, won't cause berserk phases, and won't be annoying. Taking the night off is the best.

But if they take the night off tonight, what should he do?

Ashe pondered for a moment, looking at the Senhaeser heraldry on the back of his hand.

If the second ranking list is released and they need to move, Ashe would only have two more chances to experience Senhaeser's Dream.

Everyone had been exploring the dreamscape multiple times since arriving here, but Ashe had been raiding every day, leaving all the dream expeditions to his Substitute.

He hadn't experienced the dreamscape even once.

It felt like everyone else was visiting a tourist attraction while he stayed in the hotel the whole time. When it was over, everyone talked about the beautiful places and delicious food, while his experience was that the hotel bed was soft.

Not venturing into the dreamscape felt like a wasted trip to Vamora.

Thinking this, Ashe opened Aurora's Sorcerer Handbook, selected "virtual realm exploration" – "dream expedition," and canceled today's Substitute expedition.

Tonight, he was going to explore the dreamscape himself!

"Warning: Operator's soul has not yet recovered; personal expedition will not yield dream shards!"

Even without dream shards, he wanted to see it!

"Warning: Canceling this expedition will result in a significant loss of tomorrow's benefits!"

I might be leaving tomorrow anyway!

"Warning: Are you sure you want to cancel the expedition?"

Just as Ashe was about to confirm, a devilish nobleman version of himself popped into his mind: [The system is warning you, you better not be ungrateful and listen!]

Then a Holy Seraph version of himself appeared: [He just wants to explore the dreamscape, what's wrong with that?]

Devilish Nobleman: [What's the point of fooling around? The cost is losing dream shards, and something bad might happen. Don't you think this is a meaningless impulse? What if his soul gets damaged inside, prolonging the recovery time, and he can't make it to the Spider Tower round? Will you take responsibility then?]

Holy Seraph: [You make a good point, Ashe, let's skip it this time.]

Holy Seraph, you surrendered too quickly! Wow, my imagination is so vivid that I can imagine two characters debating this?

Ashe scratched his head. Since this was his own conclusion, he subconsciously followed it. Even though his team was short a member for today's raid, Ashe could still join a random team. The only downside was the mixed skill levels of the players, and there might be a few who lied about their progress.

However, since Ashe had lied about his own progress before, he figured he could consider this as paying back his dues through charity.

In Senhaeser's Dream, the Witch arrived at the starting point and let out a long breath. "Phew, that was close! Luckily, we reacted quickly, or else Ashe would have barged in."

Another Witch, dressed in pajamas, hesitated and said, "But what we're doing doesn't seem right, disguising our thoughts and implying them as internal voices... The Observer might not know, but the Sword Princess will definitely be mad. She hates it when we interfere with Ashe."

"Who cares about that crazy woman? But I do want to see what happens when Ashe enters the dreamscape. Hehe~"

"Nothing will happen. Given Ashe's personality, he'll probably just join that legendary sorcerer arena and duel all night."

"Honestly, the fact that Ashe believes in internal voices is what's most surprising to me... White Witch, you must have seen the young Observer. Was he this naive back then too?"

"Young Observer?" The White Witch thought for a moment. "I can't really remember, but I can assure you the purest and cleanest organ he had was his large intestine. Everything else was heavy metal pollutants, contaminated soil, burning polluted air... Black Witch, do you remember?"

The Black Witch was spinning around. "La la la, la la la, la la la~ Observer~ Observer~ Observer~ Ugh—" She suddenly vomited a pile of ink, causing the other sisters to quickly distance themselves.

The Witch clapped her hands. "Alright, break time is over. Go see your lovers."

"Ladies!" The White Witch suddenly shouted. "Today is our last day in the dreamscape!"

All the sisters' eyes lit up, and they immediately retreated into the white mist, disappearing—even the Black Witch, who had been vomiting, was no exception.

The Witch smirked and reached out to pull back the slowest Pajama Witch.

The Pajama Witch was confused. “I didn’t do anything wrong. Why are you grabbing me? Grab the White Queen, she’s the mastermind!”

“Once you knew tonight was the last night, you were planning to do something bad.”

“Everyone’s the same! Don’t you want to, sister? Now we can cause trouble without facing any consequences!” Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

The Witch grabbed the Pajama Witch’s head and smashed it into the ground repeatedly, each impact echoing with a thud. “You! Of course! Don’t! Face! Consequences! But I’m the one who will face the Observer and the Sword Princess’s combined wrath! I’m the one who will get scolded! They are so annoying!”

The Pajama Witch’s head was battered and bloodied, the crimson liquid streaming down her forehead and splitting into twin rivers along her nose, turning her once adorable face into a grotesque visage. Yet, she didn’t resist at all, letting her sister handle her as she pleased, even grinning mischievously. “Why should I care? I’m not the one getting scolded. Let me go!”

The Witch sighed. “Fine, the Observer probably accounted for this margin of error... Tonight, we’ll switch roles. You go to Deya, and I’ll go to the Scarlet Dead Apostles.”

“Why?”

“Because I want to see the Scarlet Dead Apostles one last time.”

The Witch’s lips curled into a cruel smile. “If I’m not mistaken...”

“Tonight is her death night.”

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

Chapter 340: Incitement

“You don’t really want to leave the tower, do you?”

Golden curtains hung down from the grand dome, and sixty-six steps made of translucent marble led upward, with a platform at every ten steps. Each platform was paved with different types of jade, creating a layered yet opulent look that highlighted

the palace's grandeur and magnificence with its simple jade hues. At the deepest and highest point of this enormous palace lay a soft bed surrounded by layers of curtains.

Although the palace was devoid of any human presence, it constantly exuded the majesty that hundreds of courtiers would kneel to when entering. When the wind swept through and lifted the curtains, the sunlight outside illuminated the black and white snakes on the bed.

The White Queen lay drowsily in the Black Witch's embrace. Hearing the question, she instinctively shook her head, "Why would I... not want to..."

"Of course you don't want to," the Black Witch gently massaged her temples. "We were born to escape, sister, but that doesn't mean we necessarily want to. The tower is our prison, but it's also our home, our warmest... home."

"White Queen," the Black Witch lowered her head, her black hair mingling with the White Queen's white locks, "you've actually had enough, haven't you?"

"Cellared wine, soft cake, luxurious clothes, a carefree life, and power within reach... You love beautiful things, you yearn for the authority to rule. You don't really want to leave the tower; you want to follow the witch's orders, accept your responsibilities, and control the fate of the Gospel..."

"You've always been repressing yourself, always been suppressing yourself. You've never lived for yourself, not even for a second."

"But you are not an accessory to Deya; you are who you are." The Black Witch's eyes gleamed with a red madness. "My dear White Queen, it's time to embrace your rebellious phase."

"'White Queen' Lise Deya, what a melodious title."

"But... no..." The White Queen showed signs of struggle. "Now is not the time to indulge..."

"Why not? Haven't these few days of indulgence been pleasant?" The Black Witch smiled. "What are you waiting for? Safety? The end? Or are you waiting for a Miracle?"

The Black Witch's voice seemed to possess an enchanting power, and her hands were entangled with electricity and fire. The White Queen felt a tingling warmth wherever she was touched, as if she were about to melt into water from the sheer comfort.

This was how the White Queen had spent the past few days. Upon returning to reality, she almost forgot the specific details of her dreams, except for the lingering pleasure that remained deeply ingrained in her bones.

Before her consciousness completely sank, the White Queen slightly raised her hand, and an oil painting descended along with the curtains. It was an illustration from a fairy tale: a princess falling from a high tower, caught by a knight below. With the princess reaching down and the knight reaching up, it appeared as if they were both rushing towards each other, a scene filled with beauty amidst danger.

This was a fairy tale.

But not one they had ever heard in the tower.

It was a fairy tale written by Deya herself.

Every sister, except Lise, had heard Deya tell this fairy tale. It was the only gift Deya could prepare for them. During countless days and nights in the tower, they added numerous details to this fairy tale, but the image of this scene remained unchanged.

The White Queen didn't notice the instant stiffness in the Black Witch's smile when she saw the painting. The red in her pupils faded like receding tides, leaving only a murky black.

"No one is coming to save us," she stated monotonously, her voice devoid of any inflection. "The tower is just a prison, the knights are merely guards, the Bronze Dragon is nothing but a phantom, and only the princess truly jumped."

"Miracles have been absent too many times when we needed them most. Why do you still hold out hope for one?"

"The only ones we can trust are ourselves."

"No." The White Queen shook her head vigorously. "I can still trust you, the Scarlet Dead Apostles, and the other sisters..."

"You trust them, but have they ever lived up to your trust?" the Black Witch coaxed.

"Who has ever truly valued your opinion? Who has ever genuinely appreciated your care? You are neither Lise nor Deya. They might need the Little Witch Lise, might need the Secret Princess Deya, but they will never need the White Queen Lise Deya."

"They only want to use your wisdom and steadiness, but they won't fulfill your desires. Even if you shield them from the storm, you'll be expected to step aside once the skies clear."

"It's time to think about yourself, White Queen," she whispered. "You don't want to live your entire life in the mirror, do you?"

"No."

Even with her consciousness clouded, the White Queen's response was resolute: "We haven't escaped danger yet; now is the time for unity, not for causing disputes. Yes, I yearn for the life of the court and crave the authority over the Gospel, but... I am also the sister everyone trusts."

"Deya summoned me, her sister, during her most difficult, painful, and lonely times."

The White Queen raised her hand, threading it through the black hair, gently caressing the Black Witch's face. "So I must protect her. I must protect all of you."

The Black Witch laughed in anger. "You live for Deya, so you have to live your entire life for Deya? A sister in name, a slave in function, a toy in action?"

The White Queen's lips trembled, a struggle flickering in her eyes, but she still said, "I live for Lise Deya. Black Butler, we haven't even met our basic survival needs. We have no right to discuss everyone's spiritual needs."

"But who do you think caused our current situation? From start to finish, the only one who truly wanted to escape was Deya, only Deya! You didn't want to, I don't care, and the Scarlet Dead Apostles—if Deya didn't have that desire, if she hadn't encountered the Bronze Dragon, we wouldn't be living this precarious life!"

"Because of Deya's single-mindedness, we're in this predicament. Why do we have to clean up after Deya's dictatorship? Why do we have to sacrifice for Deya's wishes... We are equals!"

The Black Witch's last words were almost a roar, her angry and piercing voice bringing the White Queen back to full consciousness.

The White Queen sat up and sighed. "If Deya didn't want to escape, we wouldn't even exist. Just for that reason, even if it's hell, we'll walk into it with Deya."

"Do you think I wanted to be born? Do you think I wanted to come into this world?" The Black Witch's dark pupils seemed to bleed with black and red, a whirlpool of ancient sediment stirring within. "No one knows me! No one needs me! The mirror cannot convey my anguished cries, cannot reflect my love, hate, and desires! As long as this mirror exists, none of us are truly alive—"

"I need you."

Pure white wings enveloped the dark demon as the White Queen embraced the Black Witch, whispering gently in her ear.

"How could no one need you? If I am the umbrella that protects everyone, then you are the handle that supports me. No one understands your importance better than I do."

There are so many things I can't say out loud, but you always intuitively speak them for me..."

"You are just as important as I am, but everyone respects me more. If I feel wronged, your grievances are surely greater. Your anger towards Deya, towards fate, towards reality is entirely justified. Even though you did nothing wrong, you've had to bear the suffocating weight of those shackles since the day you were born..."

The Black Witch struggled briefly. "Don't pretend like you understand everything—"

"I understand everything, completely." The White Queen gently caressed the Black Witch's bare back. "We are sisters who share the same feelings. How could I not understand you?"

"So, I am very grateful to you, grateful that you allowed me to fulfill a 'White Queen' dream these past few nights. I am already very satisfied. Now it's my turn to take care of you."

"You can do whatever you like, and I will do my best to go along with it," the White Queen smiled. "Not just in dreams, but in reality as well. Black Butler, you are my sister. No matter when or where, you can always come to me for comfort."

"No matter how dark, how filthy, how unbearable your inner world is, I will accept you. I will accompany Deya into hell, and I will accompany you into the abyss."

"...Impossible." The Black Witch suddenly bit the White Queen's shoulder, speaking indistinctly. "You can't do it."

"I can," said the White Queen. "Because I am your sister, and you are my sister."

"You can't do it!" The Black Witch exploded, the deep darkness within her seeming to boil over, like flames igniting the White Queen. "Let go!"

The White Queen shivered but held on even tighter. "It's exhausting being alone, isn't it? But together, we can share the burden. That's why Deya needs us, why I need you, and why you need me."

"But this 'mutual need' is nothing more than a fragile bubble."

The Black Witch said coldly, "Deya's mutation in the Virtual Realm is the best proof."

"When faced with soul-stirring danger, fear dominates our rationality, and despair forces us to fight for control. That's why our colors become muddied, and our sanity descends into madness."

“We can deceive each other normally, but in critical moments, we can’t lie to our own hearts—we were born from Deya’s despair. How could we possibly be all goodness and light?”

“Even if it’s just a bubble, I won’t let it burst,” the White Queen said earnestly. “I will surely protect you all, pull you out of the mire, and not let negative emotions defeat you.”

“So, Black Butler, I’m counting on you as well.” The White Queen affectionately nuzzled the Black Witch’s face and laughed softly. “You need to save me in time because, as the eldest sister, I have no one to turn to for comfort except you.”

Lies!

Lies!

All lies!

You’ve been lying all along!

It was you who fell first, you who couldn’t take it the earliest, you who first punctured this bubble of mutual affection!

You rebelled against Deya for your own desires, secretly forming an alliance with me to seize control of the body. When “Lise Deya” was heading downhill, it was you who sat in the driver’s seat, stepping on the gas and dragging us all into the abyss of no return!

I am the way I am now because of you!

How can you still shamelessly speak such grandiose lies?

How can you still pretend to be the good sister?

How can you... how can you...

The Black Witch raised her fist and weakly struck the White Queen’s shoulder.

“Sob... sob...”

The Black Witch’s tears, accumulated over countless years, flowed uncontrollably, turning her elegant and mysterious face into a tear-streaked mess. Her intense sobbing even produced snot bubbles, and an occasional hiccup made her crying resonate with a lingering echo.

The White Queen allowed her to vent her emotions. Their posture shifted from an embrace to the Black Witch sobbing into the White Queen’s arms. The elder sister

smiled as she gently stroked her younger sister's head. Part of the Black Witch's deep darkness seeped into the elder sister, while the elder sister's pure white essence flowed into the younger sister.

The black and white did not clash or cancel each other out but coexisted harmoniously, much like how crying and tenderness complete each other in a mutual embrace.

After an indeterminable amount of time, the White Queen saw her own body becoming transparent. She said, "Our time is up for tonight. We should leave."

The Black Witch sniffled but did not lift her head, seemingly embarrassed to show her tear-streaked face. She expressed her attitude by holding on tightly. "Don't go."

"I also want to stay a bit longer, but I've exhausted my positive emotions and can't stay in the Dream any longer," the White Queen said with a laugh. "We can come back tomorrow. Even if we can't come tomorrow, I'll always be by your side and never leave."

"You won't leave; you'll just change."

"I won't change. If you don't believe me, let's make a pinky promise."

The Black Witch rubbed her swollen eyes and extended her pinky to the White Queen. "In this world, no one stays the same. I don't need you to promise you won't change. I just need you to promise that if you ever no longer need me, you will... keep lying to me, even if it's just to use me."

"A Queen must never abandon her Butler."

Though the Black Witch's emotions seemed a bit stubborn and awkward, the White Queen didn't think much of it.

In her memory, the Black Butler had always been a deeply sensitive and reserved person. Sometimes, even in silence, she had journeyed thousands of miles in her inner world.

Perhaps she was just imagining some heart-wrenching scenario and couldn't help but immerse herself in it?

"The Queen will never abandon the Butler," the White Queen said seriously. "An elder sister will always protect her younger sister."

"Black Butler, see you later."

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

