

Sorcerer's Handbook

Chapter 541: If It Were Before

“Inner court nobility or guard palace nobility?”

Sonya raised an eyebrow slightly, displaying some disdain: “The second son of the illustrious Vlozrada, reduced to playing the middleman?”

It's only natural for a sanctuary sorcerer to be granted a noble title, but unless the sorcerer is born into the inner court nobility, they usually follow the guard palace nobility path.

A sanctuary sorcerer who is not from the inner court nobility but receives an inner court noble title can only do so in one situation-through marriage with the inner court nobility, wherein the noble title is transferred to the sorcerer. Search* The NôvelFire(.)net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

If the inner court nobility has failed to produce a distinguished sorcerer for many years, their noble title faces the risk of being “adjusted” by the House of Nobles. Their only solution is to recruit a sanctuary sorcerer. So when Felix asked which noble title she preferred, Sonya's first reaction was that Felix was representing some declining inner court nobility, seeking to arrange a marriage with her.

But Felix knew her nature too well. When he initially suggested a fake marriage as compensation, the village girl outright refused. Now that she has achieved success, how could she possibly agree to marry?

“You misunderstand; I never intended for you to inherit the name of a fallen noble family,” Felix shook his head. “You no longer need to marry into a prestigious family; you will eventually become one yourself.”

“However, a sanctuary sorcerer can indeed directly receive an inner court noble title, though most sanctuary sorcerers have refused it. If you don't believe me, you can ask Professor Trozan.”

Sonya was taken aback: “But Sister Trelozan is only a bow peerage. If she could become inner court nobility, why would she refuse?”

University professors are operators within the education department, and their salaries are jointly funded by the university and the education department, naturally placing them within the administrative and legal officer system. Ordinary two-wings professors are

lance peerage, while three-wings professors are bow peerage. Only vice presidents and presidents are armor peerage.

Sister Trelozan... Felix raised an eyebrow at the mention and continued, "Except for the lowest sword peerage, higher noble titles must receive the blessing of the Stars, you know that, right?"

Sonya nodded.

Due to the existence of the blessing of the Stars, nobles who hold legislative and executive power are unable to break laws for personal gain and must wholeheartedly serve the public, striving to build a Stars society.

Nobles possess more rights but must also shoulder more responsibilities.

Sonya's views on the noble system had always been average, but everything is relative- after hearing from the Observer about the current state of Blood Moon society, her approval of the Stars system sharply increased.

After all, even though the Stars Kingdom has clear class distinctions and significant barriers, the society is stable and harmonious. Ordinary people might not achieve great wealth, but they can live comfortably. For example, the short-sighted townsfolk of her hometown, even if they never visit Galaxia in their lifetime, are content to return home after a day's work to watch the holographic screen, living a blissful and simple life.

Compared to the Blood Moon Kingdom's orphans, the Blood Moon Tribunal, and broken families, the noble system of the Stars Kingdom is nothing worth complaining about. Moreover, it has always functioned efficiently and excellently, allowing for the steady social development.

"Like noble titles, the blessing of the Stars is also graded," Felix explained. "The 'Stars' in the blessing of the Stars not only describes nobles as the stars of the nation, but it reveals the essence of the blessing itself-the blessing of the Stars requires the Stars to continue being effective."

"For example, a shield peerage requires one star to sustain its blessing, a lance peerage needs two, a bow peerage requires three, and an armor peerage needs four. As your noble title rises, the strength of the blessing increases. Beyond making nobles more loyal to the nation, it also enhances insight, learning capacity, and delays aging, among other benefits."

"Guard palace nobility will certainly benefit from advancing their noble status."

Sonya caught Felix's implication: "Does becoming inner court nobility mean a loss?"

Felix smiled slightly: "The lowest inner court nobility, 'Viscount,' receives blessings that extend life, maintain youth, ensure vitality, enhance memory, improve insight, and sharpen analytical skills. If an armor peerage has the blessing of five stars, a Viscount benefits from at least a hundred."

"Isn't that good?" Sonya asked, "Are the expectations for inner court nobility more than just loyalty to the nation?"

Felix shook his head: "No, like the guard palace, their influence is only about absolute loyalty, making the welfare of the Stars the highest priority."

"Then why-" Sonya started to ask but suddenly realized something.

"You've figured it out, haven't you?" Felix said with a smile. "Guard palace nobility are only responsible for execution, meaning their absolute loyalty requires them simply not to make mistakes, slack off, or act selfishly. But the responsibility of the inner court nobility is to propose initiatives in the Council, steer the kingdom, and lead the people!"

"Now, when a physically robust, exceptionally memory-enhanced, and analytically sharper inner court Council Member needs to fulfill their duties and propose a reasonable initiative, what do you think they will do?"

"Conduct field research, analyze, and study..." Sonya murmured.

"The renowned 'Stargazer Duke' Vlozrada spends about half the year traveling throughout the Stars Kingdom with his advisors," Felix said calmly. "Within the inner court nobility, Council Members of different noble titles must propose initiatives of varying levels. A Viscount with their team can typically complete their tasks with three months of work a year. For Counts, marquises, and Dukes, the difficulty increases step by step. If a family has fallen on hard times and can't afford consultants, it's not unusual for a Council Member to spend the entire year on this."

"So now you understand why most sanctuary sorcerers refuse to become inner court nobility."

Sonya certainly understood, as sanctuary sorcerers focus primarily on virtual realm exploration, wishing to spend all their time honing their skills. The thought of spending time drafting proposals isn't appealing at all. Even the village girl had given up on the idea of becoming inner court nobility-she had hoped to somehow earn a hereditary Viscount title in her lifetime, but she clearly had no interest in being a Council Member. If the Observer knew the responsibilities involved, he might flee overnight, carrying her away.

"However, being inner court nobility isn't all about responsibilities and obligations."

Sensing he might have alarmed the village girl, Felix added, "Because they are close to the center of power, and their intellect is enhanced, inner court nobles can almost effortlessly profit from national development. Even when their business associations compete with ordinary merchants, they remain a step ahead and hold every advantage... Every inner court noble is part of a legacy of influential families."

"And precisely because they can command significant societal resources, inner court nobility have strict quotas for training sorcerers. Those who hoard resources without utilizing them are better off being guard palace nobility."

"No matter how many advantages being inner court nobility might offer, I can't choose that path," Sonya said. "My journey as a sorcerer won't stop here."

"I know," Felix replied. "That's why I'm here to invite you on behalf of my organization, and our offer is-

"To make you immune to the Mental suggestions of the blessing of the Stars."

Sonya was taken aback and asked, "Your organization... that sorcerer alliance?"

"Exactly," Felix said, spreading his hands. "No Pact, no obligations. If you agree to join us, we will help you resist the Mental suggestions of the Stars' blessing. Meaning, you can enjoy the enhancement of the blessing without the constraint of 'loyalty to the Stars.'"

"Even if you choose to become inner court nobility, it won't interfere with your path as a sorcerer, yet you'll still rise to the ranks of an influential family."

"How about the title, Viscount Therave?"

Sonya paused for a moment before replying, "If you have the capability to do this, your target should not be someone like me-

"You're indeed not the first to be tempted by this offer," Felix said.

In a flash, many thoughts raced through Sonya's mind.

If she wasn't the first, that meant there were already many nobles in the nation whose primary loyalty was no longer to the Stars. What could these individuals possibly be intending-

"Don't misunderstand, we aren't trying to overthrow the Stars," Felix explained. "We're simply a group of like-minded sorcerers pursuing power, looking to remove the obstacles from our path as sorcerers by escaping the constraints of the blessing. We aren't many; we're incapable of even shaking the Stars, let alone overturning it."

Sonya found this curious. "If you want to be completely free of constraints, then why remain nobles at all?"

"The Star Miracles Directory you're seeing now is incomplete," Felix said. "Only nobles can access the full Miracles Directory and gain privileges to exchange in the royal spirit treasury. If you do not become a noble and don't accept the blessing of the Stars, the truly advanced resources of the Stars will not be available to you."

"I remember asking you if you would be willing to become a noble after learning the secret of the Stars' blessing. Your answer then was yes," Felix said, looking at her. "Now that you have become a three-wings sorcerer, has your answer changed?"

Seeing Sonya remain silent, Felix knew she'd been tempted.

Sonya's willingness back then was genuine, and her hesitance now is no less sincere.

Two-wings and Sanctuary are two entirely different classes; the former is still just a cog in the machinery of society, but the latter can already start to master their own life.

When you're a cog, personal will is something you might easily trade away; but once you can touch freedom, you'll instinctively be stingy with your loyalty.

Still, there's no need to rush her into making a statement. Once she consults Trozan and learns more about the situation of the nobility, she'll naturally come to the right decision.

So, Felix stood up. "I won't bother you any further. If you're interested, you can come find me--"

"When you mentioned the nobles," Sonya suddenly asked, "did you exclude the sword peerage?"

Felix was taken aback, then nodded. "Sword peerage is like a reserve for the nobility and hasn't yet qualified to receive the blessing of the Stars. Because of this, they have almost no noble privileges and the positions available to them are limited to ordinary guards, operators, or clerks, without any real power."

"Then that's fine."

"Then that's fine?"

"I'll be fine with the sword peerage," Sonya said casually. "Everyone calls me the sword Princess anyway, doesn't it fit perfectly with the sword peerage title? I appreciate your offer, but I don't need your help."

“Why!?” Felix immediately sat back down. “Do you know what you’re saying? Even if you don’t become inner court nobility, you can’t just stop at sword peerage!”

“And why not?”

“If you want to become a professor, you will inevitably have to advance to the bow peerage, and then you’ll have to accept the blessing of the Stars anyway!”

“Then I just won’t be a professor,” Sonya laughed. “I never wanted to teach. My career path is as a songstress and a performer.”

“Performers and songstresses are under the jurisdiction of the Cultural Institute and also have noble titles,” Felix explained. “Major nationwide TV shows, bestselling albums, heavily-invested TV dramas... Ordinary resources are one thing, but any significant nationwide entertainment resources prioritize artists who hold noble titles!”

“If you remain at the sword peerage level, the College League will be your only nationwide stage!”

Sonya blinked. “That is indeed a bit of a pity.”

“Besides, aren’t you considering your mother?” Felix continued. “Sword peerage can only extend a family member’s temporary stay in Galaxia to 100 days, still not allowing permanent residency, because the House of Nobles never intended for people to remain at the sword peerage level. An ordinary operator, with hard work, can progress to the shield peerage within five years and obtain permanent family residency rights... If you stay at sword peerage, you won’t be able to bring your mother to Galaxia!”

“Thank you for your concern,” Sonya smiled. “But I discussed this with my mother a few days ago; she doesn’t actually want to come.”

“What?”

“While I’ve been dreaming of establishing my career in Galaxia and bringing my mother over to enjoy a good life, that’s my wish, not hers.” Sonya shrugged. “She’s different from me; she doesn’t yearn for the bustling Galaxia, nor does she mind the quiet, remote village. I felt the village was a familiar cage, and she feels Galaxia is an unfamiliar prison.”

“Plus, since news of me reached back, those relatives who are kind to the strong but timid have been treating her much better. She’s quite content with her life now and just wants to take care of our family land.”

Felix couldn’t comprehend how someone would prefer staying in an agricultural town over coming to Galaxia. He shook his head and said, “With all due respect, your mother’s outlook is rather short-sighted, but you-“

“My mother is a village girl, and I’m the daughter of a village girl,” Sonya spread her hands. “My mother wants to stay close to our family land, and I just want to protect everything I care about, not risk seeking out resources that aren’t rightfully mine.”

“And what about your career?” Felix asked. “You’re just a step away from shining brightly. Are you willing to stop here?”

Sonya blinked.

“In the past, I might have accepted your offer without hesitation,” she said. “Yes, I do long to stand on stage, to become a performer and songstress like Delarose, to be others’ inspiration, to be a part of their childhood. To be the center of attention, famous across the Stars.”

“But my life isn’t only about my career.”

Sonya closed her book, stood up, and said, “Felix, what you sensed earlier wasn’t wrong.”

Felix, feeling lost, asked, “What?”

“If it were before, I’d probably revel in the glory of being a sanctuary sorcerer, attending lavish parties and soaking up everyone’s flattery. If it were before, I’d eagerly accept your invitation, become a careless member of the nobility, and enjoy the resources only nobility can access. If it were before, my words now would definitely be nothing but fake humility and real boasting...”

Sonya put her book in her bag, slung it over her shoulder, and waved goodbye.

“If it were before.”

11 PM.

Sonya, with her spirit restored, was already settled in the Meditation Building.

Don’t be nervous, she thought to herself.

There’s no reason to be. Five days ago, since the Observer was able to send the potion to her table, it meant he was out of danger. She should remain composed, unless the Observer showed concern for her first; then she could afford to feign a bit of insincere sentiment.

Don’t be nervous... don’t be nervous...

As the familiar sensation spread, her soul connected to the Virtual Realm, and her consciousness sank into the Distant Sky Domain.

Sonya opened her eyes and found herself on a bustling street filled with people.

She confirmed she was in the 'dream' of the Distant Sky Domain. However, as she glanced around, her heart plunged into an icy pit.

All around her were unfamiliar pedestrians.

No Observer, no Witch.

Instinctively, she gripped her sword hilt, suppressing the urge to wreak havoc, and walked quickly through the streets, scanning the surroundings.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

The more she looked, the heavier the suffocating frustration grew in her chest, almost choking her. Turning another corner, just seeing more unfamiliar faces on the street caused her legs to freeze. Her lips trembled, and she couldn't help but release all her pent-up frustration:

"Observer!"

"Right here!"

The sword Princess turned to see the Observer clumsily raising his hand, also scanning the surroundings. Once their eyes met, they immediately started moving toward each other.

Sonya initially walked, then quickly picked up her pace to a speed walk, and finally broke into a run, pushing past pedestrians. The passersby seemed ready to voice their objections, but seeing the sword hilt slightly drawn, they opted to let her pass with just their gaze.

As the distance closed, the weight on Sonya's heart was gradually lifted, replaced by an irrepressible excitement, almost compelling her to leap into his arms-

"Obser-ver-!"

The sword Princess skidded to a halt, watching as the Witch threw herself onto the Observer.

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

Chapter 542: I Want to Hold the Observer Forever

Although Ashe didn't see his teammates after entering the virtual realm, he wasn't worried. After all, he had already selected all of his team members for the "virtual realm exploration," and more importantly, he had the virtual realm map to check their locations. However, when he opened the map, his attention was immediately drawn to a newly appeared special mechanism.

While he studied the mechanism, he suddenly heard someone calling him.

"Observer!"

"Here!" Ashe instinctively responded, raising his hand and looking around. He immediately spotted that touch of crimson in the crowd.

Seeing her quickly approaching, pushing through the crowd with her lips pressed tight and eyes fixed on him, the Cult Leader found it amusing. It had only been about ten days since they last met, yet it seemed like years. He wasn't going to disappear; there was no need to be so excited.

Despite these thoughts, he couldn't suppress the smile that crept onto his face. He lowered his head and used his fingers to tidy his bangs, and all the frustrations in reality suddenly vanished at that moment.

Ashe walked briskly, pondering over what his first words should be. Before entering the virtual realm, he had specifically consulted with Igor on how to quickly reconnect with a friend after a long separation. Should he use a light-hearted "hee hee hee," a calm "let's go find the Witch," a teasing "did you miss me all these days," taking the lead with "how was your Meteor Trial result," or a flattering "you look so pretty I almost didn't recognize you," or maybe something else? But as he got closer, Ashe realized he didn't need Igor's suggestions. His inexplicable quickened heartbeat seemed to compress his thinking, leaving his focus only on the figure before him.

When there were no more bystanders between them, and noticing that the sword Princess didn't show any sign of stopping, Ashe instinctively extended his hand in preparation to receive her.

It was then-

"Obser-ver-!"

With a hurried shout, a soft figure leapt onto him, and Ashe nearly toppled over.

As he embraced the incoming person, a hint of surprise slipped into his voice, "Witch?"

The Witch clung to him like an octopus, her arms tightly wrapped around his neck, her head nuzzling against his shoulder with an unabashed smile on her face. Although surprised by her sudden enthusiasm, Ashe wasn't too taken aback since the Witch's personality was always quite mercurial.

Moreover, the joy and dependency in her eyes reminded Ashe of another little girl waiting for him, melting his heart like ice cream.

"Observer! Observer! Observer! Observer!" The Witch sang his name repeatedly.

"Yes, yes, I'm here," Ashe chuckled. "It's only been a few days, but the Witch has grown even more adorable."

"Uh-huh!" The Witch affectionately rubbed her face against his, giggling.

"You could get down from him now, couldn't you?" Sonya pressed her hand on the hilt of her sword, saying coldly, "It's only been ten days; is there really a need to be this excited?"

"No!"

The Witch reacted strongly, "I won't get down; I want to hold the Observer forever!"

Ashe and Sonya stared at her in surprise. While the Witch did have her reasons to embrace the Observer, it was unusual for her to be this excessive.

In addition, although the Witch was somewhat childish and spoiled, she wasn't truly a child and wouldn't normally say something so willful.

The expression on the Witch's face subtly changed then, the mischievousness quickly fading. She got down from Ashe, now shy, and explained, "I was just too happy and got a bit carried away, sorry."

In Deya's mind, Little Witch Lise was being scolded by the Black Butler, while the White Queen wielded the Scarlet Dead Apostles' bronze whip, spanking Lise's bottom until she admitted her mistakes.

Yes, the one clinging to Ashe earlier wasn't Deya, but Lise.

Now that Deya was the Empress, there was no need for her personality to stay bound in reality. Besides, Lise had been constantly pestering to meet Dad in the Virtual Realm, so Deya brought her into the Virtual Realm and let her sister have the chance to indulge in the long-awaited reunion.

However, Deya was aware of the consequences. She had to maintain “secrecy” to sustain the power of her Secret Incarnation. Until she fully mastered the deity “Gospel,” revealing any secrets in front of Ashe would nullify her secrecy power, and all her personalities would be overwhelmed by the vast consciousness of Gospel.

Therefore, Deya set rules with Lise-she wasn’t allowed to call him Dad, only Observer, and she couldn’t reveal their situation or ask about Igor and Harvey. Lise agreed to all of it, and she kept her promise. However, Deya and the others hadn’t anticipated that even if she couldn’t call him Dad, just seeing Ashe turned Lise into a daughter once more.

Although her elder sisters were furious at Lise for crossing boundaries with her antics, Deya knew that deep down, everyone was rather happy. Despite the jests of fate, the machinations of the Divine Sovereign, and the wandering nature of life, she could still embrace Ashe.

Yet, there was a challenge they had to confront.

Deya slightly turned her head and locked eyes with the sword Princess, who was watching unabashedly. She quickly looked away, pretending nothing was amiss.

The sword Princess.

She, too, could see Ashe every night and was also a team member discovered by him. Moreover, she had known Ashe longer than Deya and her group.

Back on the Time Continent, the sword Princess and Observer frequently argued and had cold wars. The sword Princess often whispered criticisms of the Observer into Deya’s ear, leaving Deya uncertain about the true nature of their relationship. After all, in her view, the Observer didn’t seem all that great; in comparison, Ashe was much better.

But once they realized that the Observer was Ashe, the Witch sisters completely changed their perspective.

Because it was Ashe-someone even they liked-how could the sword Princess not also have feelings for him?

The Black Butler analyzed it this way: “She pretends to be in a cold war with Ashe and talks bad about Ashe to you to make you stay away from him. She must have had an improper interest in Ashe early on and has been trying to prevent us from getting to know Ashe since we joined the team.”

“How terrible! If we had realized sooner that the Observer was Ashe, maybe...”

Deya didn’t want to think too ill of the sword Princess, but regardless of her intentions, any woman appearing around Ashe was an enemy of the Witch!

Compared to the sword Princess, they had a significant advantage-they knew Ashe in the real world!

The sword Princess hadn't even met Ashe in reality yet!

Unfortunately, due to the secrecy power, Deya couldn't reveal this secret, effectively nullifying the advantage. But that was okay; even though she couldn't disclose that she was Lise Deya, she could openly and legitimately pursue a romance with Ashe as the Witch!

Upon reflection, this might not be such a bad thing after all. Deya had always wanted to distinguish herself from Lise. Given Ashe's personality, if he equated "Lise" and "Deya," he would likely treat her just as family-only familial affection.

Even without the "secrecy" issue, Deya had intended to engage with Ashe with a clean, new identity. Now, she didn't need to concoct a new identity. Continuing to use the Witch persona to engage with Ashe romantically was even more convenient.

Once she and Ashe established a new relationship, Deya would reveal her true identity. So while the "secrecy power" influenced her, it acted both as a constraint and a motivation.

Meanwhile, Sonya, observing the visibly flustered Witch, felt a surge of confusion.

Before their last parting, the Witch's attitude towards the Observer was just that of an ordinary teammate. Why the sudden passion now?

Since they hadn't met in the Virtual Realm, the reason could only be internal or external.

The internal reason could be a drastic change in the Witch's personality; the external reason could only be... reality.

There was also a possibility that the Observer and the Witch met secretly in the Virtual Realm, but Sonya didn't want to entertain that notion. It wasn't that she couldn't imagine it, but thinking along those lines left her unsure of how she might react.

Hopefully, the Witch was just overly excited... hopefully.

Suppressing her irritation, Sonya turned to see Ashe looking around and couldn't help but ask, "What are you looking for?"

"Looking for our new teammate," Ashe replied, scanning the area before calling out, "Yolan Vesser!"

"I'm here," a soft, almost syrupy voice responded from not too far away. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Yet, neither the sword Princess nor the Witch looked at the newcomer; instead, they stared at Ashe in shock-

Why did you call us by code names, but call her by her actual name!?

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

Chapter 543: Deyas Imagination

“Nice to meet you all, I’m Yolan Vesser.”

Standing before Ashe and the others was a quiet girl wearing a small round hat, round-framed glasses perched on her nose, and a trench coat. No wonder they hadn’t noticed her earlier in the crowd; she blended in quite well.

She seemed a bit shy, clutching her notebook tightly and looking at the ground as she said, “I’m honored to join your team.”

“I’m the Observer, currently positioned as remote support, responsible for long-range damage, protection, and healing,” Ashe introduced. “This is the sword Princess, skilled in the Swordsmanship sect, excelling in close combat bursts, and she’s our main damage dealer. And here is the Witch, skilled in time manipulation and the Fist-Claw Sect, focused on control and disruption.”

Yolan Vesser hesitated for a moment before saying, “I’m a Truth sorcerer. My usual combat approach is to first gather Intelligence on the enemy, then choose which Spellcasting Sect to use based on their weaknesses. It might sound a bit arrogant, but I-

Ashe interrupted, “Do you build your Miracle System with the thousand changes spirit as the core spirit? Then you form a counter-strategy on the fly using the over twenty silver spellcasting sects you’re proficient in?”

Yolan Vesser lowered her head slightly, covering the glimmer in her eyes. “Yes, Observer, you’ve summarized it quite accurately. I was wondering how to explain it clearly, but you already seem to understand my core spirit and spellcasting sects very well.”

“Of course, I’m well aware of all the operators’ capabilities,” Ashe pondered aloud. “For now, it seems you can fill any role in the team, but we’ll better determine your tactical responsibilities through real combat.”

“That’s wonderful.”

“Hmm?”

“Your team has such clear roles, you must have gone through many challenges and battles together,” Yolan Vesser said, full of admiration. “Not having to face the Virtual Realm alone, being able to trust someone to watch your back, having friends to chat and relax with when you’re tired... it’s just amazing.”

“Really, thank you, Observer, for recruiting me into this team,” she said earnestly. “I’ll do my best to contribute! Sword Princess seniors, Witch senior, Observer captain, please guide me!”

Sonya and Deya exchanged a glance. With someone being this humble, they couldn’t keep up their stern expressions. Although they were quite upset with Ashe for bringing in a newcomer without their consent (not that they would have agreed), they had to admit that this newcomer was indeed significant for the team.

The Truth Sect!

One of the most mysterious Spellcasting Sects!

While mystery means ancient, unlike Swordsmanship or Gunmanship which see new spirits and Miracles born every day, it also means unpredictability. Enemies might guard against physical attacks like swords, guns, or fists, watch out for energy attacks like fire, ice, wind, or thunder, and be wary of mental or necromancy attacks, but it is nearly impossible to defend against the schemes of fate, prophecy, truth, or time – how does one build a defense system against something they rarely encounter?

Not to mention the newcomer is proficient in over twenty Spellcasting Sects, and just this wealth of knowledge is bound to play a crucial role in exploration.

The most important thing is, facing genuine flattery from a sanctuary sorcerer, it’d be a lie to say Sonya and Deya didn’t feel a bit pleased.

They were currently akin to Ashe, Mudborn sorcerers illegally entering the Distant Sky Domain, with their Spellcasting Sects far from reaching sanctuary level!

Yet the newcomer had opened the Gate of Truth to the Distant Sky Domain on her own; she had ventured further than them on the path of a sorcerer! And this without even considering her mastery of the Truth Sect!

Nevertheless, she now timidly called them ‘Sword Princess senior’ and ‘Witch senior’; although Sonya and Deya felt a twinge of shame, it was hard not to feel a sense of pride, thinking “A sanctuary of truth is younger than us.”

Plus, the new operator looked quiet and delicate, naturally invoking a protective instinct, making it impossible to dislike her.

But Sonya couldn't help addressing the name issue: "Observer, why do you call us by codenames, but use her real name?"

"I don't know either," Ashe shrugged. "When I picked... I mean, when I chose you, I could only see your codenames, but she alone had a real name. Wait, could Yolan Vesser be not a name but a codename too?"

The quiet girl shook her head. "No, that's indeed my name. I don't have a codename, maybe because I lack distinctive features? You see, the sword Princess is both beautiful and charismatic, as sharp and bright as a sword blade, while the Witch is cute and versatile, perfectly matching her codename. I'm quite ordinary... If you're used to using codenames, I can create one."

"No need," Ashe replied. "We'll just call you Vesser."

"Alright," Vesser seemed unconcerned. "Then shall we—"

"Wait a minute."

Deya suddenly raised her hand to interrupt the conversation. Her expression was serious as she glanced between Ashe and Vesser before abruptly asking, "Observer, can you still not talk about your real-world situation?"

Ashe was taken aback but quickly realized what she meant. "No, the Pact on me has ended. I can tell you what happened over the past two months. But this isn't the time for that—we need to start exploring the Distant Sky Domain."

"You can keep it short; just focus on your current situation," Deya suggested with a pause. "Like, are you in any danger, or what sort of people have you encountered?"

Ashe thought for a moment before briefly summarizing the events in the Kingdom of Gospel within a minute. "...In order to deal with the Blood Seed curse on me, I have been chasing a criminal called 'Silver Lantern' with some others in the Land of Senlo. Though there have been some issues, my freedom hasn't been restricted. Besides, I don't necessarily have to continue the hunt. Just as there's ancient technology to create Blood Seed curses, there are relics and treasures to cure them. If I resolve the Blood Seed during my journey, I won't need to stay in Senlo."

Deya asked, "Your companions, who are they?"

"A necromancer, a mental sorcerer, and a warrior I met in Senlo."

"Is that warrior male or female?"

Ashe hesitated for a second. "Male... I think."

Deya still wasn't reassured, and she decided to be straightforward. "Do you think Yolan Vesser resembles any of the women you've met recently?"

Both Ashe and Vesser looked at each other in surprise, but while Ashe was merely puzzled as to why the Witch would ask such a question, Vesser was shocked at how she might have been exposed.

Because another version of 'me' from a different world line had warned me, I had already established a separate persona for myself at the moment of being drawn into the virtual realm, completely severing ties with my real-world self to avoid recognition.

When Vesser saw the Observer, she immediately recognized him as Ashe Heath, who was tasked with hunting her down-she had seen him wearing the same crimson trench coat just a few days ago when the Sanctuary team nearly caught her in Food Factory Town.

According to the intelligence provided by another version of 'me' from a different world line, the Observer was entirely unaware of the real-world identities of his teammates. Therefore, as long as Vesser maintained her disguise, there was no risk of exposure.

That being said, it could still be a trap set by Ashe and his team to capture her, so Vesser did not fully trust the intelligence from the other world line.

But upon seeing the Observer's team, Vesser was determined-despite the risks, she had to stay with this team.

A well-coordinated virtual realm exploration team was just too tempting for her. Her spirit system was highly incompatible with the Distant Sky Domain, making exploration incredibly difficult until she could develop a new system. She was also on the run in the real world-without the resources provided by the Four Pillars Cult, she couldn't gather what she needed.

With this team, she could quickly overcome the initial challenges of the Distant Sky Domain.

Besides, Vesser was very curious about Ashe himself, especially since forming a team in the virtual realm was akin to a divine intervention. How could a truth sorcerer like her resist exploring the secrets this man might hold?

However, she never expected that, despite covering all her tracks, she got suspected-and by a sorcerer she didn't even know!

Was it prophecy? Fate? Or had the Witch's Time Sect reached the extent of glimpsing into the future?

As for why Deya suspected Vesser, the reason was quite simple-she herself was the perfect example!

She was both the Witch teammate of the Observer and Ashe's daughter, Lise!

When Deya saw Vesser, she couldn't help but suspect if she had already appeared in Ashe's real life. Especially given the other women appearing around Ashe, each was someone to keep an eye on!

However, while Deya was focused on Vesser, Sonya was also thoughtfully watching Deya.

"I haven't really come across many women lately either," Ashe shook his head. "And how could I possibly meet any of you in the real world... Vesser, are you in the Kingdom of Senlo? Do you recognize me?"

Faced with their gaze, Vesser displayed a confused expression. After pondering for a moment, she shook her head: "I don't think I've ever met you, and I'm not in the Kingdom of Senlo. As for where I am... I'm in a chaotic era dominated by various factions, so I don't even know what my nation is called. I usually just refer to it as 'this land.'"

Deya remained suspicious: "Could you be the new warrior Observer recently met?"

"Witch," Ashe had to clarify. "The warrior is indeed a very strong individual, but he's not even a sorcerer."

With that, the newcomer was completely without suspicion, and Deya finally felt relieved, enthusiastically taking Vesser's arm. "Welcome to our team!"

Watching them giggle and get along, Ashe also felt a sense of relief.

He was actually quite nervous because the new team member was a sanctuary sorcerer, and every sanctuary sorcerer he knew was proud and full of personality: The Blood Hunter Gerard, the Elf Patriarch Qenna, the Weeping Sand Red Cap Cleos... these sanctuary sorcerers were merely ordinary ones, while Yolan Vesser was a Truth Sanctuary!

To put it in perspective, an ordinary sanctuary is akin to achieving a perfect score in standard exams, while a Truth Sanctuary is like scoring perfectly in competitive exams, almost guaranteeing a direct path to becoming a legendary sorcerer!

If Ashe had been able to achieve perfect scores to get such a scholarship during high school, he would have been quite arrogant too.

If the new operator wanted to vie for leadership of the team or had a more pronounced personality, Ashe doubted his ability to manage the team well.

But unexpectedly, this time they drew an exceptional card. The new operator was not only powerful but also gentle and modest. Using a girlfriend as a metaphor, she would have an excellent family background, high education, be beautiful with great assets, and only have eyes for you-if you met someone like that in reality, it'd almost certainly be a scam or a tea seller. But since this was a card draw, maybe their company occasionally still retained some conscience.

"I'm curious to hear more about your experiences in the Kingdom of Gospel."

Ashe turned to see the sword Princess standing next to him.

He replied, "Although it was only a matter of days, it was a very complex adventure, not something I can sum up in just a few words."

"No worries, you take your time to tell it, and I'll listen," Sonya said. "The College League is over, and I won first place in the Meteor Trial. Now it's summer vacation at school, so I have plenty of time."

"I'll find some time to share it with you," Ashe said with a smile, "but you also have to tell me about your journey to becoming the Meteor Trial champion-I wish I could have been there to see your impressive performance."

"There wasn't much to see live; my victory was quite the close call, and I was all battered and torn up," Sonya replied, brushing her hair behind her ear. "If you want to see, just look at me now, anytime."

"No matter how battered, I'm sure you were the center of attention under the Stars."

The sword Princess tilted her head and winked at him. "So it's a date then?"

"Yes, it's a date," Ashe agreed, "but I wonder when we'll have that kind of leisure."

"We'll make time. For instance, we can find a peaceful dream, sit in a bar there, you can share how you defeated the sanctuary sorcerer on the Meteor Trial arena, and I can tell you about my amazing experiences in the Kingdom of Gospel..."

"...and the stories about you and Annan."

Seeing the 'sincerity' spirit in the sword Princess's hand, Ashe suddenly felt that sorcerers should strive to explore the Virtual Realm, not laze around and touch fish.

So he clapped his hands and said, "Alright, it's time to explore the Virtual Realm!"

Deya looked around. “Did you prepare a mode of transportation?”

“You guys even have transportation for exploring the Virtual Realm?” Vesser was genuinely shocked. What are you all here for-exploration or socializing?

“This time, we don’t have transportation,” Ashe said, “but we have something even more powerful than transportation-Aurora’s Dream Treasure House!”

With that, Ashe activated “Aurora’s Dream Treasure House,” and three collection phantasms appeared before the group!

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

Chapter 544: The Strongest Operator

“Aurora’s Dream Treasure House!”

As Ashe opened the virtual realm map, this new system appeared before him. What everyone saw was a pair of gloves, a small coffin, and a ruby necklace.

“Silver Collection – Ogre Gloves: Increases strength by 100% for both hands.”

“Silver Collection – Spirit’s Coffin: Enclose any spirit below three wings in this coffin, which intimidates other spirits you own, increasing resonance critical rate. One-Winged Spirit increases critical rate by 10%, Two-Winged by 20%, and Three-Winged by 40%.”

“Golden Collection – Crimson Blessing: Provides Sanctuary protection for sorcerers. When external damage is detected, it automatically triggers Sanctuary, lasting for 3 seconds and cooling down for 10 seconds. While carrying, it continuously grows the sorcerer’s Spatial Sect experience.”

“What are these...” Vesser gazed at the radiant collections with a look of desire. As they stared at the items, information about them flowed into their minds.

The Truth sorcerer instinctively reached out, then quickly retracted her hand, calmly analyzing, “These aren’t spirits, nor miracles; they resemble fantasy creations that encapsulate miracles... But how did you bring fantasy creations into the virtual realm and have them remain effective?”

“Hmph, impressive, right? But this is just a tiny fraction of our team’s power, hardly worth mentioning!” Deya said with a mature tone, as if she hadn’t been the one awestruck by the sports car earlier.

Sonya looked at the ruby necklace and asked, “Is this a gift?”

“No, these are the benefits we can gain tonight,” Ashe replied. “Since it’s my first time using the Dream Treasure House, there’s a lot to explore... According to the rules of the treasure house, we receive three collections at the start of each night. Then, as we break through a certain number of dream phantoms, we can get new collections, and the type of collections is random-besides gold and silver, there are even more powerful Colorful Collections!”

“Based on the current intelligence, silver collections offer slight enhancements, while gold collections can significantly reduce battle difficulty. Colorful collections seem to transform our combat power, bringing it infinitely close to the three-wings’ threshold.”

“But now we have three collections,” Deya counted the heads, “and there are four of us. How do we divide them?”

“Speaking of that, there’s another resource to allocate,” Ashe said. “I have two bottles of Lightless Sanctuary Potion, which can allow the user to directly establish a Sanctuary. Along with this Golden Collection ‘Crimson Blessing,’ at least three of us can gain the ability to explore the virtual realm tonight.”

Vesser was a bit surprised. “You all haven’t established your Sanctuaries yet?”

“We smuggled ourselves into the Distant Sky Domain through the Rainbow Tail,” Ashe said frankly. “We went through our first Ritual of Prohibited Synchronization of Wind, Flower, Snow, and Moon just ten days ago, and we haven’t even mastered the Spatial Sect, so a Sanctuary is still a long way off.”

“Also?” Sonya noted, “Vesser, did you just recently become a sanctuary sorcerer too?”

At this, Vesser gave a wry smile and shook her head. “I’ve been climbing the Distant Sky Domain for several months now.”

“Even a Truth sorcerer can’t establish a Sanctuary within a few months?” Ashe was quite surprised. He thought sanctuary sorcerers would acquire basic skills within a month, not realizing the probation period could be this long.

“According to what I’ve found, sanctuary sorcerers typically need to undergo the Ritual of Prohibited Synchronization of Wind, Flower, Snow, and Moon five times to enter the Spatial Sect. With talent, it can be reduced to three times,” Sonya explained. “The ritual doesn’t damage the sorcerer’s soul much, and at most requires half a month of rest.

Plus, as sect experience grows, soul damage decreases, so most sorcerers can establish a Sanctuary within three months.”

“Ordinary sorcerers take three months, but I need much longer,” Vesser said with a bitter smile. “Because of the secret toxin, my soul is much more fragile than that of ordinary sorcerers.”

Ashe recalled her background. “It’s the Mirror Dragon Secret Toxin, isn’t it?”

Vesser gave a slight nod. Though she had anticipated it, Ashe’s knowledge of her deepened her apprehension-spirits, miracles, secret toxins, the Spellcasting Sect, even her true name, she felt exposed in Ashe’s eyes.

If Ashe were just a stranger she’d never meet in her lifetime, it wouldn’t matter, but he happened to be her relentless pursuer. If she were ever exposed... In that moment, Vesser even regretted why she used the Dragon Blood Cultivation System and attracted this inexplicable enemy.

But in the next second, Vesser suppressed those weak thoughts inside her.

Fear must not overcome her, as it would only empower the enemy and weaken herself.

She must not run away, as fleeing means giving up hope and ceding benefits.

Reality is just a momentary delusion, so fate is void; the virtual realm is the eternal future, thus Truth prevails.

This is not a crisis but an opportunity.

The boundary between hunter and prey is inherently ambiguous.

With countless thoughts running through her mind, Vesser didn’t let any hint of them show on her face. She continued, “The Mirror Dragon Secret Toxin significantly reduces both my soul recovery rate and soul defense capability. When I die in the Virtual Realm, it takes me three to four times longer to recover compared to an average sorcerer. After going through the Ritual of Prohibited Synchronization of Wind, Flower, Snow, and Moon a few months ago, I’ve only now recovered my soul. I need at least one more ritual to establish a Sanctuary, but that would mean several more months of recovery.”

“A secret toxin with only negative effects?” Ashe asked. “Is there any important Intelligence on the toxin that might help us explore the Virtual Realm?”

Vesser shook her head. “It’s merely information about the Mirror Dragon, but we’re unlikely to encounter a Mirror Dragon in the Virtual Realm.”

Ashe suggested, "Then see if you can contract the Golden Fish secret toxin or the Rainbow Tail secret toxin."

As expected, even though Vesser appeared surprised, she couldn't contract these two toxins, just like the Witch would. For sorcerers, who are naturally greedy and suspicious creatures, it's impossible to entirely trust spoken Intelligence unless witnessed firsthand, particularly for a Truth sorcerer.

Selfless trust is the most precious luxury for a sorcerer.

"So none of the four of us have a Sanctuary, but there are only three artifacts to establish one..."

"No, don't consider me," Deya interrupted. "I can already establish a Sanctuary."

As if fearing they wouldn't believe her, Deya raised her hand slightly, conjuring a translucent Sanctuary that enveloped both her and Ashe.

"You can establish a Sanctuary after just one Ritual?!" Ashe was astonished. "Your spatial talent is almost as impressive as an orc's!"

"That's amazing!" Vesser praised. "The Witch's talent is truly extraordinary!"

"Hehe." Deya was a bit bashful. In truth, it wasn't her talent at all; she relied on the Omniscience and Omnipotence of the "Gospel" deity to forcefully make her way into the Spatial Sect.

Though the Gospel deity was a double-edged sword hanging over her head, it was also an endless treasure trove. She could currently enter a state of Omniscience and Omnipotence for 60 seconds each day, during which she could significantly advance her existing Sect Realm-even learning deeply about sects she had never explored before, like Fate's prophecy, with efficiency increased by thousands of times.

For example, because she had a foundation from the Ritual of Prohibited Synchronization of Wind, Flower, Snow, and Moon, she managed to start with the basic concepts of the Spatial Sect in just a few days. But with the Fate Sect, it would probably take her a whole year just to scratch the surface.

Sonya looked at the Witch in wonder, then glanced at Vesser, her head down, lost in thought.

"Then it's easy for us to decide-two bottles of Lightless Sanctuary Potion and one 'Crimson Blessing,'" Ashe said. "But the Lightless Sanctuary Potion has a drawback; it doesn't enhance sect experience but rather directly completes the Sanctuary construction. The Ritual was originally intended to help us get into the Spatial Sect, and skipping this step might prevent us from ever gaining entry in this lifetime."

“The ‘Crimson Blessing’ lacks that flaw and even helps boost sect experience. It’s practically a beginner’s gift for new Sanctuary holders.”

He paused and took out two bottles of the potion. “I don’t care much about Sect Realm advancement, so I’ll take one bottle. As for the other...”

“Vesser, since you’re in a hurry to establish a Sanctuary, you should take it.”

Vesser had no objections and was just about to reach for the potion when her wrist was suddenly grasped by someone.

It was the Sword Princess.

“I’ll take it,” Sonya said. “Most of my talent is in Swordsmanship, and even if I wear the ‘Crimson Blessing’ tonight, I might not be able to enter the Spatial Sect. On the other hand, Vesser is proficient in over twenty Spellcasting Sects. Her talent is much stronger than mine, and with this collection, she’s sure to establish a Sanctuary.”

Vesser looked at Sonya in surprise. Although the Sword Princess’s words seemed to make sense at first, the Crimson Blessing was undoubtedly superior to the Lightless Sanctuary Potion. Vesser herself was more tempted by this Golden Collection. Even if she couldn’t gain entry to the Spatial Sect after obtaining the collection, she could just undergo the Prohibited Ritual again. Sonya, after all, hadn’t been affected by the Mirror Dragon Secret Toxin and could enter the Virtual Realm in at most half a month.

The Observer’s approach to favoring veterans made sense to Vesser, so why was Sonya declining?

Ashe was also taken aback. He gestured for Sonya to join him on the side and asked, “Are you serious? You understand the importance of the Spatial Sect, right?”

“Yes,” Sonya nodded. “But if I fail to establish a Sanctuary, I’ll have to go through the ritual again tomorrow night.”

“Then just go through it,” Ashe said. “It’s a trial that sorcerers must face. We’re just taking a shortcut by skipping it.”

“If I die during the ritual, I won’t be able to enter the Virtual Realm for many days...”

“So what?” Ashe smiled. “Besides, I have the ‘Scorching Soul Essence Elixir’ to help you recover faster. And as you mentioned, the more spatial experience you have, the less soul damage you’ll sustain. You’ll probably recover in a few days. Spending a bit of time to enter the Spatial Sect is surely worth it?”

“But unlike the Witch or Vesser, my spatial talent isn’t high,” Sonya said uneasily, gripping her sword hilt. “It might take four or five, or even six or seven attempts before I get in...”

“Then take six or seven. At most, it’s just a month or two,” Ashe replied. “Why are you in a hurry?”

The Stretch Paw Club President said nothing, but just looked up at Ashe with wide eyes and a pout.

After a moment’s thought, Ashe understood her concern. “You’re worried about falling behind with new members joining the team, and your absence could lead to them taking your place, diminishing your role.”

It’s understandable, like when you regularly play games with a group but suddenly can’t join them, only to find out they’ve already teamed up with someone new, making you feel like an outsider.

“You once said,” Sonya murmured, “that an operator’s standing with you is linked to their strength.”

“Did I say that?” Ashe blinked. “Well, I still think that way.”

“So...”

With a casual motion, Ashe picked up the Crimson Blessing and placed the necklace around Sonya’s neck. He grinned, “How will you become the strongest operator if you don’t even enter the Spatial Sect?”

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

Chapter 545: Affix

Though it was somewhat unbelievable, it was true that Deya had the greatest need for power. Her “Water-born Thread” miracle, being an extension of the Fist-Claw Sect, fundamentally required a strong power base. On the other hand, Ashe and Sonya’s swordsmanship focused more on technique and speed, so Deya took the “ogre gloves.”

As for the “spirit’s coffin,” it could have gone to anyone, but given Ashe’s visible favoritism toward the sword Princess, he decided to give this collection to Vesser.

After consuming two bottles of lightless sanctuary potion, both Ashe and Vesser could use their spellforce to form a sanctuary. However, unlike spells or miracles, a lightless sanctuary seemed like a black box to Ashe, who didn't understand how it worked and only knew that by inputting spellforce, the sanctuary would rise.

Unless they later joined the Spatial Sect, their sanctuaries would remain at this Beginner stage.

Now that everyone was ready, they officially began to explore the virtual realm!

"...Though that's what we're saying," Ashe scanned the surrounding streets, "how do we explore the Distant Sky Domain?"

"Discover the world's traits and summarize the corresponding affixes!"

Sonya, who had researched numerous materials, immediately replied, "Every dream phantom has different affixes. If sorcerers want to gain knowledge, spirits, spellforce, or other resources, they need to find these affixes!"

Unlike the Sea of Knowledge or Time Continent, which examined the sorcerer's 'path,' the Distant Sky Domain presented a new evaluative standard: study the world.

"Dream phantoms, though rooted in reality, have their world rules distorted differently depending on the Dream Master-for example, water flowing uphill, insects descending from the sky, or people bleeding pink or green..." Sonya explained, "If sorcerers identify these warped rules and summarize the corresponding affixes, they can siphon the dream phantom's power."

"If all affixes within a dream phantom are identified, it becomes stagnant and there's no risk of it abruptly collapsing; it will only disappear once all sorcerers have left."

"How do you discover the world's traits?" Ashe asked, gazing at the nearby town structures, "Is it just slow study?"

"There are generally two methods," Sonya explained, "The first is using a Reconnaissance Miracle to quickly discern the differences between a dream phantom and the real world. However, this method has low efficiency, as many affixes do not affect the external environment but rather the sorcerer or even the spirit. The second method..."

"Is cause destruction." Deya pulled out the Water-born Thread, "In a dream phantom, apart from the locals, there are virtual realm creatures and sorcerer projections. If we destroy and pressure them into manifesting, we can extract affix information."

"Huh?"

Ashe hesitated, glancing at the busy clerk in the nearby bakery, “Isn’t that inappropriate?”

“What’s wrong with it?”

Vesser suddenly reached out and pushed a young man passing by. The young man fell but did not look at them, instead promptly standing up and continuing on his way.

“This is just a dream, and everyone here is meaningless—a projection. Perhaps in the next moment, this dream will shatter, and everything will vanish,” Vesser said, “In dreams, fate is false, and Truth is permitted. The Distant Sky Domain challenges us not only to understand the boundless void but also to perceive the essence of dream phantoms. Sorcerers who cannot grasp this point cannot progress further.”

So, everyone’s just NPCs... Ashe exhaled, tightened his grip on the long sword, and said, “I understand. Is there anything else I should be aware of?”

“By the way,” Deya suddenly said, “the first dream phantom we sorcerers encounter is usually a peaceful scenario, meaning the locals won’t show hostility toward us. However, in many dangerous scenarios, if we stand out too much, we might alert the virtual realm creatures, triggering combat.”

“Even in a peaceful scenario, if we stay here too long, we might still attract virtual realm creatures’ attacks—”

Boom!

A Lava-Scaled Slashing Dragon burst out of the second floor of a building behind them, barreling towards them!

At the same time, a cloaked man passing by suddenly extended his hand toward them, instantly siphoning the air around them to create a vacuum trap, imprisoning them within, as a transparent barrier rose around the cloaked man!

A Lava-Scaled Slashing Dragon! The matured mutant of the Blade Fish Dragon, whose every scale can trigger a small explosion, and if struck by its tail, it delivers a dual critical hit of explosion and slicing!

A sanctuary-level wind spell! Though the vacuum trap created by extracting air could only restrict them momentarily, in that mere few breaths, the wind spell sanctuary could set up a shredding windfield to cut them to pieces... No, Ashe and the others were shocked to find that, despite drawing only the surrounding air, the backfill wind worked like blades, slicing into their soul entities!

If they hadn’t been able to activate their sanctuaries, this alone would have been fatal!

In the blink of an eye, the sorcerer team found themselves in a dire situation!

Even though Ashe anticipated encountering sanctuary-level enemies in the Distant Sky Domain, he hadn't expected them to be so ferocious!

But that's to be expected. While two-wing sorcerers might not specialize in combat, as there are ways to sidestep challenges on the Time Continent, allowing them to just absorb spellforce without confronting social creatures.

Yet, given the mechanisms of the Distant Sky Domain, it's clear that there are no shortcuts here. For sanctuary sorcerers to gather resources from the Distant Sky Domain, they must fight through dream phantoms!

After undergoing such intense battles, all sanctuary sorcerers become tactical weapons!

Therefore, the sorcerer projections left in the Distant Sky Domain are naturally also sanctuary-level ravagers!

While Ashe seemed unprepared, the others had anticipated this.

Vesser's notebook suddenly flipped open by itself; she had long given herself a mental suggestion to immediately trigger the Defensive Miracle within when faced with unforeseen curse attacks.

The Truth miracle with the core spirit of illusion-"Nothing Happens!"

The moment it activated, she was no longer affected by the vacuum trap's pull. After a brief hesitation, she also cast this miracle on Ashe and the others.

This is the strength of "Nothing Happens": it creates the illusion that nothing has affected you at all! It can neutralize the majority of external influences and even deceive death, allowing normal movement when sustaining fatal injuries!

Just a few days ago, in the Food Factory Town, she stepped into a mental sorcerer's trap, providing Raven Annihilation an opportunity to pierce her heart. Without the death protection from "Nothing Happens," she would have perished there!

With the help of "nothing happens," Sonya quickly regained her footing and proactively moved to confront the descending Lava-Scaled Slashing Dragon. Streams of Water-born Thread appeared around her.

Miracle: Meteor Trial!

When the Lava-Scaled Slashing Dragon touched the thread, the trans-spatial strike's invisible blade sliced it in half!

Simultaneously, Deya pulled on the wind spell sanctuary, and the Water-born Thread instantly bound it.

Within this team, Deya's spirit system was the most complete-she was the Empress of the Gospel Kingdom, with the kingdom's resources at her disposal!

Over the past few days, Deya had meticulously crafted her set of spirits, still relying primarily on the Water-born Thread for attack, but now she had three additional core spirits: "witness," "soul restrain," and "void slash."

The "witness" spirit allowed her to launch any of her miracles along her line of sight, so she no longer needed to cast the Water-born Thread physically; as long as the enemy was within her sight, the Water-born Thread would emerge from their eye sockets, mouth, earlobes, heart, and other places!

The "soul restrain" spirit had a powerful suppression effect on soul entities, manifesting as dizziness, blindness, sluggishness, inability to think, etc. In reality, this spirit might not be very useful, given that sorcerers have the protection of their physical bodies, but in the Virtual Realm, it was an unrivaled killing tool!

The "void slash" spirit gave Deya the means to breach sanctuaries, and combined with "witness" and "soul restrain," she could instantly subdue a sanctuary sorcerer projection!

Though not spirits from the mystic sect, "witness," "soul restrain," and "void slash" were exceedingly rare even in Yisuo's treasury, leading to a qualitative leap in Deya's combat capability-her attack range was greater than a gun sorcerer's, and her destructive power surpassed that of a swordsmanship sorcerer!

With the additional speed from the time spirit, she could instantly tear apart any enemy!

Boom!

Slash!

Ashe just came to his senses, only to see the Lava-Scaled Slashing Dragon already split in two, and the wind spell sanctuary fared worse; even the spicy Lala Fatty dish Ashe had earlier was more intact than it.

A moment later, the Lava-Scaled Slashing Dragon dissipated into light smoke, leaving behind an Experience Orb and a two-wings spirit. Surprisingly, the wind spell sanctuary only dropped a -it seems the drop rate here is quite low.

However, Ashe and the others didn't immediately collect their spoils but instead focused on the words formed by the dissipating smoke:

"All things are unstoppable."

“Even a feather can cut through steel.”

“This is a hint left behind by virtual realm creatures,” Sonya explained. “We need to analyze these hints to determine the true affix of this dream phantom. If the hints aren’t enough, we’ll have to find other virtual realm creatures within this dream-“

“It’s spatial,” Vesser suddenly interjected. “Earlier, that vacuum trap should have only restricted our movements, but the airflow could still hurt us. I was wondering if it was some kind of Miracle... Now it seems it’s the influence of an affix.”

“All impacts in this world result in spatial slicing effects.”

Whoosh.

As if time were rewinding, all the damage from the previous battle was restored. The bystanders torn apart by the aftershocks were also resurrected, and everyone resumed their activities as if nothing had happened.

Only a stream of information flowed into the minds of the sorcerers.

“Trajectory of the Void: Glass cannons are a thing of the past; now it’s glass space annihilation cannons, with all attacks capable of piercing space.”

“Affix identification reward: small amount of spatial sect experience, small amount of spellforce.”

“Limited affix privilege: your next attack will definitely trigger the Trajectory of the Void.”

Ashe and the team looked at the small rainbow virtual wings forming on their backs, finally understanding the way to explore the Distant Sky Domain-kill!

Kill through all dream phantoms, kill through all world affixes!

In the first and second layers of the Virtual Realm, spellforce could be accumulated just by traveling, but in the third layer, if you do not identify the world affixes, you can’t even muster spellforce! If previously there was a basic wage and you could “touch fish” as a worker, now you’re a free creator, living and thriving by your own means!

Even if you’re a secluded sanctuary sorcerer, once you’ve fully formed the rainbow wings, you’ll have become a tactical weapon seasoned by countless affixes and battles.

Ashe sighed, “I still prefer the leisurely exploration style of the Time Continent.”

“Yeah, me too!” Deya nodded repeatedly. “Every dream phantom is different, and it feels like exploring the Distant Sky Domain is going to be really exhausting.”

“The path of the sorcerer is getting harder and harder,” Sonya couldn’t help but remark.

Vesser looked at this bunch complaining and thought to herself that if any other sanctuaries had faced the attack they just did, they might have been in for a long battle. The fact that these guys won so easily and are still complaining made her ask, “Was your combat on the Time Continent even easier than what just happened?”

Ashe replied, “On the Time Continent, we had a car; we could run over sorcerer projections.”

Sonya added, “We ran over quite a few virtual realm creatures too.”

Deya said, “There were even times we ran over a heroic soul commander.”

Vesser asked incredulously, “Are you talking about a car or some kind of war machine?”

“It’s pretty much a war machine at this point,” Ashe said. “If I kept upgrading that sports car...”

“Plowing through a heroic soul legion frontally wouldn’t be too difficult.”

Virtual Realm, Time Continent.

With the screech of tires from a sudden brake, the sports car made a donut turn and stopped. The front end of the car was equipped with a bloodied, menacing blade, while the back emitted a thick Toxic Mist. Surrounding the sports car was a battlefield littered with corpses.

With the final charge, a staggering purple figure was sent flying again. The Bewitcher inside the sports car stood up and peeked out to investigate. “Looks like it’s dead.”

“Really dead?” a Blood Saint questioned. “That was a heroic soul commander! The number one calamity on the Time Continent! My teacher repeatedly warned me never to approach such despair!”

“But even its shoes fell off, and the spirit dropped as well,” a Purple Moth said. “We...”

“Really did rely on just this car to crush an entire heroic soul legion.”

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

Chapter 546: Colorful Collection

“A sorcerer starting to build an upper-tier sanctuary can typically pass through two dream phantoms each night; someone like me, who has mastered the upper-tier Miracle of Radiant Rainbow, can manage up to ten dream phantoms per night, but usually, I get through only six.”

“Huh? Why is that? Sister Trelozan, you’re so powerful, shouldn’t you be able to spend at least five hours in the Virtual Realm? That means it would take you half an hour to pass each dream phantom?”

“Yes, because the battles in dream phantoms are unlike any you’ve experienced before. Even though I have control over the Sanctuary and the invisible blade, I still need to spend over 30 minutes gathering Intelligence. If a phantom is particularly hazardous, I might skip it altogether and move on to the next dream.”

“What makes a phantom dangerous?”

“Any phantom where you can’t find an affix clue is dangerous.”

Although fully aware that ‘every warning from a sorcerer is a summary of countless deaths,’ Sonya still underestimated the challenge-she agreed with the Witches’ ‘one-sword-breaks-all’ approach even before finding the affix clue for the sixth phantom.

It’s understandable, given that they breezed through the first five phantoms, initiating combat within minutes regardless of the clues they had found.

The first five phantoms each had a single affix: “Slippery” (very easy to slip), “Resonance” (all spirit effects doubled), and “Fear of Giants” (all attributes exponentially increase with size). Despite their challenges, under the protection of the Sanctuary, Ashe and the others could quickly deduce the general nature of the affixes, and sometimes even guess the true meaning of the affixes to bypass them-that’s right, if all affixes are deduced, you can pass a dream phantom without needing to fight further.

Overall, while dream phantoms are difficult, they remain manageable.

Moreover, after passing through the fourth phantom, Ashe retrieved the fourth item from the Dream Treasure House-and it was a Colorful Collection!

“Colorful Collection – Inspiration Glasses: The wearer takes an additional 50% damage, and every unit within their line of sight has a chance to trigger ‘A Flash of Insight’ during battle. This grants the unit a temporary boost in wisdom, offering one of three rewards: sect experience (90%), summoning a new spirit (9%), or inventing a new Miracle (1%). Each successful trigger also grants the wearer ‘A Flash of Insight’.”

This Colorful Collection item had no immediate impact on their current combat strength, but Ashe and the others were eager to keep it permanently-it was essentially a perfect tool for farming experience!

While spirits and Miracles were significant, the biggest gap for these Stowaways was sect experience, which frustratingly was the hardest to improve. Ashe could share the group's experience via Bond, and Deya could occasionally benefit from bursts of divine inspiration through her Gospel, but Sonya had to rely solely on her natural talent to synergize with Ashe's nurturing boost.

However, due to the negative effect of taking 50% more damage, the Witch and sword Princess could not wear it. It had to be given to one of the backliners, Ashe or Vesser. With the Experience Sharing from Bonds, having Ashe wear it would yield a 100% gain for the team, whereas Vesser would deliver a 130% benefit.

Vesser gladly accepted the item, assuring that her field of vision would definitely include the three of them.

Indeed, during the battle in the fifth dream phantom, Ashe and the others all triggered A Flash of Insight, with the fiercely engaged sword Princess and Witch activating it three times. They even deliberately slowed down the fight to savor the experience of thoroughly defeating the Raging Slashing Dragon, which only exploded in self-destruction to end their spree of brutality.

Everyone realized that the goal of their virtual realm exploration for the night had shifted, focusing not on passing the dream phantoms but on engaging in as many battles as possible.

So when Ashe mentioned, "The next dream phantom might be a bit difficult," everyone felt not fear but greed, knowing that according to the inspiration glasses' description, the harder the battle, the higher the chance to trigger A Flash of Insight.

The sixth Phantom was a space resembling an underground city. After spending over ten minutes probing the affix to no avail, they decisively initiated the battle.

It was then that they finally understood the true difficulty of the virtual realm.

Crunch.

As Ashe fled to a rooftop, the orc Sanctuary behind him suddenly let out a sinister laugh and pointed at him. Though it seemed as if nothing had happened, the space at its fingertip began to tear!

Meanwhile, the Xiahui Dragon in the sky let out an eerie low growl, its eyes-resembling massive frog eyes-fixed intently on Ashe. Horrific thoughts of self-harm flooded his mind, and he couldn't muster the strength to summon his Sanctuary, leaving him vulnerable!

Sonya and Deya rushed over to help fend off the attack, while Vesser cast the Miracle 'Nothing Happens' to free Ashe from the mind control!

Though they narrowly survived the combined assault, Ashe's expression bore no relief. It wasn't his first time being rescued.

Seeing the virtual realm creatures closing in, Ashe sighed and said, "I didn't think our first night exploring the Distant Sky Domain would end in ruin."

"This is disgusting!" Deya complained, "We can only take hits and can't fight back-what kind of battle is this?"

Soon after the battle began, the sorcerers quickly discovered one major problem-their attacks automatically rebounded!

Every attack they launched reflected directly back at them!

No worries, the Witch has 'Witness' and the sword Princess has the 'Invisible Blade,' attacks that transcend distance-surely they could harm the enemy?

But then the sorcerers discovered that the virtual realm creatures, the Xiahui Dragon and the orc sorcerer, were invulnerable! They absorbed no damage whatsoever, and the attacks from the Witch and sword Princess still rebounded!

To make matters worse, the attacks from the orc sorcerer and the Xiahui Dragon worked perfectly fine!

Ashe even heard the sword Princess curse 'Little Trumpet' in frustration.

How were they supposed to fight this?

If the enemies were simply invulnerable, they could have attempted to destroy the environment and create pits to limit the enemies' mobility;

If only the attacks rebounded, they would accept it as bad luck and call their exploration off for the night.

After all, when a battle occurs within a Phantom, all space gates become inactive, and no sorcerer can leave the Phantom until the battle concludes. So, either they don't spark a fight or they have to kill the enemies or be killed.

But now, with invulnerable enemies, Ashe's group facing attack rebound, and the enemies' attacks not rebounding-no self-respecting novel with an abusive plot would dare use such an absurd setup.

If it had been any other individual sorcerer, they would have been instantly defeated by the orc sorcerer and Xiahui Dragon's tactics. Fortunately, they operated as a team and were able to salvage the situation somewhat. Even so, Ashe and the others had all

sustained severe wounds, and if the enemies found another opening, it could mean their demise.

Ashe and his companions were beginning to appreciate the importance of a Sanctuary- it not only allowed them to pass through the space gates but, more importantly, provided a margin for error in unexpected encounters!

No wonder the Sanctuary is considered essential in the Distant Sky Domain: without its protection, sorcerers would have no time to react and would be instantly annihilated by enemies empowered by various world affixes!

While desperately racing through the underground city, Sonya suddenly swung back, activating the 'Invisible Blade' without a sound. However, the orc sorcerer merely laughed, and it was her Sanctuary that was automatically triggered to take the rebound.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, the Xiahui Dragon targeted her with its gaze, leaving Sonya momentarily frozen until Ashe scooped her up and dashed away. There was no need for Vesser's healing, as Ashe used the 'Slash Me' Miracle on her, allowing Sonya to recover immediately.

Thankfully, both Ashe and Vesser had Miracles to cleanse abnormal states; otherwise, they would have been wiped out long ago.

Once she regained her composure, the "village girl" remained unwilling to back down and attempted the 'Invisible Blade' twice more. Naturally, it was Ashe's Sanctuary that bore the brunt of it, while she was left drained of spellforce, weakly clinging to Ashe.

"We have no other choice," Ashe declared. "It's time for the ultimate plan."

"No way!" the Witch and sword Princess immediately protested.

The so-called ultimate plan was essentially a suicide. Since they would be inflicting the damage upon themselves, the soul damage would be much less.

But even the slightest damage requires at least ten days to half a month of recovery for sanctuary sorcerers. How could Sonya and Deya possibly agree to that?

"If we can figure out the affix, we can get through this Phantom!" Sonya bit her nails anxiously. "Let's start by figuring it out from here!"

Deya asked, "Sword Princess, have you recovered yet?"

Ashe commented, "There are at least two affixes here. The first affix is attack rebound, and the second is invulnerability."

Vesser added, "And not all attacks rebound, nor is everyone invulnerable. Both rebound and invulnerability have specific trigger conditions."

Sonya pondered, "How are they different from us?"

Deya was getting impatient. "Sword Princess, if you're good to go, then walk on your own. The Observer can't move freely while carrying you."

"No rush; I want to observe how they trigger the affixes."

"Let me try-"

Suddenly, the orc sorcerer let out a sinister cackle and pointed at Deya. Though the space around her remained still, it began tearing apart at every corner. The Xiahui Dragon also growled menacingly, directing a mental assault at her.

Yet, nothing seemed to happen. Deya, while fleeing, naturally avoided their combination attack, not even realizing she'd been targeted.

"Huh?"

Ashe and Vesser were momentarily stunned before both experienced "A Flash of Insight."

"I understand now," Ashe declared. "The trigger condition for invulnerability is 'theatricality.' By making yourself seem theatrical through your words or actions, you activate invulnerability."

"The attack rebound is linked to the nature of the attack," Vesser explained. "All tangible attacks trigger rebound, so intangible attacks like mental shocks and spatial attacks don't. Sword Princess, your spatial attack sometimes leaves faint shadows, which is why it triggers this affix."

As soon as they finished speaking, two streams of information flowed into their minds: search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Theatre Performance: The stage is sacred, and any actor on stage is like a deity and invulnerable to all harm."

"Affix Identification Reward: Small amount of fate sect experience, small amount of spellforce."

"Limited Affix Privilege: You can actively trigger Theatre Performance, and the effect lasts for 5 seconds."

/

“Civilized Audience: No throwing objects at the actors! All tangible attacks are rebounded back to the attacker, and intangible attacks are unstoppable.”

“Affix Identification Reward: Small amount of fate sect experience, small amount of spellforce.”

“Limited Affix Privilege: The next attack aimed at you will be rebounded back to the attacker.”

Everyone paused, realizing that the Phantom hadn’t dissipated yet, which meant there was a third affix to uncover.

“No worries,” Ashe said. “As long as we enter the Theatre Performance state, we can be immune to damage, and then we can figure out a way to escape the Virtual Realm-“

“That’s not necessary,” Vesser interrupted. “Since intangible attacks work, this Phantom can be cleared.”

“But your Spatial Sect-“

“Intangible attacks are not limited to the Spatial Sect.”

“They’re in a Theatre Performance state-“

“Then make them step off the stage.”

Vesser halted abruptly, transforming the ‘Thousand Changes’ spirit within her soul into a new music spell spirit, ‘Sound Wave’!

Using ‘Delusion’ and ‘Sound Wave’ as the primary spirits, she created a new Miracle, ‘Silent Tremor’!

As the inaudible, intangible sound waves swept through, the building beneath the orc sorcerer collapsed, cutting off his sinister laugh as he tumbled down and was crushed by the sound waves. Vesser then transformed ‘Thousand Changes’ into the wind spell spirit ‘Gale,’ using it to blow dust into the sky and obscure the Xiahui Dragon.

As the Xiahui Dragon paused its growling, confused and detached, the gale scattered its body like fallen leaves.

Within seconds, the ferocious enemies that had pursued them for over half an hour were vanquished!

The sorcerers stared in disbelief at what had just unfolded, but Deya was the quickest to snap out of it, hastily helping the sword Princess out of the Observer's arms.

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

Chapter 547: Igors Cheerfulness, Harveys Artistic Obsession

“Polite Curtain Call: Even the most spectacular play must come to an end with a bow. When you bow, the entire audience must stand and applaud.”

“Affix Identification Reward: A small amount of Prophecy Sect experience and a small amount of spellforce.”

“Limited Affix Privilege: You can trigger the Polite Curtain Call once.”

When Ashe and the others discovered the third affix, they realized that this was the correct way to clear the stage.

If a sorcerer could know in advance about the “Polite Curtain Call” and bow to the orc sorcerers and the Xiahui Dragon, the latter would turn into audience members and applaud, thus leaving their actor state naturally.

However, even so, the sorcerer must have the means of intangible attacks to defeat these enemies, such as using a wind spell, music spell, psychic impact, or time decay. Yet, these are relatively niche sects-intangibles are harder to grasp than tangibles.

Although this dream phantom seems to be a difficult type, it shows that the Virtual Realm has begun assessing a sorcerer's comprehensive skills: recognizing affixes, defending against instant kills, and mastering multiple attack methods to deal with different situations. A sorcerer with a single approach will find it difficult to progress in the Distant Sky Domain, and the ability to draw analogies is a skill that must be mastered at the sanctuary sorcerer stage.

After identifying all the affixes, the dream phantom suddenly collapsed into a point and shattered on its own!

Everyone fell into the true Distant Sky Domain, floating in the air surrounded by infinite light, with dream phantoms like bubbles in the distance. However, they had no time to admire the view, and immediately raised a sanctuary to prevent the Ritual of Prohibited Synchronization of Wind, Flower, Snow, and Moon!

At this moment, Ashe suddenly remembered something and hurriedly spread his golden and silver Twin Wings, rushing towards Sonya-the crimson blessing could only maintain a sanctuary for 3 seconds, after which it would shatter!

“Wait!”

The village girl raised her hand to stop him and, after hesitating for a moment, said, “I think... I can already concentrate on a sanctuary.”

“So quickly?” Ashe was taken aback, then breathed a sigh of relief, “That’s great.”

“Why did the dream phantom suddenly break?” Deya complained, “We haven’t even collected our loot yet.”

Vesser suddenly said, “Sink into your soul and take a look.”

Everyone looked inward to their souls and quickly noticed a large bubble composed of several smaller bubbles, which could be pierced with a single thought.

“Oh,” Sonya recalled, “this is an affix bubble!”

“When a sorcerer completes certain Phantoms, the Phantom may directly shrink into the sorcerer’s soul and, based on the affixes the sorcerer experienced that day, create an affix bubble!”

“Just pierce the bubble, and you can generate a corresponding Three Wings Rare Spirit affix!”

“The professor said affix bubbles appear randomly and aren’t related to the difficulty of the Phantom. It might appear after the first Phantom, or it might not appear for over a dozen. But only affix bubbles can give birth to Rare Spirits that a sorcerer cannot summon otherwise.”

“Are there really spirits that sorcerers can’t summon?” Ashe blinked.

“Of course,” said Deya, taking over the explanation. “For example, the ‘Witness’ spirit I just obtained is impossible to summon. Or rather, the race capable of summoning this spirit no longer exists, and no creature can attack others with their sight now... Only within a Phantom can affixes like ‘Witness’ appear, leading to the birth of similar spirits.”

“I see...” Ashe murmured. “How did you get your ‘Witness’ spirit?”

Deya blinked. “It was a gift from my grandmother.”

“But wasn’t your relationship with your grandmother pretty poor?”

“For certain reasons, I forgave her.”

“Congratulations.” Ashe continued to look inward at the bubbles. “I have eight bubbles here, each corresponding to eight affixes, so do I just pierce one at random?”

“Huh?” Sonya was surprised. “Why do I have nine?”

Deya said, “I have nine as well.”

“I have ten,” Vesser raised her head, “and this number, combined with the collections we obtained, matches.”

Everyone was stunned and turned to look at Ashe. He shrugged. “I have no idea.”

“Now that you mention it, the effects of the collections are very similar to affixes,” Vesser mused. “Could these collections be affixes that once existed? How come you don’t know, Observer, considering it’s your power?”

“Because he had amnesia before,” Sonya said.

Actually, at that time, I just meant I lost Heath’s memories... Although I felt a little like explaining, seeing that the Witch and the sword Princess both believed it deeply, and since Ashe didn’t really know how to explain his ignorance about the collections’ origins, he decided to let it be.

Vesser’s gaze at Ashe immediately rippled with curiosity-like the sword Princess and the Witch, she too quickly connected it to the trope of a ‘strong hero awakening.’ After all, being able to form a party in the Virtual Realm is already an extraordinary feat, and combined with his seemingly endless trump cards, it’s easy for anyone to think he’s a high-level character starting anew.

However, she quickly collected herself and said calmly, “From the outside, you can’t tell the difference between the bubbles... it’s all down to luck.”

Pop.

As the affix bubbles in their souls burst, four fantasy spirits were born.

Deya had the worst luck, obtaining the relatively common ‘Bubble’ spirit. But she didn’t really care about what spirit she got. After all, she had an entire Kingdom at her disposal, and her main reasons for entering the Virtual Realm were to condense her spellforce and spend time with Ashe. The rewards she gained from the Virtual Realm were just an added pleasure, much like a wealthy wife playing games with her husband. If she happened to get a rare spirit, it would be great, but she wasn’t betting on it to transform her abilities.

Ashe obtained the 'Acting' spirit, but it didn't have the "Invulnerable Opening Scene" effect. It merely allowed sorcerers to perform with emotional depth as if they were following a script, making it a rare but not particularly useful spirit. However, Ashe was excited about a very interesting experiment he thought of and was pleased to add it to his collection.

When Vesser and Sonya revealed their new spirits, Ashe gasped in surprise, "You two better watch your steps in the coming days-careful not to trip on flat ground."

Sonya's new spirit resembled a ruby, while Vesser's was a beam of inspiration-these were the spirit forms of the collections 'Crimson Blessing' and 'Inspiration Glasses'!

However, Sonya shook her head. "They aren't as practical as before."

"Crimson Blessing"

"Three Wings Spirit"

"Limit: None."

"Passive Effect: Automatically raises a Sanctuary when attacked, lasts for 3 seconds, cools down for 10 seconds."

"May your flames always shine brightly."

—

"Inspiration"

"Three Wings Spirit"

"Limit: None."

"Basic Effect: Enables reasoning and association based on existing Intelligence about a specific target."

"Passive Effect: You might suddenly recall distant yet relevant important clues or insights."

"I close my eyes and touch the inspiration, reading the Braille left by Truth."

"The 'Crimson Blessing' isn't too bad. Although a three-second Sanctuary isn't particularly powerful, its most important feature is the automatic defense, allowing the sword Princess to avoid being ambushed no matter her condition. However, it was surprising to see that this spirit has only a passive effect and no active effect, which was quite eye-opening for Ashe and the others."

The “Inspiration” spirit is a bit tricky. It’s not useless-quite the opposite. In the Distant Sky Domain, where reasoning through affixes is essential, this spirit can truly shine. But compared to the “Inspiration Glasses” collection, “Inspiration” seems much weaker.

After these tense battles, these rewards were enough to soothe their weary souls. Ashe let out a breath and said, “Let’s call it a night.”

Everyone agreed. Although only three hours had passed, their soul energy was already 80% depleted. Reaching the next dream phantom would require some time, and the lengthy escape battle where they received beatings without fighting back drained all their energy and spirit. Continuing the adventure might lead to mistakes and potential danger.

Even though their adventure was over, it didn’t mean they had to go back immediately. Sonya suggested, “Now we have some free time, let’s chat.”

“Sure,” Ashe said, “do you want to hear about my experiences in the Gospel Kingdom?”

Deya didn’t mind either way, and Vesser was about to nod in agreement when she saw Sonya shaking her head repeatedly. “Let’s not talk about that tonight. Let’s start with your current situation.”

Wasn’t the sword Princess eager to hear about it earlier? Now she seems uninterested... Ashe scratched his head and said, “I’m currently with my companions, pursuing the Silver Lantern.”

“It’s the first time I’ve heard you mention companions,” muttered the Stretch Paw Club President.

“They’re my companions from the Prison Break. You know them-the mental sorcerer and the necromancer,” Ashe laughed. “We’ve been working together ever since.”

“But didn’t you say they were villains?”

“Ashe chuckled, hovering in mid-air with his arms crossed. ‘They’re definitely Lala Fatty in the making,’ he said, referring to his eccentric companions. ‘But when it comes to teamwork, they’re quite reliable.’

‘The mental sorcerer is meticulous, considerate, and has a bright, cheerful smile.’

Deya recalled the cold glint in Igor’s eyes and his mischievous smirk. Back then, Lise would insist on sleeping with Ashe at night, largely out of fear that the Con Artist might silently choke her in her sleep-a thought that left her trembling with dread.

Vesser remembered the mental sorcerer’s chilling Mental Scream and his intricate traps made from fire oil, stakes, and bombs. Wherever she ran, there was a trap waiting, and

even more so, the Raven Annihilation was lurking on her escape route. Before being drawn into the Virtual Realm, the person Vesser feared most was the mental sorcerer, followed by Raven Annihilation.

‘The necromancer is a silent savant, an artist lost in his own world.’

Deya remembered how Harvey tended to Alice every night, the food he prepared for her, and... she stopped herself, feeling the Little Witch in her mind almost sickened by the memories.

Vesser thought of the necromancer’s despair-fueled Miracle, the way he merged with corpses to become a nether knight, charging through Food Factory Town. Although he did stop Vesser’s escape, his actions also terrified the townspeople. Later, when Ashe and his companions were allegedly driven out, the necromancer likely played a significant role in that chaotic scene.

‘They sound surprisingly decent,’ Sonya remarked, somewhat bemused. ‘How did two Death Row Inmates you randomly met in prison turn out so well?’

Deya and Vesser felt like ants were crawling in their throats, resisting the urge to interject, and instead turned their heads away.

‘Maybe they only seem normal in front of me,’ Ashe admitted, aware of himself. ‘Or perhaps I’ve been influenced by them; their odd behavior doesn’t surprise me anymore.’

‘No, you’re not strange at all,’ Sonya assured him. ‘So, tell us more about your upcoming plans.’

Ashe was puzzled. ‘Why do you want to know?’

‘To brainstorm with you, of course, and help you deal with the Silver Lantern and Little Trumpet,’ Sonya replied.”

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

Chapter 548: Filled with a Sense of Justice

Sonya realized something significant had occurred several days prior.

It was the night that the Meteor Trial had ended. She went to the secret garden to celebrate all night with the Stretch Paw Club. Even Professor Trozan and Professor Nidhogg made time to have a few drinks with her. Many people, drawn by her reputation or simply in awe of her, wanted to connect with her. There were even representatives from the business association seeking to negotiate. Sonya adeptly wielded her social skills, expanding her high-quality network exponentially in one evening.

She knew that her social skills were just the cherry on top-the strength of the Sanctuary was her real foundation. Because she already possessed the strength of the Sanctuary, her humble and polite smile was particularly praised, and her respectful and equal gaze made people feel honored.

In the secret garden, the Crimson Empress patrolled her domain.

Recalling the next day, the village girl thought she might have overdone it a little; Lois's abrupt departure seemed only natural. Even though she planned to tone down her sharpness, she didn't forget to report her achievements to Marsha. She knew her mother's work hours, so she timed her video call strategically when her mother was in the factory, describing in the simplest, plainest words how remarkable she was, how she had earned so much money that her mother wouldn't have to work anymore, and how she would soon bring her mother to settle in Galaxia.

If she didn't express it a bit bluntly, the other workers in the factory wouldn't understand.

However, her mother naturally refused her offer. Sonya had already sent the money from selling the spirit back home two months ago. With the low cost of living in the small village, her mother could have quit her job a long time ago. But since it's the farming off-season, and factory work isn't exhausting, her mother saw it as an opportunity to chat with her coworkers. As for Galaxia, she felt an overwhelming fear of the unknown in the big city. Having managed the family farm all her life, she was unwilling to change her lifestyle.

Still, despite Marsha's reluctance, Sonya understood the value system in a remote village that admires strength and disrespects weakness. Naturally, she had to boost her family's reputation, so she bought quite a few things over the months for the family to show everyone that her daughter had made great achievements in Galaxia. The next step was to build a new house, unmatched in the village, to teach Marsha that the world could be this kind.

Feeling refreshed, Sonya rarely found the opportunity to relax as she strolled through Swordflower College. The students she encountered along the way gazed at her with a mix of reverence and admiration. Though she had long decided to continue her studies and training, the village girl couldn't help but feel a tad proud to bask in such wonderful attention.

Happy at heart, the young woman naturally wanted to share her joy with someone. However, as someone with a rebellious streak, Sonya began to calmly examine her feelings-yes, she very much wanted to discuss this happiness with the observer, but she also wanted to share it with her mother, Leoni, Trozan, and others.

She worried about the observer's safety, but she also cared about the well-being of her roommates.

She wished to meet the observer, but she also longed to shake hands with Delarose.

The observer was important, but just how important?

As a sanctuary sorcerer and a promising sword saint, she knew she needed to handle her emotions carefully. She couldn't be like the naïve heroines in romance dramas, foolishly giving away everything she had!

Besides, the observer had plenty of flaws too...

While analyzing the observer's shortcomings to clear her mind, Sonya headed to the canteen for a meal. Not finding her usual nutritious dishes, she casually picked up a few plates of meat.

As she sat down and took a bite of the fish, she gagged instantly.

This is awful!

How could such good fish be made so poorly?

Little Trumpet, I need to remember to tell the observer about this; it's awful!

Sonya disdainfully pushed the fish aside, finished her other dishes, and then proceeded to her swordsmanship training as usual.

During a break, she thought again of the terrible fish, determined to tell the observer about it-it was unforgettable in its awfulness...

Huh?

Wiping the sweat from her flushed face with a towel, Sonya blinked in confusion.

It was then that she realized.

She was in deep trouble.

Thus, she needed to be part of the observer's life, just as the observer had become part of hers.

Because she couldn't be the only one in trouble.

"If you encounter any puzzling problems, I might be able to look up some information to help solve them," she said. "Besides, you're in the center of things, and we bystanders might be able to offer better suggestions."

"Exactly!" Deya quickly chimed in. "I can also go back and find someone to help analyze it!"

By "someone," she really meant the Gospel system. Though using the Gospel system required points, even calculating exactly how many children she and Ashe would have in the future wouldn't cost a fraction of the Royal Family's points. Unfortunately, the Gospel couldn't extend to the Kingdom of Senlo. Otherwise, they could've directly tailored a strategy for Ashe.

"We'll have to start from the beginning," Ashe said. "There was one thing I didn't mention earlier-I became a Half Tactile in the Four Pillars Cult."

"Half Tactile?"

Ashe briefly explained the concept. Sonya and Deya weren't particularly reactive at first, but when Ashe mentioned that becoming Tactile usually led to significant personality changes, they grew serious-they could handle Ashe becoming the leader of the bad guys, but not Ashe being changed against his will. [Search the novelFire.net website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Speaking of which, when I became a Half Tactile, I saw something that seemed like a prophetic dream," Ashe continued. "I saw eight things in the dark. The first died, lying in a pool of blood. The second died, lying on top of the first, and although it wasn't bleeding, a small white soul emerged from a wound underneath it, propping up the second body."

"Sounds like a fairy tale," Deya remarked.

"Could it be some kind of mental contamination?" Sonya frowned. "You should stop thinking about that dream."

At that moment, Vesser, who had been silent, suddenly had a flash of insight-a literal light flashed across her mind.

"The light spirit is pretty handy," she said. "That wasn't a prophetic dream; it's probably the worldview passed down by the Four Pillars Cult."

"Worldview?"

“A pool of blood with a first corpse, a white soul on the first corpse, and the white soul propping up a second corpse... Doesn’t that sound familiar?” Vesser said. “I wouldn’t have understood it before, but after hearing about the Rainbow Tail’s secret toxin and then making connections using the light spirit, I realized everything matches up.”

Everyone paused, and Sonya immediately responded, “The Virtual Realm!”

Deya exclaimed in amazement, “The sea has the Golden Fish, the Golden Fish is on the white bull, and above the white bull is the Time Continent... It’s exactly the same!”

“So, is the Virtual Realm actually a world formed by corpses?” Ashe couldn’t fathom it. “Is the entire Virtual Realm made up of corpse remnants?”

“This is just the worldview of the Four Pillars Cult and might not be the truth,” Vesser replied. “There are far too many sorcerers trying to decipher the Virtual Realm. Other cults might have even more outrageous interpretations, like claiming sorcerers are the Virtual Realm’s bacteria, and that reality produces sorcerers to destroy the Virtual Realm, making them pawns of reality... There are countless such speculative theories.”

Ashe nodded. The truth of the world wasn’t particularly significant to a sorcerer at his level, nor could it help him time travel across Kingdoms. He continued, “We almost caught the Silver Lantern a couple of days ago, but unfortunately, she got away. It’s going to be tough to catch her now.”

“Why?” Sonya asked. “If you managed to catch her once, you should be able to do it again.”

“We were able to set a trap for her because that small town had been infiltrated by the Four Pillars Cult, allowing me to use the Cult’s intelligence to get a lead on her,” Ashe explained. “But now she’s not only more cautious, but she’s also entered the Qinyi Alliance’s territory. The Four Pillars Cult hasn’t extended its reach there, so we’ll have to pursue her on our own.”

“The Qinyi Alliance?”

Ashe replied, “It’s a religious coalition that rapidly formed in response to the rise of the Four Pillars Cult. Their alliance has slowed down the Cult’s expansion. So not only can we not get any assistance there, we’ll be seen as outsiders and face hostility. On the contrary, the Silver Lantern, with her ability to manipulate minds, can move more freely than we can.”

“We’ve tracked her to an Underground Building, but we don’t know exactly where she is inside.”

“There can’t be many people in the building, right?”

Ashe sighed, "There are twenty thousand people living there-it's a hundred-story high structure, a relic from the Gray Fox Divine Era, with all necessary living facilities inside, and nothing built above ground."

Deya immediately caught on, "So it's like a complete version of the Senhaeser Building. In the diverse Gospel Kingdom, it's really hard to find a societal system that the Gospel hasn't touched."

"This building is the main base of the Transcendence Temple of the Qinyi Alliance. We've barely managed to disguise ourselves as merchants to settle in, but we're under surveillance day and night. Now, we can only wait for the Silver Lantern to make a move."

Sonya shook her head. "That's too passive. Can't the Four Pillars Cult help you with a prophecy?"

"The Four Pillars Cult can indeed help with a broad prediction, but the Silver Lantern is cunning enough not to leave even her real name, and her appearance is fabricated. The Cult still requires other sources of intelligence to pinpoint her location," Ashe explained, spreading his hands. "Before we even made contact with the Prophecy Sect, the Silver Lantern had already taken precautions against the intervention of these mysterious sects... She was prepared for betrayal, whether it was against the Tribulation Fire Temple or the Four Pillars Cult."

He sighed. "Moreover, the appearance she projects seems to be so endearing. Everyone other than us, her pursuers, has a good first impression of her. When we made our move, she immediately hid among the crowd to mask her presence, attacked nearby buildings to create chaos, blew up a gas station, and caused a collapse to obstruct us... It's precisely these acts of destruction, which we wouldn't dare to commit, that allowed her to narrowly escape our ambush."

"In the end, we were the ones accused of causing all the destruction. If it weren't for the Four Pillars Cult's help, we would only have been able to fight our way out of the town."

"Heartless, fearless, and relentless. You can't really call her cruel, since we are the pursuers and she has no obligation to cooperate with us. It's just that..."

"Have you ever played virtual games?" Ashe asked. "Players know that everything in a virtual game, including companions, bystanders, and enemies, is fake. So some players are willing to do whatever it takes to achieve their objectives."

"The Silver Lantern gives me the impression that she treats reality like a game. To achieve her goals, she doesn't care about anything else, as if everything is fake."

"Rather than calling her evil, it's more accurate to say she's a disaster. At the level of a sanctuary sorcerer, she's practically a natural disaster."

Vesser couldn't help but glance at him.

Even with the intelligence provided by the Four Pillars Cult, Ashe had managed to accurately assess her character based on just a few encounters. No wonder he had the potential to become Tactile.

"She's just a venomous woman, rotten to the core," Sonya remarked.

"I think she's more like those evil mad witches from fairy tales," Deya huffed. "Maybe her true form is a hunched crone with a hooked nose, leaking pus, and missing most of her teeth."

The sword Princess's eyes flickered with a bloodthirsty gleam. "If I were by your side, I could take her out with a single Blood Moon Shattered Lake strike, leaving her dragging her intestines for several meters."

"No, killing her in one blow is too merciful. Let me handle her," the Witch's voice echoed, "I'll use the Water-born Thread to tear her into hundreds of pieces."

They exchanged a glance, realizing that after so long, they finally found common ground again.

Ashe remarked curiously, "I never knew you two were so full of righteous indignation."

Sonya didn't burst Ashe's bubble of idealism and instead turned to the silent Vesser. "Vesser, with all your cleverness, do you have any suggestions?"

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

Chapter 549: The Inedible Fish

Even though they had only teamed up for one night, Vesser's abilities had already gained everyone's approval.

Just the fact that she was always the first to guess the affix demonstrated her value to the team, surpassing even the Observer. Not to mention, her ability to adapt with the thousand changes spirit and her diverse spellcasting sect, allowing her to handle almost any special situation.

In the sixth dream phantom, if not for her impromptu wind spell and music spell, Ashe and the others would not have been able to pass through.

Even without large-scale data statistics, sorcerers from the three great mysterious sects are generally considered more adept at intricate planning.

There are no fools among sorcerers; it's just that their intelligence varies: quick adaptation in battle, innovation, rapid mastery... Sonya, though skilled in social interaction and strategic deception, excels in the game of civilized rules, while Ashe is now engaging in the law of the jungle.

Vesser glanced at them, still hesitating internally.

Ever since being drawn into the virtual realm by Ashe, she had been contemplating how best to handle Ashe and his pursuing companions.

Undoubtedly, with the enemy in the open and herself in the shadows, even if the sword Princess didn't ask, she could still gather Ashe's real-world plans through conversation, putting her in an invincible position.

The question is, what does she truly want to achieve- is avoiding capture by Ashe and his team enough?

In tonight's virtual realm exploration, although she had shone brightly and turned the tide, breaking through six phantoms, Vesser understood that without Ashe and the others' protection, she wouldn't have cleared even the first phantom.

Her battle system has been rendered obsolete by the Distant Sky Domain version: she used to send out a Substitute to probe the virtual realm creature's traits, identify weaknesses, and target them. This strategy worked well in the first and second layers of the virtual realm because the virtual realm creatures had territorial awareness, allowing her to gather sufficient intelligence from a safe zone.

But in the dream phantom, there is no safe zone.

That is to say, unless she can identify a weakness immediately upon encounter, any battle she initiates would be futile and she would be simply enduring blows-she hasn't mastered any Powerful Miracles and must rely on exploiting weaknesses to damage creatures in the third layer of the virtual realm.

Moreover, Vesser was never adept at combat.

In reality, she relied on illusions and the power of the Demi-God, rarely engaging in direct confrontation.

One could say that Ashe and his team could still explore the virtual realm without her, just at a slower pace; however, without this team, she'd make no progress at all.

Additionally, Vesser realized the immense value of the Dream Treasure House-not only as an aid in virtual realm exploration but also as a prize for the affix bubble!

While affix spirits are far more precious than ordinary spirits, due to their randomness, sorcerers find it challenging to acquire one that suits them. Hence, they need to rely on market exchanges, which highlights the power of the Dream Treasure House: Sorcerers can equip collections that suit them, thereby increasing the chance of drawing from the affix bubble!

Vesser was quite satisfied with the Inspiration spirit-a rare spirit combining light spell, Mental, and Truth, which perfectly aligns with the power of the Silver Lantern. If she wished to obtain a spirit from the Distant Sky Domain that could transform her battle capabilities, the best approach was to equip the right collection every night!

Yet, the issue lies here: Ashe's favoritism was too blatant.

The useless spirits went to the sword Princess, while the sorcerer handbooks were given to the Witch first. It was hard for Vesser to even get a taste.

If a good collection emerged, unless neither the sword Princess nor the Witch could use it, it would never reach her.

This was only natural, as they were veteran members with stronger Bonds with Ashe. Vesser also noticed underlying romantic tensions, and if she hadn't suddenly joined the group, this powder keg might have already exploded.

To gain resource favoritism, she needed to elevate her standing in Ashe's mind, either by strengthening their relationship or increasing her own value.

Pursuing a romantic route was possible, but Vesser knew she'd be first to be edged out by the sword Princess and the Witch-luckily, she adopted a gentle and harmless small animal persona, and crucially, she wasn't as pretty as they were, making it easier for them to accept her quickly.

Thus, Vesser could only take the value route.

There was, in fact, another plan: capture Ashe and lock him in a dark room, extracting all benefits before taking him down with one decisive blow. This would enable her to fully gain Tactile Sense and, incidentally, assume control of the Four Pillars Cult, returning to the most successful original plan.

However, for one, Vesser currently didn't have a base or a place to imprison Ashe; and secondly, Ashe had already established his Sanctuary, so even if she used the power of the Demi-God, she might not be able to capture him.

Moreover, Ashe had companions, and he firmly believed that his allies would rescue him, making it unlikely for Vesser to successfully threaten him unless...

Vesser lowered her gaze and calmly said, "Observer, provide all the Intelligence you have at present, with every detail. That way, I can devise actionable plans for you."

Ashe nodded and shared the information that Vesser was already aware of. During this time, Vesser organized the current situation in her mind and identified two key points:

1. She must not be captured; this is the foundation of everything.
1. She needs to please the Observer, and preferably the sword Princess and the Witch as well. Helping the Observer in real-world actions would undoubtedly earn her favor from all three, boosting her standing within the team.

At first glance, these two goals seemed contradictory: Ashe's current objective was to capture her, yet she refused to be caught. Like a game of cat and mouse, only one side could succeed.

But is reality truly so black and white?

Vesser soon developed a strategy.

She had to be extremely cautious because, while Ashe himself might be somewhat naive, he was accompanied by a mental sorcerer. This meant that if she ever plotted against Ashe, even once, the mental sorcerer would expose her as a traitor in Ashe's midst.

Yet, it was precisely the presence of the mental sorcerer that could fill this plan's gaps. Although Ashe might be oblivious, the cunning man with him would surely perceive the dirty deals hidden beneath the innocent words.

Once Ashe finished speaking, Vesser asked, "I have a few questions-although you're cursed by the Blood Seed, you can replenish your life force by consuming high-energy food or using life Miracles, right?"

"Yeah, but high-energy food is very scarce in the Land of Senlo. If not for the Four Pillars Cult's support, we would have no way to obtain any," Ashe admitted, feeling helpless. He never thought the day would come when he'd have to worry about food-even in the Shattered Lake Prison, he didn't face such deprivation!

Vesser then asked, "Is it true that the Qinyi Alliance has a poor attitude towards you?"

Ashe nodded, "To be exact, they treat all outsiders not affiliated with their cult poorly."

Vesser asked, "Can you channel any Demi-God with 100% certainty?"

"Though I've never tried, it should be possible," Ashe replied.

"Has the Tribulation Fire Temple's attitude towards you changed since you channeled the Inferno of Tribulations Demi-God?"

Ashe thought for a moment, "They were already very respectful since I'm the First Gospel. After channeling, it became outright reverence."

Using her Inspiration spirit, Vesser pondered for a moment before outlining her plan. She concluded by saying, "This is just a strategy I've devised based on your Intelligence; you might want to discuss its feasibility with your companions."

Ashe nodded and looked around, "Shall we call it a night then?"

Both the sword Princess and the Witch showed expressions as if they wanted to speak but hesitated. Vesser flapped her golden and silver Twin Wings, distancing herself, "I'll head back first."

Ashe turned to the remaining two, "Is there anything you'd like to talk about?"

Oh, there was plenty.

Although they both had a lot to say, neither wanted to speak in front of others. Asking, "Ashe, can we talk in private while she leaves?" was something neither could bring themselves to say, knowing the other wouldn't give in. This impasse caused a stalemate.

"Then I'll go soak in the bath..."

"Wait!"

"If you want to just hang around here, that's fine too," Ashe shrugged, "Or is it that you know I've prepared gifts?"

"Gifts?" Sonya and Deya's eyes lit up, even Vesser, who was about to leave, couldn't help but look over.

"But I can't give them to you now."

"Why not!?"

Ashe hesitated, “At least until we can be alone, then I’d dare to hand them over... It’s nothing valuable. Maybe I won’t give them at all, so don’t worry about it. I won’t be giving them today, so no need to step aside!”

The sword Princess and the Witch exchanged silent glances, filled with annoyance at each other’s interference, and with a hint of curiosity-what gift did the Observer have that he couldn’t bring out in public? [search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

After this brief diversion, their urge to express their feelings diminished. Deya looked at Sonya and then flew over to hug Ashe, asking, “Can I pat your head?”

Ashe paused for a moment, then smiled and ruffled her hair, “Witch, why are you acting like a child and wanting to be pampered...? Did you miss me that much after just a few days?”

“Yes.” The Secret Princess, Little Witch, White Queen, Black Butler, and Scarlet Dead Apostles gave a soft hum, “Missed you very much.”

After saying this, the Witch released him but didn’t leave, hovering in place and looking at the sword Princess. Ashe also looked at the latter, raising an eyebrow, “Are you going to brag about your journey to victory?”

“I’ll tell you after you give me the gift.”

“Then...”

“A few days ago at the school canteen,” Sonya said, looking at him, “I ate a terribly awful fish.”

Ashe blinked, “How bad was it?”

“So bad it was a waste of fish,” Sonya recalled, pouting, “I almost wanted to file a complaint.”

“Hey-” Ashe’s lips turned upward into a smile, his eyes twinkling.

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

Chapter 550: Stealing from the Cult

Transcendence Zone, Underground Building Base.

“Not just the present, but the future.”

Staring at the revelation forming from the condensation on the mirror, Igor pondered for a moment. After rinsing his mouth, he wiped away the foam, grabbed his waterproof bag, and left the room.

Reaching the bathhouse level on the 51st floor, the Con Artist saw his two companions already soaking in the small pool in their usual spot. Sitting down, he asked, “Where’s Tamashi?” Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“He’s not a sorcerer like us, so his routine is different. Why would he get up so early?” Ashe replied, removing the warm towel from his face. “Besides, he hasn’t picked up your bad habit of bathing first thing in the morning. He probably just showers in his room.”

“Can you believe the most advanced hotel rooms here don’t even have bathtubs?” Igor lazily relaxed in the water. “Still, it’s better than the Food Factory Town, where there wasn’t even a communal bath.”

“It’s surprising that there’s even a hotel here at all,” Ashe remarked. “An entire societal structure within a single building.”

“Perfectly normal,” Harvey said, munching on chocolate. “A corpse birthing a civilization of scavengers.”

Among the three of them, Harvey was losing vitality the fastest. During a fight a couple of days prior, a gas station explosion burned away half of his body. Fortunately, he was in a state of ‘Frostfire’ at the time and shared the damage with Alice. He even used part of his body to reconstruct hers – Ashe often wondered if all of Alice’s flesh and bones had been replaced by Harvey’s own.

The price was Harvey becoming as thin as a 2D character. Coupled with the ongoing curse from the Blood Seed, he had to constantly eat to slowly recover.

Harvey’s situation was like a primary school math problem – if a swimming pool is being drained while water is being added, when will it be full?

“We can stay in this building for at most two more days,” Igor declared, “No amount of money will buy us more time... If the Silver Lantern doesn’t make a move by then, we’ll have to flee to the nearest town and wait it out.”

They couldn’t camp out in the wild; no one wanted to test their luck against the Choking Green of the night.

“Speaking of which, I have a big plan,” Ashe signaled for them to come closer and whispered, “I think the Silver Lantern wants to seize the Transcendent Cult’s Demi-God.”

Igor was slightly taken aback but quickly understood-of course, if it was just about escaping, Silver Lantern could have left overnight. There was no need to linger here.

Though restocking supplies was a possibility, she had just done that at the Food Factory Town and didn’t need more so soon. The most valuable things in this hundred-story building were the two Demi-Gods!

“But she already has several Demi-Gods herself,” Igor frowned, “Why would she-“

“During the battle three days ago,” Harvey suddenly spoke up, “She didn’t use the power of her Demi-God to attack us, she just blew up the gas station. She’s being stingy.”

Why was she stingy with the power of her Demi-God?

Igor had an epiphany: “Without disciples to replenish, every use of her Demi-God decreases its power. She needs to find a way to seize other Demi-Gods; otherwise, she risks running out of power on her Demi-God! Yes, she does have a motive to steal the Transcendent Demi-God! But when will she make her move?”

“During the worship period from 7 to 9 PM,” Ashe said. “Other times the Demi-Gods are heavily guarded. Even if she disguises herself, she can’t get close. But during worship, disciples can approach the Demi-Gods, and that’s her chance.”

“So we need to attend the worship and wait nearby for Silver Lantern to fall into the trap?” Harvey asked.

While Igor was contemplating the details of their actions, he noticed Ashe shaking his head: “No, worship could assimilate us. It’s best if we wait outside. Once Silver Lantern seizes one Demi-God, I’ll immediately attempt Divine Hosting on the second Demi-God to stop her.”

Hmm?

The Con Artist looked up at Ashe, puzzled: “Why are you planning it this way?”

Ashe blinked: “Is there something wrong with this plan?”

The Con Artist thought carefully and found the plan quite reasonable. First, the Transcendent Cult was not on friendly terms with them; if they abruptly requested to attend worship, the cult might not agree. Plus, the risk of assimilation during worship was too high.

However...

"Did you come up with this plan yourself?" Igor asked earnestly. "This is very important."

How did he see through that!?

Ashe was genuinely surprised. "This is guidance I received from an Adventure in the Virtual Realm. Does it not look like something I could come up with?"

Of course, it doesn't seem like something you could come up with, the Con Artist thought.

Because there's a significant flaw in this plan-after Silver Lantern seizes the first Transcendent Demi-God, the other disciples will surely band together to attack her. The cunning and malicious Silver Lantern would naturally attempt Divine Hosting, using the power of the Transcendent Demi-God against or even to destroy the Transcendence followers, causing their spirits to shatter in an instant.

At that point, if Ashe rushes in to Divine Host the second Transcendent Demi-God and helps the disciples repel or capture Silver Lantern, he would immediately gain the exalted prestige of the Transcendent Cult-as long as Ashe doesn't try to occupy the Demi-God, the disciples would see him as the spokesperson for the Demi-Gods, a savior of fate!

The crux of this plan isn't capturing Silver Lantern, but stealing the Transcendent Cult!

And this precisely solved Igor's worries that had been plaguing him during the past few nights of Meditation.

Capturing Silver Lantern was just the first phase.

The second phase involves dealing with the Four Pillars Cult.

The third phase is figuring out how to find a portal to leave the Kingdom of Senlo-with the technical power of the Gray Fox Divine Era, there should be some fantasy creation allowing travel across different realms.

However, relying on only the three of them with Sanctuary level strength is simply insufficient for either the second or third phase. The Four Pillars Cult not only has more Sanctuaries, but the Mercury Trojan Horse likely possesses other pieces of the Gray Fox heritage. Should a 'Dragon Blood Cultivation System' emerge, Igor and the others wouldn't even stand a chance in battle.

As for gathering the Gray Fox's heritage, that's even more troublesome. Most of the heritage is currently held tightly by various cults. First, they would need to figure out

which cult has artifacts like a space gate, and then find a way to acquire them, whether by negotiating, stealing, or deceiving.

But if they weren't just wandering renegades, but representatives of a major power, all of this would become significantly easier.

Being part of a major power means having the ability to trade with other factions-in the Senlo Wasteland, unless renegade Sanctuaries can wipe out others' cults, no one is willing to trade with heretics.

A major power also means access to a vast stream of Intelligence, even mobilizing other cults to gang up on the Four Pillars Cult!

Moreover, if they could control a specific faction, not only could they more effectively hunt down Silver Lantern, but they could also obtain more high-energy food, directly countering the curse effects of the Blood Seed!

Not just the present, but the future.

Increase what they desire, gift what they need.

To seize power in the cult as saviors, they must first let disaster toll the cult's death knell.

"Do you think the plan needs any optimization?" Ashe asked, watching Igor steeped in thought.

"No need," Igor replied with absolute certainty. "Let's proceed with this plan."

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

Chapter 551: Transcendent Cult

The "charging area" on the 61st and 62nd floors is the designated dining area of the Transcendence Temple, and no delivery service is available, so Ashe and the others had to come to the charging area for meals.

Although they had been here for two days, Ashe still found it hard to accept this dining environment – the uniform sound of eating, with no ambient noise in the air, made Ashe feel like a social drifter sitting in an internet café to play games overnight, only to find

himself surrounded by nearby company employees working overtime due to a power outage.

The atmosphere was so solemn and serious that Ashe didn't dare to take food from Igor's plate over the past two days.

Another thing that Ashe found hard to accept was the fact that they were literally charging.

It's necessary to describe the appearance of the Transcendence followers here – unlike the ascetic look of the Tribulation Fire followers, Transcendence followers have a futuristic feel. With silver-white metallic prostheses attached to many parts of their bodies such as the nape, ears, spine, and elbows, equipped with glowing lines of breathing lights, combined with their blue-and-white uniforms and skin with lightning runes, they look like warriors time-traveled back from a Doomsday future.

These prostheses have their functions, but they consume electrical energy, so mealtime is also charging time. There are many charging cables under the tables, and as soon as they sit down, they automatically start charging, with electricity running through their bodies – this is even more important than eating.

Ashe, who only ate without charging, felt like someone eating instant noodles in an internet café without using the computer.

In contrast to Ashe's discomfort, Igor and Harvey seemed quite at ease.

The Con Artist, of course, could joke around even if tossed into hell, so this small setting was nothing to him. As for Harvey, as a ruthless person who could eat and sleep among a pile of corpses, Ashe couldn't think of any scene in the world that could affect the necromancer's appetite.

As they ate, a middle-aged woman next to them suddenly said, "Three travelers, your stay expires in 29 hours and 43 minutes. Please leave before the deadline, or you will be forcibly expelled. If you wish to join the Transcendence Temple, please report to the 32nd floor's newcomer area by 5 PM."

Ashe and the others were no longer surprised that any disciple could become a spokesperson. Igor asked, "Can we first tour the internal situation or achievements of the Transcendence Temple before deciding whether to formally follow the Demi-God?"

The middle-aged woman immediately shook her head, then said after a moment of silence, "No, if you want the Transcendence Temple's protection, you must attend the evening worship and complete the Ritual of following, striving together with us for the transcendental consciousness. Otherwise, you are still considered travelers."

“Understood,” said the Con Artist. “We’ll seriously consider it within the remaining time. By the way, do you have any needs? If we continue our trade, we might be able to bring you the materials you desire.”

At this point, the middle-aged woman seemed to ignore their words and continued eating with her head down.

A few seconds later, a man entered the Dining Hall and handed a folder to Igor before quickly leaving without looking back.

Igor opened it and saw an illustrated list of material needs. In addition to common resources, it also included spirits, heritage creations, mechanical parts, and even populations of different species. He raised an eyebrow; just from this list, he could deduce what high-value items were present in the Senlo wasteland.

“I’m done eating,” Harvey said, picking up his tray. “I’m going to have a smoke and then head back.”

Igor responded, “There are smoke detectors everywhere here. You can’t even smoke in the restroom, right?”

“I found a place without detectors, and it’s also exposed to sunlight,” the necromancer said with words that didn’t match his identity. “I want to take Alice to get some sun, we’re both a bit calcium-deficient.”

“I’m going too!” Ashe quickly swallowed his remaining food.

“Are you going to smoke too?” Igor frowned, looking at Ashe.

“I want to get some sun as well!” Ashe replied. “I’ll leave the task of bringing back food for Tamashi up to you!”

“It was me the last time and the time before that. You just don’t want to bring the food...”

Tamashi didn’t want to eat in the Dining Hall, not because he couldn’t stand the atmosphere, but for religious reasons – he said that Raven Annihilation followers couldn’t eat with others.

He didn’t elaborate, but Ashe and the others imagined several reasons: ‘Refusing to socialize with outsiders enhances cult cohesion,’ ‘Eating would reveal vulnerabilities,’ ‘The original Raven Annihilation Demi-God was an introverted social anxiety case’... Whatever the reason, as long as it wasn’t an unbearable flaw, Ashe and his group were willing to accommodate Tamashi’s religious beliefs.

Since the charging area doesn’t offer delivery services, they had to pack their own meals. Ashe never volunteered to bring the food, not just because of his laziness, but

also because he enjoyed watching the Con Artist carefully arrange meals in the containers, making them look neat and pleasing.

For some reason, this scene always amused Ashe. He also wanted Igor to be the one bringing the food, but clearly, the Con Artist wouldn't indulge the Cult Leader's little whims.

Ashe and Harvey left the Dining Hall and took an elevator, joining a group of uniformly dressed disciples inside. They stood silently as Harvey pressed the button for the 95th floor.

A few minutes later, as Ashe stepped out of the elevator, he started taking deep breaths, leaning against the wall. Harvey gave him a puzzled look and asked, "Did someone fart in there?"

"No, I wasn't holding my breath," Ashe replied, waving his hand. "But didn't you feel suffocated? Being in that cramped elevator with them... I can handle a few seconds, but staying in there for a few minutes was unbearable."

"Suffocated?" Harvey gestured for him to follow, adding, "What's so suffocating about it? Just imagine they're all corpses."

"If they were corpses, I wouldn't mind," Ashe sighed. "But the problem is, they're people, and yet..."

"And yet, they no longer want to be human," Harvey said impatiently, lighting a catnip cigarette and speaking with a tone that indicated how familiar he was with the feeling.

The religions like the Four Pillars Cult, Raven Annihilation, and Tribulation Fire all had aspects that seemed inhuman, but they were still within a realm that Ashe could understand, allowing him to assimilate quickly into the Land of Senlo. It wasn't until he encountered the Transcendence Temple that he realized he would always remain an outsider.

As the main cult of the Qinyi Alliance, the Transcendence Temple is seen as an extremely lawful and good force. This is evident from its established rules for receiving traveling merchants and traders, earning it the trust of many factions. It's worth mentioning that the Tribulation Fire Temple, in the past, positioned itself as a villainous faction that specialized in robbing travelers, and nobody wanted to trade with them.

However, despite being recognized as an orderly force, the Transcendence Temple's philosophy is extremely radical: transcendental consciousness.

What does this mean? The Transcendent Demi-God believes that intelligence and consciousness are not inherently linked. In fact, consciousness is seen as a constraint

on intelligent creatures. If they want to evolve into a more advanced species, they must surpass consciousness and shed their sense of self.

At first glance, this may sound nonsensical, but they have a coherent logical system: When sorcerers learn any craft or skill, they depend on consciousness to actively learn and digest it. However, once they fully master a skill, they need to discard consciousness to perform it better. In the realm of art, a musician doesn't think about which note to play next but plays purely by feeling. In combat, a swordsman doesn't deliberate on where to strike next; in the blink of an eye during a duel, the thought process is completed even before the consciousness forms the idea.

The Transcendent Cult believes that consciousness is like a tutorial in a video game, a baby walker, or a product manual. It is a phase that intelligent creatures must go through, but only a phase.

While consciousness can lead to intelligence, intelligence does not require consciousness. Once intelligence is initially established, consciousness becomes a burden. Those distractions, desires, cravings, and emotions are obstacles that prevent intelligent creatures from further advancement.

The ideal of the Transcendent Cult is for everyone to shed their self, transcend consciousness, and evolve into more intelligent entities.

Although this ideal seems far-fetched, the Land of Senlo has seen many such outlandish ideals, so it's not lacking in this one.

In theory, such an avant-garde ideal would quickly be swallowed up by the competitive wasteland. However, the Transcendent Cult found its perfect utopia – the intact Gray Fox Divine Era building.

In this building, there exists an intelligent computing hub. By connecting one's consciousness to the hub, communication between individuals can occur without words, accurately conveying thoughts directly to others. Moreover, no matter what issue you encounter, you can seek assistance from the hub, which will immediately provide a solution.

Ashe and his companions speculated that this building might have originally served the hospitality industry, perhaps as a hotel or serviced apartments, with the intelligent computing hub functioning as a butler system. However, in the wasteland era, the intelligent computing hub became a great vessel for transcendental consciousness.

The concept of the Transcendent Cult is straightforward: they encourage all followers to connect with the intelligent computing hub, gradually diminishing the influence of self-awareness and entrusting all actions to the control of the intelligent hub until the self completely dissolves. In this manner, they can transcend the constraints of

consciousness and elevate their intelligence to a new level, even without connecting to the computing hub.

To achieve this goal, they equip themselves with prosthesis attachments and engrave lightning runes to allow the computing hub to have more profound control over them- technically, the hub is not supposed to control living beings, but since they aren't "legal citizens," this disadvantage surprisingly becomes a loophole to bypass safety restrictions.

This is why Ashe feels such oppressive tension in the Dining Hall and the elevator. The Transcendence followers may look human and feel human, but internally, they're gradually becoming something inhuman.

Because of this, all Transcendence followers can be perceived as a collective entity. Every person they meet could potentially represent the cult. Even a dining hall worker is qualified to discuss large deals worth thousands of gold coins with them. Followers are merely vessels for the intelligent hub, and all significant actions are executed upon the hub's decisions.

However, the intelligent hub also becomes a shackle for the Transcendence Temple. Since all followers must stay within the building to connect to the hub, they cannot leave, effectively binding the cult to the building. Unless a true pioneer of evolution emerges, the Transcendent Cult remains merely a fanciful idea of a few generations.

Suddenly, Ashe squinted, realizing he had stepped into an indoor meadow, with what appeared to be a blazing sun overhead.

"The sun is fake," Harvey said, lighting his catnip cigarette. He retrieved a coffin from his Spatial Card and called Alice to wake up. "But the sunlight is real. It seems to be reflected from the surface, or it could be a light spell Miracle... I don't really understand these things."

Ashe took a deep breath of the refreshing air, looking at the lush green grass and feeling the gentle sunlight caress his face. He exclaimed excitedly, "I'm going down to get Igor and Tamashi!"

"Why?" Harvey asked.

"Why not? With such a lovely place, you should've told us earlier instead of hogging it all to yourself!"

"What I find good, you all might not," Harvey said, sitting under the shade of a tree, as Alice gathered her dress and sat beside him. "And what you all find good, I might not."

Ashe blinked. "Speaking in circles isn't like you. Have you picked up bad habits from Igor?"

“Do I need to learn from him?” Harvey exhaled a smoke ring. “But you-have you picked up any bad habits from him?”

“What are you really getting at?” Ashe was puzzled.

“Do you trust Igor?” the necromancer asked seriously. “Who is he to you, really?”

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

Chapter 552: I Am Your Guardian

In response to Harvey’s question, Ashe sat in the sunlight outside the shade, looking at the necromancer with a peculiar expression.

“You’re not the type to talk behind someone’s back. If you have an opinion, you always say it directly. If that’s not enough, you’d even bring Alice along to say it with you,” Ashe remarked. “Igor hasn’t offended you recently, has he?”

“I have no issues with Igor,” Harvey replied. “I’m just curious about your thoughts.”

“Why?”

“Ashe, you’re a good person,” the necromancer said. “Whether or not you were a cult leader in the past, from the moment I met you, you haven’t seemed like a bad person in my eyes. Valcas, Igor, Lise, Annan... you’re not a naive do-gooder, but you’ve never done anything evil. You’re so clean that you don’t seem like someone from the Blood Moon.”

“I think Igor wants to ask this question too, but he’s just afraid to. For the two of us, who are notorious death row inmates, how do you see us?”

“I just came up here to sunbathe, not to answer such an important question...” Ashe rubbed his temples. “In your words, from the moment I met you guys-“

Harvey interrupted him, “In Gospel, we were restrained by Annan, and we couldn’t help it. After coming to Senlo... you haven’t forgotten why we were driven out of the Food Factory Town, have you? Silver lantern’s framing is just one of the reasons; our unruliness was the main reason.”

“But you also considered the impact.”

“That’s why we couldn’t catch the Silver Lantern,” Harvey said. “Didn’t the Con Artist know that the gas station could become a weapon of mass destruction? With the mental sorcerer’s abilities, why would he lead the Silver Lantern to a sparsely populated area instead of turning a crowd into his weapon?”

“Even if we couldn’t catch the Silver Lantern, we would definitely find a way to neutralize the Blood Seed,” Ashe said earnestly. “I promise.”

“The point isn’t that, it’s our true nature,” Harvey said, stroking Alice’s head. “Do you think I’m satisfied with only one Alice? Now, with no Annan to constrain us, and Senlo lacking even a unified government, I have limitless materials at my disposal... If it weren’t for being with you all, to fund my research, I might have joined a cult that didn’t interfere with my work, becoming their enforcer and bringing necromancy disasters to this land.”

“The Con Artist is the same. This world, where order and chaos coexist, is a perfect heaven for him. Here, he can freely wield his wit, schemes, and tactics, playing everyone like pieces on a board... Had he arrived here alone, he would probably already be a leader within the Four Pillars Cult.”

Ashe said, “But you didn’t do that.”

“Yeah, we didn’t. Why is that?”

Alice took Harvey’s cigarette butt and swallowed it.

“There’s a slight difference between the Con Artist and me,” Harvey said, chewing on a chocolate bar. “I’m like a fallen leaf in a river, drifting with the current, indifferent to whether the end is the sea or a swamp; but he is a fish swimming upstream, potentially turning into a bird that flies... He holds his fate in his own hands, never drifting with the tide.”

“But one thing we share is that we’ve never seen others as people. Talking corpses, usable artifacts... that’s all they are.”

“If someday we do something you cannot accept, how will you treat us?”

Ashe replied, “That kind of hypothetical is so boring, like a relative asking a child what they would do if their parents didn’t want them anymore.”

“Have you forgotten we are Blood Moon people...”

“Oh, but you get my point.”

“Take the Food Factory Town as an example,” Harvey said. “If Igor were willing to drag the whole town into battle just to catch the Silver Lantern, if I chose to transform into a

plague-spreading Dragon Lich rather than a Nether Knight to intercept the Silver Lantern... what would you do?"

Ashe looked at him calmly, without speaking.

Harvey consumed most of the chocolate bar, then Alice swallowed the final bite.

"When you hesitate, you've already made a choice in your heart," he said. "We are no longer prison break companions, nor are we slaves bound by a pact, let alone comrades you can trust unconditionally."

"No, I'm not hesitating; I'm just surprised that you nearly killed the Silver Lantern even while being so restrained," Ashe said, clenching his fists. "Next time we encounter the Silver Lantern, we will definitely take it down!"

"Hmm?" Harvey blinked.

"I understand what you mean," Ashe continued. "If it weren't for worrying about me, your actions would surely be much more ruthless than they are now. I've never doubted the malice in your hearts. How could someone nurtured in the environment of the Blood Moon not harbor a misanthropic nature?"

"So, I'm honored to be your consideration," the Cult Leader chuckled. "It feels like I've become your guardian."

"Trust should certainly be placed in someone worthy. Since you've handed me the chain, how could I refuse to become your shackle? Even if, as you said, you end up doing something I cannot accept..."

"I would still be able to subdue you instantly," Ashe's eyes gleamed. "Don't underestimate me, necromancer."

Harvey paused and couldn't help but laugh. "I look forward to it."

He reached over to Alice and rummaged for something. Just as Ashe wondered if he should turn away, Harvey pulled out a harmonica.

"Where did the harmonica come from?"

"A product of the Transcendence Temple," Harvey replied. "Their best-sellers are luxury items with a high craftsmanship threshold. Unfortunately, this is a chromatic harmonica, and I used to play the tremolo harmonica."

"Oh... wait, you used to play the harmonica?" Ashe frowned. "We're all so familiar with each other that I won't praise you even if you're boasting."

Harvey pressed the slide button with his thumb, and a melodious tune began to play. It sounded somewhat familiar, possibly a song he heard at Shattered Lake Prison.

In the shade, the dark-skinned, curly-haired young man played his harmonica, with something that looked like a beautiful girl nestled beside him. But knowing it was the necromancer and his corpse made Ashe feel even stranger-compared to an ordinary necromancer, one who could play the harmonica seemed even more terrifyingly abnormal.

Surprisingly, Harvey played quite well. Ashe leisurely lay on the grass, savoring the rare moment of relaxation. As the music ended and Ashe sat up yawning, he noticed a crowd of Transcendence followers around them.

These children looked about ten years old or younger, all wearing the same blue and white uniforms, though with far fewer external prostheses, featuring only on their ears and the back of their necks. They looked at Harvey curiously, their eyes urging him for an encore.

"Why are there so many kids here?" Ashe asked.

"This is the basic education level," Harvey replied. "All children under twelve attend classes here; this area is actually their playground."

So you're smoking in an elementary school's playground...

"So what now? Do we play another song or leave?"

"Let's do one more, and then we'll go."

As Harvey began another tune, Ashe suddenly realized he recognized it. It was the theme song from a show he watched with Freya, memorable due to its catchy rhythm. He began clapping to the beat, which soon spread to the nearby children, turning the playground into an impromptu music class.

When the song ended, and as Harvey was preparing to stand up and leave, a little girl ran over and gave him a quick kiss.

Alice, who had been tense and ready for action, finally relaxed. Harvey looked at the girl curiously, while she blushed deeply before stammering out two words: "Beautiful... tune!"

She quickly ran back to her group of friends, exchanging expressive glances with them without uttering a single word. They were communicating through the intelligent computing hub, bypassing the inefficient verbal exchange.

It seemed she had been frozen earlier because she hadn't comprehended her actions- while the intelligent hub could diminish self-awareness, it heightened impulsive reactions. Put simply, Transcendence followers often acted physically before their mind caught up to their intentions.

Watching the children disperse, Ashe suddenly fell into deep thought.

"Let's go, what are you thinking about?" Harvey asked as he returned Alice to the coffin.

"I was just contemplating whether, as I pity their future loss of self-awareness, they might also pity me for never having the chance to evolve into a more intelligent being."

"They absolutely do," Harvey agreed confidently. "Just like I pity you for not diving into the Necromancy Sect and instead sticking to mundane choices."

"Yeah, you have your interests, they have their ideals to follow, and even I have my guiding light," Ashe replied. "If reality truly is just an illusion..."

"I am still the protagonist, one whose role I won't let anyone deny."

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

Chapter 553: Worship

The two Demi-Gods of the Transcendent Cult are located on the 100th level of the building's lower level, the "Upload Chamber." It's worth noting that although this level is referred to as one, it boasts an impressive height of a hundred meters, featuring tiered seating for spectators around the perimeter and a central arena-in the departed Gray Fox Divine Era, this might have been a sports field, Arena, or even an auction venue for entertainment.

However, in the wasteland era, this place has become the worship venue for the Transcendent Cult.

As time approached 7 PM, the seats in the Upload Chamber gradually filled. Aside from those on necessary duties, the majority of the Transcendence followers would come to the Upload Chamber to participate in worship, without interruption, every night.

"Our Raven Annihilation worship isn't quite this formal." In the corridor, Tamashi leaned against the wall, his voice distorted under the raven mask. "It's more like a gathering or a banquet where everyone chats after dinner."

“During the day, the Raven Annihilation members are either honing their skills or out tracking down criminals, with hardly any time to gather. The only break is the night worship after dinner.”

“At that time, returning warriors would tell stories of how many evil ravens they hunted. For instance, Captain of the Warriors, Qieshu and Kalan, are the most frequent hunters. Kalan is especially eloquent; he recounts the countless misdeeds of the evil ravens and how they evade capture. When the apprentices are agitated, he changes the tone, claiming he finally caught up with the evil raven and subjected them to the blood raven punishment, to much applause from everyone.”

“By the way, you may not know what a blood raven is. It involves tearing open the evil raven’s back and pulling out their lungs, which look like bloody wings... I performed my first blood raven under his guidance.”

“However, not everyone is absorbed in the pleasure of slaughtering evil ravens, such as the ‘Debater’ Arnoi. Whenever he’s present at worship, it eventually turns into a debate, discussing which crimes warrant killing and the dilemmas faced by the Raven Annihilation. I’ve debated with him as well; once, I encountered a sorcerer slaughtering merchants, but clues revealed the merchants had first plotted against the sorcerer, yet there were children among the merchants... Beyond my mentor, he’s taught me the most.”

“Apart from debating and storytelling, the most popular aspect of the worship is the performance. Raven Annihilation has always had a tradition of dancing, and our ‘Dance of the Raven Flock’ is the finest performance! Ye Lu is the dance instructor, and whenever she’s at worship, people ignore Kalan and Arnoi, all waiting for Ye Lu’s dance troupe to perform... She’s always wanted me to dance too, but I’m too shy to perform in front of so many people.”

“There’s also Tanomoo; she’s incredibly smart. We found a piano from the ruins that no one knew how to play, but she figured it out bit by bit. She even composed a few pieces herself. Her performances with Ye Lu are always the highlight of our return home...”

As Tamashi spoke, his proud tone gradually softened. He looked at the crowd in the Upload Chamber, and who knows what rhythm the heart hidden beneath his terrifying raven skin was beating.

“When the worship begins, remember not to look,” he said finally. “I know my own limits, but you might succumb in just a second.”

Ashe and the others nodded in agreement.

Worship is a collective Ritual inherent in every cult, rooted in the need for the Demi-Gods to be replenished by the disciples.

When disciples engage in worship, the Demi-Gods not only regain their strength but can even grow stronger-this is why the Tribulation Fire Temple has such faith in the strength of the Inferno of Tribulations Demi-God. Theoretically, it is the top combat power in the Land of Senlo due to its long existence.

The forces of tribulation, fire, consciousness, faith... Each cult provides similar explanations for why disciple worship can power the Demi-Gods, with everyone believing that the Demi-Gods draw energy from the disciples.

Ashe initially thought the same, but Igor had a different perspective, with only one reason: "Why do other Kingdoms not have Demi-Gods?"

Perhaps disciples truly can sustain the Demi-Gods, but this energy is not overt; otherwise, other Kingdoms would have updated their versions by now.

The relationship between the Demi-Gods and disciples is unique to Senlo.

Igor even suspects there's no such thing as faith power; rather, the Senlo Kingdom has a reward mechanism specifically for Demi-Gods. The Demi-Gods do not extract energy from disciples but trigger the reward mechanism by increasing the number of followers. The best evidence of this is the Four Pillars Cult, where the Four Pillars aren't Demi-Gods, yet they can also draw energy through worship.

Regardless, worship, like the Demi-Gods, is common knowledge in the Land of Senlo. Every cult's worship is different, but they share one principle: If you do not intend to follow the cult, never partake in their worship.

Worship not only empowers the Demi-Gods but also connects them to the disciples.

As Tamashi would put it, before they lost the Raven Annihilation Demi-God, no one would falter in their ideals; after losing the Demi-God, no one could uphold the will of the Raven Annihilation.

"Simply put, worship is a brainwashing Ritual between the Demi-God and the disciples," Igor remarked to Ashe after Tamashi moved away.

Despite this, the Demi-God itself does not have consciousness; it is merely a force condensed from ideals. If you could steadfastly uphold your ideal and strive to realize it for a lifetime in this wasteland, would that be a good thing or a bad one?

Because of the unique nature of worship, the Transcendent Cult does not prohibit outsiders like Ashe from approaching the Upload Chamber. If Ashe and the others dared to rush inside, they wouldn't have control over anything, not even what they wore.

As the time displayed on the Firmament dome reached 18:59, Ashe and his companions prepared themselves mentally.

The Demi-God is not placed openly on the field; it is encased within a transparent glass cabinet. Although it's described as glass, given it protects the Demi-God, it must be a special material capable of withstanding legendary Spellcasting.

They are confident that the Silver Lantern will act during worship because it is only at this time that the Transcendent Cult opens the glass cabinet, allowing full contact between the Demi-God and the disciples. The cabinet opens one minute before worship begins; at this moment, worship hasn't started yet, but the Demi-God is exposed, making it the best opportunity for the Silver Lantern to make its move.

As time ticked away, Ashe and his group clutched their Miracles, ready to unleash them if the Silver Lantern appeared. At this moment, the sound of running echoed down the corridor. Ashe turned to see a group of elementary school students, seemingly on the verge of being late for worship.

As they passed Ashe and the others, they glanced at Harvey. Ashe recognized one of the children; it was the girl who had the guts to speak up to the necromancer.

Once the children entered the venue, the time reached 19:00, and the Transcendent Cult's worship officially began.

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

Chapter 554: Leaving the Silver Lantern Nowhere to Go

Ashe and the others immediately turned their backs to the empty passage, avoiding the scene inside the place of worship.

They had already experienced the power of worship at the hospital camp. Even if one wasn't inside, merely observing from afar could draw them in.

Only Tamashi dared to occasionally steal a glance. The burning ideal in his heart not only allowed him to resist the Choking Green cold wind of the night but also to confront other lights without diminishing his own brilliance.

"What is the Transcendent Cult's worship like?" Igor, not hearing any commotion, wondered, "Why is there no sound at all?"

Tamashi replied, "It's hard to say."

“So what are they doing?”

“Various strange patterns appeared in the air, and everyone just stared at them in a daze.”

“What exactly do these patterns look like?”

“They’re indescribable; they seem simple yet mysterious.”

“Can you draw them on our palms?”

Tamashi didn’t refuse and traced the patterns he saw on the palms of Ashe and Igor. As he did, their expressions grew increasingly bewildered. Finally, the two exchanged a glance and fell into contemplation.

Igor then asked, “How are these patterns laid out?”

Tamashi explained, “They divide grids with straight and horizontal lines; some are in groups of sixteen, some twenty-five, some thirty-six. Most grids have patterns, but some are blank...”

“Sudoku!” Ashe blurted out. He remembered being fascinated by this mental game back in middle school when he was bored.

“What is Sudoku?”

With Tamashi’s question, Harvey also understood why Ashe and the others had fallen silent. However, he and Tamashi weren’t close enough for Harvey to spare his feelings, so he calmly explained, “It’s a puzzle game using numbers. You have to deduce the missing numbers based on the patterns and rules.”

“Oh,” Tamashi paused, then chuckled, “I see, it’s my least favorite kind of game.”

“Strange, is the Transcendent Cult’s worship really just a group of people playing Sudoku?” Ashe quickly moved to the next topic, pondering, “This is far from the worship I imagined...”

“Every cult’s form of worship seems incomprehensible to outsiders,” Tamashi said. “I once saw a cult whose worship involved everyone sleeping together because they followed the Floating Cloud Demi-God, with the ideal of everyone living a leisurely life.”

“Worship isn’t just about venerating the Demi-God; it’s about venerating ideals. Every cult’s worship is related to their ideals.”

Igor had an epiphany: “Worship is when followers fantasize about the future after realizing their ideals, thus resonating with the Demi-God!”

Ashe understood as well-a cult pursuing a leisurely lifestyle has worship in the form of a long nap; a cult aiming to eradicate evildoers worships by gathering together for leisure; the Four Pillars Cult indulges endlessly in their pleasures during worship...

"What does transcendental consciousness have to do with playing Sudoku?" Harvey was puzzled. "Is playing Sudoku the future of transcendental consciousness?"

"It's because they don't even know what the future after achieving transcendental consciousness looks like, nor can they imagine it. However, worship requires the participation of all followers, so they use intellectual games as a substitute," Igor analyzed. "Sudoku is just one of them; there might be other worship options."

"But this situation is very advantageous for us," the Con Artist said. "All the Transcendence followers are seated, so any unusual movement will be evident. If the Silver Lantern attempts to seize the Demi-God, the followers will immediately intervene."

"Now we only need to worry if the Silver Lantern will abandon tonight's action, but since the Transcendent Cult's worship likely involves immobile activities each night, waiting won't help her. If we leave, she might not even have a scapegoat."

The reason Ashe and the others believed the Silver Lantern would act soon was due to the location of the Transcendent Demi-Gods-they were all on the lower level. Escaping with a Demi-God would be a herculean task for the Silver Lantern, akin to breaking through from the 100th floor to the ground floor, but a scapegoat distracting the eyes would ease the endeavor significantly.

Undoubtedly, Ashe and his companions were the perfect scapegoat.

So, why didn't Ashe and the others leave the Transcendence Building and lie in wait outside?

Since the worship takes place at night, Ashe and his group wouldn't dare camp outside if they didn't stay within the Transcendence Building. If the Silver Lantern indeed managed to escape with the Transcendent Demi-God, they would have to wait until daylight at a nearby town to resume their pursuit, essentially skipping this crucial battle.

Tamashi asked, "What if the Silver Lantern frames us for stealing the Demi-God by disguising as us? Have you thought about an escape route?"

Ashe glanced at Igor in surprise, but Igor didn't meet his gaze. Instead, he said to Raven Annihilation, "There's no need to escape. Once the Silver Lantern successfully seizes the Demi-God, chaos will ensue. Being able to host a Divine, she'll certainly use the Demi-God's power to break through. At that point, the worship will be interrupted and chaos will break out. We'll focus on blocking the exit, and Ashe will seize the opportunity to host another Transcendent Demi-God. Together, we'll corner the Silver Lantern and capture that woman."

It wasn't until this moment that Igor revealed the plan to Tamashi.

"Aren't you worried that the Transcendent Cult will also see Ashe as a thief?" Tamashi inquired.

"As long as he doesn't attempt to take the Demi-God and helps intercept the Silver Lantern, why would the Transcendent Cult be hostile toward him?" Igor smiled.

"Moreover, unlike the Silver Lantern, Ashe can host a Divine with 100% certainty. You should understand the significance of this to the Transcendent Cult."

Tamashi realized the implication. In any cult, a person who can host a Divine flawlessly becomes a 'spokesperson for the Demi-God,' an indisputable leader and embodiment of their ideal. If Ashe could demonstrate perfect Divine Hosting without taking the Demi-God away, the Transcendent Cult wouldn't dislike him, though they wouldn't necessarily welcome him either-since he doesn't follow the Transcendent Demi-God, he's ultimately a heresy.

On this basis, if Ashe helps intercept the Silver Lantern and protects the Demi-God for the Transcendent Cult, even as an outsider, he'd earn immense goodwill from the cult! The law-abiding Transcendent Cult would feel obligated to repay Ashe's favor.

However...

"Your plan has a significant flaw," Tamashi pointed out. "After the Silver Lantern seizes the first Transcendent Demi-God, she'll either immediately grab a second one, or the Transcendent Cult will guard it. Whatever happens, we won't be able to approach the second Demi-God, let alone when chaos erupts; the Transcendent Cult will certainly watch us closely."

"First, let's eliminate the possibility of her immediately seizing two Demi-Gods," Igor said. "If that were the case, there's nothing we could do, but the reaction of the Transcendent Cult, which is faster than their awareness, is unlikely to grant her such an opportunity."

"As for the likelihood of the Transcendent Cult protecting the second Demi-God, it's indeed significant," the Con Artist raised three fingers. "But once we understand these three prerequisites, this obstacle is no longer an issue for us."

"The first prerequisite is that a divine host's strength far exceeds that of a legend. We were only able to injure the Silver Lantern before because we relied on Tamashi's gray fox heritage. Otherwise, no matter how cleverly we planned, the Silver Lantern could have broken through every crisis with sheer power."

"The second prerequisite is that the Silver Lantern needs to escape the building, but the Transcendent Cult, constantly diminishing their self-awareness, will selflessly obstruct

her. Within the Transcendent Cult, there are certainly some followers who are divine hosts, and they pose a threat to the Silver Lantern.”

“The third prerequisite is that the Silver Lantern is an Insatiable Greed and reckless individual, and this is an open internal space.”

Tamashi’s distorted voice grew huskier: “Are you suggesting she might-“

“There’s no better battlefield than this,” Igor stated. “The Silver Lantern will likely attempt to seize the second Demi-God with her divine hosting powers, and during this process, she’ll continuously deplete the Transcendent Cult’s advanced combat strength. Even if it becomes impossible, she must eliminate those divine hosts who threaten her, and she’ll smear us to ensure a secure escape from the building.”

“As casualties mount, the Transcendent Cult will eventually overlook us. We simply need to wait for the right opportunity,” the Con Artist smiled. “Even if the Silver Lantern fails to breach the second Demi-God’s defenses, it doesn’t matter. Tamashi, your grey fox blade is enough to pierce through that defense. Then, Ashe can reach in to touch the Demi-God and complete the divine hosting. After that, it’ll be our time to save the day and stop the Silver Lantern.”

Tamashi remarked, “But many people will die this way.”

“Yes, the Silver Lantern will kill many people,” Igor emphasized the name ‘Silver Lantern.’ “But many others will survive because of us. If the Transcendent Cult doesn’t send people to stop us, if we can approach the Demi-God more easily, it would all be much simpler... but there are no ‘ifs’.”

“Just as we told them two days ago, a Divine Hosting criminal capable of disguising themselves is hiding in the building. But compared to trusting us, the heretics, they put more faith in their security system.”

“If they had been willing to trust us and conducted a thorough search of the building, the Silver Lantern would have been caught long ago, and they wouldn’t be facing this disaster.”

The person behind the raven mask wanted to speak but ultimately couldn’t find the words.

The Raven Annihilation Cult had encountered situations like this many times. Although they simply sought to eliminate evil, the world isn’t so straightforward. Not everyone is willing to trust them.

Moreover, they are not always right.

There are those who didn't believe them and ended up with their entire families slaughtered; and there are those who did believe, but still suffered great losses.

Naturally, the Transcendent Cult is more inclined to trust their own judgment over that of a few outsiders like us.

When faced with the test of fate, everyone has their own answers, and until the results come out, who would think their answer is wrong?

Tamashi had seen it all before, but back then, he wasn't facing these challenges alone.

So, just like old times, even though Kalan, Ye Lu, and Tanomoo were no longer by his side, he still expressed his confusion, "We've foreseen everything. Isn't there a better way?"

"The world doesn't treat us that kindly," Igor said. "Even this outcome, which leaves you with regrets, is the best we can manage."

"Indeed."

Ashe chimed in as well, "When you think about it carefully, we've truly done the best we can within our capabilities."

The Con Artist glanced surprisingly at the Cult Leader. He hadn't expected Ashe to agree with him, even though this plan originally came from Ashe himself.

"It's not that we didn't want to help the Transcendent Cult. It's that the Transcendent Cult refused to believe us, viewing us as heresy merchants and ignoring the information we provided. If you ask me, this is a consequence of their own actions."

"If the Silver Lantern doesn't make a move, we can't act either. The Transcendent Cult would just see us as outsiders with ulterior motives. It's only after the Silver Lantern attempts to seize the Transcendent Demi-God, causing significant casualties, that we have the chance to approach the Transcendent Demi-God, perform a perfect Divine Hosting, and emerge as saviors who fight against the evil calamity of the Silver Lantern."

"In this way, not only can we capture the Silver Lantern, but we can also gain the friendship of the Transcendent Cult and obtain a pass from the Qinyi Alliance..." Ashe looked at Igor. "Isn't that right?"

Igor met his gaze openly. "Exactly."

"This truly is the best plan, no doubt about the guidance I got from... the Virtual Realm," Ashe said. "Even though we foresaw everything, we're not colluding with the Silver Lantern to harm the Transcendent Cult. It's just the most helpless choice. The

Transcendent Cult isn't wrong either; it's understandable they wouldn't trust us and wouldn't let outsiders near their Demi-God. And what relationship does the Transcendent Cult have with us anyway? The only person in the wrong here is the Silver Lantern; she is a walking calamity and the source of all evil. We're all just her victims."

"But still..."

Ashe furrowed his brows, closed his eyes, and whispered, his voice growing softer. After a moment of silence, he took a deep breath, opened his bright eyes, and looked intently at Igor. "But how can the world be like this? How can they be like this? How can we be like this!"

With each of Ashe's questions, his sanctuary quietly enveloped everyone. Before anyone could express their surprise, Ashe looked to Harvey and said, "Ghost King, help me divert everyone's attention inside and disrupt their worship."

Harvey didn't speak. He simply summoned Alice and entered the 'Frostfire' state, proceeding down another passageway.

At that moment, Ashe recalled his earlier conversation with Harvey and felt a touch of self-mockery for being slower to react than a necromancer. But thanks to Harvey's prompt, he was now able to act without hesitation.

"Raven Annihilation, throw me in with all your might."

Tamashi clenched his fists, the tightness echoing like bones exploding.

"Rust Crow," Ashe turned to Igor. "You know how to support me, right?"

"Of course." Igor lowered his eyebrows. "I've always supported you, never the other way around."

"Next time for sure," Ashe smiled. "This time, join me in treating this world with a bit of kindness."

Tamashi picked Ashe up. Ashe was taken aback. "Weren't you supposed to throw me?"

"My running speed is faster than you being thrown."

"But I am a sanctuary sorcerer, can't you carry me differently-" Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Just as Harvey, transformed into the Nether Knight, spread despair and drew the attention of all the Transcendence followers, disrupting their worship, Tamashi's feet

thundered with rapid beats, reaching the audience railings in almost a single breath, and hurled Ashe out!

Ashe unfurled his Twin Wings of gold and silver to adjust his trajectory, descending from a height of hundreds of meters, aiming straight for-

The Transcendent Demi-God!

He intended to seize the Demi-God before the Silver Lantern could, to take the path the Silver Lantern sought and leave her with no alternatives!

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

Chapter 555: Pressure on Vesser

Silver Lantern Vesser was naturally in the Upload Chamber, right at the front of the lowest level closest to the Demi-God.

The internal monitoring system of the Transcendence Building was highly advanced, with optical, infrared, and temperature sensors. Beyond these technologies, sensory information from every Transcendence follower was uploaded to the central processing unit. Theoretically, every follower acted as a walking surveillance device. With such a comprehensive security system, it was understandable that they didn't believe Ashe and the others' warnings, as no one had ever managed to infiltrate the building before.

But the existence of a Miracle is meant to transcend logic.

It's worth mentioning that all the equipment in the Transcendence Building is part of the gray fox heritage. In that beautiful era, fantasy creations were always preferred over ordinary creations. For example, in the case of infrared detectors, though the gray fox heritage could produce pale creations, why settle for something that deteriorates with time and environment when you could have indestructible fantasy creations?

In any Kingdom, pale creations appear only in the early stages of civilization, as they do not incorporate Virtual Realm spirits and operate purely on physical principles, allowing even mortals to create them.

However, with the surge in the number of sorcerers, fantasy creations, which excel in production efficiency, quality, and overall effectiveness, easily replaced pale creations. Since the spirits, not the creations themselves, enable the true functionality of fantasy creations, their maintenance is straightforward-just spend money!

If fantasy creations are a factory, then the spirits are the workers. It doesn't matter if the owner changes as long as the money keeps flowing; the factory will continue to operate. Even if the factory is destroyed, with sufficient funds, the workers can rebuild it.

This is one of the characteristics of fantasy creations that outshine pale creations: self-repair. Of course, unlocking this skill tree isn't easy for a Kingdom. Only a select few high-end luxury creations under the Blood Moon and Gospel possess this feature, but in the era of the gray fox heritage, this was standard for all items. Otherwise, how could the Transcendent Cult possibly keep this building operational?

This is why Vesser could easily hide within the building. She wasn't merely deceiving optical or temperature monitors individually; she was directly causing a misperception in the spirits linked to the fantasy creations.

No era has been able to mass-produce mysterious sorcerers of fate, Truth, prophecy, and the like. Even though grey fox creations have various defensive barriers, they are easily penetrated by the Miracle of Truth.

In the eyes of both fantasy creations and Transcendence followers, she appeared as one of them. However, despite the Miracle's transformation, she dressed exactly like a Transcendence follower, with an external prosthesis and a blue-white uniform-after all, Raven Annihilation could resist the effects of Miracles and directly see her original form, so she needed to fully disguise herself to avoid unexpected encounters.

Watching the two Demi-Gods at the center of the venue, Vesser was waiting for the 19:45 "mind method time." In the Senlo wasteland, several Grey Fox mind methods are passed down that improve physical and mental abilities through a few minutes of self-massage and Meditation, but they are not widely adopted due to their subtle effects.

However, in Transcendent worship, since followers need to undergo prolonged brainstorming sessions that heavily test mental and physical endurance, the mind methods have a noticeable effect on them. During the practice, they close their eyes, massage specific acupoints on their heads with their fingers, and visualize with an empty mind, making them completely unguarded.

After experiencing a session of Transcendent worship, Vesser knew that mind method time was the best opportunity for theft.

She stood by the railing, unaffected even when facing a Sudoku puzzle, as she completely resisted being drawn into the worship.

Tribulation Fire, the Four Pillars, transcendence... no cult's worship could sway her soul.

Worship is meant to give the weak firm belief and ideals, but the strong need no worship, for every action they take is a form of worship itself.

She pondered what kind of relationship should be maintained next between Silver Lantern and Ashe, Vesser, and the Observer.

An event is never just an event; its impact spreads to all unseen corners. Once Ashe made a grand entrance with the opportunity she provided, the Qinyi Alliance would undoubtedly notice this Universal Divine Hosting adept.

In order to exploit Ashe, the Qinyi Alliance wouldn't let him starve to be drained by the Blood Seed, but neither would they let him roam free-any cult would desire a perfect Divine Hosting representative.

With the aid of a mental sorcerer in reality and the suggestions she provided in the Virtual Realm, Ashe didn't need to join any cult. Just by being a mercenary, he could become a valued guest of the Qinyi Alliance. Then, by deliberately causing trouble (since she had planned to steal from other Demi-Gods anyway), she created opportunities for Ashe to showcase his power. Soon, he would become a renowned figure in Senlo.

What he would gain was not only fame but also power.

Power is like sulfuric acid; in the right dosage, it can react beneficially with life. But once it goes beyond a certain limit, it can corrode anyone's mind.

Although Vesser hadn't spent much time with Ashe, she realized that his mental flaw was quite small. In other words, he was easily satisfied. Unless someone captured him for severe torture or became the person closest to him, it would be difficult to exploit him fully.

Frankly speaking, such people were extremely rare in Senlo.

Regardless of the cult or race, the desires and ideals of Senlo people were hotter than the sun in the sky and deeper than the spirals of the earth. Vesser was able to navigate between cults because everyone had mental flaws.

Therefore, her first step was to transform Ashe into someone with flaws, and power was the poison she had prepared.

She liked those who were strong yet imperfect, much like people who adored beautiful yet dependent pets.

Since he wasn't interested in ideals, she decided to let him savor the sweetness of power, and then...

Huh?

Vesser suddenly lifted her head. Knowing that Ashe and the others were waiting in the passageway, she transformed the thousand changes spirit into a projection spirit, projecting the passage surveillance footage onto her pupils, allowing her to monitor Ashe and his group in real time and better coordinate with them.

Thus, she saw Harvey enter his Frostfire state, departing from Ashe and the others, and moving to the other end of the passage.

Why?

She saw Raven Annihilation pick up Ashe, taking a starting position.

Why?

She watched even the most rational mental sorcerer brewing a Miracle!

Why?

She had already provided the highest-scoring correct answer, so why were they scribbling chaotically on the test paper? It was understandable for necromancers and Raven Annihilation, those Lala Fatty personas, to do so, but why wasn't the profit-focused mental sorcerer restraining Ashe?

Was the world too gentle for you, leading you to increase the difficulty yourselves?

Even though Vesser was usually the calmest Truth sorcerer and a resolute night traveler, seeing the Nether Knight spreading despair and Raven Annihilation charging with Ashe in his arms, she couldn't help but feel helplessness toward the world and...

Anger at the fools!

How could you ruin my perfect plan like this?

No matter how Vesser raged inside, the moment Ashe seized the initiative, the pressure was on her.

She had to make a decision!

Vesser nearly ground her teeth to dust as she switched the thousand changes spirit to a light flow spirit, executing the temporary Miracle: Flash of Light!

Though she could compose this Miracle with the Inspiration spirit, she would never use skills already showcased in the Virtual Realm in reality.

As Ashe descended from the sky nearing the Demi-Gods, she, too, burst into the scene as a streak of light!

Without absolute power to suppress, she couldn't compete with the pure form of the perfect Divine Hosting!

In a flash, Ashe collided with the giant wolf crackling with golden arcs, and Vesser reached the hamster Entangled in blue arcs!

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

Chapter 556: Seeing Your Success Hurts More Than My Failure

"When the cataclysm occurred, my sister and I were both under ten years old."

"The vast majority of adults perished, and those who survived were mostly children still in primary school. Then the first night of the Choking Green claimed many more lives... At that time, I hadn't studied history yet, but I heard a phrase in a listening comprehension test: 'Only those with steadfast faith can reach the other side of the night.' It was because of this belief that my sister and I barely made it through the night."

"While scavenging through the ruins, we encountered a group of older kids who planned to go to the Silent Spiral, as they had discovered in the library that those who emerged from the Silent Spiral had a better chance of surviving."

"Yes, the library hadn't been destroyed. My sister and I kept this in mind and followed them to the Silent Spiral. Food was not scarce; we easily found non-expired supplies in the ruins of passing cities. However, after 67 days of travel, only 8 of us reached the Silent Spiral, the others had succumbed to the Choking Green of the night."

"After leaving the Silent Spiral, the eight of us journeyed through the wasteland together, calling ourselves the Children of the Spiral because we had emerged from it."

"We discovered many other survivors; the children living in underground cities didn't have to endure the Choking Green, yet much of the old era's resources had decayed, and they lived in hardship until we arrived."

"To lead them in rebuilding surface civilization, some of the Children of the Spiral stayed behind. Eternal fire, justice, freedom... the Children of the Spiral became the new flames of civilization, urging the children to believe in them to endure the Choking Green of the night."

"In the end, only my sister and I remained, continuing to traverse the land, sifting through materials in various libraries. Although most facilities were destroyed by the

cataclysm, the identity verification systems were surprisingly still functional. Fortunately, our citizenship hadn't been lost in the cataclysm, otherwise, we couldn't even enter the libraries."

"We aimed to uncover the truth about the cataclysm, but this was top secret information from the old era. We could only vaguely deduce that it wasn't a natural disaster but rather a man-made calamity. In the process, we came across other records from the era of the divine and found that even with the divine fire system, the divine eras were fraught with conflicts and disasters."

"We gradually realized that individual consciousness, while aiding intelligence and skill acquisition, becomes a restraint as civilization advances to a certain level. To minimize the internal strife during divine era transitions, sorcerers arduously created the divine fire system, but it was still annihilated in the cataclysm."

"As long as self-awareness exists, there will be conflict, disaster, accidents, internal strife. It is the tragedy of civilization, and it is our tragedy."

"We must transcend consciousness."

When Ashe opened his eyes, he saw a small Golden Thunder Wolf standing on his shoulder, with flickering thunder arcs draping over him like fur, causing no harm.

He hadn't anticipated that the Transcendent Cult's Transcendent Demi-God would actually be the ancient first generation technique!

However...

Ashe looked across at the alluring and confident Silver Lantern, who was also cloaked in a blue arc. A tiny thunder hamster was nestled in the cleft of her chest, and her hair danced wildly like thunder snakes!

While he was channeling the Transcendent Demi-God as a divine host, Silver Lantern had successfully channeled the Resonance String Demi-God!

Whoosh!

With a crack of thunder, Ashe shot forth as a fleeting shadow!

Boom!

The moment Ashe and Silver Lantern's arms collided, countless gold and blue thunder arcs burst forth from them, creating a legendary-level shockwave that overwhelmed the Transcendence followers!

But compared to the shockwave, it was perhaps this scene that most shattered the worldviews of the Transcendence followers-a battle between the Transcendent Demi-God and the Resonance String Demi-God!

Ashe let out a thundering roar, a golden thunder horn emerging from his head. As the sharp horn charged with electricity, golden thunder arcs filled the entire space!

Silver Lantern, with limbs touching the ground like a beautiful vixen, crouched on the floor. A thunder arc tail grew from her, and as it stiffened and bristled, blue arcs painted the ground!

Divine Host Second Form: Phantasmal Species!

Not all demi-gods have a second form, as it is a combat method developed by previous divine hosts to best harness the power of the demi-god, akin to the perfect guide from veteran players. Thus, once Ashe and Silver Lantern engaged, they immediately entered the second form, bypassing the stage of familiarizing themselves with the powers of the demi-god!

When Silver Lantern glanced towards the audience, Ashe surged right up to her, his hand slashing down like a thunder claw capable of tearing everything apart!

A divine host doesn't need a spirit or a Miracle; they are tactical weapons superior to all else, fighting purely by instinct!

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

Ashe, the Golden Wolf, wielded formidable power, attacking relentlessly like a beast, each strike accompanied by fierce thunder and continuous explosions wherever he went. Although Silver Lantern was on the defensive, she was more agile, her attacks precise and swift like a surgeon's scalpel.

The two figures, one gold and one blue, clashed ceaselessly across the arena in a matter of seconds, entangled like paramours, clashing intensely like wild beasts! Until, with a swoosh, the blue figure was launched into the air like a missile, punching through two ceilings up to the 98th floor!

Then, with a thunderous boom, the golden figure pursued!

When Ashe caught up, he found that Silver Lantern was attempting to escape upwards, and he continued the chase.

Upon reaching the 90th floor, Ashe felt himself crossing an invisible boundary and saw Silver Lantern pause on this level.

The entire space was lined with deep red grids on the walls, resembling both a blood-red warning and a restraining net.

“Are you satisfied now?” Vesser asked, her tail swaying back and forth. “Every 10 floors here contain a Miracle cage designed for legends; entry is allowed, but exit is not—it’s difficult even for a divine host to break through. Once the Transcendent Cult initiates it, it’s even tougher to dismantle.”

“You’ve won your gamble,” she said. “Because of you, I have to execute the plan according to your pace.”

The moment she saw Ashe leap down, Vesser knew she had lost.

With Ashe taking the Transcendent Demi-God, the Transcendent Cult would undoubtedly seal the Resonance String Demi-God, and it was clear that Ashe wouldn’t kindly break the cabinet for her to access it.

After witnessing someone seizing a demi-god, the Transcendent Cult would never unlock the cabinets during future worship; she would have no chance to take it!

So, she had to either give up completely or join forces with Ashe.

But she couldn’t abandon the Resonance String Demi-God in her plan, seizing the two ancient demi-gods of the Transcendent Cult was essential! Unlike other demi-gods, they held the key to the ultimate end!

Without these two demi-gods, her plan couldn’t even commence!

And Vesser’s reaction was exactly as Ashe had anticipated.

The time spent adventuring with Igor and Harvey had not been wasted. While he hadn’t yet mastered the art of the perfect crime, he had learned how to disrupt one.

“There’s no help for it; we’re leaving tomorrow, and we can’t go back empty-handed,” Ashe said with a grin. “If someone’s going to steal something anyway, why can’t it be us?”

“You never intended to seize a Demi-God,” Vesser said, stroking her tail. “If I hadn’t appeared, you’d probably planned to run with your companions to the first floor, hold out against the Transcendent Cult until morning, then return the Demi-God and make your escape... After all, the Transcendent Cult can’t pursue you outside; they’re bound to this building by faith.”

"In that case, a cautious Transcendent Cult would surely tighten security and leave me no more chances."

"I didn't expect you to understand me so well," Ashe said with surprise. "I thought only Igor could read my mind."

"I also know you want to be a hero," Vesser said with a mocking smile. "I tried several times to extend the battlefield to the audience, but you forcibly kept it contained... Does protecting the weak give you such moral satisfaction? Sadly, the Transcendent Cult won't see you as a hero. In their eyes, you and I are just thieves trying to steal Demi-Gods, even if you claim you're trying to stop me-they'll believe they can stop me themselves, like with this cage."

"Your defense will only be seen as an excuse for attempted theft; your good deeds will be seen as audacious acts of evil. That's not how one becomes a hero. A hero must be craftier than villains, more ruthless than evil... There's never been a moral hero, only a hero of capability. You must find a way to make people trust your ability, then they'll acknowledge your morals."

"You once had the chance to gain the friendship of the Transcendent Cult and become an honored guest of the Qinyi Alliance. Unfortunately, from now on, you're just like me-villains attempting to steal Demi-Gods. Those cults won't risk listening to your explanation. Your talents will no longer be appreciated by the cults, only viewed as the source of disaster."

As Vesser spoke, she could barely contain her anger, with thunder arcs erupting around her and her tail bristling. She had paved the way for Ashe, almost spoon-feeding him the opportunity, but Ashe had overturned the table, refusing to take what was offered!

He nearly shattered her plans in the process!

Yet how was this any different from her own plan?

Ashe is performing divine hosting, and so is Vesser; both fighting... and ultimately arriving at the same result! Search the [website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Ashe, do you even understand what you're refusing!?

Boom!

Facing Ashe's charge, Vesser swiftly grabbed his wrist. The two grappled, arcs of electricity darting across the Blood Cage Net, creating ripples with each clash.

"Regretting it now, looking to vent your anger on me?" Vesser sneered.

"No, I just can't believe you'd surrender so easily," Ashe replied. "Unless I reduce your threat level down to Lala Fatty's, I can't rest easy."

Boom! Boom! Boom!

With the thunderous symphony resonating, they switched rapidly between offense and defense, tangled together on the ground. Vesser finally gained the upper hand, pinning Ashe down as she mocked, "Does being an unsung hero bring you that much joy?!"

"I'm no Raven Annihilation; I've never aspired to be a hero. I'm not kind-hearted enough to rescue people I don't know, nor do I expect applause from them," Ashe gritted his teeth. "I just can't stand to see cowards strut around in front of me."

"Haven't you ever insulted a woman? Feel free to be nastier-I've heard worse," Vesser mocked. "I've gotten tired of Senlo's filthy mouth; got anything more interesting?"

"Do you enjoy being seen as a monster by everyone?"

Vesser said nothing, instead using both hands and feet to try and crush his neck.

"Silver Lantern Saintess, Bishop of the Four Pillars, Demi-God scourge... You hide your true identity, yet flaunt your presence so boldly. Why are you so conflicted?"

Ashe sneered, "Reality is just a momentary delusion, and the virtual realm is the eternal future. You might genuinely believe the latter, but not necessarily the former. I heard Raven Annihilation mention you spout twisted things like saying murder is just setting people free, but if you truly believed the first part of that phrase, how would you justify your own actions?"

"Sometimes I just want to develop some companions," Vesser replied. "In any case, everyone will awaken in the virtual realm; reality is just a temporary delusion, a cage, a game."

"Oh, really?" Ashe retorted. "Even if reality were a game, it's one you've been engrossed in all this time. That first part isn't meant to convince others-it's to convince yourself, so you can indulge guilt-free."

"You subconsciously crave more attention, greater renown, and stronger titles-you do care about everything in this 'delusion.' I don't know what intelligence you have that makes you feel reality is beyond saving, but you haven't even tried to save what you care about; you're just keen on retreating into the virtual realm."

"The Transcendence followers believe shedding consciousness will lead to evolution, and you think returning to the virtual realm will set you free-there's little difference between you. But at least Transcendence followers strive to realize their ideals. You, on

the other hand, hide your misdeeds behind hollow slogans, rampaging across this land, just waiting for death to reset everything!"

"As a villain, you lack taste-you're not even on par with the two by my side. As a cultist, your ideals fall short of the Four Pillars Cult, who at least admit they just want indulgence."

"What do you even know!"

With thunder arcs entangling her, Vesser's strength surged, almost pinning Ashe beneath her. Seizing the opportunity, Ashe swung his hand, slamming her with a thundering claw against the wall. Standing up, he remarked, "I'm not interested in a coward's journey."

Exhaling an arc, Vesser touched her face, quickly regaining her composure. "What's the point of talking to someone as empty and ideal-less as you?"

"I might lack praiseworthy ideals, but..."

Golden thunder arcs filled the space as Ashe charged, his progress slightly slow, but Vesser didn't dare underestimate him. With arcs of lightning coiled around her hands, she prepared for a head-on clash!

Snap.

When Vesser launched her lightning-fast strike, Ashe shattered like foam, dispersing into light smoke. The familiar sight immediately signaled to Vesser-it was a Substitute Spirit!

But why was the Substitute Spirit speaking? No, the real question was-

From the golden thunder arcs filling the space, a figure like a golden wolf emerged, seizing on Vesser's moment of stiffness after her attack. Ashe's thunderous claw struck her chest, its lightning like a pillar nearly piercing through her!

"...Seeing a woman like you succeed is more upsetting than my own failure!"

With Ashe's thunderous strike, Vesser flew like a projectile, crashing into the Blood Cage Net, twisting it and scattering the blue arcs entwining her body!

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

Chapter 557: Citizens of the Old Era

Looking at the Silver Lantern slumped over the Blood Cage Net, vomiting a pool of fresh blood, Ashe exhaled a breath of turbid air, golden electrical sparks flickering in the air.

He had been in numerous battles before, but it seemed like this was his first time being so ruthless to a young girl. He wasn't sure if Igor and Harvey lowered his standards, or if the Sword Princess and Witch raised his threshold.

However, Ashe hesitated not a bit; as he often said, even though he wanted to bring the Silver Lantern back alive to the Four Pillars Cult to solve the Tactile Sense issue, if he didn't reduce the Silver Lantern's threat to Lala Fatty's level, he couldn't set his mind at ease.

Ashe crouched down on all fours, arching his back like a cat. The sharp horn on his forehead emitted flashes of lightning, and the golden lightning covering his body contracted vigorously, resembling a thin layer of golden fur. If Freya saw him, she'd surely say he looked like a plush Bewitcher, the Cult Leader thought.

But at this moment, contracting into a big cat actually made him fiercer, not weaker. The chaotic currents were a result of his initial attempt at Divine Hosting, leading to unnecessary waste due to being unable to control the power of the Transcendent Demi-God. Now that he actively gathered all his energy, his destructive power was set to surpass the limits of a legend.

Whether the Silver Lantern was faking death or truly unconscious, his next move would entirely disarm her!

Whoosh!

A blur dashed through the space, and the blinding flash of lightning illuminated the entire area. Ashe's thunder claws aimed at the limbs of his opponent, tracing a brutal trajectory!

Snap!

As Ashe tore the Silver Lantern's arms, he discovered that instead of blood, a ghostly blue lightning burst forth from the severed parts!

Lightning!?

With the close contact, Ashe realized the figure slumped on the ground was merely a cluster of lightning. He immediately reacted, turning to look at the blood on the ground behind him!

Just as he had used the “acting” and “Substitute” spirits to deceive the Silver Lantern, she too had used a Miracle to catch him off guard!

However, the Silver Lantern had already dispelled the illusion of the blood disguise, and her right hand, like a scalpel, thrust toward the back of Ashe’s neck!

Slash!

The moment they made contact, they instantly separated. Ashe retreated to the other end of the room, touching the scratch on his neck from which blood continued to ooze with each breath – the Silver Lantern had nearly slit his throat.

“In the moment near death, what flashes through your mind?”

Vesser, appearing unscathed, calmly said, “Is it the person you want to see, the things you want to do, or perhaps those unspeakable desires? Justice, conscience, ideals, desires... how fragile they all are in the face of death.”

“This is the difference between illusion and eternity. You who are trapped in the narrative of illusion fear death, despair at being adrift, and suffer from unattainable desires. I pity you. Voluntarily imprisoned in illusion and bearing suffering, yet unaware that just one step forward can grant eternal peace.”

“You consider everything within the illusion as fate, yet fail to realize that it’s merely a drama woven by the Virtual Realm for reality.”

Ashe raised an eyebrow, seeking an opportunity while asking, “What do you mean?”

“Haven’t you ever thought about it?” Vesser smiled, “Since the Virtual Realm can resonate with our knowledge, why can’t it resonate with emotions, with desires, with fears?”

“The less you lack something, the easier it is to obtain it; the more you fear something, the more likely it is to occur. Many cults have appeared in the Land of Senlo, but survival is unrelated to ideals-it’s tied to resources. Those with resources can quickly grow past the initial stages, while those without, however noble their pursuit, are lost to history.”

“The more stable and well-fed a cult is, the more the Virtual Realm can hear their pursuit of happiness; the more desperate and starved a cult is, the more they can create imaginative despair.”

“In other kingdoms, you’ve probably seen similar things, right? Money flows to those who don’t need it, love goes to those already loved, and misfortune seeks out the distressed.”

“What you call fate is merely the echo of your cries to the Virtual Realm.”

For a moment, Ashe thought of many people: Annan, Banjeet, Igor, Harvey... even himself. He had never truly settled, always living in crisis, to the point where he almost grew used to it.

But when Ashe thought of Lise and the Sword Princess, thought of Annan and Freya, his mood quickly calmed. Perhaps he hadn't escaped fate yet, but at least many people he knew were on the best paths.

“Fate Sect?” Ashe probed cautiously.

Vesser neither confirmed nor denied, her intent in saying those words was to mislead Ashe about her Spellcasting Sect and buy some time.

Sizzle.

The electric glow around Vesser suddenly dissipated entirely, leaving only a single blue lightning tail. Ashe realized something was off-unless she intentionally dispersed her power, this phenomenon could only mean she had completely mastered the power of the Resonance String Demi-God.

But it didn't matter, the combat strength of the Transcendent Demi-God was superior to the Resonance String Demi-God. If it came to a fight, Ashe wasn't going to flinch-

Yet, Vesser stood at the entrance edge of the Blood Cage Net, pressed her hand against it, turning the cage's blood glow into a safe green light. She then stepped out of the cage, giving a bewildered Ashe a backward glance.

“The reason you still cling to illusions,” she said, “is because you haven't lost enough.”

Vesser pressed the wall again, turning the cage back into the blood net. Then she nonchalantly made her way toward the elevator, leisurely escaping!

Ashe immediately rushed forward, pounding on the blood net. However, it only warped without shattering.

Even with full force, it would take at least a few optimistic minutes to break through, by then the Silver Lantern would be outside basking in the moonlight!

How could the Silver Lantern unlock this cage? Isn't this place under the Transcendent Cult?

The Cult Leader looked at the currents dancing on his palm and suddenly recalled the information he had read from the Demi-God. Both the Transcendent and the Resonance

String were remnants of the Gray Fox Divine Era, recognized as official citizens by all relics, which allowed them to gather historical intelligence data.

This building wasn't the territory of the Transcendent Cult at all.

The Transcendent Cult was nothing more than a band of outsiders, like rats raiding the fridge, cockroaches nesting in the shoe cabinet, or stray cats playing with a computer. The owner of this building still belonged to the old era over two hundred years ago.

The ease with which the Silver Lantern had opened the cage clearly indicated the building was willing to heed her commands!

Which means-

Once Ashe realized this, thunder quietly merged into his soul, creating a blurred identity verification card!

He reached out to touch the Blood Cage Net, receiving options like "maintain," "unlock," "cancel," "contact customer service," and immediately canceled the cage, contacting the building to halt the high-speed elevator!

"Sorry, honorable guest, you do not have the necessary permissions."

Just a citizen identity wasn't enough... Ashe immediately punched through the elevator doors, wrecking the elevator shaft mechanisms to force it to a stop, then transformed into lightning to chase up through the shaft!

In just a moment, the elevator had reached the 50th floor, and Ashe found that the Silver Lantern was continuing her escape through the ceiling. He silently pursued her upwards!

Vesser stared in surprise at Ashe trailing behind her. Although she initially used the delusion spirit to confuse the Resonance String Demi-God during the divine host ritual, to unlock the full access of the Resonance String, she had to continuously deepen the influence of the 'illusion' and use the thousand changes spirit to transform into the Resonance String's favored thunder spirit, thereby earning its trust.

Even if Ashe had reacted in time, how could he possibly unlock such access without the relevant spirits? After all, he wasn't truly the First Gospel!

However, the situation was still in Vesser's favor. Taking the elevator wasn't a waste of time; she had already figured out her citizen privileges. As soon as she exited the elevator, she immediately applied for an emergency escape route. Now, each floor of the building was opening tunnels on both sides, forming a direct escape path leading to the ground!

Although the Resonance String might not be as powerful as the Transcendent, it was slightly faster, leaving Ashe struggling to keep up!

Just as she transformed into lightning to rush into the night, a sinister midnight green spirit leapt down from above!

Nether Knight, Ghost King!

Harvey, riding a Nightmare Steed and clad in terrifying armor made of Frostfire, wielded a despairing blade that was part scythe, part sword. Though he rode alone, dozens of Nether Knight phantoms crowded the passageway, charging like a thousand-strong cavalry!

Vesser couldn't help but feel a ripple of unease. How could a necromancer be up there? Even with the 90th floor sealed off, no Transcendence follower could surpass it!

Then she realized.

The necromancer must have reached the upper floors before the 90th floor was sealed!

She and Ashe had been fighting in the Upload Chamber on the 100th floor for a while. The Transcendent Cult wouldn't have paid them much attention, and even if someone had tried to capture them, the mental sorcerer could handle it. With their inability to interfere in the Demi-God fights, they had preemptively set up an ambush on the top floor!

Ashe didn't seem like the type to plan that far ahead... It must have been the mental sorcerer's doing.

Nonetheless...

Vesser didn't slow down and collided like a streak of lightning with Harvey's Nether Knight blade!

Crack!

The despairing blade, Frostfire armor, and Nightmare Steed... were all pierced as if they were paper. Even though Harvey did his best to twist his body aside, his chest was still gouged out by Vesser's hand, turning flesh and bone into charred ash under high voltage!

How could a sorcerer without a Sanctuary dare to stand in front of a divine host?

Just then, a piercing shriek echoed throughout the entire building, burrowing into Vesser's ears. She turned towards the source of the sound and saw the mental sorcerer standing near the edge of the opening, holding a loudspeaker.

In her divine host state, this mental attack could barely hinder her. It was Harvey's eardrums that were likely compromised. Although she couldn't understand why the mental sorcerer would join Ashe in such madness, he clearly still had some sanity left and wasn't going to recklessly tangle with a divine host. He was merely casting Miracles on the sidelines to show he had tried his best.

Keep him around; he's Ashe's most likely weakness-

Wait, if the mental sorcerer was just putting on a show, why use a loudspeaker?

Vesser whipped her head around to see a Death Raven descending above her!

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

Chapter 558: Turn Ashe Into One of Mine

"Although we were the first to arrive and lay in ambush, to be honest, we don't really have a way to deal with the Silver Lantern, barely even a way to hold it off. The divine host can resist most of my Mental Miracles, and Harvey hasn't yet unlocked the full power of the Blood Corpse King."

"You all created an opportunity for me."

"Are you sure? This time isn't like the Food Factory Town. Back then, I was pressing her to the edge, forcing her to flee without evoking the divine host, thus creating a perfect chance for you to assassinate without injury. Now, she's already in the divine host state, and Harvey can at least use miracles to save himself, whereas you..."

"I'm sure."

"Harvey?"

"I have no problem with it. No matter the outcome, it's a good result for me."

"Raven Annihilation, do you have any other requests?"

"Same as last time, after you all are dead, record my name in the -Tamashi of the Raven Annihilation Cult, judgment warriors."

Upon seeing Raven, Vesser's first reaction was to be wary of the grey fox blade on his elbow!

Even though Raven is but a mere mortal, with this weapon, he could pierce through miracles and slay deities!

However, Ashe and the others have yet to take away Raven's gray fox heritage. No matter how strong and capable Raven is in utilizing this weapon, he could never match a sorcerer's wielding, as a sorcerer can use miracles to continue enhancing and extending capabilities, whereas Raven can only use his own body from start to finish.

In that case, I'll gladly take it.

A cold glint flashed in Vesser's eyes as her right hand, like a scalpel, swiftly aimed at Raven's arm!

The situation was urgent, so she intended to take the whole arm with her!

The blade on the elbow had too short an attack range. Even though Raven tried his best to evade, his shoulder was still penetrated by Vesser first-

Slash.

When Vesser's fingers touched Raven, Raven's left fingers also reached Vesser's neck.

A fine, almost invisible scratch appeared on her slender neck, from which a faint silver blood began to ooze with her breath. Turning her head, Vesser saw that Raven's left fingers held a shard of a grey blade.

The grey fox blade was in his left hand, and the right elbow bore only a piece of matte iron!

Vesser's pupils contracted as her right hand unleashed a thunder crescendo powerful enough to destroy a Sanctuary, smashing into Raven like a hammer. As Raven was blasted into the building like a cannonball, the air filled with the scorched scent of flesh!

However, Vesser had no time to celebrate the elimination of her target, because Ashe had already caught up to her, despite the interference from the Ghost King and Raven Annihilation!

Boom!

At the moment they clashed, a stunning arc of gold and blue lightning erupted. Although Vesser quickly retreated upward using the recoil, she noticed something unsettling.

Ashe had changed.

He wasn't looking at the falling necromancer, the mental sorcerer nearby, or the destroyed Raven. Instead, his calm gaze was fixed on her. All the arcs around him retracted, leaving only a single point of golden lightning at the tip of the horn on his forehead.

If he were charging an attack, this stance would be normal, but maintaining it in a battle? Even Vesser couldn't manage that.

The key point was Ashe's expression.

No killing intent, no disgust, no affection, no anger, neither negative nor positive emotions.

It was an expression Vesser was very familiar with. [search the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Familiar enough to see in the mirror every day.

Zzzt!

As if realizing that catching the Silver Lantern was impossible, Ashe flicked his fingers, sending threads of lightning like instantaneous bolts to entangle Vesser's phantom blue silhouette!

Witch's thread attack.

He accomplished this just through the Transcendent Demi-God's lightning transformation, without any related spirit?

Vesser quickly deduced the answer and, with a twist of her body, emitted a burst of lightning, easily breaking Ashe's threads. Unless overpowering ordinary people, most divine hosts favored close-range attacks, as long-range attacks lost too much power.

However, as Ashe could condense weapon attacks, he could also extend a sword blade dozens of meters long. Vesser began moving erratically, spinning and leaping between the floors, giving him no chance to probe her.

Yet Ashe continued forming a sword blade, albeit in a rare style for Senlo-

A whip sword.

Crack!

With a whip sound that broke the sound barrier, even though Vesser had preemptively dodged, the tail of the whip sword still curved to strike her face!

Accompanying the whip sword's strike was an icy, bone-chilling emotion!

“Ah!!”

Even though Vesser quickly stifled her own pathetic wail, her soul still trembled with piercing pain-Ashe had somehow combined his Transcendent Demi-God technique with his “Single-minded Devotion” miracle!

Vesser was well aware of Ashe's primary attack methods: the four swords of “Single-minded Devotion” and the Heart Pen Sword Mark.

Ever since she saw Ashe use the Healing Sword and Empowerment Sword to enhance the sword Princess Witch, Vesser had noted an issue-could these work on soul bodies too?

Soul bodies, though consistent with physical forms, still have differences. Miracles related to flesh, bone, or treatments like Hydrotherapy could only affect virtual realm creatures, not the sorcerer themselves.

When Vesser felt the effects of the Healing Sword, she realized it was a soul miracle that could directly affect the soul. With further development, it might be possible to heal soul injuries or directly harm a soul.

Soul miracles are incredibly difficult to defend against, unless a Sanctuary is activated. Yet, Vesser had just constructed her Sanctuary in the virtual realm, and the Silver Lantern had unexpectedly gained one in reality. She couldn't risk Ashe making connections.

To conceal her identity, Vesser had already decided not to reveal a Sanctuary in reality within ten days, so she had to endure it!

“Ah!~”

She couldn't dodge the strike of the whip sword, and the soul-piercing pain burrowed into her very marrow like ants.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Across the distance of dozens of floors, Ashe lashed out at her repeatedly! Vesser was in so much pain she could barely stand, almost stumbling mid-leap!

Crack!

Seeing that she was finally reaching the top floor, joy surged in Vesser's heart, and she tried to escape into the night with all her might! But this time, not only did Ashe strike her with the whip sword, he wrapped it around her body and yanked her downward!

Even though Vesser quickly broke free from the whip sword, her upward momentum was lost. With nothing to push off against in mid-air, she had to spread her golden and silver Twin Wings to continue flying, but by that point, Ashe was already closing in for an aerial assault!

Vesser thought of using the reaction force from mutual attacks to escape, but Ashe didn't attack her this time.

Calmly, he took Vesser's phantom blue scalpel head-on, disregarding the wound on his chest, his arms clamped around her like a vise, as if trying to absorb her into himself!

Then Ashe flipped his body, aligning with the direction of gravity, and together, he and Vesser plummeted.

Below-a direct shortcut to the lower level!

Vesser looked at Ashe, and from his indifferent gaze, she only saw one message-"You can't escape from the palm of my hand."

Delusion spirit!

It made Ashe misjudge the strength in his hands!

As soon as Ashe's grip loosened, Vesser slipped free from him like a hamster, using the rebound force to escape into the night.

She pierced through the rooftop glass Firmament of the Transcendence Building, watched Ashe fall toward the lower level, took one last deep look at the man, and then vanished into the night.

Ashe grabbed the edge of the building to stop his fall and returned to the 45th floor, where he saw Igor and Harvey coming his way.

Harvey had released his Nether Knight form but remained within the Frostfire, with his chest wound of swirling flesh and exposed bone slowly healing. It was safe to assume that once he left the fusion state, he'd lose at least ten pounds again.

Igor crouched silently in front of Tamashi.

The Raven had crashed into the wall, leaving a web of spider-like cracks-it was the wall of the Transcendence Building, resistant to many ordinary Miracles. His clothes were

torn around the abdomen, revealing blood-soaked, charred abs and starkly contrasting pale skin at the edges.

"I didn't catch the Silver Lantern," Ashe calmly admitted his failure.

"Well," Igor replied, rising to his feet, "better luck next time. It's a pity about Raven Annihilation."

Ashe nodded, glanced at the Raven, and turned to leave. "Let's go. The Transcendent Cult will be here soon. We should prepare on the first floor--"

"I can't move well right now; wait for me to finish healing."

Upon hearing that familiar distorted voice, Ashe snapped out of the Observer state and looked at Raven in shock. "You're not dead!?"

When he saw Tamashi intercepting the Silver Lantern, Ashe was convinced there was no chance of survival for Raven. After all, being a divine host himself, he knew the Silver Lantern could blow away Raven with a mere breath.

Realizing that Tamashi had no chance of surviving, Ashe suddenly entered the long-lost "Observer state." All his skills converged, and he nearly managed to keep the Silver Lantern from escaping.

"Typically, it's my enemies who say that line. Once they do, my hand usually shatters their brain tissue," Raven coughed twice and chuckled. "But seeing you guys this surprised isn't so bad either."

"You took a direct hit from the Silver Lantern--a blow even Harvey couldn't withstand. How did you--"

"If I'd died easily from a sorcerer's attack, I wouldn't have lived this long," Raven replied. "It's not that ordinary folks can't counter Miracles; they just need to employ some slightly challenging techniques."

"You know I can use bare-handed attacks to create shockwaves by breaking the sound barrier? It's ineffective against the Silver Lantern, but if I unleash fifteen shockwaves in an instant, I can propel myself away with the explosion before she reaches me. That said, she did graze my stomach, but luckily, only broke a rib."

To be honest, after Raven talked about "ordinary folks," Ashe felt like he understood yet didn't fully comprehend.

"But you crashed into the wall, and the impact--"

"The reason I'm fine is precisely because the wall's like that," Raven explained. "I transferred all the impact there."

Ashe frowned; it sounded somewhat logical but felt a bit off.

He looked at Igor. "What were you regretting earlier?"

"I was lamenting Tamashi's tactic," Igor replied. "This time, he almost succeeded in a throat slash by transferring the grey fox blade to his hand. The Silver Lantern won't fall for it again next time."

Ashe turned to Raven. "Then why are you just lying here?"

"Healing," Tamashi answered. "I'm not affected by spirits, so I have to heal myself. But with a broken bone this time, I can't move while healing."

Ashe's expression became increasingly incredulous. "You can just lie there and heal a bone?"

"Yep, it's a straightforward method," Tamashi said. "It's like setting a dislocated joint; even if the bone's broken, you can force it into place with muscle and manage to use it. Full healing requires proper nutrition."

Ashe replied, "Are you not revealing your true face because you're actually some Abyssal monster that looks like a human?"

Igor added, "You know, if someone else had made that comment, I'd likely consider them my patient."

Harvey agreed, "Canceling a Demi-God attack with shockwaves, using muscle to treat severe wounds... Even I think you're a bit much."

"This is nothing," Tamashi shrugged. "You guys can do these things just with Miracles, and do them far better and easier. When you think about it, you're clearly more impressive."

Hearing the light-hearted banter from Raven, Ashe exhaled deeply, crouched beside him, and patted him on the shoulder. Raven winced, "Don't touch me, it still hurts a bit."

"Tamashi."

"Yeah?"

"You did well this time, but don't do it again."

“Because of my religious convictions, I can’t oblige your unreasonable request,” Raven replied.

“You... rascal...”

Tap.

Ashe turned his head and realized that the Transcendence followers had surrounded the upper floors without a sound.

Under the bright moonlit night, the Flaming White Tiger moved through the wilderness. On its back lay a nearly nude young woman, draped only in a spare coat.

Despite the Flaming White Tiger’s steady gait, each jolt made the young woman wince in pain, her breath sharp and cold with every movement.

“Ah... Oh... Ugh...”

Her faint groans gradually turned into soft sobs. The stillness of the night offered no solace, and Vesser couldn’t hold back her tears. Her clothes had been shredded, but thankfully the delusion spirit camouflaged her appearance-otherwise...

Her body was covered with bruises, especially on her back, legs, and buttocks, forcing her to lie facedown on the Flaming White Tiger to let the worst of them heal faster.

Physical pain she could ignore with the aid of the delusion spirit, but the piercing ache within her soul was beyond her control. The Mirror Dragon Secret Toxin had left her soul dangerously weakened-as fragile as a ripple on water compared to the solidity of ice.

For the first time in her life, she experienced an agonizingly deep soul pain that left her mind reeling. Once she gathered a bit of composure, Vesser wiped the corners of her mouth, almost grinding her teeth to dust as she silently repeated the man’s true name: “Ashe, Ashe, Ashe...”

At that moment, she recalled Ashe’s gaze during their final chase.

So distant, so serene, transcendent, above Truth-as if embodying a deity.

In that gaze, she seemed to see herself.

A more perfect version of herself.

Vesser’s breath quickened as she wrapped her arms around herself, the humiliating sting transforming into a more potent feeling that seeped into the deepest folds of her soul, giving her a long-lost sense of reality from the illusionary stupor.

For the first time, beyond her longstanding desires, Vesser had a new goal.

She wanted to make Ashe hers.

She longed to see another Ashe, the one hidden beneath the mundane facade, the noble soul behind the delusions, the eternal presence she glimpsed.

If she could make him hers, not only would her aspirations in the illusions be fulfilled, but even on the eternal battlefield of the Virtual Realm, they would be unstoppable.

“Ashe, Ashe, Ashe...”

The sound that drifted through the night no longer carried the bitterness of resentment; instead, it bore an unnamable quality.

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

Chapter 559: Kaleidoscope Black Robe Town

One day later, in Black Robe Town.

The market was bustling, lights flashing, and music blaring. A young girl in exotic clothing darted between neon lights, while a voluptuous beauty boldly showcased her charm, her allure undimmed by the night, laughter flowing freely and painting a scene of opulence that seemed out of this era.

Ashe felt a bump on his arm and turned to see a woman whose figure could only be described as miraculous, with wavy long hair and a deep V-neck dress that seemed designed to captivate any onlooker's gaze. Even a slight brush, even through clothing, let Ashe feel the smooth and elastic touch of her supposedly accidental nudge.

She gave Ashe a slight smile, unconcerned, and continued walking down the street. Beauties like her were common here, the street was lined with them, dazzling and countless, like heaven itself.

And that was the most regrettable part.

The entire street was like this, without exception.

Including him and Igor beside him.

“People from the Bluebird Divine Era are all like Little Trumpets...” Ashe covered his face and sighed, “How can anyone follow such a Demi-God!?”

“The Blood Moon also has a trend towards extreme beauty standards. If you’ve ever been to Blood Moon University, you’d rarely see any unattractive students, even the Ogres there are pleasing to the eye,” Igor responded calmly. “If the Bluebird Divine Era is more developed and advanced than Blood Moon, it’s not hard to understand the overflow of the aesthetics obsession.”

“How can you stay so calm!?”

“Did you know, before I was arrested by the Blood Hunters, none of my partners knew my true identity. Guess how I interacted with them?”

“If you’re so familiar, then you go shop alone, I’m heading back to the hotel-“

“I can’t handle everything alone,” Igor said as he caught Ashe by the back of his collar and pulled him along, “Tamashi needs healing, Harvey can’t stop eating, and we’re the only ones left who can move freely.”

After accepting a gift from the Transcendent Cult and riding away on a Transcendent brand motorcycle, Ashe and his companions arrived at the bustling trade hub of Black Robe Town, the most vibrant center of commerce in the Qinyi Alliance.

Black Robe Town is one of the largest cults in the Senlo Wasteland, directly governed by the War Temple. Although named the War Temple, their ideal is to pursue peace by using war to destroy all other wars. This is a seemingly feasible ideal, as unifying Senlo would naturally fulfill the War Temple’s aspirations.

In the Senlo Wasteland, there is a definite desire for unification and peace, making the prosperity of the War Temple almost inevitable, regardless of the presence of war or peace cults, or even ruling cults.

However, Black Robe Town has little to do with the War Temple. Its uniqueness lies in its heritage from the Third Divine Era, the Blue Bird Era.

As mentioned earlier, during the Fire Cat Divine Era, the divine fire system was created to peacefully transition to the next divine era. The Fire Cat sorcerers were successful, transitioning from the Fire Cat to the Blue Bird without triggering wars. However, due to the absence of bloody conflicts, some of the ideals from the Blue Bird heritage are quite fanciful.

In Black Robe Town, there exists a legacy called “Kaleidoscope,” stemming from the Blue Bird Era’s Kaleidoscope Demi-God. This Demi-God’s ideal was for everyone to become a beautiful girl.

Ashe is quite certain that this ideal originally had a prefix of “everyone but me,” but since a Demi-God’s obsession is with the dead, no such prefix is necessary.

The Kaleidoscope is exactly this legacy derived from the Blue Bird heritage. Within its influence, regardless of age or gender, everyone transforms into various forms of beautiful girls. Men, needless to say, and women too would undergo transformations in hairstyle, makeup, and even clothing, effectively a one-click makeover.

Although Ashe admits this is somewhat interesting, as Igor mentioned, the Blood Moon Kingdom also trends towards this. Some people from the Blue Bird Era, having full bellies and nothing better to do, might find this understandable.

However, Senlo is currently in the wasteland era, where everyone is busy dealing with heresy and not yet at a point where they can indulge in such luxuries. So why has Black Robe Town, with its Kaleidoscope, become a trading hub?

This is because the Kaleidoscope has another feature: spirit sleep. Within the range of the Kaleidoscope, all spirits fall asleep, and no amount of spellforce input by a sorcerer can make them work. Moreover, with bodies transformed into soft and fragrant beautiful girls, even the most flawless physical sorcerers can only act cute here.

It is said that even the Four-winged Spirit cannot resist the hypnotic allure of the Kaleidoscope, leading many to suspect that its original is actually a deity from the Virtual Realm.

When everyone lacks combat power, it equates to security; when everyone transforms into different beautiful young women, it ensures anonymity.

These two points are exactly what are needed for transactions.

In the past, the Kaleidoscope Black Robe Town might have been just a wonderland where people sought beauty, but in the Senlo wasteland, it has become a trusted trading venue among different cults.

Some sorcerers might consider sniping people from outside Black Robe Town, but the Kaleidoscope only activates at night. The outskirts of the town at night are safely managed by the Choking Green, who deal with any Uninvited Guests.

Once daylight comes and the Kaleidoscope deactivates, everyone reverts to their original form. Whether to conceal identities or out of sheer embarrassment, everyone dons black robes or other garments to cover themselves completely, which is how Black Robe Town got its name.

As the largest distribution hub in Senlo, Ashe and his group come here not just to replenish supplies but also to seize the opportunity to purchase sorcerers. Trading

sorcerers is common in other Kingdoms, but it's a rarity in Senlo, where most sorcerers circulate only within their own cults.

After all, if you dare sell sorcerers to other cults, you couldn't cope mentally-how could you trade with heresy? Are you aiding the enemy? Is your loyalty not absolute?

Even the Qinyi Alliance is no different; they merely cooperate to jointly oppose the Four Pillars Cult but are not a community with aligned interests. In the divine era, there are only so many positions, and the interaction between them is a zero-sum game of life and death, not a win-win cooperation.

Thus, the flow of goods between cults relies on caravans-formal cults barter goods, like the Transcendent Cult; informal cults simply take by force, like the Tribulation Fire Temple.

But Black Robe Town is different. Here, as long as you don't tell and I don't tell, everyone is an anonymous beautiful young woman, and different cults trade directly without middlemen making a profit. Many cults have their stalls here, and even the War Temple tacitly allows their presence.

In Igor's words, this place is like an underground Black Market where everyone uses a beautiful young woman's avatar.

However, the nature of the transactions...

Ashe glanced at the stores along the roadside. Weapons like bombs and swords were expected, and the sale of strong potions was understandable, but selling corpses? Had he known, he would've called Harvey over.

Aside from that, Black Robe Town indeed had many items that surprised Ashe and his companions. For instance, the Transcendent Cult still maintained production lines for fantasy creations like solar-powered motorcycles and musical instruments. Other cults also preserved various types of heritage, such as the "Eternal Clean Water Source," "Eagle Eye Glasses," and the "Senlo Locator Map."

There were even entertainment products like the "Gray Fox Holographic Screen." However, since they couldn't connect to the Gray Fox server anymore, they were limited to basic functions such as checking the time, recording videos, computing, and note-taking (with 1,000 Gray Fox series episodes included).

"Ice cream cone!"

"Lemon tea!"

"Lala Fatty skewers!"

Before long, Ashe's mouth never stopped moving. He kept switching the food in his hands, darting from one snack stall to another, ordering this and that, then gesturing for Igor to pay.

"Has your brain been affected by hormones because your body changed?" the Con Artist remarked while fishing out his wallet. "We're not here for a stroll."

"Here, try this."

"I'm not as gluttonous as you."

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"Open your mouth, ah-ah-how's it taste?"

"Just okay."

"Let's buy some to take back for Harvey and Tamashi to try," Ashe said cheerfully. "We've been tangled with the Silver Lantern at the Four Pillars Cult, the Food Factory Town, the Transcendence Building for the past few days, and haven't really gotten a proper break. Even if you all are holding up, I'm not. At least back in Gospel, I had Lise with me; now it's just you guys..."

"What," Igor chuckled, "do you want us to coddle you like Lise did? You could try Harvey; he might not be as childlike as Lise, but I'm sure he could manage without it being weird."

"Do you think Lise was the only one being coddled?" Ashe laughed. "I was actually leaning on Lise, too. Adults are just children who have to act grown-up."

"That's just you."

"Humph, you'll understand when you have a daughter," Ashe grunted slightly. "Besides, Mercury Trojan Horse hasn't told us anything about the Silver Lantern yet, so rushing won't do us any good—"

"Are you looking for me?"

Ashe and Igor swiftly turned around to see a silver-haired beauty standing behind them. She gestured toward an open-air bar nearby, indicating for them to follow, and then walked over to sit down and order.

It wasn't the first time Mercury Trojan Horse had personally controlled a Four Pillars disciple to meet with them, so Ashe and his team were used to these sudden meetings and joined her at the table.

The open-air bar was quite crowded, with many people drinking heavily and enjoying the carefree feeling of being drunk. For sorcerers, it was typically hard to achieve a drunken state because spellforce nourishes the body. After practicing for a year or two, sorcerers become immune to minor issues like alcohol and diarrhea. However, under the Kaleidoscope's influence, sorcerers became vulnerable again, allowing them to enjoy the bliss of relaxing their minds.

But Ashe and Igor were there for business, so they only ordered two soft drinks.

"Good evening, Ashe," the silver-haired beauty said. "I heard the Silver Lantern snatched the Resonance String Demi-God from the Transcendent Cult. I thought you'd be caught up in it... Where's the necromancer?"

"At the inn," Ashe replied. "He's turned into a dark-skinned loli and doesn't dare come out."

Harvey apparently didn't care much about his appearance, but because he had lost several pounds from his original body weight and was parasitized by the Blood Seed, he had to eat constantly and use spirits to speed up absorption to compensate for the loss of life energy.

"So, Ashe, tell us about your experience at the Transcendence Building," the silver-haired beauty said, not hiding her curiosity. "How did you get out? Did you fight your way out?"

"Curious," Igor suddenly said. "How can you tell which of us is which? We're both under the Kaleidoscope's influence; Ashe is now red-haired with red eyes, totally different from his original self. Or rather, how did you recognize us?"

"It's probably your aura," the silver-haired beauty smiled. "There's still a big difference between you two. As for how I recognized you... if you're willing to satisfy my curiosity, I might just tell you."

Ashe and Igor exchanged a glance, then Ashe said, "We almost got dragged into it by the Silver Lantern, but the Transcendent Cult is sharp-eyed. They knew I was a hero helping them—"

The silver-haired beauty remained expressionless. "If you're going to lie, could you at least let a mental sorcerer do it? At least then it would be a bit challenging."

"Simply put, the Transcendent Cult needed me," Ashe shrugged, "and also..."

“They’re quite fond of Harvey.”

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

Chapter 560: Good Evening, Observer

When Ashe was surrounded by the Transcendence followers, he initially thought he was in for a tough fight. Despite the fact that in his state of remote divine hosting they posed no threat, he still couldn’t just go on a rampage after acquiring the Transcendent Demi-God while in someone else’s territory.

Silver Lantern might be shameless, but he still had a conscience!

Surprisingly, the Transcendence followers did not attack immediately and were willing to listen to their explanation.

If it had been another cult, Ashe might have thought they were intimidated, but the Transcendent Cult doesn’t even have such a concept. Their decisions result from calculations within the intelligent computing hub. If they believed Ashe was guilty of seizing the Demi-God, they would have used every follower to keep him here.

Now that Silver Lantern has fled with the Resonance String, and that the Transcendent Demi-God is with Ashe, they would at least try to subdue Ashe before any discussion.

However, when Ashe attempted to explain, the Transcendence followers pointed to Harvey and asked the necromancer to speak. After listening to Harvey’s account, the Transcendence followers were willing to trust them, provided Ashe returned the Transcendent Demi-God before leaving in the morning.

Everyone was surprised at Harvey’s favorable standing with the Transcendent Cult. Recalling Harvey’s actions, Ashe couldn’t help but ask, “Is it because you can play the harmonica?”

“Not at all,” Harvey replied. “It’s probably because I’m so close to the undead now.”

Undead?

Ashe was taken aback, then quickly understood.

Transcendental consciousness, the shedding of self.

Undead.

Undead creatures having intelligence but no consciousness precisely align with what the Transcendent Cult seeks to achieve. Though there is a crucial difference: the undead are dead, while the cult seeks to evolve while living.

Harvey's "Frostfire" is currently in a state of superposition between life and death. His consciousness is close to the silent undead, yet he's still alive, making him deserving of the Transcendent Cult's approval.

Still, Ashe suspected the harmonica might have something to do with it-perhaps the affection a little girl had for Harvey found its way to the intelligent computing hub. If one person liked Harvey, it might sway the entire Transcendent Cult to like him.

The Transcendent Cult then posed a question: Does Ashe have civic permission to acquire the Transcendent Demi-God?

Upon receiving an affirmative answer, they proposed a deal: if Ashe would use his citizenship to help them unlock several items of the gray fox heritage, they were willing to gift Ashe and his team a piece of the heritage and permit Ashe to remotely host the Transcendent Demi-God.

"Remote divine hosting?" The silver-haired beauty's eyes flickered. "Did you place your faith in the Transcendent Cult?"

"No," Ashe replied, pulling out a card. "But they gave me this."

"Oh," the silver-haired beauty understood immediately. "An atonement voucher."

Atonement vouchers can be produced by any cult, created during worship ceremonies through the resonance between the disciples and the Demi-God. Initially, they weren't intended for remote divine hosting but rather to help disciples in crossing the night.

Though the most steadfast followers can cross the Choking Green, there are always those less resolute who succumb to its corrupting transformation.

As long as a disciple carries an atonement voucher, even if their willpower is insufficient to withstand the Choking Green, they can remain unharmed. Eventually, followers discovered that the atonement voucher is the most stable connection to the Demi-God, making it perfect for remote divine hosting.

"So, not only did you avoid conflict with the Transcendent Cult, but you also obtained an atonement voucher and heritage..." the silver-haired beauty remarked thoughtfully.

Ashe chuckled and stood up, saying, "I don't mind telling you what heritage I obtained-this: the divine hosting belt!"

He revealed the stylishly sinister belt around his waist, which had a slot seemingly made for the atonement voucher.

“With this belt and the atonement voucher, I can perform perfect divine hosting even without the Transcendent Demi-God nearby,” Ashe explained. “I could take on Silver Lantern if needed.”

Though he mentioned Silver Lantern, he was clearly also hinting at the Four Pillars Cult, represented by the silver-haired beauty. Since he would eventually reveal his divine hosting capabilities in a battle against Silver Lantern, he might as well use it to intimidate Mercury Trojan Horse now.

However, despite the impressive name, the divine hosting belt is essentially a toy from the Gray Fox Divine Era.

When Ashe picked up the divine hosting belt, using his citizenship, he received this feedback: “Unregistered user detected. Please log into Zero-Style Toy Company or play as a guest...”

“Zero-Style Toy Company thanks you for your purchase. The Zero-Style Transformation Belt currently only supports the divine hosting function. Please use with Demi-God card! Additional functions can be unlocked upon login, supporting up to 10 cards at once, with more plugins available for download!”

“Divine Hosting: Operates with inserted Demi-God card, max load 100%, max quantity 1.”

The Demi-God card and atonement vouchers are essentially the same items known by different names across various eras, serving different expectations.

From these observations, Ashe could discern the intelligence of the Transcendent Cult: the divine hosting belt holds no value for Transcendence followers since they don't leave the Transcendence Building. However, by giving it to Ashe, no matter how he uses it outside, it depletes the power of other cults and acts as a living advertisement for the Transcendent Cult. Regardless of the outcome, the cult benefits.

If the atonement vouchers run out, Ashe will have to return to the Transcendent Cult to replenish them. Back and forth, Ashe might eventually become a Transcendence follower-at least, that's Igor's take on it. Ashe, on the other hand, believes the cult's real interest might actually lie with Harvey.

After all, even though the Transcendent Cult adhered to their promise and gifted Ashe the divine hosting belt from the gray fox heritage, they also went the extra mile to craft a personalized tremolo harmonica for Harvey.

The silver-haired beauty glanced at the belt with indifference and continued, "You say you almost caught Silver Lantern?"

Ashe nodded, giving a brief account of his pursuit of Silver Lantern.

As the silver-haired beauty listened, they suddenly raised a question, "Your combat style seems to have changed. Earlier, you showed no prowess in ranged attacks, and as far as I know, divine hosts find it challenging to attack at long distances. But then suddenly, you were able to significantly damage Silver Lantern from afar... What happened?"

Ashe had no intention of revealing everything to a potential future adversary. "I made a breakthrough during the fight."

"You possess abilities I'm unaware of," the silver-haired beauty noted, poker-faced. "And it's not something you can constantly use. Otherwise, you would have used it at the start to deal with Silver Lantern. Let me guess... could it be a hidden personality?"

Igor immediately glanced at Ashe, while the silver-haired beauty shook their head, continuing, "No, with the help of a mental sorcerer, if you truly had a hidden personality, you could leverage it as a regular weapon. So it's not your hidden personality but rather..."

"Your hidden self."

Ashe neither confirmed nor denied anything, uninterested in leaking Intelligence to the Four Pillars Cult. "Your turn now; tell us what you know about Silver Lantern."

However, the silver-haired beauty continued to fixate on Ashe. "I want to see the real you beneath the facade."

Ashe calmly replied, "Sorry, I don't perform for anyone."

"Oh, really? Even if the mental sorcerer beside you becomes a Trojan Horse too, you still wouldn't let your true self out?"

Smack!

Guests turned to see a red-haired girl flipping the table and grabbing the silver-haired beauty. Realizing it was just a fight between women, they shrugged and went back to their drinks.

Not wanting to cause a scene, Ashe dragged the silver-haired beauty into a side alley. "What did you just say?"

"You're just ordinarily angry now," she shook her head. "Still not your true self."

Thud!

Ashe punched her in the stomach. She instinctively doubled over but remained calm, shaking her head. "That's useless; your strength is barely good enough for a massage. Right now, you'd struggle to even crush Lala Fatty... Of course, if you use Divine Hosting, you could break through Kaleidoscope's restraints and kill me. But would it matter?"

It wouldn't.

She was just a disciple of the Four Pillars Cult controlled by Mercury Trojan Horse. Killing her wouldn't make a difference when Mercury Trojan Horse could control countless others.

Moreover, what if...

"Or are you hoping I'll come to you in another body?" she whispered softly in his ear. "Should it be the silent necromancer or the cunning mental sorcerer?"

Smack!

Ashe silently withdrew his hand, watching the silver-haired beauty fall to the ground from his slap. "Are you here to declare our cooperation with the Four Pillars Cult officially ended?"

"Of course not." The silver-haired beauty sat on the ground, touching her face and shaking her head. She looked up at Igor, who had finished settling the tavern bill, and smiled. "Seems like he doesn't care that much about you two."

"If you knew how we met," Igor said calmly, "you wouldn't have any weird misconceptions about our relationship."

"If you're just here to taunt us, then leave. Or tell us about Silver Lantern."

The silver-haired beauty stood up, dusting off her skirt. "Silver Lantern is in Black Robe Town."

Ashe and Igor showed no surprise at this information. Black Robe Town was the largest town closest to the Transcendence Building, and given its trade nature, Silver Lantern replenishing there was only to be expected.

"How did you recognize both of us?" Igor asked. "We look and dress completely different from our originals."

“Allow me to keep that a secret,” the silver-haired beauty replied, tapping her lips.
“Since Ashe isn’t willing to show his true self, I have to maintain a little mystery too.
Goodbye, gentlemen.”

Watching the silver-haired beauty disappear into the crowd, Igor turned to see Ashe leaning against the wall, deep in thought.

“We should continue shopping.”

“Yeah.”

Although Ashe agreed, he didn’t move, lost in his thoughts. The Con Artist glanced at him, then walked directly into the shopping street. After a while, he returned with two ice creams, keeping one for himself and handing the other to the Cult Leader.

Ashe took a big bite, unbothered by the cold, getting whipped cream all over his lips. After the ice cream melted in his mouth, he suddenly said, “She was lying.”

“Hmm?”

“There’s no way she put Mercury in you guys; you didn’t even touch the Trojan Horse back then. If her tactile ability didn’t require contact, she would have turned Silver Lantern into a Trojan Horse long ago. How could she have been overthrown by Silver Lantern?”

Igor was taken aback, then nodded after thinking it over. “You’re right. That’s a huge inconsistency.”

“But why would she use such a lie to provoke me?” Ashe frowned. “Was it just to see my hidden cards?”

“Come to think of it, I’ve been concerned about one thing,” Igor said. “It makes sense that she recognized us, but why did she only ask about Harvey?”

Ashe blinked and quickly realized.

Mercury Trojan Horse was not just Mercury Trojan Horse. She was also Tamashi’s former companion, Tanomoo. Given Tamashi’s hatred for her, and seeing Tamashi wasn’t with them, why didn’t she inquire about Raven’s whereabouts but only asked about the necromancer?

Just as a thought was about to form, someone suddenly shouted from the alleyway entrance, “Finally found you two. Even with a prophecy and Miracle, there are plenty of red-haired, red-eyed women around here...”

They turned to see an unfamiliar woman, and asked, “Who are you?”

“Haven’t you gotten used to my way of showing up yet?” she laughed.

“Since Tamashi isn’t here, you can still call me Mercury Trojan Horse.”

In the Virtual Realm, Distant Sky Domain.

As soon as the four operators appeared within the dream phantom, Sonya immediately looked to Ashe and asked, “How did your fight with Silver Lantern go?”

“Good thing you logged into the Virtual Realm tonight,” Deya sighed with relief. “I was worried something happened to you.”

Since a conflict with Silver Lantern was planned, Ashe had anticipated being unable to log into the Virtual Realm for a day or two. He had intended for the Sword Princess and the Witch to team up for exploration, as partnering up multiple sorcerers would be more efficient than going solo, even though the Dream Treasure House was bound to him.

But after a moment’s hesitation, both the Sword Princess and the Witch opposed the idea, preferring to operate independently. Ashe found it puzzling; they had seemed quite close before. Still, if they weren’t interested, it was no big deal, just a night or two.

“It’s a long story, and something very puzzling just happened...” Ashe turned to the quiet girl nearby, proactively greeting the new operator: “Good evening, Vesser.”

Vesser lowered her hand from her face and smiled warmly. “Good evening, Observer.”

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