

# Sorcerer's Handbook

## Chapter 401: One for Day, One for Night

May 28, the second-floor manor of Mephila, a weekday.

“Hey, why don’t you just join Belldate?”

Yvaren perched on the statue of the Bewitcher Knight, balancing herself effortlessly on her tiptoes. “Even if you leave Mephila, where do you think you can run to? The latest Family Ranking from the Gospel listed you as an enemy of nine families; the Imperial Royal Family has you on their wanted notice, and Red Hat is eager to catch you for points. Your Pact with Annan is clearly an unequal slave contract—she’s the kind of woman who never lets up. You’ll either end up as dog meat or continue being a dog, so why not be Belldate’s dog? Our benefits are great!”

Ashe was dusting the statue’s most dust-prone crevices and swatted away her skirt that was getting in the way. “But you guys have to work overtime!”

“I can give you weekends off!” Yvaren said earnestly. “Two full days off a month! That’s one more day than others! You can rest one day and spend the other!”

Damn, before I time-traveled, I had two days off a month, and after I time-traveled, it’s still two days off a month. Didn’t I time travel for nothing?

And how do Mephila’s people manage to take loans with just one day off? This consumer cycle is ridiculously efficient—breaking the workplace truth that ‘overtime means you can’t spend money’!

“But can you protect me?” Ashe asked. “I’m a fugitive now.”

“Gospel Book.” Yvaren clasped her face with both hands. “I can use Gospel points to ask the Gospel Book to erase your wanted notice.”

“But isn’t the wanted notice issued by the Empire?” Ashe asked in shock. “Are you saying the Gospel Book can directly manipulate the Empire? Wait, does the Gospel actually influence society?”

“In the hands of ordinary people, sorcerers, and us, Gospel points hold different values,” Yvaren explained. “Ordinary people can only buy fleeting happiness with Gospel points; sorcerers can exchange them for powerful abilities, but in our hands, Gospel points are a Universal resource.”

“Gospel points are like currency. When you have enough circulating currency to rival a nation’s wealth, you can influence prices, move social machinery, spark mass events, and even literally challenge nations. Gospel points can’t circulate, but the Gospel Book, this Universal wishing machine, simplifies your ‘spending avenues’ to the utmost. For instance, if you want to buy a chocolate ball, you need to know where to buy it, then purchase it through a medium, and wait for it to arrive. But the Gospel Book...”

Yvaren summoned the Gospel Book, and suddenly, a bag of cookie chocolate balls appeared in her left hand. “It’s expensive, but it skips all the steps... want one?”

“Give me one unconditionally to try,” Ashe replied smoothly.

Yvaren glared at him and shoved a chocolate ball into his mouth. “Though it surely costs a lot, Belldate can indeed erase your Imperial Wanted Notice.”

“If it’s so powerful, why doesn’t Red Hat just use Gospel points to catch me?”

“The Gospel Book can change the weather, bring the dead back to life, and twist reality, but it can’t fix the ever-changing human heart or directly access personal privacy,” Yvaren said, tossing the chocolate ball in her hand. “For example, these chocolate balls might come from a store, and the Gospel Book just transported them here and paid for them, rather than making a chef instantly prepare them.”

“Changing a wanted notice is similar. The Gospel Book won’t erase people’s desire to catch you, but it will block the Imperial Wanted Notice, cancel the bounty on you, and filter out any news about you from various media channels, effectively canceling your wanted status.”

“So, from this perspective, the Yisuo Royal Family doesn’t really care that much about you,” Yvaren said, munching on a chocolate ball. “If they were truly ruthless, they would plaster your wanted notice everywhere you could see, offering a bounty rich enough to twist the minds of the public. If the temptation were great enough, I couldn’t suppress the greed of Mephila’s people either.”

“In my view, the wanted notice against you is just the Empire’s way of appeasing the major factions, showing they are taking a stance, but they’re not paying much attention to you. After all, the night the Art Ranking came out, I, as the mayor of Mephila, demanded Nabistin to capture you, this arrogant criminal in the apocalypse. And there were at least a dozen other leaders who complained along with me.”

Ashe had a flash of insight. “So, you can maneuver in reality, get other leaders to stop disliking me, and the Empire will cancel the wanted notice?”

“Indeed,” Yvaren said. “As long as you sign this paper...”

“A marriage registration?”

"It's a promissory note. The amount isn't that large, just a mere billion gold coins. As for collateral, I only need 90% of your mental capacity, which you don't use much anyway."

"No way!" Ashe shook his head. "Why does Igor get such good treatment while I have to mortgage 90% of my brain?"

"Hmm..." Yvaren pondered. "If you want Igor's treatment, it's negotiable..."

"Huh?" Ashe was taken aback. "You want to marry me too?"

Suddenly, the blue-haired girl pulled a gold coin from her bag and slipped it into Ashe's collar, right over his chest. "This is compensation." Then she delivered a sharp karate chop to his head.

"How dare you humiliate me like this..." Ashe gritted his teeth, pocketing the gold coin.

"Besides the fact that I wouldn't fancy your unrefined, miracle-unscreened genes, the patriarch of the Belldate family is lifelong unmarried," Yvaren snorted. "But I understand. Facing someone like me, the top beauty in all of Mephila, it's inevitable for you to have such delusions."

"At least it's not that. This way, the kids won't blame me for height issues in the future..."

Seeing Yvaren conjure nearly a ton of gold coins with a loud thud on the ground, Ashe defiantly raised his head. "Can I at least wear a helmet?"

"Want to be tough and wear a helmet? Do you think such good fortune exists?" Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Blue-haired Goblin... I wasn't even talking about you!"

After Yvaren contentedly got off Ashe, who lay in a ravaged state, he stubbornly collected the gold coins into his arms.

Since most of the spirits have been replaced with two-wings and Ashe has been fighting so frequently in the virtual realm, the spirits working full-time are starving rapidly. His gold coins are barely enough to feed them, so he had to trick some money out of Yvaren, the big capitalist, to solve his immediate crisis.

Ashe could have asked Annan for money, but Annan insists on him showing proof of spirit ownership and allocates funds according to the number of spirits. If Ashe frequently asks for money, Annan would question why the spirits are being used so often, suspect if he's delivering goods somewhere, or if he's secretly starting his own business. Ashe feels that, sooner or later, this would expose the unusual activity in virtual realm exploration, so he avoids asking Annan for money.

“So, you still refuse to join Belldate?” Yvaren asked. “I can offer you a very lenient Pact.”

“You’ve been harassing me for days,” Ashe replied. “Actually, isn’t Harvey a better choice than me? He’s set to receive your ancestor’s heritage and has even dug up your family’s ancestral grave.”

“His troubles are too great. I never intended to recruit him from the start,” Yvaren shrugged. “As for the Necromancy Angelic Heritage... that’s the angel’s heritage, not the Family’s. Harvey was right in the video; Belldate has no qualifications to inherit the angelic heritage. I just need to maintain the Dominance Sect and Belldate.”

“I only need you and Igor,” Yvaren looked at him. “Name your price. I refuse to believe Belldate can’t satisfy your appetite!”

“As long as the treatment is worse than Igor’s, it’s a no-go,” Ashe said, wetting a rag to continue wiping the statue. Despite being ravaged by the mistress just now, as a lowly butler, he still had to work.

“If you absolutely refuse to budge...” Yvaren hesitated for a moment. “Fine, I can agree to your terms!”

“Didn’t you say you couldn’t marry? Oh, I get it, we can only be paramours?”

“Nonsense! I just thought you’d actually be a good match for Anfel.”

Ashe was shocked. “Wait, but isn’t Anfel currently in a passionate relationship with Igor? You want me to steal Igor’s paramour?”

“Anfel doesn’t have to have just one lover,” Yvaren said, giving Ashe a thorough look. “If you think about it, you and Igor complement each other perfectly. One is smart, the other is a fool. One is aloof, the other is cheerful. One is refined, the other is rough. One for the day, one for the night. Marrying both of you would be ideal.”

“Who’s for the day and who’s for the night—never mind,” Ashe sighed. “Can’t you offer me terms that don’t include delivering a wife?”

“You’re just trying to figure out Igor’s Pact with us,” Yvaren scoffed lightly. “I knew you were stalling me.”

“Who says so? If your terms are good enough, I’d definitely consider it!”

“If you’re so worried about Igor and don’t want him to stay with Belldate, why didn’t you interrupt their date that night?” Yvaren bent down to look at Ashe as he worked. “My original plan was for you guys to successfully cause a scene, making Igor resent you and fully join us. Did you think the remote control was so easy to throw away?”

“You owe Harvey an apology for that!”

Ashe retorted, “I just think Igor is smarter than me. If he thinks it’s okay, why should I act on my own? And besides...”

“What if you guys are sincere about him?”

Yvaren coaxed, “Exactly. If even someone as smart as Igor is willing to join us, why won’t you follow suit?”

Ashe carried his bucket to another statue, wrung out the cloth, and continued working.

“Because he didn’t invite me.”

The Cult Leader shrugged. “Maybe he thinks I’ll have a brighter future following Miss Annan?”

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

## **Chapter 402: A Con Artist in the Gospel is Truly Rare**

Ashe didn’t notice the sudden, strange expression on Yvaren’s face, but it quickly vanished. “So, unless Igor personally persuades you, you won’t join us?”

“If you insist on marrying me...” Ashe mused, “I might consider it...”

“Damn!” Yvaren snorted, “By the way, you guys have almost saved enough for your ransom, right?”

“Yeah, thanks to the high-paying jobs we’ve had these past few days, all thanks to Belldate’s blessings.” Ashe raised an eyebrow. “Are you trying to con me into spending money again? No way. The ten small videos I bought from you last time are enough to last me a year. You might not know, but watching small videos is very physically exhausting, unlike watching big videos. You can’t tempt me any further in this regard.”

“How about this: if you don’t buy my trashy goods, I’ll send those ten small videos and the news of your purchase to Annan.”

Ashe broke out in a sweat, trying to stay calm. “I’ll delete them right now and tell Annan that I’ve seen the error of my ways and turned over a new leaf!”

With that, he summoned the Gospel Book, his finger hovering over it but not pressing down. Yvaren blinked. “Go ahead, delete them.”

“I don’t think I can be threatened by a swindler like you,” Ashe declared righteously. “At worst, I’ll just face a beating from Annan and her sisters!”

“...Don’t worry, I wouldn’t ruin my reputation over someone like you.” Yvaren shook her head and turned to leave. “Once you’ve saved enough for the ransom, get lost. You’ve offended me, and since you neither want to die nor be a dog, no shop in Mephila will sell you anything.”

“Unless it’s to attend Igor’s wedding, don’t expect me to step into Mephila ever again!”

Ashe snorted, wringing out the cloth fiercely. As he continued cleaning the statue, he noticed Yvaren standing on the statue again, seemingly out of nowhere.

“Are you really unwilling to join Belldate?”

This time, Yvaren’s voice lacked its usual arrogance. Her tone was calm, even a bit pleading.

Ashe remained silent for a moment, not answering, and continued his work.

Ms. Belldate jumped down and left, disappearing around the corner of the hallway.

The Cult Leader glanced at her elongated shadow and recalled Annan’s words:

“When we’ve saved enough for the ransom, that’s when Belldate will make her move against us.”

“They’re almost there. It’s time to act.”

In an office filled with portraits, Igor sat across from Yvaren, calmly voicing his suggestion.

The blue-haired woman, who had been silent for a long time, finally spoke: “Is there really no way to recruit them?”

“Annan and Banjeet’s goal is the Divine Sovereign’s Wish. You can’t offer them what they want. As for Harvey, even if you’re willing to risk offending the entire Gospel to protect him, he has a strong self-destructive tendency. He won’t stay for any benefit, unless you can promise him a more spectacular death—on that front, Belldate’s allure pales in comparison to Funeral.”

“Lise is closely tied to Ashe. If you can’t recruit Ashe, Lise won’t stay either.”

“Then make Ashe stay,” Yvaren suggested. “He’ll definitely listen to you—”

“In our original agreement, I had only one condition: either Ashe or I stay, not both,” the Con Artist said. “I don’t care about the others, but if Ashe stays, then I leave. Our agreement is void.”

“Why?” Yvaren was puzzled. “I thought you had some grudge against him... But he trusts you so much, why won’t you stay with him?”

“Precisely because he trusts me, I can’t stay with him.”

Igor ran his fingers through his hair. “Do you know what my profession was under the Blood Moon? I was a social engineer, a Con Artist. This profession might be rare in the Gospel... A Con Artist who specializes in deceiving others, yet is trusted—don’t you think that’s funny?”

“What’s even funnier is that I truly wouldn’t deceive him.”

“Despite the many flaws in Blood Moon’s teachings, there are some valuable insights,” the Con Artist said. “‘All relationships that cause you concern will contaminate you,’ ‘All relationships that make you feel wronged will harm you,’ ‘All relationships that change you will dominate you’... Personality freedom is the foundation of everything.”

“If I stay with Ashe, I will no longer be myself. To put it more directly—”

“Getting too close to the sun will melt the wax virtual wings.”

The Con Artist gazed at Yvaren. “So you understand, it wasn’t Belldate who chose me; I chose Belldate. I was blinded by the night, bought the wrong ticket, boarded the wrong train, and went on a wrong journey.”

“But just because I bought the ticket doesn’t mean I have to stay until the end. It’s time for me to get off. And I need you to crash this train into pieces, leaving no room for second thoughts.”

Yvaren sighed. “Isn’t there any other way?”

“Isn’t this your original plan?” Igor said. “The pact only requires you to protect the Funeral Firm. It doesn’t allow you to direct, guide, or indirectly leak information in any way. But there’s a loophole: the members of the Funeral Firm can leak information voluntarily. And as long as the leak comes from their side, the pact becomes null and void, freeing you from any responsibility toward the Funeral Firm.”

“You never intended to keep the pact from the beginning. You just wanted to temporarily pacify Annan and the others, then buy off a traitor with your wealth and use the pact’s restrictions to trap them in Belldate, ensuring no fish that escaped the net.”

“Why the sudden sentimentality?” The Con Artist couldn’t help but laugh. “Blood Saint weeping with false kindness?”

“...Annan and I were partners once. If they were willing to join Belldate, I wouldn’t have gone this far,” Yvaren said calmly. “By the way, have you spoken to Annan?”

“No.”

Just then, there was a knock on the door. Igor stood up. “Anfel is here. Excuse me.”

“Don’t use your devious tricks on my sister.”

“Not while you’re alive,” the Con Artist said. “Tonight, I’ll contact Senhaeser, the Funeral Firm, the Red Hat, and other forces to inform them about Ashe and the others. Then...”

“The nightmare that has haunted me for days will finally end.”

Watching Igor’s departing figure, the blue-haired girl fell into deep thought. When she heard her sister laughing and chatting with Igor, she summoned the Gospel Book and used her points to ask:

“Did Igor Bukin lie in his statements just now? If so, which ones were lies?”

Gospel Book: “There were no lies.”

Yvaren pondered for a moment, then suddenly realized:

“A Con Artist is indeed very rare in the Gospel...”

Vamora, in the office of the Senhaeser patriarch.

“Nona, notify the other heraldry patriarchs to dispatch elite battle sorcerers and form a raid team for an expedition to Mephila.”

The female Elf beside him nodded coldly. “Shall I lead the team?”

“No.”

Qenna, sitting in her chair, overlooked the city of white mist, her fingers lightly brushing her lips.

“Ashe Senhaeser is the key to our family’s continuity. I will personally lead the team to bring them back.”



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

## **Chapter 403: I Dare to Insult the Mayor, Do You Dare to Insult the Patriarch?**

On May 30th, at 9:30 PM, during the rush hour, the streets of Mephila were bustling with traffic, as bright as day.

Sangjerte, the orc sorcerer and captain of the Mephila Red Hat squad, was rubbing his face.

This was his bad habit. Whenever he got nervous, he would rub his face until his nose and eyes were out of shape. It might be something he learned from the tricolor cat at home when he was a child. The flakes from his palms and cheeks seemed to take away his inner unease.

He glanced at the Gospel Book. The third ranking list hadn't been updated yet. He didn't know if it would be updated today or tomorrow-since May has 31 days, the Future Ranking could be updated on either day.

If the Future Ranking wanted to delay the update, it might even wait until 11:59 PM on the 31st.

"Captain," a Red Hat behind him reminded. Sangjerte looked up to see a Red Hat elf, who was just as tall as he was, walking to the front.

"Follow my lead, and you'll share the credit; act on your own, and you'll get a coffin," the elf threatened.

The local tyrant Red Hats of Mephila were being threatened like this, but the orc just rubbed his nose and nodded repeatedly. "The overall commander of this operation is Captain Senhaeser. If Captain Senhaeser doesn't trust me, she can send someone to supervise my team."

"Fine," Qenna said bluntly, sending a Red Hat from Vamora over. She had the Mephila Red Hats transfer the control authority of the balancer boots. Noticing his subordinates watching him, Sangjerte nodded, signaling them to comply.

The balancer boots were standard equipment for the Red Hats, used for flying and maneuvering. It took at least a year of training to use them, and they were much better than the virtual wings. Because of this, nearly every Red Hat was an expert in aerial combat at the level

of a swift. If the balancer boots were forcibly shut down, the Red Hats would lose 70% of their combat power at best, and at worst, they would crash and need rescue.

With control over their balancer boots, Qenna could turn them back into primitive beings who could only travel on foot at any time. But no one felt displeased about it, not even Sangjerte. After all, he was just performing his duty, while the people in front of him were here for revenge.

Senhaeser, Vastino, Mercury, Roland, Kaesrei... Even though they might not have the meticulous and absolute control over Mephila like Belldate does, in their own cities, they are still unchallenged authorities, spanning the political, commercial, and military realms, and sharing the world with the Yisuo Royal Family as the Gospel Family!

However, despite such a powerful family, they will all eventually be turned into a horde of zombies by necromancers in the future. They have plenty of reasons to root out any threats. Sangjerte, being just a tax-funded alchemist, has no need to offend them.

Although Sangjerte is a two-wings sorcerer, he comes from a proletarian family. In fact, Mephila has only three social classes: negative assets, no assets, and family assets. His orc father and goblin mother left him no inheritance. When they were over forty and couldn't work anymore, they went on a trip, while Sangjerte, after wandering until he was twenty, successfully went from having nothing to being heavily in debt, becoming a proud member of the negative assets class. For the next forty years, he would have to work like a horse for Belldate.

That's right, having no assets in Mephila is already considered middle class, enough to surpass 99% of the citizens. Generally, only retirees in their fifties and sixties who have paid off their debts qualify for this class.

As for who the family assets class is, there's no need to elaborate. Mentioning them would violate labor contracts and incur mental distress fees. Although Sangjerte lived in a house built by Belldate, ate food produced by Belldate, used machines made by Belldate, and even bought spirits from Belldate's platform, it didn't stop him from cursing Belldate in his heart. He had to curse a few times every morning before work to feel energized.

Thinking of this, Sangjerte looked at the Vamora Red Hat with a bit more sympathy: I dare to curse the mayor Belldate in my heart, can you dare to curse your patriarch in your heart?

And those other sorcerers who rushed over eagerly, for the so-called future of their families, had to hurry to Mephila overnight, as if they were puppets controlled by their families.

Seeing them, the sense of superiority of the people of Mephila naturally surged-

Free! Dom!

If the keyword for Vamora is happiness, then for Mephila, it is freedom. They are fully aware of the consequences of borrowing and that their cognitive abilities might be shared, but based on research and observation, they prefer a life of early pleasure followed by later hardship over one of early hardship followed by later pleasure.

More importantly, all these choices are made by themselves; no one forces them. If you don't like it, you can move to another city and start over. You can even live a normal life in Mephila if you can resist the temptation of advance spending—no overtime required.

Compared to these outsiders whose lives are predetermined by the Gospel, Family, and environment from birth, the people of Mephila believe they possess true freedom.

Sangjerte only joined this operation because he received information about a fugitive; he did it purely out of professionalism. He had no interest in the points ranking or the future of the Gospel—he would be dead in fifty years anyway. Even if the Gospel was invaded by the Blade Fish Dragon, it wouldn't matter to him. He was more concerned about which canteen to go to for lunch tomorrow.

However, it was clear that the others didn't think the same way. They even began arguing about how to distribute the spoils. Sangjerte rubbed his nose. As a two-wings sorcerer, he had no voice here—there were already five Sanctuary sorcerers present, two of whom were Red Hat captains: 'Weeping Sand Red Cap' Cleos and 'Soul Rending Red Cap' Qenna.

As for why a mere two-wings sorcerer like him could become a Red Hat captain in a major city, it was simply because Mephila lacked high-level combat power, and...

Unlike all other cities, Mephila's true defensive measures had nothing to do with the Red Hats—whether for external or internal threats.

Soon, the outsiders finally discussed their distribution strategy. In simple terms: everyone relied on their own skills, but no killing.

It seemed that everyone, except for Cleos's Red Hats, wanted to capture the fugitive alive.

When they looked over, Sangjerte knew it was time to get to work. He rubbed his cheeks and took a deep breath: "Please follow me to freight elevator number 23."

The informant who provided the intelligence also mentioned a crucial point besides the location of Ashe and his companions: Belldate, according to the Pact, would protect the Funeral Firm. Therefore, once the pursuers were exposed in Belldate's sight, whether she wished to or not, she would inevitably use various means to divert them. Hence, to capture Ashe and Harvey, they had to act swiftly and covertly.

To secretly infiltrate Belldate's manor, they had to take freight elevator number 23 to reach the city on the second level, where the surveillance equipment was temporarily down—the Gospel Book provided them with a top-secret operation map.

Using their employee cards, dozens of elite sorcerers took the freight elevator to the aerial warehouse. According to the informant, Ashe and Harvey were both working overtime in the Hell Zone tonight, so their plan was simple: raid Belldate, capture the targets, and return home for interrogation.

As for the authenticity of the information, it didn't need consideration: the Gospel Book would judge for them; they just needed to listen to the Gospel.

The journey was uneventful; it seemed the servants were all resting. The warehouse was empty. Leading the way, Sangjerte carefully avoided the boxes labeled "valuable items," but the faint sense of unease in his heart grew stronger.

When he received the informant's intelligence yesterday, Sangjerte suspected that the informant might be one of Belldate's people. Although the intelligence claimed that Belldate couldn't disclose the secrets of the Funeral Firm in any way, there had to be some loopholes in the Pact.

But there was a significant question: why would Belldate do this?

Couldn't she afford to support the Funeral Firm?

Impossible—Mephila wasted enough food daily to feed ten thousand Funeral Firms.

Did the Funeral Firm offend Belldate, and she wanted to use others to do her dirty work?

While possible, could Belldate not handle a group of out-of-town sorcerers herself?

Was Belldate planning to betray the Funeral Firm from the start?

Unlikely—if betrayal was her first option, why sign the protection Pact with the Funeral Firm in the first place?

Most importantly... Sangjerte glanced at the unified team behind him. Each sorcerer was among the elite, with even Sanctuary sorcerers leading them.

There were too many outsiders.

Belldate had so many channels to betray the Funeral Firm, so why did she choose the most dangerous one? Didn't she know that leaking information to the various Families would draw everyone to Mephila? Didn't she know that Harvey was a source of calamity pointed out by all? Didn't she know about her Family's Angelic Heritage—

Ding!

The group, who had set up alerts, immediately opened the Gospel Book and received the latest information from the informant:

“Members of the Funeral Firm, after inquiring with the Gospel Book, have learned that there are outsiders invading Belldate’s manor and are preparing to flee.”

After verifying the information, Qenna immediately said, “We don’t have time; we must act now!”

Sangjerte nodded, “Then let’s pick up the pace—”

“Don’t walk!” A sorcerer from Kaesrei shook his head and directly flew up—

Boom!

The ceiling was instantly pierced by various Miracles. Dozens of sorcerers blasted through the second-floor ceiling of the warehouse, then the first-floor ceiling, until they saw the night sky of Mephila! The ceiling here was reinforced by Miracles, which dispersed external force across all areas, making it very difficult to punch a hole with a normal Miracle, but once broken, the entire layer shattered!

Countless goods fell to the second floor of the warehouse, breaking into pieces. Sangjerte and the others stood dumbfounded, watching the outsiders destroy Belldate’s private property. From the appearance, these goods were sealed precious spirits, extremely valuable hard currency in the Kingdom of the Gospel.

How dare they...

Didn’t they know...

At this moment, Sangjerte rubbed his nose vigorously.

He finally understood that Belldate’s target wasn’t the Funeral Firm at all, but—

“Two city Red Hats, three firms, and eight Families, all are here.”

Igor closed the Gospel Book, “Congratulations, Yvaren. From now on, you are the most powerful patriarch in Belldate’s history.”

The blue-haired girl stood on a footstool, gazing at the outsiders flying around like flies in the distance, and asked, “How do you know?”

“The Dominance Sect of your Family is far too destructive to the potential of sorcerers,” Igor said. “Sorcerers, though varied and bizarre, must have strong convictions to be

powerful. But in the extreme hedonism of Mephila, there is no foundation for the growth of conviction, because all convictions require 'delayed gratification,' whereas Mephila emphasizes 'seize the moment.'"

"Even Vamora has the 'Family' as a belief to sustain them, but what does Mephila have? People who don't need a future won't have one."

"As for recruiting high-level sorcerers... just like you can't even recruit Harvey, other Sanctuary sorcerers cannot be tempted by Belldate. Every Sanctuary sorcerer has their own ideals and pursuits, which cannot be bound by the debauchery of Belldate."

"If you want to quickly expand your power, the only way is to... forcibly dominate the strong ones from other Families!"

The Con Artist couldn't help but laugh, "A very crude scam, something even children wouldn't fall for under the Blood Moon."

"But it's very effective, isn't it?" Yvaren shrugged.

"Making them destroy a large amount of Belldate's property, so that the Gospel judges they owe Belldate, thus triggering the Dominance Miracle... but with the dual support of the Virtual Realm and the Gospel, this is indeed an absurdly effective strategy," Igor said. "But I'm curious, why didn't Belldate use this method before?"

"Why would she need to use this method before?" Yvaren retorted. "If the future could continue to be peaceful, I wouldn't use such an annoying method. Speaking of which, it's all your fault."

"You're afraid of a future disaster foretold by the Gospel... no," Igor shook his head. "Is it because of your Family's Angelic Heritage?"

"Both, but regardless, Belldate would be crushed by Harvey like a bug in the future," Yvaren said. "The other Families have gone mad. To continue their lineage and secure their future, they won't miss any lifeline... Since Harvey can become the master of the Blood Corpse King under the Blood Moon, why can't they?"

"Belldate, who lacks high-level combat power, possesses the Angelic Heritage as a legacy... From the day she emerged on the Family Ranking, I knew my enemies were other forces."

"To protect myself, I must chop off their hands before they can reach out."

Igor couldn't help but nod repeatedly. "The day we appeared before you, you had already envisioned tonight's scenario... It was precisely because of the bait provided by Ashe and Harvey that they invaded Belldate without hesitation and stormed into your backyard!"

“You even prepared an escape route. Throughout the entire process, you ‘protected’ us unknowingly, while they invaded Belldate’s manor and destroyed your private property. Even in the worst-case scenario, it would be considered self-defense, and the Gospel would deem you blameless. As long as the other Families do not plan to openly defy the Gospel, they cannot punish you—they can’t even punish your sorcerers because you have already dominated them.”

“As for harboring fugitives... the Gospel never acknowledged Ashe as a fugitive; this is merely an internal affair of the Empire. You only need to pay a little compensation. But invading someone’s home and destroying private property is a crime recognized by the Gospel.”

“But I have one question—what if they repay their debt?”

“They can’t repay it,” Yvaren said. “The losses are all high-level spirits. Unless they return the exact same spirits, they will always owe Belldate. Even if they return higher-level spirits, it won’t work... This is the Gospel’s biggest trap in debt relationships.”

Igor couldn’t help but applaud.

For sorcerers, it’s not about having higher-level or rarer spirits. For example, giving a two-wings sorcerer a three-wings spirit is pointless, and giving a fire sorcerer a Water Spirit is even more troublesome. The Gospel, considering this, set the debt relationship to ‘must return the original item,’ but it became Belldate’s most terrifying trump card.

The Divine Sovereign Gospel, the Miracle of Domination, the Virtual Realm Pact... Yvaren’s scheme seemed like child’s play to him, but because she could perfectly utilize her resources, she successfully dominated dozens of elite sorcerers!

Even Igor had to admire Yvaren’s audacity—she was scheming against the Red Hat and the major Families! Even though she had Belldate’s support, if anything went wrong, it would mean offending half of the Gospel for nothing. Unlike Annan, who could just walk away, Yvaren had to endure the wrath of countless people alongside Belldate!

Now, with five Sanctuary sorcerers and dozens of elite sorcerers, they were still unaware that half of their minds had already been taken over. Even if Yvaren didn’t control them directly, just implying thoughts could build a solid moat for Belldate!

“But the plan went so smoothly, all thanks to you,” Yvaren glanced back at Igor. “Annan and the others were the base of the puzzle, and you were the final piece.”

“Such top-tier con artistry is rare, even under the peak of the Blood Moon,” Igor said. “I’m curious—where did you learn such skills?”

“...This wasn’t my scheme,” Yvaren replied. “But you, Annan really never approached you?”



“Really never.”

Yvaren summoned the Gospel Book to check and nodded slightly. “That’s strange, she’s not usually so quiet...”

“You should clean up the mess,” Igor said. “Belldate has to wrap up this show. By the way, are you planning to hide your domination over them or reveal it to intimidate the other Families?”

“No need to overthink it,” Yvaren said. “I’ll just go down and scold them, then they’ll leave with Ashe and the others. Tomorrow, they’ll publicly apologize to Belldate, offer compensation, and seek an alliance.”

“But for now, I need to ‘protect’ Annan as per the Pact, at least fend off most of them, or the Virtual Realm will judge me as neglecting my duties.” Yvaren jumped onto the balcony. “Thank you, Igor. Without you, the expert, I couldn’t have deceived the other Families.”

“I didn’t deceive them; the Gospel did,” Igor said. “Trust can’t be placed in the cold Divine Intervention.”

Yvaren didn’t respond, leaping off the balcony.

The Con Artist returned to Yvaren’s seat and summoned his own Gospel Book.

“Trust can only be placed in those who deserve it.”

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

## **Chapter 404: Has Your Boss Ever Risked Their Life for You?**

“I had no idea that working overtime could involve battle rounds.”

As dozens of wild mages suddenly emerged from a fissure in the distance, Ashe and Harvey, who were working late, dashed into the nearby forest. Ashe quickly donned his Twisting Mask to avoid detection, while Harvey’s skin rapidly cracked, resembling that of a corpse-effectively rendering most conventional Miracle scouting useless against them.

“So, if we get caught, the Pact gets terminated just like Annan said?”



“Exactly. The Pact stipulates that Belldate has to protect us, and if we get caught, it can’t be fulfilled, so no ransom needs to be paid.”

“Tsk,” Harvey grumbled. “I should have spent those 950 bell points sooner...”

“If we can’t gather the ransom in a day, we’ll remain Yvaren’s property for that day. She’d be more than happy to have us work for free forever,” Ashe replied. “This malicious ransom setup is just like that. We’ll gain some experience now, so next time when we break ties with Annan, we’ll be prepared.”

“Huh?” Harvey was surprised. “I thought you and Annan were getting along so well lately. I figured I’d need to prepare a coffin for you if we ever sought revenge.”

“No matter how well we get along, she won’t compromise on the Divine Sovereign’s Wish,” Ashe said, feeling a bit troubled. “Lise is the same way...”

“So why bother getting close to them in the first place?” Harvey asked. “In the end, it all comes down to a final battle, with blood marking the conclusion. The more feelings you have now, the more pain you’ll feel in the future.”

Ashe paused, staring blankly at the dark-skinned necromancer. “Is that why you...”

“Exactly. If you only have feelings for the dead like I do, you won’t face such inner turmoil,” Harvey replied. “Come on, join me as a lackey under Haagen-Dazs!”

“No thanks. I prefer things hot.”

Boom!

Suddenly, the shadows of the surrounding trees twisted and contorted grotesquely. Both men immediately used their Miracles to rush forward—Ashe’s Rush and Harvey’s transformation into a mist spirit—narrowly escaping the crushing shadows.

However, as the entire forest area was cleared, their figures were fully exposed under the night sky!

“They’re here!”

Shadow Sect... sorcerers from the Mercury Family!

“Hey, weren’t there supposed to be only Red Hats...?” Ashe glanced back. “I’m seeing a lot of people without hats... and Mercury isn’t even Mephila’s family!”

“Annan guessed wrong,” Harvey said coldly. “Yvaren never intended to show mercy.”

Days ago, Annan had analyzed Yvaren's next moves. She concluded that once they gathered the ransom to leave Mephila, Yvaren, unable to keep them, would try to distance herself from them.

Sheltering Ashe and Harvey was equivalent to offending most of the Gospel. The two of them were practically 'universal enemy triggers.' If Yvaren could make them her subordinates, it would be fine; if not, she would try to minimize the negative impact—such as 'voluntarily' handing them over.

Even though the Pact prevented Yvaren from leaking information, Belldate had plenty of ways to work around it. The most likely scenario was that Mephila's Red Hats would come after them, causing the Pact to fail. Yvaren wouldn't have to protect them, and they could escape smoothly, treating it as a fleeting encounter, with nothing but the days of unpaid labor as a consequence.

At that time, Lise had asked what would happen if Yvaren decided to go all out against them, but Annan was confident in shaking her head.

"Yvaren may be a bit cunning, but she's not inherently bad. I have a decent relationship with her; she wouldn't be so ruthless."

"Did Annan underestimate the blue-haired one's cunning or overestimate her own charm..."

"Watch out!"

Two legs can't outrun those who can fly. Several sorcerers quickly caught up. Ashe summoned his Love Sword to prepare for a Miracle clash when suddenly, there was a loud explosion beside him, and half the night sky turned crimson!

Hell erupted!

Lava from the adjacent hell zone suddenly erupted, spewing streams of magma hundreds of meters high, like a meteor shower crashing down on the flying sorcerers. While most sorcerers skillfully dodged the fiery rain, a dozen were drenched in hot lava!

"Wow," Ashe's eyes lit up. "Let's run along the edge of the special area!"

"Ashe."

A familiar voice reached his ears effortlessly. Ashe shuddered and turned to see two elegant and graceful Red Hat elves flying in the night sky.

"Qenna, Nona?" Ashe was stunned. "Why are you here too?"

“Of course, we’re here to catch you,” Qenna smiled. “Aren’t you our master on the Family Ranking? Why are you running?”

Hearing this, Ashe wished the Four Pillars would give him six more legs so he could outrun Harvey. Qenna and Nona simultaneously drew their handguns and aimed at Ashe—

Mist.

White mist from Belldate’s replica of the Sea of Knowledge area suddenly surged in, enveloping the flying sorcerers. The pursuers didn’t hesitate; unable to aim from a distance, they dove down to catch their target directly.

However, when Qenna dove, she found herself above the mist, which had nearly swallowed the entire manor below.

“Space Inversion Trap?” Qenna chuckled. “Playing with space in front of a Sanctuary sorcerer?”

This time, she expanded her Sanctuary and dove down, quickly piercing through the mist and reaching the ground. In the distance, she saw Ashe and Harvey running into the Golden Flow area. Besides her, the other four Sanctuary sorcerers also emerged from the mist.

The pursuers exchanged glances, knowing it was time to divide the spoils.

The five Sanctuary sorcerers used Movement Miracles, almost instantly closing the gap behind Ashe and Harvey, employing various restraining techniques to capture their prey—

Pop!

Ashe vanished with a popping sound, and Harvey collapsed into a pile of flesh.

A Substitute and a corpse!

At the same time, the Sanctuary sorcerers realized they were in yet another scenic spot—Belldate’s replica of the Golden Flow area!

As the golden droplets floated up, the sorcerers found their spellforce becoming incredibly heavy, turning their vast spellforce into a burden that immobilized them!

“Angelic Heritage, Belldate...” Except for ‘Weeping Sand Red Cap’ Cleos, the four family sorcerers exchanged cold glances. “Interesting...”

Meanwhile, Ashe and Harvey successfully regrouped with the others.

Lise ran straight into Ashe's arms, clinging to him like an octopus.

Banjeet pulled a coffin out of his suitcase, and Harvey clung to it like an octopus.

After comforting Lise, Ashe asked, "How do we get out of here?"

"We'll retrace their path. There must be a car parked nearby," Annan said, her face extremely grim. "Even though Yvaren is holding them off for us, we don't have much time—"

"You have no time left."

With the words came the sound of bullets whistling through the air.

Three dull thuds, and Banjeet, Harvey, and Ashe fell instantly. Only Lise, whom Ashe hugged, and Annan, shielded by Banjeet, were unscathed.

"Lise, check their injuries!" Annan quickly transformed her earring into an Assault Gun and fired, but the opponent used a single bullet to shatter the wind barrier, deflecting all her shots!

The attacker was already close. With a sudden whistle, high-heeled boots slashed like razors. The Purple Moth dodged instinctively, raising her Assault Gun to counter!

Dodge, elbow strike, and then seamlessly pushing Annan against a nearby tree, the attacker aimed the gun at her waist!

"Come with me quietly, and I'll ensure you all live," Qenna said calmly. "I'll even help you get married."

"No way!"

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

## **Chapter 405: Frostfire**

The forest is burning, hell is flowing, the Sea of Knowledge is boiling, and the Golden Flow is drying up... The fortress garden, built with the endless wealth of Belldate, has turned into a lackluster firework.

Yvaren leaned against the railing of the front garden, gazing at the standoff below. The moment Qenna captured Annan, the Pact with the Funeral Firm was completely dissolved—she was a shelter, not a protector.

The Funeral Firm no longer needed to gather 6000 bell points, and she had no responsibilities towards it.

A very profitable deal indeed. The seeds of domination were silently planted in five Sanctuary sorcerers and sixty-three elite sorcerers, and all she paid was millions worth of assets and a few newly made friends.

She actually liked them.

Banjeet was an ageless youth, mature and steady under his youthful appearance, with azure hair similar to Yvaren's, making her feel a sense of kinship when with him;

Lise was as beautiful as Yvaren herself had been in her childhood, with white hair as smooth as silk and cheeks as tender as eggs, so cute that one couldn't resist the urge to take a bite;

Harvey, though odd in character and dark in complexion, exuded a whirlpool-like aura of destruction, as if he would drag everything around him into madness. She really wanted to observe his end up close;

Ashe—Yvaren couldn't help but smile at the thought of him. It was hard to describe him with a few labels; she only knew that being with him was interesting. If Harvey was a vortex of destruction, Ashe was the opposite. She wondered why they could stay together... If possible, Yvaren really wanted to keep him around.

And then, there was Annan.

They were once sisters who talked heart-to-heart in the night, confidants who shared secrets, even rivals in love... In Yvaren's otherwise unremarkable life, the adventures with Annan were one of the few bright spots.

"I'm going to lose friends," Yvaren shrugged, gazing at the distant standoff with a calm heart.

When you dominate the will of millions, you won't be swayed by the joys and sorrows of one.

Belldate dominates all, Belldate possesses nothing.

Miracle: Slash Me!

Ashe's phantom flickered and shattered, successfully initiating the Slash Me Miracle. However, he continued to lie lazily on the lawn, not even moving a fingertip.

Even though he had forcefully triggered the Slash Me Miracle through spirit resonance, the disruptions in spellforce, nerve blockades, and sensory suppression remained unaffected. It wasn't that the Miracle was ineffective; it was Ashe who was lacking. A Sanctuary Miracle doesn't necessarily crush a golden sorcerer. If Ashe had understood the details of this binding Miracle, he could have used the Slash Me Miracle to purify it.

The essence of the Slash Me Miracle is to slash away foreign objects from the body. It's usually practical, as most foreign objects are visible or directly perceptible.

But this time was different. Lady Qenna's bullets were fierce and covert. Ashe didn't even know what was suppressing him. The Slash Me Miracle, therefore, aimlessly slashed at his fingernail as a perfunctory gesture.

If the Slash Me Miracle incorporated other spirits capable of examining the body and soul, its purification strength would be even greater... Ashe suddenly realized the direction for improving the Slash Me Miracle, but it was meaningless at this moment.

Bang!

A Sanctuary barrier appeared around Qenna, blocking a frost bullet.

She looked with surprise at the young butler, who stood up covered in frost and snow, and uncertainly said, "Able to break my soul-locking bullet's suppression... could it be the Miracle 'Frozen Age'?"

"As expected of Lady Qenna, you saw through it as the 'Frozen Age' Miracle at a glance."

The young butler nodded as the frost and snow fell from his body.

"But it's slightly different from the original. 'Frozen Age' fixes the body's time by consuming the soul's lifespan, thus generating frost spellforce. However, my soul can no longer afford such waste. Fortunately, my body is already in this form, so I made a slight modification..."

"Now this Miracle should be called 'Melt'."

As the frost and snow melted away, Banjeet's voice changed from the crisp sound of a young boy to the magnetic tone of a young man. A tall, handsome, blue-haired butler appeared before everyone, holding dual frost pistols, aiming at his former master.

"During the melting period, I possess Sanctuary-level combat power," Banjeet said. "Madam, please release the young lady."

“Your appearance has matured, and so has your arrogance?” Qenna laughed.  
“Someone who hasn’t even been to the Distant Sky Domain doesn’t understand what Sanctuary truly is... But, we’ve known each other for years. This is the first time I’ve seen you so determined, Banjeet, so I’ll give you a chance.”

“If you can take Annan from me, I’ll let you all go.”

Bang, Bang, Bang!

Frost blossomed everywhere as bullets unleashed icy rivers, swirling around the matriarch like a whirlpool.

Qenna grabbed Annan by the nape of her neck like a kitten. Even while carrying someone, she easily evaded and scattered Banjeet’s attacks.

Bullets flew wildly, Miracles overflowed, and Ashe, on the edge of the battlefield, was nearly caught in the crossfire of this golden sorcerer versus Sanctuary sorcerer clash. Suddenly, he felt himself being dragged backward. Even though he couldn’t see who it was, the small hands and the grunting effort could only belong to one person.

Ashe focused all his attention on his mouth.

Slash Me!

Slash Me!

Slash Me!

After three consecutive uses of the Slash Me Miracle, Ashe finally managed to slightly loosen the restrictions on his tongue and throat, whispering, “Run...”

“Mm-hmm!” Lise nodded vigorously. “Lise will get Dad out of here soon!”

“You run...”

“I’m going, Dad, stop pushing!”

“Put me down...” Ashe said softly. “Then run to the main house, let Yvaren protect you... You’ve never appeared at the Weaving Festival, as long as you’re not there, no one will catch you...”

“Yvaren is a bad woman, how could I go to her!?”

“Yvaren... Annan said... she’s not inherently bad. At least, without a conflict of interest, she won’t mind taking care of you... you’re so adorable...”

Lise sniffled. "Lise is so adorable, how could you bear to abandon Lise?"

"We... will pretend to be captured by Qenna... and then come back for you soon..."

"Then Lise will get captured too!"

"What if? I saw other Family members, and Red Hats... what if we are forced apart... I don't want to worry about you kicking off your blanket in a strange cell at night..."

"I won't..." Lise desperately dragged Ashe to a more concealed spot. "I won't be separated from Dad!"

"When I first met you, you were much smarter and decisive than now," Ashe's voice seemed to carry a hint of a smile. "The first night we met, you came to me and said... you wanted to pretend to be my daughter."

"It's all Dad's fault!" Lise wiped the snot and tears from her face. "Being with you has made Lise dumber!"

"Is that so... well, there's nothing to be done then." Ashe sighed softly. "Put me down."

"I won't—"

"I mean, you don't have to run anymore... we can't escape."

Just then, a wraith suddenly appeared, picking up the necromancer. An eerie, floating laughter echoed through the scene. "I thought I'd come back empty-handed, but it turns out Senhaeser thoughtfully left us some prey. Well then, Mercury will gladly accept this gift—"

"How dare you!?"

Though Qenna and Banjeet immediately redirected their fire, the wraith was incredibly fast, lifting Harvey and instantly appearing above Ashe.

At this moment, Lise decisively stood in front of Ashe, her small frame as resolute as a fortress.

But Ashe wasn't looking at Lise. Instead, he locked eyes with the necromancer held by Mercury. For some reason, the Cult Leader suddenly recalled a scene from the Family Ranking, his lips moved slightly, and he softly said:

"Harvey, save me."

Clang!



The coffin, ignored by everyone until now, suddenly shot out seven chains, swiftly binding the wraith and dragging it into the coffin! At the same time, a figure leaped out of the coffin, snatching the necromancer from the wraith's grasp!

Despite being a Sanctuary sorcerer, the wraith shook off the chains mid-air, revealing the figure of a young man in a pitch-black robe, staring at Harvey with astonishment.

Harvey, now held by Alice, had turned into a mist, enveloping the elegantly dressed girl like armor, until the two merged into one, life and death intertwined!

Fwoosh!

A ghostly green flame ignited the mist around Alice, turning her into a torch. But the flame did not harm Alice in the slightest; instead, the nearby grass quickly withered and decayed!

"Maintaining good relationships really pays off," Alice suddenly turned to look at Ashe, her mouth producing Harvey's voice. "You see, Lise only saved you."

Ashe's eyes widened, and Lise was also stunned. "You... Uncle Harvey..."

"No wonder you're the madman who can inherit the Angelic Heritage..." Mercury, the young man, said. "Is this necromantic Miracle something you created from the mist spirit? How defiant, how sinister, to merge the living with the dead!"

Before he finished speaking, he transformed back into a wraith, rushing over with the intent to capture the necromancer in one strike!

Alice-Harvey displayed a stiff smile.

"This body, though cold with Frostfire, still yearns for the moment of its demise."

Boom!

With a roar, the eerie fire exploded within, the vast spellforce burning away all life around them. The necromancer's barrier, centered on the coffin, actually withstood an attack from a Sanctuary sorcerer!

"Tonight is a good night for someone to die," Harvey said. "Maybe it's finally my turn."

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

## Chapter 406: Ranking of Schemes

When Harvey confronted Mercury, Qenna, Annan, and Banjeet quickly agreed to a ceasefire.

Annan wasn't oblivious to the situation. With no chance of escape and a horde of hunters eyeing them hungrily, the prey had little choice but to seek protection from one hunter in exchange for being spared the slaughter.

Even though Annan detested Qenna, she had to admit that becoming Qenna's plaything was far better than becoming a prisoner of the Red Hat or any other family.

"Harvey, Ashe, we surrender to Senhaeser!" Annan shouted loudly as soon as Qenna released her. "We are now Senhaeser's spoils of war!"

"Hey, hey, does that mean we came here for nothing?"

"We can't give everything to Senhaeser. At least Ashe Heath must face justice."

"Archibald Harvey can't be handed over to Senhaeser either!"

Three other Sanctuary sorcerers finally broke free from the constraints of the 'High Imitation Golden Flow Area' and hurried to the scene to join the spoils meeting. They were the Sanctuary sorcerer from the Kaesrei family, Azura's 'Weeping Sand Red Cap' Cleos, and the Happy Family Firm's 'Red Cicada Dame' Ina.

Qenna stood with Funeral and the others, waving her hand to release the soul-binding bullets that had restrained the group-leaving only a weak and helpless Ashe whimpering.

The remaining four Sanctuary sorcerers formed a semicircle around the group, all focusing pressure on Qenna.

"If you hadn't caused such a ruckus earlier, we wouldn't have this problem now," Qenna said coldly.

"That's nonsense!" Annan retorted bluntly. "Even if I had surrendered the moment I saw you, do you really think they would just let you take us away? If you had let us go earlier, none of this would have happened!"

Annan saw through everything clearly. This pursuit was a joint operation, which inevitably meant there would be disputes over the distribution of spoils, and these conflicts would be irreconcilable.

Although the Sanctuary sorcerers vaguely knew that Ashe Harvey was a ranked individual who had deceived Gospel, and that Gospel's evaluation of them would certainly be flawed, their ranking might be fake. However, the prophecy of an apocalypse within fifty years from Gospel was undoubtedly real!

At this time, anyone who could reach the future was extremely precious. Even if Ashe Harvey was a counterfeit, seizing him would still be a gain! Otherwise, why would they travel all the way to Mephila to invade a private residence? Out of sheer altruism?

Not to mention that Harvey had a high chance of obtaining the Angelic Heritage in the future, potentially leading the top ten necromancy families and becoming the undisputed king in the Gospel's apocalypse. Who wouldn't want to take his place?

Ashe wasn't as valuable, but Cleos wanted to use him to improve her ranking, and other families surely wanted this 'ordinary male protagonist' who appeared on two ranking lists in a row. So, Ashe's value, though smaller, was only slightly less than that of 'Necromancy King' Harvey.

Annan couldn't escape either. She was the number one on the Art Ranking and the head of the Firm. Everyone knew that Ashe and Harvey's inclusion on the ranking lists was closely tied to her.

Thus, when Annan closed her right eye and opened her left eye's "Calamity Vision," she saw herself, Ashe, and Harvey shrouded in black mist, clearly marked by calamity.

Sure enough, the young man Mercury spoke up, "Since Senhaeser was the first to capture them, Senhaeser can choose one of the three important targets, and all other secondary targets also go to Senhaeser. How about that?"

Kaesrei added, "Whoever chooses Archibald Harvey must share his necromancy results-not just with us, but with other families listed on the Family Ranking as well."

Cleos hesitated for a moment, then shook her head. "No, Annan is neither a fugitive nor a future offender. You have no right to decide Annan's fate. Since she chose to surrender to Senhaeser, she belongs to Senhaeser. As for harboring charges, Captain Qenna will handle it herself. Captain Qenna, you only need to choose between Heath and Harvey."

The 'Red Cicada Dame' Ina gave Cleos a deep look but nodded in agreement. "I align with the Weeping Sand Red Cap."

Kaesrei and Mercury's faces immediately turned grim.

Although Annan wasn't as crucial as the other two, everyone had deduced from the first two ranking lists that Annan was absolutely a central figure in deceiving Gospel.

If Annan and the other outsiders continued to stay together, the Weaving Festival would undoubtedly be disrupted by them.

If it were any other time, they might be able to tolerate this. But the next fifty years were crucial for the survival of Gospel, and the Weaving Festival was the most important channel for observation. They absolutely couldn't allow Annan to continue causing disruptions!

More importantly, if Senhaeser got her hands on the luxurious combination of Annan and any outsider, the advantage would be enormous. It would be equivalent to obtaining a ticket to the future!

Retreat, and the family would last a millennium; advance, and they could establish a dynasty!

In an apocalypse where resources were scarce, Senhaeser's expansion would undoubtedly squeeze the survival space of other families!

Kaesrei and Mercury had many schemes running through their minds, but with Cleos and Ina subtly siding with Senhaeser, they were left with no choice.

There were only five Sanctuary sorcerers here. Other families either didn't have any Sanctuary sorcerers or couldn't spare them. Once a 3:2 situation formed, they could only watch as Senhaeser claimed a sweeping victory.

Qenna looked back, glancing at Ashe, who was protecting Lise, then at the necromancer burning with green flames, and finally exchanged a look with the young Banjeet and her daughter Annan.

"It seems I have only one choice," Qenna said coldly, adjusting the brim of her Red Hat.

A disheveled Annan raised her eyebrows. "That's right... free attack!"

As Annan's words fell, Qenna, Banjeet, Harvey, and even Ashe simultaneously launched an attack on the four Sanctuary sorcerers!

Frost flew, death locks hooked souls, bullets exploded, and sword light flashed!

Miracle: Frost Blade and Gun Dance!

Miracle: Immortal Coffin on a Cold Rainy Night!

Miracle: Soul Burst Bullet!

Miracle: Rage Sword!

“Senhaeser, what do you mean by this?!” Kaesrei shouted angrily as he unfolded his Sanctuary to defend.

“I mean—I want it all,” Qenna said arrogantly. “All the people are mine. You want to share? Dream on!”

Cleos’s expression turned serious. “Qenna, you’re going too far!”

Mercury laughed angrily. “We have four Sanctuary sorcerers here, and you—”

“I have money!”

In the midst of the battle, Qenna summoned the Gospel Book. Instantly, everyone in the Funeral group felt an endless surge of energy. A “Gospel Field” that mitigated damage appeared around them, and their bodies were blessed with “Grace of the Cat,” “Strength of the Bull,” “Sharpness of the Eagle,” and over a dozen other direct blessings. Their combat power was pushed to the limit by the points from the Gospel Book!

In contrast, Mercury and his group were inflicted with over a dozen negative states such as ‘Soreness and Fatigue,’ ‘Platelet Dissolution,’ and ‘Mosquito Buzz Illusion.’ Although these conditions were negligible to Sanctuary sorcerers, Qenna’s lavish spending was enough to make them reconsider fighting. They were not merely facing a Sanctuary sorcerer but a patriarch wielding the assets of an entire Family!

However, Sanctuary sorcerers aren’t fools. They weren’t interested in a direct clash with Qenna and instead tried to capture members of the Funeral group to turn the tide.

But after several rounds, they failed to capture anyone and were instead suppressed!

Four Sanctuary sorcerers were being held down by one Sanctuary sorcerer and a few two-wing sorcerers!

Whoosh!

Mercury suddenly turned into a wraith and retreated from the front line.

He glanced at his hands; his right hand was almost decayed to the bone, while his left hand was deeply frostbitten. Even with the protection of a Sanctuary Miracle, he couldn’t fend off the Miracles of the two-wing sorcerers!

Among the Funeral group, Annan and Ashe’s combat power was negligible. The real threats to the Sanctuary sorcerers were Banjeet and Harvey!

“Frost spellforce, Necromancy spellforce...”

Mercury quickly healed his hands and smiled bitterly. “Are two-wing sorcerers this fierce nowadays...”

On the other side, Ashe noticed that he and Annan were barely contributing and couldn't help but ask, “Why are Banjeet and Harvey so much stronger than us?”

Annan, holding her Assault Gun and trying to interfere with the Sanctuary sorcerers, quickly replied during a reload, “Their Miracles are enhanced by spellforce.”

“Spellforce?”

“Through certain Miracles, spellforce can be further processed to become more suitable for a spirit's ‘appetite.’ For example, frost spellforce can enhance the effect of frost Miracles by 100%, even causing more terrifying negative damage.”

“There's such a thing!?”

“But such Miracles often come at an extremely high cost,” Annan glanced at him, “and the learning threshold is very high. Ordinary sorcerers can't master them.”

It was precisely because Qenna discovered that both Harvey and Banjeet had the potential to challenge Sanctuary sorcerers that she decisively initiated the battle. Otherwise, no matter how wealthy she was, she couldn't possibly withstand the combined assault of four Sanctuary sorcerers.

Boom!

While they were talking, Qenna seized the opportunity and landed a fatal shot. The Soul Burst Bullet instantly penetrated Ina's Sanctuary, sending the old lady flying over ten meters!

However, Ina immediately used the Family Ranking reward to enter ‘Mech-spirit’ mode to suppress her injuries but was already unable to continue fighting.

Already struggling, and now one person short, Mercury and his group had no hesitation in retreating from the battlefield. Qenna exhaled lightly and opened the Gospel Book. “I'll summon a hovercar with the Gospel Book, and then we will-“

“Yvaren, you're ruthless,” Annan suddenly muttered.

Qenna was slightly taken aback and turned to see the white mist dissipating above the courtyard. The sorcerers trapped by the Space Inversion Trap were now free. The elite sorcerers looked down to see the Sanctuary sorcerers fighting each other, completely unaware of what had transpired.

“Senhaeser believes that Ashe Heath, Archibald Harvey, Annan Dolan, and all other targets should be under her control,” Mercury said calmly. “We are having a friendly discussion.”

Everyone immediately understood that this was a tense and exciting post-battle distribution meeting. The Six Heraldry clansmen instantly flew behind Qenna, while the rest of the Red Hats, Firm members, and family sorcerers stood on Mercury’s side.

The situation instantly reversed. Qenna’s side had fewer than ten people, while Mercury’s side had over forty. Although elite two-wing sorcerers couldn’t intervene in the Sanctuary battle, if Mercury could hold off Qenna, the elite sorcerer squads could seize the opportunity to attack Ashe and other captives, directly snatching the spoils.

Qenna also realized this, but instead of softening, she became even more resolute. “Mercury, Cleos, do you want them to get involved in a Sanctuary battle? They will die.”

Due to the presence of Sanctuary sorcerers, the intensity of the Miracles used in their battles is extremely high. If a two-wings sorcerer gets caught in the crossfire, they will die a gruesome death. The only reason Ashe and the others managed to avoid harm earlier was because the Sanctuary sorcerers deliberately held back, not intending to kill them.

The situation reached a stalemate. Although Mercury’s side had the advantage, it wasn’t overwhelming enough to crush their opponents. Qenna, Harvey, and Banjeet, the three Sanctuary combatants, were not to be underestimated. If a battle broke out, the casualties would be so severe that all factions would feel the pain.

As everyone pondered their next move, Banjeet suddenly let out a bitter laugh. Thick white smoke emerged from his body, and he began to shrink rapidly, melting until he became a small boy of about five years old.

The young boy looked at his oversized butler attire in confusion, waved his sleeve, and glanced around at the unfamiliar adults. His innocent face showed fear and panic, and tears quickly welled up in his eyes, on the verge of spilling over.

“Don’t cry, don’t cry, come with sister for some chocolate,” Lise decisively stepped forward and led the little Banjeet away. Seeing that his new companion was only a little older than himself, the boy managed to hold back his tears and followed her to the rear.

Ashe stared blankly at Annan and pointed at the small Banjeet. Annan nodded helplessly.

At that moment, Alice Harvey suddenly coughed heavily. The green flames on his body gradually extinguished, and a cloud of white mist left Alice’s body, entering a coffin. Alice immediately closed the coffin lid.

Ashe: "You..."

"I'm Alice," Alice (Harvey) said cheerfully. "Harvey needs to rest in the coffin, so I'll take over from here!"

Ashe was at a loss, unsure if this was Harvey's split personality, a necromancer's twisted sense of humor, or a side effect of a previous Miracle. Regardless, the outcome was the same-

They had just lost two Sanctuary combatants.

Meanwhile, the 'Red Cicada Dame' Ina had recovered her basic combat strength and rejoined the Sanctuary sorcerers.

The atmosphere grew tense.

Mercury coughed twice, and Qenna rubbed her forehead.

In terms of numbers and combat power, Senhaeser and her group were now at a significant disadvantage. No matter how strong Qenna was, there was no way she could lead the Funeral members away while being besieged by four Sanctuary sorcerers and dozens of elite sorcerers.

Exhausted, Annan walked over to Ashe, wrapped her arm around his, and leaned on him, as if she would collapse without support.

Everyone had done their best.

Initially, they should have been captured by Qenna, but Banjeet stepped in;

Later, Mercury should have captured Ashe, but Harvey intervened;

Those were unexpected turns, but now reality had set in.

"We'll have to hand over Harvey," Annan whispered in Ashe's ear. "Don't say anything. I'll talk to Qenna."

"Miss, don't you have... a backup plan?" Ashe asked.

Annan glanced at him and nodded. "I do, but it might already be ineffective."

"And in this situation, ordinary plans won't work. We can only hope for a Miracle."

At that moment, everyone's Gospel Book popped open, revealing a gleaming bookmark inside.



“Now of all times?” Ashe and the others felt a surge of hope.

“Why now?” Mercury’s heart sank.

“Why at this moment?” Yvaren felt uneasy.

Although this was no time to be distracted, no one could resist the lure of the future. With various thoughts in mind, everyone opened their bookmarks and looked at the title of the third ranking list-

“Ranking of Schemes.”

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

## **Chapter 407: Finally Able to Reap the Enemys Rewards**

Virtual Realm, Time Continent, Spider Tower Area

It was not currently Spider Tower’s turn, and the entire area was shrouded in a black-and-white static domain. Except for the knowledge creatures that continued to reproduce and thrive, the three castles surrounded by multiple layers of defenses were operating day and night. The knowledge creatures, loaded with “job types,” transformed into humans, sat at their desks, buried in writing, and answered inquiries from reality. As each query was resolved, countless amounts of soul power converged at the core structure of the castle: the spiderweb.

At this moment, Danzel, loaded with a job type, was wearing a short vest and skirt with high heels, sitting cross-legged on her former throne, boredly flipping through the various questions emerging from the books.

Commanders could accumulate merit through work. Since idleness was not an option, most commanders would take on job types during the static domain period. The work at Spider Tower was very simple; answering questions did not require the staff to think. In fact, when they read the questions, the answers would pop directly into their minds, and they would just write them down.

It seemed a bit superfluous, but it was necessary-no matter how great the Divine Intervention, it was merely a set of unchanging “rules.” It had to rely on the variable “intellect” to provide precise feedback tailored to individuals.

However, commanders with some emotional range, like Danzel, found this work too boring. She walked to the window and looked up at the spiderweb that covered the entire gray sky.

To say it was a spiderweb was somewhat misleading: it had no visible web holes. Or rather, the holes were so few and far between that they were almost invisible. From below, it looked like a white curtain covering the sky.

But Danzel, upon careful inspection, could still see that there were seven web holes in the central area. When these seven holes were all filled, the Great Appointment of the Six Nations would officially begin.

However, the last ten holes that needed to be filled would almost always break open on their own. If they were lucky and only one broke, Spider Tower could secure a top position. If unlucky, and seven or eight broke, the Great Appointment of the Six Nations would only rank them at the bottom.

Let's hope the repairs hold this time...

Just then, Danzel noticed the spiderweb tremble slightly, and countless threads began to weave, gradually filling the seventh hole. She looked down at the book in her hand and turned to the page of the ranking list—Spider Tower commanders could actually obtain real-world intelligence, but almost no one was interested, and even Danzel, who had regained her emotions, felt the same way.

Compared to the decades in reality, Danzel had fought for hundreds of years in the Time Continent to retrieve her soul fragments. The vast length and depth of the latter completely diluted the former, making it impossible for her to feel any attachment to reality.

This might also be one of the reasons why the Six Nations War and the commanders' legions took place in the Time Continent: the lifespan of two-wings sorcerers was too short. The Divine Sovereign did not need to pay special attention; just the long passage of time was enough to integrate the commanders with the Time Continent.

"The Ranking of Schemes..." Danzel showed some interest. This was a title she liked. For the previous two holes, she hadn't even bothered to glance at them, feeling it was a waste of time.

"Ranking of Schemes No. 10: Danzel's Crown Descension Ritual"

"Synopsis: The ancestor of the Dolan Family, Danzel Dolan, possesses the authority to gaze into infinite futures. To obtain this authority, on April 10, 1678, Annan decided to initiate the crown descension ritual at the cost of countless treasures of gold and silver."

"Mastermind: Annan Dolan"

“...Huh?” Danzel showed a hint of confusion on her face:

“I have... descendants?”

At the Belldate Manor, when the tenth place on the Ranking of Schemes was revealed, everyone looked at the tattered Purple Moth beaten by her mother, their eyes filled with various desires.

The Dolan Family... the authority to gaze into infinite futures... the crown descension ritual!

But when Qenna grasped the handle of her gun, everyone chose to give Senhaeser some face and continued watching the ranking list.

“”Miss, this time we will truly offend all factions.””

The scene showed Banjeet, still the gentle blue-haired young butler, while Annan had become much more mature. She wore an off-shoulder purple gown, looking increasingly dazzling, glamorous, and alluring. They seemed to be standing on the second floor of a banquet hall, overlooking the guests below.

“It’s okay,” Annan shrugged, “Soon, there will only be a couple of small factions left here. If we offend them, so be it. I’ve gone through a lot to trick them into coming here; we can’t back down now.”

“You’d better worry about whether the ritual provided by the Rust Crow will succeed. Danzel is our best hope; only she can lead us to conquer the future!”

The audience held their breath, barely daring to blink. Although they didn’t know who Danzel Dolan was, they understood what summoning an ancestor in a ritual meant.

Resurrection of the dead!

Revival!

This was a great domain that only the Divine Sovereign could touch!

Anything related to resurrection was essentially considered a ‘Divine Intervention’!

Moreover, if someone as down-and-out as Annan could perform such a ritual, how could the great families not be able to?

Even knowing the details of this ‘crown descension ritual’ would be an invaluable treasure!

As if aware of everyone's thoughts, the Gospel Book maliciously skipped this part of the plot and jumped straight to the end of the ritual!

Annan stood in the empty hall, with all the guests lying on the ground, their fate uncertain. Banjeet looked at his mistress and, for some reason, took a step back.

"What are you afraid of, Banjeet?" Annan turned to look at the butler, slightly raising her proud neck. Her stunning appearance did nothing to diminish her overwhelming aura.

"...Danzel?" Banjeet's gaze was intensely focused, like a needle piercing the unknown creature before him. "What happened to Miss Annan!?"

"She's asleep. Didn't she say goodnight to you?"

"Hand over the miss!" Banjeet gripped his handgun tightly but did not draw it.

"That won't do," Danzel said leisurely. "Since you pulled me back from the Virtual Realm, let me enjoy the pleasures of being alive. In the meantime, you'll take care of my daily needs. Don't worry, I'll fulfill your requests—if I feel like it."

"Now then, Banjeet, my first command."

"Kill everyone here."

As a splash of blood hit the screen, the footage of the tenth place on the Ranking of Schemes ended.

In the next second, everyone turned to look at Annan, especially Mercury, whose presence felt as piercing as a needle, locking onto the figure of the Purple Moth.

"There was someone in that banquet hall who is my brother," he said in a deep voice.

"Oh," Qenna said calmly, "Then he's lucky to have escaped becoming a Shadow Spirit."

Mercury suddenly deflated. Qenna was right; his family's future would inevitably be turned into Shadow Spirits by Harvey. Compared to that, dying a quick death at Annan's hands might be a better fate.

Moreover, it was clear that Annan's Scheme took place before the Family Ranking—after all, in the Family Ranking, Mercury's family had already become Necromancers.

But this didn't stop him from glaring fiercely at Annan and saying coldly, "She must hand over the crown descension ritual, Senhaeser. You can't keep this to yourself!"

Before Qenna could respond, Annan shook her head immediately. "That ritual is something I obtain in the future. I don't know anything about it right now!"

“Who is the Rust Crow?” Cleos suddenly asked. “In the footage, you clearly said the ritual was given to you by him.”

Annan continued to shake her head. “I don’t know this person yet. I don’t know.”

“You don’t know this, you don’t know that...” Kaesrei said, “But you must know about the Dolan Family’s heritage, right? What is the authority to gaze into infinite futures?”

Faced with the aggressive sorcerers from the Sanctuary, Annan bowed her head directly, avoiding their gaze, and pulled on Ashe’s sleeve, hiding behind him. Ashe didn’t back down at all, pulling her openly to hide behind his aunt, Nona, like a child seeking a parent’s protection.

Nona wasn’t surprised by their closeness. Annan’s only relative since childhood had been her, and her only friend was Banjeet. As for Ashe... Nona glanced at her sister, who winked mischievously, as if to say, “Enjoy.”

Nona ignored her sister, turning to Annan and Ashe and whispering, “Hold onto my waist. If necessary, I’ll fly you both out of here.”

Ashe blinked and glanced at Nona’s slender waist. Just as he was about to reach out, Annan slapped his hand away.

At this moment, Lise seemed to sense that her dad was about to be taken away by another woman, so she quickly pulled little Banjeet over. Little Banjeet was only wearing an oversized shirt and tripped halfway, falling flat on his face. The blue-haired boy didn’t cry but bit his lip and pouted with tears in his eyes.

Ashe took Lise’s hand and couldn’t help but say, “How come you’ve been on the list more times than we have, young lady? Are you also from out of town?”

Annan crouched down to wipe little Banjeet’s tears and said irritably, “Do you think I want this? It’s not even the Beauty Ranking; it’s the Ranking of Schemes. Now my reputation is as bad as yours!”

It was true.

According to the synopsis of the ranking list, Annan’s Scheme this time was supposed to be just for the sake of money. But after the ritual summoned ‘Danzel’ and she possessed Annan, the crazed ‘Danzel’ slaughtered all the guests present. Both the money and the lives were gone, and the powerful families featured in the footage would surely hate Annan to death.

More importantly, unlike Ashe and Harvey, Annan was a bona fide local, making the Weaving Festival’s prophecy about her trustworthy!

Additionally, since no outsiders appeared in the footage, it ruled out the possibility of the prophecy being contaminated. This meant that unless something unexpected happened, the plot of “Annan holds the crown descension ritual to seize wealth and massacre everyone” was bound to occur!

Even if Qenna could protect Annan now, other families would undoubtedly send countless assassins to Vamora to kill the Purple Moth!

Moreover, whether Qenna could protect Annan was now uncertain. Annan’s two appearances on the Weaving Festival highlighted Gospel’s significant interest in her. Coupled with the crown descension ritual and the Dolan Family heritage, her overall value in everyone’s eyes had already subtly surpassed Ashe, second only to Harvey!

“Annan Dolan has received the reward ‘Guilty Crown.’”

“Guilty Crown: When you wear this crown, your crimes will not be recorded by Gospel, and those who die because of you will be considered victims of natural disasters.”

Annan stared blankly at the crown in her hand, feeling despised by Gospel—if she were to commit a crime, would it even violate Criminal Law!?

Ashe leaned in and asked, “Empress Annan, should we test it by killing someone?”

“No need to go that far. As long as it’s a crime, hurting someone is fine too.” Annan glanced at him. “Stick out your tongue and let me bite it to see if Gospel Book would consider it intentional harm.”

Lise looked enviously at the gem-encrusted crown. Annan noticed her gaze and asked, “Lise, do you want it?”

“Uh-huh!”

“Then what should you say?”

“Thank you, Aunt Annan!”

Annan elbowed Ashe in the waist. Ashe quickly shook his head—it wasn’t him who taught her that!

If it were me, she’d be calling you ‘Old Hag Annan!’

“That’s not right, Lise. Think again?”

Lise hesitated, her gaze darting between Annan and Ashe for a long while, but ultimately, she couldn’t resist the crown’s allure. “Thank you... Mama Annan?”

“Still wrong.” Annan sighed but placed the crown on Lise’s head anyway.

Little Banjeet tilted his head, then suddenly jumped up happily. “Empress Lise!”

Just then, the Gospel Book emitted a bright light, updating another ranking.

“Ranking of Schemes – No. 9: Kross’s Wisdom Reawakening Ritual”

“Synopsis: Kross Kaesrei, an ancestor of the Kaesrei Family, was a legendary sorcerer who specialized in the Fate Sect. To obtain the wisdom of their ancestor, on April 10, 1678, Zuvendas decided to murder another Sanctuary sorcerer from the Kaesrei Family and 100 ordinary Kaesrei clansmen as sacrificial offerings to perform the Wisdom Reawakening Ritual.”

“Mastermind: Zuvendas Kaesrei”

Suddenly, the sorcerer team across from them scattered, leaving only one Sanctuary sorcerer standing there dumbfounded. Ashe asked in surprise, “What’s going on?”

“He is Zuvendas Kaesrei,” Nona replied.

Is this the joy of checking the ranking list together—finally getting to see the gossip about our enemy!

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

## **Chapter 408: Schemes Upon Schemes**

“To restore the glory of our ancestors, I will sacrifice everything!”

“Since you will all become necromantic beings eventually, why not serve as my resources?”

“Don’t blame me. Your deaths are not meaningless. If you want to blame someone, blame the Rust Crow. It was the Rust Crow who sold me this ritual. I will avenge you by killing the Rust Crow.”

Watching the footage of the crazed Zuvendas mercilessly attacking his kin, everyone stepped further away from him. ‘Weeping Sand Red Cap’ Cleos even slightly raised her gun, seemingly ready to aim at any moment.

Like Annan, Zuvendas' ritual was skipped by the Gospel, directly jumping to the celebration after the ritual's completion.

Zuvendas sat in a bizarre blood-marked magic circle, surrounded by the corpses of Kaesrei clansmen: they had been cut in half at the waist by Zuvendas. Their upper bodies outside the circle had their hands clasped in prayer, while their lower bodies knelt in front of their torsos, legs together. Their dried corpses contained not a drop of blood, all of it converging on Zuvendas' forehead, forming a diamond-shaped blood mark.

"Fate... I see it..." Zuvendas' pupils shone with a flowing light. "Everything will inevitably come to an end."

Zuvendas Kaesrei received the reward 'Blood Mark.'

"Blood Mark: Requires 100 milliliters of Kaesrei clansman's blood to activate. The Blood Mark remains active for 10 minutes, during which the sorcerer's cognitive abilities are enhanced by 15%."

The footage ended, but the echoes of its impact lingered.

"Kaesrei," Mercury chose his words carefully. "This is an internal matter of your family, so I will not comment. However, you can no longer represent the Kaesrei Family, and therefore, you cannot participate in the distribution of spoils. But I assure you, in the name of the Mercury Family, that any intelligence we acquire will be shared with the Kaesrei."

Mercury's mixture of firmness and tact was a calculated effort. The Future Ranking had clearly pointed out Zuvendas' future misdeeds, and not taking this chance to expel him would be wasting the Gospel's assist. However, he still needed the combat strength of the Kaesrei sorcerers, at least to deter Senhaeser, so he gave Zuvendas enough face.

"Heh."

Zuvendas suddenly chuckled. "I don't think so. You can ask the Kaesrei. The patriarch still trusts me."

"Quite confident," Qenna raised an eyebrow. "If a traitor harming their kin appeared in Senhaeser, I would definitely turn them into a firework. Or are you confident you can convince your clansmen that the Ranking of Schemes was the Gospel framing you?"

"No, I'm quite sure this is my future," Zuvendas said. "I do admire the ancestor Kross. If given the chance, I would stop at nothing to involve myself in Kross' Fate Sect... even without external pressure, just to break through the Sanctuary and ascend to legend, I would do it. After all, I'm out of options."



When Zuvendas mentioned being “out of options,” the Sanctuary sorcerers fell silent. They had been immersed in the Sanctuary realm for years and were frequent visitors to the Distant Sky Domain. In the mundane world, they had achieved countless feats and earned much admiration. Yet, the anxiety of having “no path” constantly tormented their hearts.

Some found solace in their Family, like Qenna; others in their careers, like Ina; some pursued rankings, like Cleos... Sanctuary sorcerers were often extraordinarily talented and proud individuals, making it hard for them to accept that their gifts had limits. It was like realizing that what they thought was freedom was just a larger cage.

When Zuvendas claimed he would go to such extremes for power, everyone immediately believed him. They wouldn’t do the same, not because they didn’t want to, but because there were things in life more important than power.

“But the truly dangerous person in the Ranking of Schemes is not me,” Zuvendas said. “Schemes upon schemes.”

Everyone was slightly taken aback and looked down at the continuously updating Ranking of Schemes.

“The Ranking of Schemes No. 8: Morgan’s Comprehension Fusion Ritual”

“Synopsis: Morgan Dune, a legendary sorcerer of the Mental Sect, was adept at love Miracles. During his life, he was adored by all, regardless of age or gender, even by silver legends. To acquire Morgan’s power, on April 10, 1678, Joel Hopkins decided to murder one male Sanctuary sorcerer, one female Sanctuary sorcerer, 100 males of various ages, and 100 females of various ages as sacrificial offerings to initiate the Comprehension Fusion Ritual.”

“Mastermind: Joel Hopkins”

“Joel Hopkins is a two-wings sorcerer from Modora,” Mercury said with a serious expression. “He’s highly talented and regarded as a Sanctuary seed; it wouldn’t be surprising for him to achieve Sanctuary within ten years.”

But no one paid attention to Mercury’s intelligence. Everyone was focused on the bizarre information revealed by the Future Ranking.

“The Ranking of Schemes No. 7: Napoli’s Merciful Purification Ritual”

“Synopsis: Napoli Degil was a legendary sorcerer of the Truth Sect, known as the ‘legend closest to an Angel.’ To inherit Napoli’s power, on April 10, 1678, Jeremy Degil destroyed the Abyss seal, causing an Abyssal riot and unleashing monsters from the deep Abyss into the city to initiate the Merciful Purification Ritual.”

“Mastermind: Jeremy Degil”

“The Ranking of Schemes No. 3: Colin Tenna’s Glory Forging Ritual”

“Synopsis: Colin Tenna Mercury, the ancestor of the Mercury Family, wielded the power of a deity as a mortal. His immense power still persists through generations. Thus, each generation of the Mercury Family has a Shadow Sect talent but is also fragile and short-lived. To inherit Colin Tenna’s power, on April 10, 1678, Rein Mercury dragged an entire city into the shadows, using 7,853,454 people as sacrificial offerings to initiate the Glory Forging Ritual.”

“Mastermind: Rein Mercury”

Noticing the gaze directed at the Sanctuary sorcerer of the Shadow Sect, Ashe didn’t need to ask to know his name was Rein.

Compared to these Sanctuary sorcerers who casually killed their entire families and sacrificed entire cities, Annan, who only killed people at a banquet, seemed relatively pure and kind.

But compared to the crimes that Rein, Zuvendas, and Annan will commit in the future, everyone was more concerned with the information revealed by the Future Ranking—

“Who is the Rust Crow?” Cleos couldn’t help but ask. “Why does it seem like all the Rituals are his doing?”

In all the current images, although the masterminds were different, there was one person who connected them all—Rust Crow!

Crown Descension, Wisdom Reawakening, Comprehension Fusion... these costly and exceptionally evil sacrificial rituals all originated from Rust Crow! While Annan and the others were the masterminds, they were also consumers. The one providing the ritual knowledge, Rust Crow, was the true source of all evil, the calamity of this world! Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Moreover, it wasn’t just that. The eight schemes and rituals that had appeared so far all occurred on the same day: April 10, 1678.

This was definitely not a coincidence, but it was also impossible for the eight of them to have conspired together to make big news—at least Annan couldn’t have had any connections with them.

Also, it was strange that the Future Ranking provided such specific timing. This wasn’t the Past Ranking; why would the Future Ranking lower its margin for error this way?

“Ashe,” the Purple Moth suddenly leaned in close to the Cult Leader’s ear and whispered, “did you notice... these eight schemes, although incomplete, are all related to resurrection.”

“Yes.” Ashe’s face was severe. “And then?”

“That’s it. But don’t you think I’m very smart?”

“If you were as young as Lise, I might pat your head, but since you’re all grown up...” Ashe reached out and gently tapped Annan’s nose. “I’ll reluctantly allow you to hug me.”

Annan playfully punched his side, clearly pleased—now everyone’s attention was on the ranking list and Rust Crow, leaving the Funeral with less scrutiny. If Qenna remained firm, they might all return to Vamora. However, this time, they probably wouldn’t escape Qenna’s grasp again...

At this moment, the ranking list updated again, and another familiar name appeared.

“Ranking of Schemes No. 2: Ewaton’s Fundamental Convergence Ritual”

“Synopsis: Ewaton Belldate, the ancestor of the Belldate Family, was a Five Wings sorcerer, a Demigod Angel, who once commanded several deities. To dominate the Necromancy form of their ancestor Ewaton, on April 10, 1678, Yvaren Belldate burned the mental power of all subjugated individuals to initiate the Fundamental Convergence Ritual.”

“Mastermind: Yvaren Belldate”

Damn!

Everyone’s hearts were filled with admiration for Yvaren.

This was the most ambitious plan they had seen so far—Yvaren wasn’t just trying to resurrect her ancestor or inherit his legacy; she was directly attempting to dominate her ancestor!

Only the Belldate family could play this game. After all, other people’s ancestors had long since returned to the Virtual Realm, but the Belldate’s Necromancy Angel was still lingering in some tomb. Conveniently, the Belldate’s ancestral spellcasting was from the Dominance Sect. With all the key elements in place, not trying to dominate one’s own ancestor would indeed waste the fate’s arrangement.

In the distance, Yvaren, who had been watching the scene unfold, frowned slightly.

She hadn’t expected the Belldate family’s years of planning to be revealed just like that.

Yes, this wasn't her idea alone. It had been thought of generations ago—perhaps starting from Ewaton's son—the Belldate family had been contemplating how to dominate this Necromancy Angel.

However, because there was no immediate survival pressure, this plan had always been in the process of being perfected and had never been put into practice. There were many significant flaws that couldn't be ignored, and Yvaren herself had never seriously considered this plan.

But upon seeing the image, Yvaren understood how Rust Crow's ritual was clever: she would burn a massive amount of mental power to warp reality, weaving a body out of nothing, and then use Ritual Track to summon a wisp of the Necromancy Angel's consciousness, trapping it within the body. Since every cell of this body would be under Yvaren's control, this cage would completely imprison the Necromancy Angel, achieving indirect domination.

Yvaren was immediately tempted and couldn't wait to try it.

But everyone had the same question: who exactly was Rust Crow?

Soon, the Gospel Book would answer all their questions—

“Ranking of Schemes No. 1: Ashe's Kingdom Resurrection Ritual”

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

## **- Chapter 409: The Future of the Tactile Sense**

### **Chapter 409: The Future of the Tactile Sense**

Blood Moon Kingdom, Kaimon City.

Freya, dressed in a white lab coat, pouted as she left Sivirin's consultation room, quickly exiting the Biological Prosthesis Section with her head down. Along the way, other doctors and nurses whispered as they watched her, but no one greeted her, as if an invisible mental barrier separated them.

However, the Bewitcher didn't mind. Compared to this, Sivirin's scolding earlier had hurt her more deeply.

Even though she hadn't graduated yet, she was already a trainee Healer at Kaimon Affiliated Hospital and a student of Sivorin. However, her study program wasn't in the Mental Sect but in the Illusion Sect.

The Mental and Illusion Sects had been closely linked since their inception. However, in contrast to the almost-shielded Mental Sect in the Blood Moon Kingdom, the Illusion Sect was a highly sought-after Spellcasting Sect. Not to mention the huge demand for Illusion sorcerers in the TV drama industry, the increasingly popular virtual game world known as "the second world" within the veil was practically built by Illusion sorcerers. Their annual salaries kept rising, with the talent market unable to meet the demand.

Even Madara, the founder of the Mental Sect known as "Mind's Eye," probably never imagined that the Illusion Sect, originally developed as an auxiliary branch, would one day become more productive than the Mental Sect.

In the medical field, the status of the Illusion Sect has also been rising yearly, not for treating diseases but for involving greater interests and a brighter future.

Freya arrived at Selina's ward, where a warning sign in black and red hung on the door:

"This ward is occupied by only one patient, Selina Bright, a girl with a height of 1.3 meters, long silver-white hair with a streak of wine red, wearing a blue and white striped hospital gown. When performing any tasks that require entering the ward, such as delivering meals, changing medicine, or cleaning, please adhere to the following rules—"

"① Only one person may enter the ward at a time. If you see two people already inside, do not enter."

"② Remember the patient's appearance. If her appearance does not match the description, leave immediately and notify Healer Sivorin."

"③ If you open the ward door and see the patient outside wanting to enter with you, leave the hospital as quickly as possible (for example, by jumping out of a window)."

"④ If you feel someone pushing you into the ward when you open the door, jump out of the window immediately, regardless of who it is."

"⑤ If you feel unwell or notice significant structural distortions inside the ward, leave immediately; if you cannot move, imagine yourself already standing outside the ward. When someone else opens the door, you can turn around and leave (do not imagine pushing others into the ward)."

"This hospital is very safe; any accidents are purely personal issues."

Freya took a deep breath before cautiously opening the door.

The Bewitcher opened the door and glanced inside, seeing Selina lying on the bed reading a book. She immediately rushed over and hugged the doll girl. “Selina~”

“Freya!” Selina affectionately hugged the Bewitcher back, rubbing her cheek against Freya’s. She knew Freya loved this kind of intimacy. “Wait a minute!”

Freya looked at Selina curiously. Selina, with her hands on her hips, pretended to be serious and said, “Hello, Miss. Although I don’t know what you’ve been through, sadness is not allowed here. You look super cute today!”

“Huh?” The Bewitcher blinked. “I thought I hid it well.”

“When you’ve been in this room as long as I have, you can sense any change in the air.” Selina grabbed Freya’s hand and swung it back and forth. “The moment you came in, the air was filled with the scent of sadness.”

Yes, you read that right. Selina now had hands-but only within this ward.

After discovering that Selina never had limb neurons to begin with, Sivirin changed the treatment strategy. The currently popular biological prosthesis relies on the extension of neurons. Without neural connections, a prosthesis is just a pile of soulless scrap metal.

Therefore, the only prosthesis suitable for Selina was the latest project being researched and developed by the Four Great Institutes: the phantasm prosthesis.

If a biological prosthesis is like cutting off a person’s hand and replacing it with a universal multitool, then a phantasm prosthesis is like convincing someone that the universal multitool under their arm is their third hand, without removing any of their original organs.

This is a crazier but more promising project. After all, humans can only control their limbs, senses, and internal organs. No matter how much biological prostheses develop, there can only be twenty equipment slots, and no more souls can be recognized. However, if phantasm prostheses can be developed, humans could have three heads, six arms, a hundred eyes, and a thousand ears, undoubtedly marking another Spellcasting revolution—three heads mean three times the learning efficiency, even sorcerers would be envious!

But the progress of phantasm prostheses has always been slow, rooted in the word “phantasm”: how do you describe colors to a blind person, or let a deaf person hear thunder? How do you imagine controlling organs that never existed in the first place?

However, Selina’s rare case became Sivirin’s breakthrough point—it’s difficult for a normal person to imagine having a third hand, but what if a doll imagines having limbs?

Thus, this ward was set up as a miracle seam between reality and illusion, where Selina's phantasms could become reality. Everything proceeded smoothly; Selina quickly imagined having hands, and it's estimated that it wouldn't be long before she imagines having legs. After that, a miracle surgery would fixate them, making Selina the first phantasm prosthesis user.

This treatment is undoubtedly costly, but with Sivirin's deep background and Selina's rare case, the Institute spared no expense, allowing Sivirin to indulge in her research. However, this treatment method comes with risks—not for Selina herself, but for others entering the room.

Because Selina's phantasms become reality, when she has whimsical thoughts, the ward turns into an unpredictable eerie realm. The notice outside the ward is a summary of experiences from multiple accidents.

Although Selina's condition is now very stable, few people besides Freya and a few others visit her in the ward.

"I got scolded by Teacher Sivirin..."

"How did she scold you?" Selina was a bit puzzled, as she felt that Sivirin liked Freya quite a bit.

"She scolded me for not having a regular routine..." The Bewitcher shrugged. "I don't even know how she knew I entered the Virtual Realm after midnight last night. She said I was wasting the Blood Moon's favor and that the best time to log in to the Virtual Realm is at 10 PM... Wait, could Teacher be spying on me?!"

Selina guessed, "Maybe she saw you logging into the veil around 11 PM?"

"That's possible..." The Bewitcher tilted her head.

Selina asked curiously, "But don't you usually log in to the Virtual Realm at 10 PM? Why so late last night?"

"Last night..." The Bewitcher's face turned red, and she showed a silly smile. "Hehe..."

Ever since she found the diary copy that day, the Bewitcher kept it for herself. After following the updates for several days, she was certain that this was Ashe's diary, and that the mischievous man, wherever he was, kept updating it.

Through the diary copy, Freya could observe Ashe's entire prison break process from a first-person perspective. She knew he was bullied by a man named Igor when he first entered the prison and that he recognized a woman called the Death Maniac Sword Princess from the beginning...



The Death Maniac Sword Princess!

Tsk tsk tsk!

What an annoying name!

Although Freya was very upset, she could only watch Ashe and the Sword Princess explore the Virtual Realm together. Last night, Ashe updated the diary to describe his first Blood Moon Tribunal, where he showed a vulnerable side in front of the Sword Princess. The Bewitcher wished she could take the Sword Princess's place to comfort Ashe, and then, and then...

Seeing the pink bubbles popping out of Freya's head, Selina thought that the Bewitcher had a strong mental power. Although this room was mainly controlled by her thoughts, others could also slightly influence the illusion energy here-the stronger the mental power, the greater the influence.

If Gerard walked into this room, Selina couldn't harm a single white hair on his head even if she tried her best.

And Freya, you're reminiscing about your spellcasting materials in front of an innocent girl. The dreaming free spirit must think you have great potential.

After chatting for a while, Freya had to go home. Before leaving, Selina asked, "Are others still bullying you?"

"Of course not." The Bewitcher shook her head repeatedly. "My teacher is Sivirin after all..."

"But they still ostracize you secretly, right?"

Freya admitted it.

As a Bewitcher who hadn't yet graduated, even though she was a sorcerer, it would have been impossible for her to directly join Kaimon Hospital. Normally, she would need to undergo several years of standardized training at hospitals in other villages or towns. It was only through Sivirin's backdoor arrangement that she got in, and Sivirin even took her on as a student. Naturally, Freya faced criticism from other Healers. Even if there wasn't blatant discrimination, the atmosphere of ostracism was impossible to eliminate.

However, the Bewitcher didn't mind it at all.

Selina thought for a moment, then asked Freya to extend her finger. She bit down hard, drawing blood!



The Bewitcher tried to pull back in pain, but Selina held on and licked the wound with her tongue.

“That should do it,” Selina said seriously. “Now you have my scent, and others won’t bully you anymore.”

Freya flicked Selina’s forehead in annoyance but didn’t blame her, thinking it was just a little girl’s blessing. “Thank you, then.”

Leaving the ward, the Bewitcher thought she had to log into the Virtual Realm on time tonight. She could read the diary copy in the morning.

Logging into the Virtual Realm on time was good, as she could see the little bat.

Ever since she left the Whirlpool and ran into the little bat, the Bewitcher had encountered it every night in the Virtual Realm. The only exception was last night when she logged in two hours late.

Freya suspected she had triggered some virtual realm mechanics because the little bat not only followed her every night but also cast Miracles to help in battles.

Even if the little bat couldn’t help, Freya liked it a lot—having a pet to accompany her through the vast white mist of the Sea of Knowledge was wonderful.

Thinking of this, the Bewitcher grew even more annoyed with the Sword Princess—why her! Why not me! I want Ashe as a pet!

On the other side, after Freya left the ward, Selina’s smile faded. Her hands slowly disappeared, and she lay on the bed like a doll.

Receiving treatment was naturally a temporary measure; she would never allow herself to truly have limbs. “Loss” was an embodiment of Eternity. Once she was “polluted” by “possession,” she would completely lose the gaze of the Four Pillars.

The reason Selina blessed Freya just now was simple: Freya was already her designated chief cadre of the Four Pillars Cult.

That’s right, although Selina had not yet managed to convert the Bewitcher, this wasn’t her fault.

It was the Four Pillars’ fault.

Since arriving in the Blood Moon Kingdom, Selina had found herself constantly out of luck, even becoming a rare case under close observation at the hospital. It seemed like fate itself was obstructing her mission to spread faith and harvest souls. After some

thought, she felt the root cause was that the Four Pillars were not providing enough support.

It was natural for Tactile Sense to be rejected by fate, much like how the body's immune system automatically kills bacteria. But Tactile Sense had previously been able to hide her fate trajectory with the help of the Four Pillars, allowing her to expand her operations smoothly.

Selina was very sure that the Four Pillars were now definitely watching Ashe Heath's live broadcast, forgetting to support her work in the Blood Moon Kingdom.

However, these days would soon be a thing of the past.

By her calculations, Eternity had been entangled with Ashe for a month now, which meant—

Ashe's death was already part of the future.

How could someone who isn't even Tactile Sense defy someone who is?

Once she witnessed Ashe's death, the Four Pillars would naturally shift their gaze to the lovely Selina, and then the little Bewitcher would obediently become her chief cadre.

"Ranking of Schemes No. 1: Ashe's Kingdom Resurrection Ritual."

Lise instinctively gripped Ashe's sleeve, and Annan and Qenna immediately turned to look at him.

Ashe himself, however, felt nothing.

According to the pattern of the previous nine schemes, the person named in the scheme title was already dead. However, Ashe had brushed shoulders with death many times. If there really was a Grim Reaper in charge of his case, that Reaper would definitely have shoulder impingement by now.

Not to mention, he was a foreigner. Could the death woven by your Gospel really slash the life of a Blood Moon native like him?

In comparison, he was more curious about who wanted to resurrect him.

However, unlike the previous nine schemes, the Kingdom Resurrection Ritual did not list the mastermind but directly presented video evidence—

"Great Rust Crow of the Abyss, Goodness follows you, evil admires you! Light yearns for you, darkness also desires you! You are an existence beyond all, the color bestowed upon all things by the gods!"

Ashe finally couldn't hold it in anymore.

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

## Chapter 410: Good Morning, Igor

"Four Pillars Cult..."

Cleos murmured softly. Qenna, Annan, and several others raised their eyebrows, but most of the sorcerers looked puzzled.

High-ranking sorcerers who had worked with the Red Hat Firm generally knew about the Four Pillars Cult. Firms that focused on intelligence gathering were also somewhat aware, but other sorcerers couldn't possibly know about this mysterious organization—mainly because the Four Pillars Cult had always struggled in the Kingdom of the Gospel.

It wasn't just struggling now; it had always been this way. The only time the Four Pillars Cult could shine briefly was during the civil wars and regime changes in the Kingdom, but it would quickly be suppressed again.

The omnipresent Gospel system was too restrictive for such a mysterious organization. Even if the Gospel didn't intentionally leak information about the Four Pillars Cult, as long as the Red Hats used the Gospel for reconnaissance, they could eventually root out the cult.

To the Kingdom of the Gospel, the Four Pillars Cult, the Abyss, the virtual realm passage, and the Firm were collectively known as the "Four Plagues"—problems that could never be completely solved but posed little threat, thus no one paid much attention to the Four Pillars Cult.

However, they would soon understand that the Four Pillars Cult's struggles in the Kingdom of the Gospel were not only due to historical progress but also closely related to the leader's personal abilities.

"In the Underground Hall, the leader of the Four Pillars Cult, known as the 'Rust Crow,' sat on a throne seemingly woven from iron crow feathers, overlooking countless kneeling black robe cultists."

"His voice was ethereal, as if it came from men, women, the old, and the young, filled with a charm that pierced through eardrums: 'From today onwards, you are all Rust Crows. You are my eyes, my tongue, my ears... you are my tactile sense.'"

“‘You will delve into every dark corner of this Kingdom.’ In the Mermaid Palace of the sewer, sirens were worshipping the heretical four pillars.”

“‘You will step into every hall of this Kingdom.’ In a lavish banquet hall, several elegantly dressed people revealed their white gloves on their right hands and exchanged knowing smiles.”

“‘You will become the pillars of the benevolent.’ In a war-torn city, sorcerers were rescuing civilians from danger. Every child who was saved received a black crow feather as a gift, which became their source of courage.”

“You Will Become the Savior of the Villains”

“As the vault door was blown open, the mob surged in, looting gold, silver, and spirits. They looked ahead with admiration at the sorcerer wearing white gloves, drawn by the more elegant and brutal violence.”

“‘Then, you will fulfill their desires and needs.’”

“‘To those obsessed with family names, teach her how to crown herself.’ In the Firm, Annan looked down at the invitation in her hand.”

“‘To those who yearn for power, teach him how to inherit wisdom.’ In the training ground, a sweat-drenched Zuvendas repeatedly tried to tear up the paper in his hand, but the paper, thin as a cicada’s wing, was as resilient as a mountain at that moment.”

“‘To those who are lonely and isolated, teach him how to gain understanding.’”

“‘To those who chase grandeur, teach him how to forge glory.’”

“‘To those who are indifferent and thoughtless, teach her how to dominate the fundamentals.’”

At this point, whether it was the supporting characters making cameo appearances in the projection or the onlookers comfortably watching from outside the projection, a deep chill crept into their hearts.

What stood before them was not a remote rebellious organization that the Red Hats could eliminate at any moment, but a deeply rooted and nationwide eerie cult.

They controlled the largest intelligence organization in the inner world, the Mermaid Palace, and had infiltrated the top ten conglomerates of the Gospel. They had supporters among the people, and criminals idolized them!

The most terrifying aspect was their ability to see through human weaknesses and exploit the darkest corners of human nature. Even Sanctuary sorcerers were merely pawns at their disposal!

The top-ranked individuals on the Ranking of Schemes were all like Zuvendas—they understood that if they truly obtained the ritual knowledge given by the Rust Crow, they would most likely commit the crimes prophesied by the Future Ranking.

It was precisely because they couldn't refuse that these were called weaknesses.

Moreover, they realized that the top nine schemes in the Ranking of Schemes were all just preludes to the first scheme!

They were indeed the masterminds behind their respective schemes, but after each scheme, there was always another scheme!

An indescribable panic burned in the hearts of all the spectators in the silence—what exactly did the Rust Crow want? He had created such a large organization, controlled so many sorcerers, and induced so many schemes. What was his unspeakable purpose?

"The Rust Crow rotated his throne to reveal a massive map on the wall behind him—the Gospel map. The terrain of the Kingdom of the Gospel was generally a long rectangle, stretching from north to south and narrow from east to west. After more than a thousand years of development, almost every place was inhabited by intelligent creatures."

"The Rust Crow took out a notebook with sorcerers' profiles attached to it."

"'Crown.' Annan's photo was placed on the city at the top."

"'Wisdom.' Zuvendas's photo was affixed to the city in the upper right."

"'Foundation.' Yvaren's photo was attached to the city in the middle and lower part of the Gospel."

"When the Rust Crow connected these photos with lines, an inverted tree pattern appeared on the Gospel map."

At this point, everyone completely understood the truth of the first Scheme.

"Madman," Rein murmured.

He was indeed a madman—the Rust Crow not only schemed against multiple Sanctuary sorcerers, but all of their schemes were merely parts of a larger Ritual. This ultimate Ritual would envelop the entire Kingdom of the Gospel!

No wonder all the schemes were scheduled on the same day. They even suspected that the time difference between the first nine schemes wouldn't exceed an hour, ensuring the final Ritual's activation.

Rein and the others couldn't muster much anger; they were more filled with disbelief.

As long as they used the Gospel to detect something amiss,

As long as any link in this chain of schemes failed,

As long as...

To put it bluntly, the failure of this Scheme would be normal; its success would be a Miracle!

They couldn't fathom how much preparation the Rust Crow had done to precisely guide the first nine schemes. The sheer thought of it was overwhelming.

The first Scheme truly deserved its name!

However, the inverted tree pattern had ten nodes in total, with each of the first nine schemes responsible for one. It was evident that the Rust Crow would personally handle the final one.

And the last node was in...

The southern city, Azura.

The Rust Crow stood at the bottom floor of the Inverted Skyscraper, looking down at the bustling steel forest below. As a firework shot up, a series of fireworks suddenly rose in the city on the first level, and then sparks flew along a ring, cutting out a massive circle in the center of the city!

The sorcerers saw the space within the ring of sparks being torn into gray chaos, their expressions were remarkable because they all recognized this phenomenon.

Not only did they recognize it, but they visited it every night!

"How can there be such a large Gate of Truth?!" one sorcerer couldn't help but exclaim.

"Wait, if something from reality touches the Gate of Truth..."

"In theory, no material can travel through the Gate of Truth, but in this situation..."

When the giant Gate of Truth was fully formed, the Rust Crow seemed to receive some information. He shattered the floor-to-ceiling glass and leaped directly toward the Gate of Truth.

“‘Crown.’ Danzel, just descended into reality, suddenly found herself detached from Annan’s body, and her soul rapidly burned, turning into smoke and flying south.”

“‘Wisdom.’ The diamond-shaped blood mark Zuventas had condensed from slaughtering his kin suddenly flew south on its own.”

“‘Comprehension.’ ‘Mercy.’ ‘Severity.’ ‘Beauty.’ ‘Victory.’ ‘Glory.’ ‘Fundamental.’”

Raising the perspective to overlook the entire Kingdom of the Gospel, one could see a clear inverted tree pattern. Ritual energy from various parts of the Kingdom of the Gospel converged and flowed into Azura!

“And finally...” The Rust Crow bit his index finger, letting his blood drip into the Gate of Truth: “‘Kingdom.’”

“Boom!”

A clearly visible Aurora Veil rose over the entire Kingdom of the Gospel. The Mermaid Palace, conglomerates, Red Hats, and criminal gangs... Unbeknownst to all, the Four Pillars Cult had already devoured the entire Kingdom of the Gospel. Following the leader’s command, their life energy also flowed along the inverted tree into the final node-Kingdom!

Deceiving countless sorcerers, manipulating billions of lives!

The Gate of Truth suddenly contracted to a point, and the first level of Azura was flattened, creating a massive circular crater in the process.

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

## **Chapter 411: I Am Miss Yvarens Dog!**

“Resurrection!”

Rein Mercury’s eyes widened as he gazed at Ashe standing behind Nona, his eyes filled with shock and desire.

No wonder the first Scheme was so intricate, no wonder the Kingdom Ritual was so grand!

This was truly a resurrection ritual, reconstructing the dead, reversing life and death!

Among the spellcaster community, there is a very peculiar mindset: the weaker and more ignorant the spellcaster, the more they believe resurrection is a simple matter. Because they have seen many people who had their heads bashed in but were saved in time, they equate it to resurrection. They assume real resurrection couldn't be that much harder, right?

Only those who delve deep into the upper echelons of the Virtual Realm, study countless handbooks, and learn from the experiences of many predecessors realize that resurrection is the greatest Divine Intervention in the world.

The Mercury family members are fragile “glass people”; sunlight, table corners, toys on the floor... Mercury was always easily harmed by his environment since childhood. So, after becoming a spellcaster, almost all of them dual-trained in the Water Sect to become Healers, and Rein was no exception. Years ago, when Rein's younger sister's soul returned to the Time Continent, Rein, who was proficient in Healing Miracles, also tried to find a way to resurrect his loved one.

But he quickly discovered that healing and resurrection are fundamentally different matters.

Healing the living is easy, resurrecting the dead is as hard as climbing to heaven!

The death of a spellcaster generally goes through three processes: physical demise, which includes broken hearts, head injuries, or bodies reduced to ashes—this is the only stage a healing spellcaster can intervene; the soul's fall, where the spellcaster's soul is pulled by gravity into the six-layered hell, which cleanses all excess “impurities” from the soul; merging into the Virtual Realm, where the soul, after the purification of hell, settles in a corner of the Virtual Realm, becoming a source of knowledge for the next generation of spellcasters.

If a spellcaster dies completely, it means they have become a spellcaster projection, and resurrecting them requires three things: finding their soul entity in the Virtual Realm, retrieving their heartbeat from hell, and reconstructing their physical body in the real world—the last step is crucial; if the soul and body are not compatible, the soul will inevitably fall off again.

For example, Annan's ancestor summons; her ancestor must return to the Virtual Realm after existing in reality for a period. A non-original soul and body will always experience wear and tear, and as this wear accumulates to a certain point, the body can no longer contain the soul. S



However, this bodily issue can be circumvented, such as by repairing and patching up the original corpse. But in the first Scheme, it was clearly about directly reconstructing, weaving a brand new and perfectly fitting body from nothing!

Yet for a spellcaster, let alone crafting a new body, just finding a soul entity and retrieving a heartbeat is completely impossible—this is undoubtedly a domain only a Divine Sovereign could touch!

In comparison, the Rituals of the first nine Schemes seem exceptionally cost-effective. Temporarily summoning an ancestor to possess you, inheriting predecessors' knowledge, obtaining past powers... although the costs are also extremely high, it's not true resurrection. Therefore, the Ritual process appears considerably easier, something Rein and the others could accomplish alone.

And what about the final, first Scheme?

Years of planning, a workforce numbering in the hundreds of thousands to millions, and a risk factor so high that “seeking one’s own doom” makes it sound almost euphemistic—no matter how you look at it, only a “madman” can describe it!

If they weren’t mad, why join the Four Pillars Cult?

If they weren’t mad, why would they conceive and implement such a Scheme?

If they weren’t mad—

How could they create a shadow kingdom just to resurrect one man?

Therefore, everyone gazed at Ashe with a conflicted look, hoping he’d hurry up and die, yet wishing he’d survive a bit longer. After all, Ashe had appeared in three ranking lists consecutively, and regardless of whether he died or lived, he’d undoubtedly bring significant disaster to the Gospel... he was a true calamity child!

Among the spellcasters, ‘Weeping Sand Red Cap’ Cleos’ feelings were the most complicated.

Because she knew that Harvey, Igor, and Ashe were all individuals Annan had picked up casually. She was there when Annan signed the Pact with them, even standing nearby as a physical threat.

It was like witnessing a historic moment.

Cleos originally thought it was just an unmemorable day. Compared to these few outsiders, the runaway Eternal Presence was what truly troubled her. Yet, life is indeed full of surprises; it turns out it was these down-and-out strangers who would cause

Gospel to be swayed by storms, while the once-arrogant Cult Leader was struggling to make a new start somewhere far away.

Cleos now even doubted whether Annan had deceived her—did she really find those three in the wild? Were they not handpicked from some Dark God academy, a demon's nest, or an apocalyptic summer camp for elite students?

Feeling the piercing gazes of everyone around him, Ashe instinctively hugged Nona's waist, ready to grab Auntie and run at any moment. However, Ashe suddenly turned back to look at Annan and asked out of the blue, "Did you really not conspire with Igor?"

"No," Annan's expression turned slightly amused. "What are you speculating about?"

"Because of the Young Lady, our future is inevitably the outcome of deceiving Gospel. But wrong as it is, within Gospel's own logical framework, these erroneous outcomes cannot be contradictory or inconsistent with our characters," Ashe explained. "According to the other families that appeared in the images, the Ranking of Schemes at least includes consortium families, and those in the Art Ranking are struggling to maintain their status. The only one left in the Family Ranking is the Necromancy family... which means the chronological order is the Ranking of Schemes, the Art Ranking, and then the Family Ranking."

Annan nodded; everyone more or less had this figured out after viewing the Future Ranking.

"In the Family Ranking, Harvey said he obtained the location of the Necromancy angel's tomb from the Belldate family, yet he's not particularly known for gathering intelligence, and his social contacts don't include living people," Ashe glanced at Alice who was sitting on the coffin, and she nodded in agreement. "This means that the intelligence [Belldate possesses Angelic Heritage] must have come from someone else."

Ashe then turned to look at the Belldate main house. "However, the Belldate family has only two members, an older sister and a younger sister, and they would never betray their family's secrets... but now, the Belldate family has another person. And in the 'Ranking of Schemes,' Gospel has identified that person as someone who would never forsake us."

"'Would never forsake us'..." Annan chewed on these words and suddenly smiled, "Perhaps so."

"But you—"

"But I didn't lie. Eye contact, body language, direct communication, written messages... I exchanged no intelligence with Igor." Annan shrugged, "We have no conspiracy; the only thing we share is a consensus."

“What consensus?”

Annan did not answer, instead glancing down at Lise.

Lise thought for a moment and then gently pulled Ashe’s hand away from Nona’s slender waist. She whispered into his ear, “Dad, why did Aunt Annan bring us to Mephila?”

Ashe was taken aback.

While Ashe and the others were chatting, the spellcasters came to a consensus.

“Senhaeser,” Rein said calmly, “I’m sorry, but we need to revise our terms—you can only take your daughter and other non-essential personnel. Ashe Heath and Archibald Harvey must be handed over to different forces for supervision.”

Although Gospel had not explicitly stated what kind of threat Ashe posed, his historical role in linking together the three future disaster ranking lists was enough for no one to dare consider him a valueless 0-star waste.

In other words, the mere fact that he was breathing was already the greatest blasphemy against Gospel.

He needed to be strictly monitored, and solitary confinement was essential!

To use a card game analogy, if Ashe were a card, he’d have little effect on his own. But if he paired with Annan Dolan, Archibald Harvey, or Rust Crow, it would be an unbeatable combo!

Now everyone recognized the significant threat Ashe posed. Even Cleos, who had a deep connection with Annan, no longer harbored old feelings and tacitly agreed to Rein’s stringent terms.

Moreover, with Rein, Zuvendas, and Ina all in agreement, Ashe Heath would be handed over to the state by Cleos herself! From a standpoint of interest alone, Cleos wouldn’t permit Qenna to take Ashe away!

The spellcasters slowly began to lift off, surrounding Qenna and her group from all directions!

Ashe sensed the impending danger and was about to step back when Nona grabbed his right hand. While Annan comforted Little Banjeet, who was crouching down with his head in his hands, she kept her eyes on Qenna’s back.

Qenna lifted her head, looking up at the four spellcasters from the Sanctuary in mid-air. For the first time, there was a trace of vulnerability in her voice. “Can’t we discuss this further?”

“Hand over Heath and Harvey,” Zuvendas replied, “and we can take our time to talk.”

The Elf matriarch exhaled deeply. “I see... now I understand.”

“I will only protect my people, my clansmen.”

Lise clung tightly to Ashe, looking down at her hand mirror, so anxious she was nearly in tears.

“So,” Qenna said slowly as she drew out her dual guns, her tone solemn and steady, “I will not let you take Annan Senhaeser and Ashe Senhaeser.”

“I’m sorry,” Rein said, “but you leave us no choice.”

Alice blinked, reaching out to tap the coffin lid, attempting to draw the others’ attention—what about us?

Just as the tension reached its breaking point, the Gospel Book belatedly revealed more details about the first place on the Ranking of Schemes:

“Ranking of Schemes , 1st place: Ashe’s Kingdom Resurrection Ritual”

“Synopsis: To resurrect Ashe Heath, Four Pillars Cult leader Igor Bukin initiated the Kingdom Resurrection Ritual on April 10, 1678, based on the previous nine completed rituals.”

“Mastermind: Igor Bukin.”

Everyone glanced at the information but didn’t give it much thought, already familiar with Rust Crow’s name. Only Yvaren, watching from a distance, snapped out of her bewildered state upon seeing Igor’s name.

In a split second, Yvaren realized she was caught in a scheme not revealed by Gospel.

She immediately made the right decision—activating the fireworks installation in the front garden, using the brilliant display to capture everyone’s attention!

“Everyone, I—”

Thunk!

With a muffled, invisible blow, not only did the boasting spellcasters fall from the sky, but Yvaren's only chance to clear her name was stuck in her throat.

Simultaneously, the entirety of the Belldate manor began to glow.

Hell, the Sea of Trees, mountains, grasslands, the main house... statues in all locations started to light up, with faint blue rivers of light flowing steadily from Mephila, continuously pouring into the statues throughout the manor.

In the blink of an eye, only Ashe and his companions were still standing. Everyone else, including Qenna, had collapsed to the ground, their bodies trembling and unable to move, like puppets ready to be controlled.

Despite this, Ashe and his group didn't dare to make any sudden moves. In their eyes, it seemed like Miss Yvaren had shouted out to protect them, and then everyone fell down—oh my gosh, Miss Yvaren is so gentle!

At that moment, Ashe noticed a new message in his Gospel Book. The sender was... Rust Crow?

After reading the message, Ashe's expression grew hesitant. But he soon took a deep breath, steeling himself, and courageously walked to the center of the area.

He looked around, meeting the panicked gazes of everyone, and then flashed a wickedly charming smile:

"Sorry, but I'm actually Miss Yvaren's dog. To offend me is to offend Belldate... and you're all finished!"

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

## **Chapter 412: Domination!**

Yvaren Belldate!?

Everyone immediately believed it—this was clearly Belldate's territory, and they had just been ensnared by the various mechanisms including volcanic eruptions, white mist from the Sea of Knowledge, Reverse Rain from the Golden Flow, and more. Even Sanctuary spellcasters had not been spared.

Indeed, if it was Belldate from the Angel Family, she did possess the power to suppress them.

Moreover...

Rein and the others turned their heads with great effort, looking at Yvaren in the distance, who was watching them from the railing. In the fading light of the fireworks, she observed the group without any expression, like a homeowner releasing the dogs and then watching the show.

“Belldate...” Rein trembled all over. Every rebellious thought in his mind—“stand up,” “gather spellforce,” “cast a Miracle,” “activate the Artifact Spirit”—was extinguished the moment it surfaced.

Only fear, shame, and panic remained in his heart. Even anger faded instantly, incapable of fueling his emotional energy.

There was no sealing of spellforce, no restriction on movement. Instead, they were directly dominated from the source of their thoughts!

Dominance Sect!

Rein never expected that his first encounter with Belldate’s Dominance Sect would end in such a complete defeat!

Clearly, Belldate was extremely displeased with their actions and used the Dominance Sect to directly suppress these intruders on her private property!

“You...” He was at a loss for words, unable to utter even a harsh word, as curses were quenched before they could leave his mind. “This time, the Mercury Family... trespassed on Belldate Manor without permission. On behalf of Mercury, I apologize and ask for Miss Belldate’s forgiveness.”

Zuvendas was no different. As a renowned spellcaster from Sanctuary and a high-ranking leader in his Family, he now could only wriggle on the lawn like a caterpillar, his eyes wide and teeth clenched, as he said, “The Kaesrei Family... offers the sincerest apologies to Belldate!”

The others seemed to be reminded by Zuvendas’ words, and their apologies grew louder and more solemn: “On behalf of the Vastino clan, I offer a profound reflection, remembering Belldate’s tolerance and respect. We will make a grand compensation for Belldate’s losses in the future!” “The Roland Family has learned a great lesson from this event. We are willing to go to any lengths to earn Belldate’s friendship, even if it means going bankrupt, just to receive an olive branch from Belldate!”

Though their words were increasingly flattering, the grim looks on their faces translated them to something like, “You have the guts to kill me now, or I’ll come back with my family to slaughter yours.”

Like the Mental Sect, the Dominance Sect also focuses on three elements: thoughts, will, and emotions. The domination that Rein and the others were subjected to was ‘Thought Domination.’ All their thoughts were directly twisted and suppressed, making them unable to move even a finger, and the spirits within their souls couldn’t receive their commands.

For the individuals involved, this was undoubtedly a terrifying and awful experience. They could keenly feel their thoughts being ripped away and crushed, as if a stick was stirring their brains. Thus, Rein and the others’ concessions were genuinely heartfelt; they only wanted to escape this humiliating state of being puppets as quickly as possible!

However, faced with the submission and surrender of Sanctuary spellcasters and consortium families, Yvaren remained unmoved, her aloof demeanor as steadfast as her blue hair tonight.

“Ahem!” Ashe coughed lightly and gestured for Lise and the others to stay calm. He then turned and bowed to Yvaren. “Lady Blue Rose, do you wish to accept the apologies of these insolent individuals? Or would you prefer that we, your loyal dogs, punish their baseness and trample their dignity for you?”

Who is Blue Rose? You say it like we have some special designation between us, but I’m not that familiar with you!

And it wasn’t me who did this. I hadn’t intended to dominate you all so crudely!

You’ve all misunderstood. The real culprits are Igor and Bukin!

Yvaren had countless things she wanted to express, but the ‘Thought Domination’ she was under was the most thorough: not only were her actions controlled, but even speaking, facial expressions, and frowning were all under domination. She couldn’t even pretend to pass out because the moment she had the ‘command’ to collapse, it was immediately purged!

It was as if she were a monarch held hostage by a power-hungry minister, every expression and movement entirely controlled by the regent. People only saw her tyrannical rule but failed to see the evil minister pulling the strings behind the Court!

At this moment, the only emotions stewing in her heart were her anger toward Igor and her regret for being so slow to recognize the signs.

She should have noticed sooner!

When the Rust Crow mentioned that the new dogma of the Four Pillars Cult was “Increase what they desire, gift what they need,” she should have realized that the Rust Crow was Igor—because these words are at the core of Belldate’s Dominance Sect principles!

The Rust Crow was able to expand the Four Pillars Cult to an unprecedented scale because he stole knowledge from the Dominance Sect and applied it to cult management. Although the Rust Crow didn’t receive the blessing of an Angel ancestor, the Four Pillars’ gifts were probably just as powerful!

From the beginning, Igor never intended to betray the Funeral Gospel!

He came for Belldate’s Dominance Sect! Even the Gospel saw through it!

But Yvaren couldn’t help but feel a deep confusion: she had repeatedly verified that Igor indeed hadn’t conspired with anyone else; this was purely Igor acting alone. But... how was that possible?

Was he not afraid of losing the trust of his companions?

Why did Annan and the others subtly cooperate with his actions?

More importantly, how did he seize the highest authority of Belldate, even to the point where I, the patriarch, am now under his domination?

Could it be that I have become the Substitute, and he is the real Igor Belldate?

Smoldering confusion gnawed at the blue-haired girl, making her doubt if her father had once left a Bewitcher love child in the Blood Moon Kingdom.

“Lady Blue Rose, we understand completely.” Even though Yvaren remained silent, Ashe continued speaking as if to himself, “Your orders are their fate!”

Rejoining the Funeral group, Ashe noticed that aside from Little Banjeet, who was busy sucking his fingers, Alice, Annan, and Lise were all looking at him. Annan, however, seemed unsurprised by the events that had just transpired.

“You knew this whole time?” Ashe asked in a hushed voice.

“I’ve always said we share a common understanding,” Annan replied with a smile. “Even I didn’t expect Igor could pull off something this grand.”

“Can someone explain what’s going on?” Alice, sitting cross-legged on the coffin, scratched her head and asked, “What happened? And what is this common understanding?”



Ashe responded, “The common understanding is—why did the Young Lady bring us to Mephila?”

“Hmm? To escape from Vamora, and...” Alice pondered for a moment, “To prepare for the upcoming ranking list?”

“Although we were immediately captured by Yvaren due to the Family Ranking, even without the Family Ranking, my fugitive status could have been used as leverage by Yvaren to propose a trade for our stay in exchange for protection,” Ashe then looked at Annan. “In other words, the Young Lady likely foresaw what would happen before bringing us to Mephila—because she knows Belldate well, and also understands Yvaren.”

“She knew Yvaren would try to turn us against each other and even anticipated that Yvaren would ultimately betray us.”

“So, what was the true purpose of bringing us to Mephila?”

Lise immediately replied, “To have us experience being turned and betrayed!”

“More precisely, to have us step into Yvaren’s trap,” Ashe continued. “The Young Lady deliberately avoided discussing the relevant details with us, watching us walk step by step into Yvaren’s snare... while ignorance made us easy prey, it also served as our camouflage.”

“In a world where the Gospel can detect lies, only the ignorant can lie convincingly.” The Cult Leader turned to the Purple Moth. “Igor may not have guessed that the third ranking list would be the Ranking of Schemes, but from the Young Lady’s actions, he caught onto the key element of this trip to Mephila—actively stepping into Yvaren’s trap, and then using our ignorance to deceive Yvaren in return!”

Pretend to be fooled by Yvaren, only to turn around and fool Yvaren?

Lise and Alice both looked at Annan in bewilderment, as if to ask, “Why go to such lengths?” and “Are you out of your mind?”

Annan shrugged, “I wasn’t intentionally hiding anything, but if you couldn’t figure out even that much, you wouldn’t have been recognized by the Ranking of Schemes.”

“Actually, I didn’t plan on you deceiving Yvaren—that was a bonus. In my view, as long as you realized I was hiding something, the Ranking of Schemes would judge that you had the potential of a Con Artist. Clearly, only Igor passed that test.”

“However, I thought Igor might swindle a bit of money or something. I didn’t expect he’d aim to swallow Belldate whole...” She spread her hands helplessly. “So, what does he need us to do?”

“Bullying with power,” Ashe pointed to the spellcasters squirming on the ground behind them.

Annan quickly caught on, “Brilliant... this way, all their hatred will be focused on Belldate. Even if we escape, they’ll assume Belldate is hiding us!”

“Sounds like my kind of job,” Alice stretched lazily. “Just as long as we don’t kill them, right?”

“Lise isn’t good at bullying people,” the white-haired girl scratched her head.

Ashe picked up Little Banjeet, “Here, use this water gun. It will definitely leave a heavy impact on their young minds.”

“Does Senhaeser need to join too?” Annan suddenly asked.

Ashe glanced at her, “One Belldate is enough to attract all the hatred. Do you really want to bring in Senhaeser too?”

Annan realized her mistake—Senhaeser insisting on protecting them earlier had already drawn enough ire. If they now showed preferential treatment to Senhaeser, it would only confirm that Belldate, Senhaeser, and Funeral were all in cahoots.

That wouldn’t do. All the hatred of the Gospel Kingdom should be directed at Belldate, not scattered to include Senhaeser.

As the Funeral group approached the spellcasters, Rein and the others felt a sense of impending doom.

“What are you planning to... Ah!”

“You... I’m a Sanctuary spellcaster...”

“Urgh...”

The Funeral team hadn’t intended to be overly violent, but this group had spent the entire night hunting, ambushing, and terrorizing them, even trying to separate and imprison them until just moments ago. If it hadn’t been for Igor’s last-minute turnaround, Ashe and his companions would now be scattered and separated... Thinking of this, even though they didn’t go all out, their spirits seemed eager to work overtime on their own.

“This is the fate of those who offend Belldate!”

“Howl, scream, repent!”

“If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands~”

The scene grew increasingly brutal, but with the Healing Miracle in place, as long as the spellcasters didn’t die, they could be healed. Therefore, Ashe let them continue.

After doubling up with Substitute to bully and beat several of their pursuers, Ashe felt invigorated and began seeking a new target, but his foot unexpectedly bumped into a soft body.

Looking down, Ashe locked eyes with Qenna, who lay sprawled on the ground. Despite being pinned, Qenna remained proud and cold, showing no sign of panic. Ashe, however, instinctively avoided her gaze.

Wasn’t this Annan’s area? Ashe turned to see Annan had skipped over Qenna and was now putting on a show of reprimanding her Auntie.

In a moment of realization, Ashe understood Annan’s dilemma. Despite Purple Moth usually speaking of her mother through gritted teeth, now given the chance to openly beat Qenna, Annan chickened out, leaving the mess for Ashe to handle.

What a troublesome mother-daughter pair.

“Ashe,” Qenna said calmly, “do you dare touch me?”

“Why wouldn’t I?” Ashe snapped, sitting down on her. “I’ve been annoyed with you for a long time. Don’t forget, in the Future Ranking, you’re just my servant!”

“For disrespecting me!” Slap!

“For not calling me master!” Slap!

“For not wearing my ring!” Slap!

Qenna watched as his hand flailed in front of her face, her hair tousled by the gust of wind but not a single strike landing on her nose. Instead, Ashe’s Substitute was the one slapping its own thigh to mimic the sound of slaps.

“I am wearing it,” Qenna suddenly said.

Ashe was startled and looked down to see that Qenna was indeed wearing the Mist Spirit Ring. He had thought that such a symbolic and humiliating future reward would be resisted by the patriarchs, especially since most of them were Sanctuary spellcasters. The ring’s effect meant little to them, and wearing it was simply too disgraceful.

Just as Ashe averted his gaze, Qenna suddenly opened her mouth and bit his finger. Ashe was shocked and thought he was about to be counterattacked. However, perhaps

because of the mental domination she was under, Qenna's bite was weak and feeble, causing no pain—it felt more like his finger was just being held in her mouth.

Noticing that Annan seemed to be looking his way, Ashe had a stroke of genius and, with his left hand, decided to put on a show: “How dare you bite my finger! Let go! You’ll pay for this! Tonight, I’ll show you who the master really is!”

Slap! Slap! Slap! Slap!

His Substitute slapped its own thigh with loud sound effects.

On the second-floor garden of Belldate's main residence, the door to Yvaren's office quietly opened, and a red-haired girl in a butler's uniform entered.

Behind the desk sat Igor Bukin, the future revitalizer of the Four Pillars Cult, the first Con Artist certified by the Gospel, and the imminent equal of the “Ghost King Harvey”—a human natural disaster. He sat with his eyes closed, leaning back in his chair, as if taking a nap.

“Sorry, have you been waiting long?” Anfel asked.

“No,” Igor shook his head.

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

## Chapter 413: Igors Debt

The two conversed with phrases that resembled a couple on a date, but they were neither a couple nor was there any agreement between them.

“Congratulations, Mr. Igor,” Anfel pulled out a chair and gracefully sat across from the Con Artist.

“What's there to congratulate about being number one on the Ranking of Schemes?”

Igor rubbed his temples and said, “Now the entire Gospel is comparing me to Harvey. I've even heard people in Mephila saying that the ‘Rust Crow’ and the ‘Ghost King’ are the gatekeepers of Doomsday... Some even think I'm more valuable because only Harvey can inherit the legacy of the Necromancy Angel, but the Ritual knowledge I'll possess in the future is core technology that everyone can use.”

“Speaking of which, does Gospel have a complaint hotline? I really want to complain about its lack of user-friendly experience.” Igor sighed, resting his face on his hand. “Schemes that get exposed — are they still schemes? Can a revealed mystery still make people laugh?”

“Can’t they?” Anfel retorted.

Igor stared at the red-haired girl, a slight smile playing on his lips. “Of course... they can.”

“The only insight I’ve gained in my career is that there are far too many fools in this world and not enough con artists. The only lesson humans have learned from history is that they never learn any lesson.”

“Whether a good reputation or a bad one, reputation itself is a scarce resource; how you use it is up to you. Now everyone knows I’m a master of schemes. Subconsciously, they’ll refuse to believe my words. By slightly exploiting this cognitive bias, I can set countless traps for my enemies.”

“Even if they already know the future schemes, it won’t enhance their wisdom; it will turn into their ‘stupidity.’ As long as I slightly change the question format, these test-takers who can’t apply one concept to another will fall into my traps just as easily—because the essence of fraud is not ‘information asymmetry,’ but ‘desire.’”

“Increase what they desire, gift what they need.” Igor said with genuine appreciation, “I am truly fortunate to have come to Mephila, to Belldate. If not for this journey, I wouldn’t have such a clear understanding of my path.”

Anfel blinked, “You really like this principle of the Dominance Sect?”

“It’s too narrow, too short-sighted,” Igor smiled and wagged his finger, “This is not only the core of the Dominance Sect but also a summary of societal rules, and indeed the laws of the world’s operation.”

“Though the societal systems of Blood Moon and Gospel are vastly different, they boil down to these two sentences: incite the people’s desires and then hand over the means of production to them. Ultimately, social operation is merely the ruling class defrauding the lower level populace and plundering the value of their production. It’s just that fraud is beautified into political platforms, and plunder is hidden within imperceptible gears of operation.”

“The Virtual Realm is no different; spellcasters spend their whole lives striving, and in the end, all their wisdom becomes nourishment for the Virtual Realm... What scythe is sharper than death? Who’s harvest is more thorough than the Virtual Realm’s? Con artists like me who still need to speak are actually third-rate; true fraud doesn’t require

words and has always existed, with countless intelligent people dedicating themselves to it over millennia.”

“The desire society taps into is ‘a better life,’ and the Virtual Realm incites the desire for ‘greater power,’ but fundamentally, they both use the same thing to deceive living beings.” Igor raised a finger, “And that is ‘the future.’”

“For the sake of the future, anyone is willing to give up everything.”

“The Rust Crow understands this, which is why he is invincible, fooling all beings and toying with Gospel.” Igor clasped his hands together and smiled, “Although I’m still not the Rust Crow, by observing the Ranking of Schemes, my theoretical knowledge is sufficient. All I lack now is practical experience.”

“I have no doubt that Mr. Igor will attain the heights seen in the Ranking of Schemes,” Anfel said. “But my congratulations are not for the fame, future knowledge, or material rewards that the Ranking of Schemes brings to you. It’s because, with the Ranking of Schemes’ explanation, you don’t have to worry about being misunderstood.”

“Isn’t it true that you’re actually very grateful to the Gospel?” Anfel blinked, “Gospel is your best witness.”

Igor’s smile faded as he calmly looked at Anfel.

“Are you here to stop me?”

“How could I? I don’t have that capability.” Anfel shook her head. “I’m not even a spellcaster.”

“However, you’re not going to meet Yvaren later, although she has many questions she wants to ask you. So, I’m here to ask on her behalf.”

“Fine,” Igor said. “I also have questions. How about we take turns—one question for each of us?”

“A fair trade,” Anfel nodded. “Yvaren has plenty of questions, but what she most wants to know is how Mr. Igor managed to seize the highest authority of Belldate?”

Without a doubt, Igor’s betrayal this time has pushed Belldate into a cesspit, leaving them covered in filth that can’t be washed away.

Because everyone in the Gospel knows that the core technology of the Dominance Sect belongs to Belldate.

Now, as long as the Funeral group escapes, everyone will think that Belldate is harboring them, no matter how much Yvaren tries to clarify.

If she claims that “Igor seized Belldate’s highest authority” and expects people to believe it, it would be like Harvey saying he found a live-in girlfriend—everyone’s response would be, “You must be deceiving the Gospel (girlfriend), right?”

Your family has ruled the city with this core technology for hundreds of years, and the only mistake in hundreds of years just happens to occur in this instance?

Who’s going to believe that?

Even if Gospel says you’re right, people will construct a thousand conspiracy theories to prove you’re wrong!

And taking it a step further, even if Igor is 99% in the wrong, does that mean Yvaren is completely blameless?

It takes two to tango—why didn’t Igor target other families?

Belldate must also be at fault!

Moreover, Yvaren indeed has a fault—if she hadn’t tried to control the spellcasters of the eight major families, this mess wouldn’t have occurred.

Regardless, the eight families are doomed, the only difference being whether they suffer under Yvaren’s draining control or get directly crushed by Igor.

“The first day I arrived at the manor, I noticed the sheer number of statues here—it felt excessive, and the variety seemed... incredibly comprehensive,” Igor said. “Given that I’m a mental spellcaster, I began to wonder... Could these be containers for storing mental energy?”

“Yvaren is merely a two-wings spellcaster; her soul cannot bear the mental energy of millions. Moreover, the Dominance Sect has been part of your family’s heritage for so long, there must be a mechanism so foolproof that even an idiot could use it.”

“The reason there are so many types of statues is to accommodate different individuals, ideally funneling similar mental energies into the same statue, then purifying and eliminating the waste.”

Anfel nodded. “I’ve heard that most of the statues used to depict farmers in simple clothes, but now they mostly represent company employees in formal attire.”

“Then, I asked the Gospel where the statue most similar to me was located.” At this point, Igor looked a bit exasperated. “Whether it was a glitch with the Gospel or an issue with your family’s sorting mechanism, it determined that the statue most similar to me was a Bewitcher paladin.”

Anfel covered her mouth with a giggle. “I think it fits quite well.”

“So, I conducted many experiments next to the statue,” Igor continued. “Most of them were futile; mental miracles had no effect on the statue—until...”

“I used bell points.”

Anfel made a sound of realization. “Ah, I see.”

“After using bell points, while performing internal observation, I noticed a wisp of my mental energy being transferred into the statue,” Igor explained. “It was such a minuscule amount that it was nearly imperceptible. The next second, my mental energy recovered, and I even suspected it was just my imagination.”

“Then, I delved deeper and discovered that whether I used 1 bell point or 100 bell points, the loss of mental energy was the same. Meaning, this mechanism wasn’t about extracting energy—it was about... connection.”

“The statues are the base stations, individuals are the terminals, and the mode of connection is bell points.”

“I previously wondered why your family went to the trouble of using ‘bell points’ as currency. You don’t need virtual currency for profit, after all.” Igor looked down at the Gospel Book. “It wasn’t until that moment that I realized, ‘bell points’ weren’t for the convenience of the public; they were for your family. Simultaneously, bell points are also your family’s most secure safeguard.”

“The highest authority is crucial, but not every patriarch of Belldate is a smart person. How do you guarantee that Belldate’s authority won’t be deceived by outsiders? It can’t be physical, it can’t be a secret code, it can’t be a spirit... Your ancestors came up with an ingenious answer.”

“A virtual currency completely controlled by your family: bell points.”

“The act of ‘spending bell points’ itself is a domination miracle!” Igor’s tone was full of admiration. “The specific operation is—if you can pay off a debtor’s debt, you can dominate the debtor’s pledged cognitive power!”

“Everyone’s price is the amount of their debt!”

“There’s no such thing as the highest authority. The person who can throw out the most bell points at any moment holds the highest authority. But undoubtedly, the patriarch of Belldate, who has nearly unlimited bell points, possesses the financial power to dominate all debtors!”



“There’s another interesting aspect of the design: only those with debt can activate this system. So, if outsiders dare to touch the domination system, they’ll first have to become debtors of Belldate... it’s like delivery right to your doorstep.”

“But this design also applies to the patriarch of Belldate. In other words, the patriarch too has a price.” Igor glanced at the window, as if he could see Yvaren looking out from afar. “So, to counteract this, the patriarch of Belldate only needs to incur a debt so high that no one can possibly afford it. For instance...”

“1 billion.”

He paused. “Per minute.”

Anfel tilted her head and asked, “But... Mr. Igor, you’re not exactly wealthy, are you?”

“I’m not wealthy, but Yvaren thoughtfully provided us with Bell-Pay and gave us a very high limit.” Igor spread open his Gospel Book. “Conveniently, it’s one billion.”

“But I have to say, over the centuries, you’ve made no technical innovations, not even a safeguard mechanism against retrieval. I actively used ‘Bell-Pay’ to borrow, spending 1 bell point, 2 bell points, 3 bell points... Through different numbers of transactions, after seven consecutive retrievals from the mental wave I emitted, I identified the signal that modifies the limit.”

“This is the only technically sophisticated operation in this scheme—I hacked Bell-Pay. Although my usage of Bell-Pay still leaves a record, as it’s managed by the Gospel’s financial system, and I can’t actually steal any money. But no matter how many bell points I spend, it won’t reduce my borrowing limit.”

“In other words...”

Igor turned his Gospel Book toward Anfel. “I can now incur a debt of one billion and spend one billion every second.”

Anfel looked down and saw Igor’s debt skyrocketing by the second on his Gospel Book, yet the Con Artist himself seemed unbothered.

“Yvaren doesn’t lose without reason.” The red-haired girl sighed. “You have completely unraveled the secret of Belldate’s control.”

“In the domination system, those who borrow against their own future are the dominated; while those who borrow against the futures of millions are the dominators.”

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

## Chapter 414: Shiny

“It’s my turn to ask questions.” Igor carefully chose his words, “Miss Anfel, are you the one responsible for... um, cleansing the mental energy?”

Anfel cut straight to the point: “You’re wondering if I’m the container that stores the ‘impurities,’ right? Yes, I am.”

Igor gasped.

Ever since he heard that Belldate could harness the cognitive power of millions of people and absorb their mental energy, as a mental spellcaster, Igor had a massive question—wasn’t the Belldate patriarch afraid of being poisoned?

In the realm of mental arts, any thought other than ‘I’ is a chronic poison. Schizophrenics are the prime example. Their own clean and hygienic personalities can poison them, let alone someone else’s thoughts.

It’s one thing for a day or two, but if you’re immersed in other people’s thoughts for a long time, it will inevitably cause mental fatigue, skewed self-recognition, and bipolar disorder.

Actually, Belldate’s domination mechanism of “from the debtor, used for the debtor” isn’t an earth-shattering idea, nor is it patented exclusively by the Necromancy Angel. So why haven’t other domination spellcasters done this before? Why is Belldate the sole proprietor in all of Gospel?

Because mental energy, consciousness, and thoughts are an inseparable trinity.

Just like how hitting the jackpot makes you exhilarated, and being constipated makes you gloomy, human thoughts directly affect mental fluctuations. Mental energy is filled with all sorts of thoughts and ideas, like a fruit pulp orange juice. The mental energy Belldate absorbs is surely full of ‘thought impurities.’ Using this mental energy directly is no different from drinking poison to quench your thirst or eating shit to stave off hunger.

If there’s a wolf pack domination spellcaster who tries to mimic Belldate by absorbing the mental energy of a wolf pack to control the wolves, his only fate would be to turn into a wolf with human skin. He would be polluted and assimilated by countless wolf thoughts until he forgets his own identity.

Thus, domination spellcasters are undoubtedly single-way broadcasters; they would never absorb the mental energy of their subjects. Even Lala Fatty wouldn't dare take it lightly.

Conversely, the fact that Belldate dares to absorb the mental energy of intelligent creatures means they have a mechanism to 'purify impurities.' Indeed, Igor's biggest suspect was the statues. Storing mental energy is one thing, but if a piece of stone can filter out active thoughts, Igor might as well suggest adding healthcare functions to the statues—how could a mere stone creation possess such comprehensive capabilities?

It wasn't until Igor noticed that Anfel had no regular work and spent her days wandering around the manor, touching this statue and that statue, that he felt as if the answer was presenting itself just like the solution to a fill-in-the-blank question.

The Con Artist asked, "So, your special ability as a container is that you can read anyone's thoughts?"

Anfel shook her head. "I can't read thoughts. If I could, Yvaren wouldn't have been deceived by you... I can just become the version of myself that everyone likes."

She slowly closed her eyes, her expression serene. "I can listen to countless thoughts, understand countless preferences, and perceive countless secrets... No matter who stands before me, I can pull a persona similar to them from my database; in fact, they might already be in my database."

"Have you ever seen a Mimosa? When you touch it, it shyly closes its leaves. I'm like that Mimosa. I don't do it on purpose, but whoever stands before me, I will unconsciously adapt to their most favored personality."

Curious, Igor asked, "So what would you be like if you had to interact with both me and Ashe simultaneously?"

Anfel replied, "When chatting in a group, I find the overlapping areas and show the sides you both like; when conversing one-on-one, I switch to a specific personality."

"And what about you?" Igor asked. "What does the real you think?"

"I can listen to countless thoughts," Anfel answered, leaving it at that.

But she could never listen to her own thoughts.

Anfel was like a mirror, reflecting everyone's most liked side but unable to show her own image.

However, Igor had to admit that conversing with Anfel was indeed very pleasant. He naturally enjoyed discussions that involved only key intelligence, leaving the conclusions to be inferred by himself. It gave his brain just the right amount of exercise.

Within the Funeral, Igor found the most comfortable communication with Annan, followed by Banjeet and Lise (the mature version). At the bottom were, unsurprisingly, those two artiodactyla members who could barely understand conclusions unless spelled out in the simplest terms.

"Now it's my turn to ask," Anfel said, pouring two cups of hot tea and handing one over. "Why did you deceive Belldate, Mr. Igor?" S

"The Dominance Sect knowledge of Belldate," said Igor, without hiding his criminal intentions. "Also, I needed Belldate to attract other people's hatred so we could continue our escape."

Even without the "Ranking of Schemes," the "Family Ranking" alone was enough to make everyone in Funeral a despised group stirring up trouble.

Recently, Igor had been trying to figure out how to reduce the pressure on Funeral. But given Funeral's rock-bottom reputation, the stress would only increase until the day they disbanded. So he changed his approach—if a financial storm is inevitable, why not distribute its impact to reduce personal loss?

This is why he found common ground with Yvaren. Yvaren wanted to dominate other family elite members, and Igor not only fully cooperated but also executed the plan to the end. Sure, Ashe might be Belldate's dog, but so are all of you!

"Come on, if you want to beat the dog, you'll have to step over its master's body first!"

Even if Yvaren didn't want to take the blame quietly, would she just stand there and get hit back when others retaliate?

This back-and-forth was enough to divert considerable fire away from Funeral.

"Is that all?"

"Not quite." Igor swirled his tea. "There are many reasons. For example, it was Annan's implication, or... but the biggest reason is, I wanted to."

"You wanted to?"

"Deceiving a patriarch richer than countries, orchestrating a farce involving Sanctuary spellcasters, and then shifting all the blame onto you guys..." The Con Artist shrugged. "Such an exciting and entertaining project, even without compensation, I would probably take part in it enthusiastically."

“Yvaren would be furious if she heard this,” Anfel said with a smile, sipping her tea.

“My second question,” Igor said, “why do Yvaren... no, why do all the Belldate patriarchs become cold and ruthless people?”

Anfel set down her teacup, glancing at a portrait in the office. “Yvaren didn’t become cold and ruthless; she just had her emotions... diluted.”

The red-haired girl looked at the Con Artist. “Since you’ve tried dominating others, you surely understand why Yvaren became this way.”

Igor rubbed his temples. “So, it’s because of manipulating mental energy?”

The mental energy of millions is a quantity sufficient to cause a qualitative change. Each time the Belldate patriarch initiates a domination Miracle, they need to mobilize this ‘mental sea.’ Over time and with repeated use, even though the mental sea has been purified, it still causes irreversible effects on the patriarch.

To illustrate, a normal person’s mental energy is like sugar water. Anfel has absorbed the sweetness of millions, so she has become overwhelmingly sweet, losing her own unique flavor and exuding whatever sweetness others like. Yvaren, on the other hand, each time she performs a domination Miracle, has to dissolve herself into the water of millions, diluting her own sweetness to the point where she’s as bland as water.

“Mr. Igor, how did you realize there was something wrong with Yvaren?” Anfel asked. “She laughs and talks like anyone else, gets angry and happy. How could you tell she’s cold and ruthless?”

“Is that your third question?”

“Oh, can’t you just let me have a freebie?” Anfel winked. “But sure, let’s call it that.”

“There are many reasons,” Igor replied. “She speaks highly of her relationship with Annan but shows no mercy when dealing with her. She claims to fear the revenge of the Eight Great Families, yet she acts decisively. There’s a clear distinction between her emotions and her rationality. She does have feelings, but they never affect her decisions. It’s a textbook example of a rational person.”

“But the main reason, actually, is because she wanted to set me up on a blind date with you.”

Anfel blinked. “Oh?”

“Before Annan came to Mephila, Yvaren always lived in the manor. There were only her servants there, no friends, no lovers, and no sex life. In such a situation, her only mental

solace should have been her sister. Yet, to pull me in, she entrusted her sister to a stranger she'd known for just a few days from an exotic land?"

"Trust should only be given to those who deserve it," Igor said. "After Yvaren did something so seemingly human, I knew she didn't truly care about you. Her heart is filled with black, festering blood."

"That's a bit excessive, Mr. Igor," Anfel frowned slightly. "And besides, why aren't you someone worthy of trust?"

"Haven't I proven it with my actions?" Igor pointed to his still-mounting debt.

"If you could become part of Belldate, wouldn't that make you worthy?" Anfel tilted her head. "And Yvaren did genuinely want to find a suitable partner for me. Among you all, Mr. Igor, aren't you the most suitable?"

"Impossible," Igor said. "Isn't Ashe more suitable than me?"

"Is he?"

"Of course." Igor ran his finger along the edge of the teacup. "Although he's lazy, stupid, and vulgar, with no redeeming qualities other than avoiding rain when it's pouring and not getting lost, living with him would make one feel that no obstacle is insurmountable. Even a bad mood would be noticed instantly," Igor glanced at Anfel. "And as for me, except when dealing with clients, my favorite pastime is finding superiority through belittling others' intelligence. My partners all found me too harsh; they'd rather die than work with me—so they died."

"By choosing someone as gloomy as me over the sparkling Ashe, do you really think she cares about you? I don't believe it."

"Hmm..." Anfel rested her chin in her hand. "I have something to say, but I'm not sure if I should..."

"You shouldn't," Igor interrupted. "I have one last question—are the two of you bearing separate costs of domination to resist the ancestor's call?"

Anfel's lips parted slightly. She clapped her hands and laughed, "Incredible, Mr. Igor! How did you figure that out? Yes, that's exactly the reason!"

Since seeing the Belldate Family topping the Family Ranking, Igor had been deeply puzzled—why would the Angel of Necromancy, who clearly wanted resurrection, not train his descendants to be suitable vessels for his revival? Why would he instead forbid them from entering his tomb?

Isn't that unnecessarily complicating things?

It's nonsense to suggest that the Angel of Necromancy cherished his descendants; even Harvey certified that the Angel of Necromancy was an unoriginal necromancer who had no regard for life. And a self-preserving spellcaster would not harbor so many scruples.

So, it had to be the other way around—the Angel of Necromancy wasn't refusing his descendants' inheritance; rather, his descendants were constantly avoiding their ancestor's schemes!

Following this logic, the Angel of Necromancy would definitely transform his descendants into ideal vessels for possession. So, what kind of vessel would be most suitable for a revival?

First, it should have a highly active mind but lack personal will.

Second, it should have an abundant mental energy but be devoid of personal emotions.

And ideally, it should have vast personal wealth to allow the Angel of Necromancy to quickly regain his former power.

Anfel could listen to the thoughts of countless people but had lost her personal will, becoming Yvaren's perfect tool—a mindless entity.

Yvaren could mobilize immense mental energy but had diluted her personal emotions, morphing into a cold, unfeeling rationalist—a heartless entity.

Putting these two together, a being without heart and mind, wouldn't that be the perfect vessel for the Angel of Necromancy to possess?

"In other words, Harvey isn't ungrateful..." Igor said. "When he claimed he wanted to give the Belldate Family eternal rest, he truly just wanted to free you from your fate... I'm done asking."

Actually, Igor still had many questions: Why does the Belldate Family insist on inheriting the Dominance Sect? Why haven't they tried to kill the Angel of Necromancy instead? Why are they bearing such a fate without fighting back? But considering that this fate was a scheme devised by the Angel of Necromancy for his resurrection and that the Belldate Family could split the burden among siblings, their ancestors truly had done their best...

"It's my turn to ask the last question," Anfel said.

But just at that moment, the bookmark in their Gospel Book glowed, indicating that the update for the Ranking of Schemes had finally been completed for the night-

"Igor Bukin receives the reward 'Kingdom Coin.'"



“Kingdom Coin: While holding this coin, your personal will cannot be altered, twisted, or eroded in any way and remains pristine.”

Igor fiddled with the hot, new coin in his hand and asked, “What do you want to ask?”

“I was going to ask, Mr. Igor, given all your debts and the theoretical need to share 99.9% of your thoughts, how you plan to resist Yvaren’s domination,” Anfel shrugged. “But now I don’t need to.”

Just because Igor could borrow indefinitely didn’t mean he didn’t owe Belldate money. If Yvaren recovered and cut off his Bell-Pay, Igor would be powerless and at Yvaren’s mercy. However, with the Kingdom Coin from the Future Ranking rewards, Igor wasn’t worried about Yvaren messing with his mind.

After a moment of thought, Igor flicked the coin away with his thumb.

“Catch.”

Anfel clumsily caught the coin, surprised, as she watched the con artist walk to the window and gaze at the distant crowd.

“Mr. Igor?”

“It’s yours,” Igor said calmly. “There should still be a sliver of self-awareness deep within your soul; use this coin to reclaim it.”

“Why?”

“When I made this plan, I didn’t count on the reward from the Ranking of Schemes,” Igor smiled slightly. “Gifts of fate, I dare not accept lightly.”

“Then how will you resist Yvaren’s domination?”

“I’ve stolen knowledge from the Dominance Sect and already figured out how to resist your domination. My theoretical framework is complete; I just lack practical experience. If Yvaren is willing to spar with me, I would welcome it.”

“Besides, your domination has its limits. If I go far enough, for Yvaren to mess with my mind, she would have to reveal cards I haven’t yet uncovered. I just want to see who will break first: Yvaren or me mastering Belldate’s Dominance Sect techniques completely.”

Igor gazed into the distance where Ashe and the others were, the bright starlight illuminating his handsome face. There was no fear in his eyes, only anticipation for the future.



Anfel stared at him blankly for a moment, then suddenly said, “I have something to say, but I’m not sure if I should...”

“You shouldn’t.”

“But I’m going to say it! I just have to say it!”

Igor glanced at her. “The gold coin’s effect is this obvious?”

“Or maybe you just like this kind of girl?” Anfel smiled warmly. “I just wanted to say, Mr. Igor, people don’t actually shine or glitter.”

“Hmm?”

“So, the real sparkle is in the light within your eyes.”

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

## **Chapter 415: The Mischievous Qenna**

“Please... don’t...”

“I’ll do anything you want, just don’t...”

“No!!”

With a heart-wrenching wail, the Sanctuary spellcaster Rein Mercury was thrown into the mire. This was no ordinary mire but a replica of the “Soul-Cleansing Mire” from a special region of the Time Continent. The original Soul-Cleansing Mire dissolves spiritual impurities, enhancing a spellcaster’s learning ability, focus, and mental state for a week’s time, making it a highly desirable adventure mechanism.

However, Belldate’s counterfeit mire didn’t have such beneficial effects. Instead of dissolving spiritual impurities, it dissolved physical impurities—such as clothes and hair.

No one knew why Belldate had constructed such a seemingly meaningless feature. Perhaps it was a mere attempt to replicate an adventure from the Time Continent, or maybe it was a frivolous expenditure of excess wealth to stimulate domestic demand. Regardless, it undoubtedly provided Ashe and his companions with significant help—like having a filthy mop conveniently nearby during a brawl.

After some preliminary pummeling and soaking to render these pursuers temporarily incapacitated, the main course of action ensued: keeping them confined at the Belldate manor, ensuring they had no ability to pursue the Funeral.

The most extreme method would be to inflict severe injuries or even disfigure them drastically, or to kill all the other Sanctuary spellcasters. This would guarantee they couldn't pursue, even after recovery. However, their pent-up hatred would inevitably be directed at Belldate, and the ensuing internal conflict would drain the resources of these consortium families.

But Ashe and his team ultimately discarded this idea.

Firstly, negative reputations have different levels; "dislike" and "mortal enemy" are fundamentally different concepts. If these consortium families had previously been devoting 20% of their resources to counter the Funeral, after such brutal treatment from Ashe and his team, it might escalate to 70%, creating an even more perilous situation for them.

Secondly, there was still Lise to consider.

Among the adults present, there's no need to mention Annan and Banjeet from the Firm—the term "unscrupulous" doesn't even begin to capture their modus operandi; Harvey also isn't worth mentioning, as this backward world doesn't have moral laws capable of binding him; Ashe, having been through so much and practically becoming shoulder pain buddies with the Reaper, had long mentally prepared himself and wouldn't hesitate when dirty work was required.

But as long as Lise was around, Ashe could never just stand by and watch the narrative turn dark and grim.

However...

Ashe looked at the utter despair on the faces of those in the mire. Their hair and clothes had been dissolved, leaving them bald and soaking in the dung-colored muck. This scene of abject filth was enough to challenge anyone's sanity, Lise's included. Even Ashe felt the need for a sanity check just looking at it.

The results, though, were remarkable. Rein and Zuvendas, along with the other Sanctuary spellcasters, would be too embarrassed to show themselves without spending hours bathing and regrowing their hair.

"Stop looking, Lise. Let's go see that beautiful lady."

"Huh?" Lise seemed a bit reluctant. "I think this is quite interesting too..."

"Harvey!" Ashe called out to Alice, "Have you been a bad influence on Lise?!"

“Do you know that there’s a whole intestine between the stomach and the feces? Don’t blame everything on me,” Alice retorted. “Children are naturally fascinated by filth; it’s adults who have a pretentious obsession with cleanliness.”

“Who would understand that!”

After taking care of the male spellcasters, the next task was the female spellcasters—who were spared the ordeal of soaking in the mire and losing their hair and clothes.

It wasn’t because Ashe and his team were showing favoritism; they just needed a reason to spare the Family of Six Heraldry. Conveniently, most of the individuals Qenna had brought were female spellcasters, making it less suspicious to let them go.

Although Qenna had ultimately come to capture them, she had shown willingness to fight other forces to protect them when pressured by Rein and the other Sanctuary spellcasters. Even if her actions were partially selfish, Ashe and Annan still felt obliged to acknowledge her effort.

The only person qualified to object was Harvey, but just as he didn’t care that Qenna hadn’t stood up for him earlier, he didn’t mind Ashe and the others sticking up for Qenna now.

However, they couldn’t let Qenna and her group off too easily. Fortunately, besides the mire, there was also a pool of liquor nearby. Though it was called a liquor pool, it was filled with sweet alcoholic beverages. Ashe had occasionally helped himself to a cup while passing by.

Dunking the female spellcasters into the liquor pool would not only soak their clothes but also cover them in sticky, sugary alcohol. These pampered Gospel spellcasters would be desperate to take a bath after regaining their mobility.

Lise and Little Banjeet efficiently coordinated to carry a female spellcaster and deposit her into the liquor pool. Ashe followed suit, directing his Substitute to toss the spellcasters into the pool.

Soon, Ashe encountered a particularly challenging individual—Qenna. Tossing your own mother into the pool would require the daughter to step up, but Annan was currently deep in a conversation with Nona by the poolside, clearly avoiding Qenna.

Humans are indeed peculiar. Annan was bold enough to confront Qenna when she was strong and domineering, but now that Qenna appeared vulnerable, Annan chose to keep her distance. Perhaps the only way Annan could interact with Qenna was through ‘rebellion’ and ‘suppression.’ When Qenna was no longer able to suppress her, the Young Lady didn’t know how to handle the relationship with her mother.

Since Annan was unwilling to deal with it, someone else had to step in. Scratching his head, Ashe instructed the Substitute to move Qenna. Given that this act would directly offend a Sanctuary spellcaster, it was better for the Substitute to handle it.

However, as soon as the Substitute reached out, Qenna bit down hard on its hand, forcing it to withdraw quickly.

The Substitute looked back at Ashe. In situations where the male spellcasters offered heavy resistance, it typically grabbed their legs, spun them around, and hurled them into the mire. But that method wouldn't do here; embarrassing Qenna like that was out of the question since they were intending to let her go.

Reluctantly, Ashe stepped forward, reaching out to lift Qenna. "Come on, be good. Don't struggle, I'll just—umm!"

She was heavy.

Qenna was not only taller than Ashe but also well-built from frequent exercise. Given that she wasn't supporting her own weight at all, her body was incredibly difficult to carry. Anyone who has ever tried to lift an inebriated person knows there's a stark difference in weight between someone actively cooperating and someone completely limp.

"You need to use the physical Spirit to build up some strength," Qenna seemed to mock. "If you struggle this much to carry me in the future, it'll really kill the mood."

What kind of situation would require me to carry you in the future?... Ashe pondered.

"You're holding me in a really uncomfortable way. Tighten your grip and let me move my arms," Qenna commanded unceremoniously. Ashe had no choice but to follow her instructions. The Elf patriarch subtly shifted her graceful body, redistributing her weight onto Ashe's torso, which instantly eased the burden on his arms.

However, this left Qenna's head almost resting on Ashe's shoulder, making it look like the two were whispering secrets to each other.

And as a matter of fact, they were.

"Come back to Vamora with me," she whispered softly. "You have no escape route left."

"You'll need to discuss this with your daughter."

"The more I say, the less Annan does," Qenna chuckled. "But you can persuade her, can't you? After all, you are my daughter's... fiancé."

Because they were so close, Qenna's breath tickled Ashe's earlobe, making him feel a bit itchy. "Sorry to disappoint, but I lied to you. Annan and I actually have no such relationship."

"Uh-huh," Qenna didn't seem to mind. "But she values your opinion, I can tell. Do you really want to keep wandering aimlessly with her? Don't you want a stable life?"

"Six Heraldry can no longer protect us—"

"They can," Qenna asserted with a demonstrative grind of her teeth. "If I say they can, then they can."

"But I don't want to go to Vamora," Ashe turned his head to look at her. They were so close that their noses almost touched, their eyes reflecting each other's expressions. "I hate Vamora."

This seemed to catch Qenna off guard. "Why?"

"I dislike Vamora's white mist, its Beauty Houttuynia Farm, and its indulgent lifestyle," Ashe replied.

"What do you like then? The monetary domination of Belldate? Or other city models?" Qenna seemed amused. "The Vamora model already considers everyone, allowing all clansmen to lead a happy life. Even Mephila can't achieve that... is there any city better than Vamora?"

"Maybe there isn't a city better than Vamora," Ashe said. "And maybe there's no city I like within the Gospel Kingdom."

"Then why—"

"But that doesn't mean I have to choose the least disliked option." Ashe crouched down and slowly lowered Qenna into the liquor pool. "Qenna, you know, I'm someone who tends to settle for things. If I stayed in Vamora, I'd probably become one of your clansmen. So, I can't help you persuade Annan, because I need Annan to dash ahead with me until we find a place we can retire... or until we attain the Divine Sovereign's Wish."

"But I will convey your care to Annan," Ashe smiled. "When I visit Vamora next time, I hope you can still welcome me."

"Don't worry about that. I'll definitely capture you all first. Then we'll meet every day and night."

"Then I'll look forward to it without much anticipation."

By this time, Qenna's waist was already submerged in the liquor pool. She said, "Oh, I have one more thing to tell you. Come closer..."

Unsuspecting, Ashe leaned in. Suddenly, the Elf patriarch twisted her entire body with such momentum that she dragged Ashe into the liquor pool, causing both of them to bob in the alcoholic liquid.

"Ugh!" Ashe supported Qenna by her shoulders, half laughing, half exasperated. "Are you really getting back at me? Can't you see that we intentionally let Six Heraldry go?"

With her wet hair plastered to her shoulders, Qenna gazed at him with a hazy look, and laughed, "You're drenched in liquor."

"It's all your fault..."

Before Ashe could finish his sentence, Qenna leaned in. With a smooth swipe of her tongue, she licked off the liquor on his face. The warm breath seemed to ignite the alcohol, making Ashe feel like he was burning.

"Annan is a very stubborn child," she said seriously into Ashe's ear. "When necessary, you need to hold her back."

What else could Ashe do? He nodded hurriedly, making affirmative sounds as he quickly tried to disengage. Before leaving, he adjusted Qenna's position to a reclining posture to prevent her nose and mouth from being blocked by the liquid.

But by doing so, a mesmerizing elven beauty now floated atop the liquor pool. Wet clothes, undulating curves, flushed cheeks... Ashe dared not look too much, lest he accidentally end up returning to Vamora with Qenna.

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

## **Chapter 416: Shall We Leave Together?**

Back on the lawn, Annan looked at the soaked Ashe and said apologetically, "It must have been tough for you. Qenna is hard to deal with, isn't she?"

"Yeah," Ashe wiped his face. "I almost got sunk... Are we leaving now?"

A hovercar was parked on the lawn, clearly a taxi Annan had called. The Happy Family Firm had already met its demise here, so they didn't have to worry about modern transportation suddenly blowing up.

Annan nodded. "We need to leave first."

"First?"

"Igor said he would stay here to continue suppressing these people, ensuring no one pursues us," Annan glanced at Yvaren in the distance. "Once we reach a safe place, he will leave alone to meet up with us, minimizing the risk."

A question mark appeared above Ashe's head. "The Bewitcher I know is neither a moral person nor a self-sacrificing figure."

Alice said, "But didn't he work so hard to resurrect you?"

"Putting aside that it was the result of deceiving the Gospel, the more important thing is, I'm not dead right now," Ashe shrugged. "It's like how I'd risk everything to save Lise if she were in danger, but when she just wants to play, at most, I'd have my Substitute play with her diligently."

Lise was very displeased and kicked Ashe. "Dad, how can you say that?"

"It does seem odd," Annan said. "Igor seems to be deliberately avoiding us."

Suddenly understanding, Ashe exclaimed, "Could it be..."

Alice pondered, "Is it possible that he is..."

The Blood Moon escapee made eye contact, already guessing their comrade's little scheme.

In this way, they would leave first.

Igor, no longer observing the outside situation, casually took a book from Yvaren's shelf. The title read "The Mischievous Maid."

He picked another book, titled "The Hemophobic Healer and the Self-Harming Physical Spellcaster."

Yet another book, "The Vase Falls in Love."

All of them were romance novels, not to mention... why did they all have one person being straightforward and the other person being evasive?

Yvaren, your expectations of love seem quite skewed. Even without your emotions diluted by the mental sea, you'd probably remain single for life...

"Mr. Igor, aren't you going to join your companions?" Anfel asked while holding a teacup.

"They need to leave first," Igor replied calmly. "Once they reach a safe place, I'll leave. This ensures that no one will be able to pursue us. Besides you two sisters, no one else knows I'm at Belldate Manor, making my departure very low-risk."

"Mm-hmm," Anfel nodded. "That makes a lot of sense."

"But actually, Mr. Igor, you're just too embarrassed to meet them right now, aren't you?"

Snap.

Igor closed the book. "A Con Artist's least concern is their dignity."

"When dealing with clients, you certainly don't need dignity," Anfel laughed. "I can understand. It's quite awkward for you to meet Ashe and the others again after distancing yourself to gain Yvaren's trust. Although the Ranking of Schemes clarifies your stance, showing such an earnest side is probably too embarrassing for you."

"Don't use such girlish adjectives," Igor said coldly. "And you're wrong about everything. My arrangement was purely for safety reasons."

"Oh, really? But didn't you say I'm like a mirror, reflecting everyone's true self?" Anfel tilted her head. "And I'm not guessing. I have evidence. For example, whenever you lie, you like to cover it up with grandiose justifications, just like your reaction when I congratulated you for winning first place on the Ranking of Schemes..."

"Enough."

Igor placed a hand on Anfel's shoulder, his expression calm, though his breathing was slightly quickened. "You guessed wrong!"

The red-haired girl looked intently at the Con Artist, shrugged, and sipped her tea. "Maybe so~"

Vroom!

The sound of a Sports car engine roared outside. Igor seemed slightly relieved but also inexplicably tired. "They're finally gone..."

However, the engine sound grew louder and louder, closer and closer, until-



Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Bullets riddled the office walls with countless cracks, and a streak of sword light crazily painted upon them!

Boom!

The hovercar crashed through the bullet-riddled wall, carving a donut arc in the study, sending sofas, chairs, coffee tables, and decorative cabinets flying before it came to a steady stop beside Igor and Anfel.

“You...”

The gull-wing car door lifted up. Before the shock could leave Igor’s face, Ashe had already grabbed him and pulled him into the car. Alice quickly wrapped her arms around the Con Artist to prevent his escape, looking like a mobster abducting an innocent Bewitcher.

“We heard you were too embarrassed to face us, so we came to watch you make a fool of yourself!” Ashe laughed heartily.

“I would never—let go of me, Harvey!”

“Harvey’s in the coffin; I’m Alice,” Alice giggled. “I never thought you’d feel so guilty for deceiving us, Igor. On behalf of Harvey, I forgive you.”

From the front seat, Lise added, “I forgive you too, Aunt Bukin! His braiding skills are terrible, it’s a good thing you’re back!”

“Who cares about your forgiveness!”

“Then whose forgiveness do you care about?”

Suddenly, Alice turned to Annan. “Wait a second, by destroying Belldate’s property, aren’t we going to owe money?”

“Did you forget we have those 6,000 bell points we were going to use as ransom?” Annan replied. “Since we don’t need to pay the ransom, let’s just spend it here.”

Ashe turned to Anfel, extending his hand naturally. “Want to come with us?”

Anfel looked at the lively scene inside the hovercar, where the Purple Moth was tending to the little butler, the white-haired girl was all smiles, and the necromancer was playfully sparring with the Con Artist.

And...

The red-haired girl eyed the Cult Leader and smiled slightly. "Indeed, a shining figure."

"Hmm?"

"Sorry, but I'm Mr. Igor's fiancée," Anfel clasped her hands together in a gesture of apology. "If Mr. Igor is willing to say that to me when he comes to Mephila, I'll gladly accept."

"Harvey, open the coffin and stuff Igor inside; I don't want to see any more women falling for him... boo hoo hoo..."

"Dad, don't cry! I don't need a stepmom right now. I don't mind if no women like you!"

"Lise, thank you! Thank! You!"

The hovercar roared out through the gaping hole, swiftly ascending into the night sky of Mephila. Anfel waved goodbye to them.

Not long after, Yvaren rushed through the gap into the office. She quickly surveyed the room, noting the absence of anyone else, and turned directly to Anfel. "What should we do next?"

Decision-making in Belldate's family always consisted of two levels: the planners, known as the Thinkers, and the executors, known as the Heartless. The plan to manipulate the Eight Great Families had been devised by Anfel. She, who could hear countless thoughts, had long since understood the intricacies of human nature, allowing her to design traps that could ignite the desires of countless individuals.

In the past, Anfel would not have hesitated. But now, she paused.

The hesitation stemmed from a conflict of interest.

The conflict wasn't about Igor or Ashe, but about Harvey.

To break free from Belldate's destiny, they needed to resolve the issue of the Necromantic Angel. However, for hundreds of years, no member of Belldate had been able to accomplish this. Anfel and Yvaren couldn't either.

But now, the person capable of conquering the Necromantic Angel had already appeared in Gospel's future.

Before, they were merely tools for the family's continuation, completely indifferent to Harvey's future achievements. But Anfel had now regained a bit of self-awareness. A faint sense of selfishness began to resist the chains of her bloodline!

Increase what they desire, gift what they need.

Anfel held the gold coin in her hand, unable to suppress a smile.

“Anfel?” Yvaren asked, somewhat puzzled.

“It’s nothing,” Anfel replied with a smile. “I just think we should have a cup of tea and rest for a bit.”

Though Yvaren found it strange, her personal feelings never affected her decision-making, and she was somewhat thirsty. “Alright.”

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

## Chapter 417: Blood Moon and Shattered Lake

Stars Kingdom, 9:30 PM, Galaxia National Sports Arena.

This open-air stadium, built by a legendary spellcaster, requires no additional light sources. By merely gathering and reflecting the starlight, it can make the entire arena as bright as daytime, with the spotlight effect achieved by adjusting the mirrors. At this time, 4,600 seats were filled with students and faculty from the colleges of Galaxia. As the smooth arena floor was transformed into a shallow ground by the Miracle of Earth and Wood, an uproar erupted from the crowd. Apart from the students of Truth College who clapped vigorously, the rest of the students couldn’t help but curse.

“Big thanks to the Death Chant Phantom Band for their amazing performance!” Arsenault’s clear and bright voice cruised over the stadium, quelling the students’ commotion. “Next, we have the final segment of the College League opening ceremony—the Meteor Trial!”

“Please welcome the contestants!” another female host announced. “First up is a freshman from Swordflower College’s Swords Sect, two-wings spellcaster, Sonya Therave!”

As Sonya emerged from the tunnel, a pillar of starlight focused on her, making her combat attire glitter brightly. Fireworks erupted at the entrance, forming patterns of swords and roses, and the thunderous applause from thousands of people welcomed the village girl into the combat arena!

Eight massive holographic screens simultaneously displayed her front, side, and angled views. But thanks to the stage makeup that Lois and others had spent an afternoon perfecting, along with the ‘Fixed Day’ spirit’s enhancement, Sonya’s beauty was

flawless from any angle. No amount of starlight could overshadow her radiance. She proudly raised her chin, basking in the attention.

As she stepped onto the shallow ground stage, Sonya glanced at the commentary booth, thinking that her greatest luxury two months ago was merely to be seated there, introducing the new generation of Stars in Galaxia.

Even she hadn't imagined that two months later, she would become one of the Stars herself.

And next, she needed to prove that she was the brightest star!

"The second contestant is a senior from Trajectory College's Nunchaku Sect, two-wings spellcaster, Colonzo Warren!"

"The third contestant is a senior from Fantasy College's Gunmanship Sect, two-wings spellcaster, Lydia Azdar!"

...

"The sixth contestant is a junior from Truth College's water department, two-wings spellcaster Vereen Stella!"

"All six contestants for the first round of the Meteor Trial are two-wings spellcasters!"

When all six contestants took the stage, the most eye-catching was undoubtedly Vereen from Truth College. Not only was she one of the only two underclassmen on the stage—compared to the other seniors, she indeed was.

More importantly, she was a water spellcaster!

And tonight's Meteor Trial ground was a shallow terrain!

"Insider dealings, definitely insider dealings!" Adelle cursed angrily in the audience, "Chop the League committee into bits and feed them to Lala Fatty!"

"Truth College doesn't need to cheat in the College League," sighed Lois. "This is just Truth College's heritage."

The match terrain indeed was entirely random, but students from Truth College who studied in the Prophecy Sect didn't need to interfere with the League committee. They just adjusted the sequence of participants directly to gain the geographic advantage!

Other colleges also wanted to predict the match terrain, but the problem is, the Prophecy Sect has no set learning method. The lucky few who get in are immediately poached by Truth College. After all, Galaxia's only source of Prophecy Sect knowledge

is Truth College, and even those with restraint would be swayed by Truth College's benefits!

Some might think, is it really necessary to go all out for a league held annually? However, for schools, the College League's results directly determine next year's education funding. For students, this might very well be the most glorious moment of their lives, and everyone would give their all!

As a nationally broadcast, annually held competition show with ratings so high that even Delarose's lead drama gives way, student performance in the league directly impacts their future. The Royal Family's Starburst Guard, the House of Nobles' Griffin Squad, and the Barrier legion sweeping the Abyss all pick members from these competitors. Moreover, nobles enjoy injecting new blood through marriages. For instance, each generation of the Stargazer Duke, Duke of Vlozrada, has a partner who is a powerful swordsperson, mostly from a common background rather than noble birth.

However, for this inaugural round of the Meteor Trial, Truth College isn't going easy on anyone. If the terrain were the gobi, abyss, city, or desert, ordinary spellcasters might get some boosts, but not much. The shallow terrain is practically home turf for water spellcasters. Moreover, since Vereen hails from Truth College, she undoubtedly has some Radiant Golden-level Miracles up her sleeve, giving her a crushing advantage over the other spellcasters!

"Still, this is the Meteor Trial," Engulite said, folding her arms. "Truth College's representative is so dominant; she might be the first one to go down."

Lois and Adelle couldn't help but nod in agreement, their eyes fixed on the six contestants in the arena.

The College League is divided into three formats: the Meteor Trial, the Stars Trial, and the Celestial Palace Trial. Simply put, the Celestial Palace Trial is a round-robin format where schools are represented by five-member teams, similar to the format Sonya previously participated in during the Friendly Match, showcasing the schools' overall heritage.

The Stars Trial, on the other hand, features three-person team battles, with three teams fighting simultaneously. This format has the highest intensity, usually involving students who have experienced Abyss Adventures, testing team coordination.

The Meteor Trial is a six-person free-for-all competition. Only the last one standing is considered the winner! As the competition progresses, the number of participants in the Meteor Trial remains at six. Sometimes, of the six in the Meteor Trial, only two have continued winning, while the other four are returning to fight for resurrection opportunities, measuring each contestant's individual prowess!

Some might wonder why a single-player competition involves six combatants. There are many reasons. For example, at the low-level spellcaster stage, Sect-based weaknesses are very pronounced; a fire spellcaster facing a water spellcaster has almost no chance, a physical spellcaster counters most melee spellcasters, and gun spellcasters are a T0 profession. However, turning a one-on-one duel into a melee reduces the impact of Sect-based weaknesses, introduces many variables, and more comprehensively tests a spellcaster's combat abilities.

Another minor reason: a multi-person melee is simply more entertaining to watch than a one-on-one duel.

After all, these contestants aren't Sanctuary spellcasters. Although students go out of their way to add as many special effects as possible for the sake of showing off, to the untrained eye, student competitions still don't match the dramatics of TV drama. To enhance viewership, the Meteor Trial has experimented with scales ranging from three to a hundred participants, finally settling on six. This number strikes a balance, full of dramatic conflict without overwhelming viewers.

The primary drawback of the six-person format is that the advantage of being the strongest is significantly reduced. After all, the other competitors aren't foolish; in a zero-sum game, they will naturally team up to eliminate the strongest first.

Thus, the winner of the Meteor Trial is either someone with a formidable combination of strategy, combat power, and networking skills, or...

A genius who absolutely dominates all other participants!

"In the past ten years of opening Meteor Trials, the winners have invariably been students from Truth College," Vereen said with a smile, donning her translucent azure combat attire. "The senior brothers and sisters have worked hard."

"Is that so? That's just great." Lydia drew her dual guns. "I hadn't decided on my goal for this year's League yet, but now I know. My aim is to end Truth College's winning streak today."

Colonzo twirled his nunchaku, the silver-tipped ends bursting into flames, indicating some hidden mechanisms in his weapon. "Having a bit of respect for your seniors won't harm you, junior sister."

"Oh dear, don't tell me I'm that unpleasant? Why does everyone want to take me out first? Could it be..." Vereen tilted her head and giggled as she shook out a short rod from her sleeve. It spun once, extending at both ends, and within an eye blink, transformed into a long staff.

Thud!

When the long staff struck the muddy ground, the accumulated water on the entire shallow stage surged madly towards Vereen, transforming into water dragons that coiled around her staff. They protected Vereen while asserting dominance over the stage. At this moment, Vereen appeared like a Witch of the water, while the others seemed like mere ignorant challengers!

Leaving everything else aside, solely based on style and flair, the others were already utterly defeated!

“...Are you jealous of Vereen’s beauty?” Vereen gripped her long staff close to her back, accentuating her slender and graceful figure, and with a lazy tone, flaunted her confidence that dismissed everyone else.

“Warlord spellcaster...” The others murmured softly, abandoning any hope of luck. They stared at Vereen with intense caution and determination.

A Warlord spellcaster is not a term referring to a specific Spellcasting Sect but rather a spellcaster who uses melee weapons in conjunction with Nature Spellcasting.

While melee-focused spellcasting sects can also develop Nature Miracles, like a Sword Sect spellcaster wielding a Flame Sword, these miracles are integrated—meaning that there can only be flames if there’s a sword. A Sword Sect spellcaster can’t breathe fire, even if they wanted to fake it by slashing with their fingers.

However, Warlord spellcasters are different. They usually train in a nature-based spellcasting discipline and a melee weapon skill, both independently of each other. For instance, Vereen uses both a long staff and water dragons, but she can still conjure water even without her staff. Her water spells and her long staff technique are not interdependent.

In battle, however, her water miracles and staff strikes complement each other. While you’re trying to counter her water miracle, you get pounded by her long staff. Focusing on defending against her staff will get you blasted by water dragons!

Fighting a Warlord spellcaster is like battling two opponents at once!

This is actually a clever battle system. Nature Spellcasting Sects focus on precise spellcasting and not dynamic reactions, while melee weapon fighting emphasizes dynamic combat and not focused casting. It’s possible to use both simultaneously, but it requires an extremely high level of skill.

Spellcasting Sects have evolved to the point where miracles from just one sect can cover nearly all possibilities. Even the Sword Sect has Self-Healing Miracles. Spellcasters usually only supplement their main sect with spells from other sects for additional functions like mobility, reconnaissance, healing, or finishing moves. They wouldn’t mix completely unrelated Sects just for their battle system. Therefore, those



who do double-train in vastly different Sects are often battle-crazed enthusiasts, hence the term Warlord.

Vereen may look delicate and pretty, specializing in the water department, but deep down, she's undoubtedly an adrenaline junkie who enjoys fighting. She's probably cracked the skulls of countless Blade Fish Dragons with her long staff!

"Sonya, junior sister, may I call you that?" Vereen suddenly said, "Since we're both young and pretty, let me give you some advice—when they gang up on me, you'd better find a way to take at least one of them out."

Lydia quickly glanced at Sonya, then sneered at Vereen, "What's this? A top student from Truth College resorting to sowing discord and forming cliques? Forget it. I'll admit you're the strongest right now, so you have to be the first to go!"

"I don't talk to ugly people," Vereen laughed. "Sonya, junior sister, you're just a first-year student who recently advanced to two-wings. In their eyes, you're the weakest. Suppose—just suppose—they do eliminate me. They would immediately turn on you so you don't get to reap any benefits."

"In fact, they might even target you before eliminating me. Because in the Meteor Trial rules, only participants who have defeated others get a chance in the Revival Match. Even for insurance, they have no reason to let you, the newest and freshest junior sister, off the hook."

"Look at you, using a Wooden Sword instead of a real one," Vereen continued. "I don't know if you're deliberately showing weakness or if the Wooden Sword has some significance, but showing weakness in the arena will only make you a target for others."

Sonya raised an eyebrow, "Thanks for the advice."

"Therave, junior sister, don't fall for it!" Lydia said. "She wants us to internalize our disputes, giving her a chance to pick us off one by one. Right now, Vereen is the strongest. If we don't kick her out straight away, we're bound to lose!"

"Don't worry." Sonya gripped the handle of her Wooden Sword. "I'll take down the strongest first."

Despite the bold words, the spellcasters were clearly distancing themselves from one another. Verbal promises meant nothing here. One of the main attractions of the Meteor Trial is the deceit among participants. In a zero-sum game, forming a genuine alliance among the six contestants is impossible.

That's why Vereen wasn't worried about being ganged up on. With just a slight nudge, any so-called alliance would crumble like sand. She was confident—in terms of combat



ability, tactics, eloquence, and situational awareness, she was the strongest among the six. This Meteor Trial's victory would be hers to claim, effortlessly.

"The contestants are growing impatient after a bout of verbal sparring. Who will become the meteor and who will be reduced to ashes? Let's find out!" Arsenault's voice boomed enthusiastically. "Countdown begins at five! Five, four..."

"Three." Vereen gripped her long staff, nine water dragons forming behind her.

"Two." Lydia subtly retreated, her gun aimed at everyone.

"One." The hilt of Sonya's Wooden Sword glowed with an ancient brilliance.

"Begin!"

Boom!

Blood Moon!

A surge of a blood-red moon!

As a crimson crescent shimmered across the water's surface, everyone was momentarily stunned. It wasn't until a muffled thud sounded from outside the ring that they snapped back to reality.

Vereen had been knocked off the stage, crashing into the outer wall, gripping the broken pieces of her long staff in both hands. A ghastly wound seemed to split her from upper left to lower right. Thankfully, the "Death-Prevention" miracle had been invoked on the contestants, protecting all vital organs. But the terror in her tear-filled eyes made it clear just how deeply the attack had scarred her mentally.

"...What miracle was that?" Colonzo asked.

"Blood Moon Riptide," Sonya replied, shaking off the water droplets from her Wooden Sword. "This miracle requires a large amount of water. I actually thought this shallow water terrain was designed to give me, a first-year student, an advantage."

"It's not in the Star Miracles Directory. Something you created?" Lydia inquired.

"Yes, inspired by others' experiences." The Red-Haired Sword Princess said, "So, since I've defeated the strongest..."

"Next, it's your turn, you four weaklings."

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

## Chapter 418: But Theyre Not You

“Cheers!”

Outside the Sports Arena, Sonya caught the small wine bottle thrown at her and raised an eyebrow. “Why do you still carry alcohol with you?”

“If you lost, this would be a healthy drink to drown your sorrows,” Adelle laughed as she hugged the village girl. “Ah, we actually look quite similar. So why can you take down five opponents with one sword move?”

“It’s not the same at all. Your butt is bigger, and you’ve got more meat,” Lois chimed in.

“It’s called being voluptuous and well-proportioned!” Adelle retorted, showing her teeth. “And all the meat is exactly where it should be. I don’t have an ounce of... extra fat...”

Adelle pinched her waist and fell into a long silence. Sonya twisted open the small bottle and took a sip when a familiar voice came from behind, “Sonya!”

Sonya turned to see her senior sister Leoni. The orange-haired dancer walked over and gave the village girl a heavy hug, smiling, “Nice fight. I can’t wait to face you in the arena.”

“After witnessing my Blood Moon Shattered Lake, do you still have the confidence to beat me?” Sonya asked with a smile.

“Of course,” Leoni snatched the bottle from her and took a sip, chuckling. “I’ll admit, you’re stronger now, but before we meet, I’ll find a way to counter your Miracle. And my Rhythm Melody might just shatter your Blood Moon. If you get cocky, you’ll be in tears after I beat you! By the way, do you want to go to the secret garden for a drink after we get back?”

“No thanks, I already have plans tonight.”

“That’s too bad. I’ll catch up with the professor then,” Leoni waved goodbye. “By the way, Professor Nidhogg speaks highly of you. I think he’s regretting not taking you on as a student earlier.”

“That’s amazing,” Adelle pouted with jealousy. “My professor only regrets giving me passing grades and watching me struggle to keep up in the second semester.”

“Why not work hard and catch up?” Engulite suggested.

“I’d rather my professor regret it,” Adelle responded.

Just then, Professor Trozan approached them and unexpectedly said, “Ride with me back.”

Generally, students take the shuttle bus back on their own since the Sports Arena has direct shuttles to various colleges. However, Sonya’s performance tonight had made Trozan proud, so Trozan reluctantly agreed to be her driver for once.

Her roommates also took the opportunity to hitch a ride with the professor. Trozan’s car wasn’t anything special, but she seemed to use some spirit while driving. The car was not only very steady but also zigzagged skillfully, weaving through the traffic and carving a path despite the congestion.

“Look outside,” Engulite suddenly said.

The city’s holographic screens outside were repeatedly showing the footage of Sonya’s Blood Moon Sword defeating Vereen. It wasn’t just in Galaxia; Abacuray, Magi, Mate—now the entire Stars Kingdom was still reliving the opening Meteor Trial.

“Famed in Swordflower, famed in the Imperial Capital, famed in the Stars...” Lois commented. “You reached your goal in just two months.”

“There’s still a long way to go,” Sonya said, staring at her image on the holographic screens outside, unwilling to look away. “Unless I keep winning until I become number one, everyone will soon forget about me.”

“Could you stop being so smug while pretending to be humble? You’re totally acting like a little megalomaniac! My dog looks just as conceited when I try to take its picture!”

Sonya turned her gaze to Lois, and just when Lois thought she was angry, the village girl placed her hands on her head, mimicking dog ears, and playfully said, “Woof.”

Lois felt her face heat up and turned away, mumbling, “So you want me to take your picture, huh?”

“Sonya, Sonya!” Adelle exclaimed, looking at her wristband’s holographic screen. “Check out the school’s screens! You’re all over them!”

“Is anyone bad-mouthing me?”

“No way, this is your moment. The whole school is proud of you. Anyone who dares to say a bad word about you will get flamed instantly,” Adelle said. “Why don’t you make a

post with your verified account to boost your image? Then our Stretch Paw Club could expand!”

“Alright!”

Soon, as the Swordflower College students were still riding the wave of excitement from the night’s events, they saw a post from the Red-Haired Sword Princess on the school’s veil.

In the post, Sonya first provided a brief recap of her freshman year experiences. She shared some funny anecdotes about professors and the cafeteria, making the students realize that she wasn’t some unapproachable genius but an ordinary student just like them.

Next, Sonya reminisced about famous events at Swordflower College over the past few years, triggering nostalgia among the older students and instilling a sense of collective pride in the younger ones.

She then analyzed why Swordflower College’s recent competition results had been lackluster, subtly suggesting that it wasn’t the college’s fault but due to suppression by other schools. This kind of conspiracy theory was already popular on the school’s veil, so everyone was very receptive to it.

Finally, Sonya shared her accomplishments that evening, modestly stating that she had made a small contribution and would need to continue working hard in the future.

The emotionally charged students were so excited that they felt compelled to write thousands of words praising Miss Therave. Sonya’s post quickly became a hot topic, prominently pinned at the top of the veil. No doubt the “Anti-Village Girl Alliance” was probably fuming, wishing they could be devoured by Blade Fish Dragons overnight to avoid the humiliation.

Back at the school dormitory, Trozan called out to Sonya as she got out of the car, handed her a piece of Fluorite, said nothing, and then drove off.

Looking at the Fluorite containing a two-wings swordsmanship spirit, Sonya thought, “Trozan is truly a seasoned professional. A thousand words of praise don’t compare to directly giving something valuable.”

Now that’s the kind of professor I like!

Returning to the dormitory was like an emperor visiting the harem. Most students could only watch the live broadcast in the dorms due to the limited seating at the Sports Arena. Hearing Sonya had returned, they immediately swarmed to greet the new ruler. Soon, the entire dormitory echoed with chants of “Sonya! Sonya!” The village girl

thought of getting the duty teacher to calm them down but saw even the duty teacher shouting along at the staircase.

“Tsk, Swordflower College has become so lively; it’s fantastic!”

Finally, arriving at her dorm room, Sonya was exhausted. But now, it was Lois and the others’ turn to help her—combat attire was just as troublesome to remove as it was to put on. It took them over half an hour to get it completely off, and Sonya used the time to catch a quick nap.

Feeling a bit refreshed, Sonya went to the balcony to wash her face. Under the starlit sky, she activated her wristband and dialed a contact number, holding the wristband to her ear.

The connection was made quickly.

“Linda?”

Sonya sighed helplessly before speaking, “Mom, it’s me.”

Marsha’s voice sounded worried, “I saw you fighting on the holographic screen just now. Are you hurt? Should I come over?”

“No, no, no, they didn’t even touch my clothes.”

“But, what about those people you hurt? Will there be any consequences?”

“That was a spellcaster competition. It’s a life-and-death situation by nature; there won’t be any issues. Besides, I was representing Swordflower College. If something does come up, the school will handle it.”

After saying that, the conversation fell into silence. Sonya had many things she wanted to say, but somehow couldn’t get the words out.

Suddenly, she heard laughter from the other end.

Hearing the laughter, Sonya couldn’t help but smile too. “What’s so funny?”

“Nothing, Mom just thinks our Linda looks very pretty.”

“Of course, don’t forget whose daughter I am.”

Sonya exhaled, feeling her whole body relax. “There will be another competition in a few days. Make sure to watch.”

"I will! Mom doesn't understand spellcasting, but take good care of yourself and don't overexert."

The conversation ended, and Sonya went to the bathroom to change clothes. She came out and ran into Adelle, who had just finished bathing and was wrapped in a towel. Adelle took one look at Sonya's attire and understood immediately. "Are you going to the Virtual Realm tonight?"

"Yep," Sonya blinked. "For us spellcasters, going to the Virtual Realm is the best form of rest."

"Sure, sure."

"Absolutely."

Engulite and Lois echoed her sentiments. Sonya glanced at them curiously but didn't think much of it as she left the dorm.

Once the village girl left, the three of them started talking behind her back.

"Engulite," Adelle asked while drying her hair, "what do you make of this behavior?"

"I can only say it's highly terrifying," Engulite replied. "I used to believe it before I went to the Virtual Realm, but now that I've spent days in the Sea of Knowledge, I know there's something off."

"After an intense and thrilling battle, all I want is to come back and sleep. I wouldn't dream of going to the Virtual Realm for a second round of overtime. How can battling be considered rest after a fight? Can you cure a hangover with more alcohol?" Lois exclaimed.

"Well, actually, having a little bit of alcohol the next morning can indeed help with a hangover," Adelle chimed in. "Don't ask me how I know."

"In summary," Lois concluded, "either Sonya is a super hardworking freak that even Engulite would envy, or her Virtual Realm experience is completely different from ours."

"How could it be different?" Adelle tilted her head. "Could it turn from an adventure series into a romance drama?"

Virtual Realm, Time Continent.

As soon as Ashe arrived, he quickly opened the virtual realm map to confirm their location. "We're in the area in front of the Blood Tomb. There's no detailed map, so we need to act cautiously and avoid the heroic soul legion's pursuit..."

“Ahem!” Sonya cleared her throat and affectionately hugged Deya. “Witch, our College League just began, and tonight I had my first Meteor Trial match.”

Deya asked, “What is the Meteor Trial?”

“Well, the Meteor Trial is...”

“And then I used Blood Moon Shattered Lake to defeat Vereen...”

“The remaining four were fighting to the death...”

“The entire Stars Kingdom was watching my match...”

When Sonya finished recounting her glorious evening, Deya looked at her with admiration. “That sounds so fun! Competing, becoming famous, having tons of people admire you... Is school really that interesting? Wow, Sword Princess, you must be a super big shot!”

“Not yet,” Sonya replied nonchalantly. “I need to keep winning and eventually take the league crown to earn the Stars Kingdom’s recognition.”

“But it’s already amazing. You basically took on five opponents single-handedly. I can’t even be sure I could defeat five two-wings spellcasters in direct combat...”

“Of course, you can, Witch. Your Time Sect powers are unbeatable. If you took my place, the match would end even quicker!”

The sports car stopped outside a gemstone mine resource point. Ashe clapped his hands. “Quick, quick, quick, we need to loot as many resource points as we can before the heroic soul legion catches up!”

Deya quickly jumped out of the car and dashed toward the mine, while Sonya lingered behind, taking her time.

As Ashe was about to get out of the car, he felt a tug on his wrist.

“What’s up?”

Sonya gave him a look that seemed to say “how could you even ask that,” and pointed to herself. “I won the Meteor Trial.” S

“Yeah,” Ashe blinked, “You said it pretty loudly just now; I heard you.”

“Well, don’t you think you should...” Sonya fluttered her eyelashes, “show some appreciation?”

Ashe looked completely puzzled.

“But, but all our spoils always go to you first,” he scratched his head, “How about I give you a ‘Massage Coupon’ that you can redeem anytime?”

“Tsk,” Sonya shook his arm vigorously and pouted in discontent, “Can’t you just give me some praise?”

“Didn’t you say the audience, professors, and even the Witch praised you just now?”

“But they aren’t you.”

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

## Chapter 419: Chaotic Shopping Book

As Ashe, Sonya, and Deya sat in the sports car, glancing at each other with the Heroic Soul Legion’s countless troops chasing them, they couldn’t help but wonder: How did it ever come to this?

Half an hour earlier, Ashe had discovered a golden area labeled “Don’t miss it, once you pass by” on the virtual realm map. Upon entering, they found a small café, where three books and three cups of coffee appeared on the table, matching their number.

Ashe initially thought it was “Fate Questioning,” but upon opening the book, he realized it wasn’t. Instead, it was an even more love-hate virtual realm mechanics—the “Chaotic Shopping Book of Blessings and Curses”!

“Congratulations to every spellcaster who opens this book. Your luck is unparalleled, and your destiny is about to change. You are light, you are electricity, you are the myth of the future!”

“This book is compiled by the ‘Dramatic Poet’..., Please remember this name, for... is the narrator of fate, the wielder of the power of contradictions, the director of countless joys and sorrows, the witness of the world’s separations and reunions.”

“Millions of Spellcasters in the Virtual Realm are not even half as great as...!”

“The following purchase rules must be observed for this book—”



“① Each blessing or curse has a price. For every blessing purchased, you must endure a random curse of the same price, and vice versa. Fair exchange, after all.”

“② Blessings and curses chosen by the spellcaster will not cancel each other out. You can eat feces and excrete rice, or eat rice and excrete feces, but eating them together won't neutralize the excretion process.”

“③ Random curses only last during the virtual realm period and will not affect reality; random blessings only last in reality and will not affect the virtual realm.”

“④ After opening this book, you must purchase at least one blessing/curse, but there's no shopping limit. Don't miss it, once you pass by.”

“⑤ As a shopping tax, this book will extract personal life experiences from the spellcaster to generate new blessings/curses. There are only two unavoidable things in life: eating and paying taxes.”

“Please note, don't think you can exploit loopholes by choosing all powerful blessings to resist curses. You might step outside and be cursed with 'Thinking will turn you to stone,' instantly turning into a statue. If you chose the 'Immunity to Petrification' blessing, the curse might change to 'Thinking will turn you into a Lala Fatty.' In short, if you dare to take advantage of me, I'll wipe out your entire family.”

“But don't be too afraid, the 'Dramatic Poet'... isn't some great villain. This is a benefit for the younger generation. So, for the first-time spellcasters opening this book, if your curse points  $\leq 10$ , your random curse will end in this virtual realm exploration; if your blessing points  $\leq 10$ , your purchased curses will end within 72 hours in reality.”

It's you again, the nameless Dramatic Poet!

This was the only strange spellcaster Ashe and the others knew who could leave a special mechanism in the Virtual Realm. The “Legendary Library” that Ashe and Deya encountered last time was also his creation, but unfortunately, Sonya had written a leave request that night and wasn't able to come.

Later, Ashe asked if there were many special mechanisms left by legendary spellcasters on the Time Continent. The village girl shook her head affirmatively, saying that the Dramatic Poet was indeed the only one who left mechanisms on the Time Continent.

While it was true that the Dramatic Poet was extremely powerful, what truly made him remarkable was his ability to return to the Time Continent. After all, spellcasters who could affect the Virtual Realm were at least legendary, if not Demigod Angels or even Divine Sovereigns. However, these powerful beings found it extremely difficult to return to the lower level beginner's village of the Virtual Realm.

This was also a protective mechanism of the Virtual Realm. Otherwise, the appearance of a strong individual who enjoyed “cutting down seedlings” could easily annihilate all novice spellcasters worldwide.

The fact that the Dramatic Poet could leave so many mechanisms on the Time Continent indicated that he could almost freely move in and out of the second layer of the Virtual Realm, or at least the cost was very low. So spellcasters were very curious about what kind of sins the Dramatic Poet must have committed to be wiped clean of even his name.

However, not all of his mechanisms were beneficial. The “Chaotic Shopping Book of Blessings and Curses,” for example, fully showcased his twisted sense of humor, making people sigh and wonder if letting the Dramatic Poet live would only make rice more expensive.

As Ashe and the others opened the Shopping Book, they saw a dazzling array of options:

Physique: “Die suddenly anytime +30, weak and frail +10, resistant to all diseases -10, limb regeneration -30”

Wisdom: “Cannot avoid rain +30, intellectually disabled +10, clever and witty -10, insight into truth -30”

Luck: “Choke on water +30, no toilet paper +10, everything you wish for -10, destiny’s favor -30”

Charisma: “Repulsive to gods and ghosts +30, pollute the air +10, universally adored -10, calamity of all races -30”

These were options targeting the spellcaster’s attributes in a more conventional way, but there were many more peculiar blessings and curses—

“Beautiful Life -10: Everyone and everything appears beautiful to you, all landscapes are worth stopping for, and you never have a bad day.”

“Misanthropy +10: Even watching someone breathe makes you feel like the world is doomed.”

“Hear Inner Voice -10: You can vaguely hear others’ inner thoughts.”

“See-through Illusion -10: You can’t truly see through objects, but you do see what you want to see.”

“Mortal Danger Sense -10: When in danger, time seems to slow down for you. The greater the danger, the more time decelerates.”

“Temporal Confusion +30: Your sense of time is completely thrown off. Today is the 3rd, tomorrow is the 9th, and yesterday was the 21st. Haha.”

“Foresee Death -30: You can see how you will die.”

Although these blessings and curses were strange, they were somewhat understandable. However, there were many more that you couldn't categorize at all—

“Childhood Friend -10: Within three days, a childhood friend will find you, with similar strength to yours, but your relationship will remain just friends.”

“Lover -30: Within three days, someone who perfectly fits your romantic tastes will appear, matching your strength, and will love only you in this lifetime.”

“Enemy +10: Within three days, a hated enemy will appear, with similar strength to yours. They will align with everyone who dislikes you to take you down.”

“Sincerity +10: If everyone in a place is sincere, is it heaven or hell?”

“Chat Channel -30: You will join the Chat Channel created by the Dramatic Poet, allowing you to chat with anyone in it anytime, anywhere.”

“Blade Fish Dragon -10: Every time you enter the Virtual Realm, a Blade Fish Dragon will appear next to you, fully obedient to your commands.”

“Random Race +10: You will transform into a different random race.”

“Beautiful People Don't Poop -10: Your waste will be transferred to another person for processing.”

“What the heck is all of this...” Ashe said, feeling a headache coming on. “If you're already transferring the waste, why not just send it to the sewer instead of into someone else's intestines!?”

“Maybe it's a way of respecting the poop,” Deya speculated, “but Observer, why do you even care about this? Are you thinking of choosing it?”

“They say people spend half an hour every day on this... if I could save that time...” Ashe pondered, “But what about ‘childhood friend’ and ‘lover’? If I choose ‘lover’, does that mean someone who likes me will just appear out of nowhere?”

“It could also mean the Sword Princess will appear by your side,” Deya mumbled very quietly.

“What?”

"I was saying, why isn't the Sword Princess speaking," Deya said, looking at Sonya, who was staring at the Shopping Book like a village girl dazzled by jewels. "Sword Princess, did you find something?"

"Sincerity," Sonya muttered softly.

"What?"

"Sincerity!" Sonya looked up at Ashe. "The blessings and curses are just on the surface; they're essentially like the Summoning Ritual of sincerity!"

Ashe was momentarily stunned, then suddenly realized something and began to study the Shopping Book closely. Only Deya looked confused—these two lovebirds were having another encrypted conversation!

The village girl also realized she had subconsciously shown too much familiarity and couldn't afford to appear too close to the Observer in front of others. She then leaned closer to the Witch to explain the Summoning Ritual of sincerity.

The Summoning Ritual of sincerity was the ritual Ashe had forced the Sword Princess to undertake to obtain the spirit of sincerity. During that time, the Sword Princess could only tell the truth until she summoned the spirit of sincerity. Thinking about it, doesn't that sound exactly like the "Sincerity" curse from the Shopping Book?

According to this logic, most of the blessings and curses in the Shopping Book are actually related to Summoning Rituals of different spirits!

"Wait a minute," Deya suddenly reacted, "Then 'foresee death,' 'temporal confusion,' and 'hear inner voice'—"

"Are Summoning Rituals for spirits from the Prophecy Sect, Time Sect, and Mental Sect, respectively," Ashe explained. "Both 'beautiful life' and 'misanthropy' should also be related to the Mental Sect, while 'see-through illusion' would likely summon a Reconnaissance Spirit. So basically, the real purpose of the Shopping Book is to let you quickly master a new Spellcasting Sect!"

"But what about 'childhood friend,' 'lover,' and 'enemy'?"

"I can guess what 'enemy' means," Sonya pondered. "Your enemy will link up with everyone who dislikes you... meaning if you keep an eye on your enemy, you'll know who holds a grudge against you."

"Random Race is very useful," Deya suddenly said.

"Why?" Ashe asked, puzzled. "I'm pretty happy being human."

“Not if it’s permanent, of course, but if it only lasts 72 hours, it’s like having a rare experience,” Sonya explained. “Most intelligent races other than humans have their own specialized Spellcasting Sects. Some unique sects can’t even be accessed unless you belong to a specific race, like the Gluttony Sect exclusive to Ogres. You might be able to grasp the basics within those 72 hours.”

“But the most important ones are still the Prophecy, Destiny, and Truth Sects,” Deya said seriously. “These three Sects are nearly impossible to master on your own. You usually need some kind of Adventure to be lucky enough to gain the Virtual Realm’s favor... Yet now, the Adventure is right in front of us: ‘insight into truth,’ ‘destiny’s favor,’ and ‘foresee death.’”

By choosing these blessings, they would be guaranteed to master those most mysterious and powerful Spellcasting Sects.

“But they each cost 30 points,” Ashe pointed out, spreading his hands. “If we choose them, we won’t trigger the Dramatic Poet’s benefits.”

Purchasing blessings will add ‘-’ curse points, and purchasing curses will add ‘+’ blessing points. If it’s your first time purchasing and the points are within 10, the Dramatic Poet will compress the curse duration to either one virtual realm exploration or 72 hours. This arrangement is highly advantageous for Spellcasters.

But if it exceeds 10 points, the Dramatic Poet won’t assist, and the curses granted by the Shopping Book will become permanent. The consequences would be too severe, akin to choosing the wrong major in college and being stuck with it for life.

For a curse like ‘weak and frail,’ it might still be manageable, but a permanent ‘Random Race’ curse... it’s one thing if you randomly turn into a Bewitcher, but if you become an Ogre, you’d practically need to restart your life. Also, since Ashe is a man, there’s a zero percent chance of randomly becoming a Bewitcher; at best, he might turn into an Elf.

“Wait, why does the Chat Channel also cost 30 curse points?” Deya asked curiously. “Is it some sort of Rare Spirit Summoning Ritual?”

“The Chat Channel itself holds no inherent value; it’s the people in it who matter,” Ashe explained. “There might be weekly gatherings of Divine Sovereigns, Angels, and legendary spellcasters in there. They could be exchanging intelligence and items.”

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

## Chapter 420: The Main City

The attitude of the Dramatic Poet is quite clear: I am both the shelter for the weak and the examiner for the strong.

The truly powerful blessings in the Shopping Book all cost 30 points. In other words, if you aim to gain transformative power from the Shopping Book, the Dramatic Poet will not help you one bit. However, if you are content to take modest rewards, the Dramatic Poet is pleased to offer some benefits to the younger generation.

He will ensure that blessings become genuine blessings and that curses turn into temporary Trials, guaranteeing that every spellcaster who opens the Shopping Book will gain something, if not carry a full bag of rewards.

After a brief discussion, Ashe and the others ultimately resisted the temptation of the prophecy from the Fate Sect. Though investing in prophecy, Fate, and Truth Sects is undoubtedly worthwhile in the long run, the cycle of investment is too lengthy and offers no quick combat advantages.

More importantly, they could not afford any risks.

In a few days, they would reach the Spider Tower area, and Ashe and his companions were already exhausting their efforts to evade the Empress's heroic soul. If a curse demanded their attention, they might as well cleanse themselves and wait for the Empress's favor.

Although they could not choose the powerful blessings or curses, they still had many options. After a short discussion, they all decided on the same blessing: "mortal danger sense!"

The more dangerous the situation, the slower time flows!

This blessing is likely related to the Time Sect, but since it only costs 10 curse points, ordinary spellcasters would be unable to summon a time spirit through this blessing. However, Ashe and his companions are different—thanks to their recent time travel through the Golden Flow, all three of them had advanced to the Golden level in the Time Sect!

As long as they experience enough dangerous battles, they could surely use this blessing to summon the corresponding time spirit! Even if they could not summon one, this blessing alone would significantly boost their combat power!

As for selecting a curse, their choices varied. Sonya chose the Physical Curse "weak and frail," and Ashe chose the Luck Curse "no toilet paper."

However, the strongest was Deya—she chose the Wisdom Curse “intellectually disabled!”

Facing the awestruck gazes of her teammates, Deya calmly rubbed her face, and her hair turned wine-red, her expression becoming cool and serene.

Ashe and Sonya were slightly taken aback before they remembered that the Witch had multiple personalities. The Witch didn’t need her main personality to endure the intellectually disabled curse; she could simply switch personalities to become immune to the curse’s effects!

If not for the restrictions set by the Dramatic Poet, Deya might even dare to choose the “cannot avoid rain” curse!

“Scarlet Dead Apostles?” Ashe asked, “Are you okay with this?”

Scarlet Dead Apostles thought for a moment and then nodded, “A little bit.”

“It’s quite normal,” Sonya comforted, “Although this is indeed the best way to handle it, transferring the curse to a sister is somewhat...”

“No, it’s not that I dislike the curse. On the contrary, I’m quite curious about what I’ll be like after becoming intellectually disabled,” Scarlet Dead Apostles said. “I just think the Secret Princess doesn’t need to involve me—since the curse doesn’t affect her at all.”

Because Scarlet Dead Apostles spoke so frankly, Ashe and Sonya couldn’t tell if she was being sarcastic or not.

The curses that the three of them—Ashe, Sonya, and Deya—purchased were all worth only 10 points and would be lifted after 72 hours in real-time. Meanwhile, they would also receive permanent random blessings of equal value. The blessings they bought were also worth only 10 points, so the corresponding random curses would last for only one virtual realm exploration session and would be lifted once they returned to reality.

This is the correct way to use the Shopping Book: buy one blessing and one curse, with additional random curses and random blessings thrown in. After all the curses are lifted, you end up with just two blessings!

After completing their purchases, Ashe, Sonya, and Deya clicked to submit, and then the Shopping Book entered its final stage: taxation.

The Shopping Book extracted their life experiences to generate new blessings or curses to enrich the product list!



The Shopping Book glowed faintly and extended several luminous tendrils through the spellcasters' bodies. Then it retracted these tendrils as if ink were being absorbed into the pages, generating new items in the catalog—

“Blessing – Grand Wedding: You will have a grand wedding that everyone envies, an unforgettable honeymoon that always holds a significant place in your memories, and then have ten children.”

What!? Sonya was stunned. Isn't ten too many?

“Blessing – Family Reunion: You will have the perfect family—a mediocre male master, a virtuous female master, a sharp-tongued but tsundere butler, a cold yet passionate bodyguard, an adorable and innocent daughter, and a troublesome pet.” search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Scarlet Dead Apostles was stunned, “I'm the bodyguard?”

Black Butler retorted, “How am I tsundere?”

Deya coughed, “Ahem, I didn't expect this book to be so well-informed. The mediocre male master must be referring to Ashe, and the virtuous female master undoubtedly is—”

White Queen interjected, “Obviously me, huh. So, my relationship with Lise would upgrade from sisters to mother and daughter?”

Deya queried, “Wait a minute, then who am I?”

Black Butler responded, “First of all, let's exclude the adorable and innocent daughter.”

While Deya and Sonya let their imaginations run wild, Ashe's face turned serious.

“Curse – Emotional Fraud: A fraud adept at deceiving feelings will be doomed to die a horrible death, with no body left to bury and soul shattered. The Dramatic Poet said so, even the Divine Sovereign can't save you!”

How did this cursed book extract 'emotional fraud' from my rather uneventful life... or is this some sort of sarcastic jab? Like pointing to a worker and saying, 'You're so lucky to have such a fully packed schedule!'

Counting everyone I know, excluding operators (Sword Princess, Witch), those I haven't met in person (222), those who are too young (Lise), adversaries (Yvaren, Qenna), superiors (Annan), and those I cannot resist (Freya), there's really no one left!

You could say I'm adept at deceiving men, perhaps—Igor, Langna, Lunette, Harvey were all talents I lured from the Shattered Lake market myself!



Putting down the Shopping Book, Ashe and his companions left the café. The moment they stepped out of the special area, the random curses took effect—

“Curse – Eye Contact: You must maintain eye contact with others for 59 minutes and 59 seconds.”

Ashe didn’t know if this curse was custom-tailored for their team, but he knew that the moment the curse descended, he couldn’t tear his gaze from the eyes of the Sword Princess and the Witch!

The Sword Princess and the Witch were in the same predicament, with the three of them locked in a staring contest. For a moment, no one dared to move. Meanwhile, Ashe’s “no toilet paper” level luck seemed to have just kicked in—the thunderous hoofbeats of the heroic soul legion could be heard in the distance, signaling their immediate need to flee in the sports car!

But the curse of eye contact was like a multi-person control spell, keeping them rooted to the spot. Suddenly, Ashe had a flash of insight. He lifted the Sword Princess and the Witch, placing them in the front seats facing backward, while he sat in the back seat facing forward. This way, they could maintain eye contact while Ashe drove the sports car... to escape?

Damn it!

Ashe couldn’t look at the virtual realm map because he had to maintain eye contact! He moved the virtual realm map beside the Sword Princess’s face, using his peripheral vision to navigate. He focused solely on escaping, with no regard for the direction of the white bull!

“Two heroic soul legions are closing in,” Sonya observed through her peripheral vision, “The number of followers exceeds 100, but there are no armed troop types yet.”

“Armed troop types consume soul power. Unless they’re sure they can catch us, the commander won’t waste resources,” Ashe replied, relaxed.

For the past few days, they had been driven hither and yon by the heroic soul legion, but actually faced little danger, even managing to loot while on the run.

Aside from being fast, their lack of serious pursuit from the heroic soul legion was key.

Even though they knew Ashe had a conceptual Incarnation, deploying armed troop types required real soul power. If they failed to catch them, it would be a huge waste, right? Thus, the heroic soul legion had only been making tentative pursuits. But as soon as they started chasing, Ashe and his team would run. If the pursuit failed, there was no need for the heroic soul legion to deploy armed troop types. This endless cycle meant the heroic soul legion was like a whip constantly driving them. Ashe and his team hadn’t

dared to rest for days, looting and running, and then looting again, with far more efficiency than before.

However, as soon as Ashe finished speaking, the long-range attacks of the Thousand-feathered Drakes rained down on the “Refracting Wall.”

“Why are they using armed troop types now?” Ashe was surprised, “Are they really confident this time?”

Suddenly, a heroic soul legion appeared ahead, causing Ashe to swerve in fright. Just as he was about to leave the legion in the dust, another one emerged from the right front!

What’s going on? We haven’t even reached the Blood Tomb section tonight, and Spider Tower comes after that. It’s one thing to be zealously pursued in the Spider Tower area, but why are the locals here also going all out to hunt us down?

“Something’s off!” Sonya exclaimed. “This is the seventh different heroic soul legion we’ve encountered, and they haven’t even considered giving up!”

“Are we lost?” Deya asked.

“If we had a destination, that could be considered being lost. Right now, we’re just wandering!” Ashe replied helplessly.

Another fresh heroic soul legion appeared to their left front, forcing Ashe to redirect once again. He had no way of determining if they were heading into a trap because his eyes were focused separately on the Sword Princess and the Witch, leaving only a sliver of his peripheral vision for the virtual realm map!

“Can you squeeze a bit closer? Otherwise, I can’t maintain eye contact correctly...”

“We’re practically glued together already. I could lick the Sword Princess’s face with my tongue,” Deya complained. She was indeed face-to-face with Sonya. “Tsk, why don’t we switch places? I’ll sit in the back, and you can watch while I cozy up to someone.”

“What are you talking about, Witch?” Sonya retorted angrily, wrapping her left arm affectionately around Deya’s waist.

Whoosh!

Suddenly, it felt as though they had passed through an invisible barrier, and all three spellcasters sensed the change—or rather, they directly saw the change!

In their view, the Reverse Golden Rain vanished instantly, replaced by a lush, green meadow!

“Did we enter a static domain?” Sonya quickly recalled how they had been turned into a painting by a static domain when they first arrived on the Time Continent.

“No, it’s not a static domain,” Ashe murmured. “You’ll realize what it is soon.”

The sports car screeched to a halt, carving a donut shape into the grassy lawn. Throughout the abrupt stop, they managed to maintain eye contact. Finally, Sonya and Deya could see the enormous structure occupying this space—

A fortress.

A fortress made of colossal vines and giant trees!

Countless knowledge creatures flitted and danced outside the fortress walls, nesting and multiplying!

In the depths of the fortress stood a spiraling steel structure that resembled a gigantic torch, pointing straight toward the skies of the Time Continent!

All the Reverse Golden Rain could do was float around the grassy area, forming a Rain Curtain that nourished the oasis’s soil without turning the grass a single shade of gold!

A peculiar realization dawned upon the spellcasters: even the time rules of the Virtual Realm could only add to this place but could not overshadow it.

A faint sense of vanity swelled within them, and their pride as fellow spellcasters made them increasingly reverent.

Because this was the work of the most powerful spellcaster.

This was a manifestation of the Will of the Divine Sovereign permeating the Virtual Realm!

“No wonder we encountered more and more heroic soul legions along the way,” Ashe remarked. “We’ve stumbled into one of the main cities of the Six Nations.”

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